

## Three Proofs Restricting Apostolic Signs to the Early Churches

### The Purposes for Signs

First proof that the sign-gifts of the early church were restricted to the time of the apostles:

A pattern in biblical history suggests a cessation

Second proof that the sign-gifts of the early church were restricted to the time of the apostles:

The collective witness of the N.T. epistles indicates a cessation

### Signs in the book of Revelation

Third proof that the sign-gifts of the early church were restricted to the time of the apostles:

The N.T. Scriptures teach that sign-gifts were temporary

### **The Purpose for Signs**

In the Bible *signs*, or otherwise called miracles, were for either good or evil purposes. Often, signs either authenticated the truth of God or they were for deceptive purposes. They could reveal the servants of God or the workers of iniquity.

### The True Servants of God in the Old Testament

Joseph

*Ge 41:15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.*

...

*38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?*

Moses

*Ex.4.4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:*

*5 That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.*

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Jannes and Jambres (2Ti.3.8)

*Ex 7:11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.*

Elijah

*1Ki.18.19 Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.*

...

*21 ¶ And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*

### The True Servants of God in the New Testament

Christ revealed Himself to His own through the use of signs:

To John the Baptist, Jn.1.29-34 ,

*The descending of the Spirit ...v.33 but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*

To Nathaniel, Jn.1.47-51,

*His prescience, ... v50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou?), and*

To all the disciples, Jn.2.11,

*The water turned to wine in Cana ... This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believe on him.*

The Apostles were revealed through the use of signs:

*Heb 2:3 How shall we*

*The first person, plural pronoun includes the writer (Paul) with those he addressed in this letter (the believing Hebrews) ...*

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*escape,*

ἐκφευξόμεθα, 1ppl. fut. ind. mid. of ἐκφεύγω, ἐκ out, from + φεύγω, to flee; KJV, *to flee* (2), *escape* (5); the fut. ind. mid. is found also in Ro.2.3; the active voice verb stresses the action, but the middle voice the agent = How shall we take flight from... ..v.2 such a *just recompense of reward for every transgression and disobedience* ...,

*if we neglect so* *great salvation;*  
that is, to drift by a great salvation like this

*if ... neglect, ἀμελήσαντες, nom. pl. masc. part. aor. of ἀμελέω, ἀ + μέλει, to care; ἀμελέω, to make light, neglect, not regard.*

*so great, τηλικαύτης, gen. sing. fem. of τηλικούτος;*  
Re.16.18, *so mighty*; 2Co.1.10, *so great* a death; Ja.3.4, which though they [ships] be *so great*,

*which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us (Paul and the believing Hebrews) by them (meaning, the apostles) that heard him;*

**4** *God also bearing them (the apostles) witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

*2Co 12:12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you (Gentiles believers) in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.*

*sign, σημεῖον, sēmeion, (phonetically, say-may'-on); KJV, sign (51), miracle (22), \*token (1), wonder (3); the verb, σημειόομαι, 2Th.3.14, note that man.*

*\*In 2Th.3.17 Paul's signed his letters with a personal salutation. When the saints of God saw his sign (this **notation**) they knew it was his letter. Like this, God put the sign of His*

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Son upon certain of His people. When the believing saw this they knew that they were the authentic servants of Christ.

Others were revealed through the use of signs:

*Mk.9.38 And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.*

*39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.*

*40 For he that is not against us is on our part.*

The church at Jerusalem was revealed to Israel in the temple by a sign:

*Acts 2.1 ¶ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

*2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

*3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

*4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Stephen was revealed to those in Jerusalem:

*Ac 6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*

Philip was revealed to those of Samaria:

*Acts 8.6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.*

*7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.*

*8 And there was great joy in that city.*

But God also allows and directs others who are empowered by Satan to work signs to lead men away from the truth.

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*2Th.2.8 9 Even him [that Wicked one], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,  
10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish ...*

*Mt 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*

Now in the New Testament, Jesus sent certain of His servants, the apostles, to prepare His way before Him by the use of signs.

