

MIRACLES AND HEALING

God can perform miracles and healing anywhere or at any time that He desires. God often works in response to prayer. However, at this point in redemptive history most of God's workings are more properly defined as works of PROVIDENCE versus MIRACULOUS works.

So often people get confused regarding the gift of miracles and the gift of healing that happened through the apostles in conjunction with the early days of the church. The ability to perform miracles and healings are closely linked in Scripture.

There were THREE major periods in Biblical history where miracles were somewhat the "norm" at the hands of godly leaders. However, even during those times they did not happen all the time, and only a very few select leaders were involved. The great exception was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who, at times in His ministry, was healing everyone. But the principal times when miracles were somewhat the norm are:

1. Moses and Joshua: (cf. Ex. 3-13; Josh. 3-4; Acts 7)
2. Elijah and Elisha: (cf. 1 Kgs. 17:24; 2 Kgs. 5:8-15)
3. Christ and His Apostles: (cf. Jn. 10:24-25; 20:30-31; Acts 2; 5; 10; 14)

These miracles performed at the hands of these uniquely called people served as confirming and authenticating signs that they indeed were God's special messengers with His message.

The early church initially had no written New Testament revelation from God. Therefore, they looked to the apostles as God's authoritative spokesmen. The apostles delivered God's NT message confirmed by signs until the MESSAGE was complete (Heb. 2:3-4). At their passing the message was complete and the use of confirming SIGN-MIRACLES ceased (cf. Jn. 16:12-13; 17:20).

Gifts fall into THREE basic categories in the NT

1. Gifted people. (cf. Eph. 4:11)
2. Permanent edifying gifts. (1 Pet. 4:11)
3. Temporary SIGN gifts. (cf. Miracles, Healings, Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues)

APOSTLES & PROPHETS

The apostles and prophets were SPECIAL people with a unique calling. Prophets were the close associates and contemporaries of the apostles. The apostles had the highest office in the Church and had a very unique calling.

1. The Church was founded upon them (cf. Eph. 2:19-20; 3:1-6).
2. The Apostles were eyewitnesses of the risen Lord (cf. Acts 1; 1 Cor. 9; 15; Gal. 1).
3. The Apostles were personally chosen by Christ (cf. Lk. 6:13; Gal. 1).
4. The Apostles were authenticated by miraculous signs (cf. 2 Cor. 12:11-12).
5. Apostles spoke for God with absolute authority for God (cf. 1 Cor. 14:29-33; Jude 17).
6. The 12 Apostles have an eternal place of special honor (cf. Rev. 21:14).

Sign gifts were unique to the apostles (and a few close associates of theirs on occasion). If everyone would have been doing “sign-miracles” then they wouldn’t have served as special apostolic credentials (cf. Mk. 16:15-20; Acts 2:43; 4:33; 5:12; 14:3; 19:11-12; Rom. 15:18-19; 2 Cor. 12:11-12; Heb. 2:3-4).

The word “apostle” means “sent one”. It was used in a TECHNICAL sense of the 12, but also in a GENERAL sense much like today we would use the word “missionary” (cf. 2 Cor. 8:23). In the technical sense it refers to those uniquely sent out by Christ but in the general sense it refers to those sent out by the Church.

MIRACLES

The power to perform miracles refers to having supernatural power over the normal laws of nature or power over the forces of evil. It is the “gift of powers”.

1. **Christ:** The miracles He did were in fulfillment of prophecy and served as SIGNS that He was the MESSIAH (cf. Mt. 8:17; 12:17; Jn. 20:30-31; Acts 2:22). This was their primary value.
2. **Apostles:** The miracles they performed verified, validated, and confirmed that they were an extension of Christ’s ministry and that they were His authoritative representatives.

* The NT message is now COMPLETE (Jn. 16:13; 17:20; Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19; 2 Pt. 1:19).

* There is no recorded miracle after Pentecost performed at the hands of anyone other than an apostle or one of their close associates. Apostles and prophets have passed from the scene leaving the COMPLETED message they received from God. This is what we look to for authority today – the completed Word of God. The primary value of the miraculous was that of SIGN value.

HEALINGS

The gift of healing was the God-given ability to miraculously heal people.

1. Jesus and the apostles healed with a word or a touch (cf. Mt. 8; Acts 9).
2. Jesus and the apostles healed instantaneously – sometimes in phases but never progressively (Mt. 8; Jn. 9; Acts 3).
3. Jesus and the apostles healed totally and completely (cf. Lk. 4; Acts 3; 9).
4. On occasion they healed EVERYBODY (cf. Lk. 4; Mt. 8; 9; Acts 5).
5. They healed organic disease – not just functional problems (cf. Jn. 9; Acts 3).
6. They raised the dead (cf. Lk. 7; Jn. 11; Acts 9).
7. It could not be denied – even by their critics (cf. Jn. 11; Acts 3-4).
8. Under God's direction they did it at will (cf. Mt. 9; Acts 3).

As the Apostolic age was coming to a close it appears the sign gifts began to taper off and diminish until the apostles were off the scene. The early NT books record sign gifts in abundance but the later epistles leave them out (cf. 2 Cor. 4:16; 12:7-10; Gal. 4:13-14; Phil. 2:26-30; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20).

The apostles have passed off the scene. Their foundational revelatory work of giving us the NT Scriptures is complete (Jn. 16:13; Eph. 2:20; 3:5). Their confirming “sign miracles” are no longer necessary or operative. Apostles and sign-miracles went together, and with the passing of the apostles, we no longer have the miraculous sign-miracles functional. But they left us the enduring WORD! That is sufficient!!!