

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

67- Jesus Demonstrates His Absolute Authority- Part 5

Is the Absolute Authority of Jesus
Available Today? Part 1

Church August 27, 2023

Matthew 8:1-17

1 When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him.

2 And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

3 Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4 And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

5 And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him,

6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented."

7 Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

8 But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

9 "For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

10 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.

11 "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;

12 but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

13 And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that very moment.

14 When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever.

15 He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him.

16 When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.

17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

One of the most Perplexing and Mysterious Aspects about God and the Bible and Salvation as well as Christianity itself - is the Issue of "*Why do godly people suffer?*" Why does a Good and all-Powerful God allow Evil and Suffering to exist the extent that these things seem to almost *dominate* our world? And why does Sickness and the unspeakable human Agony associated with Disease and Sickness *exist*; and why doesn't God do something about it? And the Logic goes something like this:

- Evil- including Disease and Sickness; as well as a multitude of human Agonies like War; Injustice; Pain; Misery and Wickedness seem to *dominate* our world
- The Bible teaches that God is Sovereign
- The Bible teaches that God is Good

... and based on that human Logic- people come to the Conclusion that the Bible is wrong.

So, those who think like this say that either God is NOT Sovereign- and He doesn't have the Power to eliminate Disease and Sickness; or God is NOT Good- and He doesn't care. And then many take that faulty Logic all the way out and come to the wrong Conclusion that God is NOT- and they become Atheists.

But even though that is the wrong Way to think about this Issue- people come to that Conclusion because they see the Pain; and the Misery of this Life- and then they read the Bible- and they seem to see a Contradiction of the highest Order.

But there aren't any Contradictions in the Bible. None. And so, people who think about this Issue like that- are simply NOT reading and/or understanding the Bible rightly and fully. Because make no Mistake about it- the Bible *absolutely* addresses this Issue. And it addresses it very clearly and very precisely.

So, the main Reason those inside the modern Church come to that wrong Conclusion- is NOT because God is silent about the Issue of Sickness; Disease; and physical Healing- because the Bible literally screams out to us concerning God's Will. The main Reason people don't understand this Issue is primarily because of two things:

1. There is a proliferation of Bad, Contradictory, or very Shallow Teaching about Miracles- especially Miracles of physical Healing
2. People don't like what the Bible clearly says about this Issue

... so, I pray I can help today and next week.

Now this is the fifth Sermon in our Examination as to *why* the Apostle Matthew gave us three Examples of Jesus' absolute Authority over all things- immediately *after* He finished preaching what we call, the "*Sermon on the Mount*". So, exactly what was Matthew trying to tell us about Jesus in this Passage at the beginning of Chapter 8?

And we have seen that it was important to this man that he demonstrate through the supernatural and miraculous Acts of Jesus- that Jesus, the Christ was, indeed, God Almighty in human Flesh. And so, Matthew tells us here that Jesus had all of the Attributes and all of the Characteristics of God Himself.

But we have also seen that these Miracles that Jesus performed were NOT carried out in accord with what many are teaching today in the modern Church. And I want to continue in that vein again today.

Now first of all (and this is true about a lot of Subjects in the Bible)- it helps to define our Terms. So, for example, when people speak about "*physical Healing*" or "*Divine Healing*"- we need to understand exactly what is meant by using that phrase. Because when the Holy Bible displays the Miracle of physical Healing- in either the Life of Jesus or in the Ministry of the Apostles- it is referring to a supernatural Event of *instantaneous, organic, physical*, Healing. And please allow me to prove what I mean by that term. One of the best examples of genuine "*Divine Healing*" by Jesus is right at the beginning of Chapter eight that Brother Vern just read to us. There, the Apostle Matthew infallibly wrote:

- 1 When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him.**
- 2 And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."**
- 3 Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.**

Now we have already been over this- so, I'm not going to get into *why* this sick man, who had Leprosy said, "**Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.**" But notice that Jesus never hesitated and said, "**I am willing; be cleansed.**" And then Matthew is careful to tell us,

And immediately his leprosy was cleansed

... and there's that word I love- "*Immediately!*"

So, please consider that there were no shots; no antibiotics twice a day for 10 days; no doctor visit; no surgery to remove the dead and dying skin- just absolute, perfect, organic Healing- with nothing but the spoken Word of Jesus!

