

A THESIS:
THE OCCURRENCE MIRACLES TODAY

by

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INTRODUCTION

After the crucifixion, Jesus/Yeshua appeared to the disciples over forty days. Before departing from the earth, Yeshua left His followers with their instructions to send the Gospel to the nations, which Christians today refer to as *The Great Commission*. Three of the four Gospels record these instructions from Yeshua, and while the accounts vary slightly, each emphasizes a different part the mandate; making disciples of all nations, and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Great Commission as recorded in Mark's Gospel is different from that of Matthew and Luke, in that Mark records that supernatural signs will follow *those that believe*. Some Christians today question if the promise of supernatural works were specifically for the time of the Apostles or if the promise is for all believers. *This paper will make the case that miraculous power was not limited to the first generation Apostles and is just as necessary if not more so for fulfilling The Great Commission today.*

MARK'S GREAT COMMISSION & YESHUA'S PROMISE

Mark's version of the Great Commission emphasizes the supernatural power that will follow believers in Yeshua. He states that many signs will be given to them to authenticate the message that they bring. It is here that Yeshua promises to grant *those who believe* supernatural power as the Gospel goes forth.

Mark 16:15-18 NKJV

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.

During their time with Yeshua, the disciples witnessed numerous miracles and performed many themselves. Despite the amazing miracles they witnessed, Yeshua promises them that they would

perform greater works than these because He is going to the Father. Besides the promise given in Mark 16:17-18, other similar promises are spoken by Yeshua to His followers concerning miraculous power;

John 14:12

Amen, amen I tell you, he who puts his trust in Me, the works that I do he will do; and greater than these he will do, because I am going to the Father.

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the *Ruach ha-Kodesh* [Holy Spirit] has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and through all Judah, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

The question at hand is if this power from on High is available to believers today in the same way that it was for the original Apostles. Are these promises exclusively for the first Disciples of Yeshua? Interestingly, Biblical commentators are split on this matter. There are those who believe nothing has changed since Yeshua walked the earth, “those who trust in the Good News can expect God’s power to work through them...numerous modern instances may be found as well, even though centuries of anti-supernaturalism predispose Westerners not to believe it,”¹ while others who are from the more conservative side of Christianity would say, “this gift was but for a time to cause men the more willingly to receive the Gospel which as yet was not evidently known.”²

What is the cause of such a wide spread of opinion on this subject? Why does it appear that the Church generally does not walk in the power experienced during the first century? Robert

¹ David H. Stern, [*Jewish New Testament Commentary : A Companion Volume to the Jewish New Testament*](#), electronic ed. (Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1996), Mk 16:17.

² [*Geneva Bible: Notes*](#), vol. 2 (Geneva: Rovland Hall, 1560), 26.

Heidler, author of *The Messianic Church Arising*, makes the case that much of what the Church possessed during the time of the Apostles (including miracles) was mostly lost as a result of Christianity departing from its Jewish roots and accepting false doctrines. He believes God has been in the process of restoring the gifts which the Church as a whole has not experienced since the times of the Apostles, as the LORD prepares for the end time harvest:

God was not finished with His church. Beginning with the reformation, He began the process of restoration. In the 16th century, He restored the Bible and the doctrine of salvation. In the 18th century, He began to restore a desire for holiness. In the 20th century, He restored the gifts. Much that the church had lost has been restored, but we have not yet seen the branches re-engrafted to the root. As we move into the 21st century, I believe that restoration is beginning...the end product of the church's resurrection will be the greatest harvest of souls the world has ever known.³

If Heidler's theory is correct, the absence of supernatural power is a product of the Church departing from sound doctrine, one example being the cessation of miracles since the days of the Apostles. Mark's Gospel also testifies that Yeshua was unable to do any mighty works in His hometown of Nazareth *due to their unbelief*.⁴ When we consider the given verses (Mark 16:15-18, John 14:12, and Acts 1:8), what conclusion can we arrive at concerning miracles today?

