

1 COR. 12:1 – 13:13

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C. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts (12:1 – 14:40)

1. The presence of the Spirit in one's life is a function of one's relationship with Christ (12:1-3) – **Now about the spiritual things, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ²You know that, when you were Gentiles, whenever you were led to speechless idols [you were] being led astray. ³Therefore, I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is a cursed one," and no one is able to say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.**

a. Paul now turns his attention to the matter of spiritual manifestations or spiritual gifts, a subject about which the Corinthians were apparently showing some ignorance that Paul wants to dispel. He reminds them in v. 2 that they were no strangers to ignorance in spiritual matters because, as they now realize, when they were pagans they had been led astray each time they had been led to the worship of speechless idols.

b. Because he does not want them to be ignorant about the spiritual things (Therefore), he tells them that the most basic or fundamental criterion for recognizing the work of the Spirit is whether one is a Christian.

(1) The statement that no one who denounces Jesus *speaks by* the Spirit is a way of saying that no such person *has* the Spirit; the Spirit does not dwell in them. And the statement that everyone who confesses Jesus' lordship *speaks by* the Spirit (sincerity of the confession being assumed) is a way of saying that all such people *have* the Spirit; the Spirit dwells in them.

(2) Paul dichotomizes the world into opponents of Christ and disciples of Christ, which probably squared with their experience. The Jews may have literally cursed Christ, but no one was neutral about him. He does so to make the point that the presence of the Spirit in one's life is a function of one's relationship with Christ. As he says in Rom. 8:9, "And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." So regarding the Spirit, it is non-Christian or Christian, or in Paul's rhetorical terminology, curser or confessor.

(3) Since "those who by the Holy Spirit confess Jesus is Lord" is Paul's way of referring to Christians, one can be sure that Paul assumes they had been baptized. Indeed, "Jesus is Lord" was the standard confession of faith made at baptism, and Paul links renewal by the Spirit with the washing of baptism in Titus 3:5.

c. His point flows right into what follows. In terms of the work of the Spirit, the dividing line falls between non-Christians and Christians not between fellow

Christians, fellow confessors of Jesus' lordship, who happen have different spiritual gifts. All Christians have the Spirit; he simply works differently in each.

d. It appears there were some in Corinth who had made the possession of the gift of tongues (and possibly some other gifts) the acid test of one's spirituality, the essential evidence of the Spirit. In 12:1-3 Paul points out that the Spirit is the possession of all who are in Christ, and he reinforces this in 12:4-11 by making clear that the Spirit's gifts are too diverse to permit any one gift or group of gifts to serve as the exclusive sign of the Spirit's presence. Here's how a couple of scholars express the idea:

(1) David Garland (p. 561):

Causal readers who come to chapter 12 only to learn about spiritual gifts are tempted to skip over the difficult opening verses, but they are crucial for understanding Paul's intention for the entire passage. They introduce the topic and provide a thesis statement. The topic is the spiritual ones (gifts), and the thesis is that all Christians are spiritual. In this introduction, Paul contrasts the Corinthians' religious past with their spiritually transformed present as Christians and affirms that everyone who confesses that Jesus is Lord is directed by the Holy Spirit. This affirmation heads off any claim that some are more spiritual than others because they show evidence of having the more electrifying and exciting spiritual gifts.

(2) Wolfgang Schrage (from Garland p. 573):

Since Paul is concerned to refute those Corinthians who claim their gift of glossolalia is a special, perhaps unique, demonstration of spirit possession, he opens his response in vv 1-3 by presenting a radically different perspective. Noting the simple baptismal confession, Jesus is Lord, can only be uttered under the influence of the Holy Spirit (v 3b), Paul undermines any pneumatic elitism. All Christians make this confession, thus all Christians, not a tongue-speaking few, are *pneumatikoi* [spiritual ones].

2. The Spirit's gifts are too diverse to permit any one gift or group of gifts to serve as the exclusive sign of the Spirit's presence (12:4-11) – ⁴**Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;** ⁵**and there are varieties of services, and the same Lord;** ⁶**and there are varieties of workings, but the same God who works all things in all men.** ⁷**But to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.** ⁸**For to one is given through the Spirit a word of wisdom, and to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit,** ⁹**to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healings by the one Spirit,** ¹⁰**and to another workings of miracles, [and] to another prophecy, [and] to another discernments of spirits, to another kinds of tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues.** ¹¹**The one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing individually to each one as he wills.**

a. In vv. 4-6 Paul stresses that diversity within unity belongs to the character of God himself. The one Triune God manifests himself in a great variety of gifts, ministries, and workings, some of which are spectacular and some more ordinary. God is in no way a "one note song," a truth which also is testified to by the great diversity of his creation

b. To each one a particular manifestation of the Spirit is given, depending on what is needed for the common good. In other words, there is no universal gift of the Spirit. One person gets one kind of gift/ministry/working and another person gets another.

(1) Paul's comments raise for us the question of whether the Spirit is still choosing to give the same gifts he gave to the Corinthians, but Paul is not talking about that. He is seeking to correct problems with the Corinthians' understanding and exercise of the spiritual gifts they were given; he is not discussing whether and when some or all of those gifts would pass away.

(2) Now, I do not believe the Spirit is choosing today to give to the church all the same gifts he gave to her in the first century. Specifically, I do not believe the Spirit still is bestowing on Christians the ability to perform miraculous or supernatural feats. My understanding is that those particular gifts have ceased. That understanding, however, comes not from a direct discussion of that subject in Scripture but from putting together a number of things in different places in Scripture.

(3) Rather than take a lengthy detour from Paul's train of thought to explain why I believe certain gifts are no longer being given, there is posted on my website a paper titled "[Some Thoughts on the Cessation of Miraculous Gifts](#)." I there try to explain my view of this subject.

(a) Very briefly, my classification of views about miraculous gifts, which I distinguish from God's response to prayer, is: (1) those who say Scripture declares definitively they have ceased, (2) those who say Scripture declares definitively they have continued, and (3) those who say Scripture does not declare definitively either way but gives hints in support of one view or the other. I am in (3).

(b) Included in that paper is an explanation of why I think tongues were *human* languages, not gibberish or some non-human language, and an explanation of why I do not believe the Spirit's giving of miraculous gifts in the first century was restricted to those on whom the apostles laid their hands. Some would disagree with me on that last point, but we come out at pretty much the same place in terms of the cessation of miraculous gifts; we just get there in a different way.

