

Signs and Wonders – The Glow of Moses

(Blog 0023 AndrewHadden.org)

God directed me to write a blog on signs and wonders, and to focus in on the glow of Moses, which he exhibited after he had met with God on Mount Saini. Just like traffic signs, the signs God provides are meant for people to take note of and figure out what they represent, or who they represent. That is important because both God and Satan can empower people to display signs. We are warned of that in scripture. Second Thessalonians 2:9-10a says, “The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing” (NIV). I am reminded of a story of a witch doctor in Africa making his village fear and respect him by making a hatchet head fly around the village. A missionary came and they wanted him to display power to prove his credentials, but they would not respect him if he made the hatchet head fly too, because the practitioner of evil could do that. So the missionary declared in Christ’s name that the hatchet head would never fly again – and it never did. He gave a sign of the superior power of the one true God over the pretenders, the spiritual beings claiming to be what they are not. Then the people were ready to receive the truth from the one true God. Signs serve a purpose.

First, maybe we should define what a sign or a wonder is. I have seen some claim “signs and wonders” in order to claim apostolic authority, but when I looked at what scripture said of signs and wonders, their claim seemed to fall short of the definition evident in scripture. And, many that have claimed signs and wonders in recent years seem more interested in claiming glory for themselves than for God. Signs and wonders are evidently dangerous territory for having pride enter in, without being detected by those influenced by it. Pride is dangerous that way. But some see pride in others when it is really obedience to do exactly what God leads them to do and say. In that case, the pride may be more in the accuser than the accused. What a quagmire signs and wonders can be! Maybe that is why the apostles in scripture suffered so much rejection, and persecution, and deprivation – to help them avoid that pitfall. To reinforce that, I heard God teach me, “My apostles *will* suffer.” He was speaking of those really called today to exhibit apostolic authority. The Apostle Paul, who gave us much of the New Testament, in seeking to have his apostolic authority recognized, listed his trials and wounds and deprivations – which allowed me to test with scripture what I heard. And *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* gives us a good idea of the real cost of true apostleship.

In the Bible, signs and wonders were used by God when he wanted to introduce new truth to mankind. But God also anchored his new truth to the old truth previously known and accepted. Those who spread the truth of the new covenant, Christ and his apostles, did it with signs and wonders. However, they also linked the new truth to it being mentioned or prophesied in the old truth, what we call the Old Testament. What was new was prophesied in the truth we, mankind, already had. And after that New Testament truth was accepted, proven by consistency with mention in the old truth, and by signs and wonders, Paul warned not to accept contrary truth from anyone, even if they appeared to be an angel from heaven. Paul said, in Galatians 1:8, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (KJV). One must remain in consistency with the teaching of Christ and the apostles in scripture, even if they do signs and wonders.

Christ, in his letters to the churches at the beginning of the book of Revelation, at the end to the truth we now have, the Bible, commended one of the churches for trying those that say they are apostles and are not: “And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars” (Revelation 2:2 NKJV). Christ commended them for testing people saying they are apostles. So, it is obvious that we are supposed to do that. How is that to be done? We have to look to the rest of scripture for that. We can see the example of their sacrifice, deprivation, rejection, persecution, and martyrdom for the sake of spreading the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That seems opposite of the tests some apply today. In fact, in many circles, if one has a huge following, the biggest meetings, or the biggest church, or the biggest network of churches, they naturally get called an “apostle.” People who have had little hardship, or rejection, or persecution – the opposite of the examples of apostles in the Bible – seem most likely to be called apostles. Are they really preaching the truth? The Bible says that those that would live godly will suffer persecution (2 Tim 3:12). Are they preaching the truth that purifies the Church and prepares it for what is ahead? Are they preaching what is true and needed, but unpopular? The true apostles in scripture did. One can draw a large crowd, of shallow Christians, by preaching only what keeps people comfortable and happy, not the whole truth of the Bible.

The true meaning of the word “apostle” is “sent one.” It is one sent by Christ to do exactly what he tells them to do. They do not operate in their own authority, or carry their own message, they carry his messages and have his authority to do so. Have they really heard from God to do what they are doing, and say what they are saying? That requires a constant connection to God, hearing his voice moment by moment. Few today meet that standard, few. Few pray enough to make that possible. Look at the words of Christ that he warned he would say in the day of judgment:

Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Matthew 7:22-23 NKJV).

For a minister, these are some of the most scary and sobering words in the Bible.

Let me share what I noted about the definition of signs and wonders. There is not one clear place to look to in scripture. You have to look for examples and teachings in various places. However, what caught my eye was the list of gifts of the Holy Spirit in First Corinthians 12. It says:

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:7-11 NKJV).

I note that the list of gifts of the Holy Spirit distinguished between “gifts of healings” and “working of miracles,” which most would see as the category in which signs and wonders would fit. Something would hardly be a sign or wonder from God in this sense if it were not miraculous. Yet many seem to claim healings as being their evidence of “signs and wonders.” Some make a distinction for missing limbs and other body parts being restored instantly as being beyond simple healings and indicate that they should be considered signs and wonders. I would tend to agree.

