

**DISCUSSION:**

1. **God has spoken to us today through Jesus.** He 1:1-2A.
2. **Jesus has spoken to us today through scripture.** Jn 16:12-13A; Ep 4:8, 11-13 (the first two offices required supernatural spiritual gifts which the apostles received by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the prophets by the laying on of an apostle's hands); Jude 3; 2 Ti 3:16-17.
3. **God has spoken all He is going to say to us today through scripture.**
  - A. John 20:30-31.
  - B. 2 Pe 1:3, 15, 20-21.
  - C. Lu 16:27-31.
  - D. 1 Co 13:8. Scaffolding is to constructing a building what inspiration was to constructing the New Testament—they enable construction, but once they have served their purpose, i.e. once construction is complete, they are done away.
  - E. 1 Co 13:9-10, 11, 12, 13.
    - 1) “Perfect” means “complete” (NKJV footnote), not sinless. Though all accountable human beings have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Ro 3:23), Paul used the same Greek adjective in 1 Co 2:6 to describe certain human beings.
    - 2) “When the perfect comes” is not a reference to the second coming of Jesus. The text says faith, hope, and love will abide after the perfect or complete comes. Faith and hope will not abide after the second coming of Jesus. Ro 8:24; He 11:1.
    - 3) The reason Paul even mentions the fact that supernatural spiritual gifts would cease was to motivate the Corinthians to concentrate less on them and more on *agape* love.
      - a. This, however, would only be effective if the Corinthians understood Paul to be saying that the supernatural spiritual gifts would cease within a reasonably short period of time.
      - b. To illustrate, while the internal combustion engine has replaced the horse as man's principle mode of transportation, predicting that fact in AD 50 would not have motivated people to begin selling their horses in anticipation of the change.
  - F. There is no evidence that anyone still has supernatural spiritual gifts. The difference between what we read about in scripture and what some people claim today is truly the difference between light and darkness. Consider the stark contrast between the New Testament gifts of healing and modern “faith” healings.
    - 1) New Testament: All diseases, many visible—leprosy, withered hand, death, blindness, Malchus' ear, lameness, etc. Immediate. Ac 3:6-7. Complete. Mt 12:10A, 13. First person accounts. Mt 9:35; 1 Co 14:22A; Mt 12:38-39A (they were not evil because they sought a sign, but because they had just seen a sign and still did not believe; Mt 12:22. Jesus did give them another sign, the resurrection; Mt 12:39B-40). Hostile witnesses. Mt 12:22-24; Ac 4:14-16. Verifiable. Jn 9:13-34. Failed attempts fault of healer. Mt 17:19-20A. Money not a consideration. Mt 10:8.
    - 2) Modern: Select diseases, no visible diseases. Gradual. Partial. Some second, usually third person testimonials. No hostile witnesses. Never verifiable. Failed attempts blamed on healee. Money almost always a consideration.
  - G. Since the New Testament was completed and the apostles and those upon whom they bestowed supernatural spiritual gifts died, God has been exclusively speaking to us through scripture. If the Holy Spirit were still revealing truth through men, He would not be telling us anything that He has not already told us in scripture.

## APPLICATIONS:

1. **We walk by faith, not by sight, i.e. we do not audibly hear the voice of God.** As much as we might want confirmation of the will of God separate from the word of God, it just does not work that way. We must:
  - A. Not test God. God has given us all the information and means of processing it we need to learn His will—we must not insist that He provide or prove it any other way.
  - B. Realize that anything other than the word of God that convinces us something is the will of God could be of the devil. Therefore, the only way to know if it in fact is the will of God is for us to find it in the word of God.
  - C. Appreciate that while God uses other people's words and examples as well as our own experiences to help teach us His will, He only does so if these things spring from a proper understanding and application of His written word.
  - D. Understand why we walk by faith, not by sight.
    - 1) It is an excellent way of testing whether or not we are truly devoted to God.
    - 2) We grow in ways we never would if God directly answered every question we ever had.
2. **We must respect the silence of God.** De 29:29. "The concealment's of the Bible are as Divine as its revelations. Infinite wisdom was required as much to determine of what man should be ignorant as what man should know. Indeed, since, in regard to all matters connected with the unseen spiritual world, man is entirely dependent upon Divine revelation, the limits of that revelation must necessarily mark out also the domain of human ignorance, as the shores of a continent become the boundaries of a trackless and unfathomed ocean. Hence it is, that the silence of the Bible is to be revered equally with its teachings and that to intrude into things not seen and not revealed evinces the vanity of a fleshly mind as much as to misinterpret and pervert the express statements of the Scriptures" (Richardson). Isaiah 8:19-20.
3. **If people claim God is speaking to us through them, they must offer the same proof as Jesus, the apostles, and the prophets.** This include us if we think God is speaking to us.
4. **People who claim to audibly hear the voice of God and those who follow them undermine the credibility of Christian faith.** "There are two ways to destroy the Biblical miracles. The first way is to deny them outright or to rationalize them, as the liberal does. The second, more effective way is make everything a miracle. For example, if I were to say that the rising of the sun in the East is a miracle, what would it be if it rose some morning in the West? If I say every birth is a miracle, what then is the virgin birth of Christ? Was not the conception of Christ different from all other conceptions? Is it not that difference which makes it a miracle? If I make everything a miracle, remove the unusual from it, I have destroyed miracle as a unique category" (Floyd). If Jesus, the apostles, and the prophets did nothing different than what people do today, then there is no reason for anyone to believe the gospel.
5. **The wisdom of James 1:5-7 comes as a result of using prayer to lead us to properly understand and apply the word of God.** 2 Ti 2:15. Yes, prayer and the providence of God are powerful (Ja 5:16B; 1 Ki 18:42-45; Ja 5:17-18), but they do not come with signs, i.e. proofs that the conclusions we have drawn are in fact the will of God. We get to wisdom by faith not sight.
6. **Be careful how we express ourselves.** I understand what people can mean when after diligently studying the scriptures and the situation before them they say, "I believe God is telling me to ..." In other words, they are saying that they believe they have the answer God is trying to communicate to them through His word. However, I think it is important for us to reasonably try to make sure we are fully understood less other people misunderstand how God speaks to us today AND I think we need to be very careful to interpret such statements in the best possible way.