

Articles and Sermons :: Charismatic Chaos "Does God do miracles today?" - MacArthur

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Charismatic Chaos: "Does God do miracles today?"

In our ongoing study of the Charismatic movement today, I want to jump right into a subject that I know I can't completely cover. But I want you to learn to think Biblically about this because I am very concerned about it.

Today, we hear an awful lot of talk about miracles. Somebody says, "I had a financial need and a miracle happened. The mailman came and in the mail was a check for just the amount of money I needed. It was a miracle!" Or, you hear someone say, "I went to the Mall and there was a parking place right by the entrance. It was a miracle!" Or, a mother might sense something wrong in an adjoining room and investigate just in time to stop her little toddler from putting a paper clip into an electrical outlet or something, and say, "It was a miracle!" Or, maybe you were thinking and praying for somebody and just seemingly at the time you were doing that, the phone rang and it was the very person that you were thinking about and they were right there to be encouraged. And you say, "That was a miracle!"

Well, we call those things miracles, but they are not miracles. A miracle is a supernatural event which has no human explanation. More than that, a miracle is a supernatural event which suspends natural law. In other words, natural law stops and is suspended while God acts; moves back out and then the natural course continues.

When you find a place to park at the Mall, when you catch your little toddler just at the right moment, or when you get a check for what you needed, or when a friend calls at precisely the right moment in time, those would be acts of providence. Those would be acts whereby God is simply orchestrating natural events; not suspending the natural, but controlling the natural so that it does what He wants it to do.

A miracle then is an extraordinary event wrought by God that cannot be explained by any natural means. That would be the technical definition. It might sound something like this,

A miracle is an event in nature, so extraordinary in itself, and so coinciding with a prophecy or a command of a religious teacher or leader as fully to warrant the conviction on the part of those who witness it, that God has wrought it with the design of certifying that this teacher or leader has been commissioned by Him.

Now, that takes us to another dimension, and I wanted to read that. That's from Augusta Strong written way back in 1907. And what he is saying there is, that anytime a miracle occurs, it is associated with the certification of a teacher or a leader commissioned by God. Theologians prior, of course, to the Charismatic movement, the Pentecostal movement in this century, were united in the understanding that miracles did not happen randomly. They did not happen through history in a "willy-nilly" sort of way. God did not do them capriciously, or whimsically. There wasn't a continual flow of miracles at all times and places through Church history, but rather, miracles, that is God stepping into the natural world suspending natural law, doing something that had no natural explanation and pulling back out again and letting natural law then run its course, did that only in certification of a specially commissioned teacher. In fact, miracles in Scripture all the way from Exodus through Deuteronomy, to Nehemiah, through the Psalms, Jeremiah, Daniel, into the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, John, Acts, Romans, 2 Corinthians, Thessalonians, and Hebrews--miracles are called "signs and wonders."

They are signs. And what is a sign for? A sign is to point to something. And what were they signs of? They were signs authenticating a divinely commissioned teacher. When God, supernaturally, superhumanly, suspended natural law, and acted in human history. He did so as a sign to point to a teacher who was speaking for Him.

I've collected through the years a very large file of supposed miracles. They range all the way from 1977's newspaper article about Maria Rubio of Lake Arthur, New Mexico, who was frying tortillas in her kitchen. She noticed that one of them seemed to have the likeness of a face etched in the burn marks. She concluded that it was Jesus, and even built a crude shrine to the tortilla! Thousands of people visited the Shrine of the Jesus of the Holy Tortilla, and concluded that it was indeed a miracle. "I do not know why this has happened to me!" Mrs. Rubio said, "But God has come into my life

through this tortilla!" (from the Chicago tribune)

In 1980, in Deptford, New Jersey, Bud Ward, the town's fire dept photographer was driving with his wife when he accidentally took a wrong turn. Noticing flames in an abandoned chicken coup behind the Naples Pizzeria, he pulled into the parking lot and began taking pictures. When the slides came back from K-Mart Ward's nine year old daughter noticed what seemed to be an image of Christ in one of the photographs. Word of this discovery spread and soon people from all over New Jersey were talking about the "Pizza Jesus of Deptford Township." Several people knelt and prayed under the image projected from the slide and others asked that the image be projected onto their chests. Hundreds believed that it was a true miracle. Again, according to the Gloucester Country Times.

Such apparitions are often seen as miracles. In August of 1986, in Fostoria, Ohio, the image of Jesus seemed to appear every night in the shadows and rust marks on the side of a soybean oil storage tank. Hawkers sold thousands of "I saw the vision" tee-shirts and coffee mugs to those who came to see the miracle. Nearly a year later, Arlene Gardner of Estill Springs, Tennessee noticed that when their neighbors turned on their porch light the image of a face appeared in the glow reflected off her freezer. She believed it was the face of Jesus, although several observers said it looked more like Willie Nelson. Arlene and her husband were so convinced that it was a true miracle, they quit the church when the pastor expressed skepticism.

Well, eventually, such skepticism is a rare commodity these days. People's hunger for the mysterious and the astonishing and phenomena is at a level unsurpassed in the history of the Church. It's pretty popular stuff in the secular world and it has found its way into the Church. Eager to witness miracles, many people seem willing to believe that almost anything unusual is a genuine heavenly wonder. The problem with that is, it poses a severe danger for the Church, because it plays right into the hands of Satan, doesn't it? False wonders and false signs, false miracles--extremely believable ones, the Bible tells us will be the primary tool of Satan in the end times. Jesus said, "False Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." Then He added, as if knowing that many would ignore the warning, "Behold, I have told you in advance" (Matt 24:24-25).

Surely in the light of the warning of Jesus and the warnings of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament, we should have a healthy skepticism on the part of these supposed miracles. Now, I want you to understand, that I am not by nature a skeptic. I am not a naturalist and a humanist and an anti-supernaturalist. I believe in miracles. I believe that every miracle recorded in the Bible literally happened exactly as the Bible described it. I believe, for example, that Moses and the Israelites actually walked through the parted Red Sea and didn't get their feet wet or muddy. I believe that Elijah raised a widow's young son from the dead. And that fire called down from heaven was actually heavenly fire and consumed water. I believe with absolute conviction that Elisha made an axe head float, an iron axe head. I believe that all the healings signs and wonders attributed to Jesus in the four gospels happened exactly and precisely as they are recorded there. And I believe the Apostles literally performed all the miracles which the New Testament describe.

That's not all. I believe God can still do miracles. I believe all things are possible with God, as Matthew 19:26 says. His power has not diminished the least since the days of the Early Church. But even though I believe all of that and I believe that if God chooses to do something miraculous He can do it, I am convinced that most of the miracles, signs and wonders, if not all, being claimed today in the Charismatic movement have nothing in common with what we know about Biblical miracles. They do not fit the Biblical criteria. And I am persuaded by both Scripture and history that nothing like the New Testament gift of miracles, noted in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, is operating today. The Holy Spirit has not given any modern day Christians miraculous gifts comparable to those He gave the Apostles.

Now in spite of that, many Charismatics are making quite remarkable claims. Oral Roberts, for example, speaking at the Charismatic Bible Ministry Conference, in 1987, said, "I can't tell you about all the dead people I've raised. I've had to stop a sermon, go back and raise a dead person." No less an authority then Dr. C. Peter Wagner, Professor of Church Growth at Fuller Seminary, School of World Mission, believes such things do happen,

I too now believe that dead people are literally being raised in the world today. As soon as I say that, some ask if I believe if it is normative? I doubt if it would be normative in any local situation but it probably is normative in terms of the universal Body of Christ. Even though it is an extremely uncommon event I would not be surprised if it were happening several times a year.

John Wimber of "The Vineyard" lists raising the dead as one of the basic elements of any healing ministry.

