

The Kingdom and the Power:

Should Christians Expect Miracle Today?

Lesson 3

Dealing with the objections to miracles happening today:

4. **What do miracles prove?** Since there can be true miracles and false miracles, miracles alone can never prove anything. Therefore, how could a miracle ever be God's means for converting an unbeliever?

A leading theologian objecting to miracles happening has been James Montgomery Boice who says: "Miracles alone prove nothing. They may be false and deceptive as well as true and instructive, and we are never told that they are God's means for converting unbelievers or that we should seek to perform them... The New Testament does not teach that evangelism is to be done by cultivating miracles."

- We can all probably agree that miracles alone prove nothing.
- But to say that God never could use miracles and they have no value for evangelism is not the picture that the New Testament shows us:

People see Jesus' miracles and they know that Jesus comes from God and they believe in Him –

John 2:11, 23: After He turned the water into wine at the wedding feast: "This was the beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him."

"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did."

John 3:2 Nicodemus speaking to Jesus: "This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that You are teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

John 20:30, 31 "Truly Jesus did many other **signs** in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you may have life in His name."

From the signs, they [hopefully- we will also] decide that His miracles are true and instructive, not false and deceptive.

What about the evangelistic activities of Jesus, Paul, Peter, Stephen, Philip who all performed miracles and the results were that many people came to the knowledge of Jesus as The Resurrected Lord.

Rom. 15:18-19 “For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient- in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about it Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”

These verses describe the whole of Paul’s evangelistic ministry.

He says that the “power of signs and wonders” is one of the means God Himself used for converting unbelievers.

Paul says he did evangelism with miracles.

- If God used miracle to bring people to faith when Jesus and the apostles preached, then why could God not use miracles to bring about faith when we preach today?
- Is our preaching today more powerful than that of Jesus and the apostles?
- Did they need miracles to accompany their preaching but we do not, because our preaching is so much more powerful?
- Remember, it is God Himself who “bore witness” to the gospel “by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed to His own will-

Heb. 2:4.

5. Weren’t miracles mostly limited to the Apostles?

We see a lot of miracles in the book of Acts, but wasn’t that a special time when new Scripture was being written?

- Many, who are converted believers, argue that miracles were restricted to the Apostles and the Apostolic succession.

Granted, the early Apostles were blessed with a concentration of miracles as they were the first to represent the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Acts 5:12-16 “Many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles...and more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.”

Paul - while in Ephesus, Acts 19:11-12 “God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirit came out of them.”

Peter - Acts 9:36-42 Peter in Joppa was called to come and raise Tabitha from the dead.

Paul summarized his ministry by Rom. 15:19 “the things Christ worked through him to win obedience from the Gentiles was by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

But this concentration of miracles in the ministries of the apostles does not prove that NO Miracle were performed by others:

Working of Miracles – 1Cor. 12:10 & miraculous gifts – 1Cor. 12:4-11; were part of the ordinary function of the Corinthian church, and Paul knows that God “Works miracles” in the church of Galatia also – Gal. 3:5.

In the New Testament: Miracles by others not Apostles:

1. **Stephen** – Acts 6:8
2. **Philip** – Acts 8:6, 7
3. **Ananias** – Acts 9:17-18, 22:13.
4. **Un named believers in several churches in Galatia** – Gal. 3:5
5. **Believers with the gift of miracles** – 1Cor. 12:10, 28.

With this list, miracles cannot be regarded as exclusively signs of an apostle.

“Workers of miracles” and “healers” are actually distinguished from apostle’s in

1Cor. 12:28 “God has appointed these in the church; first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.”

Mark 16:17,18 “These signs will accompany those who believe: in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

- The power to work these miracles is assumed to be the common possession of Christians.

The New Testament shows how the Church should act, not how it should not seek to act.

If there were and still are many Christians working miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit, then the power to work miracles could not be a sign to distinguish the apostles from other Christians.