

## Paper for the convocation of the Orthodox Lutheran Confessional Conference 2013

### The cessation of charismatic gifts

The charismatic movement is a big thing in Denmark as it is in the United States. I was involved in a charismatic church, when I was younger, before I became a confessional Lutheran. However, the issue of continuation of the charismatic gifts claimed by the charismatics was a problem to me. After all, I could read about the gifts of tongues and miracles in the bible.

Nevertheless it didn't fit my newly discovery of the gospel and the external word. It wasn't until I came to Fort Wayne and read the book "An evaluation of claims to the charismatic gifts"<sup>1</sup> by Dr. Douglas Judisch, that the problem in my mind was solved. This paper is built on this discovery, but is not a replication of Judisch's work.

Before the arrival of the Pentecostal movement, few if any Protestants believed in the continuation of the charismatic gifts. They didn't deal with the question extensively either, so we don't have in depth works or clear doctrinal formulation on this issue. When we consider what they taught about the mediate and immediate call to the preaching office, I do think that they would agree with what I will say in this paper. I think Luther works under the same presupposition, when he writes regarding exorcism (as quoted in the english translation of Walthers Pastoral Theology): "*We cannot now and also should not drive out the devils with certain ceremonies and words as previously the prophets, Christ and the apostles did. We should pray in the name of Jesus Christ and seriously admonish the church to pray that the dear God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will free the possessed person through his mercy.*"<sup>2</sup> The gift of driving out devils given to the prophets and apostles was not continued in the church according to Luther. Rather the church should pray to God and ask him to drive out demons. The same holds true for the other charismatic gifts. We may ask God for healing

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1 Judisch, Douglas "An Evaluation of the claims to the Charismatic gifts" Reprinted by permission of Baker Book House. Concordia Seminary Press 1985.

2 *Walthers Pastorale* translated and abridged by John M. Drickamer. Lutheran News 1995. p. 215

of sickness, but we do not have a gift to heal sickness on our command like the apostles did.

The belief in the continuation of prophecy and the other charismatic gifts in the church was a part of the papistic faith at the time of the reformation and still is. The saints of the papacy were claimed to do wonders, and the papacy itself is built on the belief that the apostolic gift of prophecy has somehow continued in the papal office. That is why the belief in the papal office is detrimental to the sola scriptura-principle of the reformation.

The charismatic belief in the continuation of prophecy and the other charismatic gifts also undermines the doctrine of Sola Scriptura. If prophecy and revelation are continued in the church after the time of the apostles, there is no reason why we should stick with the Old and the New Testament alone. The reason why we have the Scriptures we do, is that we believe them to be divinely inspired through the Holy Spirits work in the prophets and apostles. Nevertheless if the gift to receive revelations from God is continued in the church, every new revelation could be added to Holy Scripture. Few charismatics would admit this – which just proves that they may not believe their prophetic gifts themselves. If they really believed that they had these gifts, why would they not simply add their prophecies to Scripture?

At least, this proves that they do not believe their revelations to be on the same level as those of the Bible. But if their revelations are not of the same kind as the revelations in the Bible, what is their basis for claiming the continuation of charismatic gifts? If their charismatic gifts are not on the same level as those mentioned in the Bible, they cannot be a continuation of those gifts. On the other hand, if their charismatic gifts are of the same kind as those mentioned in the Bible, their revelations should be as authoritative as those of the Bible. My point is that if you claim that the charismatic gifts, especially the gifts of revelation, have continued in the church, you must go all the way and add any new revelation to the bible or do as the papacy and claim the same authority as the Bible. There is no distinction in the bible

between authoritative revelation and less authoritative revelation.

Another point, I want to mention here in the beginning of my paper is, that all of the scripture passages used to support the existence of charismatic gifts, are scripture-passages dealing with Gods promise of inspiration of the apostles and their assistants. So if those texts are used to prove the existence of charismatic gifts in the church, they cannot at the same time be used to prove the exclusive promise to the apostles and their assistants. That would leave us with a few texts proving that there are divinely inspired scriptures, but no proof-text to prove, that the divinely inspired scriptures of the New Testament are those of the apostles and their prophet-helpers. If we are to prove from Scripture, that the apostles and their assistants were the divinely inspired messengers of God, we need those passages to prove it.

