

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD

By Keith Greer

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." {2 Timothy 2:15}

How many false teachers could be silenced, or how many doctrines of men could be left by the wayside, if folks would take this passage seriously? In all other decisions of life we do some investigating, but on spiritual matters we allow others to do our work for us! Let me give you an example.

Turn on your television on any given day. Men and woman will be proclaiming to have the power to perform miracles, claiming they have healed many, by the power of God. Is it true? **What saith the scriptures?**

Let us first define a miracle. "**Miracles are events in the external world, wrought by the immediate power of God and intended as a sign or attestation.**" {Westminster Dictionary of the Bible} "**A miracle is an event which the forces of nature, or secondary causes operating under ordinary divine preservation, are incompetent to produce.**" {George B. Fisher} In plain terms, miracles are events or actions that go against natural laws. Just because we can't explain or understand something, does not make it a miracle.

Now, we need to understand the purpose of miracles. Why were they done? What end did they accomplish?

"And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen." {Mark 16:20}

"And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" {Acts 8:6} "God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" {Hebrews 2:4} Here is the purpose, the only one, to **CONFIRM THE WORD!**

"He answered and said, 'whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.'" {John 9:25}

"...saying, 'What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it'." {Acts 4:16} Even the enemies of Christ could not deny a miracle had taken place! Can the same be true today? Have men been exposed for being phonies? We all know the answers to these questions, if we are honest!

Now if we read 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, we can see that miracles have passed. When the written word was given, the need for miracles ceased! Yet, is this the strongest evidence? No!

Please turn your Bible to Acts 8. Here, we see in the beginning, that Philip was preaching in Samaria. Verse six tells us he had the power to perform miracles. In verses twelve and thirteen, Philip's preaching caused many to believe and be baptized, even Simon, who had practiced sorcery.

"Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them,... " {Acts 8:14} Why send for two apostles? The Holy Spirit had fallen on none of them, yet (verse sixteen). When did it?

"Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit "{Acts 8:17} Who are "they?" Peter and John. We learn here that only the apostles could pass on gifts to other men.

What do all these facts added up tell us? Only by the laying on of the apostle's hands were these gifts given to man. If men have that power today, who "**laid hands**" on them? None of the apostles are living today so one can rightly conclude the gifts gave ceased! Pretty simple isn't it? ***