

What Does the Bible Teach About Miracles?

Part One: Five Great Periods of
Miraculous Activity in the Bible

4/22/21 - Thursday Indepth Bible Class
of the Trilacoochee church of Christ

Five Great Periods of Miraculous Activity in the Bible

- Removing an illusion:
 - We often think that miracles occurred often and continuously throughout the Old and New Testament scriptures. It was not that neatly arranged.
 - In reality, they were few and clustered together.
 - Relatively few people ever witnessed a miracle.

Five Great Periods of Miraculous Activity in the Bible

- God created everything by miracle, but He chose to sustain it by law.
 - He would need a good reason to suspend natural law, purposes that support and glorify His plans are that reason.
- Similarly, with inspiration:
 - 2Peter 1:12-21 - They spoke as they were moved
 - The writing came much later.

Five Great Periods of Miraculous Activity in the Bible

- We tend to over-represent the number of miracles in the Bible.
 - The miracles tend to cluster around short, special periods
 - Even in the periods of miracles, they aren't as plentiful or magnificent as they could be. They're rather spare and austere.
 - God parted the Red Sea and gave the Israelites daily manna from heaven, but He didn't flood them with feasts or build jeweled cities

Five Great Periods of Miraculous Activity in the Bible

- Jesus fed the five thousand bread and fish, but not a sumptuous feast.
 - God seems to give His people just enough miracle to get by and no more.
 - According to the Biblical account, the only remarkable thing Jesus did as a child was to display wisdom in the temple at age 12. Notable, but not overtly miraculous
 - The long stretches without miracles and the austerity of those that occur lend credibility to the miracles in the Bible.
 - We appreciate them more because they are rare.

Bible Miracles

- The word "miracle" plainly means a spectacular event, or an event, that triggers wonder. In Biblical usage, the word 'miracle' is limited to less than the conventional meaning of the word. A miracle is described in these ways:
 - An extraordinary event, unfathomable in conditions of natural forces,
 - An occurrence that causes the witnesses to assume a phenomenal personal origin,
 - An occasion that represents a proof (a sign) of consequences that are much broader than the occasion itself.

Bible Miracles

- Miracles are to be differentiated from the kind of answers to prayer, which do not comprise 'signs,' or expressive evidence for the unbeliever.
 - What Christians know as miracles are not purely works of chance or answers to prayer.
- Works of magic are not of God, and miracles performed by the hand of God should be characterized as works of God not magic.
 - Magic consists of nothing more than a wonder with a predetermined method

Bible Miracles

- Miracles are also confused at times with the works of Satanic or demonic origin and should be distinguished from them.
- There are events in nature, which cause one to wonder or marvel, and these should be distinguished from miracles of God. These events in nature are simply oddities of natural phenomena.
- The word “miracle” in contemporary English is used to mean something quite different than miracle in the Bible. “It was a miracle!”
- True miracles of God always teach a lesson and give a definite ‘sign’, demonstration of God’s truth to believers and non-believers alike.

Major Periods Of Miracles

- Most of the miracles recorded in the Bible can be placed into five periods, with a few brief occasions of lesser miracles.
 - The Creation and on a lesser basis with Abraham
 - The time of Moses and the Exodus, and Joshua and the conquest; establishment of Jewish nation (1400 BC) and on a lesser basis with Judges and early Kings
 - The time of Elijah and Elisha and the struggle with idolatry during period of the kings (850 BC)
 - The time of Daniel and Minor Prophets and the captivity (600 BC)
 - The time of Jesus and the apostles (30-70 AD)
 - These are to be distinguished from periods of inspiration and revelation, which also appear to be limited and periodic

Major Periods Of Miracles

- Creation
 - Overwhelming exhibition of power
 - Very little witnessed by humankind
 - Effects to be appreciated by humankind later

Major Periods Of Miracles

- The time of Moses and the Exodus, and Joshua and the conquest
 - The burning bush
 - The ten plagues of Egypt
 - The parting of the Red Sea
 - The crossing of the Jordan
 - The fall of Jericho
 - The battle of Gibeon
 - Numerous other miracles between the parting of the Red Sea and Crossing of Jordan

Major Periods Of Miracles

- Following the second period of miracles there was a long period under the judges when godly faith was revitalized under the rule of David and Solomon. It was during this time that miracles were few.
 - A period of idolatrous worship led to the third great period of miracles, centered on the work of Elisha and Elijah.
- The time of Daniel and the writing prophets, the fourth great period of miracles
 - The miracle of Jonah
 - The miracles in the time of Isaiah - 2Kings 19:35, 20:9-11
 - The miracles in the book of Daniel