So, this man didn't say, "*I think I feel better*"; or that he *thought* he *might* have been touched. No! All of the white, dead, skin turned immediately to its natural color; and this frightening and terrible Disease was completely healed! That is an example of what the Bible teaches is "*Divine Healing*".

And then in **The Acts 3:1-10**- we see that this SAME Authority to miraculously heal was *temporarily* granted to the Apostles. Please read that Passage with me:

1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer.

2 And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple.

3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms.

4 But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!"

5 And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

6 But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene — walk!"

7 And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened.

8 With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God;

10 and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Here, Dr. Luke tells us that Peter and John were going up to the Temple at the 9th Hour- which Dr. Luke calls, the “**Hour of Prayer**”. Now back in the 1st Century- devout Jews observed three Times of Prayer in the Temple at Jerusalem:

1. 9:00 am
2. Noon
3. 3:00pm

... where the *first* and *last* Times of Prayer *coincided* with the first and last Time during the Day when the Morning and Evening Sacrifices (animals) were offered to God.

Now I want you to notice a few things here:

1. Peter and John were still in Jerusalem (in disobedience to the Command of Jesus in **The Acts 1:8**)
2. The Temple in Jerusalem was still standing (this was prior to 70AD)
3. Peter and John were involved in the Prayer that was attached to animal Sacrifices

Now it is *possible* that both John and Peter were joining this Prayer Meeting to simply have an Opportunity to preach the Gospel to the Jews. But we have to give an allowance here that both Peter and John- *at least at this Time*- were still struggling with how to *obey* Jesus without *disobeying* Moses.

You see, God through Moses had *commanded* animal Sacrifices- which was a “Figure” of the Reality of the Lamb of God, “**Who has been slain**” (**The Revelation 13:8**). But Jesus *was* and *is* that Lamb! And once the Reality of Jesus Christ came- there was NO further Need for a Symbol or a Sign. So, as Jesus entered into His earthly Ministry- every Type or Sign or Symbol of Jesus that the Old Testament displayed was forever *replaced* with the Reality of the incarnate God now being “*with us*” (*Immanuel*).

And as I have told you before- many Jews- both then as well as now- struggled to obey the New Covenant while trying to be faithful to the Old Covenant. So, many believing Jews, who loved Jesus back then- were still sacrificing animals- almost 40 years AFTER the Resurrection!

Now, were Peter and John among that Group? I don’t think so- but we really don’t know. Because it wasn’t until around 68AD- when God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the unknown writer of the **Book of Hebrews** that it was clearly revealed just HOW a believing Jew could make that Transition from the Old to the

New. Until then- it was common for genuinely saved Jews to be straddled in between the Old and the New Covenants.

But the good Doctor then tells us that Peter and John met a man, “**who had been lame from his mother's womb**”- who was laying at the “*Beautiful Gate*” that led to the Temple- begging for money and/or food. Now the Gate they called, “*Beautiful*” was at the far East of the Temple complex in Jerusalem and was the furthest Gate *away* from the Temple itself. And it was common for sick people to be placed there- so that Jews, on their Way to sacrifice animals- would give them Money or Food. So, it is very possible that there were *many* people laying by that Gate- that all sorts of ailments. And yet, we see that Peter and John **ONLY** dealt with this one man.

Now Dr. Luke¹ tells us that this man had been born without the Ability to walk. And we really don't know what that means but it is possible that this man didn't even have ankle bones at all- or else they were horribly deformed from Birth.

At any event- this man had **NEVER** walked. And so, the muscles and tendons and ligaments in his legs and ankles and feet were **NEVER** used the first time to support his weight.

Now with the advancements we have today in Medicine- there might be some type of surgery that could correct this man's Problem. But even at that- he would have to go through many months- perhaps years of physical therapy in order to learn to walk. But we see here in verse 7:

And seizing him by the right hand, he [Peter] raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened.

... there's that word again- “*Immediately!*” And then look what verse 8 says:

With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

... so, *without* any physical therapy; *without* any crutches; *without* a single Problem- this man, who had **NEVER** walked- was not only walking- he was leaping into the air- as he praised God!

