

THE BOOK OF ACTS

MAGIC & MIRACLES

AUGUST 23, 2026

SCRIPTURE

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city. Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is rightly called the Great Power of God." They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:4-12 (ESV/NIV)

TWO CAUTIONS

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors." C.S. Lewis

We should be aware of darkness, but not afraid and not obsessed.

MAGIC & MIRACLES

1/ Magic is real.

"Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead." Deuteronomy 18:10-12

Dark magic still exists today. We see this in tarot cards, psychics, curses, etc.

Be sure not to be found "participating with demons".

2/ Miracles are real.

Miracles flood the pages of Scripture and Christian history.

With modern miracles, there are 3 camps: Cessationists, Continuationists, and Cautionists.

3/ Magic is demonic.

The major difference between magic and miracles is their source.

(The religious leaders) could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which Stephen was speaking. Acts 6:10

When contending with darkness, Christians should be cautious.

But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Jude 1:9

4/ Miracles are divine.

Some accused Jesus of practicing dark magic. But He performed no magic nor tricks.

"It is the Father, living in Me, who is doing His work." John 14:10

"Father, I thank You that You have heard Me..." John 11:41

"...it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons..." Matthew 12:28

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." Acts 10:38

5/ Magic points away from Christ.

6/ Miracles point to Christ.

7/ Magic provokes interest.

When seeing something supernatural, be sure not to be "spellbound" by it.

8/ Miracles provoke the heart.

Miracles are not about miracles. Miracles are about the message!

DISCERNING THE DIFFERENCE

"For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect." Matthew 24:24

1/ Does this work come into alignment with Scripture?

Beloved, do not believe every spirit (miracle, sign, wonder, sermon), but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world 1 John 4:1

The Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Acts 17:10

2/ Does this work glorify Christ?

3/ Does this work edify the Church?

A prophetic warning can strengthen the Church, just like a physical healing.

4/ Does this work send a message to the lost?

CLOSE

Back to Lewis' quote: "Which way do you lean? Are you leaning too far? Do you tend to over-spiritualize? Or under-spiritualize?"

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground. Ephesians 6:10-13