

**“Lord, Lord, did we not . . . in your name perform many miracles”—Matthew 7:22
NIV**

The gift of healing was given by God on occasion in the Bible as a demonstration of his power to perform miracles. But can miracles come from a *bad source*? In the book of Exodus, the priests of Egypt were able to perform miracles similar to those performed through Moses and Aaron (Exodus 7:8-12). In Deuteronomy, God’s people were warned about those who practice divination and sorcery (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).



“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Matthew 24:24) The Bible warns that there will be false Christians who will give the appearance, at least, of performing miracles.

Are the healers obedient?

The Bible also warns about those with supposed gifts of healing, but are not obedient to God (Matthew 7:15-23). But how do we know if they are obedient? Obedient Christians can be recognized by having the “fruit of the Spirit” in actual everyday living (Galatians 5:22-23 NIV), and avoiding the “acts of the flesh” (Galatians 5:19-21 NIV). Like Jesus, they should not be part of this world (John 17:16). They will not practice sins such as immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8), or take part in fleshly wars. (Isaiah 2:4)

How are real Christians identified?

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35 NIV). Jesus said that his followers could be recognized by the love they have for each other.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8) NIV). True Christians are also recognized by their being Jesus’ witnesses.

“And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?” (1 Corinthians 12:28-30 NIV) While healing miracles were part of the way that first-century Christians operated, after the first century real Christians were no longer recognized by that means. The miraculous “gifts of the spirit” that some early Christians had — ‘passed away’ (1 Corinthians 13:8-11).

Why did some early Christians do miracles?

God confirmed the Christian faith with miracles and healing, which were God’s authentication of the Christian faith. God used miracles to demonstrate the authority of the savior, as well as to certify the ministries of the apostles and other disciples, such as Stephen, since the church was in its foundational stage (Hebrews 2:3-4). The written word of God, the Bible, with its 66 inspired books, has been verified by internal testimony of Holy Spirit, so there is no further need for spectacular acts of verification (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

Immediate and complete healing on the spot

Below are a few examples from the book of Acts in which healings were immediate:

- Acts 3:7-8 – “Instantly” healed and strengthened

- Acts 5:16 - 100% success rate - "all... were healed"
- Acts 9:18 - Instantly could see - "immediately"
- Acts 9:34 - Aeneas instantly healed - "immediately" could walk
- Acts 19:12 - Healed on the spot, did not have to "go home and get better"

"The Spirit was conferred by the laying on of the apostles hands" (Acts 8:18 NAB).

Evidently when the apostles died, the ability to pass on the miraculous powers of holy Spirit ceased. While the Bible says there have been healings by God in the past, it does not say that all people who claim to heal are from God. Even some unbelievers give the appearance of having been able to perform miracles and signs, and the Bible warns about those with supposed healing gifts, but are not obedient. Miracles were performed by some early Christians to demonstrate God's approval, but this is no longer necessary in our day. So when a modern Christian claims to be able to perform miracles of healing, it is not only wise to be skeptical, but also wise to question the legitimacy of such supposed "miracles", in the light of what the Scriptures actually say,.