

"Does God Still Perform Miracles?"



"Lazarus And The Rich Man"

Many people desire miracles from God. They want God to perform miracles to "Prove" Himself to them. "If only God would perform a Miracle, Sign, Or Wonder, then I would believe!" This idea, though, is contradicted by

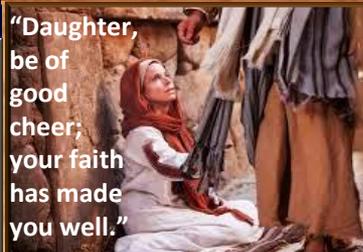
Scripture. When God performed amazing and powerful miracles for the Israelites, did that cause them to obey Him? No, the Israelites constantly disobeyed and rebelled against God even though they saw all the miracles. The same people who saw God part the Red Sea later doubted whether God was able to conquer the inhabitants of the Promised Land. This truth is explained in Luke 16:19-31. In the story, a man in hell asks Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn his brothers. Abraham informed the man, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31). Jesus performed countless miracles, yet the vast majority of people did not believe in Him. If God performed miracles today as He did in the past, the result would be the same. People would be amazed and would believe in God for a short time. That faith would be shallow and would disappear the moment something unexpected or frightening occurred. A faith based on miracles is not a mature faith. God performed the greatest "God Miracle" of all time in coming to earth as the Man Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins so that we could be saved. (Romans 5:8) "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God does still perform miracles—many of them simply go unnoticed or are denied. What we need is to believe in the miracle of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

"Jesus Touched By The Untouchable"



Our Lord Jesus was not ashamed to be touched by the untouchable, and He was not embarrassed to be publicly identified with the outcasts of this world. He was at home with sinners, He ate supper with gluttons and drunkards, He welcomed the prostitutes, He touched the lepers, and He is not ashamed to be touched by an unclean person.

Not ashamed? No, not at all. Delighted, I think, and glad to identify Himself with her. Delighted that she had the courage to reach out and glad that He could heal her. And He didn't care who knew about it. No, that's not strong enough. He wanted the whole crowd to know what He had done. Why is this so important? Because with our Lord there are no "Untouchable" people. In Jesus' eyes, everyone is touchable. Thank God, there are no hopeless cases with Him. There is a miracle waiting for all who call upon the Name of the Lord!

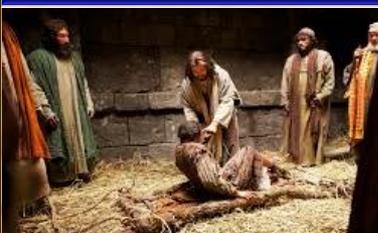


"Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well."

You may be surprised to learn that the Bible accounts of Jesus' life on earth never use the original-language word for "Miracle." The Greek word (*dy'na-mis*) sometimes translated "Miracle" literally means "Power." "But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." (Luke 8:46) It may

also be rendered "Ability" or "Powerful Works." (Matthew 11:20; 25:15) "Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent..." "And to one He gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey." According to one scholar, this Greek term "emphasizes the mighty work that has been done, and, in particular, the power by which it was accomplished. The event is described in terms of the Power Of God In Action."

"Signs And Wonders"



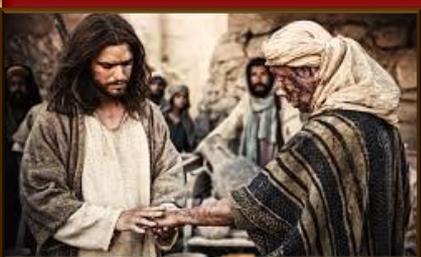
"The Paraplegic Man Walks"

Another Greek term (*te'ras*) is usually rendered "Portent" or "Wonder." (John 4:48) "Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." (Acts 2:19) "I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke." This expression highlights the effect on observers. Quite often, the crowd and the disciples were amazed and astounded at Jesus' powerful works.—(Mark 2:12) "Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!" (Mark 4:41) "And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and



"Jesus Calms The Storm"

the sea obey Him!" (Mark 6:51) "Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled." (Luke 9:43) "And they were all amazed at the majesty of God." A third Greek term (*se-me'i'on*) referring to Jesus' miracles denotes a "Sign." It "focuses upon the deeper meaning of the miracle," says scholar Robert Deffinbaugh. He adds: "A Sign is a Miracle which conveys a truth about our Lord Jesus."