Now, with the supposed large number of people being raised from the dead, you would imagine that somebody could manage to come up with one who could give testimony to the validity. But not one modern occurrence of raising the dead can be verified. You say, "What about Oral Roberts' claim that he has raised many people?" Well, he was challenged to produce the names and addresses of the people he raised and he balked. Later he recalled only one incident more than 20 years before when he had supposedly raised a dead child in front of 10,000 witnesses. "During a healing service," he recalled, "A mother in the audience jumped up and shouted, 'My baby is dead!'" Roberts said he, "prayed over the child and it jerked, it jerked in my hand." Roberts conceded that neither that child nor others he said he had brought to life had been pronounced clinically dead. "I understand," he hedged, "there is a difference in a person dying and not breathing and a person being clinically dead."

Well, what are we supposed to make out of that confusion? It certainly is a far cry from Jesus raising Lazarus, who had been four days in the grave. And if, as Dr. Wagner supposes, dead people are literally being raised several times a year, wouldn't it be reasonable to expect that he would bring one along so that we could meet him or her? The truth is, those who claim miracles today are not able to substantiate their claims. Unlike the miracles in the New Testament which were usually done with large crowds of unbelievers watching who would be skeptical, modern miracles typically happen either privately or in some religious meeting where there are a lot of people who are in a wild kind of frenzy expecting a miracle, where it is a lot easier to fabricate one in the imagination.

And the types of miracles that are being claimed today are absolutely nothing like New Testament miracles: absolutely nothing like them. In fact, the types of miracles today could be distinctly seen as different than New Testament miracles. Jesus and the Apostles instantly and completely healed people born blind, a paralytic, a man with a withered arm, all obvious indisputable miracles. Even Jesus' enemies didn't challenge the reality of His miracles and He had the people there to verify them. He raised the dead, of course, as we well know. They never did a miracle that was slow. They never did a miracle that took time. They never did a miracle that was less than permanent. By contrast, most modern miracles are partial, gradual, temporary, sometimes reversed and almost impossible to verify. And the only instant miracles today seem to be those that deal with psychosomatic diseases. People with visible disabilities are rarely, if ever, helped at all by modern faith healers.

I recently watched a televangelist interview a man he had supposedly healed of lameness. The man said he was free from his wheelchair for the first time in several years, however, the man was walking with crutches and had heavy braces on his legs. That's not a miracle at all like any in the Scriptures. No modern miracle worker claims the kind of unequivocal success seen in the ministry of Christ and His Apostles.

Now there are some in the Charismatic movement who try to defend these supposed miracles which are not verifiable by saying that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, so it's the same Jesus today. The Holy Spirit is still with us today, and therefore with Him we have the Age of Miracles. David DuPlasee (sp.) who is sort of the patriarch of the movement, who has been called "Mr. Pentecost," believed (he's dead now) that the Age of Miracles never ended, and that we are still in the Age of Miracles. And he said that the miracles and the events described in the Book of Acts should be normative throughout the Church's history. And it is that view that most Pentecostals and Charismatics hold, that whatever the Holy Spirit did in the past, He is still doing now; that miracles go on and on as long as there is the Holy Spirit. They say that the Holy Spirit never changed. They say the Early Church changed; it became doctrinal; it became formal; it became ritualistic, and so the Holy Spirit pulled back His power, and now after nearly 2,000 years He's released it again. And the thing that always amazes me is, if the Holy Spirit were going to release His power, why would He release it to authenticate the people who teach bad theology? If He wanted to authenticate anybody with miracles, you could be sure it would be those who were the truest and the purest and the most profound and Biblical, and the most skilled and dedicated teachers of the Word of God who were teaching the truth.

Many Pentecostals and Charismatics talk about the restoration of the New Testament Holy Spirit Power through their movement. They say they are doing again what the Apostles did in the first century. Is that true? If so, why do modern revelations, visions, tongues, healings, and miracles differ so dramatically from those done by the Apostles. And why is it that they're associated with people who do not understand properly the truth of God? And if miracles, and signs and wonders are so vital, then why is it that for nearly 2,000 years the Holy Spirit didn't do any? Do you mean that there weren't even a few people around who would have been worthy of such? Should Christians today expect miracles? Is Oral Roberts right when he says, "Everyone of you out there should expect your miracle today?" Are we supposed to be able to do miracles? Heal people? Raise the Dead?

Well, in answer to all of this we need to take a look at Scripture, and I want to give you just a fast look and overview at this matter of miracles, that I think will set your thinking in the right frame.

Most Biblical miracles happened in one of three relatively brief periods of Biblical history. You need to note this. Most Biblical miracles happened in three relatively brief periods of Bible History:

1. The days of Moses and Joshua
2. During the ministries of Elijah and Elisha
3. In the time of Christ and the Apostles

None of those periods lasted much more than a hundred years. Each of them, each of the three, experienced a proliferation of miracles unheard of at other times in God's redemptive history. But even during those three times, miracles were not just normal everyday occurrences that happened to anybody and everybody. The miracles that did happen in the time of Moses and Joshua--involved Moses and Joshua! The miracles that happened in the time of Elijah and Elisha, happened around the ministries of Elijah and Elisha. And the miracles that happened to Christ and the Apostles and through them, happened through their ministries.

There weren't just miracles happening all over everywhere to all kinds of people. And aside from those three intervals, the only other miracles recorded in Scripture are very, very, isolated events. It is true in the days of Isaiah, the Lord miraculously defeated Sennacherib's army, then healed Hezekiah and turned the Sun's shadow back (2Kings 19-20). It is true, in the days of Daniel, God miraculously preserved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the furnace (Daniel 3). But those are very uncommon and very unusual. It is true that God did miraculously preserve Jonah in the belly of a great fish. But for the most part, those are very isolated. And miracles like those didn't happen to God's people as a course of life. Now, God, of course at anytime can inject Himself into the human stream supernaturally, and do a miracle. But He chose to limit Himself primarily to three periods of history, and very rarely will you ever find a miracle in the times in between. The rest of the time God just works through providence. He doesn't need a miracle: He can just work through providence. The reason that He did a miracle is because a miracle can only be attributed to God. It can only be explained supernaturally, and there were times when that was crucial.

Let me give you some points. Three characteristics of the miracles in Scripture will help you understand this:

1. Miracles Introduced New Eras of Revelation.

All three of those periods of miracles were times when God gave His written revelation.

- a. Moses and Joshua--the time of the giving of the Law.

- b. Elijah and Elisha--introduced the prophetic office, the prophetic age, and all of the Books of Prophecies (Major Prophets, Minor Prophets).

- c. New Testament--obviously. Christ did miracles, the apostles did miracles. That introduced the era of the New Testament revelation.

So whenever God was going to pour out His word, he wanted to certify certain prophets and teachers of His word; to authenticate them. Moses was given the power to do certain miracles that people might know he spoke as God's spokesman. There was no other way to explain what God used him to do other than, "God was doing it," and therefore this was God's man; and when he spoke, he spoke for God. And the same was true in Joshua's case when he wrote his book. You come to Elijah and Elisha and the miracles that attended their ministry as they were the prophets of God, and they were introducing a very long era of prophetic literature as God revealed Himself through the prophets, of which, really, they were sort of the introducers. And even those rare miracles that occurred in other eras, involved people who were used by God to write Scripture.

