

# MIRACLES

## I. WHAT IS A MIRACLE?

A. Importance of the definition: Unquestionably, the definition of terms has to be the starting point. It is vitally important in this case because many people speak of miracles without knowing what a miracle really is. Therefore, this is the first point which must be established.

B. Definitions.

1. "In the King James Version [KJV] the word 'miracle' in the English is from the Latin miraculum and is translated from two Greek words: seemion and dunamis. The American Standard Version [ASV] renders seemion as 'a sign', and dunamis as 'a mighty work', occasionally, 'great miracle.' These supernatural events were signs, signifying divine accreditation; and mighty works, emphasizing that they were above and beyond the powers of ordinary men" (Guy N. Woods, **Spiritual Sword**, 1974).

2. Seemion: "a sign, a token and indication of the near presence and working of God...They are signs and pledges of something more than and beyond

themselves...valuable, not so much for what they are, or for what they indicate of the power and grace of the doer, as of the connection in which he stands with a higher world. Oftentimes they are the seals of power set to the person who accompanies them" (Gerhard Kittel, **Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament**, Vol. VIII, p. 243).

3. Dunamis: "...points to the divine power which is operative in the event or act, the invisible, supernatural sense of energy which makes the phenomenon possible" (Everett F. Harrison, **Baker's Dictionary Of Theology**, p. 356).
4. "An event which the force of nature, including man's own natural powers, cannot produce and which must, therefore, be attributed to supernatural powers" (Guy N. Woods, **Spiritual Sword**, April, 1974).
5. "Miracles are the works of God apart from his natural laws" (Gus Nichols, **Spiritual Sword**, April, 1974).
6. "Supernatural events in which the work of God appears to set aside or rise above the ordinary laws of nature" (Donald Kauffman, **The Dictionary Of Religious Terms**, ed).
7. "I use the word 'miracle' to mean an

interference with nature by supernatural power" (C. S. Lewis, **Miracles: A Preliminary Study**, p. 10).

8. "An event which could never have been the result of the working of laws of nature as we understand them, but is of such extraordinary character that it requires for its cause the intervention of a supernatural being, i.e., an event which cannot be accounted for by any naturalistic cause" (Wilbur M. Smith, **The Supernaturalness Of Christ**, p.111).
9. "A miracle, then, is an extraordinary event accomplished by the supernatural power in the midst of the world, the working of which is not subject to or explained by the laws of nature" (Clarence Sparks, **Christ And His Miracles**, FHC Lectures, 1973, p. 271).
10. "A miracle is a special interference of supernatural power for a definite moral purpose" (Frank L. Cox, **The Miracles Of Jesus**, p. 4).

C. If we ascertain what a miracle is, it will enable us to determine what a miracle is not. Since the Scriptures employ the word "miracle" to describe a supernatural event, i.e., an event which is above and beyond man or natural law (nature) to perform, it follows that a genuine miracle is not merely an event which staggers the imagination,

a phenomenon, or a one-in-a-million fluke.

- D. A diagram illustrating the contrast between natural and supernatural events:

**NATURAL-**

**Natural Law** - - - - -  
**Event**

**SUPERNATURAL-**

**God** - - - - - **natural law** - - - - -  
**Event**

**II. Three Names For Miracles.**

- A. **Mighty Works:** This indicates their practical nature, the exercise of great powers, without any reference to their meaning.
- B. **Wonders:** These indicate the immediate effect of the mighty works on the minds of the spectators. They were amazed, astonished, bewildered (Mark. 2:12).
- C. **Signs:** These indicate their value. They had a meaning, a significance. They gave proof of something. They attested the mission, the message and the nature of the person who performed them.
- D. Not counting the record of his resurrection, the New Testament presents thirty-seven scenes in which Jesus of Nazareth appears as a miracle worker. By this we do not mean that he

performed only thirty-seven miracles during the days of his public ministry: for in some instances a number were healed on a single occasion (Mark. 1:32-34).

### **III. The Design Of The Master's Miracles.**

A. The design of the Master's miracles is set forth in the fourth gospel "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31). That the character of the worker is revealed in his works is a truth universally accepted. So, in the miraculous works of the Man of Galilee we can see in clearness his character, his mission and the very nature of his being. He is divine. In his miracles we can see three things.

