

NOTE: When people reject the Bible facts, the problem isn't the *facts*, but the *people*.

"How stubborn can you be? How can you be so heartless and disobedient? You're just like your ancestors. They always opposed the Holy Spirit, and so do you!"

Acts 7:51 (GW)

But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way.

Acts 19:9a (NIV)

... they were jealous; so they slandered Paul and argued against whatever he said.

Acts 13:45b (NLT)

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, ...

Romans 2:5a (NIV)

IMPORTANT ISSUE: CONVICTION (awareness and acceptance of the facts) must occur before CHANGES can occur in a person's life. ➤ CHANGE • ➤ CONSEQUENCES Those who That day about 3,000 people ...were baptized. accepted what were added (to the group). Peter said Acts 2:41 (GW) CONVICTION CHANGE Many Corinthians believed and were baptized. who heard Paul Acts 18:8b (GW) CONVICTION CHANGE ... Philip told the The official said to Philip, "Look, there's some official the Good water. What can keep me from being baptized?" News about Jesus. Acts 8:35b, 36b (GW)

QUESTION: Can there be other influences, besides the Word of God?

As we've seen in past studies, God can use other things – circumstances people, miraculous events, etc. – as pointers to the truth. But they cannot save. We need God and his Word for that!

Such things can lead a person in the right direction. Or they can reinforce a chosen path (after the choice has been made). But they are NOT the focus of attention!

A MODERN EXAMPLE:

Today, in Islamic countries, Muslims frequently have visions or dreams that point to Jesus. But it isn't until they go to the Bible that they find out who this "Jesus" really is.

God often uses "every-day circumstances" to point people to the way of salvation.

You can just "happen" to be somewhere that the Good News is being proclaimed.

[Paul] spoke daily in the public square to all who happened to be there.

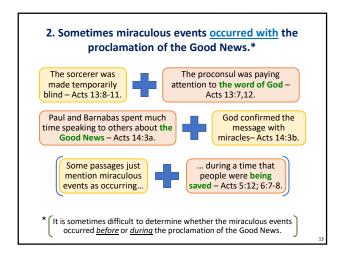
Acts 17:17b (NLT)

God has also used extraordinary events
(including miracles) to point the way.

As we look at examples in the book of Acts, we discover that even miracles are not the primary focus. They are normally associated with people proclaiming the Good News, or with one's acceptance of the Good News.

What we find in Acts ...

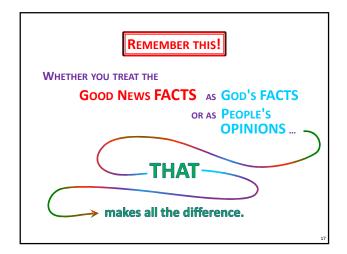
1. Sometimes God used miraculous events to provide the opportunity to proclaim the Good News. This miracle brings the people Peter heals a beggar-Actstogether to hear the Good News 3:1-11. message - Acts 3:1-26; 4:8-12. God did miracles The message about the Lord through Paul spread and accomplished its Acts 19:11. work - Acts 19:20. Philip performed The people paid miraculous signs attention to what he said - Acts 8:6.* - Acts 8:6. This is in stark contrast with Simon the magician, who was more interested in the miraculous signs - Acts 8:13.





5. In one instance, God used a miraculous "disaster" to point people toward salvation and spiritual growth. Then people began to to cast out demons in fear God, honor Jesus, Jesus' name. The evil spirit repent of hidden sins... attacks and beats them. and the Word of the People hear about this Lord spreads across the region - Acts 19:17b-20. event - Acts 19:13-17a. AS WE CAN SEE, to whatever extent these passages go into detail about what happened, the focus or conclusion of the event is the proclamation of the Good news and/or spiritual growth. The miraculous event is NOT the ultimate focus.





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