

Voice of Baptists

"The Voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."
Isaiah 40:3

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MIRACLES

By Harold D. Carver
Buena Vista, Tenn.

"GOD ALSO BEARING THEM WITNESS, BOTH WITH SIGNS AND WONDERS, AND WITH DIVERS MIRACLES, AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST, ACCORDING TO HIS OWN WILL?"

Hebrews 2:4

A great host of people today are following "so called" miracle workers who claim to possess God ordained and given supernatural powers. The self-appointed ultra-spiritualists profess to have God granted powers over nature, life, health, dream interpretation, and the prophetic powers to predict both natural and spiritual events of the future. Many cults (Charismatics, etc.) have sprung up and are attracting an ever increasing following to their false doctrines. The most alarming and disappointing aspect of this devious trick of satan is that many children of God have fallen prey to this heresy. Many have become outspoken advocates in behalf of this movement and perhaps just as bad many others are providing financial support to these individuals and organizations.

These deceptive distorters of the divine scriptures have no foundations of truth to support their theories. It is the intention of this writing to refute these theories and practices through truthful interpretation of God's Word. The primary goal being to focus attention upon the teaching of the Bible.

WHAT IS A MIRACLE? The dictionary defines a miracle as "an event that appears unexplainable by the laws of nature and so is held to be supernatural in origin or an act of God". (The American Heritage Dictionary). Ungers Bible Dictionary defines miracles as "supernatural manifestations of divine power in the external world, in themselves special revelations of the presence and power of God". In considering all formal definitions of a miracle we may say that it is an event so unmistakably supernatural that a sense of wonder and awe is produced in those who witness it. Finally, perhaps the most practical definition of a miracle is the presence of God demonstrated in "power" and "signs". With the definition firmly in mind we may now consider the next division of the subject.

(Continued on Page 2)

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

Dear Editor:

I have every copy of "Voice of Baptists". I wouldn't take anything for it.

Mrs. Zula Lowe
Indpls., Ind.

We are strengthened and uplifted when we read "Voice of Baptists". We pray for God's continued grace to be upon your efforts.

Paul & Shirley Cofer
Boliver, Mo.

Enjoy paper very much.

Mrs. Edna McAlexander
Cedar Grove, Tenn.

Am so glad to receive "Voice of Baptists". The article "From Canada to Christ" was especially enjoyable.

Mrs. Tennie Richards
Huntingdon, Tenn.

(Continued on Page 3)

SISTER TAYLOR CELEBRATES 100TH BIRTHDAY

Sister Zola Taylor of Highway 70, Jackson, Tennessee celebrated her 100th birthday October 2, 1980.

While visiting with Sister Taylor on this joyous occasion, I suggested that she give me the highlights of her life. She began talking, pausing to cry or laugh, and then concluded by saying, "I love everybody. Some don't do right, but I love their souls."

HER BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE

Our honoree saw the first light of day October 2, 1880 in Perry County, Tennessee, being born the daughter of Austin Bethel Gibson and Minerva Ann Susan (Roberts) Gibson. Her parents were both devoted members of Tom's Creek Missionary Baptist Church.

(Continued on Page 2)



NEW CHURCH IN COLORADO

Ottis L. Jones

Dear Brother Massey,

Since we have discussed the Lord's work in Denver from the time we first heard about it, I will now try to describe it for your readers.

In October of 1978, a small group of people began to meet in the Denver area, and for the first few months they met in their homes. Their prayer, from the beginning, was for a sound Baptist Church where they could worship the Lord and spread His gospel.

Brother Luther and Sister Lois Jent, Brother Orral and Sister Jean Cravens, and Brother Bill and Sister Doreen Brown and their children made up the congregation for the first few weeks. Later Brother Leonard and Sister

(Continued on Page 3)

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MIRACLES

(Continued from Page 1)

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A MIRACLE? The purpose was and is to manifest God's "power" for a "sign" to "accredit" a specific individual, group of people, place, or event. We might say they are "credential signs" of God designed to influence the observers in such a manner as to accomplish the desired aims of God. They began with the great creation miracle and will indeed continue until the end of time. Eventhough miracles have been performed by the hand of God from the beginning they have not been evenly distributed throughout time. They seem to have been concentrated or clustered in certain periods to provide and/or accomplish the desires of God. At times few if any are noted. At other times they tended to occur infrequently. However in other great periods of Spiritual History they seem to have been concentrated or clustered in a relative brief period time. For instance a large number of miracles took place during the exodus of the children of Israel from the Egyptian bondage and their subsequent travels in the wilderness. They continued with some frequency during the times of the Judges. However during the era in which God anointed Saul as King to rule over Israel the presence of miracles were extremely infrequent. This trend continued through both the reigns of David and Solomon. Once again during the days of Daniel and the period of the Bablonian Captivity frequent demonstrations of the miraculous supernatural powers of God were evident. Perhaps most noteworthy are the great miracles performed by Jesus Christ and the Apos-

tlis which we fine recorded in the New Testament.

