

November 17, 2024

The View

“Sirs, we wish to see Jesus.” – John 12:21

Welcome Visitors

Our goal at the Folsom church of Christ is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. We are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church; we have no earthly “headquarters.” The five elders oversee this church and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily for the benefit of our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask the preacher or one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

***Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate when it is passed.
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.***

Schedule

The Lord's Day

9:30 AM Bible Classes

Auditorium: Ecclesiastes

Young Adult Class (room 12)

“Acts, Sharing Our Faith”

Room 13/14: “Relationships”

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today: David Posey

“Watch!! But Don't Worry.”

|| Peter 3:9-13

Livestream at 9:30 & 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>

Bible Class: 5:00 PM @ the Building

Praying the Psalms (Auditorium)

Additional Classes

High School Class, 5 PM on Sundays @ David & Christie Posey's home

Young people monthly meeting (middle school): contact David Sanderson

(david.r.sanderson@intel.com)

or Seth Reagan (sethreagan@gmail.com)

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

2nd Saturday Men's Bible Study: 7 to 8 AM

Bel Air Market on Bidwell in Folsom. “Iron sharpens iron” (Proverbs 27:17). Mentoring (Titus 2:1-6).

Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Same classes as Sunday at 9:30

Articles published in the View reflect only the thoughts and opinions of the author alone, not necessarily the editor, the elders or any member of the church at Folsom.

Miracles Today?

Many of you are familiar with the story about a woman who felt in her heart that she saw the face of Jesus in a tortilla as she was frying it. She was so sure that God was “sending a sign” that she took the tortilla out of the pan, placed it in a little glass case, elevated on cotton balls, and called it “The Shrine of the Holy Tortilla.” Reportedly, people from miles around came to see the face of “Jesus in the tortilla.”

Before you ridicule the lady and the sign-seekers, consider this question: If *every bit* of our information about religion *does not come from Scripture*; if we admit that there is the *slightest possibility* that God will yet reveal something never before revealed; if we admit that, in some cases, our feelings count more than God’s already revealed words, then upon what basis can we dispute the discovery of the lady who saw “Jesus” in the tortilla?

There are many sincere people in the religious world who feel they have seen a miracle. I wouldn’t even attempt to argue with them because you can’t argue against someone’s perceived experience, no matter how odd it may be. So let’s assume they are being honest about what they feel they saw or heard. All we ask is that anyone who thinks they’ve seen a miracle compare it with what the Bible says about miracles.

Logically, any “miracle” must share the characteristics of the miracles, signs and wonders described in the Bible. If a person refuses to compare what he is calling a “miracle” with the validated miracles in Scripture, then that person’s conclusions should be dismissed out of hand. We must submit all of our feelings to the hard light of the truth revealed in scripture. Otherwise, our feelings are just feelings.

Yet many people have replaced God’s word with experience. For example, years ago, on a Trinity Broadcasting Network episode, one of the guests remarked that God had “given” him a “life verse.” That verse was Matthew 19:26. He said, God gave it to me because I was born in 1926.” Paul Crouch, owner and host of TBN, got excited.

“Wow! I was born in 1934...” Upon looking in the book of Matthew, however, he found there was no 19:34. So, he decided his “life verse” must be in one of the other gospels. John 19:26 didn’t make any sense so he figured it must be Luke 19:34. That verse reads, “*The Lord hath need of him.*” He was thrilled. “Yes...” said Crouch, obviously pleased that he had found such an appropriate “life verse.” After a few more giggly moments, his wife Jan looked more closely at at the text and the context and nudged him and said, “Honey... honey... wait — that verse is talking about a donkey.”

This incident seems to prove that many have a rampant hunger for some “experience” outside of scripture. Paul Yonggi Cho, “pastor” of the largest denomination in the world said, “If Jesus is with us now, the same things that He did 2,000 years ago should appear in our daily

lives. By this we can judge whether Jesus’ sayings are true or not...” Seriously?

Some of these religious leaders are telling us that only those who have gifts are truly “spiritual,” though the Bible never hints at the idea that miracles were proofs of faith for every believer. Yet John Wimber, “pastor” at a large charismatic church in Southern California known as The Vineyard, lists raising the dead as one of the basic elements of the healing ministry. Of course, not one modern instance of raising the dead has ever been verified. And who can measure the result of this falsehood on the hearts of those who feel they have somehow failed because they cannot do these miracles?

