

# SIGNS, WONDERS, MIRACLES

*Purpose for and Consistency of Usage throughout Scripture*

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30, 31).

## **History of Signs, Wonders, and Miracles**

As will be shown, the manifestation of *signs, wonders, and miracles* in Scripture is inseparably connected with two things:

- 1) *The Nation of Israel.*
- 2) *The Kingdom.*

Both *Israel and the kingdom MUST* be in view *at the same time* for signs, wonders and miracles to exist. If there is an absence of either one (either *Israel, or the kingdom*), a manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles — as seen throughout parts of the Old Testament, the gospel accounts, and the Book of Acts — *CANNOT* exist.

In this respect, any purported appearance of signs, wonders, and miracles *apart from Israel and the kingdom being in view can only be false*, for such an appearance would be out of line with the reason for the existence of this supernatural phenomenon in Scripture.

And, in order to properly understand the manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles during time covered by the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts, a person must have a correct foundation upon which to build. A person must begin in the Old

Testament and trace the history of this supernatural work into the New Testament. *ONLY THEN* will he be in a position to understand various, necessary things about this supernatural phenomenon.

### 1) *Signs, Wonders, and Miracles in the Old Testament*

Signs, wonders, and miracles, performed *through individuals*, were manifested only on *two occasions* in all of the Old Testament.

The first manifestation was by Moses, Aaron, and Joshua. They were manifested by Moses and Aaron pertaining to Israel's deliverance from Egypt, with a view to the nation's entrance into the land of Canaan; and they were manifested by Moses' successor, Joshua, pertaining to Israel's subsequent entrance into the land of Canaan (Ex. 4:29-31; 7:10ff; Deut. 6:22, 23; Joshua 3:7ff; 10:12-14).

The second manifestation occurred some five hundred years later. They were manifested by Elijah, then by his successor, Elisha, (I Kings 17:1ff; II Kings 2:13ff).

Outside of these two occasions there is not *a single reference* to an individual being empowered to perform signs, wonders, and miracles throughout all of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Numerous miracles are recorded in these Scriptures (*e.g.*, the burning bush which was not consumed [Ex. 3:2], the sun being moved back ten degrees on the dial [Isa. 38:7, 8], the three Israelites being protected in the fiery furnace [Dan. 3:19-25], or Jonah being raised from the place of death in the sea [Jonah 1:17-2:10]). But these were miraculous works *performed directly by God*, not by individuals whom God had empowered to perform them.

Note that the manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles during the days of Moses, Aaron, and Joshua was in relation to *Israel and the kingdom*. Supernatural manifestations of power occurred *relative to Israel being removed from Egypt and being established in the land of Canaan, within a theocracy*.

Thus, *a first-mention principle* was set forth at this point in Scripture, establishing an unchangeable pattern regarding the manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles. Any future manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles of the nature seen at the time of the Exodus *MUST be brought to pass with Israel in view, and*

it *MUST* have to do with the kingdom.

During the days of Elijah and Elisha the people of Israel had been established in the land, within a theocracy, for about five hundred years. But, because of continued disobedience on the part of the people, the theocracy never came anywhere close to reaching the heights which God had intended. The theocracy reached its greatest heights during the days of David and his son Solomon (though, again, far from the heights which God had intended). But after that, following the division of the kingdom, things began to go in another direction entirely, moving even farther away from that which God had commanded.

And it was during these days that Elijah was called forth (with Elisha finishing his ministry) to call the nation to repentance. The manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles accompanying their ministry pertained to *Israel and the kingdom*. They had to, for a *first-mention principle* had previously been established; and any future manifestation had to be *EXACTLY in accord with the way matters were set forth at the beginning* (cf. I Kings 18:37; Mal. 4:5, 6).

These signs, wonders, and miracles were simply *the credentials* of those manifesting them in Israel's presence, with the signs themselves, by their very nature, setting forth a message (like Christ using Jonah as a sign, which foreshadowed a miraculous deliverance of God's two firstborn Sons — Christ and Israel — from the place of death [cf. Matt. 12:38-40]).

Through a manifestation of supernatural powers accompanying the message, Israel was to recognize that the messenger had been sent from God; and, accordingly, the people were to heed the combined message set forth by the manifested signs and that proclaimed by the messenger (Ex. 4:1-9, 29-31).