Hezekiah's healing involved Isaiah; the three men in the fiery furnace involved Daniel. Those two were what we call "Major Prophets," who spoke and wrote for God. Moses performed many miracles in an attempt to convince Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go, to convince Pharaoh that this was not some normal man. This was not some natural man, but this was God's man who spoke for God. Miracles seemed to accompany the Israelites on their journey out of Egypt, and miracles came in their journey through the wilderness to remind the people of God that God was their God, and that Moses was God's spokesman. How else would they know who to listen to? They certainly didn't want to listen to Aaron or anybody else. And even when God gave His law to Moses on the mount, Moses' encounter with God was accompanied by signs so dramatic--fire, smoke, a trumpet, a thundering voice, that even Moses himself knew it was the voice of God (and Hebrews 12 says, it was fearful). And thus began the first period of revelation. And Moses recorded the truth of the Pentateuch (the five books), and Joshua wrote the book that bears his name. Other books were added intermittently after the time of Moses and Joshua, Samuel probably wrote Judges and 1st and 2nd Samuel, David wrote the Psalms, Solomon penned most of the Wisdom literature. But those books were not accompanied by the great outpouring of miracles that had distinguished the days of Moses and Joshua. They were kind of a continuation in some ways of that revelatory era.

The second major cluster of miraculous events accompanied a new era of Biblical revelation, "The Age of the Old Testament Prophets." Following Solomon's reign the nation of Israel divided into the northern kingdom, Israel; the southern kingdom, Judah. The northern Kingdom quickly deteriorated because of idolatry and hit a low point under King Ahab. Remember his wife Jezebel? At that time God raised up two spokesmen, Elijah and Elisha. The prophetic office in their lifetime was marked by dramatic miracles to certify them as the spokesmen for God and to call back the people to God. The prophets that followed them were the continuation of that era. Then when that era closed out and the Old Testament was done, there was a 400 year period of silence in which no prophet spoke for God and no miracle is recorded to have occurred.

Then came the New Testament, and the first miracle was the Virgin Birth. And then the miracles began to flow out of the life of Christ, and they began to flow out of His Apostles. Why? Because it was a new era of writing the revelation of God--The New Testament. Always the miracles were associated with the certification of those who were giving us God's revelation.

2. The second point, and that is the point we just led into, "Miracles Authenticated the Messengers of Revelation." They only happened in three eras and they authenticated the messengers of revelation. Elijah raised the widow's dead son. And what was the widow's reply? Verse 24 of 1 Kings 17, she said, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth." That's a very important verse. That's the whole purpose. So that anybody listening to Elijah would know this man is a man of God and in his mouth is the word of the Lord and it is true.

You come into the New Testament in John 10, Jesus having a confrontation with the Jewish religious leaders: they challenged Him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus said, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me." He was saying, "The miraculous works that I do authenticate me and my message as being from God." In his Pentecost sermon, Peter told the crowd that Jesus was a man attested to them by God with miracles, wonders and signs. And the same kind of power belonged to the Apostles. You'll remember that on Paul's first missionary journey, he and Barnabas were ministering at Iconium, and it says, "They were speaking boldly, with reliance on the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands." Beloved, that is always the intention of the miracle. God does not need to do miracles for everybody to accomplish His will. He does not need to do miracles for every Christian everyday to prove His love. He does not need to do miracles everyday to make people believe He exists. He only authenticates the Word, and when the authenticated Word is revealed there is no need any longer to authenticate a preacher. You can find out whether he speaks for God by comparing Him with this. And God can still control everything without ever doing a miracle through providence.

It's foolish to assume that everybody should be able to do a miracle; that we can go to a seminar in four days and learn how to do miracles. It's equally foolish to assume that God is going to do miracles for you everyday. People who keep saying they saw this miracle and that miracle have got caught up in the fact that everything is a miracle, and their definition of miracles lacks greatly Biblical parameters.

The Apostles performed miracles, signs and wonders, in Acts 5. Why? To call attention to the fact that they were supernatural servants of the living God, who spoke the truth. In Acts 15, it says, "The whole assembly became silent as they list

ened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders that God had done among the Gentiles through them." These things that mark an Apostle, signs and wonders, and miracles, Paul said to the Corinthians, "Were done among you." They mark an Apostle.

Moses, Joshua, introduced an era of revelation. Elijah, Elisha, introduced an era of revelation. Jesus and the Apostles introduced an era of revelation. And with all the spokesmen and no written word, with all the spokesmen, God had to authenticate the right spokesman, and so He gave them the power to do supernatural things in order that people might know this is no human mortal teacher, this is a man of God who speaks the truth.

3. Thirdly, and tied right in with the others, miracles are designed to call attention to the revelation. Miracles are designed to call attention to the revelation. God did the miracle so that the people would listen to the Word and see it as His truth. The miracle didn't stand alone--that's the point. God doesn't do miracles for miracle's sake. The purpose of the miracle was the effect of the miracle. For example, the miracles Moses did in Egypt were meant to enlighten two groups, the Israelites and the Egyptians. In Exodus 7, we read about Moses' first miracles and it was then that the Israelites started to believe in the power of their God. Pharaoh was a "hard case." He didn't believe until the tenth miracle, "the Death Angel," then he finally let them go.

But the purpose of the miracle was not just to stand on its own, but the purpose of the miracle was to get people to understand that God had something to say! The miracles of Elijah and Elisha were effective in convincing both believers and unbelievers that what these men spoke was the Word of God. And a graphic illustration of that can be seen in 1 Kings 18, where Elijah defeated 400 Prophets of Baal before a large crowd of Israelites, and the Scripture says, "When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The Lord, He is God; The Lord, He is God.'" They believed.

In the New Testament, miracles and signs were again used to confirm believers and convince unbelievers. John said the miracles of Jesus were done so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing you might have life in His name; and the same was true with the Apostolic miracles.

Only three eras, always to authenticate those who spoke the revelation of God, and always with the purpose of pointing to the revelation so that it is the revelation that is the important thing! And beloved, I submit to you, that if you have this Book in your hand--you have what is the end product of God's miraculous intervention. This is the purpose for which He did the miracles. You possess this--you don't need the miracles! You have what God intended them to produce. And that is why Jesus said it as simply as it could be said, "If they do not believe Moses and the Prophets (that is Scripture), they will not believe though someone be raised from the dead."

You must remember the people of Israel who saw the miracles of Moses, the whole generation died in the wilderness--in what? Unbelief! You must remember that the people who heard the prophets speak for God, for the most part, refused to believe. One whole kingdom apostatized--the northern kingdom; and in the southern, only a remnant. All those who saw the miracles of Jesus did not believe: only a small group. And when it came down to it in the Book of Acts, there were 120 of them dedicated enough to believing the Lord, that they were waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Miracles have never produced wholesale belief. They can't. They are intended to point to the truth, and it is the truth which produces faith, of course as the Spirit energizes it.

Now, the question comes, "Are miracles necessary today?" When the Old and New Testaments were completed God's revelation was finished. Through many signs and wonders He has authenticated the veracity of this Book. Anybody who reads it can see that it's true. Does God have to keep doing miracles? Is there a need for ongoing miracles to substantiate the Bible? Should everybody with faith claim a miracle? Does God do miracles on demand? Are the phenomena that are occurring today, hailed as "signs and wonders and healings," really necessary and authentic? The answers to all those questions is no. Nothing in Scripture indicates that the miracles of the Apostle's Age were meant to be continuous. You keep reading in the Book of Acts and you will get to the part in the Book of Acts where you finally say to yourself, "I haven't read a miracle in a long time," and you'll finish the whole book and never see another one! They had begun to cease even in the Book of Acts.

Charismatics today believe that the spectacular and miraculous gifts were given for the edification of believers. Does God's Word support that? No! They were not given for the edification of believers; they were not given to edify Christians; they are a sign for those who do not believe: for those who need to see that this is God's Word. Whether you are talking about tongues or healings or miracles, they served as signs to authenticate an era in which God was giving new revelation and people needed to listen. B. B. Warfield, that great Presbyterian professor of the past generation, writing in 1918, said,

Miracles do not appear on the pages of Scripture vagrantly, here, there, and elsewhere indifferently, without assignable reason. They belong to "revelation periods" and appear only when God is speaking to His people through accredited messengers declaring His gracious purpose. Their abundant display, in the Apostolic Church, is the mark of the richness of the Apostolic Age in revelation.