1. Divine Pity-- With only one exception, in each of the thirty-seven miracle scenes, Jesus brought relief to people in distress. The exception is the withering of the fig tree. Moved by compassion for unfortunate people, he fed the hungry multitude, opened blind eyes, healed the afflicted, cleansed the leper, called the dead to life, etc. In these marvelous works, we have a definite manifestation of the love of God, a doctrine most sublime-a doctrine interwoven into the very fabric of the Bible.

2. Divine Power-- No person can read the story of these miracles without being impressed with the power of him who worked them. Neither before nor since his day have such wonders been wrought. Witnesses of these marvelous deeds "were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; he maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (Mark. 2:12; 7:37; Luke. 5:26).
  - a. His miracles were instantaneous. With the exception of the man who saw men as trees walking, in the restoration of his sight, all of the Lord's miracles were immediate, in a moment of time (Matthew 8:1-3; 20:34; Mark 1:30-31; John 5:9).
  - b. His miracles were complete. Completeness was a characteristic common to all of his miraculous deeds. In his clinic no disease was incurable, and there were no fractional cures. In his work-shop, no task was left half done. If there had been just one case, for example, where a man received the healing touch of the Miracle Man and walked away with a limp or wobble, just enough to raise a doubt in the minds of witnesses as to the genuineness of the healing, how quickly the faith of the people

would have been checkmated by the criticism of the skeptic. The perfection with which he performed his miracles was significant of every phase of his ministry and scheme of redemption which he offers lost men.

c. His miracles were permanent. No cure of the great Physician had to be done over. Though he did not immunize, when he healed a person it was closed as far as that particular disease was concerned. Those who came forth from his clinic never suffered a relapse or recurrence of that ailment. In this historical fact we have a reminder of the permanence of his work in a general sense.

3. Divine Purpose-- As in the creation of the world the thoughtful soul can see the design of the Creator, so in the deeds of the Lord Jesus he can read a definite purpose. All things were done according to a wonderful plan or pattern. And what is that plan or pattern?

a. The purpose was not destructive. In all of his miracles, only one was of a destructive nature, but in this instance he made a tree to wither in order that he might construct a

deeper faith in the hearts of men. By nature his work was constructive (Mt. 5:17). Jesus was the great carpenter, the master builder (Mt. 16:18).

- b. Further, the purpose was not creative. We are here speaking of things material. None of the Master's miracles brought material substance into existence. The creative work of God was finished once and for all in the beginning (Gen. 1).
- c. The divine purpose was restorative. His consuming purpose was to give back to man that which had been lost by reason of the fall. He restored speech to dumb lips, strength to withered limbs, sight to blind eyes, hearing to deaf ears, etc. What he did for the bodies of men in those days, he now seeks to do for their souls. His noble purpose is to bring back the Edenic beauty and purity and health of the human race. He would restore the lost son to the father (Luke 15). The gospel of Christ, when believed and obeyed, restores in the heart of man the image of his Maker and prepares him for a habitation in the abode of eternal bliss. "The



heavens declare the glory of God." Miraculous deeds declare the glory of God's Son, illuminating the beauty and the power of his personality. The conclusion of Nicodemus must be true: Miracle Man, God must be with you (John 3:1-2).

#### IV. The Purpose Of Miracles.

A. It is unnecessary to examine every so-called miracle. Instead, we propose to examine the root of the matter, namely, "Why were miracles performed?" and "What were their purpose?" Our thoughts shall be developed after this fashion:

1. All miracles had a divine purpose.
2. This divine purpose has been accomplished.
3. Therefore, there is no need (purpose) for miracles today!

Note: It will be seen that this is the crux of the matter. If this argument can be sustained, the very foundation for accepting modern day miracles will be destroyed.

