

## The Purpose & Duration of Miracles

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by Bill Crews

Some miracles recorded in the Bible were performed directly by God: The burning bush not consumed (Exodus 3:2-3 — both *“the angel of God”* and *God Himself* are mentioned); the speaking of Balaam’s donkey in Numbers 22:28; and the earthquake, darkness, rending of the veil of the temple, opening of the graves of some of the dead with their resurrection on the third day (Matthew 27:45, 51-53) in conjunction with the crucifixion of Jesus are just a few of the many examples.

But many were performed by men to whom God had given the power to do so (Moses, Elijah, Elisha, the apostles - Matthew 10:1, the seventy - Luke 10:9, 17). These could choose to use or not use such power. No man has ever gone about working miracles of any kind unless given the power to do so by God. God was always given the credit, not self, and these had to be men of faith.

Such miracles always served a purpose, a divine purpose, and we do not read about them occurring continually, without interruption, down through the ages. We rather read about them periodically in the Bible. John the Baptist did no signs or miracles, even though a prophet (Matthew 10:41), but Jesus did many throughout His ministry of 3 1/2 years (John 20:30; 21:25). The purpose of the miracles of Jesus is clearly shown — they bore witness of Him that the Father sent Him (John 5:36, therefore His words and claims were true); they declared to men that He was a teacher come from God and that God was with Him (John 3:2); they were worked before those who saw them and then written down for others to read about them *“that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name”* (John 20:30-31). The purpose of the miracles performed through the apostles is clearly shown in Mark 16:20: *“And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them (through the Holy Spirit, for He had ascended to heaven in v. 19 **BC**), and confirming the word by the signs that followed.”* The purpose, then of the miracles of Jesus, the apostles and other disciples was confirmation of the word to cause the lost to believe that they might be saved. *“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will”* (Hebrews 2:3-4).

When these miracles had served their purpose of confirmation, they ceased according to God’s divine plan. 1 Corinthians 13 shows that having love is more important than having gifts that enable one to work miracles. It also shows that such miracles would cease *“when that which is perfect is come”* (vv. 8-10; notice it refers to *“that which,”* not *“he who”*). The gospel, the new covenant was fully revealed, fully confirmed, fully recorded (including eye-witness accounts of the miracles); the miracles ceased.

But remember that the New Testament warns of false or lying wonders or miracles (Matthew 24:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9). Those who do not receive the love of the truth, who do not believe the truth will be sent *“a strong delusion”* or *“a working of error”* (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Some of the things attributed to God may actually be the doing of Satan who can *“fashion himself into an angel of light,”* while his ministers can *“fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness”* (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Jesus spoke of *“false prophets”* who *“shall show great signs and wonders”* (Matthew 24:24), and Paul warned of *“lying wonders”* (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

Many today think that miracles of healing are promised to all believers and to the end of time. They think that if one has enough faith the Lord will heal him of his illnesses or heal others through him. But the miracles we read about in the Bible are not taking place or being witnessed today. They are deceived.

