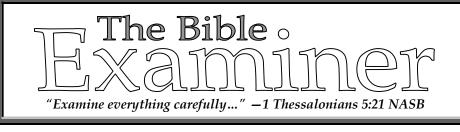


## Hays Mill church of Christ

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## Do Miracles Occur Every Day?

## By Leon Mauldin

What does the Bible teach regarding miracles? Is it true, as some claim, that miracles are happening every day?

In reality, even during Bible times, miracles did not occur "every day." Miraculous activities for the most part were confined to certain periods of Biblical history. These included the miracles of the creation week. Then when Israel was in Egyptian bondage, God sent the ten plagues, caused Israel to cross the Red Sea on dry land, fed them with manna, and on occasion also miraculously gave them water. Later, the ministries of the prophets Elijah and Elisha were characterized by numerous miracles.

The next "cluster" of miracles was during the ministry of Christ, and finally, during the establishment and spread of the church (Acts). Obviously then, miracles were not "evenly distributed" over the centuries of Biblical history, but rather were used by God only at certain times, to meet unique needs, and to accomplish specific purposes.

Among the many miracles Jesus performed we read of His healing the man with an amputated ear be simply touching him, Lk 22:50,51. Honestly, do you see that every day, or any day? When there was a great tempest in the sea of Galilee, Jesus "rebuked the waves and the sea and there was a great calm," Mt 8:23-26. On another occasion, on that same sea, Jesus came unto His disciples walking on the water, Mt 14:26. Jesus miraculously fed 5,000 men plus women and children with five loaves and two fish, Mt 15:32-39. There are three recorded occasions where Jesus raised the dead. These include the only son of the widow of Nain, Lk 7:11-17. Jarius' daughter, Mt 9:18-26, and Lazarus, John 11.

These are but a few, a very few of the miracles Jesus did. The purpose of Jesus' miracles is stated in John 2:30,31: "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." That purpose has been accomplished.

Further, Mark gives us insight into the purpose of the miraculous when he writes, "And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs," Mk 16:20. Reference is made to the salvation which began to be spoken by the Lord, "and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His will," Heb 2:3,4.

The purpose of the miraculous then was to reveal and to confirm the word of God. There was a time limitation on the miraculous. Gifts such as tongues, prophecy, and knowledge (miraculous) would cease with the completion of the revelation, 1 Cor 13:8-10. God's power has not ceased. His presence and glory are evident all around us. We are abundantly blessed by Him. Acts 14:17: Jas 1:17. He hears and answers prayer, Jas 5:16. When the revelation of truth was completed, and had been fully confirmed, the miraculous ceased, having accomplished its purpose.



The worshipper who would pray in the assembly must do more than bow his head and close his eyes. He must pray. "Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say 'Amen' at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say," 1 Cor 14:16? This verse suggests four requirements if one is to enter into a prayer.

He must listen to the prayer. One cannot legitimately say "Amen" at the conclusion of a prayer if he has not

listened to the prayer. "Mindwandering" is an ever-present problem. We sing, but we don't observe the words of the song. We bow our heads, but we don't listen to the prayer. We sit through the sermon, but our minds wander to things of an earthly nature. Consequently, we attend worship periods, but we don't worship as we ought. If one is to pray, with the congregation, he must listen to the prayer.

He must understand the prayer. When a man in the first century led a prayer in an unknown tongue, the worshiper could not say "Amen," for he could not understand the language in which the prayer was spoken. Neither could the worshiper say "Amen" today if the leader has not spoken loudly enough to be heard or if he has used words or phrases which the worshiper does not understand. Those who lead prayers in the assembly should be conscious of the needs of the whole congregation, speaking up where all can hear and using words which all can understand.

He must agree with the prayer. A number of years ago, while sitting beside an older preacher, I observed his saying "Yes" or "Yes, Lord" at the conclusion of each separate phrase of the prayer as it was being led. He spoke the words softly enough that I was probably the only one in the assembly who could hear them, but I was impressed. Obviously, this brother was listening to every phrase, determining whether or not he agreed with the phrase, and was then softly speaking his agreement. He was not just sitting through a prayer; he was praying. Occasionally, we hear sentiments expressed in prayer with which we do not agree. To these sentiments we cannot say "Amen."

He must say "Amen." The word "Amen" means "so let it be." We long to hear the strong, resounding "Amen" at the close of prayers which we used to hear. We fear that the move away from this practice is just another step toward cold, lifeless formality in our worship periods. We are not contending, however, that one must say the word "Amen" audibly; but we are suggesting that at least in his mind he should say "Amen," thus making the prayer his own prayer. He has listened to the prayer; he has understood the prayer; he has agreed with the prayer; now he speaks to God his "Amen" or approval of the prayer as his prayer. In this manner, he unites with other worshipers in common prayer unto God. 📖

Pam had fallen; she and Buddy are now out of town. Shane had a virus and sinus infection, and is doing better. Please continue to pray for Madelene Britnell, Carolyn Dennis, Tim and Dot Hice, and Joyce Smith.  $\square$