

VIII.1. Lambs to Rams: Love & Miracles

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

The focus God had in sending Jesus was His love for the centerpiece of His creation; mankind. Of the many things that brought about the result of that focus was the time of miracles. But, that age was not to last as was determined by Him in eternity. Once the purpose of miracles was fulfilled the only thing that would last, even into the next world, would be love. (*1 Cor 13:13*)

Joh 15:12 This is My commandment, That ye love one another, **as** I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man **lay down his life** for his friends. (*Emp. added*)

Mar 16:20 And **they** went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them*, and **confirming the word with signs following**. Amen. (*Emp. added*)

“Tongues”

1Co 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues (*Gk.1100-language [specifically one naturally un-acquired]*) of men and of angels, and have not charity (*Gk.26-agape-love*), I am become as sounding (*Gk.2278- to make a loud noise, that is, reverberate*) brass (*Gk.5475- through the idea of hollowing out as a vessel; copper*), or a tinkling (*Gk.214- to vociferate, that is, to wail; figuratively to clang*) cymbal.

This gives the idea of a very irritating noise like the scraping of finger nails on a chalk board. Paul compared the gift of speaking in an unlearned foreign dialect combined with not possessing a real desire for the well-being of others to such a nerve grating sound.

1Co 14:2 For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit (*his mind*) he speaketh mysteries.

Research has been done on those who profess to have the gift of “*speaking in tongues*” in present day Pentecostalism. It was found to compare with the jabbering of a toddler in which the toddler knows what they are saying but no one else does. (1 Cor 14:27)

1Co 14:7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? 8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? 9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

The saints at Corinth must have felt that speaking in an unlearned language would give them some sort of higher status in the church. Many sought after this gift of the Holy Spirit not realizing that it was not to be abused. Just as a musical instrument has certain sound qualities to recognize it by, i.e. a violin sounds different than a trumpet, so does the area dialect. Can a person who grew up in England understand another who grew up in Spain without having some formal training in that person’s language? No. It would be the same as though he was speaking into the air.

1Co 14:22 Wherefore tongues are **for a sign**, not to them that believe*, but **to them that believe not**: but prophesying (*Gk.4394- prediction [scriptural or other]*)** *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. 23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? 24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of

all, he is judged of all: 25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. (*Emp. added*)

*2Ti 4:20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

Act 11:28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified **by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. (*Emp. added*)

To be able to speak in an un-studied dialect was for the purpose of evangelizing to the foreigners they would meet after being dispersed among them. Preaching the pure unadulterated Gospel of salvation should always take president over everything else, no less the human ego. The message of truth is what convicts the heart into repentance and obedience and not the attempt to impress with personality. Such would have been the case with Trophimus. Since there were no unbelievers at Miletum to prove their words were from God, there was no need to abuse the gift of healing. So why do modern day “faith healers” profess they have this gift (a) when it is no longer available “through the laying on of the apostles hands” (*Act 8:18*) and (b) since no apostles are alive to have lain their hands on them for them to have received that ability in the first place?

1Co 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy (*Gk.4395- to foretell events, divine, speak under inspiration*), and forbid not to speak with tongues (*within the proper setting though*). 40 Let all things be done **decently and in order**. (*Emp. added*)

“Prophecy”

1Co 13:2 And though I have *the gift of prophecy* (*Gk.4394- prediction [scriptural or other]*), and understand all mysteries (*Gk.3466- a secret [through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites]*), and all

knowledge (*Gk.1108- gnosis- science*); and though I have all faith, so that I could remove (*Gk.3179- transfer*) mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

1Co 14:1 Follow after (*Gk.1377- to pursue*) charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather (*Gk.3123- more [in a greater degree]*) that ye may prophesy (*Gk.4395- foretell events*).

It would have been necessary for the church then to know future events that would affect the spreading of the Gospel, just as did John on the isle of Patmos in the Revelation.

1Co 14:4 He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

They were to first pursue love and then the gifts they were to desire were to be beneficial to the whole church. Preaching, teaching, revealing truth about future events and doing other works that make for instruction in righteousness and forewarning are all wonderful, but...if those things are done without the desire for the well-being of the souls being taught, it would all be done in vain (*that is for the one doing the instructing*). To understand the science of all things spiritual but not having grasped what love is would also be without merit. Even if a person had the faith, that Jesus spoke of in Mat 17:20 that could move mountains but lacked the affection or benevolence toward another human being, that very faith would be possessed for naught.

“Benevolence”

1Co 13:3 And though I bestow (*Gk.5595- to supply with bits, that is, to nourish*) all my goods (*Gk.5224- possessions*) to feed *the poor*, and though I give (*Gk.3860- to surrender, that is, yield up*) my body to be burned (*Gk.2545- to set on fire, consume*), and have not charity, it profiteth (*Gk.5623- to be useful, that is, to benefit*) me nothing.