What is a miracle?

A miracle has been described as “an extraordinary event produced by God, usually through human agency, that cannot be explained by natural forces.” There are slight distinctions between miracles, works, signs and wonders, but they are essentially synonymous. All involve supernatural, superhuman forces specifically associated with God’s messengers and are not merely strange happenings, coincidences, sensational events or natural anomalies.

How do miracles differ from providence?

Providence involves God working through His natural, created order to achieve His plans and purposes. Providence is the means God uses to answer prayer. It does not involve suspending the natural order, while miracles often do (for example, the parting of the Red Sea, Elisha’s floating ax head, turning water to wine, healing by Jesus and the apostles, raising the dead, etc.).

The components of New Testament miracles

As we compare New Testament miracles with current day replicas, we should ask some questions. First, who were the persons involved in doing miracles in New Testament times? Not every believer was empowered to do miracles, but had to be empowered to do so by either Jesus or the apostles. Read Acts 2:43; 5:12; 15:12; II Cor. 12:12. The Bible teaches that individuals received the power to do miracles when the apostles laid their hands upon them: Acts 6:8 (see v. 6); 19:6; II Tim. 1:6. Not every believer even got a spiritual gift nor did every believer get the same gifts. See Rom. 1:11; I Cor. 14:4ff.

Second, we should ask about the time-frame for these miracles. Charismatics admit that miracles ceased after the early church but claim they began recovering the power of the Holy Spirit in the 20th century. The first “discovery,” they claim, occurred in 1901 in Topeka, Kansas and again in 1906-09 in the so-called “Asuza Street Revivals” in Los Angeles.

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What does the Bible say about miracles?

Miracles seem to have come in clusters in “three miraculous eras.” (1) Moses and Joshua [1400-1300 B.C.] (2) Elijah & Elisha [875-785 B.C.] (3) Christ & the apostles (1st century). Not surprisingly, the third era is by far the most dramatic, since it was led by Jesus. Otherwise, miracles were isolated events, such as the healing of Hezekiah or Daniel surviving in the lion’s den. In other words, miracles are by no means the *status quo* in the Bible.

Proponents of modern-day miracles are quick to point to I Cor. 13:8-13 and then assert that the “perfect,” which they interpret as the second coming of Christ, has not come yet and, therefore, that the gifts mentioned in the text still exist. But these folks miss a simple and basic point: the “perfect” and the “part” must be the same in the text. By way of illustration, think of a cherry pie: if you have one piece of the pie (the “part”) and that “part” is a cherry pie then you know that the rest of the pie (the “perfect”) is a cherry pie. What is the “part” in the text? Gifts – specifically, the gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge. These gifts all relate to revelation, something that was incomplete, or imperfect, in the time that Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthians. He is simply saying that when the revelation is complete, these gifts will cease; and so they have.

No miracles today

There are four reasons you will not see a miracle from God to day: (1) They do not have the same purpose. (2) They do not have same characteristics. (3) They do not fit the time-frame for miracles. (4) They do not involve the prescribed persons.

Does this mean God has lost His power? Of course not. He has just changed his methods. He affirms that the power of salvation is not in miracles but in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16) and the sufficiency of the word of God (II Pet. 1:3). Desire for miracles is just a modern day manifestation of clamoring for signs (John 4:48).

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Tears

YOU NEVER KNOW what may cause tears. The sight of the Atlantic Ocean can do it, or a piece of music, or a face you’ve never seen before. A pair of somebody’s old shoes can do it. Almost any movie made before the great sadness that came over the world after the Second World War, a horse cantering across a meadow, the high-school basketball team running out onto the gym floor at the start of a game. You can never be sure. But of this you can be sure. Whenever you find tears in your eyes, especially unexpected tears, it is well to pay the closest attention.

They are not only telling you something about the secret of who you are, but more often than not God is speaking to you through them of the mystery of where you have come from and is summoning you to where, if your soul is to be saved, you should go to next.

FRED BUECHNER
Whistling in the Dark



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RESOURCES**

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There’s an apologetics resource right here in Folsom! Eric Fields discovered this earlier this week. Here’s the website: <https://genesisapologetics.com/>



Reminder:

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

– James 1:19-21