

## Where I Stand on the Subject of Miraculous Gifts

**NOTE:** *This article was prepared by Pastor Josh Buice for his church body. It can be used as needed for references and reproduction so long as it is documented properly with quotations within the proper context.*

**Preface:** I have just completed a one year preaching series through the book of Acts on Wednesday nights at Cornerstone Baptist Church (April 2009). The study was full of passion for missions that came out of the early church period and it truly impressed upon me in my personal study through the book the need for that type of passion in our church today.

The study also provided clear evidence and patterns regarding the miraculous gifts of the early church. God truly gave the gifts of miracles and signs to people in a limited sense during the early church in order that they could quench the skeptics and critics of the day. In all cases, the miracles and signs that were performed by the hand of man were always done to glorify God and demonstrate His power – never to glorify man. Therefore, it should be noted that the age of miracles is still open as God continues to perform miracles. This article should not be viewed as an anti-miracles view. I simply believe that the age in which God gave gifts to His children to perform signs and wonders (healings, raising people from the dead, speaking in tongues, etc...) has passed. That can be demonstrated in the evidence listed below. We serve a supernatural God who works miracles – and to that we should say AMEN!

**Purpose of the Miraculous Gifts:** Miraculous gifts were given for specific periods of time and for specific purposes. The most recent period of time was during the times of the Apostles. They were facing many skeptics and critics who opposed the gospel. God gifted people with sign gifts in order to authenticate His Son, His Church, and His written Word (Luke 9:1; Acts 5:12, 14:2-3; Romans 15:19; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4).

**Time Period of Miraculous Gifts:** Three periods of time are seen for miracles being performed directly through a human instrument. **Period 1** = Moses – Joshua. **Period 2** = Elijah – Elisha. **Period 3** = Jesus – Apostles. Like the gift of Apostle has passed away and is not given to the church in our day, I believe the same thing is true with specific miraculous gifts. Although the miraculous gifts to the church passed away, I do believe that God still performs miracles in this present day. I simply do not believe that the specific miracles mentioned in Acts and other places in the New Testament are being carried out by people who are gifted with those specific abilities.

**What Support Do I Have:**

1. Miracles are always connected to Christ, the Apostles, and those closely connected with (sent out from) the Apostles in the New Testament. Note Acts 5:12 – And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. . .

2. Miraculous gifts were given as gifts to the church. This is noted in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11. Also noted in 1 Corinthians 13:8, Paul stated clearly that tongues would cease, prophecies would fail, and knowledge would vanish. This is evidence that God would no longer give specific miraculous gifts after a certain period of time. Now, if those who claim that the gift of healing, miracles, tongues, and prophecy are still given to the church, why do many local churches not have at least one person who is gifted with at least one miraculous gift?

3. Where is the proof of these modern day healers? Where is one documented case of a person who healed someone through their ability or gift? Can a person pray over someone and see them healed? Yes! But, that does not mean they have the gift of healing!

4. By the time of Paul's epistles, we see that people within the church body were sick, remained sick, and Paul himself (being one who had been gifted with miraculous gifts – Romans 15:19) was unable to overcome sickness.

5. Tongues (being a miraculous sign gift) disappeared from the scene of church history. For a period of about 19 centuries, tongues only appear a few times. In the cases in which they do reappear, they are practiced by folks like Montanus. He was a 2nd century heretic who believed that divine revelation continued through him beyond the New Testament.

**Conclusion:** Should the issue of miraculous gifts be an issue of division within the local body? No! It should not be viewed as an essential doctrinal point where error in this area would cause someone to be something other than Christian. The only time it would be divisive would be if a church did not believe that miraculous gifts were given in our day and someone constantly tried to speak in tongues during the service. It could prove to be a distraction and a divisive issue.

I have personally been in error on specific doctrines in my past and faithful brothers helped me understand my errors. A mark of maturity is when you are able to admit you are wrong and accept the revealed Truth of God's Word. I am certainly not "above" that myself! This is not an area of division. We must be mature enough to accept different positions so long as they are not essential doctrines of the faith such as the Trinity, the virgin birth, the sinless life of Christ, the atoning death of Jesus, and the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the tomb. Unity can take place through minor points of difference, but a vision can never be accomplished for God's glory without unity.

For the glory of God!

Rev. Josh Buice

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Resources used for this article:

*The Bible Exposition Commentary* Vol. 1 by: Warren Wiersbe

*Word Pictures in the New Testament* Vol. 4 by: A.T. Robertson

*The John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring Acts* by: John Phillips

*Charismatic Chaos* by: John MacArthur

*1 Corinthians, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* by: John MacArthur