

News and Notes

PLEASE PRAY FOR:
Pam Patrick - Health problems.
David Brown - Spring, Texas preacher, blood clots in leg.
Sandy Craig - Kidney problems, new tests.
Jo Ann McLerran - Confined to home but doing better.
Glenda Marble - Faithful Christian at Lexington, Okla. Heart problems.
Debbie Post - Wife of Doug Post, preacher in Salisbury, Maryland - Cancer.
Sissy Craig - For spiritual and emotional strength.
Charles and Linda Pogue - Congestive heart failure.
Nancy Verkist - Ellensburg, Washington. Suffering from Von Hippel Lindau disease.
Don Smith - Faithful brother in Christ persecuted for teaching fellow inmates in an Ohio prison.

GOSPEL MEETING - Brother Moses did his usual outstanding job of making the gospel of Christ clear in our meeting. It was well attended and supported by members and the Northeast church was strengthened by his preaching. We are grateful to him for his fine preaching that was straight from the Bible and pray for his work at Berea. A few of the sermons we recorded had audio problems and cannot be posted to our You Tube Channel. We regret this, as all of brother Lee’s sermons were excellent in answering religious questions from the Bible.

FALL MEETINGS - Jerry will preach in gospel meetings, September 10-13 for the Parkview church in Odessa, Texas, and October 13-15 for the Fish Hatchery Road church in Huntsville, Texas.

KENYA REPORT - Contributing this week to the Kenya Fund were the Bellview church of Christ, Pensacola, Fla.; The Morton St. church of Christ, Denison, Texas; Gary and Jacque Rogers, Quanah, Texas; Jess and Terry Whitlock, Denison, Texas; and the Eastside church of Christ, Lexington, Okla. Brother Shane Clark, who preaches in Munford, Alabama, and also serves as an elder there, will go to Kenya in December. The Munford church oversees the support of Benard, Veroon, and Tom. We pray for brother Clark’s safe journey and that much good will be done by him in Kenya. Benard asks that we pray for his country’s safety, as there is unrest following recent elections. The Election Commission may award the win to the one who came in second, to keep the current man in power. The U. S. isn’t the only place beset with voting fraud.

Our building is located at East Avenue C and North Locust in Elk City, Oklahoma, one block east of Van Buren on Avenue C. You are invited to visit with us at any of our meeting times.

Weekly Meeting Times

Sunday Morning Bible Classes.....9:30

Sunday Morning Worship.....10:30

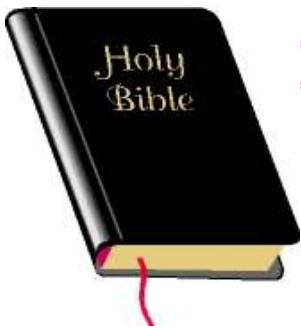
Sunday Afternoon Worship.....5:00

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Sound Doctrine

“But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1)

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What Is A Miracle?

EDITOR’S NOTE: Last week, Earl Reed shared a tract written by Norman Vincent Peale, entitled, *Expect A Miracle—Make Miracles Happen*. Like all of Peale’s works, this tract is filled with denominational blather and lies. One example he gave of a miracle was an Italian immigrant to this country who rose to be the governor of Massachusetts, U. S. Secretary of Transportation, and Ambassador to Italy. Peale called this a “miracle” and attributed his success to his parents teaching their children, “that if they followed God they could be anything they wanted to be,” and added, “Life is full of such miracles.” Like others of his ilk, Norman Vincent Peale knows nothing of Bible miracles. Any child can be whatever he wants to be and attain his goal through hard work, study and perseverance, and that is *not* a miracle. We commend the following article by brother Dub McClish to you for the truth on miracles.

Dub McClish

The Bible records numerous miracles in both the Old and the New Testaments. God caused some of these directly (e.g., the astounding miracle of creation with which the Bible begins). In most of these unique events, God employed the agency of men (and in a few cases, angels and even lower animal forms). Miraculous activity is so prominent in the Bible that one cannot credibly claim to believe in its veracity while denying its recorded miracles.

What constitutes a miracle? Men have redefined and “dumbed down” this Bible word, as they have many others (e.g., love, sin, grace, faith, et al.) in the vernacular. One may hear everything from escaping a tornado to a spectacular play in some sporting event described as a “miracle.”

What does miracle mean? This word in the New Testament is translated from two different Greek words. First, dunamis, which connotes power or inherent ability (our word, dynamite, is derived directly from this Greek word). It “is used of works of a supernatural origin and character, such as could not be produced by natural agents and means” (Acts 19:11; 1 Cor. 12:10; et al.).

The second word is semeion (also translated “sign”), indicating a sign, mark, or token, “used of ‘miracles’ and wonders as signs of divine authority” (Luke 23: 8; Acts 4:16; et al.). From

these two words we learn that a genuine miracle is a work that (1) suspends natural laws and cannot be produced/explained by natural agency, (2) can be explained only by supernatural intervention, and (3) usually is performed to confirm Divine authority (cf. John 20:31; Heb. 2: 3–4).

