

### **SECTION III. THE MIRACULOUS MANIFESTING GIFTS HAVE CEASED**

#### ***I. IF THE GIFTS WERE PRESENT THEY WOULD BE EVIDENT AS IN BIBLE TIMES (Ac. 26:26).***

When the true signs were present they were so open and amazing that it could not be disputed (Ac. 4:16; Jn. 9:16, 18; 11:44, 47; 12:10, 11; Ac. 2:6, 7, 12; etc.) and could not be kept quiet (Mk. 7:36; Lk. 5:14; Mk. 1:44, 45).

Modern Pentecostalism lacks this characteristic. If they had the real thing they would not need to spend great sums of money advertising to get people to come to their “healing” meetings. Jesus told his disciples not to advertise his miracles (Mat. 8:4; Mark 7:36; Luke 5:14; 8:56). If they did what Jesus did, people would throng them like they did Jesus (Mark 2:4).

They raise no dead in procession heading for the cemetery (some have tried and failed). They do not go into hospitals filled with burned and deformed children and raise even ONE, much less “every one” (Ac. 5:16). Let us have action, rather than excuses.

Even I, who have served the Lord for many years and would welcome the opportunity to have the afflicted freed, am unable to find one iota of evidence to support their claims.

I want to do His will (Jn. 7:17). I have given my life to His service and try to do everything possible to please Him (Ac. 5:32; 1Jn. 2:3, 5). I believe and love Him (1Jn. 5:3). I believe He is all-powerful and able to do anything He wills. I desire with all my heart to avoid teaching anything contrary to His will. I have asked for wisdom (James 2:5-6) and would gladly share the truth with others. I have honestly investigated to see if these things could be validated, yet I have never found one shred of evidence supporting their claims. If they have the same powers as in the Bible, why should not skeptics today also be confounded? If these things are so, how could I have missed it?

I have been well acquainted with Pentecostal works. I began my ministry in a church of almost half Pentecostals who professed to believe the teachings of the Church of The Open Bible. My wife’s background was Pentecostal. I went to school with Pentecostals. My brother is a Pentecostal. Over the years I have listened to many Pentecostal people share their convictions. Some of our members were former Pentecostals. I have attended their services and we have had them present their beliefs in our classes. I have read many of their books and periodicals. I have watched their “healings” and recorded their “tongues.” I have followed up and checked out everything I could. Yet, none of what I have seen matches the Biblical pattern.

They ignore facts. They gloss over and expand on the truth. They exaggerate and twist things. They seem to try to out-do each other telling a bigger story to sound convincing. Sometimes I am reminded of the quip, “The first liar doesn’t stand a chance!”

Attempts at investigation are greeted with excuses, attacks, intimidation, insinuations and put-downs. We are accused of doubting God. We are assailed as “resisting the Spirit.” Honesty about what we see is characterized as “unbelief” or even “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.” We are accused of “tempting God” and being “wicked and adulterous” for “seeking after a sign” but the bottom line is that they cannot do what is in the Bible.

I stand as ready as ever to investigate evidence. I want to see these powers work. But I am unwilling to shut my eyes and play, “Let’s pretend.” I refuse to dump a guilt trip on some poor soul who fails to get something even the charismatics cannot demonstrate. I will gladly go with any “healer” to see these powers manifested at the children’s hospital. I will follow them as they walk across Lake Washington --but they must lead the way. I will record the event as they move a mountain. I will go with them to the funeral home to see them raise the dead. But don’t expect me to blindly accept claims about miracles that cannot be verified. God did not and I will not.

I can not believe that if these powers were being exercised that people would be responding any less enthusiastically than they did in the scriptures. One healing of a deformed child would instantly become front page headlines. People would pour in from all over the world. But where are their great works? What is the problem? --They “SAY, and DO NOT” (MT. 23:3).

## ***II. THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED (Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4).***

Just as when the Old Testament was completed 400 years before Christ and no more miraculous powers were manifested, so when the New Testament was completed, the manifestations ceased.

When the church began, the Old Testament laws were abolished (Col. 2:14; Gal. 3:23-25; Rom. 7:1-4; 2Cor. 3; Heb. 7:12; 8:13). We are under a New Covenant, or Testament (Heb. 8:6-9). This came into force through the death of Christ (Heb. 9:15-17). Since there were no New Testament scriptures to provide guidance, on the Day of Pentecost God sent the Holy Spirit to bring all things Jesus had spoken to remembrance and to guide them into all truth (Jn. 14:26; 16:13).

Since anyone can claim that God is giving them a message, God gave the inspired apostles and prophets signs (1Cor. 1:6-7; 2Co. 12:12; Ac. 2:43; Rom. 15:19; 1Cor. 14:26) and manifestations (1Cor. 12:7) to confirm that they were speaking the word of God. The signs confirmed the word (Mark. 16:20; Heb. 2:3, 4; John 20:30, 31; Ac. 14:3; cf. Ac. 2:12; 5:12-14; Ac. 8:13;), whether spoken or written.

