

The Holy Spirit Today?

Miraculous Indwelling of the Holy Spirit Today?

Holy Spirit Indwelling Series – Part 6

This is the final article in a series examining the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. To date a non-miraculous literal indwelling has been rejected and left the question: “What benefit would it be anyway?” A representative indwelling of Deity and man demonstrating unity according to God’s purpose stands scripturally acceptable. However, the question yet to be answered is why not a miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit today? The miraculous must be explored so it can be accepted or rejected.

There are various religions today which lay claim to the miraculous. They are characterized by “faith healings”, “tongues”, direct guidance in teaching and persecution, and direct operation to comfort, strengthen, and energize the believer. Indeed, these occurrences are embraced in part or full by the Charismatic, Pentecostal, Christian, and denominational faiths. Even those bodies which outwardly reject the miraculous have embraced some of the above characteristics. Such a conflict occurs because a lack of study and improper teaching in regard to the nature of such claims. In this article, rather than focus on the specific miraculous characteristics claimed by man, the duration of the miraculous will be examined. If the miraculous is possible today, then why not have a miraculous indwelling? If however, the miraculous is not possible today, then a miraculous indwelling is out of the question.

That the miraculous was present in the Old Testament is without dispute. Moses, Elijah, and Elisha stand out as having been given the ability to conduct such actions. In the nature of miraculous inspiration, visions, revelations, and prophesying were demonstrated by many in past ages. The New Testament opens with the gospels where beginning with John the baptizer the direct operation of the Holy Spirit is seen in inspired speech. With Christ’s first miracle in Cana there came a flood of the miraculous. The twelve, the seventy sent out, they demonstrated the miraculous. Then came the day of Pentecost discussed in the second article in this series. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. Joel prophesied of that day. Peter declared the miraculous. The promised gifts of the Spirit were distributed to the obedient by the laying on of the hands of the apostles as

demonstrated throughout the book of Acts. It is a very detailed and recorded fact, men and women of the past demonstrated the miraculous through miracles and inspiration. Still, is the miraculous possible today?

To understand whether the miraculous is possible today, the purpose of miracles in past ages must be examined. The first reason for the miraculous is edification (**John 20:30-31, Ephesians 3:3-7**). When God wanted to reveal something in the past which would help man mature, there was direct interaction by Him to convey the information. The people of the first century and before did not have all of the Word of God with them. Without the revelation through the miraculous to edify him, man still would not have God's Word today. God's word is all man needs (**2 Peter 1:3**). It is sufficient to mature man (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). Yet, in ages since Christ, men have declared the miraculous and revelation of more information from God. The faiths of Islam and Mormonism are prominent examples of such declarations. **Jude 1:3** establishes the Word of God was once for all delivered in the first century. The apostle Paul told the Galatians (**Galatians 1:6-9**) whoever or whatever would preach something contrary to the word he preached should be cursed. With the word received in full, there is no need for the miraculous today to edify. Yet, it could be argued by the wisdom of man such events could be helpful today.

The second reason for the miraculous is confirmation of the Word (**Matthew 12:24-28, Mark 16:20, John 5:36, 10:38**). If a man appears claiming to be the son of God and he has a group of guys with him declaring men need to listen and obey, there will be some skepticism. The miraculous was given to demonstrate Christ indeed had authority to declare words with authority. Even then, he faced great skepticism reaching forward to today. Today the Word of God is received and has been confirmed. What need is there of the miraculous for confirmation? The answer is there is no need for the miraculous to confirm today. As with the first reason for miracles, it could be argued by man's wisdom further confirmation could be helpful.

The third reason for the miraculous is to glorify God (**John 9:3, John 11:40-42**). Numerous occurrences of the miraculous glorified God by showing His compassion (**Mark 1:41** – Leper; **Luke 7:12-14** – Widow's son; **Matthew 20:29-34** – Two Blind Men; **Matthew 14:14** – Healed sick of Multitude). The Word of God continues to glorify God and demonstrate His compassion. Still, once again, it could be argued by man's wisdom the miraculous would continue to glorify God by showing His compassion today.

The original needs the miraculous addressed were met. The Hebrew writer discussing the words of the prophet Jeremiah in **Hebrews 8:13** discussed the fact that when something is old (or had fulfilled its purpose) it vanishes away. Though the context is of the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ, similar logic can certainly be applied to the miraculous. If it has fulfilled its purpose, why should it continue to endure? However, this really does not answer the question: “Is the miraculous possible today? Therefore, further examination must be engaged upon.

The key passages in determining the answer to this question were briefly acknowledged in the fourth article of this series. These passages are **I Corinthians 13** and **Ephesians 4**.

1 Corinthians 13:8-13 - *Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. 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. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.*

This passage written by the apostle Paul discusses the miraculous. The context is a discussion of the need to have love. Love in Paul’s conclusion will outlast the miraculous, faith, and hope. Important to this article is how long miracles will last. Paul’s states the miraculous shall cease and be done away. He calls the knowledge and prophecies only a part of the “perfect” which was to come. The Greek word “perfect” in this text means mature, finished, or complete. The item which would be complete and they as individuals only had a part at that time was the Word. **James 1:25** calls the Word the perfect/complete law of liberty. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** mentioned previously, establishes the Word makes a man perfect or complete. **2 Peter 2:2** and the Corinthian’s passage echoes this by making the comparison of growing up from childhood. When the Word was fully delivered to them, confirmed, and written down for all (it certainly was by the second century) the miracles would no longer be needed. **Ephesians 4:11-16** – *And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer*

children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

In this letter to the Ephesians Paul again discusses the miraculous. He notes the miraculous was there until they had unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son causing them to be perfect/complete/mature men. How can anyone have unity of the Faith? They would have unity because through inspiration it was written down so all could read, hear, and know it. Again like the other passages and specifically the Corinthians passage, the growth from immature to mature by having the Word is mentioned. It is the written Word of God which would sustain the growth of man without need of the miraculous.

A final critical factor in determining the end of the age of the miraculous has already been mentioned. In the second article of this series, discussing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it was established that the miraculous was only passed on through the laying on of the hands of the apostles. **Acts 8:14-17** demonstrates clearly the apostles were responsible for the imparting of the miraculous. The apostle John was the last apostle living. History has him dying in the late first century or early second century. At this point there was no way to pass the miraculous forward. Those who had the miraculous even if they had it their whole lives would not have been able to carry it past the beginning of the third century at the most.

Yes, there are those individuals and groups which declare the miraculous today, but the stories do not match scriptural examples of the miraculous. They also do not accord with the scriptural account of the ending of the miraculous. Some of these folks are straight charlatans, others simply mislead. Whatever they are, they do not have the miraculous today. Some scholars claim the miraculous ended as early as 70 AD. Others see it possibly having extended through to the middle of the second century. At either rate, the miraculous by the authority of scripture is gone. In regard to our topic of a miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit today, if the miraculous is gone, then there is no such indwelling today.

This concludes a six part series on the Holy Spirit. Is there an indwelling of the Holy Spirit? Yes! It is the same as the indwelling of Father, Christ, and the Word in man. It is

the same as man indwelling all of the same. It is a representative unity according to Truth. It is not the gift of the Holy Spirit, the filling of the Holy Spirit, the seal of the Holy Spirit, or the miraculous in any way. The indwelling is not literal, for there is no scriptural basis or benefit to such an indwelling. The abiding of the Holy Spirit is a blessing which awaits all men who would humble themselves to God's will. May each individual repent of the world and strive to dwell in the truth.