(c) I point out in the paper that the Spirit has operated differently at different times in history. He is sovereign in his bestowal of gifts, and there are a number of clues in Scripture suggesting, at least to me, that we are in a time when he has

chosen to cease giving miraculous gifts, understanding that the line between miraculous and non-miraculous gifts can get blurry. I think this understanding is confirmed by experience.

c. Paul lists in vv. 8-10 a variety of ways in which the Spirit was manifested in the church simply to illustrate the broad range of the one Spirit's activities.

(1) Word of wisdom and word of knowledge – An utterance characterized by Spirit-given wisdom or knowledge. It probably refers to theological insight, which could include insight given by the Spirit in conjunction with study and reflection. In other words, it need not be divorced from Spirit-guided human reason. Perhaps "wisdom" refers to more practical insight and "knowledge" to the more theoretical or doctrinal. David Garland writes (p. 581), "The message of knowledge and of wisdom is closely related to the message delivered by apostles (2:6-7, 11-16; 2 Cor. 11:6), prophets (1 Cor. 13:2), and teachers (14:6, 26). It is the ministry of the word that most benefits the church and strengthens its mission to the world."

(2) Faith – As Garland observes (p. 581), "Since faith is not given to everyone, it must refer to a special endowment and not saving trust that is required of all Christians." This probably refers to a Spirit-given conviction that God will act in a special way in a specific instance, a conviction that he will do something for which there is no objective revelation. D. A. Carson says in *Showing the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 39, that this special faith "enables a believer to trust God to bring about certain things for which he or she cannot claim some divine promise recorded in Scripture, or some state of affairs grounded in the very structure of the gospel."

(a) James says in Jas. 5:15 that "the *prayer of faith* will save the one who is ill, and the Lord will raise him up." Yet, we know that Paul prayed three times for his "thorn in the flesh" to be removed but was not healed (2 Cor. 12:7-9). (Note that it was because of an illness that he first preached the gospel to the Galatians [Gal. 4:13-14].) And we know that he left Trophimus sick in Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20). Clearly it sometimes is *not* God's will to heal us physically. (The fact we all will die, unless the Lord returns before then, confirms the point.) So what's going on? How can James's apparently unconditional promise that God will heal one for whom the "prayer of faith" is offered be reconciled with the fact (from biblical testimony and personal experience) that God does not heal everyone for whom prayers are offered? One possible answer involves this gift of faith.

(b) Perhaps the "prayer of faith" to which James is referring is not the usual prayer of faith – a prayer offered with confidence in God's existence, love, and supremacy – but a prayer offered with *divinely given* assurance that what one is asking is in fact within the will of the Lord (and thus will be granted -- 1 Jn. 5:14-15). In other words, James may be referring to a prayer of God-given confidence that the specific request will be granted rather than a prayer of confidence in God's general goodness and supremacy (see Douglas Moo, *The Letter of James*, Pillar New Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 244-245).

(3) Gifts of healings – This refers to the power to supernaturally heal someone. The plural suggests that there was either a variety of healing gifts or that each instance of healing was a separate gift.

(4) Workings of miracles (lit. powers) – This refers to various displays of divine power. The plural probably suggests the same type of options as in the preceding paragraph. Carson notes (p. 40), "Presumably all healings are demonstrations of miraculous powers, but not all miraculous powers are healings: they may include exorcisms, nature miracles, or other displays of divine energy."

(5) Prophecy – This refers to the oral delivery of a Spirit-inspired message from God. The prophet was God's mouthpiece. This is clear in such Old Testament texts as Ex. 7:1-2 and Deut. 18:20-22, and from 1 Cor. 14:29-31 where prophesying is described clearly as the giving of a revelation received from God. I am aware that some seek to distinguish New Testament prophecy from that of the Old Testament, claiming that New Testament prophecy was or could be mixed with error, but I think that is a mistake. I agree with Thomas Schreiner in *Paul Apostle of God's Glory in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 363, "To sum up, there is no compelling evidence that New Testament prophets spoke both truth and error. Like the Old Testament prophets, they spoke the word of the Lord accurately." Indeed, Paul says in Eph. 2:20 that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, which suggests that the attempt to distinguish apostles from prophets in term of infallibility is off course.

(6) Discernments of spirits – This is the Spirit-given ability to distinguish the work of demonic forces from the work of the Holy Spirit, including distinguishing false prophets from true. Schreiner states (p. 364), "Those who had the gift of distinguishing spirits were able to discern whether the prophecies and interpreted tongues were truly from God. Such a gift was practical for the community indeed, since many false prophets threatened the young churches."

(7) Kinds of tongues – This is the Spirit-inspired ability to speak in a language one did not know. An example is given in Acts 2:5-11. As you can see from the online article I mentioned, I do not subscribe to the view that it was gibberish or some kind of non-human language.

(8) Interpretation of tongues – This is the Spirit-inspired ability to translate into one's own language the foreign language uttered by the tongue speaker. Note that tongues and interpretation of tongues occurs last in Paul's list. He probably did this because his readers were far too prone to exalt this one gift.

d. Verse 11 sums up the point thus far: The one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing individually to each one as he wills.

(1) The Spirit is sovereign in this matter; he gives the gifts as he chooses. So just because someone does not possess a certain gift does not mean he is any less spiritual.

(2) The point is the same for us. Even though the Spirit is no longer choosing to give miraculous gifts, as I understand it, he still gives different gifts to different Christians as he sees fit. So no one gift or group of gifts can be made the acid test of spirituality or the basis for looking down one's nose at those who do not possess it.

3. Body of Christ analogized to human body (12:12-30)

a. Just as a human body is a unity made up of many diverse members, so it is with the body of Christ (12:12-14) – **¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³For indeed in one Spirit we all were baptized so as to become one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free men – and one Spirit all were caused to drink. ¹⁴For indeed the body is not one member but many.**

(1) To press the point about the diversity that exists within the church, Paul adopts a common analogy from antiquity and applies it to the Corinthian situation. Paul says in v. 12 that just as the human body is a unity made up of many diverse members, so it is with the body of Christ. Verses 13 and 14 then elaborate on the two elements of unity and diversity. This is evident from the fact both verses begin with the identical and rather unusual phrase "For indeed."