The people of Israel though failed to heed this message; the nation didn't repent. And the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities followed (722 B.C. and 605 B.C. respectively).

"The times of the Gentiles" began with the Babylonian captivity, has lasted to the present day, and will last until the end of the Tribulation. *This is simply a prolonged, uninterrupted period of time — lasting about 2,600 years — during which Israel MUST dwell APART from a theocracy and REMAIN SCATTERED among the Gentile*

*nations. And the Gentiles, among whom Israel dwells, will HOLD THE SCEPTRE throughout this time.*

## 2) Signs, Wonders, and Miracles in the New Testament

After moving through almost 1,500 years of Jewish history and seeing signs, wonders, and miracles manifested during only two different periods by only five different men within these periods (by Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha), things suddenly changed. *Israel's Messiah* (following the ministry of His forerunner, John the Baptist) appeared to Israel with a message pertaining to the kingdom of the heavens; and *this message was accompanied by numerous signs, wonders, and miracles* (Matt. 4:17-25; 8:1ff).

Then, in conjunction with and very early in His ministry, Christ called *twelve disciples* to help carry this message; and *they were empowered to perform signs, wonders, and miracles in connection with their ministry as well* (Matt. 10:5-8).

(Also, Christ later "appointed" *seventy others* to go "before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come" — though very little is said about them in the gospel accounts — and *He empowered them to perform signs, wonders, and miracles as well* [Luke 10:1-19].

Thus, at this time, there was a manifestation of supernatural signs in the camp of Israel *UNLIKE ANYTHING* heretofore seen in the history of the nation.)

Christ had been sent *ONLY* to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24), and Christ sent the disciples whom He had called *to Israel alone* (Matt. 10:6).

Both Christ and His disciples went to Israel with *the same message and the same accompanying manifestation of supernatural powers. This was a message pertaining to the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to the nation, attended by a manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles of AN UNPRECEDENTED NATURE.*

Whether it was Jesus or His disciples proclaiming the proffered kingdom, *signs, wonders, and miracles accompanied their ministry and formed the credentials of those carrying the message.*

These manifestations of power were *supernatural events which, by their very nature, set forth a message themselves; and these signs,*

as well, authenticated the message being proclaimed by the Messenger as being true and from God (John 3:1, 2; Acts 2:22; cf. Ex. 4:1-9).

The religious leaders in Israel were to see these signs, wonders, and miracles and understand not only the message set forth by the signs but that the Messengers were God-sent, carrying God's message for His people.

Then, believing and understanding the message which they had both seen (through the signs) and heard (from the Messengers), they were responsible for carrying this message to the people of Israel (cf. Ex. 4:29-31; Num. 13:1-26).

However, exactly the opposite occurred. The religious leaders *refused to believe* the message, *rejecting both the signs and the Messengers*; and they, in their unbelief, then sought to *subvert the message and discredit the signs and the Messengers* in the presence of the Jewish people (Matt. 12:14-32).

(This is why Christ, near the end of His earthly ministry, in no uncertain terms, condemned the actions of the Scribes and Pharisees — the fundamental religious leaders of that day [Matt. 23:1ff]. They had seen the signs and heard the Messengers; but they *had rejected* the message and had sought to do away with the accompanying supernatural powers, mainly through attacking the central Messenger, through attacking Christ.

The Scribes and Pharisees *had rejected the signs and had sought to discredit Christ in the eyes of the people, bringing about reproach on the Messenger and casting doubt on His message* [e.g., Matt. 9:27-34; 12:22-24; cf. John 12:10, 11]. And, whether by word or deed, this resulted in their bearing a *false witness* to the people of Israel.)

The Scribes and Pharisees, the main body of religious leaders in Israel (one Pharisal sect), controlled, more than any other group (by their very numbers), the religious life of the nation. And these religious leaders had “shut up the kingdom of the heavens against men [*lit.*, ‘...in the presence of men’ — *i.e.*, among those in Israel]” (Matt. 23:13). These religious leaders had no interest in entering the kingdom, and they were doing all within their power to prevent others from entering as well.

And all of this had its end result in Israel's *rejection* of both

the message and the Messenger, *the removal* of the kingdom of the heavens from Israel, *the crucifixion* of Israel's Messiah, and *God bringing into existence* a separate and distinct entity to be the recipient of that which had been offered to and rejected by Israel. Israel had failed to bring forth fruit in relation to the kingdom of the heavens, and *the one new man* "in Christ" was called into existence to be accorded the opportunity to bring forth fruit in this realm (Matt. 21:18, 19, 33-43; cf. I Peter 2:9-11).