It took time for the complete revelation to be given and made available. Therefore these powers continued until after the end of the first century. Once it had all been given and

confirmed, no man could add to it (Gal. 3:15). Being now complete, the work of confirming was no longer needed and these temporary powers came to an end (1Co. 13:8-13).

### ***III. THESE POWERS WERE FOR THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH (Eph. 2:20).***

Jesus, the apostles, and prophets were the foundation of the church. It was not necessary for Jesus to remain on earth for his work to continue. Nor is it necessary for apostles and Prophets to remain here in order for their work to continue.

They provided the word which is able to *thoroughly furnish us unto every good work* (2Tim. 3:17). It is able to “*cast down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God...*” (2Co. 10:3-6; Eph. 6:10-18). This was foundational. The apostles and prophets were guided into all truth needed for the church. If not, then why do we not keep adding new revelation to the Bible? We can not be thoroughly furnished until all is revealed.

The job of revealing has been completed. This is just like when the Old Testament was completed and the prophetic work ceased for four hundred years. Evangelists, Elders and Teachers were not placed in the foundation. They continue the job of teaching what the apostles and prophets revealed.

### ***IV. THE MEANS OF PERPETUATING THE GIFTS HAS CEASED (Ac. 8:18).***

Baptism of the Holy Spirit, given only by Jesus, came upon the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. They were the “*first-fruits*” of the Jews. The baptism of the Holy Spirit came with miraculous manifestations and powers. It was specially promised to them so that they might by inspiration bear witness of Christ (Jn. 14:26; 15:26, 27; 16:13; Lk. 24:49; Ac. 1:2-8; 2:14, 32, 33, 37, 42, 43; 4:33; 5:12; 14:3; 2Co. 12:12).

It was necessary that there be no distinction between Jew and Gentile (Ac. 11:1, 2, 12, 15-17; 15:8, 9). To avoid discrimination against the Gentiles, it was poured out in a similar manner upon them (Ac. 10:44-47). After that, the manifestations of the Spirit were given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles.

Some cite the laying on of the apostles’ hands as examples of Holy Spirit baptism. However, those cases were never called that. Baptism in the Holy Spirit was only given by Jesus (Mat. 3:11; John 1:33; Mark 1:8). It seems to be a greater measure than that which was given by the laying on of hands. After Acts 10 we know of no instance of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the fact that he cites back to “us at the beginning” (Ac. 11:15) indicates that it was not a continuing experience even among the Jews.

From Eph. 4:5 we learn that by the time Paul wrote that book, while in prison near the end of his ministry, there was only one Baptism. Water baptism was the only baptism that continued (Eph. 5:26; Col. 2:12, 13; Titus 3:5; Heb. 10:22; 1Pe. 3:21; 1Jn. 5:6, 8; Mt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38, 39). It seems pretty clear that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was no longer occurring. The special powers were provided through the laying on of the hands of the apostles.

In Acts 6:1-6 the apostles laid hands on the seven and following that Stephen began doing signs and wonders (6:8). In 8:4-13, Philip, one of the seven, went to Samaria and did signs. However, he was obviously not able to pass these powers to others. When the apostles at Jerusalem, many miles away, heard about it, they sent Peter and John to go down and lay hands upon them so that it might also fall upon them (Acts 8:14-17). When Simon saw that *THROUGH THE LAYING ON OF THE APOSTLES' HANDS* this took place he offered money that he might also lay his hands and pass this on.

Philip was doing miracles. If he could have given the gift, there is no logical reason for the apostles to have sent two men such a distance to lay on hands. It would have taken at least a couple of days for the apostles to have heard from Samaria about Philip's work and a couple more days for them to get down there. It is obvious that this was necessary because only the apostles had this power (cf. 2Co. 12:12). Luke, by inspiration, states that it was through the apostles' hands this was done (Ac. 8:18).

This is consistent with Acts 19:6 where at Ephesus Paul laid hands on about twelve disciples of John the Baptist after re-baptizing them.

The same is true at Rome where Paul says he desired to come in order to impart unto them some spiritual gift (Rom. 1:11). Why was it necessary that an apostle come unto them if it could be received in some other way?

Timothy, likewise, received his gift "through" (#1223 dia) the laying on of Paul's hands (2Tim. 1:6). Some will object that 1Tim. 4:14 also speaks of the gift being given by the hands of the presbytery. However, note that it was, "*through* (#1223 dia) *prophecy with* (#3326 meta) *the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*" Thus it actually provides further confirmation because of the two different prepositions used. It was "*through*" (#1223 dia) the laying on of Paul's hands and "*through*" (#1223 dia) prophecy (by Paul), but "*with*" (#3326 meta) the hands of the Elders. The laying on of their hands was auxiliary to, rather than the means of, receiving the gifts.

