

# Are Miracles Being Performed Today?

## Bible Answers About Miracles

People today refer to nearly everything as a miracle. The birth of a baby, the coming of spring with everything turning green and the flowers blooming, a person who walks away from a terrible accident, or even a person who survives a serious illness are all called miracles. But, these are not miracles in the Bible definition.

Bible miracles were above and beyond natural law; they were supernatural, requiring the intervention of God performing what natural law could not produce. There are two Greek words translated "miracle" in the Scriptures. First, is the word *seemion* and the second is *dunamis*. You will find the first word in the following passages John 2:11, 23; 3:2; 4:54; 10:41: and the second in Mark 9:39; Acts 2:22; 8:13; 19:11. In each of these passages the words signify divine power; that which far transcends that which men on their own resources can produce. A miracle, therefore, involves the exercise of powers above and beyond those common to man and which can originate only with God. These miracles were always provisional or temporary. They were always performed by Deity directly or indirectly by heavenly appointed agents on earth such as prophets, Christ, apostles and by those upon whom the apostles laid their hands. Without exception they were performed by God's clearly revealed authority.

There is design in all the mighty works of God. He does not do things without purpose. In studying miracles, one of the most important things to know and to remember are the purposes of miracles. The incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest miracle of all human history. The earthly life of Jesus began with a miracle as the rest of His earthly life would be filled with the miraculous. For instance, Jesus used the miraculous to prove His Messiahship (Lk. 7:18-23; Isa. 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 61:1). When John heard of the work of Jesus, he asked, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3). Jesus appealed to His miraculous work: "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:5 cf.. also Jno. 20:30-31).

Another great purpose was the revelation and confirmation of truth as is clearly revealed to us in the Scriptures. God's great plan of redemption had to be revealed by divinely inspired men as declared by Paul when he wrote: "For who among men knows the {thoughts} of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the {thoughts} of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual {thoughts} with spiritual {words.}(1 Cor 2:11-13). Christ promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit "whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (Jno. 14:26). He further assured them that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth (Jno. 16:13).

The Lord then told the apostles to tarry in Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high (Lk. 24:49). With the coming of the Holy Spirit they were promised special power which they received in Acts 2:4. We read, "And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles" (Acts 2:43). Therefore, the apostles were not only empowered to speak in languages they had not learned; they were also given power to perform signs and miracles. These signs and miracles were to confirm the word they preached as Mark pointed out when he wrote, "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen" (Mark 16:20). The Hebrew writer confirms this matter for us when he wrote, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?" (Heb 2:34). Once the word was confirmed as the word of God it was forever and eternally confirmed as His word. Therefore, there was no longer any need for the miraculous.

The apostles were the only ones in the Jerusalem church who could work miracles until they imparted this power to others. The seven men in Acts chapter 6 could perform miracles only after the apostles laid their hands upon them (Acts 6:5-8). We read further that when the apostles heard that the people in Samaria had received the word of God they sent Peter and John and they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Now notice, "Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:18 -19; cf. also Acts 19:6; 2 Tim. 1:6). Only the apostles could lay hands on someone granting them the power to perform miracles. Obviously, when the last apostle died the power to confer spiritual power to perform miracles ceased and when those whom the apostles laid their hands on died, the gifts ceased.

In the 12th, 13th and 14th chapters of First Corinthians Paul gives the most complete discussion of spiritual gifts that can be found in the New Testament. In the twelfth chapter Paul discusses what these gifts are. In the thirteenth chapter he discusses the utility of these gifts, their relative importance to divine principles, and their duration. In the fourteenth chapter Paul tells us how they were to be used. Paul wrote, "But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way" (1 Cor 12:31). Based upon this statement there must be something more important than those miraculous powers. In the next chapter Paul tells us what that more excellent way is, "But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:13).

The miraculous works of the Holy Spirit were never intended to be permanent in the church. They were given in the infancy of the church to last until "that which is perfect is come" Study very carefully what Paul wrote, "Charity 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" (1 Cor 13:8-10). The spiritual gifts were in part and the gift of healing is among those things that were in part (1 Cor. 12:8-10). They were not to endure, they were to cease. This would happen when "that which is perfect is come." Paul was not speaking of the coming of the Lord, He had already come and he wasn't talking about heaven but rather the completion of divine revelation. James refers to the revealed word of God in its fullness as "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect,

thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim 3:16-17). The word of God is perfect and has come and all that was in part (spiritual gifts including the miracles) was done away. Miracles are not performed today.

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