

Great Doctrines of the Bible

Lesson Thirteen: Christology 04

The Miracles of Jesus

Introduction: The Rational of Jesus Miracles

Before studying the miracles of Jesus, we ought to first define what a miracle is and examine the purpose thereof.

Definition

The word miracle has developed a broad meaning over time. Almost any unexpected, exciting, beneficial occurrence is considered a miracle. For instance, it's a miracle when some people arrive on time. It's a miracle when little Johnny eats all of his vegetables. It's a miracle when the car starts. It's a miracle when you get an A on a test or make the game-winning basket. While God may certainly be involved in these activities they fall more under the category of His providence than that of a miracle.

Thiessen states that a “genuine miracle is an unusual event, accomplishing some useful work, and revealing the presence and power of God.”¹

Smith's Bible Dictionary

“A miracle may be defined to be a plain and manifest exercise by a man, or by God at the call of a man, of those powers which belong only to the Creator and Lord of nature; and this for the declared object of attesting that a divine mission is given to that man.”²

Smith further adds,

“No phenomenon in nature, however unusual, no event in the course of God's providence, however unexpected, is a miracle unless it can be traced to the agency of man (including prayer under the term agency), and unless it be put forth as a proof of divine mission... A miracle is not a violation of the laws of nature. It is God's acting upon nature in a degree far beyond our powers, but the same kind of act as our wills are continually exerting upon nature.”³

¹ Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans' Publishing Company, 1979) p. 11.

² Phil Linder, Power Bible CD, (Bronson, MI: 2004) www.powerbible.com

³ Ibid

Holman's Bible Dictionary

“Events which unmistakably involve an immediate and powerful action of God designed to reveal His character or purposes. Words used in Scriptures to describe the miraculous include sign, wonder, work, mighty work, portent, power. These point out the inspired authors' sense of God's pervasive activity in nature, history and people.”⁴

Dr. Carr explains for Greek words used translated as miracle.

1. *Dunamis*: signifying power and emphasizing the mighty power of God.
2. *Teras*: translated wonder. This was what they produced in those who witnessed them.
3. *Simeion*: a word used by John. It means sign.
4. *Ergon*: a word that is used both for miracles and Jesus' works of mercy.⁵

From these definitions and explanations we can draw the following conclusions.

1. Miracles involve more than God's divine providence.
2. Miracles are always an unusual event but not all unusual events are miracles.
3. Miracles do not violate the laws of nature but rather reveal the power to act upon nature in a way superior to mere human ability.
4. Miracles are an exhibition of powers that belong only to the Creator.
5. Miracles are always beneficial.
6. Miracles always reveal the presence of God.
7. Miracles always reveal the power of God.
8. Miracles always reveal the purpose of God.
9. Miracles always reveal the character of God.
10. Miracles may be performed by men only under the authority and by permission of the Creator.
11. Miracles performed by a man are a witness of the proof of that man's divine mission.
12. The most common words used to describe miracles are
 - Power,
 - Wonder,
 - Sign,
 - Works.
13. Miracles are never for the glory of men.

One must remember that not every extra-ordinary event is a miracle. Satan, himself, is able to perform humanly unexplainable feats. Sorcerers, witches and other ungodly people have performed diverse forms of enchantments. However, they are always discernable because they violate at least one of the above principles. For this reason it is

⁴ Trent C. Butler, PH. D., *Holman Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991) p. 973.

⁵ Dr. Harry E. Carr, *This I Believe*, (Orion, MI: Shalom Baptist Ministries, 1999) p. 52.

always dangerous to rely on experience alone. Always confirm your experiences by God's Word.

*“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all **power and signs and lying wonders.**” (2Th 2:8-9)*

“Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.” (Ex 7:11)

A Brief History of Miracles.

Although we can see God performing His own miracles from the very beginning, the first human agent of God to perform a miracle was Moses. Adam never did any miracles. Neither did Noah. The fathers of Israel Abraham, Isaac and Jacob never performed one miracle. While Isaac's birth would seem miraculous, it was an act of God not of man. Joseph's ability to interpret dreams was considered revelation and understanding given from God rather a miracle.