For one to be an "apostle" and thus able to lay on hands to give these powers, it was necessary that Christ personally appear to him after his resurrection (Ac. 1:21-22; cf. 22:14-15; 9:15; 26:16; 4:33; 10:39-42; 13:31; 1:8; 2:32). Paul cites this as one of the credentials of his apostleship (1Co. 9:1). In 1Co. 15:8-9 he refers to himself as being "last of all" those who saw Jesus. His becoming an apostle was like one born out of due season."

Since only the apostles had the power to pass on these gifts through the Laying on of their hands, and no one else could meet the qualifications for the office, the "signs of an apostle" (2Co. 12:12) ceased when the last apostle died. In turn, when those died who had received the manifesting gifts through the apostles' hands, the exercise of these powers naturally ended.

#### **A. OBJECTIONS THAT THE LAYING ON OF APOSTLES' HANDS WAS NOT NECESSARY**

**OBJECTION:** Ananias is cited as one who was not an apostle and yet laid hands on Paul to give him the Holy Spirit (Ac. 9:17).

**ANSWER:**

- a. First, It does not say that Ananias laid hands on Paul to give him the Holy Spirit. It says that Ananias was “sent” that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ac. 9:17). His hands were laid that Paul might receive his sight (Ac. 9:12).

Paul was told to go to Damascus and there he would be told what he must do. He needed to hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17) and be baptized (Acts 22:16). Ananias was sent to tell him what to do. When he was baptized He received the Holy Spirit (Ac. 2:38-39; Ac. 5:32; Jn. 3:5; 1Jn. 5:8; 1Cor. 12:13; Tit. 3:5; Eph. 1:13-14; Rom. 8:5-9). Nothing is said here of the Holy Spirit falling on Paul or of him speaking in tongues.

We do not know when the Holy Spirit came upon him or whether he was baptized in the Holy Spirit. In Gal. 1:1, 11-17 Paul indicates that he did not receive his commission from men. In any case, when he received it, it was not one whit behind the other apostles (2Cor. 11:5; 12:11).

- b. We cannot know that Ananias was not an apostle. He was called “disciples” (Acts 9:1) but so were the other apostles at first (Lk. 6:13). After seeing Jesus and being sent by him he could have been an apostle.

It may be objected that Ananias only saw a “vision” of Jesus (Acts 9:10). However, Paul also speaks of the appearance of Jesus to him as a “vision” (Acts 26:19).

The twelve were not the only apostles. Paul was never numbered with the eleven (Ac. 1:26; 2:14; 6:2, 3, 6; 1Cor. 15:5). He was an apostle to the gentiles (Gal. 2:7-8; Ac. 9:15; Eph. 3:8; 2Tim. 1:11; Rom. 11:13). Along with him, Barnabas is also called an apostle (Ac. 14:4, 14). James the Lord’s brother, was an apostle (Gal. 1:18-19; Ac. 9:27-28; 1Co. 15:7). Silas also may have been an apostle (1Thess. 1:1, 6).

**OBJECTION:** The Presbytery (elders) is also cited as laying hands on Timothy (1Tim. 4:14).

**ANSWER:**

We have shown that the gift was only “with” (“meta”) the hands of the Elders, not “through” (“dia”) their hands (1Tim. 4:14). The gift came “through” (“dia”) the hands of Paul (2Tim. 1:6), “through” (“dia”) prophecy (1Tim. 4:14).

Hands were also used for other things than passing on the special gifts. In Acts 6:5-6 they laid hands to appoint to the job. Notice that they were already “full of the Spirit.” Likewise it was common to lay hands to impart healing.

**B. OBJECTIONS CONTENDING THAT THE APOSTLES CONTINUED BEING REPLACED.**

**OBJECTION:** Matthias's replacement of Judas set a precedent for adding apostles.

**ANSWER:**

In order to become one of the twelve, Matthias had to have accompanied with the other apostles and see Jesus after the resurrection (Ac. 1:21-22). Where is the evidence today of those who claim to be apostles having been with Jesus and seen him after the resurrection. Where is evidence that they were sent by him or can do the special signs of an apostle? (2Cor.12:12). Remember that we are warned that there will be false-apostles (2Cor. 11:13).

**OBJECTION:**

“James, the brother of Jesus replaced James the brother of John after he was beheaded.”

**ANSWER:**

We do not know when James became an apostle. When Paul was taken by Barnabas to see the “Apostles” (Acts 9:27), it appears from Gal. 1:19 that James the brother of the Lord was already an apostle before James the brother of John was beheaded (Acts 12:2).

However, that could be misleading. It may be that Paul, writing after the occasion, speaks of James as an “apostle” when he actually did not take the office until after James died. That would be much like speaking of when President Lincoln was a child. However, we have no evidence of that.

Some think that James, the brother of Jesus, was one of the original twelve. The problem with that is that Gal. 1:9 speaks of him as the “brother of the Lord” after the twelve had been chosen. John says that at that time the brothers of Jesus did not believe (John 3:5).

James appears to have been an apostle in addition to the twelve. However, he is classed with Peter and John as going to the circumcision (Gal. 2:9). In any case, it is evident that he met the requirement of having seen Jesus after the resurrection (1Cor. 15:7).

