

## THESE SIGNS WILL FOLLOW

When Solomon prayed and dedicated the Temple of God in Jerusalem, his prayer reveals something about the heart of God for His people and for the people of the nations. Solomon prayed extensively for God's mercy and forgiveness when His own people when they fell into sin and error resulting in sickness, oppression, or enemy defeat. But when Solomon prayed for the foreigners who would come to the Temple to pray and seek the God of Israel, he asked God to grant whatever the foreigner asked. Through this, all the nations of the earth would know and exalt the name of the one true God. (See 1 Kings 8:41-43.)

God desires to make Himself known. He is willing to do just about anything to demonstrate the redemptive power of Heaven in order to introduce Himself to those who do not know Him. The purpose of miracles is to demonstrate the power of God to the world so that they can see and believe and be saved. Jesus did not come to condemn, to judge, or to oppress but to forgive, show mercy, and set free.

*John 3:17: For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but **to save the world through Him.***

*John 12:47: "If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but **to save the world.**"*

With this same intent and purpose, Jesus bestowed upon His followers all power and authority to work miracles in His name to accompany the proclamation of His Kingdom. In fact, He said that miraculous signs would follow all who believe Him.

*John 14:12-13: Very truly I tell you, **whoever believes in Me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these,** because I am going to the Father. And **I will do whatever you ask in My name,** so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

### The Miracles of Jesus

In order to do the works that Jesus did in the way that He did them, let us examine Jesus' ministry on earth to see what He did and how He did it. Jesus demonstrated the will of God to forgive, to heal, to deliver from oppression, and even to deliver from death – all revealing His purpose to save. Jesus' goodwill towards people was not hindered by their sins or anything that they had done. He did not inquire of anyone's worthiness or piety before healing or delivering them, and He did not go on religious sin-hunts to prove that the sufferer was suffering because of something that they had done to deserve it. Jesus knew that His sacrifice was totally sufficient to cover anything they may have done or not done and therefore, no matter what the problem was, when someone came to Him in faith, Jesus was moved with compassion and was willing and able to bring heaven to earth for them. He did not drone on with long flowery prayers quoting a lot of Scripture to be impressive. Rather, He freely and succinctly forgave even blatant sin without condemnation, and He exercised His *power and authority* over sickness, demons, creation, and even over death.

*Luke 7:48: Then Jesus said to her, "**Your sins are forgiven.**" (Jesus forgives immoral people.)*

*John 8:11: "No one, sir," she said. "**Then neither do I condemn you,**" Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." (Jesus forgives even egregious sin.)*

*Luke 4:39: **So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her.** She got up at once and began to wait on them. (Jesus commands sickness to leave.)*

John 9:3: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but **this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.** (Jesus heals without blaming the sufferer.)

Luke 5:12-13: While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "**Lord, if you are willing,** you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "**I am willing,**" he said. "**Be clean! [healed]**" And immediately the leprosy left him. (Jesus is willing.)

Mark 9:22-23 NLT: The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and **help us, if you can.**" "**What do you mean, 'If I can'?**" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if a person believes." (Jesus is able.)

Matthew 20:34: **Jesus had compassion on them** and touched their eyes. Immediately **they received their sight** and followed him. (Jesus has compassion on the afflicted.)

Matthew 8:31-32: The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs." **He said to them, "Go!"** So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. (Jesus commands demons with a single word.)

Mark 4:39: He got up, **rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!"** Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. (Jesus commands creation.)

John 11:25: Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;** (Jesus raises the dead.)

Jesus did all of this to demonstrate His power and authority from God and reveal His identity as God's anointed one who has power over all the forces of evil – including death. But Jesus was not limited to these miracles. In fact, these examples are just the highlights that the writers of the Gospels chose to write about for our edification. However, these writers also made it definitively clear that Jesus healed ALL diseases for those who came to Him in faith.

