

MIRACLES (2)

The Wonder Working Man

A. Introduction

1. To believe in miracles is both reasonable and vital.

Why is it reasonable?

Belief in miracles is reasonable if God exists. These are exactly the kinds of things you would expect God to be able to do.

"The experience of a miracle in fact requires two conditions. First we must believe in a normal stability of nature, which means we must recognise that the data offered by our senses recur in regular patterns. Second, we must believe in some reality beyond nature." (C.S. Lewis)

Belief in miracles is reasonable if the Bible is true. If the Bible is true, then the miracles it tells us about must be true as well.

Why is it vital?

It is vital because if the miracles of the Bible did not happen, how can we trust what the Bible says about everything else.

It is vital because if the miracles of the Bible did not happen, what we believe about who Jesus is and what He has done for us is a lie.

It is vital because if the miracles of the Bible did not happen there is no salvation and no hope for us, because if the natural realm is fallen, salvation needs to come from outside of it.

2. What do we mean by 'miracles'?

A miracle is an unusual or less common event (not only in being rare but also in how it happened) brought about by God, which is recorded for us in the Bible.

The Bible uses three terms to describe these events: Signs, Wonders, and Mighty Works.

"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles [mighty works], wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know." (Acts 2:22)

Signs are something which points to or that indicates something else.

Wonders are events that are extraordinary and cause people to be amazed or astonished.

Mighty works are acts of great power – God's power.

So a miracle is a mighty act of God, that is unusual, causing amazement, and which has a specific purpose.

3. These three different terms – signs, wonders, mighty works – provide us with three useful questions to ask as a way of examining the miracles Jesus did.

- i) What are these mighty works that Jesus did?
- ii) How did these wonders cause people to respond?
- iii) What did these signs point to?

B. The works Jesus did

1. The four Gospels describe a whole range of miracles that Jesus performed.

It is likely that there were other miracles He did that we don't know about, because they weren't recorded for us in the Gospels.

"Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written." (John 21:25)

Of those Jesus did, there are four major categories.

2. Miracles that show Christ's control over nature.

<i>Nature Miracles</i>	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>John</i>
Calming a Storm	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
Feeding the 5000	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-15
Walking on Water	14:22-33	6:45-52		6:16-21
Feeding the 4000	15:32-39	8:1-13		
Temple Tax in the Fish's Mouth	17:24-27			
Withering of the Fig Tree	21:18-22	11:12-14		
Miraculous Catch of Fish			5:1-11	
Turning Water into Wine				2:1-11
Second Miraculous Catch of Fish				21:4-11

3. Miracles that show Christ's control over sickness and disease.

<i>Healing Miracles</i>	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>John</i>
Many healings	4:23-25			
Cleansing a Leper	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-14	
The Centurion's Servant	8:5-13		7:1-10	
Peter's Mother-in-law	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39	
The Sick at Evening	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41	
Paralysed man	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	
Woman in the crowd	9:20-22	5:25-34	8:42-48	
Two blind men	9:27-31			
Many healings	9:35			
Man with withered hand	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
Many sick in Gennesaret	14:34-36	6:53-56		
The lame, blind, crippled, and mute	15:29-31			
Many healings	19:2			
Blind Bartimaeus	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
Deaf mute		7:31-37		
Blind man at Bethsaida		8:22-26		
Crippled woman			13:10-17	
Man with dropsy on the Sabbath			14:1-6	
10 lepers			17:11-19	
High priest's servant's ear			22:50-51	
Official's son of a fever				4:43-54
Infirm man at Bethsaida				5:1-15
Man born blind				9:1-12

4. Miracles that show Christ's control over Satan and demons.

<i>Casting out Demons Miracles</i>	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>John</i>
Demons into a herd of pigs	8:28-33	5:1-20	8:26-39	
Demon-possessed mute	9:32-34			
Man possessed by an evil spirit		1:21-27	4:31-36	
Demon-possessed man blind and mute	12:22-23		11:14-23	
Boy with an evil spirit	17:14-20	9:14-29	9:37-43	
Gentile woman's daughter	15:21-28	7:24-30		

5. Miracles that show Christ's control over death.

<i>Resurrection Miracles</i>	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>John</i>
Jairus' Daughter	9:18, 23	5:22, 35	8:40, 49	
Widow's son at Nain			7:11-17	
Lazarus				11:1-45

6. There is only one miracle (apart from the resurrection of Jesus) that appears in all four Gospels, which is the Feeding of the 5000.

C. The wonder Jesus caused

1. The four Gospels also describe the responses of people to the miracles that Jesus performed.

The most frequent response was amazement.

"The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" (Matthew 8:27)

"When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to men." (Matthew 9:8)

"The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel." (Matthew 15:31)

"When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig-tree wither so quickly" they asked." (Matthew 21:20)

"This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We've never seen anything like this!" (Mark 2:12)

"So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed." (Mark 5:20)

"At this they were completely astonished." (Mark 5:42)

"Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed." (Mark 6:51)

"People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." (Mark 7:37)

"Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today." (Luke 5:26)

It is no surprise that crowds of people flocked to Him.

"News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralysed, and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him." (Matthew 4:24-25)

"News of this spread through all the region." (Matthew 9:26)

"But they went out and spread the news about him all over the region." (Matthew 9:31)

"As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet people still came to him from everywhere." (Mark 1:45)

Sometimes this amazement took the form of fear.

"When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified." (Matthew 14:26)

2. In addition to amazement, there were three other responses to the miracles that Jesus did.

There was indifference as people only saw the wonder.

"Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill." (John 6:26)

"Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region." (Matthew 8:34)

When people saw past the wonder to the wonder worker, the response was either opposition or faith.

"The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons." (Matthew 9:33-34)

"All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." (Matthew 12:23-24)

"But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus." (Matthew 12:14)

"This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him." (John 2:11)

3. What was it about these miracles that Jesus did that caused people to respond in these ways?

The miracles showed His power – He is able.

"All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirit and they come out!" (Luke 4:36)

"They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" (Mark 4:41)

"A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all." (Luke 6:17-19)

The miracles showed His compassion – He is willing.

"When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick." (Matthew 14:14)

"Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way." (Matthew 15:32)

"Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him." (Matthew 20:34)

"Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said, "Be clean!" (Mark 1:41)

"Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." (Mark 5:19)

"When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry." (Luke 7:13)

4. So these mighty works that Jesus did which showed His control over nature, disease, demons, and death were wonders that caused people to respond in amazement.

But why did Jesus do them?

What purpose did they have?