



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#43)
Fake miracle workers...
not empowered by the Holy Spirit.

WHAT ABOUT MODERN-DAY "MIRACLE-WORKERS" AND "FAITH-HEALERS"?

PEOPLE WHO GO AROUND PROCLAIMING THAT THEY CAN DO MIRACLES OR HEALINGS, OR CAN PROPHECY ABOUT THE FUTURE

Even if we acknowledge that God *does* at times do extraordinary demonstrations of power in this present day (whether or not we want to call them "miracles")... we have good reasons to raise questions about these people.

Their emphasis is quite different from what Jesus had! Even though Jesus did do such things, it was *never* his main focus. **His #1 focus was to proclaim the good news.**

TEST THE SPIRITS!

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
1 John 4:1 (CSB)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE HEALED, COME TO THE FRONT OF THE STADIUM!

IF YOU'RE AT HOME, PUT YOUR HANDS ON THE TELEVISION SET!

SOMETHING JUST DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT!



FALSE PROPHETS come in many forms

TODAY'S FOCUS IS ON RECOGNIZING MODERN-DAY MIRACLE-WORKING FAKES.

- ONE WAY we can recognize them: If they direct our attention to their "miracle-working," instead of to an accurate "confession" of who Jesus is.
- But there are OTHER WAYS ...

In 1 John, the apostle had to deal with those who had a false "confession" of who Jesus is.

Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.
1 John 4:2b-3a (CSB)

#1

How do we know if it's from God?

Four principles for distinguishing between GENUINE and FAKE.

(FAKES don't go around claiming to be fake! So the rest of us have to do the recognizing.)

① & ②

Two "DEUTERONOMY PRINCIPLES"

God told Moses that he would send a prophet to his people (Israel), who would speak accurately everything God wanted him to say. This prophecy was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus; but the principles had relevance for every prophet that came before Jesus.

These two principles were given so that the people would know if the person claiming to be a prophet was genuine or not. We can still use these principles today, to recognize fakes for what they are.

- ✓ Their PREDICTIONS.
- ✓ Their MESSAGE.

1 **PRINCIPLE #1** – If the prophet ever makes a PREDICTION that *doesn't* happen, that prophet is a **FAKE**. **1**

If the prophet predicts something in the Lord's name and **it does not happen**, the Lord did not give the message. That prophet has spoken on his own and need not be feared.

Deut. 18:22 (NLT)

- The greater focus of a genuine prophet is "truth-telling," not "future-predicting."
- But when "future-predicting" was involved, a genuine prophet would have **exactly 100% accuracy**.

- Sometimes a false prophet may seem to "predict" something accurately (especially if his predictions are vague, or if the devil is involved); but even a "99% accuracy level" is not enough!

2 **PRINCIPLE #2** – If the prophet's predictions **do** happen, but the prophet's MESSAGE *does not* point to the God of the Bible, that prophet is a **FAKE**. **2**

Suppose there are prophets among you, or those who have dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles, and **the predicted signs or miracles take place**.

If the prophets then say, '**Come, let us worship the gods of foreign nations**,' do not listen to them.

The Lord your God is testing you to see if you love him with all your heart and soul. Serve only the Lord your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his voice, and cling to him.

Deut. 13:1-4 (NLT)

- A "100% accuracy level" for predictions is only the first step. "What they say" is just as significant! Failing either test proves them false.

THEY DON'T ALWAYS OPENLY ADMIT WHAT THEY'RE DOING **THEY OFTEN PRACTICE STEALTH**

If the prophets then say, '**Come, let us worship the gods of foreign nations**,' do not listen to them.

Deut. 13:2b-3a (NLT)

- If you don't pay careful attention to what they're saying, you might not recognize what's happening!

For some people have slipped in among you **unnoticed**. ... they are ungodly.

Jude 1:4a (ISV)

... some false brothers had **infiltrated** our ranks...

Galatians 2:4b (NIV)

They will **secretly** bring in their own destructive teachings

2 Peter 2:1b (GW)

3 **THE FOCUS PRINCIPLE:** **WHERE DO THEY DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION?** **3**

IF GENUINE: They will point **AWAY FROM: themselves and their miracles, TO: something greater.**

Biblical miracles were pointers, given for a purpose that went beyond themselves. People were to look beyond the miracle, to what it pointed to.

