

LESSON 7

What is the Purpose of Miracles in Establishing the Church?

- 1) What is a Bible miracle? It is instantaneous. There is no delay.
- 2) Can a true miracle be disputed by even those that oppose the Lord? Acts 4:5-7: ***5 And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, 6 as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"***

No one, not even the Jewish high council ever denied the occurrence of miracles. Today many claim the ability to work miracles. These are false teachers using lies to sell themselves as God's messengers.

2 Corinthians 11:12-15; ***13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.***

- 3) Acts 3:12; ***12 So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"***

What kind of attitude did the Peter have with regard to working a miracle? Peter's attitude was entirely humble and gave the glory to God.

- a) Acts 4:13-16; ***13 And they realized that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.***

Were the Jew who opposed the church able to deny the miracle. True miracles can not be denied even by those opposed to the apostle's teaching.

- 4) Does the Lord heal the sick today? Absolutely yes. Sometimes it is what we may call a miracle. But it is not the same as a Bible miracle. Today when God heals there is a delay of time. God is merely answering prayers as he promised.
 - a) James 5:14-15; ***14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.***

The Lord wanted to make sure in the New Testament it was clear how He would heal once miracles would cease.

5) What were the purpose of miracles (prophesy is a miracle).?

- a) John 20:30-31 ***30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 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.***

What was the purpose of miracles performed by Jesus? Thus we see the purpose of the miracles or signs of Jesus.

- b) Mark 16:19-20; ***19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.***

What do these verses tell us the purpose of miracles performed by the apostles? To confirm the word of the prophet..

6) Jeremiah 28:9: ***9 As for the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known as one whom the LORD has truly sent."***

How can a person know if a prophet is truly from the Lord?

7) Who gave miracles to the church? Who specifically initially received these powers?

- a) Acts 1:4-8; ***4 He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."***

Who gave the apostles miraculous power? Jesus promised them the power prior to his return to heaven but it was the Holy Spirit that gave the apostles power.

Who were promised the power of the Holy Spirit? Only the apostles were promised to receive power directly.

- b) 2 Corinthians 12:11-12; ***11 I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing. 12 Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.***

To whom were signs and miracles promised? The apostles: Paul was given the powers of an apostle by Jesus.

- c) Acts 5:12; ***12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people.***

Through whose hands were signs and wonders done? The apostles were the only ones with the power to pass on the Holy Spirit's power to others.

8) How did others besides the apostles receive power of miracles?

- a) Read Acts 8:5 – 25 (Acts 8:6-7) ***6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed.***

Remember that this is the same Philip of Acts 6:5, who was full of the Holy Spirit.

- b) If Philip had the power of the Holy Spirit why did he have to send for Peter and John to leave the Holy Spirit's power in Samaria? Acts 8:14-19; ***14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, 15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."***

Why did Simon offer money to the Peter and John? To be able to receive the ability to give the power of the Holy Spirit to others. Why did not Simon offer the money to Phillip the evangelist. Philip was not an apostle and did not have the power to pass on that power to others.

- c) Acts 19:1-6; ***1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples 2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." 4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.***

When did the new converts become able to speak in tongues and prophesy? After Paul the apostle laid his hands on them.

- d) 2 Timothy 1:3-6; ***3 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, 4 greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, 5 when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. 6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.***

How did timothy receive his gift of power from God? Through the laying on of hands of Paul the apostle.

9) Were miracles and prophesy intended to continue beyond the first century church?

- a) 1 Corinthians 13:8-10: ***8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it***

will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

What do these verses tell us about miracles and prophesy? They would cease or stop.

- b) 1 Corinthians 13:11-12; **¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹²Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.**

Do these verses tell us anything about why miracles might cease? After childhood.

10) Can the message of Christ be resisted?

- a) Acts 6:8; **⁸ And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.**

Stephen was able to perform signs among the people, as a result of being full of the Holy Spirit.

- b) Acts 6:10; **¹⁰ And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.**

The Holy Spirit gave Stephen such power in speaking that no one could successfully counter his message.

- c) Acts 7:51; **⁵¹ "You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.**

When the people rejected Stephen's message, they were rejecting the Holy Spirit.

11) Acts 17:11; **¹¹ Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.**

How can we know for sure today if we are following the truth? By examining the Bible to be sure others are teaching the truth.

12) What is the better way than miracles? 1 Corinthians 13:1-8; **¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ²And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. ⁴ Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails.**

Paul was preparing the way for the way the Gospel would continue to be preached after miracles would cease. Love of Christ is the better way.