To solve this problem, we must go to the texts dealing with charismatic gifts. The gifts of signs and wonders are seals of the gifts of prophecy. As Dr. Judisch puts it: *“For to Moses God gave signs and wonders that the people might believe the Lord had appeared to him and they might listen to his voice. (Exod. 4:1-9, 17, 28-31; Deut. 34,10-12). Elijah and Elisha saw their miracles – including the power to heal by command – as the attestation of their claims to the prophetic office (I Kings 18:36-40; II Kings 5:8-15). The crowds (John 6:14; 7:31), Nicodemus (John 3:2), the apostle John (John 20:30-31), the apostle Peter (Acts 2:22), and Christ himself (John 10:25, 37-38; 14:10-11) appeal to His signs, including His miraculous healings, as proof of his role as the Prophet par excellence.”*<sup>3</sup>

My main focus, therefore, will be on the gifts of prophecy or revelation, including the gift to speak in tongues. But I will also touch upon the other gifts. While Dr. Judisch's book built on a logical order of the different arguments for the cessation of the charismatic gifts especially from the Old Testament and the epistles, I will primarily look at Jesus' promises to the apostles in the gospels and the beginning of Acts and their fulfillment in the rest of Acts. As a preacher I have been working with these texts at the time

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<sup>3</sup> Judisch, Douglas "An Evaluation of the claims to the Charismatic gifts" Reprinted by permission of Baker Book House. Concordia Seminary Press 1985. p. 14.

around Pentecost almost every year.

I will however start with a summary of argument from the prophecy in Daniel 9:24 and end the paper with a summary of some of the testimonies from the epistles. I recommend reading Judisch's book for a deeper analysis of these texts.

### **The cessation of prophecy prophesied in Daniel 9:24**

The cessation of prophecy at the time of the first coming of the messiah was already prophesied by Daniel in Daniel 9:24 *"24 "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. (Dan 9:24 NKJ)*

To put a seal on something, when used figuratively in the Old Testament and especially in Daniel never means to confirm as we sue the word today. It means to stop. When studying in Fort Wayne, I wrote a paper on this text and made a words study on the word. The word used here always means to put an end to something or stop it, when it isn't used literally. Daniel is speaking about a time, when vision and prophecy stop. The rest of the verse is about the first coming of the Messiah. In the period of the first coming of the Messiah, visions and prophecy would stop. Daniel doesn't specify when this would happen exactly, but it should come as no surprise to anyone, that it happened shortly after the Lords first coming.

### **The promise of the Spirit in the Gospel of John**

Let us look at Jesus' promises in the gospel of John.

In chapter 14 and 16 Jesus promises the apostles to send the Spirit. Since the apostles were already believers in Christ, they did have the Spirit in heir hearts. So the promise cannot be a promise to send the Spirit as a faith-creator. Neither can it be a promise of the Spirits gift of the preaching office in general, the office of the keys. They were already given the Spirit to do

this work before the ascension (John 20:21-23).

Jesus says in John 14:16-18: *16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- 17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. (John 14:16-18 NKJ)*

The word “helper” originally meant a spokesman, representative or mediator. We must look at the word “another” to further clarify, what Jesus means. The Holy Spirit will be a spokesman the same way Jesus is a spokesman. If not, he would not be called “another” spokesman. In what way Jesus is a spokesman, we learn in John 1:18: *“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” (John 1:18 NKJ).* Jesus has declared or revealed the Father, while he walked among people on earth. He was the spokesman of the Holy Trinity. Jesus now promises that he will send another spokesman, who is to speak in his stead. This spokesman is to abide with the apostles forever. Jesus will stay in the church forever too, because he speaks through the apostolic word. The Holy Spirit is to be a spokesman like Jesus was in his earthly life. That means that the Holy Spirit is to speak to the apostles as the spokesman of the trinity like Jesus did in his earthly life – through outward words. Mark that Jesus says that the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not work directly on the world like it does on the apostles, whom Jesus is speaking to.