It was not until God chose to send a man to deliver His people that He used a man to perform miracles. The miracles performed by Moses were a sign that he was sent from God to accomplish His purpose with power and authority.

Exodus 4

1 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.

2 And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.

3 And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.

4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught

it, and it became a rod in his hand:

5 That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

6 And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow.

7 And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it

out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.

8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

9 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.

As Moses performed miracles as a sign of his authority from God, so too would Jesus perform miracles demonstrating that not only was He sent from God, but indeed is God.

“For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.” (Ac 3:22)

“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.” (De 18:15)

“Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.” (Joh 6:14)

Moses first **public** miracle was turning the water to **blood**. However, Jesus first public miracle was turning water into **wine**. Turning the water to blood was a plague of death and destruction. Turning the water to wine was a symbol of life and joy. These two first miracles would find their unity of meaning when Jesus held up the cup and said, *“This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”* (Luke 22:20)

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (Joh 1:17)

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Ro 8:2)

The Relevance of Jesus Miracles

Miracles were never performed for **entertainment**. They are not simply to amuse the curious. Herod was excited to see Jesus when He was brought before him. He was looking for a show. But to Herod’s displeasure, Jesus did not perform for his delight.

“And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.” (Lu 23:8-11)

The purpose of Jesus’ miracles was to reveal His **deity**. They were a sign of His **authority**. (See John 6:14 above) John the Baptist recognized the authority of Jesus. Yet in prison he sent his disciples to inquire of Jesus. He wanted to know if Jesus were merely a prophet or if He was truly the Messiah. Jesus answered by citing His **miracles**.

“And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the

blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.” (Luke 7:19-22)

Among the most revealing of all His miracles was the restoring of sight to the **blind**. Aside from the obvious symbolism in this act, we find that this was a sign that the Jewish people should have recognized from the prophets of old. The restoration of sight should have been recognized as a sign of the Messiah’s coming.

“The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous.” (Ps 146:8)

“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.” (Isa 35:4-5)

“I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.” (Isa 42:6-7)

Careful examination of the Scriptures reveals that the giving or restoration of sight had never been done by any of the **Old** Testament prophets. In fact, none of the Apostles even performed this miracle. Annanias was the only one to come close, when he restored Saul’s sight after his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9:17)

Furthermore, this was the most **frequently** recorded of all of Jesus miracles. (Matthew 9:27-31, 11:5, 12:22, 15:30, 21:14; Mark 8:22-26, 10:46-53; John 9)

Charles Ryrie concludes, “Thus when the Lord restored sight to blind people He was making a clear claim to be Israel’s long-awaited Messiah.”⁶

The obvious difference between the Lord’s miracles and those of the prophets and apostles is that **none** of them claimed deity or received worship. The miracles authenticated both the message and the messenger.

The Reality of Jesus’ Miracles

Aside from the resurrection, **thirty-five** miracles of Jesus are recorded in the four gospels. Some miracles are recorded more than once and others only once.

20 in Matthew

18 in Mark

20 in Luke

07 in John

⁶ Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999) pp. 404-405.