Major Periods Of Miracles

- Perhaps the greatest time of miracles happened during the time of Christ in His ministry and that of His apostles during the early days of the church.
 - Healing of the leper (Matthew 8)
 - The centurion's servant (Matthew 8)
 - The healing of the wife's mother (Matthew 8)
 - Calming of the sea (Matthew 8)
 - The casting of the devils into the swine (Matthew 8)
 - A woman with an issue of blood (Matthew 9)
 - The blind men healed (Matthew 9)
 - A man with the withered hand (Matthew 12)
 - The feeding of the multitude (Matthew 14)
 - Walking on water (Matthew 14)
 - A child vexed with a devil (Matthew 15)
 - A great catch of fish (Luke 5)
 - The lame man made whole (John 5)
 - The blind man healed (John 9)
 - Water into wine (John 2)
 - Miracles of the apostles (Acts 9; 13; 19; 1Cor. 12; Gal. 3; Heb. 2)
 - Miracles of the disciples - tongues, prophecy, interpretation, etc.
- There were close to 40 miracles of demonstrative nature performed by Christ recorded in the Gospels alone - John 20:30

Major Periods Of Miracles

- Great periods of miracles followed times of great spiritual need
 - During the time of the Exodus, God's people had forgotten His name.
 - Through the course of the ministry of Elisha and Elijah, the people converted to Baal and Molech.
 - In the time of Daniel and Minor Prophets, God's people were in exile and in danger of being absorbed into the oblivion in Babylon
 - In the time of Christ, self-righteousness, hypocritical attitudes, and religious corruption were rampant. But primarily, it was the time of the change of covenants

Miracles Had A Purpose

- They are for edification and revelation
 - John 20:31 - “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”
 - 1Kings 18:37-39 - “‘Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.’ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, ‘The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!’”

Miracles Had A Purpose

- They are to confirm God as the ultimate source of all things.
 - John 4:48 - “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.’”
 - Acts 2:19 - “I will show wonders in heaven above
And signs in the earth beneath”
 - 2Cor. 12:12 - “Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds”

Miracles Had A Purpose

- Miracles introduce periods of Divine revelation
 - Moses and Joshua: the time of the giving of the Law
 - Elijah, Elisha, major and minor prophets: introduced the prophetic office, the prophetic age, and the books of prophecy
 - Christ and apostles introduced the era of the New Testament revelation of the new covenant.

Duration Of Miraculous Periods

- None of those periods lasted much more than a hundred years.
 - Each period experienced a proliferation of miracles unheard of at other times in God's redemptive history.
 - But even during those times, miracles were not just normal everyday occurrences that happened to anybody and everybody
 - Miracles were not happening everywhere to all people. And aside from those five intervals, the only other miracles recorded in Scripture are very isolated events.

Duration Of Miraculous Periods

- Miracles didn't happen to God's people in the normal course of life.
 - While God can at any time can inject Himself into the human events supernaturally, but He chooses to limit Himself.
 - The rest of the time, God works through providence or in response to prayer by providence or established natural law.
 - He doesn't need to accomplish His will through miracles; they were for our benefit, not His

Duration Of Miraculous Periods

- God does not need to do miracles for every Christian every day to prove His love.
- He does not need to do miracles every day to convince people that He exists.
- He only needed to authenticate the Word for our benefit, and when the authenticated Word was fully revealed there is no longer any need any longer for authenticating miracles.

Are Miracles Necessary Today?

- When the Old and New Testaments were completed, God's revelation was finished.
- Does God have to keep doing miracles?
 - Is there a need for ongoing miracles to authenticate the Bible?
 - Does weak faith require a miracle to remedy it?
 - Does God do miracles on demand?
 - Are the phenomena that are occurring today, hailed as "signs and wonders and healings," really necessary and authentic?
- The answer to all of these questions is no.

What Does the Bible Teach About Miracles?

- 1Peter 1:7-9 - "...The revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls."



What Does the Bible Teach About Miracles?

**Conclusion: Modern Miracle Workers
Or Pious Pretenders?**

**4/29/21 - Thursday Indepth Bible Class
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What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Failing To Do?

- Every miracle that Christ did, and more
 - John 14:12 - “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Failing To Do?