THAT is what the Miracle of *instantaneous, organic, physical Healing* looks like. That's what “*Divine Healing*” looks like. And take note that this man didn't merely “*feel better*”; he didn't struggle to take a few steps; he also didn't limp or

¹ Luke, a Gentile medical doctor, was the writer of the Gospel Record that bears his name as well as the **Book of the Acts of the Apostles**. And we know from History that Luke's Gospel Record was the most meticulous and detailed of the three “*Synoptic Gospels*” (**Matthew, Mark, and Luke**). We also know that Luke was the Apostle Paul's personal Physician and that he undertook this Effort at writing a Gospel Record and the Diary of the first 30 years of the Christian Church at the urging of Paul.

use crutches or need help from other people. The infallible Word of the living God said that his feet and ankles were IMMEDIATELY strengthened; and he walked with no Help and no Problem; and was actually leaping into the air!

So, this was a real, genuine Miracle of Healing. And my Question for us this morning is: *Why* did God do this? *Why* did Jesus demonstrate His absolute Authority over every Realm; and then *why* did the early Disciples and the Apostles also perform these Miracles? And why was only one man healed? So, the Question really is:

Why do Miracles exist?

... what is the main Purpose of Miracles- *especially* Miracles of physical Healing; and why does God perform them? And the short Answer is this:

Miracles happen- so we would believe

... THAT is why Miracles exist; and THAT is why God does them.

Okay, but believe in *what*? Are we to simply believe in *anything*? And can we then apply this Belief to *every* Area of our Lives- like winning a football game; or buying a car; or making more money? Are we to just believe in Miracles or the Supernatural? Is this some kind of generic and vague “Belief”? So, what exactly do Miracles lead us to believe IN?

In a nutshell- the Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches that Miracles happen- to give “*Divine Credibility*” **to what is being taught about Jesus**. That is what ALL Miracles are for- which is why they are rare. Please turn with me to **John 5:2-9**:

2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes.

3 In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters;

4 for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.]

5 A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, "Do you wish to get well?"

7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

8 Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk."

9 Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day.

Now there are probably at least 10 different Sermons we could get from this Passage- there is a lot here. But let's focus on just a few things. First of all, the Apostle John tells us in verse 3 that there was a "*multitude*" of people who were sick and lame and blind and suffering from all sorts of problems. Yet Jesus ONLY deals with one man.

Now I have told you that Miracles have always been very rare. And I have also told you that the main Purpose for Miracles is NOT to banish all Disease from the earth- but to give "*Divine Credibility*" to the radical Teaching from Jesus and the Apostles. But there are many, many people who think I'm wrong about that. And they teach that Miracles are supposed to be wholesale and common. And they also teach that EVERYBODY who has enough Faith can be healed from ANY Disease.

But if that is true- then why did Jesus ONLY deal with one man here? Did our Lord not care about all the others? Was Jesus hard-hearted against the rest? Because it is evident that Jesus didn't deal with the "multitude" of people there by that Pool. He ONLY dealt with this one man.

But this was a very interesting Scene. Because the ONLY reason those people were laying there by that Pool- was to be healed. And yet, in verse 6- when Jesus approached that man- our Lord asked a very odd Question. He asked, "**Do you wish to get well?**" What a strange Question to ask a Man who had been sick for 38 years!

And the normal Response would have been, "*What do you mean, 'Do I want to be healed?' I've been in this shape for nearly 40 years- what do you think I'm laying here for?*" But that man didn't say that. Instead, he said,

"Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

The man told Jesus, "**I have no man**"? But what did that have to do with anything? This is truly a very strange Setting.

Now, over my 52 years of following Jesus- I have heard many Sermons about this Passage. And they almost always teach that this was a wonderful and glorious Situation where God's Power to heal was on Display. I disagree.

I think this Setting here by that Pool- was one of the most horrible and evil and wicked Examples of the fallen Depravity of Man that existed anywhere on the

earth. Every Attribute of carnal Flesh; and Selfishness; and Sin; was on full display here. And Jesus came to that Pool that Day- NOT to bring “*Divine Healing*” to those who needed it the most- but to save the soul of a single Man- and to prove- *by a Miracle of Healing*- that He alone could forgive him from ALL of his Sins.

Notice what John tells us in verse 4:

for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.]

