

“Show Us a Sign”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Matt. 12:38-39; Heb. 2:3-4 - The great salvation has been confirmed by:
 - 1. Signs - supernatural means of pointing toward something important
 - 2. Wonders - supernatural events that astonish and amaze
 - 3. Various miracles - Visible manifestations of Divine power
 - 4. Gifts of the Holy Spirit - The Source Giver of miraculous power to men
- B. What do we know about Bible miracles?
 - 1. What were they?
 - 2. Why did they occur?
 - 3. What was their source?
 - 4. Who could do them?
 - 5. Where were they done?
 - 6. When were they done?

I. WHAT WERE BIBLE MIRACLES?

- A. Understanding miracles will not take place until we learn what the Bible means by the word miracle.
- B. Misconceptions:
 - 1. Any act of God - “God's answer to my prayer was a miracle.”
 - 2. An amazing event - “The birth of my child was a miracle.”
 - 3. Something highly improbable - “The fact that he survived the tsunami was a miracle.”
- C. Biblical definition - “A discernibly supernatural event demonstrating God's control and power over the material intended to produce faith in His word.”
 - 1. It is intended to produce trust in the authenticity of God's word.
 - a. Mark 16:20; John 20:30-31; Acts 14:3
 - 2. It demonstrates God's control and power over the material condition.
 - a. John 3:2, 9:32-33
 - 3. It is necessary to discern between an event that is clearly supernatural and one that is not beyond nature.
 - a. Jesus walking on the water was discernably supernatural, because it was visibly beyond the laws of this universe.
 - 4. However, just because a thing is supernatural does not necessarily mean it is a miracle.
 - a. God's existence is supernatural, but not miraculous.
 - b. God's answer to prayer may be supernatural, but not necessarily miraculous, as in the case of Hanna's prayer for a son.
 - 5. It must also demonstrate God's power and control of the terrestrial.
 - a. Without doubt, God performs supernatural events in heaven on a regular basis; however, as heaven is not governed by the laws of this universe, those events would not be miraculous.
 - b. A miracle must take place in this universe in order for it to be discernable as a miracle.
 - c. Bible miracles manifested God's power and control over nature, disease, death, and possession.

- d. If a miracle isn't demonstrable over a terrestrial cause, then it's not a miracle. Subjective opinions and protestations of faith do not make it so.

D. Examples of Bible miracles:

1. Axe head floating - 2Kings 6:5-6
2. Jesus walking on water - Matt. 14:25-27
3. Raising the dead - John 11:43-45
4. Healing the blind, deaf, and disabled - Matt. 11:5

E. Examples of answered prayer without involving the miraculous:

1. Hanna's prayer for a son - 1Sam. 1:10-20
2. Prayer of Abraham's servant for a wife for Isaac - Gen. 24:12-15
3. Esther's prayer for deliverance from Haman's plot to exterminate the Jews - Esther 4:1-3
4. Joseph's protection from God in Egypt - Gen. 39:2, 21

II. WHO COULD PERFORM MIRACLES?

A. God is the source of all true miracles, and it is His power that empowers the one who performs the miracle.

1. Acts 3:11-13, 10:38, 14:3; John 15:26; Rom. 15:18-19

B. God approves His spokesmen and miracle workers.

1. Moses - Ex. 4:1-9
2. Elijah - 1Kings 17:17-24, 18:24
3. Jesus - John 5:36, 14:10-11; Acts 2:22
4. Apostles - Acts 2:43, 5:12; 2Cor. 12:12
5. Those upon whom the apostles laid hands - Acts 8:14-19, 19:6

III. WHEN WERE MIRACLES PERFORMED?

A. Changing God's covenants with humankind - Ex. 4:29-31

B. Validating the authority of Jesus and the apostles - Acts 4:29-30

C. When God required His word confirmed

1. 1Kings 18:24; Dan. 3:28, 6:26-27; John 11:43-45

D. Godly compassion - Matt. 14:14, 20:34; Mark 1:41; Luke 7:13

E. Was faith required in the person receiving it? Occasionally, but not always

1. In some cases faith was a requirement
 - a. The woman with an issue of blood - Matt. 9:22
 - b. The blind man of Jericho - Luke 18:42-43
 - c. The lame man of Lystra - Acts 14:9-10
2. Lack of faith also limited the ministry in some cases.
 - a. The unbelievers at Nazareth - Matt. 13:58; Mark 6:5-6
3. But not always
 - a. The dead son of the woman of Nain - Luke 7:11-16
 - b. The lame man of Bethesda - John 5:5-15
 - c. The blind man near Siloam - John 9:1-7
 - d. The lame man at the temple - Acts 3:1-8

Conclusion: Signs, wonders, miracles, and works of the Holy Spirit were designed to point one in the direction of salvation, just like the Gospel; and, just as with the Gospel, many persons ignored the point of the miracles. There is no secret formula or magic incantation that will suddenly move you to obey the Gospel or be restored to the faith. Your response depends entirely on you.