Matthew 4:23-24: Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, **and healing every disease and sickness among the people.** News about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to Him **all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and He healed them.**

Matthew 9:35: Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and **healing every disease and sickness.**

Matthew 12:15: Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed Him, and **He healed all who were ill.**

Matthew 14:35-36: And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought **all their sick** to Him and begged Him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and **all who touched it were healed.**

Matthew 15:30-31: Great crowds came to Him, bringing **the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at His feet; and He healed them.** The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Mark 1:32-34, 39: That evening after sunset the people brought to **Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed.** The whole town gathered at the door, and **Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons,** but He would not let the demons speak because they knew who He was. ... So He traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and **driving out demons.**

Mark 6:54-56: As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard He was. And wherever He went--into villages, towns or countryside--they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged Him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and **all who touched it were healed.**

Luke 4:40-41: At sunset, the people brought to Jesus **all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying His hands on each one, He healed them.** Moreover, **demons came out of many people,** shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But He rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew He was the Messiah.

Luke 6:17-19: He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases. **Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch Him, because power was coming from Him and healing them all.**

John 6:2: ...And a great crowd of people followed Him because they saw **the signs He had performed by healing the sick.**

These healings and other miracles Jesus performed served as a sign to confirm Him as God's Son and the Messiah promised to Israel who is the Savior promised for all mankind. He did not work miracles for amusement or to pridefully put His power on display. He worked miracles to reveal His identity so that people might come to know Him, repent of their ways, and be saved.

### **Doing the Works that Jesus Did**

Jesus shared His authority with His disciples while He was still with them to demonstrate to them beyond a doubt that it is His and God's will for the sick to be healed through faith in His name. Before His suffering, death, and resurrection, when the Lord had sent out His twelve disciples and later the seventy-two, He gave them authority over every disease, unclean spirits, and the power of the evil one.

Matthew 10:1, 7-8: Jesus called His twelve disciples to Him and **gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness...** As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' **Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.** Freely you have received; freely give.

Luke 10:17, 19: The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us **in Your name** ... I have given you **authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.**

Now after His resurrection, Jesus sends His disciples out with ALL authority in heaven and on earth **in His name** to continue the work of bringing His Kingdom to earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 28:18-20: Then Jesus came to them and said, "**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Mark 16:17-18: And these signs will accompany those who believe: **In My name** they will **drive out demons;** they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will **place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.**

When the first disciples set out to obey Jesus' command after His ascension to heaven, they continued to do the things Jesus had done during His ministry and what they had done when He previously shared His authority with them. They healed the sick, raised the dead, cleansed the lepers, and cast out demons with the same approach, authority, and power of God that Jesus would use if He was there in person. All

the while, they pointed to Jesus as the one and only Messiah and Savior sent by God and the One who was truly responsible for all of the miracles and told people to repent so that they could be saved from the wrath of God to come.

*Acts 3:6-8, 16: Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.**" Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ... **By faith in the name of Jesus**, this man whom you see and know was made strong. **It is Jesus' name** and the faith that comes through Him that has completely healed him, as you can all see."*

*Acts 8:6-7, 12: When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, **impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.** ... But when they believed Philip as he **proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ**, they were baptized, both men and women.*

*Acts 9:34: "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "**Jesus Christ heals you.** Get up and roll up your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up.*

*Acts 16:18: She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "**In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!**" At that moment the [demonic] spirit left her.*

Practically speaking, in order to do the works that Jesus did in the way that He did them, we cannot simply imitate what He did. We must do what He did. It is impossible to replicate the works of Jesus by any formula because He never did anything the same way twice. For example, in different episodes of giving sight to the blind, Jesus touched their eyes, spit on their eyes, or made mud to put on their eyes. In spite of these different methods, each one received sight. In every miracle that Jesus did, He did what He saw God doing, acting on God's command, and saying what God said.