But, though the kingdom was taken from Israel and the Church was called into existence to be the recipient of this offer, there was a *re-offer* of the kingdom to Israel, beginning at the time of the inception of the Church (Acts 2:1ff). And, if for no other reason, this is evident because of *the continuance of signs, wonders, and miracles*.

That would be to say, if God had terminated His dealings with Israel relative to the kingdom of the heavens at or before the time that the Church was called into existence, *signs, wonders, and miracles would have ceased to exist at that point in time (33 A.D.)*.

These supernatural manifestations of power had *NOTHING* to do with *the one new man* "in Christ" (who is "neither Jew nor Greek" [Gal. 3:28]). They had to do with *Israel ALONE* (I Cor. 1:22), and they had to do with *Israel in relation to the kingdom*.

These were *supernatural works, manifested through empowered individuals as they carried the message to Israel* (Acts 2:4; 3:1ff; 4:29-33; 5:12ff; 6:8ff).

Then, when Gentiles began to be added to the body of Christ, they were manifested among saved Gentiles (Acts 10:45, 46; Rom. 15:18, 19) and within Churches comprised of saved Gentiles, such as the Church in Corinth (I Cor. 12-14). And a manifestation of supernatural works after this fashion could only have been *centered* around the thought of *provoking Israel* "to jealousy" (Rom. 10:19; 11:11, 14 [*ref. indented data ending this section, next page*]).

That is, God was using those whom Israel considered *Gentile dogs* to manifest supernatural powers which naturally belonged to Israel *in order to provoke the nation to jealousy*.

And, between a segment of *the one new man* "in Christ" carrying the message to Israel and another segment seeking to provoke

the nation to jealousy — all being done through a manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles — the Jewish people were dealt with in what might be considered *A MAXIMUM MANNER*.

In one respect, God pulled out all stops (*cf.* Luke 10:13-24; 11:29-32); but the religious leaders in Israel would still have nothing to do with the message. Thus, the nation continued in unbelief.

(The matter of signs being manifested among Gentiles during the Acts period could be understood as extending beyond that dealt with in the preceding, though existing and being used by God to provoke Israel to jealousy.

This manifestation of *signs* among Gentiles occurred during the period when the message was being carried beyond Jerusalem and Judaea to Samaria and the Gentile nations, in accordance with Christ's commission to His disciples prior to His departure [Acts 1:8], with resulting conditions as seen in Mark 16:15-18.

But, of course, *NONE* of the preceding could be true beyond the Acts period [*ref.* the author's books, *The Acts Period, Message in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and From Acts to the Epistles*].

Again, when God dealt with both *the old creation* in "Jacob" and *the new creation* "in Christ" relative to the proffered kingdom, at the same time — *is not an easy period to understand*. But, *IF* the preceding is ignored, *the Acts period becomes an impossible period to properly understand.*)

## Purpose for Signs, Wonders, and Miracles

Most of the manifestations of supernatural power during the ministry of Christ and the Apostles (during the periods covered by both the gospel accounts and by the Book of Acts) centered around *bodily healings*. This was the manner in which they were introduced during Christ's ministry (Matt. 4:23-25), and this was the manner in which they were brought to a close about three decades later during Paul's ministry (Acts 28:7-9).

(And along with bodily healings, *death* was no longer irreversible [Mark 5:35-43; John 11:1-47; Acts 9:36-42; 20:7-12], *material needs* were miraculously supplied [food, drink, etc. (John 2:1-11; 6:1-14; Acts 5:19-23; 16:26)], there was *deliverance from demonic spirits* [Matt. 12:22; Acts 5:16], and *angelic ministry* was abundantly available [Matt. 4:11; Acts 12:7, 8, 23].)

The signs, centering around bodily healings (though including other related things), reflected on and had to do with a dual aspect of one thing: *the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel, with the kingdom in view.*

1) The signs showed *an existing condition (sickness, seen prior to the healings).*

2) The signs also showed *another condition which could exist (restoration of the nation, in a restored kingdom, seen following the healings).*

And *deliverance for the nation* after the fashion set forth by the signs was contingent on *national repentance, followed by baptism* (cf. Matt. 3:1-11; 4:17, 23-25; 10:5-8; Acts 2:37, 38; 3:19-21).

