

Faith Is Not An Option

© 2022 Wayne J Vasilenko / Selah Life Ministries

www.selahlife.net

Did you ever wonder why there are some people who claim to have witnessed miracles, yet there are others who say, "Miracles do not happen anymore." Whenever there are such disagreements, as with the subject of any debate, the outcome can be determined in various ways; consider the following examples:

1. I can reject everything you say, and you can reject everything I say and we both refuse to debate the issue.
2. We can argue and get mad at each other when we disagree and stop debating as a result.
3. We can discuss the issue solely based on our own opinions ignoring relevant information.
4. We can examine the facts and evidence with bias.
5. We can examine the facts and evidence without bias.
6. ***We can have a civil discussion or study of an issue, agreeing to disagree at times, while we both learn more about each other and our differing views, but more importantly we will get closer to the truth together.***

The last one on this list is the goal of this study.

Disagreement within the Church

A large number of people, who identify as Christian, do not believe that God performs miracles as in the past. Some believe that the last miracles were performed by original Apostles, ceasing after their death. However, many other Christians claim to see miracles performed, "in the name of Jesus," with regularity! Where do you stand on this subject? It is interesting that miracles are what first drew people's attention to Jesus, yet there were times when Jesus himself could not "perform" miracles! It was the changing of water into wine at a wedding, which brought public attention to His miraculous powers. Nevertheless, there were in fact times when Jesus could not perform miracles. It was not because of His lack of ability, but according to the Bible, because of the people around him! **Matthew 13:58 (NIV)** ⁵⁸ **And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.** Most other Bible translations render the latter part of this verse "because of their unbelief." Could this be among the various reasons that many Christians never see or experience healings, or miracles today, they simply do not have faith, or is it because of unbelief? There is a difference between lack of faith and unbelief... See my article: [Lack of faith or unbelief](#) the disciples failed to cast out a demon at one point however, it was not because they lacked faith, otherwise they would not have tried... something else was hindering them! If someone is "taught" that miracles do not happen anymore, it is no wonder they would never see one! Faith, according to Jesus Himself, is a "Key Ingredient" not only for miracles and healings, but also for salvation itself! Here is something to consider, if a person says they have "Faith" that Jesus took the penalty for their sin on the cross long before they were even born, how does one say in the next sentence, that Jesus no longer heals the sick or performs miracles! Is Jesus constantly going back on the Cross every time someone sins, or did He die on the cross, "Once for all" as the Bible clearly teaches? Did God "change His mind" and suddenly decide to no longer show His power through "Signs and Wonders," the very thing He uses to draw people to Himself at the beginning of His earthly ministry? If God "changed His mind" about performing the miraculous as some people say, how do we know He did not change His mind about saving us by grace through what He did on the cross? **Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV)** ⁸ **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.** God Does Not Change; nevertheless, there remains much debate concerning miracles and healing.

If God does not change, then perhaps it is us!

If God does not change, then perhaps it is us! I submit that in order for the argument supporting miracles **not** continuing beyond the 12 Apostles lifespan to work, many passages of scripture have to be either twisted or ignored. I will begin with the following passage: **Matthew 7:21-23 (KJV)** ²¹ **Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.** ²² **Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?** ²³ **And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**

This article or teaching may be reprinted for use in Bible Study or Discussion Groups. It May Not be used in any Publication or Media for profit without permission

Faith Is Not An Option

© 2022 Wayne J Vasilenko / Selah Life Ministries

www.selahlife.net

Is the previous passage referring to only the 12 disciples? Jesus refers to the “*day of judgment*” when He says, “many will say to me in that day...” Therefore, He is obviously referring to people in the future, and not only the disciples He was addressing at the time; yet He describes people seeming to boast about the miracles they performed in His name as if the performance of miracles would somehow qualify them for heaven! The phrase “*Wonderful Works*” in the King James translation comes from the Greek word, “*Dynamis*” which is also translated “*Miracle (s)*” at least 7 times according to Strong’s Greek Dictionary. Therefore - here we have Jesus Himself talking about people, sometime in the future - *long after the 12 Apostles would have joined Him in heaven*, having performed miracles in His name! How does that fit with the beliefs of those who say that miracles do not happen anymore if you take the Bible at face value and keep it all in context?

Then there is Stephen (The so-called “First Martyr of the Christian Church.”)