- Every miracle that Christ did, and more
 - Works of nature - John 6 - calm storm, walk on water.
 - Control elements - water to wine, feed 5000
 - Control demons and madness - Gadarene man
 - Read minds - Matt. 9 - Palsied man
 - Cure all diseases - Cancer, leprosy, paraplegics, AIDS
 - Prophecy - Deut. 13:1-3; Speaks consistently with what has been revealed - Deut. 18:20-22
 - Raise the dead - Luke 7:15; John 11 - Lazarus



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Doing?

- Making excuses
 - “You don’t have enough faith.”
 - Mark 16:17 - “And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues.”
 - Matt. 17:20 - “Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”
 - How much faith did the water have to be turned into wine? The faith is in the one performing the miracle.



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Doing?

- Making excuses
 - “You don’t have enough spirit; you are weak in the Lord.”
 - 1Cor. 3:1-2 - “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able”
 - Corinth was weak and carnal, and they still performed genuine miracles.



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Doing?

- Getting the cart before the horse.
 - John 10:37-38 - “If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.”
 - Jesus used the miracles to prove the word; modern day miracle workers use the word to try to prove their miracles.



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Forgetting?

- The purpose of miracles
 - Confirm the deity of Christ
 - John 20:30-31 - “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Forgetting?

- The purpose of miracles
 - Confirm the teaching of the word
 - Mark 16:17-20 - “And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. 19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.”



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Forgetting?

- The purpose of miracles
 - Confirm the teaching of the word
 - Heb. 2:3-4 - “For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Forgetting?

- Not everyone received a gift nor the same gift.
 - 1Cor. 12:29-30 - “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?”



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Forgetting?

- Tongues aren't the best gift, yet that's the one they all want. And gifts aren't even the best "way."
 - 1Cor. 12:31 - "But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way."



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Forgetting?

- Every tongue speaker must have an interpreter or he is to keep silent. They must speak one at a time, too.
 - 1Cor. 14:27-28 - “If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. 28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.”



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Forgetting?

- Tongues are a sign for unbelievers, not to confirm one's salvation.
 - 1Cor. 14:22 - "Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe."
- Is God redundant or so uncertain that He needs to re-confirm that which has been proven?



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Doing To Themselves?

- Bringing themselves under a curse
 - Gal. 1:7-9 - “There are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”



What Are Modern Day Miracle Workers Doing To Themselves?

- Making fools of themselves
 - 2Tim. 3:8-9 - “Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.”
- Burning themselves out religiously



Have Modern Day Miracle Workers Performed Any Miracles?

- They have followed no New Testament authority or examples in their performance; therefore, a performance is all they are accomplishing.



Have Modern Day Miracle Workers Performed Any Miracles?

- Miracles have ceased
 - 1Cor. 13:8-10 - “Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.”



Have Modern Day Miracle Workers Performed Any Miracles?

- Miracles have ceased
 - Zech. 13:1-3 - “In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. 2 It shall be in that day, says the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land. 3 It shall come to pass that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the LORD.



Have Modern Day Miracle Workers Performed Any Miracles?

- Only the apostles could give gifts to obedient believers.
 - Rom. 1:11 - “For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established.”



Have Modern Day Miracle Workers Performed Any Miracles?

- Transmission of gifts was by apostles only.
 - Acts 8:14-18 - “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, 15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money.”



Have Modern Day Miracle Workers Performed Any Miracles?

- There never was any doubt over New Testament miracles.
 - John 11 - Lazarus was dead four days and walked from the tomb.
 - Matt. 12 - man with withered hand in presence of skeptical Pharisees.



Have Modern Day Miracle Workers Performed Any Miracles?

- There never was any doubt over New Testament miracles.
 - Acts 3:6-10 - “Then Peter said, Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them--walking, leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 10 Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”



Have Modern Day Miracle Workers Performed Any Miracles?

- There never was any doubt over New Testament miracles.
 - Acts 5:14-16 - “And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 15 so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. 16 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.”



Have Modern Day Miracle Workers Performed Any Miracles?

- There is nothing but doubt over modern miracles.
- 2Cor. 12:12 - “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty works.”
- “Be patient with me, and show me a mighty work.”



Have Modern Day Miracle Workers Performed Any Miracles?

- There are no more miracles.
- Those who are involved with them are either deceivers or deceived. It is our duty to bring them out of this error.
- Many of them are sincere, but they are sincerely mistaken.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matt. 7:15).