Paul speaks of himself as “last of all.” He was “born out of due season.” (1Cor. 15:8). Since the apostles were still in Jerusalem after Paul's first missionary journey, and it is unlikely that the deaths of any further apostles would have gone unnoticed, it is clear that Paul and Barnabas, who were also apostles (Ac. 14:4, 14), were not replacements of anyone. The twelve were apostles to the Jews (Gal. 2: 7-9; Mt. 19:28). Paul was not one of the twelve (1Cor. 15:6-9). He was an apostle to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:7-8; Ac. 9:15; Eph. 3:8; Rom. 11:13).

**OBJECTION:**

“Eph. 4:11 shows that apostles were to continue until the church reached perfect unity. That has not yet been accomplished.”

**ANSWER:**

Eph. 2:20 indicates that, like Jesus, the apostles were in the foundation. The necessity for apostles and Prophets to remain on earth after the church was founded is no more warranted than that Jesus must remain here. Such claims smack of the Roman church’s insistence that Jesus had to have a “vicar,” in the office of Pope, to serve in his place as an earthly head. Just as prophets ceased for 400 years after completion of the Old Testament, when the New Testament was completed prophecy was no longer needed.

The work of apostles and prophets still continues through the word, which is able to “*thoroughly furnish us unto every good work.*” (2Tim. 3:15-17). Instead of giving revelation the Holy Spirit now helps us to obey it (Rom. 8). Our unity comes by being sanctified in the truth (Jn. 17:17-23).

Those offices were provided to bring the church body to completion. That is what happened. The apostles and Prophets gave the revelation needed to fully establish the church as a completed body. In turn, evangelists, elders and teachers taught and spread the word to build up each member. Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. Jesus is still head. Apostles and prophets still continue their work through the word. Evangelists, Elders and Teachers continue to impart it. The church is still a completely functioning body.

**OBJECTION:**

“Apostles are listed as members of the body. Every member is important to the body. The body would be crippled without apostles. (1Cor. 12:28).

**ANSWER:**

The “body” is composed of PEOPLE, not gifts (12:25-27). The scriptures plainly teach that a time would come when these gifts would be put away (1Cor. 13:11). Until all of the New Testament was revealed, they were necessary to guide the church during its infancy, but when that was completed (“teleios” = “perfect”), that which was in part was done away.

Some things were only for certain times. Insisting that in order for there to be a body, apostles and prophets must always be on earth, conflicts with the plain declaration that the church was to grow up and put away the gifts. Giving of the revelation and confirming its source was temporary. But what was given still continues to strengthen the members of the body. Because Jesus is no longer on earth does not mean the body no longer has a head. Likewise, the work of the word given through apostles and prophets continues while they are in heaven.

### **C. PROBLEMS OF THOSE WHO CLAIM TO BE APOSTLES**

1. They must be able to establish that Jesus has appeared to them. (Ac. 1:22; 1Co. 9:1; Gal. 1:16-17; 1Co. 15:7-9).
2. Their claims must stand the test (Rev. 2:2 cf. 2Co. 11:13-15).
3. They must demonstrate the “signs of an apostle” (2Co. 12:12).
  - a. Apostles did all manner of miracles (Ac. 2:43; 5:12; 14:3; 19:11-12).
  - b. Apostles laid hands and passed the gifts (Ac. 8:14, 18; 19:6; 2Tim. 1:6; Rom. 1:11).
4. They would have to have been a part of the foundation (Eph. 2:20).  
The “foundation” is that which is first laid before the rest of the building (Eph. 1:4). The foundation has been laid and needs no successors any more than does the chief cornerstone.
5. Since Paul was “last of all” (1Cor. 15:7-10), they are just too late.

### **V. TWO SCRIPTURES SPECIFICALLY SPEAK OF THE END OF THE PROPHETIC GIFT**

#### **Zech. 13:1-5. The prophets will pass out of the land.**

The prophecy begins in chapter 12 and continues through chapter 14. It speaks of the “day” when a fountain would be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness (13:1). The Messiah was wounded (13:6) and the sheep scattered (13:7). Jesus cited this with reference to himself (Mk. 14:27). Zech. 12:10. They would look on him whom they had pierced. All of these things concern Jesus’ first coming (Lk. 24:46-49; Ac. 1:8; Jn. 4:10-15). It appears that the “day” continued at least to the destruction of the Jewish nation (70 AD to 125 AD). (Zech. 12:2, 11; 13:8-9; Luke 21:20-24).

The main objections raised are from chapter 14. It is possible that this continues from the destruction of the Jewish nation down to the second coming. That poses no problem because they are spoken of as passing out of the land in chapter 13.

If we see this as is symbolic, it may be the spiritual war in which we are engaged (2Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-18; 2Tim. 2:3-4; 4:7; 1Tim. 1:18; 6:12). Thus, the “living waters” that flow from Jerusalem may be the gospel message (14:8; John 4:10; 7:37-39; Luke 24:44-48; Ac. 1:8)

Some may insist that it is literal and that idols and demons still remain in the world. I would note that the reference is to the land of “Jerusalem” (12:11), not the whole earth. The false-prophets, such as Bar-Cochba were destroyed. Idols and false-prophets seem to be entirely removed from the Jewish religion.