(3) Verse 13 explains the basis of their unity, how they, though many, are in fact one body. The answer is that they all have received the Spirit. He says, "¹³For indeed, in one Spirit we all were baptized so as to become (*eis* taken as purposive) one body." He then repeats that concept in a piece of Semitic parallelism, "and one Spirit *all* were caused to drink (or all were watered or drenched)." (A similar understanding would result from taking *kai* in the last clause of the verse epexegetically.)

(a) His point is that *all* who are in Christ, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, comprise a unity because they have all received the one Spirit. That is how they became a body. *All* Christians have been baptized in/with the Holy Spirit. The preposition here (*en*) is the same preposition used in the other six references to baptism in/with the Spirit (Mat. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5, 11:16). In none of those instances is it translated "by," so I do not believe it should be so translated here. D. A. Carson states (*Showing the Spirit*, 47):

In the other six instances, related to the prophecy of John the Baptist, Christ as the agent does the baptizing, and the Holy Spirit is the medium or sphere *in* which we are baptized. Moreover, whenever the verb *baptize* is used in the New Testament, it is the *medium* of the baptism – water, fire, cloud, and so forth – that is expressed using this preposition *ἐν* (*en*), not the *agent*.

(b) This sense of the preposition, taking it as "in/with" instead of "by," is supported by the parallel description in the final clause of the verse: "and

one Spirit all were caused to drink (or all were watered or drenched)." In the imagery of that clause, the Spirit is *received* (drunk) by the Christian; he is not the agent of the baptizing.

(c) This reception of the Spirit, this being "baptized in/with the Spirit," takes place, of course, at the time one becomes a Christian. As Paul suggested in 12:3 and made clear in Rom. 8:9, there is no such thing as a Christian without the Spirit.

(d) Since water baptism is the time that a person becomes a Christian, it should not surprise us to find Peter in Acts 2:38 telling the crowd on the Day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." When the penitent believer submits to water baptism he concurrently is "baptized in/with the Spirit," meaning he receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. This is what Jesus referred to in Jn. 3:5 as being "born of water and Spirit."

(4) Verse 14 elaborates on the main point, the diversity that exists within this spiritual body. He says, "For indeed, the body is not one member but many." The body is indeed a unified whole, but it is made up of many different parts. Those seeking to make uniformity the test of the Spirit were missing the mark.

Excursus on the Spirit's Coming and His Manifestations in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 and on the Spirit's Association with Water Baptism

Let me detour from Paul's train of thought to say a word about the Spirit's coming and his manifestations in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 and about the Spirit's association with water baptism. Don't turn me off before I've finished painting the picture. I have labored to make this digestible, but I think it will require your full attention. If you'll stick with me, I hope you will find that some pieces fit together in a more satisfying way. But you'll have to judge that after you hear me out. I am going to assume you are familiar with the accounts in Acts.

The Spirit's Coming and His Manifestations in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19

1. It is common, at least in our circles, to hear that "baptism in/with the Spirit" is *not* the gift of the Spirit that all Christians receive at conversion, the gift that accompanies and indicates salvation. Rather, it is said to be a work that is separate and distinct from salvation, a work done only in Acts 2 and 10, whereby the Spirit enabled certain individuals to speak in tongues. I think Paul's words here contradict that understanding. He says *all* Christians have indeed been baptized in/with the Spirit.

a. The notion that being baptized in/with the Spirit refers to some kind of unique endowment of the Spirit that causes one to speak in tongues, something that is separate and distinct from the common reception of the Spirit at conversion, comes from the fact the Jews who were baptized in/with the Spirit at Pentecost in Acts 2 and the Gentiles who were baptized in/with the Spirit at Cornelius's house in Acts 10 immediately spoke in tongues. Some have concluded from this that baptism in/with the Spirit *necessarily* results in tongue

speaking, and since not all Christians, not all who received the gift of the Spirit, speak in tongues, they further concluded that baptism in/with the Spirit must be separate and distinct from the gift of the Spirit that accompanies and indicates salvation. So in their view, Paul in 1 Cor. 12:13 must be saying something other than what he quite clearly seems to be saying.

b. The problem is with the assertion that baptism in/with the Spirit *necessarily* results in tongue speaking. The fact those baptized in/with the Spirit in Acts 2 and 10 spoke in tongues need not mean that *all* who are baptized in/with the Spirit will speak in tongues. That's like seeing an artist create various paintings of flowers and then asserting that all of his paintings must be of flowers. It is logically invalid; it is the fallacy of unwarranted extrapolation. If, as Paul says, all Christians have been baptized in/with the Spirit, the correct conclusion is that the Spirit in/with whom all Christians are baptized does not always give the same gifts, does not always manifest his indwelling presence in the same way. Indeed, Paul makes that very point in 1 Cor. 12:4-11.

c. I think the people in Acts 2 and 10, who are said to have been baptized in/with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5, 11:16), received the same gift of the Holy Spirit that every Christian receives. Paul says in 1 Cor. 12:13 that all Christians are baptized in the Spirit, and Peter says in Acts 10:45 that the Gentiles at Cornelius's house received "the gift of the Spirit," the very phrase he used in Acts 2:38 to speak of the gift that is bestowed in conjunction with salvation. But in those cases the Spirit immediately manifested his indwelling presence by enabling the new Christians to speak in tongues and prompting them to do so. Why is that? Stay tuned.

2. The reception of the Spirit by the Samaritans in Acts 8 and John's disciples in Acts 19 is not labeled the "gift of the Spirit" or their being "baptized in the Spirit," but the text states expressly that they received or had come upon them the *Holy Spirit himself* not simply *an ability* given by the Spirit. There is a difference between the Spirit, who is a divine person, and the gifts the Spirit gives, between the Spirit himself and how he manifests his presence, and receipt of the Spirit is throughout the New Testament an accompaniment and indication of salvation. His presence in a person is regeneration and spiritual life.

a. As in Acts 2 and 10, the Spirit in Act 8 and 19 immediately manifested his presence in the new Christians by enabling and prompting them to speak in tongues or do some other miraculous feat. Tongues and prophesying are identified in the case of John's disciples, and some unspecified miraculous manifestation seems implied in the case of the Samaritans.

b. And as with Acts 2 and 10, I think the believers in Acts 8 and 19 received the same gift of the Spirit or baptism in the Spirit that every Christian receives. In other words, it is not that they received some working of the Spirit unrelated to salvation but that in their cases the Spirit chose to mark his indwelling presence, the common experience of Christians, by miraculous manifestations. Indeed, Paul makes clear in 1 Corinthians 12 that tongues-speaking is a gift given to *Christians*, a manifestation of the one Spirit all Christians share, so why assume in these cases it is divorced from the indwelling of the Spirit that accompanies salvation?