The objective of miracles remained the same during the ministry of Jesus Christ. However it must be concluded that the design and purpose of the New Testament miracles are greater than those in the Old Testament. They were of a great order in that Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God was literally God incarnated in the flesh. A greater design was evident because the Lord performed miracles by his own hand during his personal ministry. A greater purpose is evident in that they directly witnessed to his "Sonship", his role as Savior of the world, the institution of his Church, and his command to the Church to evangelize the whole world. The spiritual gifts of the Apostles was merely an extension of these same miraculous powers designed for the same purpose.

At this point we will review some of the great miracles which have occurred over the previous centuries. Especially those that tend to characterize certain periods of divine history.

In all of the examples which shall follow the aim is to reveal the divine purpose of God in manifesting his "power", exhibiting a "sign", and accrediting the occasion or instrument of God.

PLAGUES IN EGYPT. Immediately prior to the exodus of the Children of Israel God brought many convincing plagues upon the people and the land of Egypt. The land had been beseiged with frogs, lice, flies, murrain, boils, hail mingled with fire, locusts, thick darkness and finally the death of the first born of Pharoah, the captive, and all the cattle. Certainly we may declare that these events were unmistakably supernatural and that a sense of awe and wonder was produced in the witnesses is evidenced in the writings of Moses. "And Pharoah's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed? Then Pharoah called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you". Exodus 10:7, 16. Moses and the Children of Israel left Egypt fully accredited and possessing the credentials of God wherever they trod.

PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA. The Children of Israel pursued by the Egyptians fled to the brink of the Red Sea. The children fearful, doubting, helpless, and seemingly hopeless were miraculously delivered by the divine hand of God. They were provided safe passage, the Egyptians perished, and this "sign" has been left for mankind to ponder throughout all future generations. "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work

(Continued on Page 4)

SISTER TAYLOR

(Continued from Page 1)

At the age of ten, her mother died of blood poisoning, and she was raised by her christian father.

One year as the protracted meeting was in progress at Tom's Creek, young Zola was told by her father to stay home that night. She was usually a very obedient child, but couldn't be loyal that time. She and a friend went to church and took a seat by the window. As Bro. Lum Bussell wielded the sword of the Spirit, she was cut to the heart. Her conviction deepened throughout the sermon for it seemed the preacher was talking straight to her. Finally, he concluded and invited all sinners to take the front seat. Young Zola went forward, bowed and began praying, "Lord here I am, take me just as I am." Next thing she knew she was saved and happy and going back to invite a lost friend to the altar. "I remember my Daddy shouting twice, the night I was saved and two years later when I joined the church.



Editor and Mrs. Taylor

Our sister in Christ was baptized at the hands of Bro. Lum Bussell by the authority of Tom's Creek Missionary Baptist Church.

MOTHER IN ISRAEL

During the days following the close of World War II, Sister Taylor and her late husband, Bro. Sam Taylor, and a few neighbor friends in a small community just south of Huntingdon began a prayer meeting. These people met in homes until the interest became so great they moved into Sister Taylor's garage and Sunday services were added. Eventually, the Lord moved in such a way that a new church was organized May 14, 1950 in that little garage of the Taylors. The new church was named Independent Missionary Baptist Church of Huntingdon. Bro. Robert Noles was called to serve as the first pastor.

In a short time, such crowds demanded the building of a churchhouse, the house of worship maintained at this time. Brother and Sister Taylor were denied the privilege of being charter members due to a delay in their letters of recommendation, and they joined the following month.

The members of Independent Church surely do love and respect Sister

Zola Taylor for her travail as a "mother in this spiritual Israel."

Sister Taylor has three children living: Mrs. Augusta Carey with whom she resides, Mrs. Opal Robinson and Mrs. Bessie Carey both of Huntingdon. She has six grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren.

May God continue to bless the life of this faithful christian mother, who demonstrates the boldness of Deborah, the unselfishness of Hannah, the loyalty of Ruth, and the righteousness of Elizabeth.

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

(Continued from Page 1)

I really enjoy reading the paper. Hope that it will continue for a long time. It has become a link between here and there. Keep up the good work, and we hope the Lord will bless you.

Elder Terry Foster
Belton, Mo.

We really enjoy the paper.

Willard & Genevieve Carter
Pendleton, Ky.

We enjoy the paper very much and pass it on to others to read.

Bro. & Sis. James E. Underwood
Louisville, Ky.