You realize, don't you, that between about 36 A.D. and 95 A.D., all 27 books of the New Testament were written. And so there was a proliferation of authentication because of the vast volume of literature being revealed in a brief period of time. Warfield goes on,

When this revelation period closed the period of "Miracle Working" had passed by also as a mere matter of course. God the Holy Spirit has made it His subsequent work, not to introduce new and unneeded revelations into the world, but to diffuse this one complete revelation through the world and to bring mankind into the saving knowledge of it.

Abraham Kiper (sp.) the Dutch theologian writes this in 1898,

It has not been God's way to communicate to each and every man a separate store of divine knowledge of his own, to meet his separate needs. But He rather has spread a common board for all, and invites all to come and partake of the richness of the great feast.

I want to stop in that quote to say, that is such a very important rebuke to the contemporary Charismatic movement which assumes that God talks to everybody individually, has special revelation for everybody, separate information for everybody to meet everybody's individual needs. That is not the case. Abraham Kiper is right when he says,

He has spread a common board for all, and invites all to come and partake of the richness of the great feast. He has given to the world one organically complete revelation, adapted to all, sufficient for all, provided for all, and from this one completed revelation he requires each to draw his whole spiritual sustenance. Therefore, it is that the miraculous working which is but the sign of God's revealing power cannot be expected to continue, and in point of fact, does not continue after the revelation of which it is the accompaniment has been completed.

Great statement. In Acts, chapter 7, as Stephen preached his famous sermon, he talked about Moses who performed wondrous signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness, "And received living oracles to pass on to you," Stephen said. Note how God's Word draws the parallel between Moses' signs and the living oracles--the direct revelation from God which he was to pass on. Hebrews 2:3-4 confirms that the validation of the New Testament writers was purposed to cause folks to see them as the agents of God's revelation, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit." He was authenticating the Apostles--the writers of Scripture.

Does God promise miracles for everybody? No! He never has: it's not their purpose. You hear Charismatics say, "God has a special miracle for you today!" No, He doesn't! "You better be seeking your private miracle. If you're not getting it, it's because you don't believe strongly enough." Not true! By the way, Jesus didn't do any private miracles, they were all public. And they were, as I said, to authenticate the one who spoke for God.

There is so much more that can be said about this, and there will be much more in the book. But I just want to wrap this up in the last five minutes or so.

If you are going to say that God is doing miracles today, and be Biblically consistent, you are going to have to say that, "God is also. . ." What? Giving what? Revelation. And if God is giving revelation, it will be coming through the people who are what? Doing the miracles. And I will say this for the Charismatics, they are at least logically consistent in that sense. They have got the whole package--God is giving revelation. He is still giving it. The people who are getting it have miracle power in their view. And what is the next logical step? To call them . . . what? Apostles. And that is what they are doing.

We are now having a pretty common movement in the Charismatic scene, labeling people as Apostles. Earl Palk (sp.), q

uite a prominent Charismatic, teaches that certain anointed individuals have been called to be Apostles. Jack Deere (sp.), former professor at Dallas Seminary, the chief theologian of John Wimber's movement, isn't certain that Apostolic ministry is functioning today, but he told a workshop in Sidney, he, "Is convinced that Apostolic power is coming," listen to this, "and the new Apostolic age will be greater than the first!" We are going to get the whole package back. New Apostles doing new signs and wonders, receiving new revelation to produce a "New Bible?"

You want to look at this very carefully, beloved. This almost looks like a plot to deceive the whole Church. Doesn't it? The Apostolic office isn't for today. The Church was founded upon the Apostles, Ephesians 2:20, they were the foundation. You don't put the foundation on the 20th story. The Apostles were all eyewitnesses to the resurrection. Eyewitnesses to the risen Christ! They were chosen personally by Jesus Christ. They were authenticated by miraculous signs. They had absolute authority, and they were given an eternal, unique place of honor, Revelation 21:14 says that Heaven, the city of the New Jerusalem, has a wall with twelve foundation stones, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. There are only twelve! You can argue who the twelfth was, some say Matthias, some say Paul, Judas being excluded. You might want to say Matthias, and Paul was an apostle in due time, kind of an addendum.

But the point is, there are only twelve of those honored places. Each of them will rule over one of the twelve tribes of Israel in the Kingdom. There is not room for more than twelve folks. They are a special breed. They had no successors. The age of the apostles is over because the age of authentication is over, because the age of revelation is over. You say, "Oh, MacArthur, you have a weak view of God." No I don't! I have a strong view of God. I think that He is consistent with Himself. And I think He is true to His revelation. Jerry Horner, Associate Professor of Biblical Literature at Oral Roberts, said, "Who in the world wants a God who has lost all of His zip?" Well, has God lost His zip? Has He done nothing significant in 2,000 years? That's hardly the case. He has got plenty of zip, in fact, he is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, beyond all you can ask or think, according to the power that works in us.

He had a special purpose for the eras of revelation. He has a different purpose now, just as powerful, just as wonderful. Don't buy into the deception that there is something beyond the Scripture, because that's what this deception is saying; that there is somebody getting a revelation; that there is somebody with apostolic authority; that miracles are supposed to be happening all over the place. It's not true. It's not consistent with Scripture.

Father, we thank You, that we can look at Your Word tonight, and in just this brief time discern its truth again. Help us to have that discernment. And Lord help us to believe that You don't have to do a miracle to show Yourself. Providence, in many ways, is a greater miracle than a miracle. It would be easier to do something supernatural than it is to orchestrate all of the infinite contingencies of life and make them work Your purpose, but You do it every moment of every day. Thank You for Your Word which needs no update, for the authenticated messengers gave us the once for all, delivered to the Saints, faith on which we rest. We ask Lord that You will keep us true to Your truth. Don't let us get led astray, for Jesus sake. Amen.

Re: Charismatic Chaos "Does God do miracles today?" - MacArthur - posted by wilhelm42 (), on: 2007/7/2 7:57

"you keep reading in the Book of Acts and you will get to the part in the Book of Acts where you finally say to yourself, "I haven't read a miracle in a long time," and you'll finish the whole book and never see another one! They had begun to cease even in the Book of Acts." --John MacArthur

"In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed: Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded with such things as were necessary." --Acts 28:7-10

The great tragedy of such teaching as denies the working of God continuously throughout these last days in the Church of Jesus Christ is that its refusal of God is manifested first in its refusal of His Word. Mr. MacArthur does greatly err in his reading and interpretation of Scripture and thus proceeds to further err in his application of that misinterpretation upon present day realities within God's will for the church. While much of the modern Charismatic movement is indeed rightly impugned for its aberrant doctrine and pernicious deeds, it is not rightly judged by this man's carnal finger pointing and accusation. "If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity..." (Isaiah 58:9). John MacArthur fails to obey the commandment of Jesus Christ the LORD, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). He has exposed himself in much of his teachings as nothing more than

n an amateur skeptic, incapable of true spiritual discernment, by judging things with "healthy skepticism" rather than with the mind of Christ, indeed a mind that has been renewed and brought under subjection to the will and whim of God the Father. For "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1Corinthians 2:14-16). Let us, therefore, endeavor to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and cast down every imagination that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (see 2Corinthians 10).

The God of Israel is not a man that He should repent, and He has said, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I the LORD that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26). This is the expressed nature of God Himself as Yahweh the Healer, revealed in the understanding that without hearing His voice, and giving careful heed to that which is spoken, healing cannot take place in such a way as to point one to the ultimate exodus from slavery in the redemptive work of the Son of God on the Cross--a true sign and wonder indeed.