It is almost humorous how even some Bible commentators do not let the Bible get in the way of what they believe! I am in no way elevating myself above any of the numerous commentators whose work I consult almost daily. These are all, *without doubt*, godly men who have dedicated their lives to interpreting scripture; nevertheless, not “impervious” to the influence of religious dogma. It struck me funny that even when the Bible makes a simple statement that we should take at face value, many of them feel obligated to include a “**Yeah-But**” in their commentary, so as not to bring into question some of the dogmatic teachings of various groups or churches they may belong to, or may have been influenced by! Rather than getting into pages of Quotes and Citations, I will simply state some of my observations concerning this issue by some of the commentators I regularly use when researching a topic. I will do this without mentioning any names as their bias is in most cases, is obviously due to their “upbringing” or religion rather than an unbiased analysis of the context and the facts; this is something that we are all guilty of to some degree I might add. Here are some observations of what some commentators say concerning Stephen, considered to be, “the first Christian martyr.” We will be looking at the following passage: **Acts 6:5-8 (NKJV)** ⁵ **And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch,** ⁶ **whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.** ⁷ **Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.** ⁸ **And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.** (*Italics mine*)

They *all* (the 6 or so commentators that I regularly consult,) acknowledge that Stephen was not an “Apostle.” They all acknowledge that Stephen was a “Man of Faith, and “*of the Holy Ghost*,” what some modern Christians would refer to as being “Filled with The Spirit.” They all acknowledge that Stephen was “ordained” by the Apostles by the Laying on of Hands. There is not much “side commentary” up to this point, not until we get to **verse 8** which states: **Acts 6:8 (NKJV)** ⁸ **And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.** It is at this point that I noticed that some of the commentators felt obligated to add in some of those “**Yeah-Buts**” I mentioned a moment ago. One commentator, points out that of the 7 including Stephen mentioned in Verse 5, were all ordained by the Apostles; he thereby concludes, that only those ordained by the “Twelve” are able to fulfill the mission of servants they were given when ordained by the Apostles. If that is true, what about now! It is generally accepted that these seven men were the first of what we now call “Deacons.” Do we still have Deacons today, if so, do we still ordain them? If so, did the Apostles ordain them? No, the Apostles have long since gone to be with the Lord in heaven! So, does that mean the people ordained as Deacons today are not really Deacons? After all, the original 12 Apostles did not ordain them! What really caught my eye was the fact that the Bible only mentions Stephen performing “Wonders and Miracles;” why only Stephen out of the seven mentioned; they were all commissioned by the same 12 Apostles! I submit that Paul clears this up in his many references to the “Gifts of the Spirit.” I refer to *1 Corinthians Chapter 12* which was written concerning events that took place long after the events in Acts Chapter 6... following are some examples.

Faith Is Not An Option

© 2022 Wayne J Vasilenko / Selah Life Ministries

www.selahlife.net

1 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NKJV) ⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: ⁸ for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

The ordination and eventual martyrdom of Stephen took place quite some time before Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. It is a fact that, although Saul (later known as Paul) stood watch over the cloaks of those who put Stephen to death *with his consent*. He had already become actively involved with his persecution of Christians. **Acts 7:58 (NKJV) ⁵⁸ and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.** After Stephen's death is when Saul's persecution of the Christians went into high gear so to speak, **Acts 8:2-3 (NKJV) ² And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. ³ As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.** It would be possibly 1 to 3 years after this that Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus. He later went off for another three years before he met up with Peter and James, so it was quite a while before Saul, *now known as Paul* wrote to the Corinthian church, yet, he mentions the working of miracles in 1 Corinthians verse 10 as he addresses the church concerning Spiritual Gifts! This indicates that people within the church apart from the "Original 12 Apostles" were seeing the workings of the Holy Spirit manifesting **which included miracles**, happening within their own ranks! This is what I mean when I say that in order for some religious dogmas to work, certain passages of the Bible have to be manipulated, *usually by being taken out of context* or worse yet, totally ignored.

I have said many times, "I do not believe God gave His Word only to be understood by *The Educated or the Religious Leaders*." The fact that God chose ordinary people, Fishermen, Tax Collectors and the like, to be His first disciples is hard evidence to support this. Whom did Jesus challenge the most during His ministry, the very people many put their faith in even to this day! (Religious leaders and the educated) How do we know what we are being told about the Bible is actually what the Bible says? It is not "Rocket Science;" we have to *read for ourselves* what it says! I mentioned at the start of this article that if you are taught and believe that miracles do not happen anymore, then, I would not expect you to experience a miracle. The same is true if you are taught to believe that healings do not take place any more in our time. The fact is that in order for any of these things to take place, Faith is not an option. Most people who claim to be Christian, say they have "Faith" in God and His ability to provide salvation and also to perform miracles. However, this brings us back **Matthew 13:58 (NKJV) ⁵⁸ Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. (Sometimes translated faith)** This passage makes it very clear that Faith is **Not** an Option... the people in this scenario did not have faith in who Jesus was because they grew up with Him and did not yet know whom they really grew up with! If you acknowledge Jesus as your Lord and Savior, (God with Us) if you believe that He does not change... then how could you doubt that He can - and does - perform miracles today? Just as it was when Jesus walked there earth, there was only one thing that limited His ability to perform the miraculous... Faith!

Faith Is Not An Option!

Do You Have Faith In The Power Of God And His Word?