



Lesson Four

Assignment: You must spend at least 30 minutes this week studying the chart which is at the end of the textbook. You will do this each lesson with a view to memorizing the major divisions of the chart by the time you finish this course. You will be tested over the material.

You may access the chart at any time by clicking [HERE](#).

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Lecture 4

Miracles: What They Are And Why They Are Used

USE OF MIRACLES AT BEGINNING OF EACH DISPENSATION

CEASING OF MIRACLES WITH APOSTOLIC AGE

PURPOSE OF MIRACLES

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PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Miracles: What They Are And Why They Are Used

USE OF MIRACLES AT BEGINNING OF EACH DISPENSATION

Miracles were used at the beginning of each dispensation. There are some mistaken ideas concerning miracles. For instance, there are many who think the new birth is a miracle. It is not a miracle because it is the regular work of grace and has been from the beginning of the world. It takes supernatural power to save a soul and the new birth is produced by the same power that works miracles. But being produced by supernatural power does not make the new birth a miracle. It takes supernatural power to cause the earth to whirl around the sun once a year, thus producing the seasons — spring, summer, autumn and winter — but that is not a miracle because it is the regular thing that has been going on from the beginning of creation.

A miracle is a demonstration of supernatural power. God makes wine by causing the sap to rise in the vine and gather in the cluster of grapes, then by causing fermentation. It takes *supernatural power* to do that. Man cannot do it. But that is not a miracle because it is the regular way of making wine. But when Jesus turned the six pots of water into wine *instantly*, that was a miracle, for it was a *demonstration* of God's power. **Unusual demonstrations (miracles) were used at the beginning of each dispensation and proved that those who wrought the miracles were from God.**

CEASING OF MIRACLES WITH APOSTOLIC AGE

Divine healing and miracles, as taught and manifested in the Word of God, ceased with the Apostolic Age. Divine healing as seen in the Bible was without the use of medicine or surgery. It was direct, immediate and perfect. Miracles were supernatural acts of God, such as turning water into wine, stilling the storm on the sea, cleansing lepers instantaneously, taking up serpents and not being harmed, drinking deadly poison without injury, and raising the dead. The only apparent deviation from this is the anointing of the blind man's eyes, but there was no medicinal value in the clay:

“When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay” (John 9:6).

In Matthew 10:8, we read where Jesus sent His disciples out to *“heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead.”* Our Lord told His disciples that they should even do greater works than He did, meaning greater in number, certainly not greater in degree or power.

A common argument, and one used with tedious repetition, is that the Bible says *“God is the same, yesterday, today and forever.”* Since God never changes, some reason that He never changes His laws, never changes dispensations and continues to have the same rule of practice that He had all the way back.

God does change His methods, while His character remains unchanged. If we are expected to take the whole Bible, Old and New Testaments, as our rule of faith and practice, then we shall be compelled to offer up animal sacrifices, such as lambs, bullocks, and red heifers. That was once the practice by the command of God. We shall still be compelled to observe the Passover Feast, and observe all the Temple ceremonies. All agree that those things have been done away. Because they were

fulfilled in Christ they were done away. There was the seventh-day-Sabbath that was observed by God's command, and we no longer keep it, because in the New Testament, we have the Lord's Day or Sunday.

God has not changed, but He has changed His laws and His methods. Even so, miracles had their purpose and when the purpose for miracles was fulfilled, then miracles were done away.

PURPOSE OF MIRACLES

What was the purpose of miracles? Why did Jesus and the apostles heal the sick miraculously, cleanse the lepers, turn water into wine, still the storm at sea and raise the dead?

The purpose of these wonderful miracles was to convince the people that the message brought by Jesus and the apostles was from God. Miracles were their credentials.

When Jesus healed the paralytic man (Mark 2:1-12), He said He did it *"that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins."* I feel sure Jesus knew what He was talking about, and I am sure He told the truth as to why He wrought miracles.

Nicodemus was convinced by the Lord's miracles that Jesus was sent from God because he said, *"No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him"* (John 3:2).

Hebrews 2:3-4 says:

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them who heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles . . ."

What was the purpose of miracles? These passages say they were to confirm the message of God.

“And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the work with signs following” (Mark 16:20).

Thus, we see that the purpose of miracles was to confirm the word spoken by Christ and the apostles.

The purpose of miracles never was to accommodate the ones on whom the miracles were performed. In II Timothy 4:20, we read where Paul said, *“Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.”* Why did Paul leave him sick since he had the power to heal him? The answer is that Trophimus was already a believer and did not need the miracles to confirm the word. Paul told Timothy:

“Use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities” (I Timothy 5:23).

Why did not Paul heal Timothy? He had the power to do it. He had the faith necessary. Why, then, did he not heal Timothy? Because Timothy was already a believer and did not need the miracle to confirm his faith.

