

The Truth About Miracles

I. **Introduction** – Misuse of the term and misunderstanding about miracles abound.

II. **Miracles in the Bible**

A. **Definition of Miracle:** The Biblical idea of miracle as an **extraordinary work** of God, generally **transcending the ordinary powers of Nature**, wrought in **connection with the ends of revelation**, is illustrated by the terms used to describe miracles in the Old Testament and New Testament. (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)

B. **Greek Words**

1. **δύναμις** "Power" (Supernatural, beyond the laws of nature)
2. **τέρας** "Wonders" (Cause extreme astonishment)
3. **σημεῖον** "Sign" (Points to something or someone)
4. As in Acts 2:22, 2:43, 5:12; II Cor, 12:12; He. 2:4.
5. The miracles in the NT demonstrated God's power:
 - a. Over nature, Jesus calmed storms, walked on water
 - b. Over Satan, Jesus cast out demons
 - c. Over sickness, Jesus cleansed lepers, the blind received sight, crippled walked
 - d. Over death, Jesus raised Lazarus, Widow of Nain's son, Jairus' daughter
6. The results were instantaneous, immediate, visible, verifiable causing great astonishment

C. **Three Clusters of Miracles in the Bible followed by REVELATION from God.**

1. In **Moses** Days. Miracles, Signs & Wonders followed by God's revelation, the law, etc... Moses' rod turned into a serpent, 10 plagues, parting of the Red Sea, pillar of cloud and fire, etc..
2. In **Elijah and Elisha's** Days; Miracles, Signs and Wonders followed by all the prophetic revelations from 800 B.C. to 400 B.C
3. In the **Days of Jesus and the Apostles**. Miracles, Signs and Wonders authenticated the Person of Christ and the Gospel message of the NEW AGE of GRACE as REVEALED in the New Testament.

III. **Sovereign Providence** (Pro – knowing before, God will provide)

A. **Definition:** "The continuous activity of God whereby He makes all the events of the physical, mental, and moral realm work out for His purpose, and this purpose is nothing short of the original design of God in creation. To be sure, evil has entered the world, but it is not allowed to thwart God's original benevolent, wise, and holy purpose." (Henry Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology)

B. Types of Providence

1. **Permissive Providence.** (Hosea 4:17) "... Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."
Also, (Romans 1:28) "...God gave them up to a reprobate mind.." Joseph and his brothers. Gen. 37 – 50.
2. **Restrictive Providence** (Job 1:12) "...only upon himself put not forth thine hand..."
3. **Preventative Providence** (Genesis 20:6) "...I withheld thee from sinning against me..."
4. **Directive Providence** (John 13:27) "...that thou doest , do quickly.."
5. **Other passages to consider.** Is. 44:28 - 45:5 , Persian King Cyrus, God chose him to deliver the captives (200 years) before Cyrus was born; Pr 21:1, "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." Php 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Prov. 3:5-6; Psalm 37:4.)

These are not miracles, nor are they new revelation from God.

IV. What Should We Expect Today?

- A. Jesus ascended into heaven, the Apostles died, the NT cannon had been completed, and direct revelation from God has ceased. We now have the Bible, the 66 books for faith and practice. Each believer has the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead into all truth. (John 16:13)
- B. The sign gifts that were given to the Apostles have passed away when the Apostles died.
- C. The Lord is still VERY active in his creation and in the lives of people, both saved the lost.
- D. His working is normally in the "providential manner."
- E. God can and may do works of miracles according to HIS own purpose and timing, but not according to some self appointed apostle in front of the TV camera, or in a stadium.
- F. In our lose 21st. century Christian culture biblical terms and their correct use have lost their true meaning.
- G. A check arriving in the mail just in time to meet a need to pay a bill is not a miracle.
- H. A person stopping to help a lady change a tire on the highway is not a miracle.
- I. Forwarding a Face Book post will not produce a miracle.

V. Conclusion

- A. The believer's life is one of faith. (II Cor. 5:7)
- B. We are to live in a trusting, Spirit filled manner, being led by Him as we are given to regular study and meditation of His Word.
- C. Let us walk circumspectly, beholding the wonder of His beautiful creation all around us, and let us be **spiritually sensitive** to how He directs our life. (Eph 1:18, The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;)
- D. Behind every physical event, or incident, or trial is a much greater spiritual growth opportunity, not only for the person involved immediately, but also for others around.