B. Purpose of miracles--A speeding school bus, clearly out of control, careens off the highway and overturns in a ditch; amazingly, no one is seriously

injured. A drunk rams his car into a concrete abutment at 60 mph and climbs out unharmed, even though his car is demolished. A heavy flowerpot falls off the window ledge on the fifteenth floor of a skyscraper and hurtles toward the crowded sidewalk below; unbelievably, it just misses a child and smashes harmlessly instead. A loved one suffers in the hospital with a serious disease while the doctors are puzzled and seemingly helpless; inexplicably, the fever breaks and the patient begins to recover. What do all these incidences have in common? Each one would be hailed as a "miracle" by so many in the world today!

1. Miracles were to create faith--
  - a. John 6:46-53---"So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus

had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house."

Note the chain of events:

- (1) Jesus declared that some would not believe unless (except) they witnessed a miracle (v. 48).
- (2) The nobleman believed Jesus when He said his son would live (v. 50).
- (3) Upon returning home and discovering that his son was healed at the exact time that Jesus spoke, the nobleman's faith was

made full: he knew Jesus was Lord, along with the rest of his family.

(4) Thus, the miracle of healing resulted in faith among those who experienced the event.

b. I Corinthians 2:1-5--"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Paul declares that the Corinthian's faith was founded upon his "demonstration of the Spirit and power"; not upon pleasing words and worldly wisdom. Again, the performance of miracles created faith in God and obedience to His will.

2. Miracles were to confirm the word.

- a. "And they (apostles) went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen" (Mark 16:20, emphasis mine CEN).

Note: To confirm is to make sure; to make firm; to give new assurance of the validity thereof. Jesus' word (gospel) was to be confirmed by miraculous signs, e.g.: casting out devils, speaking in tongues, taking up serpents, drinking poison, healing the sick (Mark 16:17-18).

- b. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles,

and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will" (Hebrews 2:1-4).

Note: We must give "the more earnest heed" to the gospel of Christ so that we may enjoy that "great salvation." The saving message was first proclaimed by Jesus Christ; following His ascension, the Holy Spirit guided the apostles unto all truth (John 16:13), by which they proclaimed the gospel. We may be confident that Peter and the rest of the apostles preached the truth because their message had God's stamp of approval on it: it was certified by signs and wonders.

3. Miracles were to prove His deity.
  - a. "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe" (I Corinthians 14:22).
  - b. Observe that miracles (tongues) are a sign to the unbeliever, and prophesying was a sign to the believer, and that these miracles proved His deity (Cf. John 3:1).

C. The purpose of miracles have been fulfilled.

1. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), not through miracles. The Calvinists teach that faith is the result of a miracle, the miracle being a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the sinner's heart. Such is patently false! Faith results when the testimony concerning Jesus is heard and believed; and that testimony is found only in the Word of God.
2. This was John's avowed purpose in writing his record of Jesus' life: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).

Observation: **Today, faith comes through hearing the word of God--it is not the result of witnessing a miracle.**

D. The Word (Bible) has been confirmed.

1. "A thing once confirmed is forever confirmed! If the court proves a man innocent of a charge, does it have to convene and reaffirm the man's innocence every year? Certainly not! One merely has to check the written record. Did Moses

have to come back and again call forth the plagues on Egypt for us to believe they were done? Does Jesus have to come back and perform miracles again for us to believe that He is the Son of God? We now have the written record to make believers (John 20:30-31), If one cannot be convinced by the Bible, he would not be convinced if one should rise from the dead (Luke 16:19-31)." (A. G. Hobbs, "**The Purpose of Miracles Has Been Fulfilled**", Spiritual Sword, April, 1974, p. 12).

2. Who will affirm that the New Testament is questionable or insufficient, unreliable, today? Who will contend that it has not been and is not now confirmed or made sure? Nevertheless, this is precisely the position that we occupy if we insist on the occurrence of genuine miracles today.
3. "Special miraculous gifts were given to certain Christians in order to confirm and establish the Gospel as it was preached and to facilitate the harmonious functioning of the body of Christ until such time as [1] the revelation of the gospel was complete, [2] the church was functioning as she should, and [3] leaders could be developed by normal means of spiritual growth (Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:11-12). Once the New Testament was completed and circulated, the need for spiritual gifts would cease to exist. God



does for us today through His inspired word what He once had to do through miraculous means--before the Gospel was completely revealed and confirmed. 'That which is perfect' (i.e., the full revelation of the gospel, James 1:25) is now in our possession. 'That which is in part' (i.e., such miraculous gifts as tongues) has ceased!" (Rubel Shelley, "**No One Has The Gift Of 'Tongues' Today**", Spiritual Sword, October 1970).

