

God can bring massive spiritual revival to a community (despite resistance or timidity) through the preaching of the gospel coupled with miraculous power, therefore believers who long for kingdom growth must fervently pray that God would work supernaturally and give us boldness for witness.

Introduction – Revival is exciting for many, for others it is the only hope for the church today, and controversial for the rest. Third of three summaries of church life in Acts (2:42-47; 4:32-35). This passage, the third summary, teaches us the method by which the church grew—expectant prayer accompanied by supernatural power.

I. Hearing About Signs and Wonders Should Give You Déjà Vu (vv. 12a, 15-16)

A. The supernatural in the ministry of King Jesus

The multitudes coming from the surrounding region echo the ministry of Jesus to Israel (Mark 3:7-8). People came from all over to see Jesus and be healed. Why did Jesus perform signs and wonders? (1) To demonstrate God’s compassion and meet human needs; (2) To authenticate his credentials as God’s appointed messenger; (3) To convey the spiritual truths that the miraculous signs pointed to; (4) To set people free from bondage and bring them under the merciful lordship of Jesus (Mt 4:24; 9:35; Mk 1:32-34; Lk 4:40-41).

B. The supernatural in the ministry of his apostles

Apostolic healings and exorcisms follow the pattern of Jesus. The Spirit of God that endowed Jesus with power, might, and authority is alive, and is now working in Jesus’ apostles! The miracles done in Jesus’ name prove that Jesus is continuing to build his Church. Their miracles were so clearly works of God that the multitudes were being converted to God in Christ. Even the skeptics and unbelievers could not discredit them. Their only recourse was to stop the apostles from preaching the gospel and performing miracles in Jesus’ name—just like they tried to stop Jesus’ ministry. Déjà vu?

C. Supernatural signs and wonders point to the King and his kingdom

The purpose of signs and wonders is to bear witness to the gospel (Heb 2:3-4). Healing and exorcism benefit the body and represent the spiritual grace of Christ. Healing points to Christ as he makes sinners whole again; exorcism points to Christ as he set prisoners free from their bondage to sin and Satan. Jesus is Lord and King, and as the risen King he is now giving the gifts to his people (healing, exorcism, new birth, salvation).

II. Hearing About Signs and Wonders Should Leave You Dissatisfied (vv. 12b-14)

A. The state of the early Church (at this point)

1. **The Characters:** Most likely three groups of people in vv. 12-14: believers (including the apostles), hostile unbelievers (“the rest”), and the onlookers.

2. **The Scene:** Exhilaration and euphoria because God was obviously moving in power and multitudes were being saved. The healings were signs pointing to redemption, and the redemption that God brings to this world is not limited to forgiveness of sins (although that is the bleeding edge of redemption). These healings are signs that point to the new heavens and the new earth. The multitudes flocking around the apostles knew that world had begun, and it was the most exciting thing they had ever seen! The point of vv13-14 seems to be that all but the most committed disciples were scared away.

B. The state of the Church today

Compared to the early church, are you satisfied with the state of the church today? Churches today seem to be more blessed than ever. But we seem to be short on people listening to apostolic teaching, rejoicing, sharing, worshiping, fellowshiping, and telling anyone who will listen about Jesus and the gospel.

C. The state of your heart

Disinterested in the fate of sinners, the plight of the weak/sick/marginalized, the mighty power of God, the kingdom of God advancing, kingdom-oriented prayer? Disinterested in miracles because you are convinced they are past their expiration date? While God may no longer be authenticating his message through signs and wonders, he is still bringing sinners into his kingdom—the greatest miracle of all. The King still gives revival!

III. Hearing About Signs and Wonders Should Move You to Decision (Acts 4:29-31)

How should the accounts of signs and wonders in Acts shape our expectations for today? In Acts 4:29-31 the apostles prayed that multitudes would be brought into the kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ the risen Lord. It was appropriate for God to answer this prayer with signs and wonders because God was doing a new thing in salvation history. But subsequent history since the close of the apostolic age teaches us that God's method of bringing multitudes to faith in Christ is true spiritual revival.

A. Decide to Study

Educate yourself on the history and nature of revival, on the emotional excesses and dangers of revival, so we don't make the same mistakes that previous generations made. Know the difference between counterfeit and true revival. Edwards identified 5 marks of true revival. (1) It exalts Jesus Christ; (2) it attacks the powers of darkness; (3) it exalts the Bible; (4) it honors sound doctrine; (5) it promotes love to God and man (which includes evangelistic and missionary zeal). But do not study first, study last, lest you stop at this step!

B. Decide to Pray

True revival has always begun with earnest—even desperate—prayers. How should we pray for revival? (1) Pray for revival in your own heart. (2) Start a prayer group to pray for revival to break forth in the lives of those who call this church their home. (3) Pray (alone and with others) for God to give revival to your families, your friends, your neighbors, and your community. (4) Pray that God would bless our missionaries with revival in their ministries.

C. Decide to Witness

Do not despair that somehow we “missed out” on the age of signs and wonders. The best miracle is the changing of a sinner's heart. The miracle of regeneration is best because it lasts the longest (forever), it costs God the most (the death of Christ), and it meets the greatest need (forgiveness and new life). Tell everyone about King Jesus and bring them to church to repent, be forgiven, sing, pray, listen, taste, give, belong, and be changed forever.

Conclusion – Do you want to see a miraculous sign and wonder in your life? Then believe the gospel, place your trust in Christ alone, give your life, your ambitions, your all to him, and watch as he saves you from your sin and gradually transforms you into his likeness. No one else can perform such a sign and wonder! Do you also want to see God do a massive miracle of revival here and in this community? Then pray for God to change the hearts of the multitudes through the preaching and sharing of the gospel. Pray for apostolic boldness (cf. Rom 1:16).