"I want to stop in that quote to say, that is such a very important rebuke to the contemporary Charismatic movement which assumes that God talks to everybody individually..." -- John MacArthur.

And so John MacArthur fails to see the self-determined and self-acquired blindness and deafness that come when one closes his eyes from seeing and seals his ears from hearing the Word of God. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me...For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:39-47). We have condemned ourselves already if we cannot see the Word of God standing before us as He speaks the testimony given of Himself in generations past! "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God..." An awe-inspiring "if" that ought to cause the haughtiest of men to tremble, for it requires that most humble of actions--to sit still in contrite silence before the Throne of Almighty God until He speaks, and then to hear and obey THAT command that is delivered from the mouth of God. But how can a man hear what he does not want to hear? And how can a man receive what he refuses to believe?

If the healing work of the God of Israel has ever been needed in the history of the world, I do believe that hour rests upon us, the Church of Jesus Christ, in this present day. Let us, therefore, "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" and turn to hear that Voice that speaks as a trumpet as did John in the consummate Revelation of the last days (see Revelation 1:12). Then will we see Him as He is, then will we hear Him as He speaks, then will we as a Church fast the fast He has ordained for us, and then will our "light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward" (Isaiah 58:8).

Re: Charismatic Chaos "Does God do miracles today?" - MacArthur - posted by Sems (), on: 2007/7/2 8:28

What a tragedy !!! People like John Mac Arthur giving excuses for the lack of power in their lives and hiding behind well crafted theological mixture of the Word & human pride. There is no doubt that there are excesses in the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement but at the same time there are genuine signs & wonders being performed by the Lord accompanying the preaching of the gospel..the only thing is that they are not known to the American gospel media or even to these so called 'theologians' who seem to know the answer to the everybody & everything. God has done wonders in the past and He is WELL ABLE TO DO WONDERS TODAY THRU HIS PEOPLE!! The only thing that is necessary - the church needs to humble themselves at the feet of the cross and walk totally & absolutely under the Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ. John 14:12,13

Re: - posted by Moorsey, on: 2007/7/2 8:48

<http://www.newble.co.uk/anderson/silence/preface.html>

Re:, on: 2007/7/2 9:14

Quote:
-----What a tragedy !!! People like John Mac Arthur giving excuses for the lack of power in their lives and hiding behind well crafted theological mixture of the Word & human pride.

I wouldn't be so quick to jump on MacArthur and say he is coming up with excuses for the lack of power in his life... you don't know him. You probably know nothing about his ministry.

I've read Charismatic Chaos. I do not agree with everything conclusion MacArthur makes.

But to say he has no power in his life when you know nothing about him is judgemental, irresponsible... and only proves that haughtiness is a trademark of the Charismatic movement.

Krispy

Re: Confidence in the Word, or do we need miracles?, on: 2007/7/2 10:22

Funny, I have been thinking about this same subject lately. I don't think John MacArthur is denying the power of God to do miracles. I think the real issue is...

Do we actually have confidence in the Word of God anymore? Do we really believe that if we preach Christ...if we just tell the story, that God's Kingdom will go forth in people's lives? Sinners will get saved. Christians will mature. Lives will be changed! By the Word!

I think many times, especially as Americans, we want to see results now. We want people to change and come to Christ...now.

But Jesus said the Gospel goes forth, the Kingdom of God advances, as a sower sows seed.

I have a huge corn field behind my house, and it takes several months for that corn to grow to maturity. But you know what, come September/ October, the farmers will be out there reaping a mighty harvest. The farmer has to have confidence that the seed he plants will grow.

Yes, some of the seed will be stolen by the birds, some of the stalks will grow without any corn on them, but the promise is that there will also be mighty harvest...it just takes time.

I suppose, if the farmer had some miracle grow that would make the corn grow faster, he would use that. But he does not...that is not the way it works.

I heard a quote from a gentleman the other day, he said:

Quote:
-----What happened on the greatest day of power in the New Testament, the Day of Pentecost? Peter stood up and gave a long, long sermon. Christ was preached and three thousand were added to the Church that day.

We might say, see those people were saved immediately on the day of Pentecost. But actually the apostles were reaping a harvest from the seed that Jesus had sown.

I, myself, am actually returning (or maybe for the first time) to a greater confidence in the Word of God. I believe that it is the Word that will change my life. It is the Word that will change my kid's lives, my wife, and those around me and under my influence.

God can do anything! He's God. I choose to have confidence in His Word

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/7/2 11:49

Quote:
-----What happened on the greatest day of power in the New Testament, the Day of Pentecost? Peter stood up and gave a long, long sermon. Christ was preached and three thousand were added to the Church that day.

Brother was this on the Whitehorse Inn? I ask because I heard the same thing on a recent show.

What a tremendous blessing that show has been!!!

Re: White Horse Inn, on: 2007/7/2 11:56

Quote:
-----Brother was this on the Whitehorse Inn? I ask because I heard the same thing on a recent show.

Yes. That program has transformed the way I read the Word. Funny thing is, I used to hate that show.

Those guys are solid, and that program on Preaching Christ was incredible.

Re:, on: 2007/7/2 11:56

Quote:
-----Krispy said: I wouldn't be so quick to jump on MacArthur and say he is coming up with excuses for the lack of power in his life... you don't know him

It is said that we don't judge a book by its cover. We do judge by what is written therein, if the man believes that the power of God to perform today is dead, can we rightly say that this is a tragedy? After all he's not the first man to say such things. I was reading a book that was very interesting, everything was great until the writer said that miracles and healing died out in the first century. I stopped reading the book because I do not want his false spirit to influence my thinking. Even though what he was saying up to that point was true, however, a little leaven leavens the whole lump. If I continued reading that, in time my senses would be dull with other things and eventually over time, I too would come to the conclusion that miracles have ceased.

Quote:
-----Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Adding this: I am not against MacArthur, I've heard him on several occasions, I have never heard say that miracles have ceased yet.

Re: Charismatic Chaos "Does God do miracles today?" - MacArthur - posted by FireinmyBones1 (), on: 2007/7/2 12:37

To even ask such a question "Does God do miracles today?" is to insult the power of the cross. This is ridiculous. To come to the conclusion that the answer to the question in "question" is no is to rewrite much of the New Testament and to play into the hands of the enemy. Go over to let's say the Chinese or Vietnamese house churches and present them with such a theory and they will lovingly chuckle at you due to your lack of experience and knowledge of the Kingdom of God. I just personally met a woman last week named Marlene Kleppes who until the age of 20 (I believe my number is correct) was a spastic quadriplegic (sp?) with Cerebral Palsy. At the age of 20 she was prayed for and completely and totally healed. Not a trace of any of her afflictions remain. She lives a normal life and is now a minister of the gospel. Her st

ory is well documented and you can research it if you like.

Folks, I cannot say how such thinking breaks my heart and (forgive my bluntness) sickens me. We talk so frequently of revival and whatnot, but very few of us have any idea what such a thing entails. We will be quick to point to historical awakenings to show that revival's come typically only with deep workings of the spirit in conviction of sin and not in signs and wonders. The only problem with such revival theology is that it is taking it's pointers from the history of revival, and not the scripture. Whenever there was a great movement in scripture of course there was deep conviction of sin, but the message was almost always confirmed by signs and wonders. The reason why most historic revivals did not contain such elements was due to the fact that the incorrect yet consensus orthodoxy of the day, had no grid for such things as signs and wonders. It is time to get back to the scripture when it comes to revival and not the history of revival itself. (although it is a priceless treasure, our theology must only be formulated from the plains teaching of scripture.) Just some thoughts.

God Bless,

Jesus is King over all!