3. If you are following me, the question on your mind is: If the believers in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 received the gift of the Spirit or baptism in the Spirit that all Christians normally receive at conversion, why in those four cases did the Spirit immediately signify by miraculous manifestation his having come to dwell in those new Christians? Why in those four cases but not in the countless others?

a. We are not told directly, but I think the answer is suggested by the texts. It is not that these people received some work of the Spirit that was unrelated to salvation, something separate and distinct from the indwelling Spirit common to all Christians, but that the Spirit on those particular occasions marked his indwelling presence with miraculous manifestations in order to send a message. And the message he was sending is tied to the fact each of these conversions marked the first extension of the gospel to a new, definable group.

b. Before going further, let me address briefly a possible objection to my assertion that each of these conversions marked the first extension of the gospel to a new, definable group. Specifically, I want to address the claim that the conversion of John's disciples in Acts 19 did *not* represent the first extension of the gospel to the group "John's disciples" because Apollos was a disciple of John and was converted prior to those in Acts 19 (see Acts 18:24-28).

(1) It is by no means clear that Apollos was a disciple of John. He was a learned or eloquent Jew from Alexandria who had somewhere at some point, perhaps very recently, received accurate but limited instruction about Jesus, which information he conveyed to others enthusiastically (Acts 18:24-25). He had been informed about John's baptism, perhaps from the story of Jesus having been baptized by John,¹ but there is no indication he had received that baptism or thought it had ongoing applicability. He may have thought John's baptism, being one of repentance with a view to the coming Christ (Acts 19:4), was fulfilled with Christ's coming and taught about it simply as a witness to Jesus' identity, as a God-given ministry announcing Jesus' arrival. Brian Dennert states in *John the Baptist and the Jewish Setting of Matthew* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 63 (fn. 134), "There is no reason to see the expression ["knew only the baptism of John"] as indicating that Apollos was a disciple of John." Rick Strelan similarly states in *Paul, Artemis, and the Jews in Ephesus* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 221:

A number of scholars think Apollos belonged to John's community and was . . . "one of his ardent disciples" (McCasland 1958: 229). But this is not self-evident from the text. Nor does Apollos' knowledge only of John's baptism necessarily mean that he himself had been baptized with such a baptism. Luke is talking about Apollos' *knowledge*, not his experience or practice. The verb ἐπίστασθαι is used regularly in *Acts* (10:28; 15:7; 19:15,

¹ L. D. Hurst states in "Apollos" in David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:301 (emphasis supplied): "It is most likely that this knowledge [of John's baptism] came either from contact with some of John's disciples or *from a fragmentary report of the events in Palestine between A.D. 25-30.*"

25; 20:18; 22:19; 24:10; 26:26) in the sense of factual, practical knowledge. Apollos knows as fact the baptism of John, but he knows it as something outside of his *own* experience – he was not baptized with John's baptism.

(2) The point of the text is that the teaching Apollos received included knowledge of John's baptism, but he had not been taught about the Spirit-related baptism instituted by Christ. When Priscilla and Aquila heard Apollos and realized immediately the inadequacy of his knowledge, they privately instructed him in the additional things he needed to know, which no doubt included the baptism about which he was expressly ignorant. Luke does not say Apollos was thereafter baptized, but I think that is a reasonable inference. Throughout Acts Luke has made clear the significance of baptism. He often speaks of people "believing" without specifying they were baptized, but their baptism is rightly assumed from the larger narrative (e.g., 4:4, 9:42, 11:21, 13:12, 13:48, 14:1, 17:12, 17:34, 18:18a). So it is not a stretch to think Luke intended the reader to conclude Apollos had acted on his new knowledge about baptism. Indeed, before his instruction from Priscilla and Aquila, he spoke in the synagogue; after that instruction, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. Coleman A. Baker states in *Identity, Memory, and Narrative in Early Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 169:

[Apollos'] only shortcoming, according to Luke, is that he "knew only the baptism of John" (18:25). The implication of Apollos' description, therefore, is that he believes that Jesus is the resurrected Messiah but he has not undergone the boundary crossing rituals of baptism in Jesus' name and being filled with the Spirit. Once when Apollos was speaking in the synagogue, Priscilla and Aquila heard him and "took him aside and explained the Way [of God] more accurately to him" (18:26). This reference implies that they had explained the boundary crossing rituals to Apollos and that he underwent the rituals to join the Christian group.

(3) There is no indication that the twelve "disciples" in Acts 19 had been taught by Apollos. It seems from 18:26 that Apollos's inadequate knowledge was corrected at the start of his time in Ephesus, and it is difficult to believe the church in Ephesus would allow John's baptism to be administered during Apollos's tenure there. Those in Acts 19 represent an ignorance similar to that of Apollos, but whereas he knew only about John's baptism, they assumed its continuing validity and had submitted to it. Apollos was unaware of Christian baptism, having only heard about John's; they were disciples of John, people who practiced an obsolete baptism in place of Christian baptism. Paul Trebilco states in *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 123, "We have no reason to think that Apollos had any strong connection with John the Baptist, and so no reason to suggest that Apollos and the 12 were connected historically."²

c. Notice that Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 each involved multiple conversions of members of a group – Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, and disciples of John – rather than conversions of single individuals. As *group* conversions, they readily serve as representatives of the group

² Trebilco thinks Apollos was baptized into John's baptism, but despite that he says, "Nothing suggests he was John's disciple."

to which they belong. The giving of the Spirit to these *group representatives* signified or confirmed the availability of the gospel's blessings to all members of the respective groups (that significance is alluded to in Acts 11:18, 15:8), and for that reason the Spirit's indwelling presence was specially and objectively indicated by miraculous manifestations. That signaled unmistakably that each of those groups were indeed to be part of the harvest.

d. The availability of the gospel's blessings to these groups having been confirmed objectively, there is no hint that subsequent conversions within the groups were accompanied by such manifestations (see, e.g., Acts 2:41, 4:4, 5:14, 8:25 [conversions implied], 8:38-39, 9:17-18, 11:20-21, 13:12, 13:48, 14:1, 14:21, 16:15, 16:32-33, 17:12, 17:34, 18:8, 22:16). That is why Peter referred all the way back to the events of Pentecost when explaining his experience at Cornelius's house (Acts 11:15-17). It was obviously quite rare for speaking in tongues to accompany the initial giving of the Spirit, the receipt of the Spirit on conversion.

e. This does not mean that later converts within a group were permanently deprived of such spiritual gifts. On the contrary, Paul and some of the Corinthians clearly exercised the gift of tongues. It simply means that those later converts did not receive such gifts (or were not moved to exercise them) at the time they initially received the Spirit. So in their case, the gift and its exercise did not function as a marker of the Spirit's arrival. It did not serve as a sign that the blessings of the gospel were available for that group; that had already occurred.

