

## The Purpose of Sign Gifts – By Andy Smith

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The miraculous sign gifts are dispensed in Scripture to Christ's Apostles. Not to be mistaken for the spiritual gifts bestowed upon the Body at large, these miraculous gifts served unique purposes in the validation and expansion of The Way. They were a means to two primary ends: the authentication of the Apostles, *for* the authentication of their glorious message, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Importantly, the early church did not possess a completed Bible. Thus, the Apostles were marked by revelatory gifts, enabling and empowering them to perform wonders and pen divine revelation. To be sure, the Lord certainly performs wonders today. However, the gifts are not *necessarily* the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 14:22 tells us the miraculous gifts were never intended to edify the church, but the lost; oh how this is denied today. These gifts were not unleashed to heal *every* believer. Healing was associated with the ministry of Christ and the Apostles (Luke 9:1-2). Paul raised Eutychus from the dead (Acts 20:9-12), but he did not remedy Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-27). Trophimus (2 Tim. 4:20), Timothy (1 Tim. 5:23), or even himself (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Thereafter in Scripture and history, it is the *spiritual* gifts that assume precedence, for the Gospel had been substantiated and was on the move. Leave no doubt, brothers and sisters, the Lord is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. His nature is unchanging. But His Glory remains His highest concern. How he achieves this is not always the same. Much to the NAR's chagrin, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God became sufficient in the life of believers long ago (2 Tim. 3:16). It was not the signs that

eternally edified people, but the Gospel. Many men (and women) today are calling themselves “apostles.” They speak as if they are inerrant. They even admonish their audiences to write down their self-approved, aimless ramblings. Yet, they fail to share in the required inspiration of 2 Pet. 1:21. Divine revelation is their coercive ploy. The purpose, ability, and aim of their messages is nowhere near that of the Apostles, thus disqualifying them as such. They simply *do not* bear any proof. They seek to accredit themselves and their false messages. What a counterfeit spin they have put on the Apostles! Remember, If Christ would have hung around forever, His disciples would have never duplicated like Paul instructed Timothy (2 Tim. 2:2). They would have clung to the Lord like a baby bottle. Similarly, Christ told His disciples it was “better” that He left them (John 16:7), for they needed to be independently dependent on His commands. Did you hear that? It was *better* that He bounced. Similarly, apostles in our lives today would only tempt many to rely on them for ongoing revelation. Scripture is designed by God to be the measure of truth and means of answering our deepest longings. Revelation and Apostleship are no longer necessary or active. This means the sign gifts have ceased with them. My brothers and sisters in Christ, this takes *nothing* away from our Lord, His miraculous power, or His work in our lives. It is but a testimony to the purposes of His plans, and the all-sufficiency of His Word and the Gospel. For it is His glory He desires above all things. No need to see the scars like Thomas. No more praying for a sign. We are witnesses to all we need, for we testify of Christ’s rising from the dead for the salvation of the doomed. The greatest spiritual gift we have been given to pursue is not tongues, for Bible translations abound. It is not healing, for the Lord has given us incredible physicians. It is love. Faith... hope... and love. This is why the Gospel is so important; it

exudes the immeasurable love of God. No miracle or sign gift can express this more than the Cross, not even Todd White growing limbs back a millimeter or Steven Furtick miraculously fitting into a toddler's jeans (as miraculous as those fetes may be).

I end with this. Is the Gospel enough for you? Do you need to see miracles? Is His Return second on your bucket list? Do you really think the Lord isn't aware that you may desire signs more than His Word or His Son? He has safe-guarded us against such longing by closing the Canon and ceasing Apostleship. We are doing even greater things than Christ already, just as He predicted. We are reaching the entire world with the Good News. I implore you, do not chase after that which cannot comfort, save, or reveal new truth to you. God is not limited in the cessation or continuation of anything, but His intentions therein are to be understood. As the Apostles had their roles and intentions, so do we. Some of these are shared in common, but some are not. They all align with God's Will and Word! May they give *Him* the glory.