

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

What was the purpose of miraculous gifts
and when/why did they cease?

Mark 16:20

²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere,
while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed
the word by the signs that followed.

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"The Prophecy"

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These miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit
were prophesied by Joel in Joel 2:28

28 "It will come about after this
That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;
And your sons and daughters will prophesy,
Your old men will dream dreams,
Your young men will see visions.

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Acts 2:1-4 (The Day of Pentecost)

¹ When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

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Acts 2:14-16 (words of the Apostle Peter at the onset of
his 1st "gospel sermon")

14 But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. **15** For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is *only* the third hour of the day;

16 but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel

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"The Portent"

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What exactly were the special gifts according to Paul?
(1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

1. words of wisdom (verse 8) – Gave us the doctrine (the Gospel)
2. words of knowledge (verse 8) – Understood the “Mysteries” hidden in the OT scriptures. (Paul, Barnabas, Stephen had this gift)
3. faith (verse 9) – an extraordinary amount faith referenced here which enabled one to do miracles
4. healing (verse 9) – the miraculous healing of diseases
5. miracles (verse 10) – likely the ability to mete out judgement, such as what was executed on Elymas, Ananias and Sapphira (view supported by McGarvey, Macknight, Lipscomb, Coffman)

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6. prophesy (verse 10) – the ability to foretell future events
7. distinguishing of spirits (verse 10) – ability to identify and expose false teachers.
8. various kinds of tongues (Verse 10) – the most common view is that they were likely the ability to speak in languages not known to them, i.e. Pentecost. (McGarvey, Lipscomb, Macknight, Lange, Clark all held this view)
9. interpretation of tongues (verse 10) – the ability of someone to interpret tongues must be present for tongues to be used. (A far deeper exegesis on tongues is found in I Cor 14)

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"The Perfect"

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Were there any hints these “gifts” were not going to be here for the remainder of time? Yes!

I Corinthians 12:28-31

28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues.

29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of* miracles, are they?

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I Corinthians 12:28-31 (cont.)

³⁰ All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

³¹ But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And **I show you a still more excellent way.**

This “more excellent way” is love! It is within this discussion, Paul would also reveal the “perfect”!

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This is vital for us to understand: It is through this revelation of Love that he also reveals the end of the need for “gifts” when the “perfect” comes!

I Corinthians 13:8-12

⁸ Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away.

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

¹⁰ but **when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.**

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I Corinthians 13:8-12 (cont.)

11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.

12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

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"The Propagation"

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How were the miraculous gifts propagated, or transferred, to other Christians? Let's look at the example of Philip (the evangelist, not the apostle)

Acts 6:5-6

⁵ The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and **Philip**, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.

⁶ And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.

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Through this example, we find Philip had clearly
received the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit.
How? By the “laying on of the apostles’ hands”!

Acts 8:5-6

⁵ Philip went down to the city of Samaria
and *began* proclaiming Christ to them.

⁶ The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what
was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which
he was performing.

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But there is no evidence Philip (the evangelist) could then propagate (or pass on) the miraculous power to others! The apostles were needed for this and Philip (the evangelist) was NOT an apostle! Acts 8:12-17

¹² But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

¹³ Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.

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Acts 8:12-17 (cont.)

¹⁴ Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John,

¹⁵ who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶ For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

¹⁷ Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.

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Our conclusions:

1. The 'miraculous power (gifts) of the Holy Spirit' was both prophesied by Joel (Joel 2:28) and was necessary to confirm, or prove, the message of the gospel (Mark 16:20)
2. This 'miraculous power of the Holy Spirit' was bestowed only upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

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Our conclusions:

3. This 'miraculous power of the Holy Spirit' could then be propagated (or passed on) to baptized believers, but only by the 'laying on of hands' by the apostles. (noting the example of Philip the evangelist in Acts 8:12-17)

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Our conclusions (cont.):

4. Our study of the scriptures also reveals the important inference that there is no known example provided that those Christians, who were given this miraculous power by the apostles, could then propagate (or pass on) the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit to others (again noting the example of new Christians who were “simply baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” by Philip the evangelist in Acts 8:12-17)

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Our conclusions (cont.):

5. Therefore, our conclusion must be that once they, both the apostles and those who were given the miraculous power, all died, there is no scriptural evidence to support the belief that the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit was propagated any further.

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Our conclusions (cont.):

6. Further reasoning for our belief that miraculous gifts no longer exist are a result of our now having what the Apostle Paul promised, the “perfect”, that is the written, Holy Spirit-inspired word of God, the New Testament. (1 Corinthians 13:10)

7. We end by noting the passage we first discussed which fully ratifies these truths: Mark 16:20

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