A few verses later, Jesus continues to speak about the spirit and office of the Spirit: *25 "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. 26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (John 14:25-26 NKJ)*

This makes it even more clear, what Jesus means, when he speaks about the spirit as a spokesman. Jesus directly compares his own speaking to the

apostles to the speaking of the Holy Spirit, when Jesus has left the apostles. The Spirit is first to teach the apostles all things. Jesus has told the apostles some things, but the Spirit is to tell them all things. If this promise was meant both for the apostles and all later generations of Christians, it couldn't mean the same thing for the apostles and later Christians. However the promise must include the apostles, whom Jesus is speaking to. If the Spirit is to reveal *all things* to the apostles, there is no need for him to reveal *all things* to the church later in history. But what are the “all things”? It cannot mean every secret in the whole world. No charismatic even believes that the church is to know everything about everything in the age of the Spirit. So if the things are not things in general, then it must be “all” of some special kind of things. We must look at the context. Jesus is speaking about doctrine to the apostles. Therefore, the Spirit is to reveal all doctrine to the apostles and teach them the whole revelation of God this side of heaven. When the Spirit has already taught the apostles all things, and they have written them down, there is no need for further revelation. The second thing the Holy Spirit is to do, is to bring everything, Jesus has said, to remembrance. Someone might say that the Spirit reminds Christians in general about what Jesus has said. That might be true, if understood properly. However the Spirit can only remind Christians about what *the Bible testifies* that Jesus once said. Since Jesus is not walking on earth and speaking to us, the Spirit cannot remind us about what Jesus said the same way it could remind the apostles about what Jesus said. They actually heard what Jesus said. So this promise cannot be a promise to both the apostles and everyone else, since the words “whatsoever I have said to you” must have a completely different meaning for those who walked with Jesus than it could have for those, who only read the testimony of those who heard him. Therefore, since Jesus was actually speaking to the apostles, this promise about being reminded of what Jesus said is to them alone.

In these verses, Jesus promises the apostles to send the Spirit to them in order to teach them the full and final revelation of God and to remind them of Jesus's words. Therefore, it cannot be a promise to every Christian about

the Holy Spirit. However it is a promise that the words of the apostles is the full truth and the infallible witness to the words and deeds of our Lord Jesus Christ. If the words should be a promise to every Christian, the inspiration of the apostles would be undermined.

Later, in chapter 16, Jesus again speaks to the apostles about the Holy Spirit: *7 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 "of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. 12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (John 16:7-14 NKJ)*

In the first part of this text, Jesus explains what the Spirit is going to do in relation to the world. This is the work of the Holy Spirit through law and gospel. In the second part, Jesus again speaks to the apostles and explains, what the Holy Spirit is going to do in them. Jesus explains that there are things he cannot say to them yet, but that the Spirit is going to guide them into all the truth. The apostles would not be able to understand the full body of doctrine, before the death and resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, Jesus must first fulfill his work and then send the Spirit to guide the apostles into the whole truth. The clear distinction between the work of the Spirit in the world and to the apostles makes it clear that this is a promise exclusively to the apostles. The connection between the two promises is, that the promise to the apostles is a promise about the means to fulfill the promise of the spirit's work in the world. The words of the apostles are the means through which the Spirit is to convince the world about sin, righteousness and judgment.

We are also told that the Spirit is to speak what he hears. The Spirit will be the spokesman of the Trinity and speak to the apostles on behalf of the Trinity, just like Jesus did in his earthly life.

John's gospel gives a pretty clear picture of Jesus' promise of the Spirit to the apostles. Jesus does not promise prophetic gifts to all Christians at all times. Jesus promises to send his Spirit to the apostles in order to reveal the whole truth to them and make them infallible witnesses.