So, think about this. You are laying by that Pool- so you can get into the water and be healed. That’s why you’re there. But ONLY the *first* person in- was healed. And keep in mind that those people laying by that Pool were the most *desperate* people on earth. So, as soon as the Angel troubled the water- you have this mad rush to get into the Pool *first*.

So, cripple people are literally crawling toward the Pool as soon as the waters are troubled. And blind people are slowly making their way to the Pool reaching out for someone to help guide them in. And just as a sick man is about to get into the Pool and be healed- another sick person grabs him by his feet and pulls him away from those healing waters and steps in before him!

Think of how you would feel- if you were just inches away from being healed of some terrible Disease; and right at the moment you are entering into the Water- somebody grabs you and pulls you away and gets there before you! Think of the Anger; the Bitterness; the Jealousy; the Outrage- as you have to now wait till the Angel comes back- because somebody robbed you of your moment of Healing! You are NOT happy at all that somebody got there before you. You’re NOT praising God that somebody else was healed. You feel robbed and you’re angry!

Remember, these people were desperate! And then you have to also consider the great Distinction between the Rich and the Poor back then. So, the sick people, who were wealthy, could afford to hire somebody to pick them up and push people out of the way and pull people away from the water and put you in- because the ONLY people who were healed were the ones that got there *first*.

So, this is NOT like you see in the Movies, where people are politely allowing those who are *worse* off- to get into the water *first*. No, as soon as those people saw the water troubled- they made a mad dash to get there- first. I mean this was *worse* than the chaos and violence and pushing and shoving you see in Wal-Mart on “*Black Friday*”. Because these people used any means at their disposal to get there- including Violence!

And that is why the man told Jesus, **“I have no man”**. He had been sick for 38 years and didn’t have the ability to hire people to push everybody else aside so he could get into the water *first*. And after being so frustrated at never being able to get into the water first- getting a man to help him- overrode his desire to be healed!

Yet Jesus did NOT even mention the horrible Inequality here. He never mentioned the Bitterness; and Outrage; and the Unfairness of it all. After the man complained to Jesus that he didn’t have a man- Jesus simply said,

“Get up, pick up your pallet and walk.”

... and then John wrote that word for us to read here, *“Immediately!”*

Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk.

Now it is evident that this man did NOT demonstrate any Faith at all. He actually argued with Jesus about whether he even *wanted* to be healed. So, his physical healing had NOTHING to do with some powerful level of Faith that he supposedly had. At that fact alone destroys one of the main Points of what the modern Church teaches about physical Healing: that is requires a powerful level of Faith.

So, something else was going on here. And to find out look at what John wrote in verses 14-17:

14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you."

15 The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

16 For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

17 But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."

Please hear me clearly when I tell you that this Passage is about Salvation- NOT *“Divine Healing”*. And there is a lot that Jesus said here that we need to grasp- that we might just pass by- if we’re not careful.

First off- Jesus made sure that He performed this Miracle on the Sabbath. And He did that for two reasons:

1. The Pharisees’ Teaching about the Sabbath was wrong (sinful)

2. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

Secondly, in Response to those religious Frauds attacking Him because He had healed (and saved) this man on the Sabbath- Jesus responded by saying,

My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.

Now why did Jesus say that? What does that have to do with the Meaning of this Passage? We read this Statement today- and with our 21st Century, American, Western mind- we don't see anything great or unusual about it.

But that is because ALL we have known our entire Lives- is that Jesus is God's Son. That's ALL we have ever heard. And because we are saved *in* Jesus- the Lord has told us that WE too, can call God, "*our Father*" as well. But that is strictly a New Covenant Truth. It didn't exist under the Old Covenant. And so, when we read it in the Bible- we shrug our shoulders and say, "*Well, sure- what's new about that?*"

But back in the 1st Century- under the Old Covenant- for anyone to call God, "*Father*" meant that he was EQUAL with Almighty God. That He was of the *SAME* "Substance" or the *SAME* "Essence" of God. And that meant that whoever called God, "*Father*" was fully Deity. And since NOBODY is Deity except God- for *anyone* to call God, "*Father*" under the Old Covenant was Blasphemy- punishable by Death.

