



How God Uses the Miraculous

Miracles are not normative – Otherwise, they wouldn't be miracles

QUESTION: What is the purpose of miracles?

Why is there an entire chapter on leprosy (Deut 13)?

Heb. 11:8 ¶ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Heb. 11:9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

Heb. 11:10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

THE PURPOSE OF MIRACULOUS GIFTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1) To validate the Messiah: Isaiah's prophecy

Who was Isaiah speaking to? Nation of Israel (Jews)

*Is. 35:3 ¶ Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.*

*Is. 35:4 Say to those who have an anxious heart,
"Be strong; fear not!*

*Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.*

He will come and save you."

*Is. 35:5 ¶ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;*

*Is. 35:6 then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.*

a. **John the Baptist requests confirmation:**

Matt. 11:1 ¶ When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

Matt. 11:2 ¶ Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples

Matt. 11:3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

Matt. 11:4 And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see:



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*Matt. 11:5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.
Matt. 11:6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."*

b. Jesus gives his authority and power to validate their message to the apostles:

Mark 6:12 So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent.

Mark 6:13 And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

c. Luke confirms that the application of miracles was used to validate their message to the Jews:

Acts 14:1 ¶ Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed.

Acts 14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.

Acts 14:3 So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

Acts 14:4 But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles.

Acts 6:7 ¶ And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Acts 6:8 ¶ And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.

Acts 8:6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did.

Acts 8:7 For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.

Acts 8:8 So there was much joy in that city.

Acts 8:9 ¶ But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great.

Acts 8:10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great."

Acts 8:11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 8:13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.



2) The unity and edification of the church

a. For the common good:

1Cor. 12:7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1Cor. 12:24 ...But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it,

1Cor. 12:25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

Eph. 4:11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

Eph. 4:12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Eph. 4:13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

b. According to the will of God, not one's desire or level of spirituality:

1Cor. 12:11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

1Cor. 12:18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

1Cor. 12:19 If all were a single member, where would the body be?

1Cor. 12:20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

c. For the unbeliever

1Cor. 14:22 Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers.

1Cor. 14:23 If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?

1Cor. 14:24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all,

1Cor. 14:25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

BIBLICAL RULES FOR SPEAKING IN TONGUES:

1) One present with the gift of interpretation (14:17)

2) Limited to a few people at a time for the sake of unity (14:27-28)

1Cor. 14:27 If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret.

1Cor. 14:28 But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.



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3) Are there lost present within the congregation? (14:22-25)

4) It is a controlled gift

1Cor. 14:29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.

1Cor. 14:30 If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent.

1Cor. 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged,

1Cor. 14:32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets.

1Cor. 14:33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. ¶ As in all the churches of the saints,

QUESTION: What about a prayer language?

Points one and two above help us understand the purpose of 1 Cor 14 and Paul's instructions to the church.

1Cor. 14:1 ¶ Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

1Cor. 14:2 For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.

1Cor. 14:3 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

1Cor. 14:4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.

1Cor. 14:13 ¶ Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret.

1Cor. 14:14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.

1Cor. 14:15 What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.

1Cor. 14:16 Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying?

1Cor. 14:17 For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up.

1Cor. 14:18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

1Cor. 14:19 Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.



SHOULD WE EXPECT TO SEE SIGN GIFTS TODAY?

1) The requirements of an apostle:

1) One who followed Jesus during his entire earthly ministry, beginning from Jesus' baptism by John to Jesus' ascension into heaven (Acts 1:21–22a).

Acts 1:21 ¶ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

Acts 1:22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us

2) They were required to have seen Jesus after His resurrection (Acts 1:22b).

Acts 1:22 ...one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection."

3) Appointed by the Lord Jesus himself (Acts 1:24–25).

Acts 1:23 And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias.

Acts 1:24 And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen

2) **Paul is the last apostle to see the resurrected Christ:**

1Cor. 15:8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Acts 12:2 He killed James the brother of John with the sword,

3) The church is being built on the foundation of the apostles:

Eph. 2:18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Eph. 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

Eph. 2:20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

Eph. 2:21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

Eph. 2:22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

a. Gentiles are now part of the body of Christ by faith in Christ, not bloodline or tradition:

Eph. 3:1 ¶ For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—

Eph. 3:2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you,

Eph. 3:3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.

Eph. 3:4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,

Eph. 3:5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

Eph. 3:6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.



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b. No need for further revelation:

Heb. 1:1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,

Heb. 1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

Jude 3 ¶ Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

2Pet. 1:3 ¶ 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, 2Pet. 1:4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

2Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

2Tim. 3:17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.