If we first look at Luke's Gospel,⁵ it is clear that Yeshua gives final instructions to His Disciples which are *exclusively* for them. He commands them in Luke 24:49 to wait in Jerusalem until the Spirit comes. This might cause some to come to the conclusion that the promise of supernatural power in Acts 1:8 was also only for the original Disciples since it is part of the same conversation by Yeshua before His ascension. If this was the only place in Scripture where the promise of power to believers was recorded, this would be a reasonable conclusion to make.

³ Robert Heidler, *The Messianic Church Arising*, (Denton, TX Glory of Zion International Ministries 2006), 51.

⁴ Mark 6:5-6.

⁵ Luke also wrote the Book of Acts.

Similarly, if we consider the conversation between Yeshua and the Disciples in John Chapter 14, we see that Yeshua also provided them instruction. However, nothing suggests for His directives to be limited to that time period (as was the case with the specific instructions recorded in Luke to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Spirit), but are more general in nature. Christians today read Yeshua's words in John 14 and apply them to their lives without hesitation. Just to mention a few; we are to love Him and keep His commandments⁶, we are promised to have the Holy Spirit dwell with us and be our teacher⁷, and are given the assurance of His peace.⁸ Included with these promises is the supernatural promise to do greater works than Him in John 14:12, which obviously would require miraculous power to accomplish. Should we not receive this promise with the rest of Yeshua's words, and if so, on what grounds?

The same is true of Mark's account of The Great Commission. There is nothing in the text that would justify us making a separation between the first portion (sending the Gospel message forward) and the second portion (supernatural works being a sign to follow those who believe). As is the case in John 14, Yeshua speaks the message in the same breath. Any division in His words would have to be inserted based solely on *our* predispositions. Likewise, it would be difficult to find a Christian who would argue that the Great Commission was specifically spoken to the twelve Disciples and does not apply to us today.

Finally, an honest look at Christian history will show that God has continued to operate supernaturally and there have been times when His Spirit was poured out to validate the Gospel

⁶ John 14:15.

⁷ John 14:16-17, 26.

⁸ John 14:27.

message.⁹ This was the pattern in Scripture and occurs at times today when the Gospel is brought to some of the darkest and remote places on earth. *While theology can be validated by experience, it should not be determined by experience.* Truth (the Word of God) must determine how we view reality. Just because a Christian has never witnessed a paralytic being healed or a demon being cast out, doesn't mean miracles like the ones we read about in the Bible are not for today. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever and He does not change. If Heidler is correct, the gifts of the Church will once again operate in the supernatural as they did during the first century, with possibly even greater manifestations as Truth is restored and we come closer to the return of Yeshua.¹⁰

AUTHORITY AND POWER

Signs and wonders are possible for the Church of God solely because of the victory Yeshua achieved at Cavalry. Prior to Yeshua walking the earth, it was not possible to cast out demons. This point is proven in the first chapter of Mark when Yeshua casts out a demon while teaching in a synagogue, "What is this? What *new doctrine* is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."¹¹ Before His Ascension, Yeshua gives us *our* orders in the form of the Great Commission, but not just in word. He now legally has all the power and authority to do so.¹² The Holy Spirit that God once contained within a twenty by twenty room in

⁹ For an comprehensive reference on this subject, see Tony Cooke's book, *Miracles and the Supernatural throughout Church History: Remarkable Manifestations of the Holy Spirit from the First Century until Today*. ISBN 1680314890.

¹⁰ For more on the validity of God's miraculous power today, read Michael Brown's book, *Authentic Fire*. ISBN 1629984558.

¹¹ Mark 1:27. Emphasis mine.

¹² Even though God always had authority over everything (even Satan) since the creation, Satan was entitled to man's dominion due to the fall. It is true that God could have simply restored man, directly taken on the role of dominion Himself, or handed it over to Jesus. However, seizing authority from Satan would have been unjust since Satan was entitled to it. Since God is perfect and just in all His judgments, it

the Temple now lives within every believer, connecting us to Him 24/7. Filled with the Spirit, we are to storm the nations by the authority of His name.

The Resurrection accomplished something that had not been previously done; it established authority over every evil principality and power. Remarkably, ever since the Holy Spirit came upon the believers in Acts Chapter 2, that *same* authority and power has been permanently delegated to the Church.

