

Miracles Signs and Wonders

by Hendrik Joubert

Ignorance is bliss? The logic behind this proverb is *what we do not know cannot hurt us* – emotionally. The actual phrase comes from a Thomas Gray poem, however it may be deduced from the following words God delivered through Solomon: ***Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain.*** (Ecclesiastes 1:18)

To isolate these words and promote ignorance of God in the hope of securing salvation is foolish. God took meticulous care to reveal, not only Himself, but also His will for man. The message of the Bible may be summed up in the following words given through Solomon: ***The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.*** ¹⁴ ***For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.*** (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

In the book of Proverbs God (through Solomon again) declares: ***The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.*** (Proverbs 1:7) Knowledge with permanent benefits begins with acknowledging God. Over many years God supplied sufficient evidence for man to have faith in Him.

Miracles and wonders and signs played a major role in the revelation of God and His will. Creation is a most powerful miracle demonstrating the existence of God: ...***because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.*** ²⁰ ***For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*** (Romans 1:19-20)

Rather than granting God the power for this amazing miracle, the *wise of this world* grants it to the *amoeba* – the capability of improving/transforming itself progressively into the complexity we witness today is nothing short of miraculous. The vastness of the time suggested would not minimize this amazing inherent ability. In the words of God: ***For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*** (Romans 1:25)

Consider the date. What does the 2007 represent? It has been 2007 years since the birth of one Jesus of Nazareth. How do we know that this Man, by whom we measure time, is not just another man? ***"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know--"*** (Acts 2:22)

The terms *miracle*, *sign* and *wonder* may be used in reference to one and the same occurrence or event. A miracle may serve as a *sign* – of God's existence, or the fact that Jesus is the Christ, or that those speaking are doing so with God's authority. Herein lies the obvious and inherent purpose for signs, miracles and wonders – it is God revealing and attesting. In **Hebrews 1:1 through 2:4** we find a summing up of the process of the revelation of God's word. In the first two verses we learn that over the ages God chose to speak in various ways to individuals, as well as the people of Israel, but His final message, to all men, was delivered through His Son. In **verses 3 through 14** of the **first chapter** we are supplied with a detailed description of the *credentials* of the Son – why He is the sole source of authority. (**Matthew 28:18**)

The next chapter starts with a solemn warning why we are to accept only that which is revealed through Jesus, as the meticulous process of delivery is explained. ***For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.*** ² ***For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and***

disobedience received a just penalty, ³ *how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,* ⁴ *God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.* (Hebrews 2:1-4)

It was at the first spoken through the Lord... Jesus personally announced His spiritual kingdom, a kingdom *not of this world.* (John 18:36; Acts 1:13) In a promise made to Peter we learn something of the nature of this kingdom as He promised to give them the keys, or terms for entrance. (Matthew 16:18-19)

It was confirmed to us by those who heard... While upon the earth Jesus chose men to be witnesses of His *resurrection* from the dead, another miracle, wonder and sign. (John 6:70; Acts 1:2-3, 15-22) These witnesses received personal instruction from Jesus, but also a promise that the Holy Spirit would come to them, after He leaves (John 16:7), to *remind* them of what He said while he was with them. (John 14:25-26) They did not have to be concerned about forgetting what He taught them over the years. The Holy Spirit would not only remind them of what Jesus told them, but would *guide* them *into all the truth,* (John 16:12-13) the complete message of the *good news,* the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and the terms by which sinners may obtain forgiveness of their sins.

In Acts 2:14 we learn that *Peter took his stand with the eleven* and preached the first gospel sermon of redemption in Jesus Christ. He uses the keys given by Jesus (Matthew 16:19) as he announces the way to gain access to the kingdom of Christ. *"Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* (Acts 2:38) The timelessness of these conditions is stated in verse 39.

God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. In this statement we not only find the declaration of the purpose for signs and wonders and miracles, we also learn about the purpose for the gifts of the Spirit – it was to reveal and confirm the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 3:5-6 we read *...which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;* ⁶ *to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,...* In verse three we learn that we merely have to read Paul's insight to be able to understand what the will of God is. (See also Ephesians 5:19)

When Peter spoke on the day of Pentecost the words came from God. The attention of the people were focused by a procession of *miracles* and *signs* and *wonders*, the ultimate of which was the miracle of instantly speaking in a tongue you never learned, proclaiming God to people of that tongue. (Acts 2:7-8) This served as *a sign for* these *unbelievers* (1 Corinthians 14:22) that they were dealing with something out of this world.

These gifts would last until the revelation was complete. (1 Corinthians 13:8-10) Consider building a jigsaw puzzle. Each piece added causes one to have a clearer picture of the whole, and when the last piece is added you have the complete, or perfect picture in front of you. All the pieces served their purpose by contributing to the whole, but now that it is complete there are no more pieces. Jude therefore appeals *that Christians contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.*(Jude 3)

The Lord will not, and does not have to come back each generation to perform these acts in support of the fact that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and be crucified again – because He *is the same yesterday and today and forever.* (Hebrews 13:8) God declares that, as in the parable of the land owner (Matthew 21:33-40), He spoke the final message through His Son.

(Hebrews 1:1-2:4)

The message delivered through His Son is *unalterable*. (Galatians 1:6-9) Those who became Christians in obedience to the gospel must ***contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.*** (Jude 3) When people make changes to it, worship becomes vain. (Matthew 15:9; 2 John 9) And here false wonders and miracles play a role to distract those who do not ***love the truth...with all power and signs and false wonders,***¹⁰ ***and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.***¹¹ ***For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,***¹² ***in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.*** (2Thessalonians 2:9-12)

How may we keep from being misled?: ***Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.*** (Act 17:11) Consider the contrast between the miracles supposedly performed today and those performed in support of the truth revealed in the Bible. Men assemble year after year to change what was revealed by God. The words of these men are not supported in the same way God supported the words of His chosen witnesses.