Jeff

Re: Question, on: 2007/7/2 12:56

I have a question...

My intention is not to be contentious, I really would like to know what people think, according to the scripture.

If the Word of God is alive, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...

If the Word of God is the means by which God has chosen to cause faith to arise in sinners and saints hearts, and if salvation comes by grace through faith...

If God says His Word will not return void... (meaning...have no effect, it will either condemn or redeem...in both God is seen/ Glorified)

If Jesus said His Kingdom advances by the preaching of that Word. (in a Church building, on the street, in a house...wherever)...

If Jesus Himself used the Word to defeat the devil and his lies...

If all things pertaining to life and Godliness are bound up in that Word, which is Christ...

Than why should there be such a necessity for miracles?

Why would I want to seek God for miracles?

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/7/2 13:10

Brother Mahoney,

I would add, since we have been given every spiritual blessing in Christ, why should one settle for such paltry things like tongues, and miracles when we have a living Christ!!!!

It is interesting to see how the Church has dealt with these issues throughout history. It seems that after Azusa, people went bonkers in seeking tongues, second blessings, and anything but Christ Himself. now fast forward to where we are now, and you can really see how men can ramble in tongues(uninterpreted), and be taken seriously, or that men like John Wimber can deceive many into believing they have gold tooth fillings, or spiritual drunkenness.

One thing I have never understood about much of what goes on in the Charismatic movement is that Christ Himself said the Holy Spirit would testify of Him. Much if not all of these "signs and wonders" supposedly done by the Spirit do not testify of Christ at all, but rather to a man.

Re: - posted by FireinmyBones1 (), on: 2007/7/2 13:11

Because the same word that you just very eloquently praised admonishes us to seek the gifts of the spirit, especially the greater gifts (prophecy). It also explicitly tells us in several locations that the word of God, when preached correctly with Christ crucified and resurrected as it's focal point, miracles, signs and wonders will follow. You are not given the option in scripture to pick and choose (this isn't old country buffet, or Barnhill's for the southerners). The same word you praise admonishes you to expect them. Plain and simple.

Jeff

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/7/2 13:20

My concern though is that people do not get grounded in Christ by signs. True they provide a temporary jolt of joy, but in the long haul if you do not know Christ, no amount of miracles will produce joy, and your spiritual life will be one big roller coaster ride.

Christ is sufficient, and I had rather know Him through the Scriptures than through miracles and signs any day. Not because I am better or more spiritual, but because I am weak and easily led astray after other loves.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/7/2 13:27

Quote:

roaringlamb wrote:

My concern though is that people do not get grounded in Christ by signs. True they provide a temporary jolt of joy, but in the long haul if you do not know Christ, no amount of miracles will produce joy, and your spiritual life will be one big roller coaster ride.

Christ is sufficient, and I had rather know Him through the Scriptures than through miracles and signs any day. Not because I am better or more spiritual, but because I am weak and easily led astray after other loves.

this is a very good statement, anything less than Christ is a loss.

Re:, on: 2007/7/2 13:29

Quote:

-----We do judge by what is written therein, if the man believes that the power of God to perform today is dead, can we rightly say that this is a tragedy?

I've read the book. Have you? He never said that.

Krispy

Re:, on: 2007/7/2 14:05

Quote:

FireinmyBones1 wrote:

Because the same word that you just very eloquently praised admonishes us to seek the gifts of the spirit, especially the greater gifts (prophecy). It also explicitly tells us in several locations that the word of God, when preached correctly with Christ crucified and resurrected as it's focal point, miracles, signs and wonders will follow. You are not given the option in scripture to pick and choose (this isn't old country buffet, or Barnhill's for the southerners). The same word you praised admonishes you to expect them. Plain and simple.

Jeff

So then the question arises:

If the Word of God is preached, and there are no visible miracles, signs, or wonders following, has that preached Word fa

iled. Is it of no effect.

Because the point is a serious one.

I don't know about you, but I so want to have an utter dependence and confidence in the Word of God. And if miracles, signs and wonders are the only way to know if God is confirming His Word, then I guess we in America here don't have much hope.

I don't want to be misunderstood, I do believe that miracles and gifts are for today. But, as Roaringlamb stated:

Quote:
-----My concern though is that people do not get grounded in Christ by signs. True they provide a temporary jolt of joy, but in the long haul if you do not know Christ, no amount of miracles will produce joy, and your Spiritual life will be one big roller coaster ride.

And the visible evidence of this is found in the charismatic/ Pentecostal movements...in which churches I have spent pretty much my entire Christian experience.

Quote:
-----You are not given the option in scripture to pick and choose (this isn't old country buffet, or Barnhill's for the southerners)

I live near Lancaster, PA, so I would rather choose Shady Maple Smorgasbord...their buffet line is 450 feet long, and the food is homemade and incredible! :-)

Re: - posted by FireinmyBones1 (), on: 2007/7/2 14:15

Mmmm...Buffet sounds pretty good right about now.

Anyways :) . . .

Personally I think that the whole Miracles VS. Scripture debate is crazy...just to be honest. Nowhere in scripture is there a hint of evidence that miracles will ever cease at the closing of the apostolic age. Yes I've heard all of the Perfect=New Testament/1 Cor 13 argument - and I repeat - "Nowhere in scripture is there a hint of evidence that miracles will ever cease at the closing of the apostolic age."

Miracles are never meant to root you and ground you in your faith. They are in many cases proofs or evidences that the word or message being brought forth is the word of God. Jesus told the Pharisees in one instance, that He healed so that they might know that He had power on earth to forgive sins. In other instances He healed because He was moved with compassion for the oppressed. Yes we must be rooted and grounded in the word. And if our entire relationship with God is only based on phenomena then you can be sure that when shakings come, there may be some falling going on. Jesus told Thomas that there is a greater blessing reserved for those who believe without first experiencing anything in the sense realm (yet He still allowed him to see). Yet He told the sisters of Lazarus that if they would first believe, they would indeed see (experience via the senses) the glory of God. I'm just saying that we do not have to have an "either or..." mentality when it comes to this. One can be rooted and grounded in the word and living in the realm of miraculous, supernatural Christianity. (which last time I checked, was the only genuine kind available.) The word and the Spirit are not in opposition one to another, rather they are meant to work in tandem with one another. Remember that the word of God is likened unto a sword in Ephesians 6. Yet it is specifically called the "sword of the SPIRIT which is the WORD of God." The Word of God and the Spirit of God are never in contrast to one another, but are rather meant to function together.

Just some thoughts...

jeff

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/7/2 14:35

i found this article, i think this is one of the things we lack. And when we lack the genuine, we make it up by other things.

The art of preaching

(Letters of J. C. Philpot)

We are overrun with a shallow, superficial ministry, which is destitute of all life, savor, and power. A dry, dead-letter scheme of doctrine, as mathematically correct as the squares of a chess-board, prevails, where what is called "truth" is preached. And to move Bible texts on the squares as pawns, is called "the art of preaching".

How simple is truth!

Man's misery--God's mercy.

The abounding of sin--the super-abounding of grace.

The depths of the fall--the heights of the recovery.

The old man--the new man.

The diseases of the soul--the balm of a Savior's blood.

These lessons learned are in the furnace of inward experience. How different from . . .
the monkish austerity of the Ritualist,
the lip service of the Pharisee, and
the dry Calvinistic formulary!

What a dreadful lack is there of true preaching now!
I look round and see so few men qualified to feed the church of God. We are overrun with parsons, but, oh dear! what are they? I cannot but attribute much of the low state of the churches to the ministers!

Ezekiel 34 is a true picture of the false shepherds.