4. "Inasmuch as the design of these 'signs and wonders' was to confirm the truth, when this had been accomplished, no further need existed for them and they were removed. The truth (body of doctrine) has been once for all (apax) delivered to the saints (Jude 3), and as there are no further deliverances, there is no place for further confirmations. Thus, all confirmatory signs ended with the completion of inspiration in the apostolic age" (Guy N. Woods, Spiritual Sword, April, 1974, p. 13).

**Observation:** There is no need to work miracles today in order to convince people we proclaim the truth. Instead, we need only proclaim the "whole counsel of God" on any subject, and on all occasions.

**Observation:** Neither is there any need to work miracles in order to assure men of

their faith. We can know that we are serving God if we keep His commandments (I John 2:3) and if we keep His word (I John 2:5).

## V. Miracles To Cease.

- A. The importance of the argument must be understood because their arguments are an attack against the foundation or the root of the issue. If it can be established from the Scriptures that "signs and wonders" were but a temporary feature of the Lord's church, it follows that the so-called miracles of today are counterfeit.
- B. Acts 8:14-17.
1. The disciples in Jerusalem, facing persecution, were scattered abroad (8:1).
  2. Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them (8:5).
  3. Part of Philip's ministry included the working of miracles, which caused many of the people to believe (8:6-8).
  4. The Samaritans, believing, were baptized and saved (8:12-13).
  5. The apostles in Jerusalem, hearing that the word had spread to Samaria, sent Peter and John unto them (8:14).

6. When the apostles (Peter and John) laid hands on the Samaritans they received the Holy Spirit (8:15-17).

**Thus, the argument:**

Major premise: Only an apostle could bestow the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands.

Minor premise: There are no apostles living today.

Conclusion: Therefore, there are no miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit today.

C. Ephesians 4:11-13. Paul's train of thought concerning spiritual gifts may be traced as follows:

1. By whom given? - God (4:8-10).
2. To whom given? - Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (4:11).
3. For what purpose? - "For (that is, with a view to... the perfecting of the saints... in order to do the work of the ministry, in order to edify the body of

Christ" (Guy N. Woods, 4:12).

4. For how long? - Until the unity of the faith, the knowledge of Christ, and maturity (4:13).

**Thus, the argument:**

Major premise: Miraculous spiritual gifts were to continue till the church had received a perfect and complete revelation.

Minor premise: We have a complete, perfect, and final revelation, the New Testament.

Conclusion: Therefore, miraculous gifts have been taken away.

D. I Corinthians 13:8-13.

1. Prophecies, tongues, and knowledge have reference to spiritual, miraculous gifts (13:8).
2. See I Corinthians 12:8-10.
3. Prophecies--included the gift to preach and

teach by inspiration.

4. Tongues--was the gift of speaking another language which the speaker had not previously studied.
5. Knowledge--refers to divine knowledge, not the result of personal study and scholarship.
6. These spiritual gifts were to fail, cease, vanish away (13:8).
7. These terms are translated from two Greek words: katargeo and pauo.
8. Katargeo means to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish.
9. Pauo means to cease, leave off.
10. William Woodson says, "Two points may be established from the use of these two definitive Greek verbs: [1] The verbs indicate an activity in progress which was to cease at a definite time; and [2] The ceasing would be complete, once for all and not a temporary discontinuance" (William Woodson, **FHC LECTURES**, 1973, P. 470).

**Thus, the argument:**

Major premise: That which was in part, or spiritual gifts, would cease

when God's revelation was perfected or completed.

Minor premise: God's revelation has been perfected or completed.

Conclusion: Therefore, spiritual gifts have ceased.

