

## "Miraculous Gifts Today?"

Do people have miraculous gifts today like Jesus and the apostles had? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. This is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." And today we're going to test whether people have miraculous gifts from God, so stay with us.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way. Each week we strive to listen to what God says and follow His will. We love the Bible, which reveals the complete will of God. You can be fully assured in all the will of God by reading the Scriptures. You can know the truth by studying the Word. And you can distinguish what comes from God, from what comes through the imagination of men. We examine everything by the unfailing standard of truth found in God's Word. And we're so pleased you've joined us today. We want to hear from you and be a part of your life each week.

If you watch much religious television, you'll probably see a preacher claim that he can miraculously heal someone just by calling the name of Jesus and touching them. Perhaps you've wondered if they can really do that. Well, stay with us and we'll explore the question in an important Bible study. Today we're asking the question, "Does anyone have the miraculous gifts today?"

There can be no doubt that Jesus and the apostles had the miraculous ability to make the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and the sick to be healed. They claim to cast out demons. And Jesus could walk on water, multiply the loaves and fishes, still the storms, and raise the dead after they have been buried.

To hear some preachers today, they claim to be able to duplicate some of these miraculous signs. Now, we don't doubt that Jesus and the apostles could do these things, but we want to explore whether people today have those miraculous gifts. Can people today perform miracles like they did in the Bible? Now all these things happened by the power of God in the first century, and some claim they have the gift to make them happen today, but the Bible clearly teaches miraculous gifts would come to an end.

Now if you want a copy of our study about miraculous gifts today, we offer this information free. Mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. Now you can also see us on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org) or on YouTube.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from John 20:30 to 31, and examine the claim of miraculous gifts today.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to John chapter 20 verses 30 and 31. And they reveal the primary reason why John wrote this book.

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

And the word signs here means those miraculous events that pointed to God. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're grateful that You have given us records of the things that took place so many years ago. Things that took place in the minds of many witnesses and Father we're thankful that we can read about them. We pray Father that our faith will always be placed in You. To help us Father always to test the spirits. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

When people claim to be inspired or to work healing miracles, Christians should test these claims. 1 John 4 and verse 1 says, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world." Jesus praised the church in

Ephesus in Revelation 2 and verse 2 for their faithfulness; Jesus told them that He knew “how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.”

Religious leaders today who claim miraculous powers cannot measure up to Jesus and the apostles. They cite passages as Mark 16 verses 17 and 18, “And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.” Well people today think they can do what the apostles did.

Well the Lord gave power to work miracles to confirm the preaching of the gospel to the apostles and early prophets of the first century. These miraculous signs guaranteed that they were speaking God’s Word. Hebrews 2 verses 3 to 4 says, “After it (that is the message of salvation) was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.”

Now this confirmation is like a governmental seal upon a legal document; once the confirmation has been made, no additional proof is needed. Now since the preaching of the gospel “was confirmed” in the first century, it no longer needs confirming by miracles again and again. Jesus promised the apostles in John 16 verses 12 to 13, “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.” This first-century revelation to the apostles is complete and once for all. God no longer inspires men to reveal new truth. And we have God’s complete message from the first century in the New Testament.

Paul said that miraculous gifts were temporary in 1 Corinthians 13. Love would outlast any miracle gift. Paul contrasted the temporary gifts with love that never fails. He declared in 1 Corinthians 13:9 to 10, “For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.” Now the partial things are the prophecy, tongues and miraculous knowledge. These miraculous gifts were to cease when “that which is perfect is come.”

Well what is “that which is perfect”? well since “perfect” means “complete,” it stands in contrast with that which is partial. Well the “partial” refers to miraculous knowledge and prophecy, which revealed the Word of God orally. It is most natural, then, to realize that the complete or “perfect” is the full revelation given to man in the written record of the New Testament.

This complete revelation of God's will, or as Jude calls it, “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3), came into general possession about the end of the first century. When the complete revelation of the faith came, the partial, that is the miraculous gifts, were done away with. 2 Peter 1 and verse 3 says that, “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.” You see we have the complete will of God, and we no longer need more revelation. The Bible is sufficient to teach us all the will of God.

We see a marked difference between what people claim to do today and what the Lord and the apostles could do. Just as there was a difference between Simon the sorcerer and Philip in Acts chapter 8, so today a remarkable difference exists between so-called faith healers and the miracles Jesus and His apostles performed.

If real miracles through spiritual gifts are occurring today, they should be easy to verify. They should replicate the miracles in the New Testament. But are they? We should test the spirits. Many today who claim they were miraculously, instantaneously healed often find later they're not. A woman told me several years ago that a faith healer miraculously healed her ear. And then she said, "But I went to the hospital and had the surgery on my ear anyway just to make sure." Well she didn't realize that the faith healer really had failed to heal her.

Let's compare the New Testament gift of healing and that practiced today by Charismatics; it's really quite revealing.

First, Jesus healed everyone who came to him without fail. Matthew 4:23 to 24 says that, "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them."

The apostles were also successful. Acts 5:14 to 16 says, "Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by. A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured."

Second, Jesus healed everyone completely; no one came back in a few days still suffering. Crippled persons who had lost arms and legs and eyes were made whole. And the crowd could see immediate physical changes. Matthew 15:29 to 31 says, "After Jesus had left that place, he passed along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the mountain, where he sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them, so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel."