You see, NOBODY in the Old Testament called God, "*Father*". Not Moses; not David; Not Isaiah- NOBODY! And even though we don't think this is a big deal- the Jews of the 1st Century knew it was. So, look at WHY they wanted to kill Jesus from **John 5:18**:

For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

So, by healing this man on the Sabbath- Jesus was proving that He was "*Lord of the Sabbath*" (**Matthew 12:8**)- meaning He, Himself was *superior* to even the Sabbath! And by calling God, "*Father*"- Jesus was saying that He was "God Almighty in human Flesh"!

So, this Event- *that involved a Miracle of Healing*- was actually NOT about Healing at all. It was about people knowing and believing that Jesus was God- so they can be saved!

So, the Miracle was performed- so that it would give "*Divine Credibility*" to what Jesus was teaching- about Himself!

Now I want you to go to another Passage- found in **Hebrews 2:1-4**:

1 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.

Here the unknown writer starts off Chapter 2 with a very serious Warning that we must “**pay much closer attention**” to what we have heard; and that we do NOT “**drift away from it**”. So, two things are true from this verse:

1. Saved people have the Power and Ability to “**pay much closer Attention**” to what we have been taught
2. Saved people can “**drift away**” from the Truth

And from that- we can determine that we are to *constantly* refresh our souls “*in*”; “*by*” and “*through*” the “*Means of Grace*” that God has provided to flood His Grace into us- which will keep us strong in the Lord. And foremost among these “*Spiritual Disciplines*” are:

- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Fellowship
- Fasting
- Communion
- Service
- Giving

... and the Bible teaches that as you *routinely* and *consistently* “avail” yourself of these various Means of God’s Grace- you will obey verse 1 and you will:

- Pay Attention to the Things of the Spirit of God
- You will NOT drift away from what you have been taught

Okay, but then look what the writer said in verse 2 and the first part of verse 3:

For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

... where the “**word spoken through angels**” is referring to the “*Law of God*” that Moses received on Mt. Sinai. (**Deuteronomy 33:2; Psalm 68:17; The Acts 7:53; and Galatians 3:19**)

So, the writer is reminding the Jews who made up this small Church in Asia Minor (Turkey) back in the 1st Century- that since the Word of God that had been given by angels was “**Unalterable**”- meaning it could NOT be changed; and since “**every Transgression and Disobedience**” against *that* Word- received a “**just Penalty**”- how in the world “**will escape if we neglect so great a Salvation?**”

In other words, if it is true that the *inferior* Revelation of God (the “**word spoken through angels**”) in the Law of God was “**unalterable**”- which meant it was fully Inspired; Inerrant; and Infallible- AND if it was true that every single Act of Rebellion against the Words of that Law received a Penalty that was “Just”- why would we think we could escape an infinitely *greater* Penalty- than they received- if we neglect the Salvation that has been brought to us by the *superior* Revelation of the New Covenant in Jesus Christ?

If God supported the *inferior* Revelation by punishing everyone who transgressed against it- how much MORE will God support the *superior* Revelation by punishing those who rebel against it even *more*?

So, by comparing the *inferior* Revelation of God (the Old Testament) and the *superior* Revelation of God (the New Testament)- we see that because the New Testament IS vastly superior to the Old- God will judge those who transgress against the New Testament much MORE harshly than He did with the Old.

But then in verses 3b&4- the writer gave his readers two different “*Testimonies*” about the Veracity; or the Truthfulness of this superior Revelation from God that we now call, the “*New Testament*”:

1. The Testimony from Man (v. 3b)
2. The Testimony from God (v. 4)

... After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard (the Testimony of Man)

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. (The Testimony of God)

Now the Testimony of Man is what is called, an “*eyewitness Testimony*”. And it involved two groups of *reliable* Witnesses:

1. Jesus Himself (“**it was at the first spoken through the Lord**”)
2. Those who first heard Jesus speak (the Apostles)- “**it was confirmed to us by those who heard [Him]**”.

... so, Jesus Himself testified on numerous occasions that He was from God and was God. And that made what He said- to be true.

But Jesus also spoke to His Apostles about His infinite Superiority (**those who heard [Him]**)- who then relayed that Information to other people- *including* the writer of the **Epistle to the Hebrews (us)**.