These *signs, wonders, and miracles*, along with being the credentials of the Messengers of the gospel of the kingdom, were manifestations of supernatural powers (powers necessary to bring the signs to pass) depicting *Israel's present spiritual condition and showing how this condition could change, if...*

These same manifestations of supernatural powers could and would — contingent on Israel's repentance — bring to pass that of which the signs spoke, *i.e., Israel's supernatural healing, accompanied by God's supernatural provision for the nation in all areas of life, dealt with in all the other various signs. And this deliverance, as previously seen, would occur in a restored kingdom.*

### 1) *Israel's Present Spiritual Condition*

Israel's spiritual condition prior to God's miraculous healing is revealed numerous places in Scripture. But note Isaiah's description of the nation in this respect:

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

Why should ye be stricken anymore? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness



in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (1:4-6).

This was the way Isaiah introduced Israel at the very beginning of his prophecy.

But he didn't remain at this point, *depicting Israel's spiritual condition during his day (a condition which has continued to the present day)*. Isaiah went on, at the beginning, to relate the main subject matter of his prophecy.

*Israel was sick, but Israel could and one day would be cured of this sickness.* And the latter is what Isaiah went on to also relate. Israel's condition was *NOT permanent*. The nation *WOULD one day be healed*.

But this would occur *ONLY AFTER God's conditions had been met*: "If ye be willing and obedient..." (1:19a; cf. v. 18). *ONLY THEN* would the Lord turn His hand, purge the nation, and restore her rulers (1:25, 26). *ONLY THEN* would redemption occur, and only then would the kingdom with all its glory be restored to Israel (1:27-2:5).

## 2) *Israel's Future Supernatural Restoration*

But when will Israel repent, allowing *healing* to occur? The answer is provided numerous places in Scripture, but note Hosea's prophecy where the matter is dealt with in so many words.

In Hosea 5:13-6:2, Israel is pictured as *sick*, having a *wound* (near the end of Israel's time of sickness, during the coming Tribulation), with the Assyrian (Antichrist) being unable to provide a cure (5:13). Help though is available, but it *MUST come from the same source which Isaiah or any of the other prophets foretold*. It *MUST come from the Lord* (5:14-6:1).

Israel's sickness was brought about by the Lord because of the nation's refusal to obey that which the Lord had commanded. And the same One Who brought about Israel's condition is also the only One Who can effect a change in Israel's condition. And *a reversal of the nation's condition* after this fashion is *DEPENDANT ON a reversal of the nation's attitude and action* regarding the Lord's commandments (cf. Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7-12; 4:19, 20).

Israel being positioned in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the head of the nations, within a theocracy, is *CONDITIONAL*. It was *conditional* in history and *remains so* today. It was/is *conditioned on Israel obeying the Lord's commandments*.

Once the Israelites had been delivered from Egypt and were at Sinai, about to receive the Law (the Magna Charta for the kingdom, the rules and regulations governing the people within the kingdom), the Lord made one thing very clear — *the necessity and importance of the people obeying His commandments*.

“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel” (Ex. 19:5, 6; cf. Lev. 26:1-13; Deut. 28:1-14).

(Note that *obedience to the Lord's commandments follows repentance [a change of mind]* in both the type and the antitype.

In the type, the Israelites changed their minds and received the one whom they had previously rejected [Moses]. In the antitype, the Israelites will change their minds and receive the One Whom they previously rejected [the One greater than Moses, the nation's Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (Zech. 12:10-14; 13:6)].

It is only after this, in the type or the antitype, that subsequent events leading up to the reception of the Lord's commandments governing the Jewish people in the kingdom occur [in the type, following the Passover, the Exodus from Egypt...; in the antitype, following that foreshadowed by these events].

In the type, the Lord's commandments had to do with the Old Covenant, the Law received at Sinai; in the antitype these commandments will have to do with the New Covenant, the Law placed “in their inward parts,” written “in their hearts” [Jer. 31:31-33].

And the New Covenant may very well be made with Israel at the same place that the Old Covenant was made with the nation — at Sinai.)