The Spirit's Association with Water Baptism

1. As for the Spirit's association with water baptism, on two occasions after Pentecost the gift of the Spirit was separated from water baptism. Both times it was done for a specific reason.

a. In Acts 8, the Samaritans *accepted* Philip's message about Christ and were *baptized*, but God temporarily withheld the gift of the Spirit from them to teach them an important lesson.

(1) Contrary to what you may have heard, what was withheld from the Samaritans was the same gift of the Spirit normally received at baptism. This is clear from the fact the text speaks repeatedly of them receiving or being given "the Holy Spirit" himself (not a Spirit-given ability) and the fact Luke signals in 8:16 that the gift withheld was the gift normally associated with baptism. He says the Spirit had "not yet" come upon the Samaritans (contrary to what one would normally expect regarding baptized believers) and that they had "only" been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus (contrary to what normally happens in baptism).

(2) The Spirit was withheld (meaning the normal timing of baptism and receipt of the Spirit was altered) until Jewish apostles from the Jerusalem church came to Samaria. That was done, I am convinced, to teach the Samaritans that the Jews were the true Messianic community, the ones through whom the Messiah came and to whom he was first

preached. (Philip, being a Hellenistic Jew, a "Greekified" Jew, would not send a clear message in that regard.) Despite the longstanding claim by the Samaritans that they and not the Jews were the true people of God (see, e.g., Jn. 4:22), they were shown through this episode to be no different than the Gentiles in terms of salvation history. The believing Jews were God's olive tree and the Samaritans, like the Gentiles (Rom. 11:11-24), were wild shoots that were grafted into that tree.

(3) This lesson was intended to prevent the Samaritans from starting a competing Samaritan church, as they had done with Judaism. Once the point about Jewish priority in salvation history had been made, Samaritan conversions followed the normal pattern (i.e., the Spirit was received upon baptism).

b. The Gentiles at Cornelius's house in Acts 10, on the other hand, received the Spirit *after* they came to faith but *before* being baptized.

(1) That it was after they came to faith is clear from Acts 15:8-9 where Peter tells the Jerusalem Council that God gave those Gentiles the Holy Spirit, *having cleansed* (καθαρίσας) their hearts *by faith*. The gift followed the cleansing by faith. When speaking to the church in Jerusalem Peter in Acts 11:17 equated the gift of the Spirit given to the Gentiles on that occasion with the gift the Jews had received *when they believed* in the Lord Jesus Christ. I. Howard Marshall rightly notes in *The Acts of the Apostles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 193-194, "Since elsewhere the gift of the Spirit comes to people who repent and believe (*cf.* 11:17f.), the implication is twofold: first, that the Gentiles present responded to the message with faith; and, secondly, that God accepted them and sealed their faith with the gift of the Spirit."

(2) The giving of the Spirit prior to baptism was done to show the Jewish Christians present that under the new covenant there was no place for a Jewish nationalism that would withhold baptism from believing Gentiles until they submitted to circumcision. To break through Jewish resistance to administering baptism to the uncircumcised, God *demonstrably saved* the Gentiles (meaning the Spirit flagged his presence in them by miraculous manifestations) prior to baptism. In doing so, he indicated clearly that it was his will for Gentiles to be saved *as Gentiles*. And since baptism is the rite in association with which salvation normally is granted, his will that Gentiles be saved as Gentiles was rightly understood to mean that baptism must not be withheld from believing Gentiles. As Peter concluded in Acts 10:47-48, and repeated in Acts 11:17, to do so would be to oppose God.

(3) Now I know some reject any possibility of salvation prior to baptism because they believe the norm of salvation occurring at the time of baptism is absolute. If God ever were to grant salvation prior to baptism he would, in their view, contradict his revelation about the nature and purpose of baptism. So whatever the text in Acts 10 means it cannot mean that these Gentiles were saved prior to baptism, despite the strong indications to the contrary. (I flesh out those indications in my online paper "[Cornelius and Rebaptism](#).")

(4) To that I say the granting of salvation prior to baptism in the case of the Gentiles at Cornelius's house is consistent with a strong baptismal theology if one recognizes that God has nowhere bound himself never to alter the timing of salvation in relation to baptism. In other words, he nowhere declared that he would never make an exception to that timing. The *norm* of salvation at the time of baptism is clearly set forth in Peter's programmatic statement in Acts 2:38 and confirmed throughout Scripture and church history, but it is an over-reading to conclude that God left himself no room to vary the order of things in fulfillment of his purposes in salvation history. I think Acts 10 is a case of his doing just that. He on that occasion varied the order in a special circumstance to make a point to the Jewish Christians. (In Acts 8 he made a point by delaying the Spirit's reception.) Making an exception to the norm for a specific theological purpose does not do away with the norm. If an ambulance racing to an emergency were excepted from the requirement to stop at a red light, it would not mean there was no requirement to stop at a red light.