When the Bible was completed, when John wrote the book of Revelation, the Apostolic Age ended. The Bible being finished, the Word of God having been fully confirmed, miracles were no longer needed. As the animal sacrifices and the Temple ceremonials had fulfilled their purpose and had been done away, so the miracles fulfilled their purpose and were done away also.

MIRACLES DONE AWAY

The Bible plainly tells us that miracles – these supernatural gifts – were done away when the New Testament was completed. The twelfth, through the fourteenth chapters of I Corinthians are on the subject of spiritual gifts. In I Corinthians 12:1, we are told what the subject is. Here it is:

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.”

Spiritual gifts is the subject. In that twelfth chapter, at least nine gifts are mentioned, such as healing, gift of tongues, prophecy, inspiration (called the gift of knowledge) and on through the list. In the thirteenth chapter we are told that all these gifts were done away “*when that which is perfect is come.*” What is that perfect thing that would come and at which time the miraculous gifts would be done away?

Strangely, some say that it means these gifts will pass away when Jesus comes again. A three months grammar student knows that a personal pronoun is not used here. It does not say when *He who* is perfect is come, then supernatural gifts would pass away, but it says that *that which* is perfect is come. You cannot correctly speak of Jesus as a “that which.”

What perfect thing has come? The New Testament, which James calls “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25).

The New Testament, at the time Paul wrote Corinthians, was only “in part,” and Paul said, in this thirteenth chapter, that they “knew in part,” and prophesied in part, but “*when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*” That settles it. So long as the Bible was in process of formation – up until the last word in the Bible was written – they only had the truth “in part.” But when the New Testament was completed they had *the perfect thing, the perfect law of liberty*, and the inspiration, prophecy, tongues, and all other miracles were done away. In Ephesians 4:8-14 we read that the “gifts” (these miraculous gifts) were to last “*Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God.*”

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of

the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:8-14).

That unity of the faith is the New Testament. At the time Ephesians was written, the faith – the knowledge of the Son of God – was in fragments, in part only, as Paul said in Corinthians, but when the New Testament was completed the *knowledge of the Son of God was complete*, and hence, the gifts ceased. These gifts, mind you, were to last till this knowledge of the Son of God was completed and, that having been fulfilled, the gifts passed away.

ONLY THREE REMAINING GIFTS

Then what have we left? Paul explains in I Corinthians 13:13: “*And now abideth faith, hope and^{*}love, these three . . .*” Can you spell three? Can you count three? Then you know just exactly the number of gifts that remain. What are they? “*Faith, hope, love, these three.*” If we still have the gift of healing, that would make four. If we still have the gift of tongues, that would make five. If we still have the gift of prophecy, that would make six. But it does not say we have four, five or six of these supernatural gifts left. It positively says we have *just three* and names them – *faith, hope, love*. It seems strange to me that any one can conclude that he has four, five or six of these miraculous gifts when the Bible plainly says that only three abide in the church.

God has not changed. He is the same yesterday, today and forever, but He changes his methods of dealing with men. He changes His laws, and He changes dispensations. When He had served His purpose with such things as the Jewish ceremonials and with the seventh day, He set them aside and started something else. So, when He used miracles for the purpose of establishing His *perfect rule of faith and practice* to confirm the

Word until it was fully written, then He set aside miracles, also. *He is unchangeable*, but He changes His laws and methods as it suits Him.

MIRACLES NO LONGER NEEDED

Why do we not need miracles now the same as they needed them before the Bible was completely written? Because the Bible is fully confirmed and preachers can be gauged by the New Testament. You can tell whether the preacher is from God by whether He preaches according to the written Word, and miracles would be superfluous.

How do we know the New Testament is God's Word? We know it by several rules.

Signs Recorded

The miracles recorded are as much for us now as they were for those who personally witnessed them. In Mark 16:17 (the passage used so much by modern miracle workers) we read:

“These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

What signs? These signs. Not similar signs wrought over and over again, but *these signs*, the very signs that the apostles wrought shall follow all believers all through the ages. Not signs we do, but the signs the apostles wrought, *these signs* shall follow clear on down to the end of time. We have every one of these signs recorded in the Bible, and wherever the Bible is read, these same signs are right there.

A surveyor surveys a tract of land, and he makes signs of the land lines by hacking the trees and placing corner rocks.

Those signs remain on through the years to come. Anyone can go to that land and see the same signs that the original surveyor made — the signs follow from one generation to another. We do not need to hack fresh notches in the trees and set out fresh rocks on the corners from year to year. The signs *first made remain* and follow on down through the years to come. So, in establishing the Bible, the original survey is sufficient. The Bible is marked all over with God's approval. The original signs remain. They follow and are just as good today as they have ever been. There is no need for more. If there is a need for more, then the Bible is not perfect, but needs supplementing.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (II Timothy 3:16).

