

Can Men Work Miracles Today? (1)

Who has not seen religious programs on television that feature men who claim to have the ability to perform miracles of healing, prophesy, and conduct other supernatural acts? The popularity of these programs seemed to peak in the early 1980's and then took a significant dive after scandal and corruption by several well known television evangelists. As we have entered a new century, television evangelists seek to make a come back with outrageous claims and predictions. There are many unsuspecting people who have cast their spiritual hopes on the teaching of men who depend upon emotionalism to make their actions seem real.

Men have been able to perform deceiving tricks which have fooled the masses for centuries. The Bible tells of Pharaoh's magicians who could seemingly do the same kind of miracles as Moses and Aaron (Exodus 7:20-22; 8:5-7). In the New Testament, we read of Simon the Sorcerer who astonished the people of his day with powers he claimed were from God (Acts 8:9-13). The Apostle Paul warned the Thessalonian brethren about those who would attempt to deceive them with lying wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

What light does scripture shed on this subject? Would men always have the power to work supernatural wonders? If the Scriptures do not speak of the need of miracles today, then we may conclude that the wonders performed by men on my television are indeed "fake."

What Was the Purpose of Miracles in the New Testament?

There is no argument that signs, wonders, and miracles were performed during the first century. Hebrews 2:3-4 says, *how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?* Throughout the history of God's dealing with man, in both testaments, God confirmed His messengers and message through miraculous signs & wonders. In the first century, it was necessary to demonstrate that the church of Jesus Christ had indeed come into existence. Miracles and powers bestowed upon the apostles and other first century Christians served a twofold purpose.

Gifts of prophecy and knowledge were for the purpose of revealing God's Word. God's word has been completely revealed through the apostles and it is contained in the pages of our bibles. There are many passages in the Scriptures which teach us that God's Word has been completely revealed and confirmed:

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – *Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate and equipped for every good work.*
- 2 Peter 1:3 – *His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness...*
- 1 Corinthians 4:6 – *so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written.*
- Jude 3 – *contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.*

Healing and the working of miracles were to confirm that the revelation was from God. Since God's word has been completely revealed, these powers have ceased:

- 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 – *gifts of prophecy...will be done away; tongues...will cease; knowledge....will be done away...when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.*
- Ephesians 4:8-16 – see especially verses eleven through thirteen. Some early church offices were to help brethren *attain to the unity of the faith, and to the knowledge of the Son of God...*

Many are quick to go to Hebrews 13:8 to cite proof of miracles today. The writer said in the passage, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.* Some argue that since Christ performed miracles in the first century that He is still doing the same today. But is this the case? Although Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, He is not turning water into wine, feeding 5,000 with five loaves and two fishes, or raising the dead as He did in the first century. See John 2:1-11, Matthew. 14:15-21 and John 11:30-46. Neither is Jesus now personally walking on the shores of Galilee nor dying on the cross now as He once did. The Scriptures are plain in teaching that those who now live do not have power from Almighty God to perform miracles as some did in the first century. (To be continued...)

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