Christ displayed signs and wonders to attest to his divine nature. He commanded the storm and it ceased. He defied the “laws” of gravity and physics to walk on water. He broke bread and fish and multiplied it to go from feeding one boy to feeding thousands. He commanded thousands of demons and they left their victim at once. These signs attested to the claims of the person performing them. But the signs alone were not enough. Christ and his disciples also attested to who Christ was by pointing to the prophecies in scripture he was fulfilling. And the Jews pointed back to Moses, of whom they said, “We know that God spoke to Moses” (John 9:29a KJV). How did they know? Because of the signs and wonders displayed around Moses. But the disciples, and Christ, argued that Moses attested to Christ. Moses did indeed prophesy another prophet coming who would be like him and to whom they must listen or be judged (Deuteronomy 18). The disciples asserted Christ was that prophesied prophet.

Now let us look at the signs and wonders that attested to Moses being sent by God. At the burning bush encounter with God, where God called Moses to be the one man he was sending to the leader of the superpower of his day, to deliver his people from slavery and oppression, God promised and demonstrated a couple of signs – because Moses said the people would expect a sign. One sign was his staff turning into a snake and back. The other was his hand being smitten with leprosy instantly, and being instantly healed. These allowed Moses to be heard when he first went back to begin leading God’s people. However, they quickly proved inadequate when the people, and Moses, experienced greater adversity than they expected. Then plagues and judgments, great plagues and judgments, became the signs and wonders. Many were afflicted and died in Egypt to accomplish God’s purposes and establish Moses as the leader appointed by God.

But then greater adversity came – when Pharaoh and his army pursued the Israelites and they were trapped up against a sea. Then God did an incredible sign and wonder. He, using Moses, parted the sea to allow a path of escape for the Israelites. He also used it to bring a great judgment on their enemies, Pharaoh and his army that was drowned when the waters rushed back upon them. These signs and wonders were never forgotten by the Jews.

But there were more signs and wonders displayed around Moses, as the need arose. God gave Moses great authority, supreme authority, to be his mouthpiece and lead his people. However, the Israelites chaffed under his authority, and really God’s authority, and murmured and complained and rebelled, in various measures on various occasions. God was going to use Moses to establish the law for the Israelites and for mankind. First was the moral law. Then the civil and criminal law for the new nation Moses was commissioned to establish in the promised land. Then the ceremonial law for sacrificial worship that would eventually pass away. God wanted people to respect the law he was giving them, so he arranged signs and wonders to assure

that – signs and wonders to endorse his power and authority, and signs and wonders to endorse the authority of his messenger, Moses.

One of those times was when Moses came back from meeting with God for forty days and nights on Mount Saini bringing back the tablets with the ten commandments on them. When he came down, his face shone, glowed, such that the Israelites could barely keep their eyes upon him, such that Moses resorted to wearing a veil. See Exodus 34:28-35 and mention of it by Paul in Second Corinthians 3:13-15. In this case, God assured that the people would know that his messenger really had met with him. Moses came down from meeting with God with a sign and wonder that would cause the people to know that he really had met with God, and that the message he carried, the moral law in the ten commandments and more, really was from God.

But, in time, the glow faded. However, in the New Testament, there is mention of a glow that will not fade away: “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2 NKJV). Given that the Book of Daniel refers to a supernatural being in the fire with the three Hebrews (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego), described as being in appearance as a “son of god,” this appears to be a reference to being changed eventually into a nature like unto heavenly spiritual beings – who glow. God’s holy angels are called angels “of light” for a reason. Christ, in the book of Revelation, chapter one, shone very brightly, like the sun. And we are told in scripture that his coming is bright.

However, unfortunately, God’s endorsement of Moses, as his messenger, and to lead his people with his delegated authority, evidenced by signs and wonders, was not enough for the people. In Numbers chapter 16 we see multiple uprisings, and increasing signs and wonders – by judgments, which are also signs and wonders. If the signs and wonders on the mountain when God came to meet with Moses, and the glow of Moses when he came down from the mountain, had been enough for the people, many lives could have been spared. In Numbers 16 we see that Korah and others, Levites, ministers, men of renown, totaling 250, rose up against Moses and Aaron, saying: "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" (Num 16:3 NKJV).

Then God made known his view of what was being done, in Numbers 16:28-35:

28 And Moses said: "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. 29 If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. 30 But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD."

31 Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. 33 So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished

from among the assembly. 34 Then all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up also!"

35 And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense. NKJV

But the people complained all the more, even in the face of all the obvious judgment that had occurred to defend Moses as walking in the role God himself had put him in. Then God judged them with a great plague. But Moses sent Aaron to make atonement for them to spare them, by standing between those already struck down and the rest of the people. But fourteen thousand seven hundred died. God did not take lightly those that rose up against his chosen and anointed leaders, especially after he had already proven that they were chosen by him with signs and wonders, and then great judgment on the leaders, servants of God in the tabernacle, Levites, who said God was with them too, and that Moses and Aaron had taken too much upon themselves.

So it will be. These are times of great transition, and formation, and setting the course for a new age. God's people are at risk, great risk, in the days and years ahead, and God will act much as he did in the days of Moses, similar days. For God's people will come out of many nations in the years ahead to the place of safety and blessing ordained by God. They will come out of "Babylon" to avoid her sins and her plagues. It is prophesied in scripture and it will come. And many "Egypt" will be judged and plagued, that they not mistreat them and that they let them go in God's timing. As they do to God's people, so will it be done unto them by God. Evil will fear God and his servants. Leaders like Moses and Elijah are prophesied, leaders defended with great judgments, and they will come. Revelation 11, and the predictive types of Zechariah three and four will be fulfilled. Signs and wonders will come.