

Holy Spirit: “Moving Toward the Miraculous”  
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Scripture Reference: Matthew 14: 25-33 (KJV)

### Introduction

1. Death of John the Baptist (Grieving)
2. Attempted Vacation (Foiled by continuing ministry)
3. Day of long efforts—Feeding 5,000 (adrenaline rush is over)
4. Contrary Winds—Storms and trouble, compounded by weariness. But in their situation, Jesus comes walking to them on the water.

### Christian History of Miraculous Works

1. Two sides of the spectrum:
  - a. Radical pursuit of the Charismata with a blatant disregard for greater issue of Christian character
  - b. Supernatural works of God have been regulated to a distant age and deemed unattainable or uncalled for in current time period.
  - c. Neither are biblically accurate or acceptable
2. The Fruit of the Spirit and Christian character is just as important—if not more important—than the Gifts of the Spirit/manifestations of God.
3. These controversies also were waged theologically and practically in the early church, and have grown even more acute since the reformation.
  - a. Augustine developed theology which moved the early church away from miraculous.
  - b. Catholicism still held to mystical and miraculous believing supernatural occurrences were part of the Christian faith.
  - c. The reformation caused the Protestant pendulum to swing even further from the supernatural, rejecting the mysticism and experiential in choice of faith alone.
  - d. Calvin especially espoused a radical cessationism teaching miracles ceased with the death of the apostles and the completion of the New Testament; and even declared demons were all banished at the death and resurrection of Christ so there was no need for exorcism.

### Definitions:

1. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century—John Darby taught dispensationalism—limited the miraculous to the dispensation of the apostles.
2. Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century—Benjamin Warfield wrote a book Counterfeit Miracles refuting the healing movement.
3. Cessationism—teaches that miracles and gifts of the Spirit as delineated in 1 Corinthians ceased at the conclusion of the New Testament.
  - a. Led Protestant church away from experiential Christianity into a cold, unemotional cerebral understanding of man’s relationship with God.
  - b. The world was moving toward modernist philosophy, scientific discovery, and the explainable.
  - c. However, cessationism left many Christians with a religious experience instead of spiritual relationship with God.

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- d. It was into this vacuum that God poured out His Spirit in places like Schearer Schoolhouse and Azusa Street—where people began to experience the power of God and Holy Spirit in a personal way.

**Today miracles have not ceased. Here are four witnesses why:**

1. The witness of the Resurrection
  - a. The first fact concerning the miraculous that we must understand is that Jesus is alive. He is not dead, he is not a statue on a nice religious lawn somewhere—He is risen—the tomb is empty.
  - b. This is the same Jesus who worked the miraculous
  - c. Even after his resurrection, He walked through walls and ministered to His disciples.
  - d. He is the same today! Hebrews 13:8
2. The Witness of Scripture
  - a. The Bible itself reveals that the miraculous would be seen beyond the ministry of the apostles.
  - b. John 14:12 (he who believes in Me will do the works I do)
  - c. Acts 8:6 (Philip performs miracles)
    - i. Philip was not an Apostle—he was one of those who waited on tables and would become an evangelist
  - d. We see the gift of prophecy working in Agabus
  - e. God used people outside the apostles to work the miraculous.
3. The Witness of the Holy Spirit
  - a. Acts 2:39
  - b. The Holy Spirit was promised to all that were afar off—all that the Lord would call. The apostles at this time had already received the Holy Spirit.
  - c. This is the same Spirit—with the same spiritual gifts—as recorded in Corinthians.
4. The Witness of Personal Testimony.
  - a. I can verify today that the days of the miraculous are not over
  - b. Many who believe in the miracle of conversion will not believe in the other miraculous works of the Holy Spirit.
  - c. God is able to change a person's heart, heal bodies, reveal personal destiny, guide a person's path, and work miracles through His church
  - d. Ephesians 3:20; Jeremiah 33:3 God is able to work miracles through your life too.

Closing

1. John 2:1-11