



## ***“When That Which Is Perfect Is Come” – Is Not What You Think***

***“<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part. <sup>10</sup> But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.” – 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 (NKJV)***

To begin Paul states ... Love never fails, in the sense that it will never come to an end. Positively stated, it is eternal.

This is not true of all spiritual gifts. Some of the gifts were **foundational** (e.g., prophecies and knowledge; cf. Eph 2:20) ... and **confirmatory** (e.g., tongues; cf. 2 Cor 12:12; Heb. 2:4) in the early building **by the Apostles** of the New Testament Church the “body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 2:14-18, Galatians 3:28).

Every gift is linked in some way to “*building up the church to maturity*” ... some (prophecy, knowledge, tongues) functioning in the early years of the Church Age ... and others continuing on until the church is complete. When that is achieved, the gifts will have served their purposes and will be rendered obsolete. But this will not happen to *love*.

***Having said this ... “I believe” 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 argues strongly that ...***

- ***the gifts of tongues*** (as it occurred and was defined in Acts 2:4-11, 10:46, 19:6) ...
- ***the spiritual gift of prophecy*** (the “forth-telling” of the Word and Will of God, as “new revelation” as defined in Deuteronomy 18:18; Revelation 10:11; 11:3) and ...
- ***the spiritual gift of knowledge*** (the receiving and sharing of specific, special revelatory knowledge from God apart from scripture, as was demonstrated by the early Prophets and Apostles; cf. Daniel 2, Acts 5:3, 14:9,) ***has ceased with the completion of Bible.***

**For the church now has the mature and perfect revelation of God, the completed Bible.** The last Revelation of which was recorded by the Apostle John from the Lord Jesus Christ in conclusion in Revelation 22. Thusly, *no other special knowledge* about God and our Savior is now given or gained apart from that perfect Word.



Unfortunately, many people misunderstand the gift of prophecy to be the ability to predict the future. While knowing something about the future may sometimes have been an aspect of the gift of prophecy, it was primarily a gift of proclamation (“*forth-telling*”), not prediction (“*fore-telling*”).

A pastor/preacher who declares the Bible can be considered a “*prophesier*” in that they are speaking forth the counsel of God. With the completion of the New Testament canon ... prophesying changed from declaring new revelation ... to declaring the completed revelation God has already given.

Jude 3 speaks of “*the faith which **was once delivered** unto the saints*”. In other words, the faith to which we hold has been settled forever, and it does not need the addition or refinement that comes from extra-biblical revelations.

**Also, note the transition from prophet to teacher** in 2 Peter 2:1: “*There were **false prophets** among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers** among you*”. Peter indicates that the Old Testament age had *prophets*, whereas the church will have *teachers*.

***The difference is that, whereas the message of the prophet was a direct revelation of the mind of God for the occasion ... the message of the pastor/teacher is gathered from the completed revelation contained in the Scriptures as led by the Holy Spirit!***

1 Corinthians 13:10 says “***But when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away***”, signifying that when the fullness of God's revelation is complete (often understood as the completion of the New Testament Canon) ... temporary or incomplete aspects of spiritual gifts and knowledge will no longer be needed.

A closer look at the “**perfect**” Greek *teleios*, (neuter gender) found in 1 Corinthians 13:10 shows us why. To interpret *TELEIOS*, “**perfect**” to mean Jesus Christ or Heaven ... is inconsistent with both the context and with the usage in the rest of the New Testament. ***Not to mention Jesus is never referred to in the neuter gender!***

### **Key takeaways:**

- The passage highlights the temporary nature of some spiritual gifts compared to the eternal value of love.
- It emphasizes that as believers grow in their understanding of God, they move from partial knowledge to a deeper, more mature understanding.
- It encourages believers to pursue love and seek to understand God more fully, rather than focusing solely on miraculous gifts.