

# False Signs & Wonders

One of the great things that Jesus was known for was His power to do miracles. He healed the blind, the paralyzed, the lepers, the demon possessed, and many others. In fact, His powers were so great that He even raised Lazarus from the dead. Without doubt Jesus Christ had the power to do many great signs and wonders. But should we see such things today among those that call themselves Christians? While we don't doubt for a moment that even today God has the ability to heal people according to His will, we do doubt certain religious people of our day that promise so-called healings, signs, and wonders. Why? Let's examine the Scriptures to find the truth that can set us free.

**Fact #1 - There are many false teachers in the world today.** Make no mistake about the fact that “many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Even Jesus Himself warned: “See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many” (Mat. 24:4-5). In other words, many so-called popular religious leaders, radio preachers, and religious authors of our day are simply false teachers, and many are misled by them. We'd probably be utterly shocked if we knew their names and the churches they pastor because “... his servants disguise themselves as servants of righteousness...” (2 Cor 11:15). So many false teachers have gone out into the religious world that you are probably unknowingly influenced by at least one of them. How do they deceive? Obviously by clever words, twisting of the Scriptures, presenting a false way of salvation, and even by false signs and wonders.

**Fact #2 - Satan has the ability to do signs and wonders.** One doesn't have to read the Word of God for very long before understanding that even Satan has great powers. In fact, Satan is known as the one who “deceives the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). One way that he does this is through false signs and wonders. For example, in the time of Moses the magicians opposed God by performing great signs (Exo. 7:11; 8:7). In the future a false prophet will perform great signs “so that he makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men” (Rev. 13:13). In fact, the Bible says that he will deceive “those who dwell on the earth because of the signs” (Rev. 13:13). In other words, it will be so convincing that very few will even suspect that it is not of God. The lesson for us today is that a so-called sign, wonder, or miracle does not prove that the person who did it is from God because even Satan has the power to perform great signs.

**Fact #3 - People are easily deceived by the miraculous.** Be certain that if fire ‘came down’ at the local basketball arena in the presence of thousands of religious spectators virtually all would believe that the person who did it was a “great man of God.” Why? Because Satan knows very well the natural tendency of people to seek spiritual signs. How many people have said, “Show me a sign and then I'll believe”? This is why when someone announces a healing meeting at ‘such-and-such’ church, a mob of curiosity seekers show up even though they don't

have any physical problems. Yet Jesus says this of those who seek signs: “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign...” (Mat. 16:4). What about you? Are you the type of person who seeks after the miraculous? If so, be careful for your soul!

#### Fact #4 - Many so-called healings are simply false.

False healings are actually easy to identify if one keeps in mind how the Word of God describes the healings of Jesus and His apostles. Simply speaking, when they healed someone, it was something that could be completely verified.

For example, when He healed the dumb, the blind, the paralyzed, lepers, the demon possessed, no one doubted that a real miracle had just occurred. The physical problems of the sick were well-known among the people. These problems were not anything ‘doubtful’, but obvious, confirmable ailments. Furthermore, when the healing occurred it was concrete, confirmable to all, and permanent. See John 9 and Acts 3 for two examples (a blind man and a lame beggar).

However, in today’s religious world it is a rare thing to see such a healing. The majority of so-called healings today are of a completely different type. For example, at a typical ‘healing meeting’ several people will usually testify that they have been wonderfully healed. As they come onto the stage those in attendance will quiet down to hear the ‘glorious news of God’s power.’ Are these who give testimony the crippled, wheel-chair-bound people who have come to the meeting? No. In fact, the wheel-chair-bound cripples will remain seated in their wheel-chairs -- unhealed. The people who testify generally speak of having some kind of pain prior to the meeting, but during the prayers for the sick the pain had gone away. Are such testimonies actual accounts of real healings? Suffice it to say that no one can objectively verify whether something has actually happened or not. The discerning person will wonder whether this is simply some emotional or psychological effect. Perhaps one of the ‘healed’ will testify of a ‘small improvement’ in his impaired hearing. While the preacher might classify this as a ‘progressive healing’ (that is, a partial healing now with the completion to follow later), the discerning onlooker will question the validity of such a claim. When Jesus and His apostles healed someone it was always a complete, sudden healing. The only example of a so-called ‘partial/progressive’ healing is in Mark 8:22-25 where the entire healing took place in about a minute!

