

MIRACLES (4)

The people Jesus did miracles for

A. Introduction

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

It is reasonable if God exists (these are exactly the kinds of things you would expect God to be able to do) and if the Bible the true (if the Bible is true, then the miracles it tells us about must be true as well).

It is vital because if the miracles of the Bible did not happen it means that we cannot trust what the Bible says about anything; what we believe about who Jesus is and what He has done for us is a lie; and there is no salvation because if the natural realm is fallen it needs to come from outside of it.

2. What do we mean by 'miracles'?

The miracles recorded in the Bible are mighty acts of God (mighty works), that are unusual, causing amazement (wonders), and which have a specific purpose (signs).

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

Of those Jesus did, there are four major categories.

Miracles that show Christ's control over nature.

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

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

Miracles that show Christ's control over death.

4. The four Gospels also describe the response of people to the miracles that Jesus performed.

The most frequent response was amazement.

"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)

5. But why did Jesus do these miracles?

To point us to who He is and what He had come to do.

They are proof of His identity:

That He is God – in His own power Jesus does things that God did in the Old Testament.

That He is a prophet – He did things that were similar to those done by the Old Testament prophets.

That He is the Messiah – His miracles fulfilled Old Testament prophecies about a coming King who would save God's people.

They are pictures of His salvation:

The miracles were a foretaste of Jesus' saving work. The particular needs Jesus met point to the greater need He will meet through His death and resurrection for those who trust in Him.

The miracles were a foretaste of what life with Him in His kingdom will be like. They give us a glimpse of what heaven is like.

6. But as well as teaching us about who Christ is and what He came to do, each miracle has something important to teach us about ourselves.

This we see when we study the people Jesus did miracles for.

B. Their condition

1. The people Jesus did miracles for are not random bunch of individuals.

Together they represent humanity in desperate need of being saved by Jesus.

They teach us a lot about ourselves and what we were like.

2. Who does Jesus do miracles for?

The leprous.

"A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." (Matthew 8:2)

The sick.

"When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever." (Matthew 8:14)

The lame.

"Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat." (Matthew 9:2)

The blind.

"As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" (Matthew 9:27)

The deaf.

"There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man." (Mark 7:32)

The mute.

"While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus." (Matthew 9:32)

The deformed.

"Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, and a man with a shrivelled hand was there." (Matthew 12:9)

The demon-possessed.

"When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him." (Matthew 8:28)

The dead.

"Soon afterwards, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out – the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." (Luke 7:11-12)

The outcasts.

"The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant." (Luke 7:3)

"She was a widow." (Luke 7:12)

"Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." (Luke 17:11-14 cf. Leviticus 13:45-46)

3. What were we like?

"If you put together all the maladies of those whom Jesus miraculously healed during his earthly ministry (i.e. those having to do with eyes, ears, tongues, arms, hands, legs, skin and blood) you would have a perfectly deformed man or woman – both internally and externally." (Nick Batzig)

"Why should you be beaten any more? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart is afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness – only wounds and bruises and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil." (Isaiah 1:5-6)

We were leprous – the lepers unclean skin and rotten bones exposes both our internal corruption and external evil deeds.

We were sick – our souls were infected with sin.

We were lame – helpless and unable to walk the paths of righteousness.

We were blind – unable to see the glory of Christ.

We were deaf – unable to hear God's voice.

We were mute – unable praise the Lord.

We were deformed – not the humans God made us to be.

We were under the power of Satan – following his destructive will and living his destructive way.

We were dead – spiritually dead and facing God's wrath in hell.

We were cut off – from God, His place, and His people.

Yet Jesus is able to save us completely.

"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:4-5)

4. But these weren't the only people Jesus did miracles for?

He also did them for His disciples.

He gave them miraculous catches of fish.

"Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." (Luke 5:5)

"He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." (John 21:5-6)

He saved them from the wind and waves.

"Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" (Matthew 8:24-25)

"Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came towards Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" (Matthew 12:29-30)

He fed crowds of thousands for them.

"Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered." (Matthew 14:16-17)

"His disciples answered, "Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?" "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked. "Seven," they replied, "and a few small fish." (Matthew 15:33-34)

5. We live life on this earth in the wilderness east of Eden.

A place of danger.

A place of testing.

"One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out." (Luke 8:22)

We are still as needy and dependent on Christ as we were before He saved us.

"and his incomparably great power for us who believe." (Ephesians 1:19)

C. Their faith

1. The people Jesus did miracles for are not random bunch of individuals.

These individuals represent humanity in desperate need of being saved by Jesus, but also what we need to be saved by Him.

2. The miracles Jesus did were for those who had put their faith in Him.

"When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2:5)

He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." (Mark 5:34)

"Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter." (Mark 7:28-29)

"When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith... Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour." (Matthew 8:10, 13)

"Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." (Luke 17:19)

Jesus refused to do miracles when faith was lacking.

"All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your home town what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his home town." (Luke 4:22-24)

"Jesus said to them, "Only in his home town, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honour." He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith." (Mark 6:5)

"The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it." (Mark 8:11-12)

3. The people who saw Jesus do miracles were expected to respond by putting their faith in Him.

He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (Mark 4:40)

Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." (Mark 5:36)

"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:30-31)

But Jesus' miracles in themselves were not sufficient to generate faith.

"He said to him, '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)

In order to receive the salvation, which the miracles Jesus did point us to, we must trust in Him.

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, and signs pointing to who He is (God, a prophet, the Messiah) and what He came to do.

They also tell us about ourselves and how we desperately need to be saved by Jesus because of the condition we are in, and how we can be saved by Jesus through faith in Him.