Re: Charismatic Chaos "Does God do miracles today?" - MacArthur - posted by Isaiah64, on: 2007/7/2 14:38

Quote:
-----And the thing that always amazes me is, if the Holy Spirit were going to release His power, why would He release it to authenticate the people who teach bad theology? If He wanted to authenticate anybody with miracles, you could be sure it would be those who were the truest and the purest and the most profound and Biblical, and the most skilled and dedicated teachers of the Word of God who were teaching the truth.

"But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

1 Corinthians 1:27-30

By no means am I defending the televangelists and other so-called "signs and wonders" people, but the above by quote by MacArthur doesn't sound right at all. It reflects not only a faulty understanding of Scripture, but hints of pride and, to be honest, reminds me of the pharisees.

"Oh, signs and wonders CAN'T be occurring today--otherwise they would be occurring through *our* church and *our* denomination since we have the truest, most accurate Bible teaching around." I don't mean to unjustly judge Mr. MacArthur, but this is how it came across to me.

I find it interesting that Paul Washer, a man who has been in presence of God, has the exact opposite to say as MacArthur:

"I feel that there is a need to hear that our God is a living God, and some of you young men who are so keen and so interested in being so theologically sound need to understand you can reduce God down to a proposition, and it's intellectual death. And God *will* raise up a man and use him whose theology and knowledge is not as pristine as yours--if his heart is there and he's believing God."

"I'd take a Leonard Ravenhill over 20 dead Calvinists."

"So much of Baptist theology is nothing more than a reactionary movement against heresy, but it becomes a heresy in itself."

I wonder what MacArthur would say if he went to a country like China or India where the Lord is moving mightily, and where people are truly getting healed, demons are being cast out, and people are being raised from the dead. These brothers and sisters have no Bible schools or seminaries...they are the furthest thing from 'intellectual'--and yet the Lord uses them more than any of these theologically trained, big-headed seminary graduates in America.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/7/2 14:46

ok....this article was a "side-post" to this thread

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id17724&forum36) Kenneth Hagin & Copeland - Holy Laughter

i just wanted to lift up some "points" as i said in that thread, that not everything that goes by the name "miracle" or all things that happens are from the Holy Spirit from the living eternal God, i myself do not agree on everything MacArthur says, but i think he nails some things right on....

i watched yesterday a video about this man Marjoe Gortner, and it broke my heart, i spoke with one brother about this and he said something to me, : that at least Marjoe said he was only pretending and lying, how many is there that dont come out and say that?

if anyone want a link to the video i will PM it to you, just tell me.....

Christian

Re:, on: 2007/7/2 15:18

Quote:
-----"I feel that there is a need to hear that our God is a living God, and some of you young men who are so keen and so interested in being so theologically sound need to understand you can reduce God down to a proposition, and it's intellectual death. And God will raise up a man and use him whose theology and knowledge is not as pristine as yours--if his heart is there and he's believing God."

Quote:
-----"I'd take a Leonard Ravenhill over 20 dead Calvinists."

And I will take the true, life-giving Gospel from any man, rather than lift up some particular preacher.

I am so weary of these type of emotional comparisons of what type of man God will use. It is not about, nor has it ever been about the man. It has always been about His Word.

In bible school, I constantly heard the same thing the Paul Washer was trying to say. And it gets you excited while you are sitting in your seat there. You know Kneeology, not Theology. You start to look at yourself and get visions of grandeur, you start looking at men just like the Corinthian church.

And then...

God marries you off and gives you a bunch of kids, and through all of your struggles in learning to love those around you as Christ Loves, you begin to look away from yourself and back to the Word of God.

As we all know, the Apostle Peter was an unlearned man, and look at the message he preached on the day of Pentecost. He preached Christ. He went through the scriptures, historically, and preached Christ. His message was rich with doctrine and Theology...

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/7/2 16:34

Quote:
-----God marries you off and gives you a bunch of kids, and through all of your struggles in learning to love those around you as Christ Loves, you begin to look away from yourself and back to the Word of God.

And then you can preach the dread of sin WITH the promise of salvation in such a way that is completely Christ centered in which He becomes all we could never have- peace with God, holiness, wisdom, sanctification, and then the Gospel really becomes good news to the ones God gives ears to hear it!!!

Charismatic Chaos "Does God do miracles today?" - MacArthur - posted by narrowpath, on: 2007/7/2 16:47

I bought McArthur's book "Charismatic Chaos" for the very reason of this topic and tried to read it through. I do agree with him that there is much chaos and pretense in some of the Charismatic churches and have posted comments about some of their excesses, too.

However, I was quite appalled by his cynical and judgemental tone against those who believe in the gifts and signs and wonders to a point where I had to put the book down.

There is Chaos in great parts of the charismatic churches but he has missed a great opportunity to reach out to them and enrich them with his wealth of understanding of other parts of the scriptures.

Paul encountered the same chaos in Corinth, but his handling of the situation stands in stark contrast to John McArthur's spirit. Does John McArthur actually LOVE his fellow brothers, the charismatics?

When you read Mark 16:17 in its plainest and unbiased way how can you still come to the conclusion that wonders are not for now if you are not biased?

Mark 16:17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

You cannot treat scripture this way and not find yourself in conflict with the Lord of the Word. If I weren't sure in my faith

about these things, his book would greatly disturb me.

When the Lord is able to miraculously turn a sinner into a saint, is he not able to do far lesser miracles such as healing diseases and temporarily overrule the laws of physics for His glory?

I think the reason for this attitude is that we do not live radical enough. We are not dependent enough on His power. Our walk with the Lord has not yet let us into situations that we would feel prompted to pray this prayer in Acts 4.

29Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. 30Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

narrowpath

Re: Charismatic Chaos "Does God do miracles today?" - MacArthur - posted by Jeppe (), on: 2007/7/2 17:19

Quote:
-----Paul encountered the same chaos in Corinth, but his handling of the situation stands in stark contrast to John McArthur's spirit. Does John McArthur actually LOVE his fellow brothers, the charismatics?

I came across the journals of Wesley where he mentioned this:

(April 1786)

Monday, 3. About eleven I preached to a crowded congregation in the new House near Chapel-en-le-Frith. Many of these lively people came from among the mountains, (...)

It is chiefly among these enormous mountains that so many have been awakened, justified, and soon after perfected in love; but even while they are full of love, **Satan strives to push many of them to extravagance.** This appears in several instances: — 1. Frequently three or four, yea, ten or twelve, pray aloud all together. 2. Some of them, perhaps many, **scream all together as loud as they possibly can.** 3. Some of them use improper, yea, indecent, expressions in prayer. 4. **Several drop down as dead;** and are as stiff as a corpse; but in a while they start up, and cry, "Glory! glory!" perhaps twenty times together. Just so do the French Prophets, and very lately the Jumpers in Wales, **bring the real work into contempt.**

Yet whenever we reprove them, it should be in the most mild and gentle manner possible.

Re: - posted by seanjol (), on: 2007/7/2 17:32

Hey Mike,

You are right on about the word. I think the frustration that many face is that as Poonen says there is all word with no Spirit. It's as if the letter kills because the Spirit of God is not allowed to work in that Word. Then on the other side, there is such a desire for "signs and wonders" that as Poonen says, they're like a train puffing and puffing but they're off of the tracks because there is no word. I pray for a balance in our walk. Paul said "be ye followers of me as I imitate Christ." Unfortunately, many people are imitating many who just go after signs and wonders. We do need men of God who will preach the Word of God and if God chooses to move by His Spirit, Praise God, but we both know that His movement will not be contrary to His word. A message that many people in these movements forget. Lord bless you brother and your rapidly growing family :).

Sean

Re: - posted by Isaiah64, on: 2007/7/2 17:54

Quote:

-----And I will take the true, life-giving Gospel from any man, rather than lift up some particular preacher.