*Mt.10.7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.  
8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. (Jesus sent also the seventy. [Lk.10.17])*

After the ascension of Jesus Christ into glory there were other signs which began to be shown. These included taking up serpents, drinking deadly substances, speaking in new tongues (*new*, *καινός*, meaning in a tongue other than the native tongue [Is.28.11; Acts 2.4; 1Co.14.21]),

*Mk.16.17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;  
18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

and partial knowledge and prophecy. (1Co.13.8, 9)

Signs convinced others that Jesus was the Christ of God.

*Joh 2:23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.*

*Joh 6:2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.*

*Joh 7:31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?*

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Signs authenticated the faith of some to the servants of God. *Mk.16.17 And these signs shall follow them that believe ...* This was especially important when the gospel went to the Gentiles and there began to be Gentiles churches.

*Acts 10.44 ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.*

*45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

*46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. ...*

So, signs in the Bible were for either good or evil purposes. Signs authenticated the truth of God or were used for deceptive purposes; they revealed the servants of God or the workers of iniquity.

### **First proof that the sign-gifts of the early church were restricted to the time of the apostles: A pattern in biblical history suggests a cessation**

In the history before the coming of Christ and the history after the ascension of Christ there is a pattern that would indicate a cessation of the sign-gifts at the close of the apostolic period. First, there is a long period of silence where there were no signs or miracles worked. Then about thirty years before Christ's personal, earthly ministry they begin. After Christ's ascension to the right of the Father, which closes Christ's personal, earthly ministry signs continue for about thirty years and again cease. Since then there has been a long period of time where no signs or miracles have been worked. This is the pattern.

From the last of the O.T. prophets, Malachi (written c.400 B.C.), there is a period of about 400 years of silence which preceded the births of John the Baptist and our Lord Jesus Christ. There were no prophecies and no signs or miracles worked during all of this time. From the close of the prophesying of Malachi to the history of Luke chapter 1, verse 5, which is about a year before the birth of John the Baptist there were no signs. Then suddenly signs or miracles began to be worked. And signs continued over the next several times.

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John the Baptist's parents, Lk.1.11-22 [59-66] – Mary, Lk.1.26-38 – Joseph, Mt.1.18-25 – The shepherds in the field, (Lk.2.8-17 [v.12] ) – The wise men, (Mt.2.1, 2) – Simeon (Lk.2.25-35) – Anna, a prophetess of great age (Lk.2.36-38) – The wise men warned against returning to Herod (Mt.2.11, 12) – Joseph warned to flee to Egypt (Mt. 2.13, 14) – Joseph commanded to return to Israel when Jesus was a young child (Mt. 2.19-21).

Then about thirty years after these signs began, Jesus Christ began His personal, earthly ministry. Over the next 3 ½ years there was an explosion of signs or miracles. It is not possible to begin to list the all the miracles that Christ and His disciples showed during this time.

*Joh 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.*

At the close of Christ's earthly ministry, when He ascended to the right hand of the Father signs continued over the next 30 years. This can be proved by considering a brief history of the book of Acts.

The book of Acts begins with the ascension of Jesus Christ and ends at least two years past the time of Paul's arrival to Rome. (cf. Acts 1.9; 28.30) It is not very difficult to account for at least thirty years of history in this book.

From Paul's conversion to his seeing Peter and James [the Lord's brother] in Jerusalem, was at least 3 years. (Gal.1.18) **3**

From Paul's conversion to the heresy of legalism is 14 years (Gal. 2.1; Acts 15.2, which encompasses his first missionary journey and is approximately half the history of Acts; Paul does not visit Jerusalem again until the time of his arrest, which he terms '*after many years.*' [Acts 24.17]) **14**

No period of time is given for Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey, but he stayed at Corinth for 1 ½ years, and in Ephesus for 3 (cf. Acts 19.10; 20.31) **4 ½**

After Paul's apprehension in Jerusalem, he remained under house arrest in Caesarea for two years (Acts. 24.27) **2**

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He stayed in his own hired house in Rome for two whole years. (Acts 28.30)

**2 = That is a total of 25 ½ years.**

(cf. Acts 11.20, *a whole year*; 15.7, *a good while ago*; 24.17, *many years*; Paul's last visit to Jerusalem was in 15.3)

(Albert Barnes agrees that the history of the book of Acts spans about thirty years, dating from A. D.29 to A.D. 60.)

