

# **APOSTOLIC GIFTS**

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Apostolic gifts include such things as tongue-speaking, miracles, and healings (those who promote the so-called "Toronto Blessing" even claim apostolic authority for such aberrations as holy laughter and being slain in the Spirit). Should we expect and pray for a manifestation of such gifts today?

We believe that such gifts, as gifts of the Spirit of God, have ceased since the death of the apostles and the closing of the canon of Scripture. If such things continue today, and are not sheer fraud or mere psychological phenomena, then they are the work of other spirits beside the Holy Spirit (II Thess. 2:9).

We say this on the basis of Scripture itself.

Scripture calls all such gifts "signs of the apostles" in II Corinthians 12:12. This means that they belonged only to the days of the apostles. In fact, there is no record in Scripture of these gifts being conferred by anyone other than the apostles (cf. especially Acts. 8:14-17). This alone ought to be sufficient proof that they have ceased with the death of the last of the apostles.

In any case, to believe in and seek their continuation is to deny the sufficiency of Scripture (II Tim. 3:16, 17, Rev. 22:18, 19).

The Westminster Confession of Faith says, "The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture, unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men" (I, 7).

These gifts were only ever given as signs to accompany and witness to the teaching and preaching of the apostles while the Scriptures were still incomplete (Heb. 2:3, 4). Now that we have the complete Word of God, inspired and infallible, we not only do not need these signs, but by asking for their return would be showing our refusal to receive and believe the Scriptures as the all-sufficient Word of God.

Not only that, but Scripture itself tells us that it is better than all such things. In contrast to actually seeing Jesus, even when He was transfigured on the mountain, Scripture is a "more sure Word" (II Pet. 1:19). Let us then give heed to it and not seek the return of apostolic gifts. Scripture is able to make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ." What more need we?