Have Miraculous Manifestations of the Holy Spirit Ceased?

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Introduction

1. The question before us needs our study.
2. In the world today there are three attitudes toward miracles:
   a. Modernist: Miracles never occurred.
   b. Pentecostalism: Miracles still occur.
   c. People who rightly divide the Word teach that:
      i. Miracles did occur during the New Testament times.
      ii. God fulfilled His purpose with them.
      iii. They have ceased – do not occur now.
3. What is a Miracle?
   a. An act of God superseding or suspending a natural law.
   b. That which deviates from natural law (a miracle has been performed when natural law has been suspended and an act has been performed which is contrary to natural law.
   c. A miracle has no acceptable natural explanation.
4. A miracle should not be confused with the work of Providence.
   a. Providence is the preservation, care, and government which God exercises over all things that He has created in order that they may accomplish the end for which they were created.
   b. Providence differs from a miracle in that its ends are brought about by means of the established laws of God and through ordinary channels.
   c. God answers prayer today through providence; not by miracles.

I. The Miracles Christ Worked

a. Jesus Christ was endowed with the Spirit to an unlimited extent – John 3: 34 – 35; Matt. 12:28.
   b. Jesus Christ performed miracles to establish the fact that He was the Son of God – John 20: 30 -31; Matt. 11: 2 – 5 (John's disciples).
   c. Christ’s power to perform miracles stamped His work with a divine seal and proved He was the Son of God – John 3:2; John 5:36; John 10:25.

II. The Miracles of Christ were of Five Classes:

a. He demonstrated His power over NATURE in stilling the tempest – Matt. 8: 26 – 27.
b. He demonstrated His power over DEMONS, and therefore over the devil, by casting out demons – Matt. 8:16.
   i. God allowed demon possession during the first century while Christ was on earth and while the New Testament was being revealed.
   ii. Christ showed His power over Satan by casting out demons – Matt. 12: 22 – 29.
   iii. Demons understood they were limited in this appointed time – Matt. 8: 28 – 29; Luke 8:31.
   iv. The apostles, and inspired men of the first century, cast out demons as a sign identifying them as God’s spokesmen – Mark 16: 17 – 20; Matt. 10: 1 – 8.
2. “Cut off the names of the idols out of the land”.
4. “The unclean spirit to pass out of the land”.
   a. The demons are fallen angels now “reserved in everlasting chains” until the judgment – Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4; Matt. 25: 41.
   viii. We can now resist Satan – James 4:7; Rev. 12:11.
   c. He demonstrated His power over DISEASE by healing leprosy, every disease, and every sickness – Matt. 8: 2 – 3; Matt. 9:35.
   d. He demonstrated His power over MATERIAL THINGS by multiplying the loaves and fishes, and by feeding the five thousand men besides women and children – Matt. 14: 15 – 21.
   e. He demonstrated His power over DEATH by raising Lazarus from the dead – John 11: 39 – 45.

III. Purpose of the Miracles of Christ
   a. To demonstrate that He could forgive sins – Matt. 9:5,6.
   b. To prove that He was the Son of God that we might believe – John 20: 29 -31.

IV. The Miracles performed by the Apostles:
   a. The apostles had miraculous powers which were signs of their apostolic office – 2 Cor. 12: 11 – 12.
      i. They healed all manner of diseases – Acts 19: 11 -12; Acts 3: 2 – 8; 28: 8 – 9.
      ii. They cast out devils – Acts 19: 11 – 12; Mk. 16:17; Acts 16: 16 – 18.
      iii. They imparted spiritual gifts to members of the early church by the "laying on of hands" – I Cor. 12:1, 8 – 11; Acts 8: 14 – 19; 19:6; Rom. 1:11.
      v. They had power over DEATH:
      vi. They had power to pronounce a curse upon those who stood in their way – Elymas – Acts 13: 10 – 11.

V. The Purpose of the Miracles Worked by the Apostles
   a. To witness that they were of God – Heb. 2:4; John 3:2.
   b. To confirm their preached word – Mk. 16: 19 – 20; Heb. 2:3.
   c. So people would not place their faith in the wisdom of men – I Cor. 2: 4 – 5.
   d. Signs of their office and authority in the Kingdom – 2 Cor. 12: 11 – 12.

VI. When did Miraculous Power Cease?
   b. Paul said prophets would cease “when that which is perfect is come” — I Cor. 13: 8 – 13

Conclusion
The New Testament is complete and now confirmed – Heb. 2: 3 – 4; Mk. 16:20.
(1) It is forever confirmed.
a. A thing once proved is forever proved. (If a court proves a man innocent of a charge it does not have to go back and prove it every year.)
b. A truth once confirmed is forever confirmed.

(2) We now have the evidence in writing – John 20: 29 – 30.