I am so weary of these type of emotional comparisons of what type of man God will use. It is not about, nor has it ever been about the man. It has always been about His Word.

I think you're missing the point of what was said. Of course we need to be concerned about being doctrinally sound (2 Tim. 2:15). But pure theology without the presence or power of God brings about death. Just ask the pharisees, who made their converts twofold children of hell.

The Bible tells us about what kind of man God will use--one with a broken, humble heart and faith in Him. God can and does use men whose doctrinal knowledge might not be as great as your own, and in so doing he puts to shame those who pridefully believe they're more worthy to be blessed because they've acquired more head-knowledge of the Bible.

Quote:

-----You know Kneology, not Theology. You start to look at yourself and get visions of grandeur, you start looking at men just like the Corinthian church.

So what you're saying is that seeking the Lord will make you prideful?
A real student of "kneology" looks at Christ, not at himself. You can't be on your knees and look to yourself--that's a contradiction. The very fact that you desire to seek Him in prayer demonstrates a dependence on Him, humbleness, and a desire to obey and please Him only.

Re: Charismatic Chaos "Does God do miracles today?" - MacArthur, on: 2007/7/2 20:35

At the top of p2 Mahoney asked

Quote:

-----why should there be such a necessity for miracles?

Why would I want to seek God for miracles?

Brother, please read very carefully and consider the order in which things in this verse happened, and why? (I think these may be your answer.)

Matthew 11:21 NKJV

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

(Also reported in Luke 10:13)

Also, I noticed something recently, in Hebrews 2.

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,
3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard
4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to

His own will?

Tyndale chooses to put 'it' instead of 'Him' at the end of verse 3.

If you read it through with 'it', then the signs following mean that the correct preaching of the word is **confirmed** by God's bearing witness with signs, wonders, miracles and the gifts of the Spirit.

This has a slightly different feel, to putting in 'Him', which makes the verses seem to say that the people confirming the word preached, could do so because they had first heard CHRIST preach that word.

First question this raises is why would they be preaching to the converted?

Second is, how many years before there is no-one alive who can 'confirm' the word because they personally had heard Christ?

When I first noticed this, I thought it was an attempt to embed the doctrine of apostolic succession (so important to both Catholics and Anglicans) in (KJV) scripture, but I do believe from the tiny bit I've gleaned of Greek, that maybe both options are technically correct. (Anyone who can confirm this, please do.)

Either way, what a wonderful confirmation of one's authentic calling, to find God Himself pouring out on those who respond to the word He gives, which has been preached (by you) in faith!

Re:, on: 2007/7/2 20:42

Quote:
-----I think you're missing the point of what was said. Of course we need to be concerned about being doctrinally sound (2 Tim. 2:15). But pure theology without the presence or power of God brings about death. Just ask the Pharisees, who made their converts twofold children of hell.

And I think you would agree that the Pharisees doctrine, their teaching, was not sound. None of it pointed to Christ. They were ignorant of God's righteousness and, therefore, they went about to establish their own righteousness. Their converts were 2-fold children of hell because they were laden with burdens that not even the Pharisees could bear.

Christ's burden is light.

Quote:
-----The Bible tells us about what kind of man God will use--one with a broken, humble heart and faith in Him.

Actually, the bible tells us what GOD DOES to a man that He will use. He will take an ambitious Moses and put him in a desert for 40 years until he has no other agenda then to keep the sheep. God chose Moses, not when he was broken... He chose Moses and then broke him.

This why I said I am weary with preachers who compare what type of man God will use (intellectual, unlearned, strong, weak, smart, dumb, proud, humble, etc.) God chooses the man, or woman, and then He makes the man or woman. God will even use a man or woman in spite of themselves because it is not about the person, it is about His Word. The true life-giving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Quote:
-----God can and does use men whose doctrinal knowledge might not be as great as your own, and in so doing he puts to shame those who pridefully believe they're more worthy to be blessed because they've acquired more head-knowledge of the Bible.

First of all I don't think I talked about how much doctrinal knowledge that "I have" (which is very limited) and if I came across like that, I do apologize.

I firmly believe that God uses whom He chooses. But let's say someone does have a real honest zeal for the work of God, and they are sincere, and pure in heart. What would be so wrong in telling that individual to wait and make sure that they have studied to show themselves approved unto God, and to make sure that they actually know what they are talking about.

I don't know about you, but I sure do blush looking back at the times (whether in the street, or in a pulpit, or one on one with someone) when I taught, preached, or discussed something that was just...off! I honestly did not know what I was talking about. I had a lot of zeal. My heart was pure (motives) I prayed for very long time, but I my doctrine was just off...

Quote:
-----So what you're saying is that seeking the Lord will make you prideful?

Quote:
-----A real student of "kneeology" looks at Christ, not at himself. You can't be on your knees and look to yourself--that's a contradiction. The very fact that you desire to seek Him in prayer demonstrates a dependence on Him, humbleness, and a desire to obey and please Him only.

I do not want to pit prayer against doctrine, that was not my point, but I will tell you that I have known several people who prayed a lot, and yes, they were very prideful. I'm talking about sincere, real-honest believers who actually prayed...with tears, and earnestness. I was one of them!

I would pray for hours and then come out of my prayer closet and look down on my wife because she was not as surrendered to God as I was.

I went to school with a brother that would literally pray all day in one of the bathrooms in our dormitory, and a lot of the time he was a nightmare to be around because you always felt like you didn't measure up. To him, if you did not pray for an extended period of time, you did not really love Jesus.

Sound doctrine is very important, and prayer to the One True and Living God, which is revealed in Christ, in the scripture s...is very important.

You really cannot have one without the other.

God chooses the man, and God chooses the woman. God chose Joseph, Jacob, Abraham, Peter, Deborah, Mary, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Paul, etc.

Some were prideful, some were humble, some were ambitious, some were sloths, some were self-reliant, some were fearful, some were liars, some were honest, some were rich, some were poor, some were male, and some were female.

There is only one steadfast, unchanging, eternal factor included in the lives of all the people God chooses.

His Word.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/7/3 0:02

Quote:
-----As we all know, the Apostle Peter was an unlearned man, and look at the message he preached on the day of Pentecost. He preached Christ. He went through the scriptures, historically, and preached Christ. His message was rich with doctrine and Theology...

And then there was Paul ...

There seems to be some unnecessary dividing here. It appears the Lord chooses who He uses and uses whosoever will.

Re: - posted by Isaiah64, on: 2007/7/3 0:34

No disagreements with what you said, brother. But again:

Quote:

-----But pure theology without the presence or power of God brings about death.

This was my point, and the point Mr. Washer was making in the statements that I presented. No one was trying to compare one Christian with another, or decide who God would use. The reason Washer said he would take 1 Ravenhill over 20 dead calvinists is because he himself is a Southern Baptist and Ravenhill was from the holiness pentecostal movement. Although Washer disagreed with him on a great many points of doctrine, he knew Leonard Ravenhill was a man with the presence and power of God in his life, and would prefer him over dead theologians any day. To a large degree this is what I was referring to.

But what MacArthur seemed to be saying was that God would only authenticate Himself with signs to those who had the most theologically accurate knowledge, and as I showed, that is just not true.

And I can definitely relate with what you said about prayer. I was the same way in bible college. Though I earnestly sought the Lord, at times I was full of the spirit of religion. It wasn't so much the seeking the Lord that made me that way, it was the pride in ME that I hadn't surrendered. Oh, the horrible self-sins! They are the hardest to kill. :-)

But by His grace He is changing me and replacing that pride with His love.

I desire to daily be filled with His Spirit, His Word, and His LOVE.

Re:, on: 2007/7/3 8:31

Quote:

-----But by His grace He is changing me and replacing that pride with His love.

Same here bro...