Now maimed persons were people who had arms or legs missing. To make the maimed whole means that he gave them new arms or legs, new hands or feet. The lame were also physically changed. The Bible describes people whose legs were shriveled or whose foot seemed out of place. And Jesus healed people in a physical, visible ways; and no one could deny it. Who is putting on new arms and legs today? No one! No one.

In Acts 3 verses 1 to 2, Peter and John healed a forty-year-old man who was lame from birth. People had to carry him and lay him at the gate. Acts 3:7 to 10 says, "And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God, and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him." It's no wonder the leaders in the Sanhedrin said in Acts 4 verse 16, "For it is obvious to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable sign has been done through them; we cannot deny it." Well who is restoring withered limbs today immediately? No one!

Are modern faith healers raising the dead to life? Have they ever visited a fatal accident and restored bodies to life, as Paul did with Eutychus? Eutychus fell out of a window and died (Acts 20 verses 9 to 12); and yet he was completely healed in an instant! Have people today ever simply spoken the dead back to life? Why don't those who claim the gift of healing today heal at the hospitals or cemeteries? Jesus stopped a funeral procession and He gave the widow of Nain her son back. Yes.

While some tell of people who supposedly died and then came back to life, these stories don't tell of a resurrection at the gravesite. No, they usually speak of a person in a hospital who is revived by doctors after a few minutes. If Charismatic healers could raise the dead, like Christ and the apostles did, they could prove it in front of witnesses at the cemetery.

If miraculous healings are still occurring, anyone could record the miracle for all to see. We could see the maimed made whole or the lame limb restored. We could see physical changes immediately. But why is this not happening? Because the supposed healings deal with what you cannot see. The supposed healing today deals with back pain, tumors, or headaches.

Christ restored a man's withered hand; and the "hand was restored" right in front of Christ's enemies according to Luke 6:10 to 11. Jesus restored Malchus' ear that had been cut off, right in front of His enemies (Luke 22:51 to 52). Are modern faith healers restoring amputated limbs? Of course not! Can you go to a healing crusade and observe a withered hand restored? No. If anyone were healing crippled legs, withered hands, cut-off ears, blind eyes, deaf ears, palsy, or hemorrhages like Christ and the apostles did, they would be on the nightly news.

Third, the enemies of Jesus admitted that he could work miracles. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, people ran into Jerusalem to tell the chief priests. Now remember Lazarus had been dead for four days. And John 11:47 to 48 says, "Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, 'What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him *go on* like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.'" The enemies of Jesus never questioned his miracles were real.

During his trial, Pilate sent Jesus to King Herod. And Luke 23 and verse 8 says, "Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign (some miracle) performed by Him." Jesus didn't do His miracles in a corner (Acts 26:26). And Peter could say on Pentecost in Acts 2 and verse 22, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with (many) mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know."

But today's faith healers often show only the success stories; they don't show the quadriplegics and the paraplegics that are behind who remain in wheelchairs and don't walk. They don't tell the stories of the sick folks that they supposedly healed who were still sick two weeks later.

Fourth, Jesus and the apostles healed people with a word or a touch and prayer. They healed instantaneously and were completely healed. They weren't partially healed or temporarily healed; they were made whole. Jesus didn't require a person to be present at a healing service to be healed. He could speak the word and heal from a distance. Jesus didn't require faith of everyone before He healed them; some He healed didn't believe and others couldn't, because they were dead. Jesus worked miracles to cause people to believe. The miracle then the faith. Jesus never said He couldn't work miracles because unbelievers were present. Jesus never made excuses because He healed everyone. People today claim to be able to heal but fail, and then they make excuses for their failures by pointing to other people's unbelief. My friend, they never had the power to heal to begin with.

Let's pray together. Oh Father help us to be able to distinguish the truth from error. From right and wrong to see what is true and real. And Father to be able to be convinced and be convicted on the things that we know to be true in scripture. But also to see the things that are false in today's world. Helps us always to do Your will in the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

My friend, all healing is divine. Healing doesn't require a miraculous gift from God. God also gave us doctors and medicines to bless us because He loves us. We shouldn't think, then, that because

miraculous gifts have ceased, God has abandoned us or stopped loving us or stopped answering prayer. Remember: love abides, even when the gifts cease. God loves us in many, many ways and blesses us every day. He gives us life, hope, His Word to believe, the church to strengthen us, our daily provisions, and prayer. Prayer is His listening ear ready to hear our hearts and fill our requests.

While miraculous gifts have ceased, God still hears our prayers and answers them with the answer best for us. Sometimes the answer to prayer isn't immediate healing but the strength to endure. Sometimes God says no, as He did to Paul's thorn in the flesh, because that was what was best for him. Sometimes God gives us something more and better than we ask. One thing is sure: God cares for His people.

The question, then, is, "Do we love God?" Are we willing to commit ourselves to His ways? I'm asking you to put your loving trust in God, turn away from sin, confess the name of Jesus Christ, and be baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins. On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached the first gospel sermon and told those who were guilty to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2 and verses 38). Those words are still God's words. And if you'll obey, the Lord He'll forgive every sin. He'll make you His child, He'll add you to His church, and He'll write your name in the book of life. Give yourself to God today and don't delay.

We hope that today's study of miraculous gifts has challenged you to think. If you want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org).

Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now our programs appear on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). And there's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! We ask that you subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." Like those programs that you watch and help spread the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you get a hold of us don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And I realize that some of you for health reasons cannot attend worship; I'm speaking to those who can attend and haven't been. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us. Tell a friend about the program and encourage them to watch. As always, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.