Some examples of the "greater": They may...

- 1) point to Jesus as the Messiah;
- 2) be a "picture" of salvation;
- 3) confirm the work of an apostle (in the book of Acts);
- 4) prepare you for greater faithfulness and obedience;
- 5) remind you of God's greatness; etc.

IF FAKE: They will:

- ✓ Point to themselves, or
- ✓ Leave you focused on something of temporary value.

- Even food and health are temporary matters; for eventually, the recipient will die.
- In the Bible, these temporary matters were secondary in importance, compared to the primary issues the people needed to deal with.
- When people were unwilling to redirect their focus to the primary issues, Jesus stopped performing miracles in their midst. [Example: John 6.]

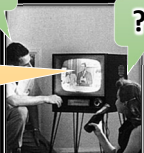
4 **THE VERIFIABILITY PRINCIPLE:** **CAN THEIR "MIRACLE" BE PROVEN GENUINE?** **4**

It's easy for a **FAKE "miracle worker"...**

- ... to psychologically manipulate a crowd.
- ... to "heal" ailments that cannot be verified.
- ... to verbally attack anyone who questions the "healings."

IF YOU QUESTION MY MIRACLE-WORKING POWERS, ... THAT SHOWS YOU DON'T HAVE FAITH!

???



GENUINE MIRACLES – CAN BE VERIFIED* EVEN BY THOSE WHO **REJECT** THE MESSAGE! *

One man, who had been sick for 38 years, was lying there. Jesus told the man, "Get up, pick up your cot, and walk." The man immediately became well, picked up his cot, and walked.
John 5:5, 8-9a (GW)

"We know this is our son and that he was born blind, but we don't know how he can see or who healed him."
John 9:20b-21a (NLT)

"What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it."
Acts 4:16 (NIV)

MODERN MIRACLE WORKERS & HEALERS:
BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT THEM ... **TEST THE SPIRITS!**

FOR A \$100 DONATION,
I'LL SEND YOU A COPY OF
MY NEW BOOK, "25 YEARS
AS A FAITH HEALER"!

People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, ...
2 Tim. 3:2a (NIV)

[JUST LIKE IN JEREMIAH'S DAY]

They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the Lord.

Jeremiah 29:9 (NIV)

JESUS IS COMING
IN ~~1995!~~

~~1998!~~~~2003!~~~~2009!~~~~2014!~~~~2019!~~

2021!

MODERN MIRACLE WORKERS & HEALERS:
BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT THEM ... **TEST THE SPIRITS!**

ABOUT THOSE PEOPLE
YOU SAY YOU HEALED... IS
THERE ANY MEDICAL
EVIDENCE THAT THEY
WERE REALLY SICK?

YOU UNBELIEVER!
HOW DARE YOU
QUESTION GOD'S
MIRACLES!

Many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.
Matthew 24:11 (GW)

#2

**WHO needs to have the FAITH
required for a miracle?**

If a modern-day "healer" or "miracle-worker"
tries to heal you... and it doesn't work...
who's to blame?

(They tend to say it's because you don't have enough faith!)

THE FAITH OF THE RECIPIENT WASN'T ALWAYS AN ISSUE.

✓ JESUS COULD LIMIT HIS MIRACLES TO PEOPLE WHO HAD FAITH
(They were at least willing to ask Jesus to heal them!)

He couldn't work any miracles there except to lay his hands on a few sick people and cure them. Their unbelief amazed him.

Mark 6:5-6a (GW)

✓ HE ALSO PERFORMED MIRACLES WHEN PEOPLE DIDN'T RESPOND TO THE TRUTH!
(They may have believed that Jesus could heal them; but they were unwilling to believe the things that the miracles pointed to.)

Then [Jesus] proceeded to denounce the towns where most of his miracles were done, because they did not repent: ...

Matthew 11:20 (CSB)

✓ HE COULD HEAL WHEN NOBODY HAD FAITH!

Nobody knew what Jesus was going to do... except Jesus!