2. I do not consider the receipt of the Spirit by John's disciples in Acts 19 to be an occasion when the gift of the Spirit was separated from water baptism. Rather, the laying on of Paul's hands that Luke mentions in 19:6 should be understood as part of the baptism rite of 19:5.

a. In Heb. 6:1-2 the writer lists three pairs of teachings that he includes among the basic things, six items that "span the journey of faith from initial repentance to final judgment" (Koester, 311). In the middle pairing, he speaks of "instruction about immersions and [the] laying on of hands," thus associating baptism and the laying on of hands.

b. I think James Dunn is correct in stating in *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 87, "baptism and the laying on of hands [in Acts 19:5ff.] are the *one* ceremony." Frederick Dale Bruner states in *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 211, "The laying on of hands was no doubt an integral part of the baptismal service, with prayer, and should not be separated from baptism as an independent rite granting the Spirit." Gerhard Krodel states in *Acts*, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1986), 358, "The imposition of hands in connection with Baptism reflects the liturgical practice of Luke's church. Baptism mediates the gift of the Holy Spirit . . ." Joseph Fitzmyer states in *The Acts of the Apostles*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 642, "The episode emphasizes Christian baptism as a baptism in the Spirit, which has superseded the preliminary baptism conferred by John in Judea." Eckhard Schnabel states in *Acts*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 789, "When Paul baptizes these disciples of John, he lays his hands on them (which may have been his practice) and they receive the Holy Spirit."

c. Indeed, the relevant text could be rendered: "On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and, Paul having laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them." Dunn writes (p. 87), "The laying on of hands is almost parenthetical; the sequence of events is 'baptism (resulting in) . . . Spirit.'" I suspect Luke highlighted the laying-on-of-hands aspect of the baptisms in Acts 19 to parallel Paul's role with that of Peter and John in Acts 8.

d. Unlike Jewish proselyte baptism (which probably was practiced at this time) in which the person immersed *himself*, Christian baptism is done to someone by someone else. The person being baptized is laid hold of by a saint, buried in the water, and then raised; it is a rite of human contact. (Beyond that, we hug the baptized person and then pray for him while holding his hand or shoulder.) So though we may not pay much attention today to the human-contact aspect of baptism, I think we nevertheless practice it; it is inherent in the way we understand baptism to be conducted.

b. The body consists of *different* parts (12:15-20) – ¹⁵**If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," it is not for this reason not of the body.** ¹⁶**And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," it is not for this reason not of the body.** ¹⁷**If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole [body] were a hearing [organ], where would the sense of smell be?** ¹⁸**But as it is, God placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as he wished.** ¹⁹**Now if all were one member, where would the body be?** ²⁰**But as it is, there are many members but one body.**

(1) The fact a foot is not a hand does not mean it's not a part of the body, and the fact an ear is not an eye does not mean that it is not a part of the body. Rather, the body consists of a multitude of *different* parts. That Paul has the hand and the ear expressing their alienation from the body probably reflects the alienation felt by those in Corinth without the "required" or status-giving gift (i.e., tongues).

(2) And each of these different parts of the body is arranged or fit together according to God's purpose and design. That is true of the physical body, and it is also true of the church. As Paul said in 12:7, "to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

c. No part of the body is dispensable (12:21-26) – ²¹**And the eye is not able to say to the hand, "I do not have need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I do not have need of you."** ²²**Rather, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are much more necessary,** ²³**and what [members] of the body we consider to be less honorable, to these we grant more abundant honor, and our unpresentable [members] have more abundant presentability,** ²⁴**but our presentable members have no need. But God composed the body, giving more abundant honor to the lacking [members],** ²⁵**so that there not be division in the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.** ²⁶**And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with [it]; if [one] member is glorified, all the members rejoice with [it].**

(1) No part of the body (eye/head) can say to any other part (hand/feet) that it is not needed. Each part has its own unique function, and no part is insignificant, unimportant, or inconsequential. As David Garland notes (p. 594), "The failure of one little valve can shut down the whole bodily system."

(2) Again, this probably reflects the attitude of those in Corinth with the gift of tongues toward those who lacked it. They saw them as less spiritual, to the point of being unnecessary and unworthy members of the church.

(3) In the human body, the parts that seem weaker (probably internal organs) actually play a vital role; and to those parts we, in one respect, consider less honorable and unpresentable (i.e., sex organs), we give more honor and presentability by the way we protect and cover/clothe them.

(4) God composed the body in this fashion, compensating for parts that needed honor by giving it to them, so that no part would be despised. The body is not at war with itself; no part of the body thinks it would be better off without any other part. Instead, the body is a whole in which all parts have the same care for one another. There are no outcasts or second-class members. When any part suffers, the whole suffers; when any part is glorified, the whole is glorified.

d. As with the human body, God has assigned different roles to different parts in the body of Christ (12:27-30) – ²⁷**Now you are the body of Christ and individually members [of it].** ²⁸**And God placed some in the church – first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helpful deeds, acts of guidance, [and] kinds of tongues.** ²⁹**Not all are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? Not all are [workers of] miracles, are they?** ³⁰**Not all have gifts of healings, do they? Not all speak in tongues, do they? Not all interpret, do they?**

(1) As the body of Christ, the same principle of diversity in unity applies. Just as God composed the body of different functioning parts, so he has composed the church. The individual members of the church have different roles/gifts.

(2) God made some to be apostles, some prophets, and some teachers; some were enabled to work miracles, some to heal, some to perform special acts of service, some to provide special guidance (wise counselors), and some to speak in tongues. (It is noteworthy that Paul does not limit divine manifestation, the Spirit's gifts, to the overtly supernatural; he includes the gifts of "helps" and "guidances" in the list.)

(3) The emphasis is on the fact that only some, not all, are given certain roles/gifts. This is clear from vv. 29-30 where the rhetorical questions expect a negative answer, e.g., "Not all are apostles, are they?" Contrary to the Corinthian warped exaltation of tongues, all are to be appreciated for their contribution to the whole. No gift is any less a work of the Spirit, and no gift is unnecessary. All are blended into a harmonious whole.

(4) Now what does all this say about the attitude of so many in our culture that one can be right with Christ while having nothing to do with his church? You've heard it – "I love God; it's 'organized religion' I avoid." As Craig Blomberg remarks (p. 254):

All of Paul's emphasis on unity within diversity calls into question the behavior of a growing numbers of Americans who claim to be religious, believe in God and even Christ, and yet drop out of organized church life or at least fade to its periphery. In a land still heavily influenced by a heritage of rugged individualism, believers need to work ever harder to demonstrate that Christianity is not a merely personal religion but fundamentally corporate. Even evangelical language for conversion betrays this bias: a "*personal* relationship with Jesus Christ." That is the necessary starting point, but we dare not stop until that relationship leads to intimate *interpersonal* relationships with other Christians.