Our church enjoys receiving "Voice of Baptists".

Long View Baptist Church, Gallatin, TN
Raymond R. Hall, Treas.

We really enjoy getting the paper. Thank you for sending it to us. We are always glad to read about the people that get saved. We know that God is everywhere. Thanks again for the paper.

Mrs. C. L. Smith
Lafayette, Tenn.

We Christians need to show the world we have the Lord on our side and feel as bold as a lion. Thanks for the paper.

Mrs. Ollie Prince
Camden, Tenn.

I just want to express my thanks for receiving the "Voice of Baptists." I really get an enjoyment out of reading them. I also want to thank my daughter (Connie Perrigo) for giving you my name and address. Keep the good work up. May God bless you, and each one that sends in the writings.

Ruth Troutt
Gallatin, Tenn.

I read and enjoyed your article "A Mourner's Bench." I'm 83 years old and still drive the freeway to church. The Lord saved me Nov. 28, 1911 in Cedar County, Missouri. I went to the altar to pray. The preacher, Henry Phillips, said let's pray, and I rolled off the bench into the floor, and somewhere between the bench and the floor it happened. The condemnation, grief, fear and sorrow were gone, and in its place was joy, peace, and love.

Leo F. Mullins
Carson, Calif.

Our church continues to enjoy the paper. I especially look forward to reading each issue.

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church
Nashville, Tenn.
Colin Dyer, Treas.

I would like to write a note to tell you how much I have enjoyed the "Voice of Baptists." It is good to see sound baptist doctrine expounded in a clear, concise manner. It is a help and encouragement to hear ideas and interpretations from fellow Baptists.

Marvin D. Payne
Ventura, Calif.

I want you to know I have really enjoyed the "Voice of Baptists." Thankful for all the writers who have a part in this paper. I have received many good blessings from reading the articles, and look forward to it each month.

Mrs. Otis Berry
Flint, Mich.

Please send me the paper. Also, may I have a copy of the paper in which the obituary of my brother, Elder W. T. Taylor, appeared.

Mrs. Gilbertta Anderson
St. Petersburg, Fla.

NEW CHURCH

(Continued from Page 1)

Katherine Musselwhite began to attend the devotional services as the group discussed Baptist doctrines.

The group rented a school room for a few weeks until they were able to rent the Cherry Creek Grange building which provided a good place to worship.

As the group studied and prayed, they requested help from every Baptist source they knew about. Each time they heard of a Baptist preacher that they thought might be able to help, they told him of their need and sought advice. Always the need was for a sound Baptist Church in the Denver area.

I heard about the need at the October 1978 Wiseman Association when Brother H. C. Vanderpool read Brother Jent's letter asking for help. After much prayer, I told Lafayette Missionary Baptist Church that this was where the Lord would have me go.

Lafayette extended an arm for the mission in the Denver area and we moved there to help the group in June of 1979.

The group wanted to study basic Baptist doctrines for a period of time. After the group was sure that Lafayette was the kind of Baptist church they were searching for; the eight people listed above, Sister Debbie Naquavi, and Sister Ruth Davis joined the Church.

With their hearts set on serving the Lord and the prayer for a sound Church, the mission continued to study Baptist Doctrines, because, can two walk together, except they be agreed. The studies were always based on the principle that this is Baptist Doctrines; and if you do not want to be a member of a church which the Lord Jesus is the founder and head of; that believes, teaches, and practices the truths as described in the Articles of Faith and the Church Covenant, then you are at the wrong place.

In July of this year, the Church members listed above, and Sherrill and I requested letters to organize a Missionary Baptist Church. The letters were granted with authority for a Church to be organized September 28, 1980.

Several Baptists from Indiana, Tennessee, and Missouri made plans to attend the organization.

As the Mission learned of the preachers that planned to attend; Elder H. C. Vanderpool, Elder A. G. Gregory, Elder D. C. Barton and Elder Calvin Perrigo were asked to preach at services the weekend of the organization.

The Lord's Spirit was felt in each service and I cannot describe the joy as we heard God's Word. I also cannot describe how thankful the Mission was for each person that came to the services.

Sunday morning, September 28, 1980, Colorado Missionary Baptist Church was organized with twelve members. The new Church then voted to ordain three deacons. Brother Musselwhite, Brother Jent and Brother Cravens were then ordained.

I wish I could describe how the Lord was with us from the beginning of the service Friday night until the end of the ordination Sunday afternoon. We were also wonderfully blessed by the fellowship, singing, testimony, preaching and prayers of all the Brothers and Sisters who came to worship with us.

Please pray for us.

Your Servant,


Elder Ottis Jones

MIRACLES

(Continued from Page 2)

which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses". Exodus 14:30, 31.

