

Cooke, Tony

Miracles and the Supernatural Throughout Church History

11. Chapter Two: The Biblical Record

This chapter argues that God works supernaturally throughout the Bible and has never changed. It surveys miracles in both the Old and New Testaments, then challenges the idea (cessationism) that the gifts of the Holy Spirit ended when the last apostle died.

Key takeaways

- God does not change; the same God who acted in Scripture still acts today (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17).
- Miracles were not an everyday event in the Old Testament. Gideon and the psalmists longed for the 'former' works of God they had only heard about.
- Often people saw no miracles because they had turned from God; when they cried out and returned, His power was manifested (the Gideon and Exodus cycles).
- Never having seen a miracle does not mean you never will — revivals come in cycles.
- Miracles are not all 'mass miracles.' Elijah was sent to one widow, Elisha healed one leper; Jesus often ministered privately.

- The author lists many Old Testament miracles beyond Moses, Elijah/Elisha, and Jesus to refute the claim that miracles were only 'clustered' in three windows.
- The New Testament packs concentrated supernatural activity into one century: the Incarnation, Pentecost, and the birth of the Church.
- Acts is really 'the Acts of the Holy Spirit' — Jesus keeps working through the Church by the Spirit (guiding Philip, Peter, Paul; sending out Barnabas and Saul).
- The cessationist reading of 1 Corinthians 13 is wrong: 'the perfect' is not the completed Bible but Heaven, since even now, with the Bible, we still 'know in part.'
- Ephesians 4 says the ministry gifts continue until the Church reaches full maturity and unity — which has not yet happened — so the gifts are still active.
- Any modern prophecy or word of knowledge is subordinate to Scripture and must be judged by it; if it contradicts the Bible, disregard it.

Passages worth keeping

“Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”

The hinge of the argument: since believers still know only in part even with the Bible, 'the perfect' must be Heaven, not the completed canon — so the gifts have not ceased.

How it connects

The chapter sets up the book's next move: having argued from Scripture that the gifts never ended, it turns to church history to test whether the Spirit's works continued after the apostle John.

Scripture referenced

- **Malachi 3:6 / Hebrews 13:8** -- God and Christ do not change — the foundation for expecting the supernatural today
- **Judges 6:13** -- Gideon asks where God's miracles are; he had never seen one, though God had not changed
- **Luke 4:25-27** -- Jesus notes Elijah and Elisha were sent to single individuals, not the masses
- **Acts 1:1-2** -- Luke implies Acts records what Jesus continued to do through the Church by the Spirit
- **1 Corinthians 13:8-12** -- The passage cessationists use; the author argues 'the perfect' means Heaven, not the canon
- **Ephesians 4:12-13** -- Ministry gifts continue until the Church reaches full maturity — still unfinished