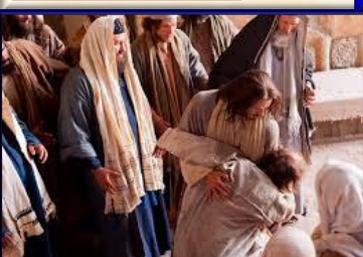


During His earthly ministry Jesus performed miracles. Why did Jesus perform miracles and what do these supernatural acts mean for our lives today? Let's consider three reasons why Jesus performed miracles. First, Jesus performed miracles to show "Compassion And Meet Human Need." For

example, in Mark 1, Jesus encounters a man with leprosy. Mark 1:41 reads, "Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man."

(1) "Jesus Showed Compassion and Met Human Needs"

What stands out to me is that often Jesus' miracles were not planned or calculated; rather, they were frequently spontaneous, the result of the intersection between God's love and human suffering. Why should the compassionate example of Jesus be so encouraging to us today? It is because the Bible teaches that Jesus is God in the flesh. Jesus provides us with a portrait of God. What is God like? What does God feel? How does God respond to human suffering? To answer these timeless questions we should look to Jesus. In Jesus we see a God Who is deeply affected by our pain, a God Who is moved to compassion because of our suffering, a God Who weeps with us, and a God Who desires to answer our prayers and bring spiritual and physical healing to our lives.



(2) "Miracles Was To Affirm His True Identity"

A second reason Jesus performed miracles was to "Affirm His True Identity As The Son Of God." One detail that stands about the miracles of Jesus is how few He actually performed. The infrequency of Jesus' wondrous acts informs us that miracles were only a small portion of His ministry. The Bible hints that the miracles

themselves were not the point. The miracles actually served as "Signs" pointing to a greater reality. Acts 2:22 declares that "Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God by Miracles, Wonders And Signs." The miracles substantiated the claims of Jesus to be the Son of God. The people of the day were wowed by Jesus' miracles; however, Jesus knew that this "Wow-factor" was not enough to encourage long-term, obedient faith. When the wonders ceased, Jesus understood that the crowds would turn elsewhere for their entertainment. So rather than impressing the crowds, Jesus actually requested silence of those He healed. And then He used the occasion of a miracle to teach His closest followers about His vocation as the 'Savior Who Would Suffer, Die, And Rise Again.'

Jesus recognized that the hope of the world did not rest on a few isolated healings in rural Galilee, but rather on the climatic miracle of His death and resurrection from the grave. The miracles, as signs pointing to the deeper truth about Jesus, should cause us to place our faith in Him. When He needed to confirm His identity for a doubting John the Baptist, Jesus appealed in Luke 7:22 to His miracles: "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached."

(3) "Miracles Provide a Glimpse of What Is To Come"

Author Philip Yancey writes that a "Sign Is Not The Same Thing As Proof; A Sign If Merely A Marker For Someone Who Is Looking In The Right Direction." The miracles point us in the direction of Jesus as the Son of God. Are we paying attention to the signs? A final purpose for miracles that I will mention is this: Jesus performed miracles to provide us with a glimpse of the world that is to come. The supernatural acts of Jesus are like a flash of lightning that illuminates a dark night for a few moments, allowing us to see clearly. Just when we think this life is all there is, miracles introduce us to another world—the spiritual reality of God's Presence, Kingdom, Love, And Eternity.

"The Signs Points Us Back To The Garden Of Eden"



The miracles of Jesus are a snapshot of the Bible's early chapters. In the Garden of Eden, humankind existed with God in perfect harmony and peace. When Jesus healed the sick, restored sight to the blind, and calmed the storm, He was taking us back—even just for a moment—to the perfection of Eden. The supernatural acts of Jesus are also a taste

of the future Eden, the world that is to come described in Revelation 21-22. Just as God once created, He is going to re-create the world at the end of time. The miracles provide us with a peek at this future re-creation. Author Tim Keller comments, "We modern people think of miracles as the suspension of the natural order, but Jesus meant them to be the restoration of the natural order. The Bible tells us that God did not originally make the world to have disease, hunger, and death in it. Jesus has come to redeem where it is wrong and heal the world where it is broken. His miracles are not just proofs that He has power but also wonderful foretastes of what He is going to do with that power. Jesus' miracles are not just a challenge to our minds, but a promise to our hearts, that the world we all want is coming." The miracles of Jesus serve as a glimpse and foretaste of what God will accomplish on a grand, universal scale when Jesus comes to establish the New Heaven and the New Earth.