### **The promise in the gospel of Mark**

Another gospel-text we must look at is the text in Mark 16, which is often used as proof of continuation of charismatic gifts. Jesus having instructed the eleven apostles to go into the world and preach the word says: *16 "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. 17 "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; 18 "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."*

(Mar 16:16-18 NKJ)

One could argue that since the promise to be saved through faith and baptism is a promise for every Christian until the end of the world, then the promise of the charismatic gifts mentioned must also be a promise for the church to the end of the world.

Few, however, will claim the full correspondence of the two promises. That would mean that *each and every* Christian should cast out demons, speak in tongues, take on serpents and drink poison without harm and heal by the laying on of hands. Paul clearly contradicts this interpretation, when he asks rhetorically in 1 Corinthians 12:29-31: *29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?* (1Co 12:28-31 NKJ)

However if the promise of these charismatic gifts isn't aimed at every



Christian then it cannot be proven from the text that it is meant for every time either.

In the last words of Marks gospel the stress is on the fulfillment of the promise, which actually happened when the apostles went about and preached the gospel: *19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.* (Mar 16:19-20 NKJ)

The confirmation of the word must be understood as the confirmation of the word as revelation of God. That is how the word is confirmed in the rest of the bible. Mark's gospel doesn't state whether other Christians should receive revelations that are to be confirmed, but it doesn't promise it either. While we cannot prove directly from Mark 16 alone that the charismatic gifts should cease, we cannot prove that they are to continue after the time of the apostles either. We can only conclude that their function was to confirm the word of the apostles, whom we know to be inspired teachers. If we compare Mark 16 to John 14 and 16, however, we do have proof enough to draw the conclusion, that the promise of the charismatic gifts aims at the same people as Jesus' former promise of the Holy Spirit to the apostles.

Let us go on and see if the description in Acts fits this picture:

### **The promise of the Holy Ghost to the apostles in Acts 1**

In Acts ch 1 verse 2-5 Jesus speaks to the apostles about the Spirits coming on Pentecost: *2...until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. 4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from*

*Me; 5 "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Act 1:2-5 NKJ)*

In this text, Jesus promises to the apostles, that they are to be baptized with the Holy Spirit shortly after his ascension. This promise is not given to all believers, but to the apostles alone. Shortly after, Jesus also informs the apostles, what the function of this baptism with the Holy Spirit is: *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* (Act 1:8 NKJ).

The power of the Holy Spirit is a power to be a witness. The role of a witness is to testify to something and the power of a witness as witness is credibility. The power to be a witness is the power to be credible. The highest credibility is the one called infallibility. When God promises The Holy Spirits power to be a witness, it means a power to be an infallible witness. That was what Jesus promised the apostles in John 14:26 when he promised that the Holy Spirit would *bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.* (John 14:26 NKJ).

A witness is someone who has seen something. As Klemet Preus rightly states in "The Fire and the Staff": *"Amazingly, I discovered that I am not a witness of Christ and neither are you. You and I never saw Jesus. To be a witness you have to see. "Were you there when they crucified your Lord?" No! In the Bible the word witness always refers to those who actually saw something."*<sup>4</sup> (p. 384)

Commenting on Acts 1:8, Klemet Preus writes: *"The apostles are often called witnesses, especially in the Book of Acts, because they saw the life, death, and resurrection of the Savior. Not only did they see, they were also appointed by Christ officially to give testimony before the world to what they had seen. In Acts 1:8 Jesus is talking to the eleven apostles: You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" These men had all seen his miracles, been privy to his sermons and*

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<sup>4</sup> Preus, Klemet "The Fire and the Staff", CPH 2004, p. 384.

*parables, and literally witnessed his death and resurrection. They are witnesses in the normal sense of the word, having seen something. Now they are called upon to testify to what they have seen.”<sup>5</sup>*

We can see this understanding of the term, witness, when Peter suggests the election of a new apostle in stead of Judas: 21 *"Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 "beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." ...26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (Act 1:21-22, 26 NKJ)*

Peters understanding of the apostolate was that the apostles were to be witnesses of the resurrection.

The Testimony of the apostles was to go to the end of the world. The Holy Spirit would give their testimony the power to do that. Therefore, they were to wait for this power, which would fall on them on Pentecost.