In the same way, as Jesus sends us out to do the works that He did, He shows us or tells us through the Holy Spirit exactly what we are supposed to do with the person right in front of us. We will lay hands on the sick, we will command body parts to be healed, and we will command unclean spirits to flee in Jesus' name. As we wait for His spiritual direction, in our minds eye we may see ourselves doing something such as laying hands on a person in a particular place, or we may experience a physical sensation somewhere in our bodies as an indication of where their pain is. In other instances, we may hear the Holy Spirit from our inmost being whispering to us, "foot pain" or, "anxiety," or we may experience a momentary onset of emotion to indicate how the person is feeling. As the Holy Spirit guides us, we may hear Jesus whispering things like, "Tell her I love her," or, "Tell her I am not ashamed of her." When we watch and listen for Jesus' instructions and step out to obey His promptings, we do only what we see Him doing and say what He says. We will do the things that He did in the way that He did them.

We who believe have been made citizens of heaven, even though we are still on the earth. We are sent by Christ as His ambassadors to do His will on earth, the way it is in heaven. In heaven, there is no lack, only abundance; there is no sickness, only health; there is no oppression, only freedom; there is no rejection, only acceptance; there is no depression, only joy; there is no stress, only peace. In heaven, there is no death, mourning, crying, or pain. In order to bring heaven to earth, we must keep our minds in heaven and do only what we see Jesus doing.

### **Resistance, Unbelief, & Demands**

When Jesus walked on the earth and people did not believe in Him, He never defended Himself. He simply pointed to His miracles as proof that He had God's approval.

Jesus encountered people who did not believe Him and could not receive heaven on earth from Him. For example, in Nazareth, Jesus' boyhood hometown, people doubted His power. They scoffed, believing that He was just like everybody else, and they were deeply offended by Him. I imagine that they believed things such as this is the way things are in the world, and we get what we deserve, and Jesus is a good guy, but He is not able fix me, or my situation is too hard or impossible for Him. Jesus could not do many miracles in Nazareth because they could not receive from Him.

On the other hand, the religious leaders of the day had issues with Jesus' authority. They questioned if Jesus' authority came from God and accused Him of working for the devil. Other times, they demanded a miraculous sign from Jesus in order to prove that His authority was from God. When they did this, they were treating God like their servant and refused to believe Jesus unless they received what they wanted, the way they wanted it. Jesus did nothing for them.

Similarly, as we set out to do the works that Jesus did in the way that He did them, we will also encounter resistance from people who resist God's miracle working power or do not believe God still works miracles today the way He did in the Book of Acts. Many of these are well-meaning professing believers who have been incorrectly taught or who have had unfortunate experiences with those moving in spiritual power. Their teachings, like the religious leaders in Jesus' day, have a tendency to emphasize character through morality and good works as the demonstration of godliness and Christlikeness. However, Jesus Christ ministered in the power of God. To claim His likeness without His power is not quite like Him at all.

Moreover, the days are coming when the antichrist and the powers of darkness will fill the world with counterfeit signs and lying wonders to deceive all the nations into taking the mark of the beast. Scripture says he will work all manner of miracles including calling fire down from heaven. In the midst of the great apostasy, professing believers will even demand a signs to confirm that someone is working for the real Jesus. But we should take heed to what Jesus said about those who demand a sign.

*Matthew 12:39-40: He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it **except the sign of the prophet Jonah**. For as **Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth**. (See also Matthew 16:4; Luke 11:29-30.)*

Therefore, let us press on to the fullness of all Jesus has died to give us – including His miracle power for bringing heaven to earth. But let us not be confused about who is God or who works for whom. We are the servants, Jesus is the King.

The works that Jesus did as the Son of God are the very same works that we are commissioned, authorized, and empowered to do as God's sons and daughters in Christ. The anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus is the same anointing He has now shared with us. Jesus came to save. We go to save. Let's go!

*Luke 4:18-19 **The Spirit of the Lord is on ME**, because he has **anointed ME to proclaim good news to the poor**. He has sent **ME to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor**. (emphasis added for personal prayer)*

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