## VI. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS.

- A. While many significant differences can be established concerning the genuine miracles of the Bible and the so-called miracles of our day, it is best to approach the issue from the perspective of the principles involved. It usually proves to be futile to argue about specific events or miracles.
- B. Instead, we have attempted to establish that there are no genuine miracles today on the following basis:
  - 1. Most people do not realize what a miracle really is. Perhaps what they believed to be an act of God can be accounted for on natural grounds.
  - 2. There is no need or purpose for miracles today. Today, faith comes from hearing God's word; that same word has been confirmed "once and for all time".
  - 3. The Bible specifically teaches that by the

end of the apostolic period, miracles were  
to cease, **AND THEY DID!**

# Faith and Divine Healing

## *I. Cases Where No Faith Was Required.*

- A. Matthew 8:15...
- B. Matthew 8:28-34...
- C. Matthew 9:32-33...
- D. Matthew 12:9-14...
- E. Matthew 12:22-23...
- G. Matthew 20:29-34...
- H. Mark 7:32-37...
- I. Luke 7:11-15...
- J. Luke 13:11-13...
- K. Luke 14:2-4...
- L. Luke 22:50-51...
- M. John 5:5-9...

## *II. Cases Where Some Were Healed On Faith Of Others.*



- A. Matthew 8:5-13...
- B. Matthew 9:2...
- C. Matthew 15:21-28...
- D. Mark 9:21-27...
- E. Luke 8:49-56...
- F. John 4:47-51...
- G. John 11:33-34...
- H. Acts 3:16...

*III. Cases Where Some Were Healed On Their Own Personal Faith.*

- A. Matthew 8:2-4...
- B. Matthew 9:20-22...
- C. Matthew 9:27-30...
- D. Mark 10:46-52...
- E. Luke 17:11-19...
- F. Acts 14:9-10...

*IV. One Case Where Jesus Demanded Faith.*

A. Matthew 9:28...

V. *Cases Where Some People Were Healed Over Their Own Protest.*

A. Matthew 8:28...

B. Mark 1:23-25...

C. Mark 5:7...

D. Luke 4:33-35...

E. Luke 8:28-29...

VI. *Cases Where Jesus Healed All Present.*

A. Matthew 4:24...

B. Matthew 8:16...

C. Luke 4:40...

D. Luke 6:19...

E. Acts 5:16...

# The Miracles Classified

## *I. Raising The Dead...*

- A. Luke 7:11-16
- B. Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:22-24; Luke 8:41-56
- C. John 11:32-44
- D. Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:7-11; Luke 24:1-7; John 19:42-20:14

## *II. Casting Out Demons...*

- A. Mark 1:23-26; Luke 4:33-37
- B. Matthew 12:22-23; Mark 3:19-30; Luke 11:14-23
- C. Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39; Mark 5:1-20
- D. Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30
- E. Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-39; Luke 9:37-43
- F. Luke 11:14-26

## *III. Healing...*

- A. John 4:46-54
- B. Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39

- C. Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16
- D. Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:3-12; Luke 5:17-26
- E. John 5:1-9
- F. Matthew 12:9-13; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 6:6-10
- G. Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10
- H. Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48
- I. Matthew 9:27-31
- J. Mark 7:32-37
- K. John 9
- L. Mark 8:22-26
- M. Luke 13:11-17
- N. Luke 14:1-6
- O. Luke 17:11-19
- P. Luke 18:35-43
- Q. Mark 10:46-52
- R. Luke 22:50-51

*IV. Supply...*

- A. John 2:1-11
- B. Luke 5:1-11
- C. Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17;  
John 6:5-14
- D. Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 3:1-10
- E. Matthew 17:27
- F. John 21:6-14

V. *Judgment...*

- A. Matthew 8:30-32
- B. Matthew 21:18-21; Mark 11:12-24

VI. *Deliverance...*

- A. Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:37-41; Luke 8:22-25
- B. Matthew 14:28-31; Mark 6:45-52
- C. John 18:4-6

VII. *Miracles Wrought Not Directly By Jesus, But To Attest To His Divine Power...*

- A. Matthew 2:1-9
- B. Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-12; Luke 3:21-23

- C. Matthew 17:1-14; Luke 9:28-36; Mark 9:1-13
- D. John 12:28-30
- E. Matthew 27:45-53
- F. Matthew 28:2; Mark 16:4
- G. Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50; Acts 1:6-12