The Miracles of Jesus

Miracle	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
1. Turning the water into wine.				2:1-11
2. Healing a nobleman's son at Cana				4:46-54
3. Healing a lame man at the pool of Bethesda				5:1-9
4. First miraculous catch of fish			5:1-11	
5. Delivering a synagogue demoniac		1:23-28	4:31-36	
6. Healing Peter's mother-in-law	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39	
7. Cleansing a leper	8:2-4	1:40-45	5:12-16	
8. Healing a paralytic	9:2-8	2:3-12	5:18-26	
9. Healing a man with a shriveled hand	12:9-13	3:1-5	6:6-10	
10. Healing a centurion's servant	8:5-13		7:1-10	
11. Raising a widow's son			7:11-15	
12. Healing a blind and mute demoniac	12:22		11:14	
13. Stilling a storm	8:18	4:35-41	8:22-25	
14. Delivering the Gadarene demoniacs	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	
15. Healing a woman with an issue of blood	9:20-22	5:25-34	8:43-48	
16. Raising Jairus' daughter	9:18-19, 23-26	5:22-24, 35-43	8:43-48	
17. Healing two blind men	9:27-31			
18. Delivering a mute demon possessed man	9:32-33			
19. Feeding the 5,000	14:14-21	6:34-44	9:12-17	6:5-13
20. Walking on the water	14:24-33	6:45-52		6:16-21
21. Delivering a Syrophenician's daughter	15:21-28	7:24-30		
22. Healing a deaf mute in Decapolis		7:31-37		
23. Feeding the 4,000	15:32-39	8:1-9		
24. Healing a blind man at Bethsaida		8:22-26		
25. Delivering a demon possessed boy	17:14-18	9:14-29	9:38-42	
26. Finding the tax money	17:24-27			
27. Healing a man born blind				9:1-7
28. Healing a crippled woman on the Sabbath			13:10-17	
29. Healing a man with dropsy			14:16	
30. Raising of Lazarus				11:17-44
31. Cleansing ten lepers			17:11-19	
32. Healing blind Bartimaeus	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
33. Cursing the fig tree	21:18-19	11:12-14		
34. Restoring Malchus' ear			22:49-51	18:10
35. Second Miraculous catch of fish				21:1-11

The Results of Jesus Miracles

For many the miracles of Jesus were proof of His claim to **deity**. The miracles confirmed the truth of His teaching and no one was able to dispute Him or His works.

*“And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the **mighty works** that they had seen; Saying, Blessed be the **King that cometh in the name of the Lord**: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” (Lu 19:37-40)*

In spite of these signs and wonders, many still **refused** to believe. They could not deny His works. They even acknowledged them. Yet their hard hearts would not believe.

*“And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even **such mighty works** are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And **they were offended at him.**” (Mr 6:2-3)*

When the Jews were about ready to stone Jesus, He said, *“Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?”* (John 10:32) They denied being angry over His works but they could **not deny** His works. So instead they accused Him of blasphemy. He responded that His **works** were sufficient testimony for them to believe.

“Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.” (Joh 10:36-38)

The miracles of Jesus were done so that man might believe on Him. However, man's unbelief can be a stubborn thing. After many **mighty** works, Jesus rebuked their persistent unbelief.

“Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this

day. *But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.*" (Mt 11:20)

Conclusion: Seeing and Believing

"Seeing is believing" is so often quoted that some likely think it's in the bible. Although Jesus did say, "*Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe,*"⁷ He was **not** intending to **compliment** a man's demand for proof. In fact, Jesus taught just the opposite. He taught that **believing is seeing**. When we believe in Him we see great works. Listen to what He told Martha before He raised Lazarus from the dead.

"Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (Joh 11:40)

One of Jesus' very own apostles had adopted this dangerous doctrine. Even though He had seen Jesus many miracles, **Thomas** doubted the resurrection and said, "*Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*" (John 20:25)

In God's mercy, Thomas got what He demanded. He saw the resurrected Christ. Jesus chided him for his previous unbelief then added, "*Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*" (John 20:29)

Although you may not reveal Himself to you by walking on the water, calming the storm or raising the dead, the salvation He provides is no less a **miracle**. While some today still demand miraculous proof, never forget that Jesus says that you have the greater blessing for believing without seeing.

As you read the Scriptures, remember that He has given us a reliable account of His miracles in His Word. When you read the miracles of Jesus, remember their purpose to increase you faith in God's Son.

All our Lord's miracles were intended to be parables. They were intended to instruct as well as to impress. They are sermons to the eye, just as his spoken discourses were sermons to the ear.

-Spurgeon

⁷ John 4:48