And it was later clearly revealed *EXACTLY* what would occur if Israel refused to obey the Lord's commandments (Lev. 26:14ff;

Deut. 28:15ff). The nation would be punished “seven times [a number signifying *the completeness* of that which was in view, *i.e., a complete punishment at the Lord’s hands*],” all types of curses would befall the people, they would be removed from their land and scattered among the nations, and they would find themselves in subjection to the Gentile nations where they had been scattered.

They would find themselves *at the tail* of the nations rather than *at the head*, and their lot in this position would be that of *curses* rather than *blessings*. And, though remnants of those scattered would, at times, leave the Gentile nations and return to their own land (a remnant was present 2,000 years ago, and another is present today), the nation — *THE WHOLE NATION, including any remnant in the land* (Isa. 1:5-7) — *would REMAIN in the same spiritually sick condition, with its land desolate. ONLY the Lord could bring about healing, but in His time.*

And that’s what Hosea 5:13-6:2 is about — Israel’s present condition and that future time when the nation will repent, resulting in the nation being healed. Note again Hosea 6:1, 2 relative to Israel’s repentance and healing:

“Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

After two days [after 2,000 years] will he revive us: in the third day [the third 1,000-year period] he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.”

Then, note the two things revealed immediately before this, in Hosea 5:15, which introduce Israel’s future repentance:

1) The two days (the 2,000 years, covering the Jewish dispensation) begin with Israel’s “offense” (disobedience over centuries of time, resulting in harlotry and ultimately the crucifixion of the nation’s Messiah).

2) The two days (the 2,000 years) come to a close with the Jewish people seeking the Lord’s face during a time of “affliction” (during the coming Tribulation), receiving the Lord when He returns.

“The Tribulation” will be *the last seven years of the Jewish*

*dispensation*, a fulfillment of Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy. And when time resumes in Daniel's prophecy, the Jewish people, time-wise, will be placed in *the position of having just crucified their Messiah*. Then, exactly as stated in Hosea's prophecy, healing for the nation will occur *immediately following the Tribulation* — after two days (after 2,000 years), in the third day (in the third 1,000-year period).

As God worked six days to restore a ruined creation in the beginning and then rested the seventh day (Gen. 1:1-2:3), He is presently working six more days (6,000 years) to restore a subsequent ruined creation, with a view to resting the seventh day (the seventh 1,000-year period). And all subsequent sections of Scripture, such as Hosea 6:1, 2, merely rest upon and provide additional light for the foundational framework — showing the septenary structure of Scripture — set forth at the very beginning.

Then, with all of the preceding in mind, note Isaiah chapter fifty-three. This chapter outlines Israel's confession in that coming seventh day, *following the healing of the nation*:

“Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes *we are healed...*” (vv. 1, 4, 5).

It was this future condition of Israel which Isaiah (along with the other prophets) dealt with so extensively. And it was this future condition of Israel to which the miraculous signs throughout Scripture pointed, whether during Moses and Joshua's day, during Elijah and Elisha's day, or during the days of Christ and the Apostles (both preceding and following the events of Calvary).

*The central thought* when the Spirit of God closed the Old Testament Canon pertained to *Israel being healed* [Mal. 4:2, 3], and this was likewise *the central thought* when the heavens were once again opened over four centuries later in the New Testament [Matt. 3:1, 2; 4:17, 23-25]. The New is simply a continuation and unveiling

of that which has lain in the Old *from the beginning*.

Do you want to understand the New? *Then study the Old*. Do you want to see Israel and the Christ of the New? *Then view Israel and the nation's Messiah in the eyes of the Old*.

### **Cessation of Signs, Wonders, and Miracles**

As previously seen, *signs, wonders, and miracles*, manifested during time covered by the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts, were inseparably connected with the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel (both in the original offer and in the re-offer).

In the gospel accounts (in the original offer), these manifestations of supernatural power *were more evident* prior to Israel's climactic rejection of the message and Christ's departure from the house (Matt. 12:22-32; 13:1), *though seen throughout this period*.

And in Acts (in the subsequent re-offer), these manifestations of supernatural power *were more evident* prior to Israel's climactic rejection once again and the introduction of Paul to carry this message to the Gentiles (Acts 7:51-58; 9:1-15), though, as in the original offer, *they were seen throughout this period*.

There was a definite, revealed reason for the particular type manifestations of supernatural power — something which would not be true at all beyond that time when the offer was removed from Israel and the nation set aside, awaiting “the fulness of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:25).