4. Exhortation to be enthusiastic regarding the "greater gifts" (12:31) – ³¹**But be enthusiastic about the greater gifts. And yet I show you a far better way.**

a. The verb ζηλώω (ζηλοῦτε could be an indicative, but with most, I take it as an imperative) literally means "to be zealous." Though it often has the connotation of striving for its object, the thing for which one is zealous, I think the focus here is on the *attitude* Paul wants the church to have toward certain gifts. He wants the *community* to be enthusiastic about, to appreciate and value, the gifts he labels "greater." It's like a father exhorting his family at Christmastime, "Be enthusiastic (or excited) about gifts that induce learning." He is trying to reorient the family's evaluation of gifts not instructing individuals to strive for certain gifts.

b. There is a wide diversity of gifts given by the one Spirit, but Paul instructs the Corinthian church to be enthusiastic about the *greater* gifts, which he is going to explain are not the gifts (or gift) about which they currently are enthusiastic ("jazzed"). He is going to adjust their perception of what constitutes the greater gifts by painting for them in chapter 13 the surpassing value of love. That is why he says, "And yet . . ."

c. In light of the paramount nature of love for the Christian and its importance to spiritual gifts, the "greater gifts" are those that bestow the greatest benefit on one's brothers and sisters. The Corinthians only think the gifts for which they are zealous, the gifts they exalt or prize, are the "greater gifts" because they are not evaluating them by the criterion of love.

d. The gifts they need to prize are those that build up the church, which he will explain are those that are intelligible, those that communicate. Thomas Edgar states in *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996), 43, "The normal meaning of *zealo*, 'be zealous or enthusiastic,' fits perfectly in this verse and context as an exhortation to the entire assembly to be enthusiastic for the edifying gift of prophecy rather than the more 'showy' gift of tongues." In 14:1 he repeats the point from 12:31 that they are to be enthusiastic about spiritual things, but he prefaces it with the need to pursue love, the result of which combination is that they be enthusiastic about prophesying in particular.

e. This does not contradict what he said about no gift being less spiritual or unnecessary. All gifts are spiritual and necessary, but particularly in an assembly setting, some are more valuable in that they are more beneficial for building up the saints.

5. Discussion of love (13:1-13)

a. Love, not some spiritual gift, is the indispensable quality in a Christian's character (13:1-3) – **If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but I do not have love, I am nothing. ³And if I dole out all my possessions, and if I hand over my body that I might boast, but do not have love, I am in no way benefited.**

(1) The root issue regarding their spiritual gifts is whether love is radiated in their exercise. As Garland writes (p. 608):

Far from being a displaced hymn singing the praises of love as a virtue, chapter 13 is a call to a way of life that addresses real problems in the church. The purpose is to debunk "self-centered spirituality" (Thiselton 2000: 1028) and to exhort the Corinthians to pursue love (Spicq 1965: 141). . . . Godet (1887: 237) eloquently gets at the heart of the matter: "Experience proves that a man, after opening his heart with faith to the joy of salvation, may soon cease to walk in the way of sanctification, shrink from complete self-surrender, and, while making progress in mystical feeling, become more full of self and devoid of love for others than he ever was." Paul reminds the Corinthians that love, not spiritual gifts, is the marrow of their Christian existence.

(2) The point of these three verses is that love, not some spiritual gift, is the indispensable quality in a Christian's character. No gift or deed, however spectacular or costly, is of any value in the eyes of God if performed by one devoid of love. As Paul indicates in the next section (vv. 4-7), love is not an emotion or a sentiment but is fundamentally a disposition toward another that produces an array of behavior, a whole way of relating to other people. Those who do not love are without spiritual status in the kingdom of God, regardless of what they may do.

(3) Paul pointedly opens with a reference to tongues because that is where the problem was. When he says "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels," he is not claiming that they spoke in anything other than human languages. He is speaking about himself, not them, and refers to tongues of angels simply to stress the point that being spiritually empowered to speak another language, even if it be the grandest of all languages, will not impress God if the one speaking it lacks love.

(a) In the sentence, "If I fight with the strength of men and of angels but cannot recognize my enemy, it profits me nothing," the reference to angels clearly is hyperbole to stress the importance of knowing the enemy. It need not mean that I actually fight with the strength of angels. Likewise, when Paul says "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal," the reference to angels is hyperbole to stress the importance of love. It need not mean that he actually spoke in angel language. (Then again, it may be that "human language" is also the language of angels [e.g., Lk. 2:13-14; Rev. 5:11-12], and Paul characterizes the gift of tongues in this grand fashion to emphasize the importance of love.)

(b) The hypothetical nature of what Paul is saying is apparent from the fact he says "And if I have prophecy and know *all* mysteries and *all* knowledge . . ." As 13:9, 12 make clear, Paul is well aware that in this life we will not have complete knowledge. His point is that *even if* he were to be given this complete knowledge, that gift would not benefit him in the eyes of God if he lacked love.

b. Practical description of the love he's talking about (13:4-7) –
⁴Love is patient; love is kind; it does not envy; [love] does not boast; it is not puffed up; ⁵it does not behave shamefully; it does not seek its own things; it is not provoked to anger; it does not take account of evil; ⁶it does not rejoice over injustice but rejoices together in the truth; ⁷it puts up with all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(1) In these four verses Paul provides a practical description of the love he is talking about. As I said, it is not primarily an emotion or a sentiment but is fundamentally a disposition toward another that produces an array of behavior, a whole way of relating to other people. To quote Garland again (p. 616), "Love is dynamic and active, not something static. He is not talking about some inner feeling or emotion. Love is not conveyed by words; it has to be shown. It can be defined only by what it does and does not do." Their conduct with regard to gifts was apparently exposing a lack of such love, and a disregard for love characterized their evaluation of the gifts.

(2) Positively, Paul says that love is patient and kind.

(a) Patience includes the endurance of injuries without retaliation, "to bear up under provocation without complaint" (BDAG). For instance, Prov. 19:11 says, "A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is his glory to overlook an offense." This is a message the "inferior" undoubtedly needed to hear as they were made to feel alienated from the body.

(b) Kindness, of course, refers to actively doing good on behalf of another, responding to them with a tender heart. Those with feelings of superiority especially needed to internalize this.

(3) Negatively, Paul says that love:

(a) does not envy or brag – This was especially relevant to the "inferior" and the "superior," respectively. It would be easy for those looked down on to have negative feelings toward those seen as superior, to begrudge their standing. And it would be easy for the "spiritual elite" to brag about their great spirituality.

(b) is not puffed up – Thinking too highly of oneself, being obsessed with one's own importance, is at odds with respecting and caring about the welfare of others. If it's all about me, then it's not about you, but love means that it's about you.

(c) does not behave shamefully – Love does not dishonor or treat others rudely, as though their sensibilities and desire for respect are trivial in light of one's own wishes.