However, the passage appears to be symbolic. The “land” has reference to God’s people who make up the heavenly Jerusalem, the church. The prophetic powers ceased after the

New Testament was given. True Christians have no demons or anything to do with idolatry.

**1Cor. 13:8-13. The gifts were to pass away when the revelation of God’s will was completed.**

1Corinthians, chapters 12-14 deal with problems that had arisen with regard to the exercise of spiritual gifts. It appears that tongues had become a dominant feature and controversy had arisen over which gifts were most important. Paul shows that they all came from the same source--the Spirit. All did not have the same gift but all were important to the body. He concludes chapter 12 by saying that he would show them a “*more excellent way.*”

Chapter 13 shows why love is more important than the gifts. Without love, whatever they did would be in vain. He then shows that the gifts were temporary, while love would never end.

In chapter 14 he shows that because demonstrations of tongues in the church without interpretation could not edify the listeners, therefore that gift would be of less value than the other gifts. Then, in chapter 14, he lays down some rules for use of the gifts and indicates that those who do not abide by these are not under direction of God.

We want to specifically consider the import of the latter part of chapter thirteen, which teaches the temporary nature of the gifts.

First, note that in 13:8 it states that “love never fails.” This is contrasted with prophecy and knowledge which were to fail and tongues which were to cease. The reason given is because they are partial and intended only for the period of childhood, after which they were to be put away. But faith, hope and love remain. The greatest of these is love. The question here is not whether these gifts were to cease, but, when? Let us carefully analyze the text.

Note that nothing is said in 1Cor. 13 about Christ or his coming.

1Cor. 13:10 says that the things *in part* (*ek meeros* literally *from part*) would *cease* (*katargeo*) *when THAT which is perfect (to teleios) is come.* It does not say it would cease when “HE who is perfect is come.”

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3752	1161	2064	3588	5046	3588	1537	3313	2673

The Greek word, “teleios,” (#5046) is an adjective used as a substantive. “Substantive” means it is used like a noun. An adjective normally modifies a noun or pronoun but but in this case it stands alone with no noun to modify. If it modified a noun it would have to take the gender of the noun it modified. Since it does not, it has the choice of having a masculine, feminine or neuter gender. In such a case the gender becomes significant. If it is masculine, it must refer to a person. In this case it is neuter and thus cannot refer to a person. The meaning is inferred by the circumstances and gender (See Machen’s Grammar, p. 37 or Summers’ Grammar, p. 29). This was the usual way of expressing a “thing” in general.

In this case the definite article (“to”) which stands before it and must agree with it in gender, is neuter, indicating “teleion” is also neuter. In such a case it cannot be speaking of a person. If it were masculine, as in 1Co. 14:20, it could have been translated, “perfect man” or “perfect one,” or as in Heb. 5:14, “full age.” Since it is neuter rather than masculine, the “perfect” cannot be Christ.

“Teleios indicates something complete. Because in 1Cor. 13:10, it is neuter, it indicates THAT which is complete rather than HE who is complete. Since it is contrasting the partial revelation (cf. Heb. 1:1) received through the gifts, to that which is complete, “that which is perfect” indicates the completion of giving God’s revelation to man.

**OBJECTION:**

Neuter nouns, and adjectives which modify them, such as “teknon,” (child), show that the neuter may refer to a person.

**ANSWER:**

This is true of nouns, but teleion is an adjective which does not modify a noun. Nouns have fixed gender. If teleion were modifying a noun it would have to agree with the gender of that noun. Since it does not, the choice of gender becomes significant. It requires the masculine or feminine if referring to a person. The fact that it is neuter shows it is not speaking of a person. It cannot refer to Christ.

**OBJECTION:** 1Jn. 1:1, 3 shows that the neuter pronoun, “that,” refers to Christ.

**ANSWER:**

In this case, the pronoun, “that,” does not refer to the person of Jesus but to the evidence to which they were testifying (See Barnes, p. 279). If it were modifying “logos” it would be masculine. If it modified, “life,” it would be feminine.

**OBJECTION:** WE are perfected at his coming.

**ANSWER:**

If it were speaking of our perfection it would have used the masculine, as in Heb. 5:14. It would have been much simpler to have plainly said “when we become perfect,” if that were what was meant. Why say, “that which is perfect?”

**OBJECTION:** Perhaps it refers to the perfect CONDITION or STATE when Christ returns.

**ANSWER:**

If it refers to the conditions after Christ's coming it seems strange that nothing at all is said of Christ or his coming and it is much more likely that the masculine would have been used, directly referring to Him.

**OBJECTION:** Some claim the "perfect" is "LOVE."

**ANSWER:**

"Love" is feminine. Teleios would have to be the same, as in 1Jn. 4:18. It is speaking of the time when he would "know fully," not when he would "love perfectly."

