

Sunday, March 18, 2018—I Corinthians 14:36-40 Don't Be Ignorant Concerning Spiritual Gifts

I Corinthians 14:36

- **What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?**
- Paul asks essentially two questions in verse:
 - Came the word of God out from you? —Or, did the word of God originate with you? Are you the Corinthians the source of the word of God?
 - Or came it unto you only?—In other words, did it arrive or reach you only i.e., are you Corinthians the only ones who possess the word of God?
- This verse proves what I have been saying about the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge being the mouth piece of God during the early stages of the body of Christ. These gifts were the mechanism through which God was making known his word while it was still in the process of being written.
- I Corinthians 1:5—the phrase “are enriched by him” is in the present tense. So, the Corinthians were already in the state of having been “enriched” by Christ i.e., “made rich or wealthy; fertilized; supplied with that which is desirable, useful or ornamental,” according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*.
 - The Corinthians had been “enriched” by Christ “in all utterance, and in all knowledge.” So, their enrichment in Christ was in the specific categories of “utterance” and “knowledge.”
 - Acts 2:4—the word “utterance” is used in connection with speaking in tongues.
 - I Corinthians 14:9
 - I Corinthians 12:8—“word of knowledge” was one of the gifts that was being given during the formative stage of the dispensation of grace.
 - I Corinthians 13:1-2—when Paul begins to address the function of spiritual gifts in the Corinthian church he specifically mentions “tongues” and “knowledge.”
 - I Corinthians 1:7—that Paul is contextually talking about spiritual gifts in verse 5 is evident from verse 7, “so that ye come behind in no gift.”
 - II Corinthians 8:7

- I Corinthians 1:6— Once again please remember that verse 6 is a continuation of the sentence that started in verse 4.
 - “Even” connects the beginning of verse 6 with the end of verse 5. So the enrichment in “all utterance” and “all knowledge” that had been given to the Corinthians by Jesus Christ had something to do with the testimony of Christ being “confirmed” in the Corinthians.
 - According to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* the English word “confirmed” means “made more firm; strengthened; established.” The Greek word translated “confirmed” in I Corinthians 1:6 is elsewhere translated “stablisheth,” “stablished,” and “established” by the King James translators.
 - I Corinthians 1:6—so in the context of 1 Corinthians 1 what “confirmed” the “testimony of Christ” in the Corinthians? It was the functioning of the gifts of tongues (“utterance”) and “knowledge” in verse 5.
 - I Corinthians 14:22—tongues were for a sign. The Greek word translated “sign” in this verse is the word *sēmeion*. *Sēmeion* is variously rendered as sign (50x), miracle (23x), wonder (3x), and token (1x) by the King James translators. A sign is a miracle, wonder, or token that authenticates or confirms that a man and/or his message is from God.
 - I Corinthians 1:22—the Jews required a sign. From the time God began dealing with Israel as a nation he did so in accordance with a program of signs.
 - I Corinthians 1:6—it was through the sign gifts of “utterance,” i.e., tongues and “knowledge” that the testimony of Christ was “confirmed” in the Corinthians.
- I Corinthians 1:7— again please keep in mind that verse 7 is a continuation of the same sentence that began in verse 4. Through this enrichment in “all utterance” and “all knowledge” that we saw in verse 5 the “testimony of Christ” was “confirmed” in them in verse 6, as a result in verse 7 the Corinthians find themselves a state where they “come behind in no gift.”
 - In other words, there is no lack or wanting of spiritual gifts in Corinth. There was no spiritual gift that the Corinthians were found wanting with respect to.
 - Why would that be the case? First, recall who requires a sign. The Jews (I Cor. 1:22).
 - Acts 18:4-7—the Corinthian church met in a man’s house that joined hard to the synagogue. Therefore, the Corinthian church, perhaps more than any other, had a direct relationship and interaction with Jewish people who all required a sign in order to believe. Therefore, it makes sense that the Corinthian church would “come behind in gift.”

- I Corinthians 14:36—all of this exposure to and experience with spiritual gifts had caused the Corinthians to think they had cornered the market on the word of God. They thought the word of God began and ended with them.
 - This also explains why Paul had to show them the more excellent way of “charity.”

I Corinthians 14:37

- **If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.**
- In its context, this verse is referring to Paul’s discussion of the spiritual gifts in Chapter 12-14.
- God the Holy Spirit manifested in the Corinthians via the gifts is going to confirm Paul’s testimony regarding the gifts set forth in these three chapters. A true prophet or spiritual person would bear witness to the fact that Paul’s instructions regarding this topic are the commandments of the Lord.
- God is not going to reveal or manifest anything via the gifts that contradicts what Paul has written by inspiration of God.
 - Gifts were given to the body of Christ for its edification during its infancy.
 - The gifts are temporary.
 - Charity never fails.
 - Prophecy is to be preferred over tongues.
 - Gifts in the church are to edify the entire church.
 - Until the word of God is complete there are rules and guidelines for how the gifts should function in the local church to facilitate order and edification.
- A spiritual man does not seek to extend the gifts beyond the just limits of the word of God rightly divided.

I Corinthians 14:38

- **But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.**
- I Corinthians 12:1—chapters 12 through 14 comprise Paul’s instructions regarding spiritual gifts if one wishes to avoid being ignorant.

- Unfortunately, in our day many are ignorant regarding this topic if not outright rebellious. Every function that God accomplished for the body of Christ via spiritual gifts has been replaced and superseded by the sufficiency of God's written word.
 - II Timothy 3:16-17
- Ignorance of Paul's teaching concerning spiritual gifts has harmed the lives of untold numbers of believers. People will fight you when they perceive you are trying to take away or diminish their experiences.