On the day of Pentecost, the disciples in the upper room are filled with the Holy Spirit, and Peter is inspired to speak to the crowds in the streets. His sermon results in 3,000 souls being pierced in their hearts by God's words and being baptized that same day! The religious establishment tries to shut down this movement, and it only grows. The Pharisees bark threats, and the Apostle's voices grow louder. Peter is imprisoned, and angels bust him out of jail. The dead come back to life, and Peter's shadow heals the sick. Prayers for boldness result in an earthquake. This is what Yeshua meant when He said the gates of Hell would *not* prevail against the Kingdom of God. Can you imagine what the world would look like if the Church operated like the Church in the Book of Acts today?

It is foundational for all believers to understand the concepts of authority and power. Simply put, *authority* is defined as having the legal right or permission to do something, and *power* is the force or strength necessary to do something. It is similar to police officers who have been granted authority by a governing agency (city or county) to do this. They have the legal right to stop and detain people acting unlawfully so they can be dealt with in accordance with the law. However, legal rights are not enough to enforce the law. Power is also needed to do so.

is not in His nature to do something unjust. I believe He chose to let the story play out as it did so authority could be restored in a just manner.

With no power, a police officer could easily be overpowered by a larger or stronger criminal. For the officer, power comes in the form of tools like handcuffs, tasers, and if necessary, firearms and backup. Equipped with authority *and* power, the officer can patrol the streets, enforce the law, and bring subjects before a judge for prosecution if necessary.

APPLICATION

It is possible to have authority and no power, or power with no authority. Substitute teachers, for instance, are in a position of *authority* over their students, but unfortunately they are often disrespected because of their lack of *power* to enforce discipline. A citizen might have *power* (through a weapon) to enforce a law on the books, but since they do not have the *authority*, they might end up in jail if they take the law into their own hands.

It's also possible to have authority and/or power and not use it. Imagine a police officer (having the power and authority to uphold the law) not using his gun or doing nothing when a criminal commits a crime. This officer swore to enforce the law, yet in the face of lawlessness, chooses to run in fear when challenged or ignores the problem altogether. This is unthinkable, but it is possible.

The same happens when a believer who has sworn allegiance to the Kingdom of God does not operate within the authority and power God has delegated to them; the enemy runs amok. This is a huge problem in the Church today. There are numerous issues today that the Church has been unwilling to engage with the power and authority of the Holy Spirit for a very long time. The Church as a whole is not enforcing the victory of Yeshua on earth.

If you were to ask a believer if God has given them the same Spirit that empowered Yeshua during His time on earth, I would hope that most would agree with that statement. This is, in fact,

what the Scriptures teach.¹³ However, many Christians might believe this in theory but not in practice. What do I mean by this? Most of the work or progress in churches today results from *our* strength, effort, and wisdom, not God's. A.W. Tozer illustrates this point masterfully with this powerful quote:

If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference.¹⁴

If every believer possesses the same Spirit as Yeshua, why does the Church as a whole appear to be so weak compared to the first-century church? I believe it is because most Christians haven't fully believed or accepted this truth. We might think miracles are a thing of the past and God doesn't need to move in power anymore. Or maybe those things aren't for me or my Church. The truth is that supernatural works have always been a part of God's plan: in the Old Testament, during the times of Yeshua, in the present, and in the future (Book of Revelation). Every child of God should burn for the anointing power of God because we are inadequate or mediocre at best without it.¹⁵

Second Chronicles 16:9, shows God's heart on this issue, "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, *to shew himself strong* in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him."¹⁶ The LORD is looking for people with perfect hearts towards Him to trust with His power to manifest on earth what He has decreed in heaven. Yeshua validated His message with miracles, and the Apostles did the same, and the same Spirit lives in us. When we

¹³ Romans 8:11.

¹⁴Good Reads, "A.W. Tozer Quotes,"<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/964813-if-the-holy-spirit-was-withdrawn-from-the-church-today>. Accessed October 15, 2023.

¹⁵ Rankin, 155.

