

The extraordinary gifts of revelation were ceasing in Paul's day

written by Alfred Persson | June 26, 2023



Can you show from the scriptures where to find the gifts of special revelation ended in the 1st century?-JLB

“Not explicitly” but the extraordinary gifts of revelation were ceasing in Paul's day as can be inferred from 1 Cor. 13:8-13

8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:8-13 NKJ)

The question you posed asks: “Can you show from the scriptures where to find the gifts of special revelation ended in the 1st century?” The

scriptures may not explicitly state this, but a careful interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 suggests the cessation of the extraordinary gifts of revelation.

In this passage, Apostle Paul speaks of love as a constant, unfailing force, but he foretells that prophecies, tongues, and knowledge will eventually cease or vanish. He describes these revelatory gifts as “partial”, indicating they are temporary and will be replaced when the “perfect” or “complete” comes. This has often been interpreted as a reference to Christ’s return. Paul, along with many early Christians, believed this return could be imminent.

Paul uses the metaphor of childhood and adulthood in verses 11-12 to illustrate this transformation. As he puts it, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” These “partial” gifts of revelation can be seen as the “childish things”, becoming obsolete as we transition into spiritual “adulthood”, a time when we will see God “face to face” and “know just as I am known”.

It’s conceivable that as these gifts began to fade, it might have prompted fears of abandonment by God among the Corinthians. This might explain why Paul starts his letter with words of reassurance, emphasizing God’s faithfulness and the grace given through Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:3-9).

As this transition took place, it led to divisions within the Corinthian church, separating those seeking “signs” from those pursuing “wisdom” (1 Cor. 1:17-24). The majority, seemingly focused on non-charismatic issues, appeared less concerned about the cessation of the gifts (1 Cor. 14:39). Paul’s expectation of the imminent arrival of “the Perfect” or “Complete”, combined with historical records that suggest a gradual disappearance of the extraordinary gifts after the 1st century, lend support to the cessationist view. Furthermore, passages such as Hebrews 2:2-4 refer to the extraordinary gifts as past events, bolstering the notion that the era of special revelation ended sometime after the apostolic age.

While the cessation of these extraordinary gifts isn’t explicitly declared, careful interpretation of the scriptures, in combination with early Christian tradition, strongly supports the cessationist position over continualism.

Are they a demonic manifestation?

Although it is reasonable to conclude demons inspire the wild sensual excesses we see in “Charismania” among the TARES (Mt. 13:24-30; 36-43) in the church, demons can only deceive true believers, they cannot work signs and wonders through them (Mt. 7:9-11; 1 John 4:4; 5:18).

It could be demonic. It could be satanic; I think it was in Corinth in some cases. It could be that. Ecstatic speech is a part of many pagan religions in Africa, East Africa. Tonga people of Africa, when a demon is exorcised, sing in Zulu, even though they say they don’t know the Zulu language. Ecstatic speech is found today among Muslims, Eskimos,

Tibetan monks. It's involved in parapsychological occult groups. Did you know that the Mormons – even Joseph Smith himself – advocate speaking in tongues? It could be demonic.

Secondly, it could be learned behavior. You just learn how to do it. If you can go to the Hunter's seminar, they'll jump start you. It could be psychological; it could be a kind of a self-induced hypnosis, a kind of a trance where you just yield up all of your will and you yield up your vocal chords, and you empty out your brain. And the power of suggestion takes over, and you become psychologically induced. And once you've had that experience, you then learn to do it and just do it. Many studies have been done to show that it is psychological.-Pastor John F. MacArthur, Grace Community Church

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