So, the pattern for signs is *silence* (for 400 years), about thirty years on either side of Christ's personal ministry, and back to silence. This suggests that signs and sign-gifts are limited to the era in which the apostles of Jesus Christ lived.

### **Second proof that the sign-gifts of the early church were restricted to the time of the apostles: The collective witness of the N.T. epistles indicates a cessation**

Among the N. T. epistles, 1Corinthians and Revelation are the *only* books which deal with signs and sign-gifts. (1Co.1.7; 7.7; and chs.12-14) However, there are seven epistles which mention *gifts*. What about these? Upon closer examination these are not related to the *sign-gift* issue at all. Notice,

1. Romans (1.11, whether this refers to sign-gifts is doubtful in light of Ro.12.6, *χάρισμα*, refers to gifts of service: prophecy/preaching, ministry, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, mercy. None of these are apostolic gifts.)
2. & 3. 1 Timothy 4.14; 2Timothy 1.6 (the *χάρισμα* refers to his pastoral gift and again, this is not an apostolic gift.)
4. Ephesians (*gift*, *δύμα* not *χάρισμα*, Eph.4.8, of offices: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor/teachers)
5. Philippians (*gift*, *δύμα*, Phl.4.17, refers to receiving *ministerial support*)



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6. James' reference (5.14, 15) is not the sign-gift/miracle of healing. The *sick, feeble, ἀσθενέω* (v.14) is saved from his *exhaustion, weariness, κάμνω*, through prayer. This is not the gift of healing described in Mk.16.18.

κάμνω, LXX: Job 10.1; 17.2, *weary*; Apocryphal books Wisdom, 15.9, *much labor*; 4Macc. 3.8, *very weary*; 7.13, *much labor*.

7. 1Pe.4.10, *as every man hath received the gift, χάρισμα*, which in verse 11 appears to be a *gift to serve* particularly as being God's spokesmen or servants. But there is nothing about any apostolic gift in this chapter or epistle.

So, apart from 1Corinthians and Revelation, no other epistle refers to signs and sign-gifts. So, first of all, unlike what we have seen in our day with so much emphasis on sign-gifts (especially speaking in tongues) the collective witness of the epistles concerning this matter is **almost negligible**. (healing the sick, cleansing lepers, casting out demons, raising the dead, prophesying in part, partial knowledge, speaking in and interpretation of tongues, harm from taking up snakes or ingesting poisons) What does this mean to us? It means that in the history of the early N.T. churches sign-gifts played an almost insignificant part in the lives of the majority of Christians.

Second, add to this, that, except for the book of Revelation, no epistle written after the close of the history of the book of Acts mentions sign-gifts at all.

Post Acts epistles are:

Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 2Timothy, Philemon, Hebrews, (I assume James, 1 & 2 Peter were written after the close of the history of Acts), 1-3 John, and Revelation.

So, both the pattern of the history of the Bible and the witness of the epistles coincide on the issue of sign-gifts being restricted to the days of the apostles. Some few remarks need to be made concerning the book of Revelation.

### Signs in the Book of Revelation

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At this place consider the testimony of the book of Revelation concerning signs and sign-gifts. This book reveals the state of affairs in the earth which leads up to the coming of Jesus Christ. (cf. Re.1.1,-3, 7, 8) It is a book about *last things*. As we have tried to show a pattern in the history of the Bible of silence, signs 30 years on either side of Christ's personal ministry, back to silence, so the book of Revelation breaks that long, long period of silence. What is it about this book and signs/miracles that stands out? Revelation is a book which marks a *resurgence* of signs and sign-gifts in the last days. Notice the Acts account of the prophecy of Joel. Clearly, there will be a resurgence of signs/miracles in the last days. Joel's prophecy appears to unfold in two stages. The first stage was after Christ's ascension (vss.16-18), and the second is in the time of the second coming of Jesus Christ (vss.19, 20).