(d) does not seek its own things – Rather than self-satisfaction, love seeks the good of others. This is key in terms of evaluating the various gifts in the assembly.

(e) is not easily angered – There is not a hostility just below the surface that is waiting for an offense at which to take umbrage. Love is forbearing, or as we might say, cuts its object some slack.

(f) does not keep a record of evil – It does not nurture or cling to grievances but seeks to heal them as soon as possible; it seeks reconciliation, not to prolong estrangement.

(g) does not delight over injustice/wrongdoing but rejoices together in the truth – It does not delight when another is the victim of injustice, take pleasure in the perpetration of a wrong against another. Rather, it rejoices with that person when the truth comes out, when justice is done and he or she is vindicated. Alternatively, it does not delight when another succumbs to wrongdoing; rather, it rejoices with that person as he lives in the truth of the gospel.

(4) Again speaking positively, Paul says that love:

(a) puts up with and endures all things – For the benefit of the other person (see 9:12). Love is stubborn in its commitment to bless its object; it will not be put off by difficulty or even wounds.

(b) believes and hopes in all things (i.e., always, in all circumstances) – It always believes that its object is not beyond help and hopes that its object will be blessed. Love does not write the other person off. Even "tough love," which can be misinterpreted as a lack of love, is done in the hope of blessing its object.

c. Love is superior to spiritual gifts (13:8-13) – **⁸Love never falls. But if there are prophecies, they will be brought to an end; if there are tongues, they**

will stop; if there is knowledge, it will be brought to an end. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but whenever the complete [state] comes, the partial will be brought to an end. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child; when I became a man, I brought the ways of a child to an end. ¹²For we now see through a mirror, in a dim reflection, but then [we will see] face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I was fully known. ¹³And now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love.

(1) The point of this paragraph is that love is superior to the spiritual gifts because the gifts are only for now whereas love is for both now and forever, for today and the eternal state. Love never ends, but prophecies, tongues, and miraculous knowledge, and presumably other gifts, will not proceed into the eternal state. That is the point beyond which they cannot go because they are superfluous in the full light of the eschaton.

(a) The vast majority of commentators recognize that the "perfect" or "complete" state mentioned in v. 10 refers to the eternal state, consummation of the kingdom at the return of Christ (e.g., Conzelmann, Carson, Mare, Fee, Schrage, Oster, Blomberg, Thiselton, Fitzmyer, Garland, Ciampa and Rosner, Taylor). Mark Taylor states in 1 Corinthians, NAC (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2014), 316, "The coming of 'perfection,' literally, 'the perfect thing,' undoubtedly refers to the consummation of all things, which is clarified by the language of 13:12, seeing 'face to face' and 'knowing fully even as I am fully known.'"

(b) Some claim the perfect or complete state of v. 10 is the completion of the New Testament (others claim it is acquisition of love or maturity by the church), but as Taylor indicates, that does not square with the description of the complete state given in v. 12 (or v. 10b for that matter that speaks of the partial being brought to an end). It fits comfortably, however, with Paul's declaration in 1 Cor. 4:5 that the Lord *at his coming* "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will display the motives of hearts." In contrast, there is no indication the Corinthians had been taught that a new canon of Scripture was in the process of being written, so there is no reason to think the Corinthians would have taken the coming of the "complete state" as a reference to completion of the canon.

(c) Some are driven to identify the complete state of v. 10 with completion of the New Testament because they think identifying it with the eschaton, the final state, means the verse is saying the miraculous gifts *will continue* until Jesus returns, which they are convinced contradicts what is revealed elsewhere. So they reject that meaning in favor of one that proves the gifts ceased long ago, thereby converting a liability into an asset. But it is a false dilemma to think one must *either* reject identifying the complete state of 13:10 with the consummation *or* accept that miraculous gifts continue until the return of Christ.

[1] Even if 13:10 refers to the consummation, as I believe it does, Paul does not say that the gifts mentioned in 13:8 necessarily will

continue until that time. The point of 1 Cor. 13:8-13 is that love is superior to the spiritual gifts because the gifts are only for now, whereas love is both for now and forever. Paul's concern is to establish that the gifts will not be part of the eternal state, *not* to pinpoint when they will pass.

[2] He knows that the giving of the gifts is according to the will of the Spirit, so he is not saying that they must continue until the final state. Love never ends, but *even if* prophecies, tongues, miraculous knowledge, and presumably other gifts should exist at the consummation, they will at that time come to an end. (That Paul means *if* there are miraculous gifts *at the consummation* is apparent as it would make little sense to say *if* there are miraculous gifts in his day after spending all of chapter 12 discussing them.) In other words, that is the latest possible point for their existence, not necessarily how long they actually will exist.³ For example, if one said, "*If* there are trees in Jerusalem they will be consumed at the Second Coming because they are ill suited for existence in the eternal state," one would not be asserting that trees would not vanish from Jerusalem before then (e.g., through war or disease).

(d) The gifts will not proceed into the eternal state because they are partial expressions of the end glory. They are only suited for the overlap of the ages, for this time of the now and the not yet. These gifts, about which the Corinthians were so proud, are fine for our childhood (ouch!), our time on this side of the consummation, but they will have no place in our adulthood, our experience of the final state. Then we will have full knowledge, full understanding, and ultimate communion. There will be no need for the lesser knowledge, understanding, and communion reflected in the gifts.

(2) In the present age, in the time before the consummation, the well-known triad of Christian virtues – faith, hope, and love – will necessarily remain, will continue to be present. But the greatest of these is love because it alone will continue in the eternal state.

(a) Paul mentions faith and hope in conjunction with love because these three constituted a stock formula in early Christian preaching. In other words, they were seen as a unit.

(b) In the sense in which they were used in the triad formula, faith and hope were restricted to the present age. In 2 Cor. 5:7 Paul contrasts *faith* with the final glory in the words "for we walk by faith not by sight" (see also, Heb. 11:1 where faith is "the conviction of things not seen"). In Rom. 8:24 Paul says that we were saved in the *hope* of the resurrection and then adds, "But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?" When the complete state comes, faith becomes sight and hope is finally realized. Paul wants to clarify that the same is not true of love; it continues.

³ As Daniel Wallace states in *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1996) 423, "This verse does not specifically address *when* tongues would cease, although it is giving a *terminus ad quem*: when the perfect comes."