**OBJECTION:** Others have contended that it refers to the perfection of the "body" (the church).

**ANSWER:**

It is true that the Greek word for "body" (#4983 sooma) is neuter and in Eph. 4:4 it is followed by a discussion of the offices of the church (4:11, 12, 16). However, the word, "perfect" (#5046 teleios) in that passage is masculine, not neuter.

In 1Cor 13 we have a further problem in that we would have to jump clear back to 12:27 to make "body" the grammatical antecedent. Even if it referred to completion of the church, that would not prove it referred to the time of Christ's return. Bringing the body to a completed state may have reference to providing the full revelation to fully set it up, as was done in the first century. But this is more easily seen in Ephesians 4 than in First Corinthians 13.

Even in Eph. 4:11-16, it cannot be shown to refer to Christ's return. Eph. 4:14 shows that the purpose of their unity and knowledge was that they "henceforth be no more children." In this case, ceasing to be children is present tense rather than at Christ's coming.

### **THE MEANING SUPPLIED BY THE CONTEXT**

All such attempts are strained and unnecessary. The context itself supplies the meaning. The Greek word translated, "perfect" simply means, "complete" (see #5046 "teleios" in Strong's Lexicon) in contrast to that which was "in part" ("ek meeros"). The spiritual gifts provided partial revelation. That which was in part would eventually be complete. At the time the revelation was incomplete but when God's will was completely revealed there would be no more need for partial inspired revelation, just as took place when the Old Testament was complete.

Like things of childhood, these would be put away. Indeed, the reference to what he thought, saw and knew, clearly indicates the perfect to be the complete revelation of His will. Before this they saw God's will for their lives darkly, like looking into a polished brass mirror. When it was complete, they would see themselves clearly as if "face to face." They would then be able to know God's will fully, even as God knew their needs fully.

Has not the will of God been completely revealed? Is it not able to “thoroughly furnish unto every good work”? (2Tim. 3:15-17)

### **THE CLINCHER: FAITH AND HOPE REMAIN WHEN THAT WHICH IS COMPLETE COMES, --NOT WHEN JESUS COMES**

The “perfect” cannot refer to the coming of Christ because 1Cor. 13:13 indicates that when these temporary gifts have ceased; faith, hope and love will REMAIN (“menoo”). “Menoo” strongly carries the idea of remaining (1Cor. 3:14; 7:11; 15:6 etc.). Even today this word is a part of our English word, “remain.”

The passage teaches that when that which is “complete” comes, the gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge will pass away. Faith, hope and love will remain.

Faith, cannot remain when Christ comes because “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Hope will not remain because “Hope that is seen is no longer hope” (Rom. 8:23-25). Therefore, it is evident that this can not be at the second coming of Christ. We do not hope for that which we have.

**OBJECTION:** The word of God is never said to be the perfect.

**ANSWER:**

That was because at the time the word was not complete.

However, in Romans 12:2 the will of God is spoken of as being “perfect” (“teleios”). Since “will” (“theleema”) is neuter and is modified by teleios, both must be neuter. However, 1Cor. 13 has no noun to modify, so the choice of gender is open and use of the neuter is consistent with the concept of the complete revelation.

**Rom. 12:2** *And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and complete [5046 “teleios”] will [2307 “theleema”] of God.*

Likewise, in the James 1:21-25, teleios modifies the masculine word, “Law.” In this case because “law” [“nomos”] is masculine, so is teleios.

**James 1:21-25.**

*Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. 23 For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: 24 for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But he that looketh into the perfect [#5046 teleios] law [3551 “nomos”], the (law) of liberty, and (so) continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing. (ASV)*

At the time of Paul, revelation was given in parts. Paul speaks of a time when the will of God (Rom. 12:2) would be completely revealed. At that time, partial revelations would cease. Faith, hope and love would remain. Of these, love was greatest. See the following diagram.

**A MORE EXCELLENT WAY**

**1Cor. 12:31--13:13**

**(Superiority of love over spiritual gifts.)**

	<b>PARTIAL REVELATION</b>	<b>COMPLETED REVELATION</b>	<b>SECOND COMING</b>
	<i>LOVE</i>	<i>NEVER</i>	<i>FAILS</i>
BUT	Prophecies--(cf. 12:10) -----> Tongues-----(cf. 12:10) -----> Knowledge---(cf. 12:8) ----->	shall be ABOLISHED (katargeoo) shall CEASE (paoo) shall be ABOLISHED (katargeoo)	
FOR	in PART -we know and -we prophesy----->  that which is in PART----->	BUT WHEN COMES THAT WHICH IS COMPLETE ("to teleion" -cf. Rom. 12:2)  shall be DONE AWAY (katargeoo)	
	WHEN I was a child -I spake as a child -I understood as a child -I thought as a child ----->	BUT WHEN I became a man things of childhood  I PUT AWAY (katargeoo)	
	FOR <u>NOW</u> (arti) - we see darkly as in a mirror --->	BUT <u>THEN</u> (tote) face to face	
	<u>NOW</u> (arti) -we know in part ----->	BUT <u>THEN</u> (tote) I SHALL KNOW FULLY (epignoskoo) (cf. Jn. 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17) as I was fully known	
BUT "de"	NOW "nuni"* cf. 1Cor. 14:6 (in conclusion ) Faith-----> Hope-----> Love----->	REMAINS (menoo) cf. 2Co. 3:11, 14 with katargeoo  -----> -----> ----->	(Heb. 11:1) (Rom. 8:23-25 Greatest----->