### **The fulfillment of the promise of the Spirit in Acts**

Who were assembled on Pentecost and received the Holy Spirit? We read in Acts 2:1-2: *1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. (Act 2:1-2 NKJ)*

If we read the text in context, the “they” of verse 1 in chapter 2 must refer to the apostles mentioned in chapter 1 verse 26. This seems logical too since all of chapter 1 is about the apostles: Jesus' promise of the Spirit to the apostles before his ascension and the election of a new apostle.

Acts 2 continues: *2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon*

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<sup>5</sup> Preus, Klemet "The Fire and the Staff" p. 384.

*each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Act 2:2-4 NKJ)*

The Spirit manifested itself visibly as tongues of fire and gave the apostles utterances in other tongues. This miracle was a fulfillment of the promise made by Jesus in Chapter 1. As such the meaning of the sign is clear. The Holy Spirit testified that these twelve apostles chosen by Jesus were indeed the instruments of the Spirit and that their words were the words of the Spirit. The gift to speak in tongues not learned naturally was a sign that the words were given by the Spirit. The gift of tongues could be called the sign of verbal inspiration, since it is a proof that the words are given by someone else – in the case of the apostles by the Holy Spirit.

The gift of speaking in previously unlearned tongues is also known from demon-possessed as a sign of a true demon-possession<sup>6</sup>.

The gift of speaking in tongues might also have a specific purpose as a sign of the gospel going to the ends of the earth and as a sign of judgment on the Jews for not believing the gospel.

Pentecost, therefore, might be called the birthday of the verbal inspiration of the holy apostles rather than the birthday of the church, as it has been named. On Pentecost, we should not focus on charismatic gifts but rather on the sword of the Spirit, the word of the apostles as the infallible testimony and effective instrument of God, by which he gathers his church throughout the world. One could call it the birthday of the visible new testament church, since the foundation of the visible church in the apostolic revelation was founded here.

### **The distribution of the gifts in Samaria**

The next text we will take a look at, is Acts 8, where the Holy Spirit falls on the Samaritans. Philip, who was a prophet, but not an apostle, preached to the Samaritans and did miracles among them. However it seems that he was

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<sup>6</sup> See Quenstedt quoted in Walthers Pastorale p. 215 on the marks of physical possession. In the case of demon possession too, the speaking in unlearned tongues is a sign of the fact that someone else is speaking through the person.

not able to distribute the prophetic and charismatic gifts himself. We read: *14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, 15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."* (Act 8:14-19 NKJ)

We should not understand this as if the Samaritans did not have the Holy Spirit already. They received the Holy Spirit when they came to faith, just like the apostles had the Holy Spirit both as believers and as bearers of the preaching office (John 20:21-23) prior to Pentecost. The reception of the Spirit which is spoken about here is clearly something visible even for a hypocrite as Simon. When compared to the wonder of Pentecost and what happened in Cornelius's house later, the giving of the Spirit referred to here, must be the giving of the Spirits prophetic and charismatic gifts. While Philip himself had received such gifts through the apostles, he was not able to give them to others. Simon acknowledges this, and the apostles do not reprove him for this understanding. If we read through Acts we do not find any occurrence of reception of prophetic gifts except through the apostles.

The only incident might be Paul, but he was called directly as an apostle by the risen Lord. In fact his reception of prophetic gifts directly without the interaction of the other apostles might be seen as proof of his apostleship. That might be what Paul is referring to in Galatians 1 when he writes: *11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.* (Gal 1:11-12 NKJ)

Again Paul writes: *15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my*

*mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.* (Gal 1:15-17 NKJ)

Paul makes a point out him being called as an apostle directly by Christ and not having the need of confirmation from the apostles. This is only meaningful if the normal way of receiving prophetic gifts was through the apostles.