These signs, wonders, and miracles were not only inseparably connected with the offer of the kingdom to Israel (a connection established in the Old Testament Scriptures) but they spoke volumes in and of themselves. These manifestations of supernatural power reflected directly *on Israel's spiritual condition, past, present, and future* — something dealt with throughout the Old Testament.

In this respect, before Israel's climactic rejection in both the original offer and the re-offer, it was only natural for these signs, wonders, and miracles *to be very prevalent*.

However, in each instance, once these climactic points had been reached it was also only natural for the signs, wonders, and miracles *to become less prevalent*, though still in evidence because

the offer of the kingdom remained open to Israel.

Then, once the offer had been withdrawn (about 62 A.D.), it was not only natural but absolutely necessary that the signs, wonders, and miracles *cease altogether*.

*THEY HAD TO CEASE at this time.* They would have been *COMPLETELY OUT OF PLACE* beyond this point.

And this, as previously shown, can be seen from a Scriptural standpoint entirely apart from referencing I Corinthians chapter thirteen — a section of Scripture in which Paul stated that they would cease, giving both *the TIME* and *the REASON*.

### 1) I Corinthians 13:8-10

Paul's reference to this matter in his first letter to those in Corinth was made necessary because the Church in Corinth was a Gentile Church in which signs, wonders, and miracles were being manifested, which, as previously seen, could only have had to do centrally with provoking Israel to jealousy (Rom. 10:19; 11:11-14; *cf.* Acts 13:44, 45 [also refer back to the indented data at the top of p. 161]).

And Paul, *viewing that which was occurring in the light of the Old Testament Scriptures, called their attention to the TIME when and the REASON why these manifestations of supernatural power would cease.*

In I Cor. 13:8-10, Paul called attention to the fact that the spiritual sign-gifts being manifested in the Church in Corinth were only temporary, *for a revealed reason*. And it is evident that the whole panorama of spiritual sign-gifts (ch. 12) would be alluded to by the three which Paul singled out — *prophecies, tongues, and knowledge*.

All of the spiritual sign-gifts would have to be looked upon together — as a unit, comprised of different parts — simply because of *their interrelated purpose*. They all existed for *EXACTLY the same purpose*. And when the Lord saw fit to bring His purpose surrounding these gifts to a close, they (all of them together, delineated by the three in I Cor. 13:8) *would NO LONGER EXIST*.

Actually, from a Scriptural standpoint, *THEY COULDN'T EXIST beyond this time*. Any existence of these gifts beyond this time *would be contrary to the revealed Word of God and, thus, be impossible*.

Prior to this time, Paul had the power to effect bodily healings (portending Israel's healing), for the offer of the kingdom was still open to Israel (Acts 19:6, 11, 12; 28:8, 9). But after this time, when the offer of the kingdom was no longer open to the nation — when healing for Israel was set aside with the nation, with the corresponding cessation of signs, wonders, and miracles — Paul no longer possessed this power.

After this time, Paul instructed Timothy, "...use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (I Tim. 5:23); and he later left Trophimus "at Miletum sick" (II Tim. 4:20).

In I Cor. 13:8-10, two expressions relative to these sign-gifts are used in opposite senses — "in part," and "perfect":

"Charity [Love'] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

In these verses, "in part" has to do with *incompleteness* (from *ek meros*), meaning "out of a part [plural in the Greek text of vv. 9, 10, 'out of parts']," and "perfect" has to do with *completeness* (from *teleios*, meaning "complete," "bringing to an end") Thus, *ek meros* and *teleios* are used in antithetical senses.

And both expressions, since they have to do with either *the continuance* or *the end* of the manifestation of supernatural signs, are inseparably connected with either *the continuance* or *the end of the offer of the kingdom to Israel*. This is a connection which, from a Scriptural standpoint, *MUST BE RECOGNIZED*, for "signs," apart from both Israel and the kingdom being in view, *CANNOT EXIST*. And *THIS MUST BE RECOGNIZED* in order to properly understand that which is being stated in I Cor. 13:8-10.