*Acts 2.16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;  
17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:  
18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:  
19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:  
20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:*

The working of miracles in this time is especially for deceptive purposes. Satan shall work through the beast, otherwise known as the Antichrist, to deceive the masses of the unregenerate into worshipping him as god. (Re.13.4, 8, 12-14; 14.9; 19.20) The apostle Paul wrote very clearly on this matter.

*2Th.2.8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:  
9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,  
10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

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*11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*

*12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

Otherwise, the only others noted for working miracles in this book are the two witnesses of Revelation chapter 11. (Re.11.5, 6) Brethren, there has been a revival of signs/miracles. This is the testimony of God's word. There is *already* a great deception at work in the earth. These conspire to turn the masses to worship Antichrist as God. There is a danger that we face today as Christians for failing to understand, for failing to believe the truth of God's word concerning the cessation of the sign-gifts in the apostolic day and the resurgence of them today. Satan is the power that is behind it all.

*Re 13:2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.*

### **Third proof that the sign-gifts of the early church were restricted to the time of the apostles: The N.T. Scriptures teach that sign-gifts were temporary**

For the early churches, signs and sign-gifts provided a *particular* revelation of the will of God. This is one of the things that a reading of 1Corinthians chapter 13 will disclose. Sign-gifts (some call these *charismatic gifts* because of the use of the Greek word *χάρισμα* in chapter 12, [vss. 4, 9, 12, 28, 31]) were *particular* revelations from the Lord which helped the early churches through *certain* instances relative to the day in which they lived. There are many instances in the book of Acts where the Lord revealed special things relative to the need they had at the moment. (cf. Acts 5.12-15, 19, 20; 8.29; 9.10-12; 10.1-3, 9-16, 44-48; 12.7-10; 13.2, 9-11; 14.8-10; 16.9, 10, 16-18; 18.9-10; 19.6, 10, 11; 20.7-12, 22, 23, 29, 30) For example, when the apostle Paul was on his way to Jerusalem a prophet names Agabus foretold of those things relative to Paul's arrival to Jerusalem.

*Acts 21.10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.*

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*11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.*

Later, Paul prophesied of things relative to those that were with him in a ship during a terrible storm.

*Acts 27.22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.*

*23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,*

*24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.*

*25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.*

*26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.*

So, sign-gifts in the early churches supplied a *temporary, extra-biblical, particular* need. The Lord distributed among the membership of those churches *special* gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, prophesies, healings, miracles, discernments, tongues and interpretations of tongues. (1Co.12.7-11)

In 1Corinthians 13 it is written that *charity* will never fails. (v.8) It abides or continues without end.

*1Co 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*

The implication here is that faith and hope shall one day pass away.

*Ro 8:24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*

*2Co 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*

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Hope and faith give way to sight at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, that is not the case with the charismatic gifts. That there is a separation made between these two groups, between the special revelations and the gift of faith and hope, inclines us to this conclusion. Special revelations pass away long before faith and hope do, long before the second coming of Jesus Christ. This is proved by the word of God.

In 1Corinthians chapter 13, vss. 8-12 there is a contrast made between two things. There is that which is *in part* and that which is *perfect* in verse 8-12. Also, the term *that which* refers to some-*thing* not to someone. So, the passing away of special revelations is not due to Christ's coming, but because of some-*thing* which precedes His coming.

