

MIRACLES IN LUKE – ACTS AND THEIR  
IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANS

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## ABSTRACT

This work has examined the miracles/miracle passages in Luke-Acts and drawn out the implications for contemporary Christians in the light of an apparent obsession with miracles and confusion about how to distinguish genuine miracles from magic. The first chapter outlined how the work was carried out and defined the key terms, namely: miracles and contemporary Christians. The second chapter gives a background to Luke-Acts. It was stated there that Luke-Acts was written by Luke, a physician and companion of apostle Paul, to a Jewish-Gentile audience, from an uncertain place, around AD 75-85. Luke-Acts is a theological-history genre and has discipleship as its major purpose. Magic in the Graeco-Roman world was discussed and the chapter was concluded with a section on how the miracle passages could be studied and classified.

Chapter three outlined and classified the 66 miracle passages into 12 categories; highlighted the distinctive elements/ ingredients of Lukan miracles; and a brief textual commentary on one miracle passage each from the 12 categories was done. The fourth chapter considered the theological, apologetic, missiological and ecclesiological implications of the Luke-Acts miracle passages. It was shown that the miracles in Luke-Acts establish the nature and attributes (infinite, personal, omnipotent, self-revealing, goodness/ love etc) and redemptive purposes of the true God. Lukan miracles also show that genuine biblical miracles differ from magic in terms of means, purpose/ uses, and human instruments.

Miracles in Luke-Acts affirm the relationship between miracles on one hand, and missions, evangelism and church growth on the other; and they highlight the need for power evangelism, spiritual warfare and spiritual mapping. The Lukan miracles challenge us to celebrative and joyful worship, sound teaching/ discipleship, prayer, in-house evangelistic witness to prevent the flock from straying into magical practices. The fifth and final chapter was the conclusion which consisted of a few remarks on the subject, reiteration of the challenges before the Church and areas of further work on miracles.

## CONCLUSION

A legitimate question that some have raised is that: "Is it right to seek or pray for miracles today?" The categorical answer to contemporary Christians is YES!!! However, it must not be for selfish or wrong purposes – to gain power, fame, wealth etc. or for mere entertainment (Acts 8:21-22; Lk. 23:8). Contemporary believers may pray for boldness to witness, for strongholds of the enemy in towns/cities or institutions to be broken, to authenticate the gospel message and God's servants etc. This writer is of the view that where there are critical needs – sickness, religious, socio-economic and political problems etc. which defy human solutions, the contemporary believer can pray for miracles to meet those needs and redress those situations. In praying for miracles believers must have "a Christlike compassion for those in need and a burning desire to see Christ's Kingdom advance, and his name GLORIFIED."<sup>1</sup>

Adrian Rogers speaks of salvation or new life or eternal life through Jesus Christ as the "MAXIMUM MIRACLE." This is what Nicodemus sought, and it is the miracle to which all other miracles point.<sup>2</sup> (cf. Jn. 3:1-7; 20:30-31). In view of the foregoing, the following are being recommended to the 21<sup>st</sup> century Church:

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<sup>1</sup> Adrian Rogers, Believe in Miracles But Trust in Jesus (Wheaton: Crossway Books; Good News Publishers, 1997) pp. 177-178, 188

<sup>2</sup> Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press/Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), pp. 369-376.

- i. Engage in more teaching on biblical miracles, as a safeguard against the threats of the prevalent counterfeit miracles/magic of this age. Bible studies, seminars, workshop, testimonies by ex-cult members and magicians etc will prove useful.
- ii. Sound discipleship on the Christian faith – as spiritual maturity is key to appropriate use of spiritual gifts, especially the power gifts, and to check encroachment of demonic influences in a Christian’s life.
- iii. Engage the members in one or all of spiritual mapping, spiritual warfare and evangelism.
- iv. Organize prayer retreats and programmes that will build faith in God who works miracles.
- v. Ministration of deliverance to those with demonic influences, engage in fervent prayer for solution to critical problems or needs so that as God answers, the reality of the triumph of God’s power over Satan will become real to beneficiaries and other persons.

The following topics are being suggested as possibilities for further work in the subject of miracles:

- i. “Miracles in John and Revelation and Challenges for Parousia/Eschatology.”
- ii. “Current Beliefs About Miracles Among 21<sup>st</sup> Century Baptists.” ✓
- iii. “Incarnation and Resurrection as the Central Miracles.”
- iv. “Case Study On Miracles and Missions/Evangelism in a Given Locality or Denomination.”

- v. "A Critique of Cessionist Theorists/Theory on Miracles."
- vi. "Validating Miracles in Contemporary Times."