In this respect, *INCOMPLETENESS* (shown by *ek meros*) *CAN ONLY have to do with that time prior to God finishing His work pertaining to the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (with signs, wonders, and miracles still in evidence)*; and *COMPLETENESS* (shown by *teleios*) *CAN ONLY have to do with that time following God finishing His work*

*pertaining to the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (with signs, wonders, and miracles no longer in evidence).*

Thus, the thought set forth by Paul in I Cor. 13:9, 10, contextually, is *something quite easy to see and understand* as long as the proper connection with the manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles is made. But *remove this key, and the whole matter becomes impossible to properly see and understand.*

Verse nine teaches that Paul and others were exercising *supernatural spiritual gifts*. And they were exercising these gifts during a time of “incompleteness,” i.e., they were exercising these gifts during the period *prior to the time* God would “complete” His work with Israel relative to the proffered kingdom.

Verse ten then goes on to state that the time was coming when God would “complete” His work surrounding the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel. Then, the things being done during the time of “incompleteness” (during the time when the offer/re-offer of the kingdom had previously remained open to Israel, *prior to God completing His work in this respect*) — things pertaining to *Israel and the kingdom* — would “be done away” with.

(Note that to associate *teleios* in I Cor. 13:8-10 with the completion of the canon of Scripture and a corresponding cessation of sign-gifts, as many do, *has NOTHING to do with Israel and the kingdom*. Accordingly, the completion of the Canon of Scripture, *can have NOTHING to do with the matter*.

*All of this MUST be kept within context.*

“Incompleteness” *MUST be understood in connection with the subject matter at hand — the offer of the kingdom still open to Israel, with signs still in evidence.*

And “completeness” *MUST, correspondingly, be understood in connection with the subject matter at hand as well — the offer of the kingdom no longer open to Israel, with signs no longer in evidence.*)

## 2) Acts 28:28

Thus, *the manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles CEASED when the offer of the kingdom was withdrawn from Israel, with a view to God completing His work of removing from the Gentiles “a people for his name.”*



And ALL of this was in COMPLETE KEEPING with the usage of signs, wonders, and miracles in the Old Testament (pertaining to *Israel and the kingdom*), in COMPLETE KEEPING with their usage during the time covered by both the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts (again, pertaining to *Israel and the kingdom*), and in COMPLETE KEEPING with that which they portended (*Israel's spiritual condition and ALL things that appertained thereunto, both past/present [sick] and future [healed]*).

In Acts 28:28, Paul told the Jews for the third and last time that he was going to the Gentiles with the message which they had rejected.

“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

And when he had said these words, the Jews departed...” (vv. 28, 29a; cf. Acts 13:46; 18:6).

At this time, God set Israel aside for the remainder of the dispensation, and, correspondingly, *signs, wonders, and miracles CEASED*. With God's termination of His dealings with Israel in relation to the kingdom, *signs, wonders, and miracles HAD TO CEASE*.

For sign-gifts to continue beyond this point *would have been COMPLETELY out of line with Scripture*. And, *remaining in line with Scripture*, these sign-gifts *CANNOT again be in evidence until that future time when God resumes His national dealings with Israel in relation to the kingdom*.

This is a truth drawn from the Old Testament, the gospel accounts, the Book of Acts, and I Corinthians *which, from a Biblical standpoint, CANNOT be denied*.

And that's where we are today — living during a time in which Israel has been set aside awaiting “the fulness of the Gentiles” being brought to pass (Rom. 11:25). We're living during a time when signs, wonders, and miracles *can have NO PART within the framework of God's plans and purposes*.

And this can be easily understood, for any present manifestation of supernatural powers of this nature would portend God dealing with *Israel* in relation to the nation's spiritual condition

and *the theocracy* during the present time; and this is *something which God is NOT doing*.

Thus, such a manifestation of supernatural powers during the present time, from a Scriptural standpoint, can only be *COMPLETELY out of place*.

But a time is coming when signs, wonders, and miracles *will once again be in evidence*.

The next and final manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles during Man's Day will occur through Jewish prophets during the coming Tribulation (true and false prophets [Rev. 11:3-6; 13:11-15]).

At this time God will have resumed His dealings with Israel, completing Daniel's full Seventy-Week prophecy. And, during the completion of these final seven years, two things will once again be in view: *Israel*, and *the kingdom*.

Thus, in that day, signs, wonders, and miracles can and will once again exist in the camp of Israel.

(For information on a present existence of signs, wonders, and miracles seen in Christendom, particularly in the Charismatic Movement, refer to the author's article, "Matthew 7:21-23.")

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (Ps. 122:6).