

Cooke, Tony

Miracles and the Supernatural Throughout Church History

13. Supernatural Works in Rome

This chapter traces the presence of the Holy Spirit's gifts and miracles in the church at Rome across five centuries. It starts with the apostolic roots of Roman Christianity and then walks through key leaders—Clement, Justin Martyr, Novatian, Gregory the Great, and Benedict—showing that each one testifies to healings, prophecy, and other supernatural works continuing in their day.

Key takeaways

- Roman Christianity likely began with Jews converted at Pentecost; Paul later wrote Romans and both Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome under Nero (~AD 67).
- Clement of Rome (35-99), who knew the apostles, brought stability after Nero's persecution and praised Peter and Paul as models of endurance.
- Justin Martyr (100-165), a philosopher-turned-apologist, testified that the gifts of the Spirit—healing, prophecy, exorcism—were still active in his day.
- Novatian (200-258), in *Concerning the Trinity*, described the Spirit as the one who gives the church its gifts and also sanctifies believers by restraining sin.

- Gregory the Great (540-604) led Rome after its fall; his Dialogues records some 200 accounts of miracles, and he saw signs among the missionaries to England.
- Gregory warned Augustine of Canterbury that miracles are given not for the worker's benefit but for others' salvation—stay humble.
- Benedict (480-547), father of Western monasticism, is credited with words of knowledge and even raising a dead boy to life.

Passages worth keeping

“Now, it is possible to see amongst us women and men who possess gifts of the Spirit of God.”

Justin Martyr's plain claim that the Spirit's gifts continued in the second-century church.

“Whatever gifts you have received relative to doing signs, remember that these powers were not granted for your benefit, but so that others may receive salvation.”

Gregory's counsel to Augustine—miracles serve mission, not the miracle-worker's pride.

How it connects

The chapter's thread is that the miraculous did not cease with the apostles—each generation of Roman leaders, from those who knew Peter and Paul down through the fall of the empire, still reports the Spirit at work.

Scripture referenced

- **Acts 2:10** -- Visitors from Rome at Pentecost—possible seed of the Roman church.
- **Acts 18:2** -- Aquila and Priscilla expelled from Rome under Claudius; met Paul in Corinth.
- **Romans 16:4-5** -- Paul greets the church meeting in Aquila and Priscilla's house.
- **Acts 28** -- Book of Acts ends with Paul under house arrest in Rome.
- **Philippians 4:3** -- Possible mention of the same Clement who later led Rome.