So, the radical Revelation of God in the New Covenant was given “*Divine Credibility*” through the ongoing “*Testimony*” of these human “*Witnesses*”.

But then there is an even greater “*Testimony*”- the Testimony from God Himself. And that’s where the Miracles come in:

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.

So, the Purpose of Signs, Wonders, Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Spirit- is to, *very narrowly*, “*testify*” to the full Deity of Jesus; and to the infinite *Superiority* of the New Covenant as opposed to the Old. THAT is what Miracles are for- to testify *unmistakably* as to the Veracity; or the Truthfulness; or the Reliability; or the Trustworthiness of the Words of the New Covenant- the New Testament.

And the Point the writer of **Hebrews** is making is that because the New Covenant is *infinitely* superior to the Old- the Penalty for ‘neglecting’ what it says- will be infinitely *harsher* than the Penalty for ignoring or transgressing against the Revelation of the *inferior* Covenant.

But in making this Point- the writer infallibly reveals to us the entire Purpose of Miracles: To give “*Divine Credibility*” to what Jesus and the Apostles taught. So, the Miracles gave everyone the Knowledge that what Jesus and the Apostles taught- was “*from*” and was “*of*” God. And because the New Covenant is *superior* to the Old- wherever the New Covenant *differs* from the Old- we are to *abandon* the Old and fully *embrace* the New.

But then that also means that Signs and Wonders and Miracles and spiritual Gifts were NEVER meant to banish Disease from the earth; or to always heal the bodies of those who are sick; or to be permanent.

Now awhile ago, I told you that the Ability to perform Miracles of Healing was *temporarily* given to the Apostles. And here is what I meant by that. Once the

Revelation of God in the New Testament obtained that “*Divine Credibility*”- there was no further Need for the things that gave it that Credibility. And that is *why* the Signs and Wonders and Miracles and Gifts that we see in the Gospel Records began to cease BEFORE the End of the “Ministry of the Apostles”. Case in point- is **1 Timothy 5:23**, where the Apostle Paul wrote:

No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

Now **1 Timothy** is part of a 3-Book collection of Epistles (**1&2 Timothy** and **Titus**) known as the “*Pastoral Epistles*”. These are the Books that teach us how to lead the Church- so that Jesus *always* has the Preeminence; and what the Requirements are for both Deacons and Elders. **1 Timothy** was written by the Apostle Paul to his “Son in the Faith” Timothy- a young Pastor of the Church at Ephesus- shortly after Paul’s release from his *first* Roman Imprisonment (62-64AD).

Now, according to History- Paul was beheaded in Rome by the Emperor, Nero sometime around 64-65AD. So, this Book was written just before his Martyrdom.

And here in verse 23- this Apostle, who had been caught up into the 3rd Heaven; this man who had heard, “**inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak**” (**2 Corinthians 12:2**); this man, who had seen Jesus; who had been given “*Direct Revelation*” from Jesus; and a man who had seen; and was used by God to perform *many* Miracles- is telling his “**son in the Faith**”- Timothy to,

No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments

But *why* did Paul tell Timothy this? Why not simply instruct Timothy to have Faith enough to be healed? Why not just lay hands on him and cast out the “*Spirit of Infirmary*”? Why did this great Apostle- who personally *saw* and who personally was *used* by God MORE than almost anyone else- *especially* in the Realm of Miracles and Signs and Wonders- tell Timothy to engage in the very SAME natural medicinal Benefits of alcohol- *that everybody else was using*?

Now we know from History that the water in many places of the Middle East in the 1st Century was filthy. So, it was common for people to add a small portion of alcohol to the water to kill the bacteria- so they could drink it. And this was common knowledge. Even Lost people did this. So, *why* did Paul instruct Timothy to go the SAME route of “*Natural Healing*” instead of going the route of

“*Divine Healing*”- unless he already knew that the “*Age of Miracles*” was coming to an End?

This is Proof that what I am teaching you is true. And Miracles support the Words that Jesus and the Apostles spoke. Which means that the Words that Jesus and the Apostles spoke do NOT support the Miracles. In other words, Miracles happen to give “*Divine Credibility*” that God is in what is being taught about Jesus; and that He is pleased with what is being taught about Jesus. And Lord willing, I’ll finish this next week.

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

