

Hebrews 2:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

Analysis

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? This verse concludes the author's warning against neglecting salvation, emphasizing divine authentication of the gospel message. "God also bearing witness" (sunepimarturountos, συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος) uses a compound Greek verb meaning to testify together or confirm jointly—God Himself validated the apostolic testimony.

The fourfold description of divine attestation is comprehensive: "signs" (sēmeia, σημεῖα) are miraculous indicators pointing to divine truth; "wonders" (terata, τέρατα) are extraordinary events evoking awe; "various miracles" (poikilais dunamesin, ποικίλαις δυνάμεσιν) refers to diverse manifestations of supernatural power; "gifts of the Holy Spirit" (pneumatōs hagiou merismoi, πνεύματος ἁγίου μερισμοί) denotes distributions or apportionments of spiritual gifts. This quartet echoes apostolic preaching (Acts 2:22, 2 Corinthians 12:12, Romans 15:19) and demonstrates the continuity between Jesus' earthly ministry and the apostolic witness.

"According to His own will" (kata tēn autou thelēsin, κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ θέλησιν) establishes divine sovereignty over miraculous gifts. God distributed these attestations purposefully to confirm the gospel, not according to human merit or

demand. This reminds readers that signs serve revelation's authentication, not personal gratification.

Historical Context

Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians facing pressure to abandon Christianity and return to Judaism (likely before 70 CE, as the temple worship is described in present tense). The community had received the gospel from those who heard Jesus directly (second-generation believers) and needed assurance about Christianity's divine origin and superiority to Judaism.

The apostolic generation witnessed extraordinary divine confirmation of the gospel—the Holy Spirit's dramatic descent at Pentecost (Acts 2), apostolic miracles (Acts 3-5), signs among the Hellenists (Acts 6-7, 8:4-8), and the Spirit's sovereign distribution of gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14). These miraculous attestations authenticated the gospel as God's new revelation, superior to Mosaic law. By the time of Hebrews' writing, this foundational confirmation was complete, though spiritual gifts continued.

The mention of divine witness 'according to His own will' would resonate with readers tempted to seek miraculous confirmation of their wavering faith. The author reminds them that God had already provided sufficient attestation through the apostolic witness; now faithfulness, not fresh miracles, is required. The gospel's divine authentication was historically accomplished and testified to by reliable witnesses.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How did miraculous signs and wonders function to authenticate apostolic testimony?
2. What is the relationship between divine sovereignty ('according to His own will') and the distribution of spiritual gifts?
3. Why does the author emphasize God's confirmation of the gospel message in this warning passage?
4. How should believers today relate to the miraculous attestation of the gospel in the apostolic era?
5. What does it mean to neglect 'so great salvation' that has been divinely authenticated?

Interlinear Text

συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος	τοῦ	θεοῦ	σημείοις	τε	καὶ	τέρασιν
also bearing them witness		God	with signs	both	and	wonders
G4901	G3588	G2316	G4592	G5037	G2532	G5059
καὶ	ποικίλαις	δυνάμεσιν	καὶ	πνεύματος	ἁγίου	
and	with divers	miracles	and	Ghost	of the Holy	
G2532	G4164	G1411	G2532	G4151	G40	
μερισμοῖς	κατὰ	τὴν	αὐτοῦ	θέλησιν		
gifts	according to			will		
G3311	G2596	G3588	G846	G2308		

Additional Cross-References

Acts 14:3 (Witness): Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

Ephesians 1:5 (Parallel theme): Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Mark 16:20 (Parallel theme): And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

John 4:48 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

Daniel 4:35 (Parallel theme): And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

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