

## Have Miracles Ceased?

No. 132

### Introduction.

- I. Today I would like for us to study the question, "Have Miracles Ceased?" The religious world today is greatly divided over this question. There are many sincere people who emphatically affirm miracles still exist in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; while others just as emphatically affirm they have ceased.
- II. Let us carefully examine the facts to determine the truth of this matter. This is not an insignificant question, but one of great importance. We certainly do not want to deny the power of the Almighty God nor do we want to want to falsely attribute to Him what He does not do today.
  - I. **A Miracle Defined** - At the outset of this discussion it is important that we define the word "miracle."
    - A. This word is quite often misunderstood and mis-applied by many people.
      1. In our culture many define a miracle as something phenomenal, strange, unexplainable. This is not how the Bible uses the word.
      2. Simply defined, a miracle is a sign or wonder, above and beyond the laws of nature. For example, if you dropped a ball and it rose in the air instead of falling to the ground, this would be a miracle since the law of gravitation requires that it fall or descend.
    - B. On the other if a sick person gradually recovers over a period of time, this could not be called a miracle since the recovery would have been effected through natural laws and not in opposition to them.
  - II. **The Apostles' Miracles** - Now that we have defined a miracle, let's consider the miracles of the apostles. This is very important to our study.
    - A. After the resurrection of Christ He promised His apostles that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:5, 8).
    - B. A short time after Christ made this promise all the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:4).
      1. The baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit gave the apostles great power.
        - a. It gave them the power to **speak in languages they had not studied.** (Acts 2:5-11).

**ACT 2:5** Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. **6** And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language. **7** And they were amazed and marveled, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? "And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? **9** "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both

**Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God. "**

- b. The baptism of the Holy Spirit gave them the **power to preach by direct revelation of God.** (Jn. 14:26). The apostles did not have to study to gain their knowledge of God's word. The Holy Spirit taught them all truth.
  - c. The baptism of the Holy Spirit gave the apostles the **power to heal the sick and raise the dead.** (Acts 2:43; 5:16; 9:36-41; 20:7-12).
  - d. The baptism of the Holy Spirit gave the apostles **power to impart miraculous gifts to others.** (Acts 6:1-6; 8:5-7, 12; 8:14-17; 19:1-6).
2. **The purpose of the apostles' miracles was to confirm their preaching.** Their miracles were conclusive proof that God was with them and that they were inspired of God. (Heb. 2:4).

### III. "Miracles Workers"

- A. With very few exceptions, modern "miracle" workers maintain they have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. If this be true, they should have the same power the apostles possessed.
1. If these men have been baptized with the Holy Spirit, why is it that they **cannot speak in foreign languages** they have not studied? The apostles could.
  2. If these men have been baptized with the Holy Spirit, why do they have to **study the scriptures to learn them**? As we studied a few moments ago the apostles did not have to study to gain their knowledge of God's word. The Spirit taught them all truth.
  3. If these men have been baptized with the Holy Spirit, why can't they give others the power to perform miracles and why can't they raise the dead as the apostles did?
  4. The failure to do these things is evidence they have not been baptized with the Spirit of God.
- B. **Their claims are also refuted by a number of other incontestible facts.**
1. In the first place, the alleged miracles of these men are **unlike those found in the Bible.**
    - a. Some years ago I read of a claim of **a cripple boy being healed in Oakland, California.** Both the boy and his parents claimed a miracle had been performed. Let's examine the facts of the case to see if a healing really occurred.
      - **Just prior to the healing the boy had had an operation on his leg.**
      - **The boy had had a similar operation in times past.**
      - **After a period of time, had been able to walk without crutches.**
      - **The doctor, who was treating the boy, said that the boy would have been able to walk without crutches the last time he had seen him.**
      - **The doctor made this statement over the telephone before he knew that claims had been made**

**that the boy had been healed.**

- Although the **boy had laid aside his crutches**, the night he was supposedly healed, he limped off the stage.
- **About 2 week after the healing, the boy still limped.**
- **His leg had not returned to its normal size.**
- **The place the doctor had cut open in the operation had not yet completely healed.**
- **The boy still kept a dressing on his leg and also Vaseline or some such preparation, in order to keep the clothe from sticking to the wound.**

b. **Does this sound like a miracle to you?** It certainly does not sound like the healings we read about in the Bible! The healings performed in the Bible were instantaneous and complete.

1) **The leper** (Matt. 8:2-4).

2) **Peter's mother-in-law**. (Matt. 8:14, 15).

3) **The lame man**. (Acts 3:1-10). Note: This miracle did not require faith. He had none.

4) Some of these men in an effort to justify their gradual healings have attempted to prove that some of the healings of the Bible were gradual. **The Blind man**. (Mk. 8:22-25).

