

Article: The Bible is Confirmed as God's Word by Miracles Performed, Prophecy Fulfilled, and Hearts Transformed

God enabled His prophets and apostles to perform miracles. This was to establish the fact that their message had come from God. When Moses stood before Pharaoh of Egypt and demanded that he let God's people go, Pharaoh responded, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey Him and let Israel go?" (Exodus 5:2). God enabled Moses to summon the ten plagues on Egypt to establish that Moses spoke God's Word. The ten plagues also answered Pharaoh's challenge dramatically. By the time the plagues were over, Pharaoh knew with certainty that the God who had sent Moses is God indeed.

God enabled Elijah (1 Kings 17:22-24) and Elisha (2 Kings 5:14-15) to perform miracles to confirm that they were prophets who spoke the Word of God. Jesus empowered His apostles to perform miracles to substantiate that they were messengers from God (Matt. 10:1). God enabled Paul to perform miracles to indicate that he spoke the Word of God (Acts 19:11-12). In our Gospel today, we heard how John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus to see if He was the promised Messiah. Jesus directed John's disciples to report to him the miracles Jesus was doing. These miracles confirmed that Jesus was indeed the Messiah (Matt. 11:2-6) and that God had sent Him (John 10:38).

God did use miracles to corroborate that His messengers proclaimed His Word. These miracles, however, were not the basis for people's faith. The words and promises of God, delivered by the prophets and the apostles, were the basis for people's faith. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees when they demanded a miracle from Him to substantiate that He was the Messiah. In the account of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus indicated that faith is worked only through God's Word, not through miracles (Luke 16:31). When Jesus was taken before King Herod, He did not say anything to him. Herod had hoped to see Jesus perform a miracle to satisfy his curiosity (Luke 23:8-9). Jesus, however, had not come to perform His miracles to entertain people. He came to seek and to save the lost. His miracles certified that He had the divine credentials to accomplish His mission.

It should be noted that miracles were not an automatic guarantee that a messenger came from God. Moses warned, "If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, 'Let us follow other gods' (gods you have not known) 'and let us worship them,' you must not listen to the words of the prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 13:1-3). The devil tries to deceive people by empowering his agents to perform counterfeit signs and wonders (see also 2 Thess. 2:9). God's people are not to look to miracles alone. They are to look to see if the message is the message of God. The miracles performed by the prophets and the apostles in conjunction with their message corroborated the fact that God had sent them.

Do we need miracles today? God can certainly empower His people to do them, if that is His will. However, He warns us not to base our faith on miracles. Since we have the Bible, we do not have a need for miracles to corroborate its message. We have the complete testimony of the Bible, which, by its own authority, establishes that it is the Word of God.