*1Co 13:8 Charity never faileth [ἐκπίπτει, 3ps. pres. ind. of ἐκ + πίπτω, to fall off]: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*

*shall cease, παύσονται, 3ppl. fut. ind. mid. of παύω; tongues shall of themselves cease, refrain, leave. Tongues basically dissipate.*

*shall fail, καταργηθήσονται, 3ppl. fut. ind. pass. of καταργέω, κατά at or as + ἄργέω is tss. to linger (2Pe.2.3) and adjective ἄργός, is tss. to be idle, barren, slow .*

*shall vanish away, καταργηθήσεται, 3ps. fut. ind. pass. of καταργέω.*

καταργέω, for prophecies and knowledge is tss. in the KJV with verbs meaning *to be cumbersome* (Lk.13.7); *to become without effect* (Ro.3.3); *to make void* (Ro.3.31); *to be destroyed* (Ro.6.6); *to be loosed* (Ro.7.2); *to be delivered* (Ro.7.6); *to bring to nought* (1Co.1.28); *to be put down* (1Co.15.24); *to be abolished* (2Co.3.13). **The Greek for shall fail, shall vanish away, shall be done away, καταργέω, are future, passives.**

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**The use of the passive verb indicates that there is some-thing future shall cause these special revelations to *vanish*.**

Charity is the grace of the love of God working in the hearts of His people. It is this love for Jesus Christ and for His people which *never falls off* ... Charity is contrasted to that *which shall be done away* ... Immediately we know that love will continue after *prophecies, tongues* and knowledge have ceased. That is what we now read.

9 For we know *in part,* and we prophesy *in part.*  
in particular in particular

*we know, γινώσκομεν, 1ppl. pres. ind. act.*

*we prophesy, προφητεύομεν, id.*

*in part, μέρους, gen. sing. of μέρος, and tss. in part, in particular (1Co.12.27), in some sort (Ro.15.15), somewhat (Ro.15.24).*

Paul says, we know a particular thing and we prophecy a particular thing. But ...

10 But when that which [that which, refers to some-thing, not to someone] is perfect [meaning, something full, complete] is come [in the aorist future tense the time is not as important as the fact that it does come], then that which [notice again, some-thing; this thing has already been stated as prophecies, tongues and knowledge] is in part [incomplete] shall be done away [καταργηθήσεται].

*perfect, τέλειον, nom. neut. which refers to a thing*

*is come, ἔλθη, 3ps. aor. subj. of ἔρχομαι; or simple comes. The time when it comes is not as important as the fact that it will come!*

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*shall be done away*, καταργηθήσεται, 3ps. fut. ind. **pass.** of καταργέω.

So, some-*thing* is coming that shall replace those-*things* that are passing away.

11 *When I was a child* (a babe unable to speak intelligibly), *I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away* [κατήργηκα, 1ps. perf. ind. act. of καταργέω] *childish things.*

*child*, νήπιος, νη not + ἔπος, to say a word; so a babe unable to speak or think for itself (cf. Lk.10.21). (cf. Mt.11.25; 21.16; Lk.10.21; Ro.2.20; 1Co.3.1; 13.11; Gal. 4.1, 3; Eph. 4.14; Heb. 5.13)

*put away*, κατήργηκα, 1ps. perf. ind. act. of καταργέω.

*put away* (v.11) is in the perfect tense which is the tense of completed action. The act of putting away is complete and he continued in the results of that action.

As a baby matures in knowledge so does its thinking, speech and actions. As the early churches matured the need for that which was in part began to be *put away*.

12 *For now we see through a glass, darkly* (the lenses through which Paul and the Corinthians looked was presently unclear or obscure because the they had not yet received that *perfect* thing which was coming.)

*darkly*, ἀνίγματι, dat. sing. of ἀίνιγμα, meaning *hardly, with difficulty*; from which we have our English, *enigma*, which with reference to seeing would mean obscure.

*but then face to face:*

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*Then* looks forward to some instance when that thing which is perfect is finally come. Then they would stand face to face with that which is ordained for a full revelation of the will of God.

This is why our confession state that the word of God is our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. We do not need any other revelation than this to walk with God.

