

# Do We Need Miracles Today?

by Clark Dugger

In the first century miracles played a necessary part in convincing people to believe and obey. After His resurrection Jesus told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem "until ye be clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). This they did. And on the day of Pentecost the apostles were "all together in one place . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). Being "clothed" with this power of the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to perform miracles. Why were such powers necessary in the first century?

We must remember that Jesus had charged the apostles to "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). This commission was great and required that the apostles preach the truth of God. When Jesus told them He was leaving, they were concerned about this. But Jesus tells them not to be troubled, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). This tells us the primary purpose for the apostles being "clothed with power from on high" - they were to receive, preach and record the revelation of God.

This revelation was miraculously made known through the Holy Spirit to the apostles (Eph. 3:3-5). But the purpose of miracles did not stop there. In the same way that Jesus proved His deity by performing miracles (John 20:31), so did the apostles confirm this revelation by doing miracles. Miracles were essential to the revelation and confirmation of the word of God in the first century.

But are such miracles necessary today? Paul speaks of that time when miracles would no longer be necessary, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. 13:9, 10). The word "perfect" in this passage means "complete." Paul is contrasting the time when miracles were necessary to reveal and confirm the word of God with that time when the completed revelation made them no longer necessary. Today we have access to God's confirmed word in its completed form. There is, therefore, no longer a need for miracles today, hence, they have ceased.

Sometimes we might think it would be easier to convince people to obey the gospel of Christ today if we could perform a miracle to persuade them. But the fact is, they have evidence of a multitude of miracles that have long ago revealed and confirmed the word of God. If they are not impressed with this evidence, they will not be moved by the performance of one more miracle. The same kind of prejudice that hardened the heart of the Jews against Jesus will harden people's hearts today.

This principle is set forth in the story of the rich man and Lazarus found in Luke 16:19-31. You recall that the rich man dies and goes to a place of torment. While there he is concerned about his five brothers ending up in the same place when they die. He pleads

with Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn his brothers. "But Abraham saith, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead" (Luke 16:29-31). Clearly, the necessity for miracles ceased long ago.