

The Brown Street Beacon

"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,

holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)



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Are Miracles Performed Today?



This article is not about whether or not miracles were performed in the first century church. THEY WERE! Jesus performed miracles. The apostles performed miracles. Many members of the church of Christ, in general, performed miracles in the first century. Anyone who believes in the Bible knows that this is true. So again, whether or not miracles were performed in the first century is not the focus of this article.

This article is not about having faith in the power of God. As faithful Christians, we believe firmly and confess confidently and with bold assurance that God is all powerful and that there is no limit to what He can do. That is not the question this article is striving to answer. That God can perform miraculous deeds whenever and wherever He wants was affirmed by the angel Gabriel when he said in regard to the miraculous conception of Mary, "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37). We stand upon the truth and rest upon the reality that God is all powerful and can do anything He wants to do. He created this universe miraculously just by the power of His Word. He created man miraculously out of the dust of the ground. There is no doubting that we serve an omnipotent God. However, whether or not God is in the miracle performing business today is not determined by God's power - it is determined by God's will. Charismatics like to say that those who deny miraculous activity have a lack of faith. I want to go on record as saying that I have as much faith in the power of God as anyone, but faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). So then, it is not a question of faith, it is a question of what the Bible teaches. This is what this article is about—what the Bible teaches about miracles. Emotionalism won't give us the answer! Religious rhetoric will not give us the answer! Relying on manmade testimonials and claims of human experiences will not give us the answer! The answer is found in one place and one place alone—the Bible.

Those who claim they are able to perform miracles today claim that they do so by the same power as those in the first century. If such is really the case, then miracles today should be of the same quality and nature as those in the first century. So, let's look at the miracles performed by Jesus. When we begin to look at His miracles, we see that He had power over every realm.

He had power over nature (Matthew 8:26).

He had power over the demon world and therefore Satan (Matthew 8:16).

He had power over material things (Matthew 14:15-21).

He had power over disease and sickness (Matthew 4:23; 9:35).

He had power over death (John 11:20-45).

Why isn't anyone performing these kinds of miracles? Why don't we see these so-called miracle workers today multiplying bread and giving food to the hungry? I'll tell you why—they can't do it! They can't raise the dead. They can't heal all manner of sickness. They can only perform miracles that consist of inward, unverifiable illnesses. Why? The answer is because they really have no power at all. The miracles of the apostles were just like the miracles of Christ. They healed all manner of sickness (Acts 19:11-12). They raised the dead (Acts 9:36-42). They cast out devils (Mark 6:12-13). They were even able to resist poisonous venom from snakes (Acts 28:1-6). Do we see these kinds of miracles today? No! If we did, there would be no doubt about miraculous activity going on, but we don't see so-called "faith-healers" doing these kinds of things. When the apostles healed someone, there was no doubt about it (Acts 4:15-16). Now, if indeed those who claim to be performing miracles today do so by the same Spirit as did the apostles, why don't they perform the same kind of miracles?

Another difference between the genuine miracles of the Bible and the pseudo miracles of today is seen in the fact that in the first century there were no failures when one attempted to perform a miracle. Today we could give several examples of men failing. Let's notice a few of them.

In Miami, Florida a so-called faith healer by the name of Jack Coe claimed to heal a little boy of polio. After shouts of "Jesus, heal this body!," he ordered his braces to be removed. When the braces were removed, the boy fell to the floor. Later a doctor said that the braces must be replaced or the child would suffer permanent injury. Mr. Coe ended up in jail being sued for \$225,000 and eventually he, ironically, died of polio (The Holy Spirit, V.E. Howard, pg. 181).

In Springfield, MO., a 16 year old girl by the name of Truth Carder was burned about the face, chest and shoulders by an oil stove explosion. Her mother, Cora Carder, took the girl to the Free Pentecostal Mission Church at Mountain Grove, MO., where about 100 members started a non-stop effort to heal her by prayer, but they failed to do so. Finally the Sheriff and his officers were able to go into the church building and rescue the girl so that she could get the medical attention she desperately needed (ibid. pg. 184).

Supreme Court Rules against Miracles

"The Supreme Court Monday rejected claims by a rural Tennessee church that the First Amendment allows the congregation to drink poison and handle dangerous snakes to test the good will of God. The Justices unanimously turned down an appeal by the Holiness Church of God in Jesus Name. The church was contesting a Tennessee Supreme decision which barred the poison practices after two members of the congregation drank strychnine and died" (United Press International, Washington, March 9, 1976).

Though many more examples could be cited, these are sufficient to show a contrast between the genuine miracles of the first century and the fake miracles of today. Failing was unheard of when the apostles set out to heal a person for the power was not their own, but God's. Why is such not the case today if the same God is still in the healing business? And there are other differences too. For instance, in the New Testament miracles were not conditioned upon the faith of the one being healed. Today when one fails, he says it is because of a lack of faith. In the New Testament it was a complete healing. It was not just an altogether improvement; however, today many times a partial healing is claimed. In the New Testament it was immediate. They did not get better gradually. That's not the case with the so-called miracles of today. Today it is sometimes claimed that the healing might take several weeks. The simple truth is if miracles were really going on today, they would be just like the ones you read about in the New Testament. If not, why not?

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