### **The distribution of the gifts among the heathens according to Acts 10**

Our last text from Acts is from Acts 10, where Peter preaches in the house of Cornelius: *44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, 47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.* (Act 10:44-48 NKJ)

While this incident shows that the heathens had received the Holy Spirit and therefore could be baptized in water also, we should not use the text to confuse the charismatic gifts with the faith-creating activity of the Spirit. The charismatic gifts followed faith, when the faith was preached by the apostles, but as shown in the example of the Samaritans, the Spirit did create faith without giving those gifts, when the apostles were not at hand. The fact that the gift of tongues could be used as proof of the indwelling of the Spirit as a faith-creator, only proves that the indwelling of the Spirit as faith-creator is necessary for the reception of the charismatic gifts. It doesn't prove that the reception of charismatic gifts is a necessary effect of the

indwelling of the Spirit. The incident in Samaria proves that it isn't.

The incident in Cornelius' house is another example of how the charismatic gifts were distributed through the apostles to confirm the preaching and infallible witness of the apostles.

Without looking at the proof-texts dealing specifically with the cessation of the gifts, but only looking at the historical texts of the New Testament, we are able to draw the conclusion, that the prophetic gifts and the other charismatic gifts were given to the apostles so that they might be the infallible witnesses of Christ's words and deeds and teachers of the Church throughout time.

### **A few testimonies from the epistles**

I will briefly touch on a few texts in the epistles that testify to the same as the above texts:

Romans 1:11 *For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established* (Rom 1:11 NKJ). The fact that Paul wants to come to the Romans in order to impart spiritual gifts to them could be explained by the fact that an apostle was needed to receive the charismatic gifts. In Romans 12 the only charismatic gift mentioned is prophecy. There might not yet have been an apostle in Rome but only someone who himself had received the gift of prophecy like Philip.

1 Corinthians 2:13 *13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* (1Co 2:13 NKJ)

This is one of the classic proof texts of the doctrine of verbal inspiration. The apostle speaks about the apostolic office, when he says "we". He uses the same word, when he speaks about the apostolic office in 1 Corinthians 13, which is one of the proof-texts in Dr. Judisch's book on the charismatic gifts: *8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish*

*away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. 13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love (1Co 13:8-13 NKJ)*

In summary, Douglas Judisch's argument is that the “perfect” cannot be the second coming of Christ, since faith and hope, which are to cease at the second coming will abide when the prophetic gifts mentioned here will cease. The perfect thing is the opposite of the parts mentioned. The parts are different kinds of verbal revelation. So the perfect or complete thing must be the complete verbal inspiration. The “we” is the apostolic “we” and what Paul sees in the mirror is the complete apostolic revelation. When this revelation is complete, that is when the apostles have fulfilled their call and are dead, the partial prophetic gifts will cease, since the apostolic revelation has been completed. For further investigation of this text, I will refer you to the fourth chapter of Douglas Judisch's book.

In 2. Corinthians when Paul is proving his apostleship, he appeals to his signs: *12 Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. (2Co 12:12 NKJ)*

If anyone else could also do signs and wonders, they could not be a sign of his apostleship. Paul is clearly indicating, that the gifts of signs and wonders are not given to anyone, but to the apostles as a sign of their apostleship. Even when the assistants of the apostles were given these gifts, it happened through the apostles.

## **Conclusion**

From what we have seen here, the prophetic gifts are essentially the same as what we as Lutherans have always called verbal inspiration. The doctrine of verbal inspiration builds on the same texts as the false doctrine of the



continuation of the charismatic gifts. If we want to hold to Holy Scripture as the sole rule and norm of our faith, we cannot claim the continuation of the prophetic gifts or the sign-gifts that confirmed the prophetic gifts. There is no need for further divine revelation. Vision and prophecy has been sealed. That doesn't mean that God doesn't work anymore as some charismatics would have people think that cessationists believe. God is still at work. We can ask God for healing of diseases and driving out of the devil. But we cannot ask him for new revelations. We should stick with the revelation we have in the Bible. That also means that we shouldn't look for secret hints from God or look into our emotions to find out what God's will for our life is. God's will is revealed in his word, in the law and the gospel. Those who look for God's secret plan for their lives end up making new commands for themselves that God has never made for them. And often they don't adhere to the commandments God has given them in his word. And they look for signs of Gods mercy in their emotions in stead of looking to the gospel, where God has revealed his good will toward men.