¹⁶ NKJV.

fully accept the truth that God desires for His Holy Spirit to manifest powerfully through us with expectation, we will see Him move mightily.

It is understandable why Satan still has authority over people who are not children of God since they have not been redeemed from the curse. They are still slaves of sin. It makes sense that they would be in bondage to sin, mental illness, addictions, etc. However, this should not be so for a born again believer. Not to say that we won't experience hardships, but we should pass through them, not abide in them. We abide in the presence of the LORD. Psalm 91 is just one powerful Psalm that lists the blessings and benefits of abiding in God's presence.¹⁷ For example, if you dwell in the secret place of the LORD, one promise of the many listed in this Psalm is that no evil or plague will come upon you or your house.¹⁸ You can either choose to believe it or not. I have witnessed enough miracles to know that His Word is as accurate today as it was when it was written.

Satan has *no power* over a faithful believer unless they willingly yield it to him. If a Christian gets a thought that they are a failure, they could either listen to the enemy and agree with him (inviting more destruction into their life), or they could do what Yeshua did in the wilderness and bring out the Sword of the Spirit and say something like, "I am not a failure, I am more than a conqueror through Christ Jesus!"¹⁹ The enemy has NO authority over your life! Tell him that! Say it out loud! Do it often!

When speaking on the authority and power of Christians, this final point cannot be overemphasized. All Christians have power and authority through Messiah and *Messiah alone*. If

¹⁷These blessings were not limited to the times of the Bible.

¹⁸ Psalm 91:10.

¹⁹ Romans 8:37.

you have crossed that threshold of salvation by repenting of your past, giving your life to Yeshua, and vowing to pick up your cross daily and follow Him, you are His. We cannot look back or dwell on the sins from our past, nor should we get hung up on your current shortcomings.

Pastor and missionary Jerry Rankin puts it this way, "Satan's most subtle and effective strategy is to convince us that we are still in bondage to our old, unregenerate nature. When we believe this lie, we have already lost the battle...Satan influences us to interpret truth and reality by our feelings and experience rather than believing what God has told us about our life in Christ."²⁰

If you say you are God's but don't fully accept this truth, it will be impossible to overcome the spiritual attacks of the enemy. We need to identify with the Truth of what God's Word says about us. We are new creations, overcomers, and warriors in Messiah.

CONCLUSION

The Great Commission is a conquest to reclaim the heavens and earth for the LORD, one soul at a time. We are now armed with His Spirit to engage the powers of darkness to enforce the victory of Messiah.²¹ It is through our faith, obedience, and love that we carry the Gospel message to the ends of the earth, making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bringing this planet closer and closer to the eternal rule of

²⁰Jerry Rankin, *Spiritual Warfare: The Battle for God's Glory* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2009). 108.

²¹Dutch Sheets, *Intercessory Prayer* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1996), 57.

Messiah.²² As the Holy Spirit continues to purify and restore the Church, more miraculous signs will be manifest as a powerful witness of the Kingdom of God coming to earth.

It is obvious why Yeshua instructed the Apostles to wait in Jerusalem was only for them and not for all believers. Thankfully, Christians nowadays are not required to travel to Jerusalem to be filled with the Spirit. But even if we are inclined to not believe that Acts 1:8 applies today, there are other places in Scripture where miraculous signs are promised to believers, and we are given no reason to conclude it was solely applicable for that era of time (as was seen in John fourteen). Church history also testifies of this fact. Since a logical reason cannot be offered for creating a division within Yeshua's statement in Mark 16:15-18, we are left with only two options; the entirety of mandates and promises contained within Mark's Great Commission account must either apply to all believers or it was exclusively spoken to the original Apostles alone. Again, there is nothing in Scripture which would suggest it is acceptable to dissect Yeshua's words.

We must stand confidently and faithfully through our position in Messiah against the enemy with zero doubt. We need to get our minds right to effectively engage and remain in the constant battle to make a difference for the Kingdom of God. It is foundational to the understanding of EVERY believer. The victory is God's, and the enemy can't do a thing about it.

²² Matthew 24:14.

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