

15. The Church Saw God Perform Miracles

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that God will discipline those Christians who choose to walk in sin. We saw that such discipline in the life of a Christian can even lead to physical death since any judgment that Christians receive will be on this earth so that the spirit can be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Although God did judge the sin in the lives of Ananias and Sapphira, we see that He also showed His power in other ways that brought great blessing to the church.

Acts 5:12-13 says, “And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.” Here, we see that the Lord was performing many signs and wonders in the early church. We see that these signs and wonders were being done through the hands of the apostles. Hebrews 2:3-4 says, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” God verified the message of the apostles and a few close associates about the death and resurrection of Christ by many signs and wonders.

Later, when some of the Corinthians were questioning whether Paul had a right to be called an apostle, Paul responded in 2 Corinthians 12:12 by saying, “Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.” Here, we see that Paul called these signs “the signs of an apostle.” This was due to the fact that the signs and wonders were for the purpose of verifying their eyewitness testimony about the resurrection of Christ.

The word translated “signs” means *a miracle that God used to back up the words of the apostles*. The word is translated “miracle” in Acts 4:22 which says, “For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.” Then, in Acts 4:29-30, the apostles prayed, “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” Here, we see that the apostles prayed that God would verify their message as He performed signs and wonders done by the apostles in the name of Jesus.

The word translated “wonders” means *a miracle performed by those that God has chosen*. Acts 14:3 says, “Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.” Here, we see that God allowed signs and wonders to be done by the hands of Paul and Barnabas. In Acts 5:12, it was through the apostles that God allowed signs and wonders to be done. God was working in the lives of many people by the hands of the apostles.

We also see that the early believers were gathering in the outer count of the temple called the court

of the Gentiles in the area known as Solomon's Porch. This area was a covered area around the outer edge of the court of the Gentiles. As the believers gathered in Solomon's Porch, we read that they were all of one accord. We saw in an earlier topic that the word translated "one accord" is used eleven times in the book of Acts and once in Romans. The word is actually a combination of two words "to rush along" and in "unison". It is like many different musical notes being played but they are all in harmony with one another. In eight different places in Acts, the word is used to show the unity of the early church. Here, we are reminded again that the early church experienced great unity as they served the Lord together.

The people had seen what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. They were seeing the signs and wonders that God was performing through the apostles. They noticed the unity that was present among those who had believed in Christ. As a result, unbelievers who had not yet placed their faith in Christ were afraid to join with the believers when they gathered in Solomon's Porch. However, the Lord was working in the lives of many of the common people as they saw what the Lord was doing. Most of the Jews had a very great respect for the believers as they saw how the Lord was changing lives.

We see the impact of what the Lord was doing and of these changed lives. Acts 5:14-15 says, "And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them." The believers continued to share the message of the death and resurrection of Christ with everyone. As a result, the Lord continued to increase the number of believers that were being added to the church. These new believers included large numbers of both men and women.

Here, we see that the Lord was answering the prayer of the church in Acts 4:29-31, where we read, "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.' And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." Instead of fearing the threats of the Sanhedrin, the church had prayed for boldness to speak the Word of God. They had prayed that the Lord would verify their words with signs and wonders. Because they were in submission to God, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God with boldness.

In addition to large numbers of people becoming new believers, we also see that the Lord chose to perform great signs and wonders. The people of Jerusalem began bringing the sick out into the streets with the hope that the shadow of Peter might bring healing to those who were sick. As a result, along the streets of the city there were large numbers of sick people laying on bed and couches. The very fact that people were placing the sick out in the streets showed that the great majority of people were amazed at what the Lord was doing. This gave the believers even more opportunities to share the message of the death and resurrection of Christ with the people that were laying on these beds and couches and their families.

As we study the Gospels, we see that most of the recorded miracles of Christ happened in the area of Galilee. However, these miracles were happening right in Jerusalem. The people in the area of Judea that surrounded Jerusalem also heard what was happening. As a result, Acts 5:16 says, “Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.” The people of these surrounding cities began to bring their sick and afflicted to Jerusalem.

We see that a multitude of people came from these surrounding cities to bring their sick and those tormented by evil spirits to be healed. God chose to work in a very powerful way in answer to the prayers of the church. We read that all of the people that were sick and all of the people that were tormented by evil spirits were healed. Three times in the book of Acts we read about large numbers of people being healed. The first time is right here.

The second time that we read about large numbers of people being healed is in Acts 8:7 where we read, “For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed.” In Acts 8:4-5, after the death of Stephen and the persecution that followed, we read, “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Then, Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.” Many believers were scattered because their lives were in danger in Jerusalem. One of those who left Jerusalem was Philip. He went to the city of Samaria.

Here, we see that in this city of Samaria the Lord chose to verify the message of Philip by performing many miracles. Although Samaria was near Jerusalem, God chose to perform many miracles among the Samaritans just as he had done among the Jews. The result of the message being preached is recorded in Acts 9:31 where we read, “Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.” We see that God multiplied churches in each of these areas.

The third time God performed many miracles is recorded in Acts 28:9 where we read, “So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed.” Here, we see that all of those with diseases on the island of Malta were healed as God verified the message of Paul as he shared the message of the death and resurrection of Christ with the people on that island. This means that God verified His message about Christ among the Jews, among the Samaritans (who were of mixed Jewish and Gentile background), and among those who were Gentiles on the island of Malta. Here, we see that God verified the message of the apostles among both the Jews and the Gentiles as He began to build His church among the nations. We want to help our children understand how God worked in the early church by verifying the message of the death and resurrection of Christ among both Jews and Gentiles. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand that the Lord is the One who builds His church.