

**MIRACLES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANS.**

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ABSTRACT

This work has examined closely the miracles in the Gospel of Mark and drew out the implications for contemporary Christians bearing in mind the trend of magical powers, false prophets and the reality of demonic oppression, obsession and possession in our time. The first chapter of the research opens the essay with motivation for the study, the scope and methodology, and definition of the key term.

The second chapter examined the book of Mark in view of the Authorship, Date, Audience and the purpose of the book while the third chapter outlined the uses of miracles in the book: a means to demonstrate the Divinity of Jesus Christ; reveal the Glory of Christ; instill faith in men leading to confession of sins and salvation, and breaking down of social barriers.

The fourth chapter examined the implications of these miracles in terms of the theological, apologetic, missiological, ecelessiological and worship implications. The research did make clear ultimate that the miraculous can and does occur today. It shows that exorcism tends to occur most in conjunction with the preaching of the gospel in the lands and areas in which Christianity has not flourished. But Christians of all theological persuasions must scrupulously avoid dictating to God what he must do or what he must not do. God's spirit blows where he wills, and no one can unerringly predict where his gifts of the miraculous will break forth. God works and performs wonders in whosoever he wishes.

CONCLUSION

The concept of Miracle in our contemporary time is an exciting issue of discussion that arouses the interest of everyone but it thus appears from the study made in the presentation of Evangelist Mark; Jesus is presented as the Ultimate of all miracle workers and He as God decides to give to everyman mainly to achieve His only determined purpose. A great deal of confusion on the subject of miracles has been caused by a failure to observe that scripture does not sharply distinguish between God's constant sovereign providence and His particular acts.

It IS worth mentioning that "The belief in miracles is set in context of a world view which regards the whole of creation as creation continually dependent upon the sustaining activity of God and subject to His sovereign will."⁶⁶ A legitimate question that some have raised is that: Is it right to seek or pray for miracles today?" The categorical answer to contemporary Christian is Yes!!! It is one thing to say that miracles might occur today. It is quite another thing to ask God for miracles. The correct answer depends on the purpose for which miracles are sought. Certainly, it is wrong to seek miraculous power to advance one's own power of fame, as Simon the magician did."⁶⁷

There is no doubt now that the question of saying "Are miracle of any use to the church, the question was addressed and found to be relevant to every present day christian; Markan miracles made it that miracles are used to reveal

⁶⁶ M.H.C. "Miracles" New Bible Dictionary (Leicester: Intervarsity Press), 1996 p. 771

⁶⁷ Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology 1994 p. 370

the glory of Christ, to instill faith in men, to lead the Gentiles to salvation and to demonstrate the messiahship of Jesus Christ from this we see that miracle is inevitable for the body of Christ, therefore it is nothing inappropriate in seeking miracles for the proper purpose because it equally conform the truthfulness of the gospel message. It is also stated in this research that Mark places miracle on a high regard in its implication to missions because the presence of signs and wonders establishes the gospel truth especially in areas where demonic oppressions prevails while apologetically as a tool for defending the gospel and make it convincing in our day to day ministry activities. The ecclesiological and worship implications were also explained and found to be a means of making our worship service a lively experience.

It is also clearly illustrated from this research that "The Power of God is greater than the power of Satan to walk miraculous signs, and God's people triumph in confrontations of power with those who work evil, thus affirmed that miraculous happenings will characterize the end of the age. The church should therefore expect more signs, miracles and wonders in these last days, the unique limitation to this miraculous is as a result of unbelief of people (Mark 6:5-6).

There are tales of some "workers of miracles" who charge what we could very correctly style "professional fees". You consult one of them with a problem and he weighs the gravity of it on a mental scale. Next thing is that he comes out with an appropriate charge which you have to settle either before or during the process of procuring your "miracle". The very thought of it is indeed nauseating.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Samuel Olu Ayodele, Miracles! Are They Still With Us? (Ibadan: Power House Press and Publishers Ltd., 1997 p. 139.

These ones could be tagged professional robbers in God's name. Such should be marked out.

It is equally important to conclude that faith on the part of human participants is a necessary condition of a miracle "And without faith it is impossible to please God" because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him". (Heb. 11:6). On the other hand, the incidence in Mark 6 about Jesus been in Nazareth, Mark tells us that he healed a few sick people there but rather because He could not proceed with His preaching or with the deeds which proclaimed His gospel in action where men were unready to accept His good news and His Own person.⁶⁹

The debate continues over the contention that miracles are of necessity confined to the apostolic age. Miracles have not ended, the New Testament teaching has no peg concerning miracles, signs and wonders as discussed in this work but rather a good example to follow to request and work in the miraculous in our time. Ayodele opined, "Health miracles are still with us today too. Human beings only make an effort towards the realization of God's healing processes' ... Lagos University Teaching Hospital has this motto "We care, God Heals,"⁷⁰

✓ On the other hand, when we take miracles to mean those acts which man cannot convincingly and plausibly account for, those incidents in our lives in which we find ourselves cornered or helpless, almost about to give up every hope and then something happen to save the situation. With this we can say that

⁶⁹ M.H.C. "Miracles" New Bible Dictionary 1996, p. 772.

⁷⁰ Ayodele, Miracles! Are They Still With Us? 1997, p. 65

miracles are around us all the time. Let me site an example about the notion that Miracles are still with us titles "Can Engine Work again with the Bible?" This is the detail of the testimony as written by Samuel Olu Ayodele, Miracles! Are they still With Us? 1997 pp. 59-61 (I have not edited the account in any form).

It happened one day in April 1989, I had to travel from Port Harcourt where I was spending my Sabbatical year. I had to travel in a commercial vehicle, a station wagon car with room for six passengers. The journey commenced early enough, and I hoped to arrive Ibadan a little late in the afternoon. But the vehicle soon developed a queer problem. Somewhere around Ahoada, it started moving jerkily, with strain. Finally, it coughed and stopped. We were in the very middle of the bush.

The driver tried all he could, but all he got was an unsteady movement for about thirty minutes. The car coughed again and refused it further services. As the driver was again fiddling with one component after another under the raised bonnet, one of the passengers got out and asked, "What exactly is the problem?"

The driver said he was not very sure but that he thought it was the coil. The woman asked him to show her the coil and the driver did. She then asked what exactly the coil does in the car and the driver said it helps in increasing the electricity supply to the engine failing which the engine would not have enough power to move. After that explanation, the woman went back to her bag, took out a Bible, and joined the driver. She touched the coil with the bible, and started to pray. This time, each of us six helpless people, (five passengers and the driver) had closed his eyes. Each "Amen" was resounding, uttered right from the heart,