*now* I know in part; but **then** shall I know                      even as also I am known.  
I shall take knowledge

*I shall know*, ἐπιγνώσομαι, 1ps. fut. ind. mid. of ἐπιγνώσκω, a full knowledge; know and participate in the result of that knowledge; I shall know and take part in that knowledge by coming to that perfect *thing*.

*I am known*, ἐπεγνώσθην, 1ps. aor. ind. pass. of ἐπιγνώσκω;

I take knowledge from *something* that reveals how I am viewed by the Lord in every way. There is nothing hidden in it. That is why the world hates it, rejects it, and would destroy it. They don't like what the Bible says about them. And rather than coming to the light that they might live, they continue in the darkness that they love already condemned.

*Joh 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.*

*21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

The issue is not *if* these sign-gifts will stop, because they will. The issue to be resolved is to answer *when* they will. By determining *what thing* it is that so perfectly instructs the children of God, then we know *when* the sign-gifts passed away. What is this *thing*?

In the book of James this perfect thing is identified.



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*Jas 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect (τέλειον) law of liberty, and continueth therein (or, continues about, παραμείνας, those things), he being not a forgetful (secret, ἐπιλάθων, to be hidden, see λανθάνω) hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

James clearly refers to the New Testament Scriptures. His book is a late letter probably written to the diaspora, the scattered twelve tribes of Israel. These were very likely being assembled more and more, and circulating to every congregation of Christ. (Col.4.16; 1Th.5.27) They were receiving these letters with the same authority that they held for the Old Testament Scriptures. They were the word of God.

*Jas 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

The completed revelation of God's word, that which is *perfect*, came into written form and displaced the *temporary, extra-biblical, particular* revelations. The Spirit of God revealed to the apostle Paul that there was coming a time when the churches would have all that they needed to keep and direct them unto the day of Christ.

Saints, as the N.T. Scriptures were received, began to form judgments increasingly based on the word of God. Today, because of the word of God we know those who speak the truth and those who do not. By the word of God we can discern who are His and who are not. By the word of God we know how to live and how not to live. It is only by the word of God that we know anything concerning the last days, the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. What need have we of any extra-biblical revelation? All that we need is in this book, the KJV Bible.

There is so much confusion today in Christendom, and that is because they have not received the word of God as that all-sufficient rule.

**Ps 119:11** *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.* **Ps 119:89** *LAMED. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.* **Ps 119:105** *NUN. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* **Ps 119:114** *Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.* **Ps 119:116** *Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and*

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*let me not be ashamed of my hope. Ps 119:133 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. Ps 119:160 Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.*

*Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

In view of the fact that the book of Revelation shows that there will be a *resurgence* of sign-gifts or working of miracles in the last days, this topic becomes all the more important. Today, many dear brethren in Christ have opened themselves up to deception because of their ignorance of the truth. The charismatic *gifts* movement today is that driving force of deception in the latter day.

*2Co 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*

*Mt.7.22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

*23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

God help us to decide the truth of this matter. We have family and friends wrapped up in this. It doesn't make them evil (though there are evil workers in this, for certain), but it does show that they are deceived.

In closing here is a summary of the things that we have stated today:

The first proof that sign gifts were temporary: there is a detectable pattern surrounding the personal, earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning the sign-gifts.

- There was a long interval of silence from the Old Testament prophets to the birth of Christ.
- About thirty years before our Lord begins His earthly ministry signs began to show again.

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- About thirty years after our Lord's ascension into glory, there has been another long interval of silence regarding the sign-gifts.

The second proof that sign gifts were temporary: the collective witness of the New Testament epistles reveals that the role of sign-gifts was almost negligible.

The third first proof that sign gifts were temporary: that thing which was *in part* would be superseded by the coming in of that which is *perfect*. These three witnesses coincide on the issue of sign-gifts.

This is instruction for those who know Christ. Do you know Him as the sinner's savior? Do you know that He died for you? If so, have you made that public profession of faith in Him? If so, have you received biblical baptism? Have you shown in a figure your life in Christ, that you died with Him, you were buried with Him, and you were raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

*Ro.10.9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

*11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

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