

Signs
and
Wonders

An Apology

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Biblical Apologetic of Signs and Wonders

In today's society, and especially in Western culture, there is a tendency toward the belief in the tangible and reasonable. This belief in reason and that which is tangible rises from the rejection of the belief of God's power. People choose not to believe in the miraculous power of God because it forces them to come face to face with God and their own sin. So, through the centuries, man has attempted to push the supernatural into the extremes of life where he will not be compelled to see his need for the God of the Universe. It is from this point that we must view man and attempt to show reason for the belief in signs and wonders. Signs and wonders is the power of God used in the realm of sight (i.e. the supernatural in the natural realm). This definition excludes the "lying signs and wonders" of animism and the powers of the devil. In defending signs and wonders, there are three main points that will be discussed: the reason signs and wonders are not seen as much, the absolutes that must be true, the steps of defense of signs and wonders.

The Reason Signs and Wonders Are Not Seen

Since today's society does not believe that there are signs and wonders, the power of God is inhibited. People do not look to God to provide for their needs: basic or otherwise. As the world continues to deny the God and his miraculous power, the world grows worse and worse. The massive problems in poverty and famine stricken countries are examples of the need in our world. People die every day without the basic necessities of living. They lack the physical items that make up the standard of living in the United States. They lack the health needed to sustain normal life (i.e. emotional health, physical health, and spiritual health). The population of the world has not decreased since its beginning, but rather increased. Therefore, there are more people with needs; more people who need the working of signs and wonders in their lives today.

The Absolutes

For signs and wonders to be real, several things must be true. One, there must be a being or source from which the power of the signs and wonders flows. Two, the words of God must be true.

Three, God has not, does not, and will not change His character.

The source from which the power of signs and wonders flows is none other than the God that the world has turned away from. Job 37:23 and Psalm 62:11 both speak of God's mighty Power that He alone has. God's power is evidenced by the vastness of the universe, the complexities of creation, and by the beauty in all that is seen. God's power is more vast than the human mind can conceive. It is from this great vastness that He allows for signs and wonders to be seen and felt by mankind. His power is not that of a potentate who is uninvolved with the subjects of the land, rather it is shown forth in the great love and compassion that characterized creation.

If a person is to be trustworthy, what he says must be reliable. The same is true of God: His words must be true. God's word is the Bible. Numbers 23:19 relates the fact that God is truthful: He does not lie. If God does not lie, then His words must be true. If His words are true, then the Bible is true.

Since the Bible is true, it can be used as a resource to understand God's gift of signs and wonders. This particular fact is the stabilizer in all doctrine of Christian belief. If a doctrine is found to go against the Bible, it is pronounced heretical. When discussing the

doctrine of signs and wonders, the Bible supports the continuation of signs and wonders unto the present day. The great commission and ascension passage of Mark 16:15-20 says that word is to followed by signs and wonders to confirm it. This statement alone shows that signs and wonders should go on because the teaching of the word should go on.

If a man tells the truth once, it does not always follow that he will tell the truth in every situation. This, however, is not true of God. He has not lied before and He will never lie in the future. The reason for this is that God is immutable (unchanging). In Psalm 102:26-27, the psalmist makes reference to God's immutability when he says, "...Thou art the same..." God's immutability affects all aspects of His character. Since this is true, it is legitimate to say that God still uses signs and wonders in today's world and that they operate out of the same compassion and love with which He began using them. God used signs and wonders in the Old Testament and New Testament times, He uses them today, and He will continue to use them in the future.

The Steps of Defense

Since man fell as shown in Genesis, there has been lack in the world; the most important lack being the need for a relationship with God. For thousands of years the world was without the ability to have a one-on-one relationship with God. Then came the appointed time when God sent His only Son to mend the gap between man and God as a result of man's fall. Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth and set it afire with His use of signs and wonders and His resulting death and resurrection from the dead.

