

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## When The Perfect Comes

(Jerry Fite)

Paul writes, “...for we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away” (I Corinthians 13:9-10). In chapter twelve of I Corinthians, nine miraculous gifts are named. The gift of *prophecy* and *knowledge*, along with other miraculous gifts, such as speaking in tongues are shown to be from one source: The Holy Spirit. In chapter thirteen, Paul emphasizes that these gifts will be done away when that which is perfect is come.

Therefore, understanding who or what the “perfect” to come is becomes important in determining if these same miraculous gifts are present today. If the perfect has already come, the gifts have been done away. If that which perfect has not come, the miraculous gifts should still be present among us.

Some say, “that which is perfect” has reference to *Jesus Christ*. He is the perfect one due to His sinless character. When He comes or returns to usher the redeemed to heaven, the miraculous gifts of prophecy and knowledge will then be done away. While it

is true that Jesus never committed a sin (*John 8:46, I Peter 1:19*), and will return or come again as promised (*John 14:3*), Jesus’ sinless perfection is not under consideration in I Corinthians 13:10.

The Greek word “TELEION,” translated “perfect,” denotes that which has “reached its end” or has become “complete,” not that which is sinless. For example, the word is used to denote the goal of patience: “that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing” (*James 1:4*). Being sinless is not under consideration here. Passing through a process to finally reach maturity, becoming entire, lacking in nothing or being complete is being emphasized for consideration.

Some say that which is perfect is pointing to the coming of *Heaven* as the final reward at the last day. Surely Heaven did not have to become complete. Being the dwelling place of God, Heaven must be as eternal and complete as God (*Ecclesiastes 5:2*). Where do we read that Heaven was first a building project before reaching completion and becoming the home for God? If one is speaking of Heaven in

the sense of the prophecies and knowledge regarding Heaven being fulfilled, what new prophecy from God, or what inspired word of wisdom from above have you heard or read concerning Heaven over the last 1900 years? If the fulfillment of Heaven is to usher the end of these miraculous gifts, should not the prophecies and words of knowledge regarding Heaven continue today until Heaven comes in fulfillment?

In I Corinthians 13:9, “that which is perfect” is not the coming of Christ, or Heaven. Paul is pointing to the completion of God’s revelation, the New Testament, containing the gospel of Christ. The word of wisdom and knowledge were occurring in part until they combined to produce the completed revelation of God in Christ. After A.D. 100, this process of prophesying in part along with other miraculous gifts ended having accomplished the purpose of revealing and confirming the New Testament (*cf. Mark 16:20, Hebrews 2:4*). The completed or perfect revelation has come. The times of knowing in part and prophesying in part as the New Testament was reaching completion has ended. Therefore, the miraculous gifts have been done away!