

No. 7, *Scripture Sufficient – Miracles Ceased*

Our last study on *The Miracle in Scripture* was comprised of three particular points:

- (a) The place of the miracle in Scripture – its place or role is to draw attention to & illustrate the truth of redemption. The miracle is a mode of special revelation, the theme of which is redemption. Thus, the miracle must be seen in that framework of the revelation of redemption.
- (b) That the miracle as a mode of special revelation authenticated the prophets who delivered the message of redemption – since the place of the miracle was to point to the truth of redemption, the miracle also gave authenticity to the ministry of the prophets, of Christ, and of the Apostles, all of whom delivered that message. Beginning with Moses, we looked at various men in Scripture and saw the evidence of the authentication of their ministries by means of the miracle.
- (c) The final point was an obvious conclusion – since the miracle in Scripture was for the purpose of drawing attention to the truth of redemption and giving authenticity to the ministry of those who delivered that message, *then the Biblical miracle has ceased since God is no longer giving revelation.*

Consequently, what we have come to see is that revelation has ceased. For hundreds of years the Lord gave supernatural revelation to men, leading to a particular goal. That goal was to give the Church the special revelation that is comprised in Scripture, a goal accomplished with the close of the canon of Scripture. Thus, if it can be shown that Scripture attests itself to be complete, then God is no longer giving special revelation, which means that the Biblical miracle has ceased and Scripture is sufficient.

CHARISMATISM – A DENIAL OF THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

In the arena of *Charismatism* with its emphasis on visions, tongues etc, it is accepted and promoted that God continues to give revelation. Constantly, the claim is made that fresh messages are being received from heaven, providing, it is claimed, guidance and direction in the experience of those affiliated with the Charismatic/Pentecostal movements and churches.

However, it must be stated at once that such Pentecostal practice is a *de facto* denial of the sufficiency of Scripture. Such practice is the implication that the Scriptures are not sufficient to cause a believer to be “*thoroughly furnished unto all good works,*” 2 Tim 3: 17. It is not that the Charismatic church is simply seeking enlightenment in the study of Scripture; they are seeking an additional word from God, so that for them the Bible is not enough. Consequently, expecting new revelation, Pentecostals essentially believe that the three modes of revelation are still in operation and that the office of the prophet is still in vogue.

Even among those who might have been regarded as milder in their Pentecostalism there has been this incipient denial of the sufficiency of Scripture, as is seen in a book written by Henry W. Frost, *Miraculous Healing*. He writes, “*It may confidently be anticipated, as the present apostasy increases, that Christ will manifest his deity and lordship in increasing measure through miracle-signs, including healings. We are not to say, therefore, that the Word is sufficient. It is so to those who know and believe it; but it is not so to those who have never heard of it, or who, having heard, have disbelieved it. To these persons, a dramatic appeal may have to be made, and on the plane where such will most easily be understood, namely, the physical. The missionary abroad, therefore, may have it in mind, in the case of the sickness of others that God may choose to make him a miracle worker.*” Frost’s words indicate at least a lack of confidence in the Word of God and its sufficiency. Such men forget the great promise that the Lord gives His servants in Isaiah 55: 10, 11.

Another quite subtle element within the Charismatic/Pentecostal emphasis on new revelation is that the giving of new revelation is some kind of a completion of the Reformation. The Reformers did not go far enough in delivering the Church from medieval darkness, thus new forces in the form of Pentecostalism have arisen to complete the work. But this is a gross misrepresentation of Reformation events. It was because Rome’s corruptions arose due to rejection of God’s Word and adherence to tradition *and extra Biblical revelation* that the cry of the Reformers was *Sola Scriptura*. The Charismatic movement does not carry on the Reformation; rather, it strikes a damaging blow to the very roots of the Reformation, the Protestant foundation of the sufficiency of Scripture.

THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

In essence, to take the position that God is no longer giving revelation, thus that Biblical miracles have ceased, is to assert that the Word of God is sufficient for all matters of faith & practice. We make this assertion as our Protestant forefathers did and as is summed up in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* chap. 1 section 6 – “*The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.*”

Note here that the Confession, in underlining the sufficiency of Scripture, warns that nothing is to be added in the form of supposed new revelations of the Spirit or human traditions. The point is clear – since Scripture is sufficient no further revelation from God is to be expected. The Old & New testaments are complete and sufficient for all our needs with regard to belief and conduct. The Bible alone is and must be the authority of the Church.

THE BIBLICAL SUPPORT FOR THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

Our Protestant forefathers drew their doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture immediately and directly from the New Testament Scriptures themselves. The New Testament is the final section of special revelation, thus we would expect it to present clearly that all Scripture is complete and therefore sufficient; and this is exactly what is found in many N.T. Scriptures.

Note Heb 1: 1-3 – certain points should be noted here:

1. The Old and New Testaments are essentially in view.
2. Clearly there is a contrast presented here between the Old and New Testaments, and careful thought will note that contrast:
 - (a) O.T. Scripture was given over a lengthy period, but N.T. Scripture in one generation.
 - (b) O.T. Scripture was delivered progressively through many messengers, but N.T. truth essentially was given through one person, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (c) Scripture was not complete with the close of the era of the prophets – there was more to come. But in contrast, special revelation given through Christ is marked by finality. There is nothing more to come – this is the clear sense of the language employed here by the Apostle. In the person & work of Christ special revelation was brought to finality with a dramatic suddenness. Note the words – *“hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.”* Note this well – when the epistle to the Hebrews was written the “last days” had arrived. In other words, the whole period from Christ’s first coming to His second coming comprises the “last days”. But here we are told that in the last days God has spoken through His Son, which means that what He has said through Christ as comprised in the N.T. is final and complete and nothing more is to be expected. God’s Son as sent forth by the Father embodies all that the Father purposed to give to His Church by way of final revelation. Nothing needful was held back for subsequent times. Moreover, no greater revelation could be given, for Christ as set forth in the N.T. is the ultimate truth and reveals in the fullest, most complete fashion all that God wishes His Church to possess by way of truth.

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