\* ="non temporal sense," -(Vincent's Word Studies p. 769)

Note that "abideth"--A.V. is a translation of the word, "menoo," from which we get our English word, "remains." "Menoo" is often translated as "remain" (Jn. 9:41; 1Co. 3:14; 7:11; 2Co. 3:11, 14; 9:9). Thayer's Lexicon defines it, "2. to *TIME*; to continue to be, i.e. *not to perish, to last, to endure: ...of things, not to perish, to last, stand: ... 1Co. 13:13....*"

Of particular significance is the contrast between “*katargeoo*,” (“*abolished*” 1Cor. 13:8, 10, 11) and “*menoo*,” (“*remains*” 1Cor. 13:13). We see these two words placed in similar relationship in 2Cor. 3:11-14 where it contrasts the old covenant being done away (*katargeoo*), with what *remains* (*menoo*).

**OBJECTION:**

The word, “now” indicates that it is saying that NOW, (at the present time) faith, hope and love abide, --not when that which is perfect comes.

**ANSWER:**

The Greek word, “*nuni*,” (“now”), is not here concerned with time.<sup>1</sup> It is a grammatical indication of a conclusion. The context is contrasting what would pass away and what would remain. This can be readily seen by the fact that, when time itself was being contrasted between, “now” and “then” (13:12), a different word, “*arti*,” was used. If he had intended to use the time sense, “*arti*” would surely have been employed. This is further indicated by the word, “*de*,” (“but”), which supports the contrast. The same use of “*nuni de*” may be observed elsewhere (1Co. 12:18; Rom. 7:17; Heb. 11:16).

It would be meaningless to affirm the obvious, that the three graces, faith, hope and love THEN existed. It is only in the context of a contrast between the temporary nature of the gifts versus the continuing nature of the graces, that the passage makes sense. To this the commentators generally agree.

**OBJECTION:** “Face to face” has reference to seeing Christ.

**ANSWER:**

As the passage shows, when that which is perfect comes, that which is in part shall be done away. Faith, hope and love remain. When we are face to face with Christ we will no longer need to hope. *Who hopes for that which he has?* (Rom. 8:24) Likewise, *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen* (Heb. 11:1). If faith concerns what is “not seen” then the coming of the “perfect” cannot be Christ for when He comes, “*every eye shall see him*” (Rev. 1:7; 1John 3:2).

The passage does not say they were to see was Christ. On the contrary, when they looked into the “glass,” they saw themselves. (cf. James 1:23) The crude metal mirrors they used showed a poor image. The time would come when God’s will would be completely revealed and they would, see clearly --as it were, face to face. “Face to face” was a proverbial saying indicating how clearly a thing might be understood. We use similar expressions. “I came face to face with the truth,” or, “I can not face myself.”

Even when similar language was used of seeing God face to face (Gen. 32:30; Deut. 34:10; Ex. 33:11; Deut. 5:4-5) it was not speaking of either the end of time or of actually viewing the face of God (Jn. 1:18; Ex. 33:20, 23; 19:21; Deut. 4:12).

Indeed, we see Christ clearly by means of the completed word.

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<sup>1</sup> Vincent Word Studies, p. 796; Arndt & Gingrich, p. 546 (1979 ed, later, p.548) #2

For the record, let it be understood that we do not question the visible return of Christ (Rev. 1:7). Our concern is with the intent of the passage. Nothing whatever is said here of Christ or his return.

The passage itself indicates what is in mind by the use of the word, “see.” It is plain that he is not talking about us literally looking into a metal mirror. Because of the fragmentary nature of New Testament revelation at the time, this is a figure indicating our limited ability to “know.” In the same way, “face to face” is a figure of speech indicating the comparative state of knowledge with the completed revelation.

**OBJECTION:** Before Jesus returns, it would be impossible to “*know even as I am fully known.*”

**ANSWER:**

First, note that it does not say that we shall “know Christ.” That is pure assumption, imposed on the text by the theological expediency of maintaining the position. What they knew “in part” was God’s revelation. What they would fully know was the completed revelation. The idea that it is impossible to “know fully” (epiginoosko) before Christ comes is clearly false since the same word is used in the New Testament of things before the coming of Christ (Col. 1:6; 1Tim. 4:3). The noun form is used in Col. 1:9-10; 1Tim. 3:4; Heb. 10:26 in a somewhat similar manner.

