

# GLAD TIDINGS

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

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## The Purpose of Miraculous Gifts

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**W**hy do we not see people being raised from the dead and rising from their graves today? In Biblical times these miraculous events certainly occurred. Jesus raised Lazarus from the tomb after his friend had been dead for four days (*John 11: 17, 43-44*). Tabitha was presented alive to loved ones after Peter raised her from the dead (*Acts 9:40-41*). The New Testament is replete with occurrences of miracles and people empowered to do them. Why are they not performing the genuine miracles of the Bible today? The answer lies in knowing God’s purpose for them occurring in the first century.

How would one make sure that the word they were hearing was truly from God? The miraculous event of God making his will known to man would need an equally miraculous event to confirm to all that the message was truly from God. The confirming purpose of miracles is clearly established in the New Testament. “*How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? Which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard: God bearing witness with them, both*

*by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will” (Hebrews 2:3-4).*

As the apostles of the Lord went about preaching the gospel, the Lord was working with them, and “*confirming the word by the signs that followed” (Mark 16:20)*. Therefore when people heard of Peter raising Tabitha from the dead, “*many believed on the Lord” (Acts 9:42)*. They knew that the Lord behind the miracle was the one in whom they could trust, so they believed on Him.

Miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were connected with revealing God’s word, such as *prophecy* and the *word of knowledge*, and confirming what was revealed such as *discerning of spirits* and *interpretation of tongues (I Corinthians 12: 8-11)*. God teaches us that the revelation of His word would come to the point that it would be complete. After this, the confirming miraculous gifts would end. “*For we know in part, and we prophecy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away” (I Corinthians 13: 9-10)*. God for a time was revealing his word through

the means of prophecy and such gifts as the word of knowledge. Such revelation was coming in the first century in part, here a little and there a little. But once God had revealed the faith once and for all (*Jude 3*), it was perfect or complete and therefore the miraculous gifts of revealing God’s word would end. That which was in part had become complete. That which is perfect had come.

Once the revealed word was completed and confirmed for all time, there was no need for the confirming miraculous gifts to continue. So, they ceased just as Paul promises. “*...whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away” (I Corinthians 13:8)*.

The reason we do not see people being raised from the dead today, is not that God could not do so now, but that his purpose for doing so in the first place—confirming his revealed word—has been fulfilled. If the miraculous spiritual gifts are still being done among us, what is God’s new message that needs to be confirmed? God’s message has already been confirmed.