

Have Miraculous Manifestations of the Holy Spirit Ceased?

Donald Townsley

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.
 - v. Zechariah prophesied when demon possession would end in Zechariah 13: 1 – 3.
 1. “*Fountain opened*” – blood of Christ – Matt. 26:28; I Pet. 1: 18 – 19.

2. *“Cut off the names of the idols out of the land”*.
3. *“The prophets . . . to pass out of the land”* (or cease) – I Cor. 13: 8 – 10.
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.
- vi. Christ’s death destroyed the power of the devil – Heb. 2:14; I John 3:8; Col. 2: 14 – 15; Rev. 12: 11.
- vii. Satan is bound – Rev. 20: 2 – 3; Matt. 12:24 .
- 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.
 - i. Jesus COMPLETELY healed (no partial healing) – Matt. 12: 22 – 23; Matt. 9: 32 – 35; Matt. 15: 29 – 31.
- 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.
 - iv. A viper fastened on Paul’s hand and he felt no harm – Acts 28: 3 – 5; Mk. 16:18.
 - v. They had power over DEATH:
 1. Peter – Acts 9:40 – Tabitha.
 2. Paul – Acts 20:10 – Eutychus.
 - 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?

- a. Zechariah prophesied that God would cause the prophets to pass out of the land – Zech. 13:1 – 3.
- 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.