All of the will of God has now been revealed. Through revelation I can become thoroughly furnished unto every Good work. I can fully know his will, even as he knows me and my needs.

**OBJECTION:**

Some argue that the mention of “knowledge” being done away indicates a period after Christ comes.

Donald Barnett, of Community Chapel, argues:

*“This interpretation would mean that knowledge (as well as tongues and prophecy) has ceased; yet the scriptures were written to IMPART knowledge. Did knowledge cease as soon as the Book of Knowledge was written? Are we void of either spiritual or earthly knowledge?”<sup>2</sup>*

**ANSWER:**

One wonders whether Pastor Barnett is really so incapable of seeing the obvious or is he willfully muddying the water. How can anyone miss the simple fact that it is speaking of the inspired GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE (12:8; 13:2), not mere information or knowledge gained through ordinary learning? When all of God’s will was revealed there would be no need for the gift in parts. How with any logic could anyone think that when the

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<sup>2</sup> Glosalalia p. 23

“complete” came we would all become imbeciles? If Pastor Barnett thinks his question is so clever, let him apply his own meaning to the coming of Christ. When Jesus comes will we be void of either spiritual or earthly knowledge?

What was to be done away was not the information but the exercise of the gift. This was the focus of their childish dispute. In time they were to grow up and put these things away.

**OBJECTION:**

Some have claimed that the choice of “katargeo” to indicate that knowledge and prophecy was to “vanish away” indicates that what was to pass away was some temporary information.

**ANSWER:**

The choice of katargeo to describe the end the gifts of prophecy and knowledge is purely a matter of contemporary grammatical usage. “Pao” was the normal way of saying that the person ceased to speak. If anyone wishes to dispute this, let him note that in 13:11, “spake” is included in the things “put away” (katargeo).

**OBJECTION:**

It has been contended that the difference between the passive voice of katargeo and the middle or passive voice of pao indicates it is information that is to pass away. It is claimed that katargeo means that when the perfect comes, prophecy will have been “fulfilled.”

**ANSWER:**

Here again we see the need to satisfy theological expediency at work. The matter, as before, is merely one of common usage. The middle voice is the normal way of saying the person stopped speaking.

**OBJECTION:**

Some have maintain that the passive voice of “katargeo” indicates the action of terminating the gifts was to be performed by the “perfect.”

**ANSWER:**

There is nothing whatsoever to support this. In fact, the very next verse uses the active voice to speak of how the man puts away things of childhood.

**OBJECTION:**

It has been argued that, “know” indicates information and thus “put away” means to put away the information.

**ANSWER:**

Paul says, “*we know in part and we prophesy in part.*” Information would be involved, but these were verbs describing exercise of the gifts. It was the action rather than the information that was to be done away. Revealed information concerning Christ, heaven, hell and many other things will certainly not pass away when Christ comes.

**OBJECTION:**

Paul stated that he would “know fully” when the “perfect” had come. Paul did not live to see the completion of the Bible. John’s last revelation, was around 95 AD. If Paul was to be there it must be when he will be raised at Jesus’ coming.

**ANSWER:**

In the first place, this appears to be much the same as “we” in 1Thes. 4:15, 17. Paul says, “we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord...shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:...”

Paul died like others and will be raised, not be still living when Jesus comes. Likewise, David’s use of first person (Ac. 2:26-31), did not mean that he was the one who’s flesh would not see corruption. In Paul’s case it appears to be the prophetic future with “I” representing those who would then be living. If Paul were there he would know fully.

Secondly, Paul may have come to know all of Christ’s will before his death, or even when he went to be with Christ (Heb. 12:23; Mt. 22:30). To this it is objected that the gifts continued until John died. However, it is an assumption that the moment the last truth was revealed the exercise of the gifts would all everywhere instantly cease like a blown switch at the power plant!

The gifts continued while those who received them lived. This provided revelation to guide the churches until the word was completed and distributed. When the gifts ceased to be passed on to others they began coming to an end as those who had them died. Not every inspired message was included in our Bibles, although we can be assured that every truth needed to furnish us completely, was (2Tim. 3:16).

**OBJECTION:**

“Prophecy” and “knowledge” are both feminine. Since “in part” (“merous”) and “perfect” (“teleion” “complete”) are neuter, they can not refer to those words.

**ANSWER:**

The use of “in part” and “perfect” as substantives does not require that they agree in gender with “prophecy” and “knowledge.” They are not modifying these words but merely referring to them as the source of the revelation. They are understood to be gifts (12:8, 10).

If it is supposed that agreement of gender is important, then be it noted that the word, “gifts” (“charisma”) is neuter and more than adequate (12:4, 28, 29, 31). The connection is so obvious that in 12:1; 13:2 and 14:1 where a similar substantive, “spiritual,” is used, the translators have added the word “gifts.” We might also compare this with Rom. 12:2 where teleion is used with reference to the “will of God” (neuter) or 2Tim. 3:15 where the Holy Scriptures (“grammata”) is also neuter.