

My Speech Was

"... in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and power of God" (1 Cor. 2:4f).

When Paul preached the gospel in Corinth, resulting in the beginning of that church, he was helped greatly in the message he proclaimed by the miracles he wrought through the Holy Spirit. Luke tells of Paul's efforts, but unlike his record of his preaching in other places, he states nothing of miracles done in Corinth through Paul's hands. Still, let none doubt that Paul worked miracles there just as he had on an earlier journey on Cyprus and Lystra, as he done at Philippi on this same journey to Corinth, or as he will do on his third journey at Ephesus (Acts 13:10; 14:8ff; 16:16-18; 19:11f). Working miracles was a universal part of his preaching: works given by God to aid him to confirm the message he preached. And although Luke was silent regarding any miracles performed by Paul at Corinth, this text from 1 Corinthians 2 does so imply. Furthermore, in his second letter to the church he wrote, *"the signs of an apostle were wrought ... signs and wonders and might works"* (2 Cor. 12:12).

The Lord sent out His 12 apostles, knowing full well their message was an "unbelievable" one. Miracles were necessary to convince honest souls that the message of something impossible had transpired because works were done on men that were also impossible to be done. This was Jesus' promise: *"these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall in no wise hurt them ..."* (Mk. 16:17-18). An unbelievable message needed something to make it believable and apostles power to work signs and miracles was God's provision.

Miracles -- signs would be convincing only to "open-hearted" hearers. When Jesus was on the cross, some who had put him there, mocked: *"he saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross and we will believe on him"* (Mt. 27:24). These men were "lying in their teeth." Had Jesus come down from the cross, they still would not have believed! Jesus had healed a blind man in Jerusalem and the healing produced a great uproar. When the rulers were finally convinced Jesus had given the man sight, they still did not believe in Jesus. They told the blind man, *"We know God spake unto Moses, but as to this man, we know not whence he is"* (Jn. 9:29). The blind man's response was precise: *"Why herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he*

opened mine eyes" (Jn. 9:30). Unable to answer his forceful words, they *"cast him out of the synagogue."*

Men no longer have power to work miracles, but our preaching still must not seek to cause men to believe through man's wisdom. Our faith must still stand in the fully documented demonstration of the Spirit's works of yesterday. The Jews asked for a sign and Jesus gave them one: the sign of Jonah. Just as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish three days and nights the Son of Man would be in the heart of the earth for three days and nights, as well. The resurrection of Jesus was genuine. It was fully documented after it occurred; it still remained documented today.

Our faith must stand in the established truth that Jesus was raised from the dead. That startling truth was proclaimed publicly for the first time when Peter delivered his sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2). The miracle of the 12 speaking with unlearned tongues was a sign to the unbelievers. The testimony of eyewitnesses further confirmed Peter's message. And, Peter's use of Psalm 16 to show that David's prophecy was fulfilled when his Son was raised from the dead added further to that immortal truth. Someone has said, "You cannot argue with a demonstration." The apostles demonstrated their conviction regarding Christ's resurrection by their testimony coupled with them each speaking in languages they had never learned. The wisdom of man is often "shot full of holes" but God's word confirmed with signs is always true. Did not Jesus say, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away"*?

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