

## **Miracles**

In order to become a Christian, we must believe in Jesus. We learn about Jesus from information found in the Bible. We believe information that is found in the Bible because God confirmed the people who wrote the Bible through miracles. In order to study about God, the Bible must be accepted and a belief in miracles is essential for the Bible to be attested to.

### **Miracles defined**

Augustus H. Strong provides the following definition: "A miracle is an event in nature, so extraordinary in itself and so coinciding with the prophecy or command of a religious teacher or leader, as to fully warrant the conviction, on the part of those who witness it, that God has wrought it with the design of certifying that this teacher or leader has been commissioned by Him."

Miracles are more than a super-normal, unexplainable occurrence. Odd phenomena are often considered to be a miracle but our lack of understanding does not determine a miracle.

Miracles are more than supernatural acts of God. God acts in the lives of people normally. The conversion of a person to Christ is a tremendous supernatural act of God, but it does not fit a biblical miracle.

Miracles are more than a supernatural and extraordinary phenomenon. A true miracle must coincide with God's revelation. In the Bible, miracles were always in the context of revelation from God. A true miracle authenticates the messenger from God.

### **Miracles are possible**

Some hold that miracles cannot occur because of scientific or philosophical reasons. One most common reason is that miracles are impossible because of the uniformity of natural law. Since the laws of nature are unchanging, then anything that diverts from nature is impossible. But miracles, by definition, are events that are extraordinary diversions from natural law produced by the God who overcomes natural law to produce the miracle. The laws of nature do not tell us what must occur, only what nature does. Just like aerodynamics overcomes the law of gravity, so God overcomes the law of nature.

Science cannot explain miracles, but this alone does not prove they do not exist. There are many non-miraculous natural occurrences that science is yet to explain.

Arguments against the possibility of miracles are essentially arguments against a theistic God. Once you establish a theistic God, then miracles become possible. If miracles are possible, then the next question concerns their occurrence. Simply showing that miracles are possible does not show that they actually occur.

**Miracles do occur**

Some will personally witness a miracle and still deny its existence (cf. Luke 16:31; Acts 2:13). This is unbelief and is impossible to overcome. Witnessing a miracle by Jesus and denying its validity, indeed ascribing it to other sources, is what Jesus said shall not be forgiven (Matthew 12:22-32). This is the highest form of unbelief in that no more vivid revelation will be given beyond what has been rejected.

Some people will not believe in a miracle unless it is proven to them. They must personally witness the miracle before they will acknowledge the possibility that miracles exist. This is a standard they uniquely apply to miracles. There is much that is accepted by us through the testimony of other reliable sources.

The question then surrounds the reliability of witnesses to miracles. Witnesses may be deluded or fooled. Many falsely claim to produce miracles. Techniques are used to deceive people. Things are claimed to be miraculous that are natural phenomena. This is particularly found in so-called faith healing today.

Yet the witnesses of the biblical miracles were not deluded or fooled. One reason is because there were so many different miracles and multitudes of witnesses to miracles. It is difficult to consider so many to be fooled.

Another reason witnesses of biblical miracles were not fooled is due to the type of miracles. The miracles in the Bible were of such a dramatic nature that they were undeniable. Everyone, even Christ's enemies, stood amazed for they were unable to deny or discredit the miracles. No medical examinations were necessary for His healings were clearly evident to all. The validity of the healings was never based on one person's testimony but what was observable. Because men two thousand years ago were not as medically sophisticated as men today are does not mean they cannot be credible witnesses to the miraculous healings.

These miracles served to authenticate the messengers of God's revelation to man. They were critical to establishing the God-given authority of the apostles and prophets. The reality of miracles is an essential presupposition to the study of God.