

## “FAITH” HEALERS?

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Matthew 17:14-21 says, “And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, *and they could not cure him.* Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: *and the child was cured from that very hour.* Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” In our modern religious world, we have many individuals who falsely claim the power to do miracles. They often refer to themselves as “faith healers.” When these *false* healers clearly fail to heal someone, they blame their failure on a lack of faith on the part of the one they were attempting to heal. That is not what happened in Matthew 17, and we never see such a thing anywhere in God’s word.

### **Miracles for those who did not have faith**

Although faith many times led to people asking for a miracle and therefore receiving their request, not every miracle required the subjects to have faith. In some instances, it would have been utterly impossible for the subjects to have faith, such as when Jesus cast a legion of devils out of two blind men in the land of the Gadarenes (Matt 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39). Those men were not in their right mind such that they could have had faith to approach Jesus to be healed. And no one brought those men to Jesus. Certainly, when the dead were raised, they were not able to have faith! No one brought the dead boy from Nain to Jesus (Luke 7:11-16), and no one called Jesus to come and raise Lazarus four days after he was dead (John 11:1-45). Many other miracles were done without faith being required by their subjects. Malchus was among those who came to take Jesus to kill him. He obviously did not

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believe in Christ, yet Jesus healed his ear (Luke 22:49-51).

## **Why the apostles failed**

So what about the one time the apostles failed? Jesus had given his apostles the power to do miracles, and commanded them to use this power (Matt 10:5-8). Matthew 17:16 (and the parallel accounts in Mark 9:18 and Luke 9:40) is the only recorded case where men who truly possessed the power to perform a miracle failed in the attempt. Otherwise, their success rate was one hundred percent. Acts 5:12-16 says, “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: *and they were healed every one.*” Notice, they were healed “every one.” There were no failures! Jesus also “healed *all* that were sick” (Matt 8:16), and “*every* sickness and *every* disease among the people” (Matt 9:35). It should be noted that in no case did any *attempt* to do a miracle ever fail because the potential subject of the miracle lacked faith. The failure of the apostles to cast out the devil from the child was their own fault for their own lack of faith (Matt 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43). When the apostles asked Jesus why they failed, he told them, “Because of *your* unbelief” (Matt 17:20). In contrast to this, “faith healers” do not ever blame themselves for their failures! They blame others. It should be pointed out that even in the case where the apostles did not cast out the devil from the child, this does not represent an actual failure of the witness of God, because Jesus did cast out the devil. The actual reason that the efforts on the part of any person today to miraculously heal always fail is because God is not bearing witness to any man today (1 Cor 13:8-10). We no longer have miracles today, because their purpose has been fulfilled.