Jesus' Power of Signs and Wonders

Jesus was given the power of signs and wonders. This is evidenced by many scripture passages. Jesus, on many occasions, casted out a devil. This is shown in scriptures such as Matthew 4:24, Matthew 8:16, and Mark 1:34. Jesus also healed many people. He healed out of compassion. It was the motive that kept him at the heart of God the Father's plan. This is the motive that should keep today's society in check: compassion. From compassion Jesus healed as shown in such scriptures as Matthew 4:23-24, Matthew 8:13, Matthew 8:16, Matthew 12:15, Matthew 14:14, Matthew 19:12, Mark 1:34, Mark 3:10, Luke 4:40, Luke 6:18-19, Luke 9:11, Luke 14:4, and

Luke 22:51. Matthew 28:18, Luke 4:18, and Acts 10:38 epitomize the power of signs and wonders in the life of Jesus Christ. God annointed Jesus and gave him the express authority over heaven and earth.

Jesus' Immutability and Deity

Jesus Christ is not a created being. He was from the beginning with God. The prologue of John's gospel establishes that Jesus (the Word-as was His title in the Godhead before he came to earth) is God and has always been so. As a result of this, He has the some of the same characteristics that God the Father has. Therefore, Jesus is immutable. Hebrews 13:8 states this saying He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. This is very important to the ministry of signs and wonders. If Jesus was not immutable, then His ministry of Signs and wonders would be subject to change. Since it is not, then it will continue on until His return in the same manner in which it has coninued thus far: people will still be healed and delivered from devils.

The Power of Signs and Wonders to the Disciples

Jesus gave the power of signs and wonders to his disciples and sent them out to do as he had done. This was a training ground for the disciples and they learned how to use the gifts of God with the compassion that Jesus had. Jesus gave the disciples the power to cast out devils, heal the sick, and raise the dead. These powers are present in their ministry as shown in Matthew 10:1, Matthew 10:8, Mark 3:15, Mark 6:13, Luke 9:2, and Luke 9:6.

Power to All Believers

Jesus gave the power of signs and wonders to all that would believe on Him. This is indicated in the Great Commission passage of Mark 16:15-18. Jesus says that certain signs will follow believers. These signs now the territory of anyone who would believe on Jesus.

Signs and wonders did not end with the disciples. This can be verified by reading the history of Christianity from the day of Pentecost to the present day. All throughout history, there are accounts of miraculous healings. Although they cannot be totally verified, there must be some amount of truth for them to be written in books.

Conclusion

Thus far, several things have been shown. God is the source of power for signs and wonders, His words are true, and He is unchanging. It also has been observed that Jesus has the powers of signs and wonders and that He does not change. Further, the power of signs and wonders has been given to believers by Jesus. Since Jesus is God and He does not change, and since he has the power of signs and wonders and gave them first to the disciples and then later to those who believed on Him, the power of signs and wonders is still alive today for those who are following Jesus. To say that the power of signs and wonders is not available today is to deny the immutability of God and destroy His very being.

Without signs and wonders, man is in a sad state. He has no means of hope when circumstances cause him to be down-trodden. If signs and wonders are no longer, then God has changed in nature. If God has changed in nature then He is not trustworthy. If God is not trustworthy then His powers are of a variable nature. It has been said that "Absolute power corrupts absolutely". Since God has absolute power, He would ultimately be corrupted if He was not trustworthy. It has been nearly 2000 years since the pouring out of

signs and wonders on the earth. God has still not been absolutely corrupted. If He were, the world would no longer operate in the same manner and may even cease to exist at all.

The reality of signs and wonders exists in everyday life. Without signs and wonders (miraculous happenings), the world would drift out of alignment, the principles of gravity would cease to exist, the sun would no longer give off its light, and many other related things would take place (or rather, not take place).

The contemporary ministries of Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagin, Benny Hinn, and other healing ministers have shown that signs and wonders are still for today. Thousands of people have seen personal healing through these ministries. Although there have been instances when some people have been phony, they have not acted out of the primary motive that guided Jesus: compassion. These "quacks" have sought after the glories in this life and personal gain. Although there is nothing wrong with material possessions, greed as defined in the Bible is a sin. It is the sin of greed that these phonies have allowed to take over their lives. When guided by the compassion that Jesus had for the people of the world, signs and wonders do not become corrupted. They are a pure outpouring of

God's nature of love.

Signs and wonders are still available to those seeking after God. They still flow through the lives of healing evangelists such as those listed above. To doubt what can be seen is to the thinking of the world ridiculous. It is for this reason that God made His character evident in the natural realm through signs and wonders.