Giving to a local charity to take care of the needy by selling all possessions a person has would be a noble gesture, but why? After answering Jesus' question concerning the Law and his adherence to it and thinking he was justified by his answer, the rich young ruler expected a pat on the back but Jesus knew his heart and gave him an answer he didn't expect.

Mar 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and **come**, take up the cross, and **follow Me**. 22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. 23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! (*Emp. added*)

There are different instances throughout the ages where people became martyrs by fire for reasons other than for the truth of the Gospel. The question again is, why, and for what purpose? Was it to promote the truth, love or justice or did it bring about the end of some sort of slavery? No self-serving sacrifice can amount to anything if the true reason for it was not to save one's or another's soul for the kingdom of God.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are My friends, **if ye do whatsoever I command you**. (*Emp. added*)

1Co 13:4 Charity suffereth long (*Gk.3114- to be long spirited, forbearing, patient*), and is kind (*Gk.5541- to show oneself useful, that is, act benevolently*); charity envieth (*Gk.2206- to have warmth of feeling for or against, be jealous over*) not; charity vaunteth (*Gk.4068- braggart, to boast*) not itself, is not puffed up (*Gk.5448- in the primary sense of blowing; to inflate, that is, [figuratively] make proud [haughty]*),

Not only does love have to put up with a lot, it cannot be envious or boastful.

1Co 13:5 Doth not behave itself unseemly (*Gk.807- to be [that is, act] unbecoming*), seeketh (*Gk.2212- to worship, or [in a bad sense] to plot, endeavor*) not her own (*Gk.1438- own selves*), is not easily provoked (*Gk.3947- to sharpen alongside*), thinketh (*Gk.3049- to take an inventory, that is, estimate*) no evil (*Gk.2556- worthless*);

The one who possesses such a care for others will be known for it. They aren't self-centered and it would be hard to "find their goat", so to speak, or push their buttons. They understand the saying; "if you don't have anything nice to say about someone don't say anything at all" and they don't keep a record, memory or otherwise, of someone else's mistakes.

1Co 13:6 Rejoiceth (*Gk.5463- to be full of "cheer"*) not in iniquity (*Gk.93- injustice; moral wrongfulness [of character, life or act]*), but rejoiceth (*Gk.4796- to sympathize in gladness, congratulate*) in the truth;

Love cannot laugh about sin (*such as in filthy jokes, etc.*) because sin is what separates man from his God. And condemnation is no laughing matter. On the other hand, it spends more energy in the promotion of truth.

1Co 13:7 Beareth (*Gk.4722- to roof over, that is, [figuratively] to cover with silence [endure patiently]*) all things, believeth (*Gk.4100- to have faith [in, with respect to, a person] that is, credit*) all things, hopeth (*Gk.1679- to expect or confide*) all things, endureth (*Gk.5278- to stay under [behind], figuratively to undergo, that is, bear [trials], have fortitude, persevere*) all things.

Not only does love put up with a lot it does so without comment or rebuttal. It has faith in people with the understanding that everyone has some level of good in them. Love expects to be able to confide in those who are just and strives to persevere through the many trials that come to faithful Christians.

1Co 13:8 Charity never faileth (*Gk.1601- to drop away; become inefficient*): but whether *there be* **prophecies**, they shall fail; whether *there be* **tongues**, they shall cease; whether *there be* **knowledge**, it shall **vanish away** (*Gk.2673-to be [render] entirely idle [useless]*). (*Emp. added*)

Benevolence can never lose its affect. But the miraculous gifts:

1Co 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man **to profit withal**. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of **wisdom**; to another the word of **knowledge** by the same Spirit; 9 To another **faith** (*this is the miraculous faith needed to literally move mountains*) by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of **healing** by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of **miracles** (*Philip in Acts 8:6*); to another **prophecy**; to another **discerning** (*Gk.1253- judicial estimation: disputation*) **of spirits** (*Gk.4151- vital principle*); to another *divers* kinds of **tongues**; to another the **interpretation of tongues** (*to be used in a mixed audience where one man would speak and another would translate to those of differing dialects*): 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally (*Gk.2398- separately*) as He will. (*Emp. added*)

Act 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, **as the Spirit gave them utterance** (*Gk.669- to enunciate plainly, that is, declare*). (*Emp. added*)

Rom 1:11 For I long to see you, that I may **impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established** (*Gk.4741- to confirm*); (*Emp. added*)

The miraculous gifts of the Spirit, determined by Him as to who received which gift for the benefit of the church, had their purpose back before the written word was being copied and shared among the congregations. In order to convince someone of the truthfulness of their message, the saint

possessing whatever gift would perform the miracle bestowed on them by the Holy Spirit thus confirming the word they spoke was in fact from God. Why?