ELIJAH PRAYS THE FIRE DOWN.

Even though the life of Elijah had been filled with the miraculous power of God (fed by ravens, multiplication of meal and oil, restoration of widow's son) the most captivating experience seems to have been reserved for the great miracle atop Mt. Carmel. Elijah having contracted with the prophets of Baal for them to call on the name of their gods, and he would call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. When they had called on their Gods until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice with no answer it was Elijah's time. The prophet of God promptly repaired the altar, prepared the sacrifice, and then drenched the altar, wood, and burnt sacrifice with twelve barrels of water. When all preparations had been completed, he began to pray to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then the miraculous answer of God. "Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God". I Kings 18:38, 39. We also note that the miracle had great effect upon those who had witnessed the miraculous power of God.

THREE HEBREW CHILDREN.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not compromise the truth nor bow to the idolatrous king of Babylon. Their staunch resistance so angered King Nebuchadnezzar that he sentenced them to death by casting them into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and commanded that the furnace be heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. The furnace was so hot it even slew those men that took up the Children of God. Now for the miraculous intervention of God. "He answered and said, Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who

hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God." Daniel 3:25-28.

PERSONAL MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES. The Old Testament characteristics were evident in the many miracles of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. His miraculous works were so numerous (forty-three miracles) that space will not now allow a minute description of each. Suffice it to say he fed the hungry, healed the sick and lame, restored the sight, cast out demons, raised the dead, and stilled the storms. As in all of the other great miracles performed by God they were certainly supernatural and they defied all human explanation. When he performed any of the supernatural feats, it was obvious that God was at work. He quietly, meekly, but powerfully pursued his mission. These miracles were for a sign to the people in that day that God had sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law. They were to accredit and provide credentials to the works, ministry, and Church of Jesus Christ.

Many today profess the gifts of God to perform equally supernatural miracles. But what man today can restore sight to the blinded eye? What man can feed five thousand with two fishes and five loaves with twelve baskets of fragments left over? What person can raise the lifeless form of one that has been dead and in the grave for four days? The answer is, "Not One", because these gifts and powers are not given to men in this age. Another interesting observation is that not one of the great miracles of the Lord or the Apostles were performed for the expressed benefit of the recipient of the miracle but for a "sign" to benefit those that witness the incident (primarily the unbeliever). Certainly this point is contrary to those who profess such abilities today.

A great misunderstanding has developed over the misinterpretation of Spiritual Gifts as listed in I Corinthians 12:28 "And God hath set some in the church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues". These gifts listed by the Apostle Paul were temporary gifts and never intended to be practiced throughout the Church age. In fact there is no evidence that they continued after the era of the Apostles. These gifts were supernatural fruits of the Holy Spirit given for a specific purpose limited to a specific time. The design and purpose of God was the same as that expressed in the exodus from Egypt, the supernatural protection and

provision in the wilderness. The same as blessing Elijah before the Baalamites on Mt. Carmel or delivering the Hebrew Children from the fiery furnace or Daniel from the Lions Den. Just as God's supernatural wonders had been concentrated (clustered) during these particular periods in time once again his intervention, or lack of it, was intensified for the reasons of convincing and accreditation. The signs were so designed that his Son might receive glory in the Church throughout ceaseless ages. The divine gifts listed in I Corinthians 12 have served their purpose, completed their missions, and therefore have been removed.

A function of some of the divine gifts of the Holy Spirit were to confirm and authenticate the authority and message of the servants by "bearing them witness" through the manifestations of supernatural power. But that is no longer necessary today. The gifts of "wisdom", "knowledge", "prophecy", "teachers", "helps", and "governments", had a definite function for that specific period in the history of the Church.

The gift of tongues, the last gift listed by Paul is the final gift given to the Church by the Holy Spirit. It was a "sign-gift" given on the day of Pentecost as a sign declaring the Word of God to the unbeliever. As with the other temporary gifts it served its purpose but finds no place in the Church today.

These various gifts spanned the gap during the early years of the Church when the New Testament Scriptures were not available. However, when the Bible had been completed and circulated among the Churches, the divine supernatural gifts of God were no longer necessary. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away". I Corinthians 13:9, 10.

Therefore we conclude that the spiritual gifts listed in I Corinthians 12 have been withdrawn. They are no longer needed today and we should be suspicious of anyone who claims to possess them.

The purpose of this writing finds no place for the limiting of the great power of God. I am a total believer in all of the great works recorded in the Bible. I am also convinced that God continues to perform great miracles today, however not through the vessels of men as he did in other great periods of Spiritual History. We should be perfectly content with the abiding gifts, especially the greatest of these. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity". I Corinthians 13:13.

