

Trances Then and Now

The Bible talks about “wonders” and a wonder is just that. It causes you to wonder. It actually means something that astonishes you, something that amazes you.

One definition is “something strange causing the beholder to marvel”. A wonder appeals to the imagination while a sign appeals to the understanding. A wonder is supernatural. God is a God of Wonders which should be no surprise to any of us.

The Bible speaks of “trances” and we see this happening in the lives of Balaam and Peter. Peter tells how the gospel came to the Gentiles and 3 times explains how God revealed this to him in a trance. Many would have preferred that God reveal things in nice understandable ways that make sense. However, it made sense to God to put Peter in a trance. In Acts 11:4, 5

“But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning
and expounded it by order unto them, saying,
I was in the city of Joppa praying and in a trance.
I saw a vision....”

So we have a trance and a vision and out of that came the revelation of the Gentiles being recipients of the gospel. It is also interesting that later on Peter says, the Spirit told him that an angel had went to Cornelius house and he also had a vision too. Angels, visions, trances and the Spirit speaking directly to the one with the keys of the kingdom. God put Balaam in a trance in Numbers 24:16 and in it, Balaam saw a vision of the Almighty and prophesied of the coming of Jesus Christ.

The word ***trance speaks of being transported out of oneself to see the realities shown by God.*** It speaks of throwing the mind out of a normal state. Somehow you become removed from the awareness of where you are and are in touch with the realm of God. Most of us have read of the ministry of Maria Woodworth Etter who would be speaking and in the middle of a sentence go into a fixed trance for days, locked into a physical state, frozen like a statue. She would come out of it and start the sentence where she left off, not aware she was in a trance. It was a wonder that struck conviction in hearts and many were saved as a result. Trances were commonplace in her meetings always with the fruit of righteousness resulting.

There were reports of people going into trances miles away and it was a wonder that resulted in many conversions.

Young Man Goes Into Trance

Awhile back I was asked to speak at a ministers luncheon in Heredia, Costa Rica. As I began to share the power of God descended upon a pastor and his wife. They were pastors of a Mennonite Church and these types of occurrences were not experienced in that denomination. The wife laughed and laughed and was marvelously touched by the Lord. It is amazing how people get offended when people laugh in the presence of God. 2 Samuel 6:21 speaks of King David *saying, “therefore will I play before the LORD”, in answer to Michals being offended at his exuberant dancing before the ark which represents the presence of God.* If you look up the word “**play**”, you will see that one of the primary meanings is to laugh. Not just joy and celebration but laughter. In another place, it says all the people played or laughed.

The husband was visited by God and a hunger for more of God erupted in his soul. After the meeting he asked me if I could preach that Sunday morning at his church. For some reason, I mentioned to him that if I came and the Lord began to pour out His Spirit that it might not go well with his denomination and he might be out of a job. He said that would not happen and it would be fine.

It wasn't. There was an outpouring of the Holy Ghost and God broke out, the altars were flooded with people crying out for God. These people literally shook, trembled, laughed, wept, collapsed as God touched them. Many cried out for forgiveness for things in their lives that were displeasing to God. At lunch afterwards, he was just overjoyed at what God did but a few hours later he received a call from the denomination's headquarters and was removed as the Pastor. He was devastated to say the least.

Months later he established another church downtown and he asked me to minister. They met in a rundown building with no windows in the openings and it was a howling rainstorm that night. As I was preaching a young man in his 20's came forward seeking God and suddenly was frozen in a standing position and for the rest of the evening was just fixed in that position like a statue. It was a wonder to say the least.

Hours later when the meeting was ending, he was still there. Almost everyone had left and his wife became hysterical because she did not know what was happening to her husband and how to get him back to normal and home. She began to accuse me of doing this to her husband but of course I had nothing to do with it. God had simply touched him and he went into a trance. I had to leave and somehow they got him home but

here is the rest of the story.

This young man was a very shy person who hardly ever talked. After this trance, he was filled with an incredible boldness with an insatiable desire to pray for the sick and people began being miraculously healed as he did so. Obviously, what happened inside of him transformed his life and it happened in a trance.

Indian Woman Goes Into Trance

One time I was speaking in an open air meeting in Fiji with about 800 people present when I witnessed an amazing trance. There were some government leaders there and the senior pastor, Jone Tabaka, was sitting behind me. As I began to speak, an Indian woman began dancing before the Lord off to my left in front of everyone. Fiji has a large population of people from India.

What made this remarkable was that the Indian Christians never expressed themselves in church in this manner and it just wasn't done. Then to do it in front of everyone in a meeting like this was not only "out of order" but in the minds of people, downright rude.

As I looked towards her, I realized that this was different. The Spirit of God had come upon this woman and her whole countenance and the worshipful dancing was heavenly. She was literally in a trance as she was dancing and her eyes were closed. This was inspired by God and I dared not stop it. Others did not feel the same way but began moving towards her to stop her. I boldly said, "this is God" and to not worry about it. However, they continued to approach her but were struck down to the dirt by the power of God and anyone that tried to get near her was knocked to the ground.

All throughout my sermon, she danced ecstatically before the Lord and a holy hush was on the meeting and she did not distract me at all nor did she distract others.

I felt a tap on my shoulder and it was Pastor Tabaka letting me know that the buses were coming in 5 minutes to take some of the people back to the villages. Buses had been rented to take the people back and forth and the last ones were at 6, otherwise the people could not get home.

So I simply asked all the ministers in the audience to come forward for prayer and 40 of them came to the front stretched out in a line. What happened next was unbelievable! As I stepped down to pray for them, the Indian woman, her eyes CLOSED, whirled in front of me and in a sweeping motion with her right hand just pointed at the first minister on my left and

swept her arm down the line to the last one on my right. I stood there as 39 of the 40 ministers, most of who had their eyes closed also, fell backwards to the ground and began crying out to God and seeking Him with passionate pleadings. The one minister was a friend of mine and he just wobbled back and forth and described how God dealt with him in the core of his being later on when I asked him what happened.

Then the woman finished her sweeping motion by flicking her hand at Pastor Tabaka and I just saw his lip twitch and she danced away off to my left. Suddenly, Pastor Tabaka rose from his chair and came to me and said, “tala tala, sit down”. That means Pastor in Fijian and I saw him come down off the platform and walk out to the audience and walk down the middle of the aisles and touch the first person on each side, and each row went down like dominoes under the power of God and the entire place came under the power of God. I guess he forgot about the buses!

Healings began to break out, the ministers were still on the ground seeking God, the woman was still dancing and I just worshipped God and rejoiced.

Suppose I would have stopped the woman?

Was there fruit from this?

That flick of the wrist was no ordinary human movement. *A new anointing* came upon Pastor Tabaka and the following Sunday he preached on national radio and reports came in from hospital patients who were being healed and saved as a result. I think that is a good thing, don't you?

Peter was praying and went into a trance. The brother was seeking God at the altar and went into a trance. The sister was just at a service and went into an trance and danced. No one was seeking trances nor was I even talking about them and I had never seen them before or personally went into one. They happened. There was the fruit of revelation about salvation for the Gentiles, a wonderful thing. There was the release of the gift of miracles and new boldness to express healing love, a wonderful thing. There was a visitation resulting in ministers becoming desperate for God, a new anointing on a man of God that touched the people present and brought salvation and healing to those in hospitals, a wonderful thing.

And it happened during a trance. God can do what He wants, Amen!