He went up to the open coffin, [and] said, "Young man, I'm telling you to come back to life!"
The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

Luke 7:14-15 (GW)

(SO COULD THE APOSTLES.)

Nobody knew what Peter was going to do... except Peter!

Peter made everyone leave the room. He knelt and prayed. Then he turned toward the body and said, "Tabitha, get up!"

Tabitha opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up.

Acts 9:40b (GW)

THE FAITH OF THE HEALER SEEMS TO BE THE GREATER ISSUE.

★ WHEN A PERSON FAILED TO GET HEALED, ★
JESUS BLAMED THE HEALER, NOT THE SICK PERSON!

JESUS BLAMED THE DISCIPLES

Afterward the **disciples** asked Jesus privately, "Why couldn't **we** cast out that demon?"

"**You** didn't have enough faith," Jesus told them.
Matthew 17:19-20a (NLT)

JESUS SAID THIS TO THE DISCIPLES

"I assure you, even if **you** had faith as small as a mustard seed **you** could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible."
Matthew 17:20b (NLT)

★ **JESUS BLAMED THE HEALER, NOT THE SICK PERSON!** ★

THIS FACT SHOULD BE A WARNING TO SUPPOSED "MIRACLE WORKERS"!
IF THE PEOPLE DON'T GET HEALED (OR WHATEVER MIRACLE YOU'RE CLAIMING TO DO), DON'T BLAME THEM FOR YOUR FAILURE!

There is a BIG difference between:

- "Come and get healed; and if it doesn't happen, I'll claim it was your lack of faith."
>> AND <<
- "We will pray for your healing, if it is God's will; but otherwise, we cannot promise you healing."

#3

What is God's obligation?

(Time for a "reality check.")

THE REAL ISSUE ...

God has NO OBLIGATION to do anything for us!
(Nothing beyond what he freely chooses to do.)

★ **PEOPLE TEND TO FORGET THE PROBLEM:** ★

- WE, the human race, chose to sin and rebel against God. WE pushed God out of our lives, and chose to go our own way.
- Because of that: HE has no obligation to do anything for us. (He doesn't even owe us salvation – though he has graciously offered it to us.)
- If we focus on what we deserve, there is only judgment and death.

SINCE WE ARE IN THE WRONG...

God has NO OBLIGATION to do anything for us!

IF GOD DOES DO SOMETHING GOOD FOR US, IT IS BY GRACE
(= UNDESERVED KINDNESS) THAT HE HAS DONE IT.

EXPRESSIONS OF GRACE INCLUDE:

- ✓ What he does, what he doesn't do;
- ✓ What he prevents from happening, what he allows.
- ✓ Anything good, whether temporary or eternal.
- ✓ (And for those who love him)... Even evil and harm will be turned into something good for them!

« **APPLICATION OF THIS FACT TO MIRACLES?** »

SOME PEOPLE THINK THEY ARE "ENTITLED" TO MIRACLES.
But God doesn't owe them to us,
even if the end result might seem beneficial.

God has NO obligation to perform miracles.
(Though he can do so, if he wants.)

NO OBLIGATION TO DO MIRACULOUS THINGS – AS DEMONSTRATED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

NO OBLIGATION...

EVEN WHEN PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING WITH STARVATION AND SICKNESS!

[Jesus said, ...] "I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was **not sent to any of them**, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon.

And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet **not one of them** was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian."

Luke 4:25-27 (NIV)

NO OBLIGATION... AT ANY TIME, IN ANY PLACE... EVEN IF THE POSSIBLE OUTCOME LOOKS GOOD.

Then [Jesus] proceeded to denounce the towns where most of his miracles were done, because they did not repent:

"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes long ago.** But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.

And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will go down to Hades. **For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until today.** But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

Matthew 11:20-24 (CSB)

[This also shows us that the more revelation and opportunity we receive from God, the more severe our judgment will be, if we ignore or reject it.]

Our final conclusion?

1) Nobody deserves to experience a miracle.

2) If God does do something miraculous in your life:

- ❖ Give him the honor and praise he deserves!
- ❖ Look beyond the miracle, and pursue the purpose for which he did it –

{ whether that purpose is:
✓ something special...
or just:
✓ so you can give him glory and
honor by the way you live. }

Credits

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