

Signs and Wonders

- I. Anyone desiring an encounter with signs and wonders should consider all of what Scripture says about them. **MAT 4:4.**
- II. Scripture does declare the imparting of supernatural gifts to men. **LUK 9:1; 10:1, 17-20.**
 - A. **LUK 10:20** shows that salvation is better than gifts.
 1. Judas Iscariot was given such power yet he is the son of perdition and a devil. **JOH 6:70-71; 17:12.**
 2. Election into the Lamb's Book of Life *from* the foundation of the world (**REV 13:8; 17:8**) trumps any sensational gift *since* the foundation of the world.
 - B. Real Christian joy derives from knowledge of salvation, not from sensationalism. **1PE 1:8-9 c/w ROM 5:11.**
- III. Jesus Christ promised that miraculous signs and wonders would accompany His apostles (**MAR 16:17-18**). These sign gifts can be categorized as follows:
 - A. The gift of faith (**MAT 17:20 c/w 1CO 13:2**). This faith was a special measure of confidence and trust in God that could seek and expect great things from God. **ACT 6:5, 8.**
 - B. The gifts of healing, which included healing of diseases and casting out devils. **MAT 4:24; ACT 10:37-38; 19:11-12.**
 - C. The working of miracles would cover any other extraordinary displays of power. **ACT 9:40-42; 28:3-6.**
 - D. The gift of divers kinds of tongues was the ability to speak in another language that one had not learned.
 1. There are 165 uses of “tongue” or “tongues” in Scripture. 111 times it refers to the physical organ of speech, 52 times to languages, and twice referring to objects shaped like a tongue.
 2. The divers tongues were actual known human languages. **ACT 2:4-11.**
 3. The tongue was unknown to the speaker in that he had never learned it before. **1CO 14:9-11.**
 4. The “tongues of angels” in **1CO 13:1** is clearly hyperbole. **c/w 1CO 13:2-3; ECC 6:6; JOH 21:22-23.**
 5. Any usage of the gift of tongues had to meet ALL of the criteria of **1CO 14** and all of the criteria had an eye to enabling orderly understanding. **c/w JER 9:24.**
 - a. Prophesying was superior to tongues. **v. 5.**
 - b. Tongues were subordinate to understanding. **vs. 18-19.**
 - c. Tongues should only be used to build up understanding. **vs. 2-4, 26.**
 - d. Tongues were not a sign for believers. **v. 22.**
 - e. Three at most and in succession should use tongues. **v. 27.**
 - f. No tongues where there is no interpreter. **vs. 27-28.**
 - (1) This would apply when a speaker addressed those who did not know the language he was exercising with the gift.
 - (2) Obviously, if all the listeners understood the language being exercised with the gift, there would be no need for an interpreter. This would be the purest, most useful exercise of the gift.
 - g. Women could not use tongues in the assembly. **vs. 34-35.**

- h. All speaking was under the control of the speaker (**vs. 27-32**), contrary to spontaneous overwhelming of the speaker.
- IV. The sign gifts in and of themselves do not infallibly evidence:
 - A. spirituality. **1CO 1:4-7 c/w 1CO 3:1.**
 - B. charity. **1CO 13:1-2.**
 - C. grace. **MAT 7:21-23.**
 - D. humanity. **2PE 2:15-16.**
- V. There is more than one spirit that produces miracles. **JOB 1:16 c/w REV 13:13-14.**
 - A. Satan can produce counterfeit miracles to deceive men. **MAT 24:24 c/w 12:43-45; 2TH 2:8-10.**
 - B. Satan's ministers excel when they closely counterfeit God's ministers. **2CO 11:13-15.**
- VI. There were two purposes for the sign gifts.
 - A. Sign gifts were given to confirm prophecy and the apostolic ministry. **EXO 4:1-9; DEU 18:15 c/w JOH 6:14; MAR 16:20; HEB 2:3-4; 2CO 12:12.**
 - B. Sign gifts were also given to convict unbelieving Jews. They were given a *space of repentance* replete with the signs and wonders they looked for from God's prophets. **1CO 14:21-22 c/w ISA 28:11-14; 1CO 1:22 c/w JOH 4:48; 15:22-25.**
- VII. These sign gifts were foretold in the O.T. **ISA 28 & DEU 18:15-19.**
 - A. A forty-year time period would be the duration of these gifts (**MIC 7:14-20 c/w LUK 1:67-75 c/w ACT 7:36**). The word "marvellous" is connected with miracles. **PSA 78:12.**
 - B. The time period started around the time of Christ's baptism at about age 30. **JOH 2:11 c/w LUK 3:21-23.**
 - C. The clock would therefore have run out by 70 A.D., when Jerusalem was destroyed.
 - 1. God had prophesied numerous times in the O.T. that He was going to someday cast off natural Israel in favor of a new order of covenant people. **ROM 9:22-30.**
 - 2. Daniel also prophesied about God's dealings with Israel. **DAN 9:24-27.**
 - a. Among the things that would happen before God's termination of natural Israel as a covenant people was the sealing up of vision and prophecy.
 - b. The last thing in the chain of events was the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the date of which is well established as 70 A.D.
 - c. Thus, by 70 A.D., the stated purposes of the sign gifts (confirming prophecy and persuading unbelieving Jews) would be unnecessary.
 - 3. There are other evidences of a cessation of sign gifts.
 - a. Near the end of Paul's ministry, he could not heal Epaphroditus (**PHIL 2:25-27**), nor Trophimus (**2TI 4:20**), and he recommended wine for Timothy's infirmities (**1TI 5:23**). Why not mail him a handkerchief (**ACT 19:11-12**)?
 - b. Second generation pastors are given no instruction regarding sign gifts in the three pastoral epistles. **1TI 3:15; TIT 2:15.**
 - c. **1CO 13:8-10** shows an end of sign gifts commensurate with the perfection (completion) of the New Testament.
 - d. Late in his ministry, Paul described mighty signs and wonders in the past tense. **HEB 2:2-4.**

- e. The sign gifts were to facilitate the commission of **MAR 16:15**, which was accomplished in the 1st Century. **COL 1:6, 23**.
 - 4. Sign gifts after 70 A.D. implies:
 - a. God was lying or in error about their duration.
 - b. God prematurely destroyed Israel and ended His covenant with them.
 - c. prophecy is continuous so we do not have a complete Bible nor have a sure word of apostolic prophecy by which to measure all things. **1JO 4:6**.
 - d. the rules for qualifying an apostle (**ACT 1:22**) were wrong.
 - e. the Holy Spirit misled Paul in writing **COL 1:6, 23**.
 - D. God Himself still works miracles. The conversion of a soul is owing to the miraculous power that raised Jesus from the dead. **EPH 1:19-20**.
- VIII. There would be a resurgence of miracles after the apostles' times, but it would be after the working of the devil as he tries to establish a world empire. **2TH 2:1-12; REV 13:11-18**.
 - A. Therefore one should soberly consider the source of a man's miracle power.
 - B. Some so-called miracles have been proven to be fake, in which case Satan is simply using his primary tool: the lie. **JOH 8:44**.
- IX. Signs and wonders, like everything else, must be tested by Scripture. **ISA 8:20; 1JO 4:1, 6**.