2. In the second place, the alleged miracles of these men are refuted by the fact they **had been shown to be false**.

a. A representative committee of ministers, physicians and others examined 350 cases that passed under the hand of Dr. Price.

1) Of this number they found **only 5** had been cured and in each case they were susceptible to cure by hypnotic suggestion.

2) **39 died within 6 months of the meetings.**

3) **A number of people became insane when they failed to be healed.** Surely such results are not to be linked with Divine Healing.

b. "Mrs **May Wyburn Fitch**, who attended a number of healing campaigns, wrote: 'I have attended between three hundred and three hundred and fifty meetings, in most of them being on the platform where I could observe all that was taking place. I have dealt with hundreds of sufferers before and after they were anointed and prayed for, and I have assisted the evangelists as they anointed and prayed for the sick. I have seen people in all sorts of conditions—some suffering from cancer, diabetes, Bright's disease, tuberculosis, and in fact almost every thing except contagious diseases. I have seen hundreds upon hundreds of cripples, some so badly crippled they could not even use crutches, but had to be carried in and out of the meetings and up on the platform to be anointed, and they had to be carried

down again.”

**Why did she stay with the movement as long as she did?** She said, “When questions would come up in my mind because of what I heard or saw in some of the meetings, and which I could not reconcile with what the Bible said, I would dismiss it and censure myself for my lack of faith. The time came, however, when I could no longer deny the fact even to myself, that the doctrine proclaimed was a false one, Scripture was misquoted, results misrepresented, and Christ’s own ministry of healing belittled in order to account for the failure on the part of these evangelists to heal people.” (Miracle or Mirages?, p. 56).

3. In the third place, the alleged miracles of these men are refuted by the fact that they are **only psychosomatic cures**.
  - a. It is a matter of scientific knowledge among medical authorities that a great deal of bodily sickness is of mental origin. This relationship between the mind and body is termed “psychosomatic.”
    - 1) As a simple illustration of the effect of the mind on the body in illness we know that bad news received suddenly may cause one to faint.
    - 2) Emotional disturbances following a meal can cause acute indigestion.
    - 3) Ulcers, headaches, blindness, high blood pressure and many other things are often produced by this body mind relationship.
  - b. The process of healing through psychological means is called psychotherapy. At best faith healers serve as psychotherapists. They do nothing more than any psychotherapist could do under the same atmosphere as they work under.
4. In the fourth place, the alleged miracles of these men are refuted by the fact that they **refuse to demonstrate their miracles**.
  - a. There are many **sick people** in the local hospitals and thousands of sick people in hospitals throughout the world. If these men really have the power of the Holy Spirit, if they really have the power to heal, why do they not go to these hospitals and heal the sick ones.
  - b. There are **thousands of others** with mangled bodies and others with severed and withered limbs. If these men really have the power to heal as the apostles did, why do they not heal them.
  - c. There are **many in the graves**. If they really have the power of the apostles, why do they not go to the cemeteries and raise the dead ones. The failure to do these things shows they do not have miraculous power from God.
5. In the fifth place, the alleged miracles of these men are refuted by the fact the Bible teaches **only the apostles could impart miraculous gifts to others**. (Acts 8:11-17).
6. In the sixth place, the alleged miracles of these men are refuted by the fact that **the Bible teaches that miracles would cease**. (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

**1CO 13:8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.**

- a. Paul affirms that prophecies, tongues, supernatural knowledge would cease when “that which is perfect is come.”
- b. The word “perfect” does not refer to Jesus and His second coming because the words “that which” are neuter in gender and the passage is not discussing the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ.
- c. The word “perfect” means “complete” and refers to the complete revelation of God. Paul was saying that when the word of God was fully revealed and confirmed that miracles would cease. They would have served their purpose and no longer be needed. He declared that faith, hope and love would abide and we should covet these greater gifts. (1 Cor. 13:13).

### **Conclusion.**

- I. From this study we can only conclude that these “faith” healers are false. They are limited to a few psychosomatic cures. Let us not be deceived by their claims. Let us not let them undermine or destroy our faith in God.
- II. **One of the most moving stories in the Bible is found in Luke the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter.** The Bible pictures the rich man burning in the flames of hades and crying out for mercy. He cried out, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.” But Abraham replied that it was now too late for mercy. The rich man then asked that someone from the dead be sent to his 5 brothers and testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.
  - A. **Abraham** said. (Lk. 16:29).
  - B. **The rich man** then said. (Lk. 16:30).
  - C. **Abraham** answered. (Lk. 16:31).
- III. **This narrative teaches us an important lesson in reference to miracles and faith.** Some say we need miracles today to produce faith, but the Bible teaches that if men will not hear and heed the word of God that they would not believe, they would not repent even if a man would return from hades and preach to them. The gospel is God’s saving power. We must accept it to be saved. We urge you to accept it now and come and give your life to Christ. Come as we stand and sing!

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