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What Does God's Word Say About... Miracles - Part 1

A miracle, as the term is used in the Bible, is an act of God superseding or suspending a natural law. It must not be confused with a work of nature, which is an effect resulting from a natural law of God; neither should it be confused with a work of providence, which is an effect produced by a special act of God through natural means. An example of the working of natural laws is the birth of children resulting from the physical union of men and women. The birth of Samuel, the prophet, in an answer to his mother Hannah's prayer is an instance of natural laws being used in the providential working of God (1 Samuel 1:1-20). The virgin birth of Jesus is an example of the performance of a miracle, in that it was an act of God superseding the natural laws pertaining to biological birth (Luke 1:34-35). The purpose of this series of articles is to answer the question "Have miracles ceased?"

There are countless numbers of people in the world today, representing many religious organizations, who claim to believe that miracles are currently being performed by the power of God. Men are making bold and blatant assertions that God is performing miracles through them in such acts as healing the sick, speaking in tongues, preaching by direct inspiration, seeing visions, and raising the dead. Let us carefully search the scriptures to find out whether or not these claims are worthy of acceptance by reverent Bible believers.

When Jesus and His apostles healed the sick, there were no need for doctors, medicine, or hospitals. Also, the need for convalescence was non-existent because the miracles were immediate and those healed were completely whole. Furthermore, there were no failures (Matt. 4:23) which demonstrates God's power over nature, disease, demons, and death (Matt. 12:22-23; John 11:1, 5-6, 17, 32-44).

The purpose of the miracles in the New Testament were twofold. First, they were for confirmation. They confirmed who Jesus was (Acts 2:22), and they confirmed that Jesus and His apostles' message was from God. "And they [apostles] went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed (Mark 16:20). The Hebrew writer also wrote, "For this reason we must pay closer attention to what we have heard...After it was [the gospel] at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard [the apostles], God also testifying with them [apostles], both by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will" (Hebrews 2:3-4).

Second, miracles were performed to cause belief in Jesus. John wrote, "And many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31). By confirming that these miracles were from Jesus and the apostles, the miracles lead to belief in Jesus as the Son of God. Though miracles benefited individuals, their actual purpose was not for the benefit of the recipient (Acts 13:9-12). Would Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, benefit when he was brought back to physical life? He was in Paradise (Luke 16:19-24) and then brought back to this world of woes! His resurrection was not for his benefit, but it confirmed that Jesus is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25).

In next week's article we will discuss that since God confirmed His word through miracles, signs, and wonders, then He does not need to re-confirm it to this generation. In fact, through His word, He "has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3), and His complete written word is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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