Examples abound about so-called healings. Sometimes the healer tells a person that “you have one leg longer than the other” or perhaps “you have a cancerous tumor inside of your body.” This poor soul is totally amazed because until that moment he didn’t have any problem with his legs and they appear to be of the same length, nor has there been any medical diagnosis of cancer. In either event, after many prayers in the name of God, it is announced, “You are healed!” All such testimonies of so-called healings from ‘mysterious ailments’, and ‘unverifiable pain’ and of ‘small improvements’ do not compare at all to the clear and confirmable miracles of Jesus and His apostles.

What about all those wheel-chaired-bound people who come for healing? Why aren’t these obviously physically impaired people healed? What reason might they be told as to why God ‘passed them by’ in spite of all the earnest prayers to God on their behalf? A common excuse is “The reason you weren’t healed is you lack sufficient faith.” Don’t be deceived! This is simply a convenient way of hiding the truth.

**Fact # 5 - Many so-called miraculous events of our day are simply false.** For example, there is a very popular so-called miraculous sign called the 'Toronto Blessing' that is gaining momentum in religious circles. While gathered in a 'worship' meeting, people begin to fall backwards to the ground and laugh without any self-control over their actions. The preacher usually explains this phenomenon by saying that 'this is a sign from God that you have received the Holy Spirit.' It is also labeled a 'blessing' because it is claimed that the people who experience this have more love for God and His Word. Yet, those that are spiritually minded will look at this so-called miraculous event with great suspicion. Why? First of all, the Word of God says nothing of such a phenomenon. On the contrary, the Word of God explicitly reveals that when true believers were in the presence of God they did not fall backwards but always fell on their faces, in silence, as dead people (see Rev. 1:17). Secondly, the Word of God says that the only way to receive the Holy Spirit is to repent of your sins and believe in Christ (John 1:12, Acts 17:30, Rom. 8:9). Thirdly, more love for God and His Word is equivalent to more obedience to His Word and growth in the area of personal holiness. How many people who have fallen to the ground and have laughed uncontrollably have continued to wear their 'mini-skirts', have continued to watch immoral and violent television programs, have continued to live for self from Monday to Saturday, etc.? So-called love (from one's lips) without holiness is hypocrisy. Don't forget that "...without holiness no one will see God" (Heb. 12:14).

Another common false sign is that of the so-called tongues movement. Many people will testify that they have spoken in a 'tongue', but this is in all likelihood completely untrue. Why? First of all, a 'tongue' according to the Bible is a known language that exists in the world, only the person speaking it did not learn it since the ability to speak it came from God (Acts 2:5-13). A 'Biblical' tongue is not random and disordered sounds and noises, but a known language of the world. This point alone reveals the falseness of most so-called manifestation of tongues. Secondly, the Bible says that at most two or three should speak in a tongue during a meeting, each in order, not simultaneously (1 Cor. 14:27) and if no one is present to interpret, then tongues are prohibited (1 Cor. 14:28). Those that have any experience with the so-called tongues movement of today will be able to see that these verses are routinely violated with scores of people (not two or three) speaking in a so-called tongue during a meeting, all simultaneously (not in order), and no interpretation. What should we think of such so-called miraculous manifestations? By our review of the Scriptures it ought to be clear that whatever they are, they are not Biblical.

What about you? Have you actually practiced such things? Do not be deceived. "The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in Him" (1 John 2:4). To continue to practice such things with full knowledge that they are unbiblical is a sure sign that you do not know God.

What should you do if you find yourself in a religious meeting where the above mentioned violations take place? God says, "Come out from their midst and be separate" (2 Cor. 6:17).