1Co 13:9 For we know in part (*Gk.3313- [to get as a section or allotment]; a division or share*), and we prophesy in part. 10 But when **that** (*not He*) which is **perfect** (*Gk.5046- complete*) is come, then that which is in part shall be done away (*Gk.2673*). (*Emp. added*)

Once the complete canonization (*standard or rule*) of scripture had come, the imperfect ability to perform miracles thus ended. And to be sure that no man chose which writing was authorized and which was not, all scripture by definition proved itself to be or not to be inspired.

2Ti 3:16 **All scripture** is given **by inspiration of God** (*Gk.2315-divinely breathed*), and is profitable (*Gk.5624- helpful, advantageous*) for **doctrine** (*Gk.1319-instruction, learning, teaching*), for **reproof** (*Gk.1650- proof, conviction: evidence*), for **correction** (*Gk.1882- straightening up again*), for **instruction** (*Gk.3809- tutorage, that is, education or training*) in righteousness: 17 **That** (*denotes purpose*) the man of God may be **perfect** (*Gk.739- fresh, that is, [by implication] complete*), **thoroughly furnished** (*Gk.1822- to finish out; to equip fully*) unto all good works. (*Emp. added*)

It was a gradual process, but as the New Testament writings were shared and spread among the churches, they became universally recognized as inspired and authoritative.

“The books of the Bible possess their own authority and indeed had this authority long before there were any councils of the church.” (*pg. 153*) Neil R. Lightfoot: *How We Got the Bible*

1Co 13:11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood (*Gk.5426- to exercise the mind*) as a child, I thought (*Gk.3049- to take inventory*) as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

In comparing miracles to the canon of scripture Paul was stating how much different the “incomplete” was to what had not yet been, at that time, “complete”. He foresaw the day when there would be no more apostles to pass on the gifts that had been given to them to convince the unbeliever*. His analogy fit. Then there would be no need to think immaturely because all the information necessary to lead someone to Christ would be found in one source. And that source (*the Bible*) would be available to everyone.

*Act 8:18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

Translated into English, “early in 1526 the first copies were smuggled into England and bought with enthusiasm” but to the reluctance of the Roman Catholic church which “condemned the translation. Copies were obtained and burned in public ceremony.” (pg. 178)

Neil R. Lightfoot: How We Got the Bible

1Co 13:12 For now we see through a glass (*Gk.2072-mirror*), darkly (*Gk.135- an obscure saying [“enigma”], that is, [abstractly] obscureness*); but then face (*Gk.4383-the front [as being towards view], the countenance*) to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known (*Gk.1921- to know upon some mark, that is, recognize, by implication to become fully acquainted with*).

At the time Paul wrote to the church at Corinth the completed letters of the God inspired New Testament writers had not yet been compiled. Once completed and compiled the writings we know as the Holy Bible (*hag'-ee-os bib'-los*) would be able to be recognized and be fully acquainted with. We now have the ability to do something even the apostles of Christ, with all their miraculous powers, could not do; become fully acquainted with the word of God! Are we taking that ability for granted?

1Co 13:13 And now abideth (*Gk.3306- to stay [in a given place, state, relation or expectancy], remain*) faith (*Gk.4102*), hope (*Gk.1680- expectation*), charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity (*Gk.26- agape-love*).

1Pe 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, 5 Who are **kept by** the power of **God** (*the Gospel- Rom 1:16*) **through faith** unto (*for the purpose of*) salvation (*being saved*) ready **to be revealed** (*Gk.601- to take off the cover, that is, disclose*) in the last time. (*Emp. added*)

Rom 8:25 But if **we hope for that we see not**, then do we with patience **wait** for it. (*Emp. added*)

Our faith and hope will end at death when all things will be revealed but love will last eternally.

VIII.1. Questions

1. What actually does it mean to have the gift of “tongues”? a) to be able to speak gibberish like a toddler; b) to be able to speak in an unlearned, unknown language; c) to be able to debate.
2. True or false: This gift exists today. a) true; b) false; c) the text does not say.
3. Why was Trophimus left at Miletum sick when Paul had the gift of healing? a) the gift of healing came and went for those possessing it; b) there were no unbelievers at Miletum; c) both a and b.
4. Who decided who would receive which miraculous gift? a) the apostles; b) Jesus, c) Holy Spirit.
5. Why was it important for Paul to impart miraculous gifts on the Roman church? a) in order to establish them; b) so they would be able to make a name for themselves; c) because they didn’t have any of the gifts to begin with.
6. Why can men not be credited with the canonization of scripture? a) men weren’t there when the scripture was being written; b) scripture possesses its own authority; c) neither a nor b.
7. Why did Paul say he once spoke and understood as a child? a) because he was once a child himself and didn’t understand; b) he was comparing the miraculous with the canon of scripture; c) because there was a time in his life when he didn’t possess the gifts of an apostle.
8. What ability do we have that even the apostles lacked? a) to know for certain that Jesus is coming back; b) to become fully acquainted with the word of God; c) to know we are closer to our own salvation than when we first believed.