While human genius and physical prowess have produced some amazing feats (e.g., in sports, medicine, et al.), such things are still human accomplishments. The Bible miracles were spectacular, extraordinary, and amazing, but they were more—far more. The enemies who sought Jesus’ death admitted concerning Him: “For this man doeth many signs” (John 11:47). When Peter and John healed the lame man in Jerusalem, enemies of the Gospel who sought to silence them nevertheless confessed “that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought through them, ...and we cannot deny it” (Acts 4:16).

Another characteristic of Bible miracles was their immediate, rather than gradual, effect. This fact is demonstrable in the many miracles of healing (e.g., the lame, blind, deaf, and dumb, replacing a severed ear) and raising the dead. The so-called “miracles” of modern religionists are gross deceptions that stand in stark contrast with the actual miracles recorded in Holy Writ.

God’s Grace Requires Obedience

Jerry C. Brewer

The prevailing notion in the religious world is that God’s grace is equivalent to toleration of sin—that under the law of Moses, God condemned and punished sin, but His grace now eliminates all law and He tolerates every sin man wants to commit. Thus, the modern answer to Paul’s question, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” (Rom. 6:1) is, “Of course! The grace of God saves me regardless of how I live. Grace eliminates obedience.” Does it?

To understand Paul’s response to the question—“God forbid...” (Rom. 6:2)—we must understand that he uses the terms faith and grace as synonyms for the gospel scheme of redemption. He wrote to the Ephesians that, “by grace are ye saved through faith” (Eph. 2:8), yet he said to the Romans that the gospel is God’s power to save men (Rom. 1:16-17). The gospel system of justification is one of grace on God’s part and faith on man’s part. So the gospel — the message of grace and faith — is that which reveals God’s grace and produces obedient faith in those who accept it. It was through the free gift of Christ that God’s grace was manifested to the world, but it is through the faith of man that His grace is applied to our souls. The plan of salvation is singular, but consists of two parts—God’s grace and man’s faith.

God’s Grace

So far as God’s grace is concerned, He has done everything He’s going to do to bring about our salvation. His plan to save the race of man was purposed from eternity, executed in the birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and coronation of Jesus Christ, and revealed to man by the Holy Spirit through Christ’s apostles in the first century. His purpose was carried out, Christ died once for sin (Heb. 9:27), and everything necessary for man to know about God’s plan of salvation has already been revealed by the Holy Spirit (Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Titus 2:11-12).

Note the past tense of Titus 2:11—“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation *hath appeared* to all men.” God has completed His work in saving man, His grace has been revealed and there is nothing more He will do.

As the prime cause of salvation, God willed it according to His eternal purpose (Eph. 3:7-11). As the sacrificial cause of salvation, Christ freely gave Himself for our sins (Rom. 5:6-8). As the procuring cause, His blood purchased us from sin (Acts 20:28; 1 Jn. 2:2; Eph. 1:7). As the revealing cause, the Holy Spirit miraculously guided the apostles into all truth (Jn. 14:26; 16:13) and revealed the mystery—the plan of salvation—through them (Eph. 3:3, 5). As the instrumental cause of salvation, the gospel which was revealed by the Spirit brought life and immortality to light, (2 Tim. 1:10), and is God’s power to save. Since God has done all this, that leaves man with the responsibility of availing himself of God’s grace and that must be done “by faith.”

Man’s Faith

It is by faith that man appropriates the grace of God and receives salvation. That was Paul’s argument in Galatians 3:6 when he said, “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Notice that Paul doesn’t say “Abraham believed *in* God,” but that, “Abraham *believed* God.” When Moses disobeyed God’s instruction to speak to the rock at Kadesh and struck it twice with his rod, God told him he would not enter Canaan, “Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel...” (Num. 20:12). Moses believed *in* God, but he did not *believe* God. One may profess belief *in* God, but if one does not obey God, he is an *unbeliever* and, in this sense, Moses was an unbeliever.

Faith in God is not mere mental assent to His existence, but a willingness to do whatever God says. That is amply illustrated in Hebrews chapter eleven. The faith of those worthies listed there was one which moved them to action. “By faith Abel offered...” (Heb. 11:4). God told Abel what to offer, and Abel did what God told him, for “faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Likewise, “By faith, Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house” (Heb. 11:7). By His grace (Gen. 6:8) God instructed Noah to build an ark, and gave him the specifications for it. By faith, Noah obeyed and built the ark according to God’s instructions and it was said of him, “Thus did Noah according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22). That was acting “by faith.” So it was with Abraham’s faith. He heard God’s voice and acted upon the commands God gave him. Thus, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal. 3:6). Faith is doing what God says because God says to do it. No other kind of faith is acceptable to God, and no other kind of faith will make one righteous.

In Galatians 3, Paul argues that we have been called to the liberty which is in Christ and no longer serve God as bondslaves, but as sons in the glorious liberty of the gospel by which God forgives, receives, adopts, and blesses those who answer its call. But even in the liberty of the gospel there is danger. Not a danger that arises from the gospel itself, but from the liberty that is ours therein. That danger is the one which we find so rampant in our contemporary world and which Paul addressed in the Roman epistle — the danger of viewing God’s grace under the gospel as a license to sin.