If we are completely, throughly, furnished for all good works in the Bible, there is no need for miracles. If something in addition to the Bible is needed to bolster up the Lord's work, then the Bible is not a perfect rule, but is short somewhere and somehow. Those who use miracles, or expect miracles to be used, show that they do not believe what God has said in His Word because they demand further confirmation.

Scientific Accuracy Of The Bible Demonstrated

How do we know that the Bible is God's Word? We know it by fulfilled prophecy. Peter calls fulfilled prophecy the *“more sure word of prophecy.”* The prophets foretold events that have come to pass in such wonderful exactness that we cannot doubt their inspiration. The scientific accuracy of the Bible proves it to be from God. It was written long before any scientific book was written, and yet, there is not an unscientific statement in the Bible. We can demonstrate the Bible to be God's Word, and hence, we do not need miracles to confirm it. It is already confirmed. It is a *perfect law of liberty.*” The man who demands miracles shows he has no confidence in the Bible.

THE DEVIL A MIRACLE WORKER

Since God withdrew the power to work miracles from His people, it follows that **any miracles wrought now are wrought by the power of the devil and not by the power of God.** Can the devil work miracles? He can. If you will read the seventh and eighth chapters of Exodus, you will find that when Moses wrought miracles, *“the magicians did so with their enchantments.”*

Spirits of Devils

In Revelation 13:13-14 we read that the beast deceived the people *“By means of those miracles which he had power to do . . .”*

“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live” (Revelation 13:13,14).

In Revelation 16:14, we read that it is *“the spirits of devils working miracles.”*

“For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth . . .” (Revelation 16:14).

In Mark 13:22, Jesus foretold that just exactly this sort of thing would be.

“For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect” (Mark 13:22).

Sorcerers

In Acts 8:9-11, we read of Simon, the sorcerer, who bewitched the people by his sorcery until the people declared, *"This man is the great power of God."*

"But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God" (Acts 8:9-10).

Thus, we see Simon did such wonderful things that the people were convinced that he was the mighty power of God.

We read also of Elymas the sorcerer in Acts 13:6-11, who wrought miracles and led off many people, but Paul came along and called him a *"child of the devil."*

"Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil . . ." (Acts 13:9,10).

This is rough language to use against a miracle worker. Some of you may think I am speaking roughly, but do not forget, I am using Bible language.

Devil's Preachers

The devil has the most attractive preachers in the world:

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (II Cor. 11:13-15).

I did not say that. I quoted those very words from the Bible. The devil does not come with cloven feet and horns and barbed tail and dark visage. He could not deceive the people that way.

A counterfeit is not dangerous if the difference between it and the thing counterfeited is glaring. But when the counterfeit looks so much like the genuine, then it becomes dangerous. That is why the devil comes to us as an angel of light. He comes in the most attractive form and even preaches righteousness. He even works miracles that benefit people to get them the more in his power. If the Scriptures read do not mean this, then they have no meaning.

Heretical Sects

Every heretical cult and church founder that comes along, comes working miracles. The Mormons have a large book printed telling of their wonderful healings. These Mormons, with half a dozen wives, come along healing the sick. Are they of God? Alex Dowie, the founder of the cult that holds forth with Voliva as their leader now, healed thousands of people. Yet, he was living in such disgrace that his name became a stench in society. Christian Science, that denies the existence of the devil and the existence of sin, comes along healing. So with all the Pentecostal and "Holy Roller" sects. They come healing and talking with tongues and working miracles. They all claim the baptism of the Holy Ghost and power to work miracles.

Do they work miracles? If they do, the Bible says it is by the power of the devil. But some say that if this is true, then the devil has been converted and has gone to doing good works. Not at all. He is only up to his old tricks, clothing himself as an angel of light, and if he does any good thing, it is for an evil purpose, in order to deceive the people, and thus, get them securely into his power.

Delusion

Are the people sincere who are deluded by such deceitful work?

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (II Thessalonians 2:9-11).

Are they sincere? Certainly. So is the Hindu mother who throws her babe to the crocodiles to appease the wrath of her imaginary god.

Are they sincere? So was the Mormon woman who believed that her salvation depended upon her husband having several wives.

Sincere? So was Saul of Tarsus who said he thought he was serving God when he persecuted the saints and brought them bound into Jerusalem.

The devil can deceive until one who *“killeth you will think he doeth God service” (John 16:2).*

Sincere? Hear what the Lord says of some who shall appear at the judgment:

“Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:22,23).

Surely these miracle workers were sincere or they would not have talked like that at the judgment.

BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST

The baptism of the Holy Ghost was miraculous. All of God's people have the Spirit. The Bible says that we are born of the Spirit, that we are led by the Spirit, and that we are comforted of the Spirit. But the baptism of the Spirit was miraculous and passed away with the Apostolic Age. How do we know this? Here is how we know it.

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5).

For a while there were two baptisms, the baptism in water and the baptism in the Holy Ghost. But when the baptism in the Holy Ghost accomplished what God intended to accomplish by it, that baptism passed away. In Acts 2:39 where it says the promise is *“unto you, and your children, and to all that are afar off”* it has reference to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The repetition of the Pentecost baptism of the Holy Ghost is not what was promised, but the remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit is promised to all to the end of time. If we have water baptism, then it follows that the Holy Ghost baptism would make two baptisms, and Paul made a mistake when he said that there is only one baptism. It does not say one Lord, one faith, and two baptisms.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

Why pray for the sick? I pass the question back. Why pray for bread? When we pray for bread, we go to work to get it. That is right. When we pray for sinners, do we not go to work and do all we can to get sinners saved? Certainly, we do. Then, when we pray for the sick, we should do all we can to bring them back to health. Since God made Peruvian bark from which quinine comes, and quinine kills malaria germs, we should pray for the one who has malaria and then give quinine, God's remedy for malaria. When we pray for the poor, we should take our prayers along in a basket and pour them out in the pantry of the poor. Two little boys were on their way to school and one said, “We are late, let us get down here and pray that we

may get to school on time,” but the other said, “No, let us run and pray while we run.” Even so, when we pray for the sick, let us do all we can for them, and, since a good doctor knows more about how to help the sick than we do, we should pray and then call a doctor.

Paul had a bodily affliction, a thorn in the flesh, and he prayed three times for the Lord to remove that bodily affliction, but God refused to do so, telling Paul, “*My grace is sufficient for thee.*” (II Corinthians 12:7-10). Paul knew that healing of the body was not in the atonement, and for that reason, he said he took pleasure in his infirmities which God refused to remove.

Job suffered agony with the terrible affliction brought on him by the devil, God permitting it. (See the book of Job.) All the faith that Job had did not keep him from suffering. God was working out a great purpose in his terrible affliction. If healing of the body had been in the atonement, then Job would have been as well in body as he was in soul. God sometimes has a purpose in allowing His people to suffer.

* Will God sometimes heal in answer to prayer? The sick get well and the hungry are fed in answer to prayer, but both are done by the use of means and not by miraculous power. Shall we pray for bread and then sit down and wait for God to bake it for us and slice it, put butter on it and drop it down from heaven? So, we may throw away medicine and refuse to use a doctor and just depend on the Lord to work a miracle. Can you not see the absurdity of this? Can you not see the Bible plainly says that the miracles ceased when the New Testament was completed? Can you not see that the power to work miracles has been withdrawn from God’s people and that the *devil’s people only have power to work miracles*? That is one way to distinguish between the Lord’s people and the devil’s people. **The Lord’s people are willing to accept the New Testament as a perfect rule of faith and practice, but the devil’s people positively refuse to believe the Bible unless a miracle proves it to them.**

Ed. Note:

When God does heal the sick in answer to prayer, and sometimes He chooses to do so by supernatural power, it is still not a miracle but rather the normal outcome to God's promise to answer prayer. And only God chooses whether the answer will be Yes, No, or Wait. Either answer is still an answer to the prayer of His children. And we must have faith that His answer is always the best answer. Dr. VBK

You may access the chart at any time by clicking [HERE](#).

Review questions may or may not be included on the test.

QUESTIONS

1. What are miracles? _____

2. Is the new birth a miracle? _____
What is the reason for your answer? _____

3. What was divine healing in the Bible? _____

4. What was the purpose of miracles? _____

- Give some Scripture upon which you base your answer. _____
5. Were miracles done away when their purpose was fulfilled? _____
Scripture Reference: _____
6. Do we have inspiration now? _____
Do we have any other supernatural gifts? _____
7. What gifts do we have now? _____

- Scripture Reference: _____
8. Do we need miracles now? _____
Why? _____

9. Does anyone besides God work miracles? _____
Upon what do you base your answer? _____

10. How can you know a preacher is from God or from the devil? _____

11. How do you account for the “miracle workers” of today?

- What Scripture supports your opinion? _____

12. Was the baptism of the Holy Ghost miraculous? _____
13. Do we have this today? _____
Explain. _____

14. Should we pray for the sick? _____
What else should we do? _____

15. Are people sincere who are deceived by the devil’s preachers? _____
Give examples. _____

16. How does the Bible describe the devil’s preachers? _____

17. Explain Mark 16:17 _____

You were instructed at the beginning of this lesson to spend at least 30 minutes for each lesson from now to the end of the course.
You will be tested over the chart in each lesson test and in the Final Test.

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