

Resources:

Lewis Sperry Chafer. *Systematic Theology Vol. 5.* Pg. 170-176; *Vol. 7.* Pg. 239
Pastor David Thompson. *Biblical Miracles Series.* Texas Corners Bible Church
Charles Ryrie. *The Ryrie Study Bible*
C. I. Scofield. *The Scofield Reference Bible*

Jesus was a miracle worker, but what were those miracles all about? Why did Jesus perform signs and wonders? Why did He heal? Why did He do the supernatural?

What I believe we will learn tonight is this:

THE BIBLE TEACHES US THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS AND IS A MIRACLE WORKER WHO PERFORMS MIRACLES TO MEET SPECIFIC PURPOSES.

We will ask and answer 5 questions.

Question #1 - What is a miracle?

Lewis Sperry Chafer gave a simple explanation to miracles that I think is very Biblical. He said, "what is natural with God may be supernatural with man" (*Systematic Theology Vol. 7.* p. 239). In other words, man is limited and the environment that man lives in appears to be limited, but God is not limited. He is able to do things that go beyond the limitations of man and man's environment. The reason I think this is accurate and Biblical is because of what Jesus said in Luke 18:27, "*the things that are impossible with people are possible with God.*"

David Thompson defined a miracle this way: "A miracle is a supernatural, extraordinary and special act authorized by God in which He chooses to permit a deviation from the continuous and normal and natural law of something and chooses to do something that people witness which is far above and beyond human power, experience and explanation in order to make a statement for Himself, His Word, His will and His program" (*Biblical Miracles Lesson #2*).

So a miracle, according to the Bible, is something that God allows to happen that goes beyond the normal limitations of man and the natural laws of this universe.

Question #2 - Where do we see the majority of miracles in the Bible?

There are 4 major portions of the Bible where we see a lot miracles taking place, and the rest of the Bible does not contain much or any miracles. For example, Abraham did not perform any miracles. King David did not perform any miracles. John the Baptist was not a miracle worker, and the apostles, as the book of Acts comes to a close, do not perform miracles.

1. - Miracles were prominent in the days of Moses and Joshua. **Exodus - Joshua**

Moses' ministry of bringing the nation of Israel out from Egypt was certainly accompanied with miracles. When Moses' life was coming to an end, Joshua was the military leader that was appointed to lead the nation of Israel, and the people of Israel saw God's miraculous work in the days of the conquest of Joshua. That event of Jericho and the walls falling down was certainly a miracle of God. But after Joshua, and after the Law age was established and the nation of Israel settled in part of the land promised to them, the miracles settled down as well.

2. - Miracles were prominent in the days of Elijah and Elisha. **1 Kings 17 - 2 Kings 13**

Elijah was a prophet raised up by God who worked many miracles. Elisha was Elijah's apprentice, and we learn that Elisha has even more miracles recorded of him than Elijah had. God used these two men during a time when Israel was wrapped up in idolatry and rebellion against God. God used them to wake up His own people and to reveal to their minds and hearts that the LORD is the God and false gods were really no gods at all.

3. - Miracles were prominent during the days of Jesus and the apostles. **Matthew - Acts**

The majority of Biblical miracles occurred during the life and ministry of Jesus. After Jesus ascended back to heaven, the apostles were given the ability to perform miraculous works. We see that Peter was able to heal people, and Paul spoke in all kinds of different languages without having to train in those languages. These miracles gave evidence that their message was of God and proved their authority as representatives of Christ. We do, however, see the miracles of the apostles fade away as the New Testament was being written and came to a completion.

4. - Miracles will be prominent during the days of the Great Tribulation. **Revelation**

The Bible tells us that God will once again do things that are miraculous on this earth, but this future time will not impress people and make people rejoice; these miracles will be signs and wonders of judgment. This will be the scariest time in all of history. This will be worse than the ten plagues on Egypt.

Question #3 - What were the various kinds of miracles that Jesus performed?

There are 3 words to describe Jesus' miracles in the Bible.

1. - Jesus performed signs. **John 6:2 (READ)**

Signs of Jesus were miraculous events that were specifically purposed to give evidence that Jesus has divine power and authority. By the use of the word sign, that meant that the miracle had a greater purpose than the miracle itself. The miracle was not done in order to

impress people. The miracle was done in order to signal that Jesus had authority and power and that the presence of Almighty God was near them because of Jesus.

2. - Jesus performed wonders. **John 4:48** (READ)

The term wonder refers to something that would leave eye witnesses awestruck and amazed by what they saw. This word indicates that people who saw the miracles were impressed, confused, and astonished by what just took place. For example, the calming of the storm left the disciples of Jesus completely terrified (Mark 4:41).

David Thompson makes a good point about this word. He noted that this word 'wonder' is never used alone. This word is always accompanied in the New Testament with the word 'signs'. What that would tell us is that miracles are never intended to be something that just leaves people in wonder. Rather, the wonder of the miracle should point people's minds to see a sign that points to Jesus and His authority and power.

3. - Jesus performed miracles. This word is often translated 'miracles' in the NASB, but 'works' in the ESV. **Matthew 11:20** (READ).

The idea of the term 'miracle' or 'work', as we already noted, indicates that this is something God allows which goes beyond the limitations of men and the natural laws of this universe. Jesus performed many miracles.

He healed leprosy. He healed a Roman centurion's paralyzed servant. He healed Peter's mother-in-law. He healed demon possessed people. He healed a woman of a chronic hemorrhage. He healed blind people. He healed a deaf man. He healed a royal official's son from a distance. He calmed the waves, the wind, and the sea. He walked on water. He fed five thousand. He fed four thousand. He withered a fig tree. He placed a coin in a fish's mouth. He allowed twice for the disciples to catch a huge amount of fish. He turned water to wine. He rose Jairus' daughter back from death. He raised back to life the son of a widow. He called Lazarus out of a tomb. And He even came back to life Himself.

Question #4 - Why did Jesus perform miracles?

If we look through the New Testament, I think we can come up with 3 basic reasons why Jesus performed miracles.

Reason #1 - Jesus performed miracles in order to display His divine credentials. **Acts 2:22-24**

Peter said in Acts 2 that Jesus was a man who was attested by God. According to Webster's, the word 'attest' means to certify as genuine by signing as a witness. Peter declared that God the Father gave His stamp of approval on Jesus, declaring Jesus'

ministry to be genuinely from God, and God the Father did this by performing miracles, signs, and wonders through Jesus of Nazareth.

How do we know Jesus was legitimate? How can we know that Jesus has the divine credentials necessary to be our Savior? The miracles give us the proof.

Reason #2 - Jesus performed miracles in order to reveal His glory. **John 2:11**

Glory is the manifestation of the excellence of Almighty God. Glory is the awe-striking, astonishing wonder of God. Glory produces worship. And Jesus revealed His own glory through His miracles. Jesus revealed that He is God through His miracles. He revealed that He is the glorious, second member of the triune God.

Reason #3 - Jesus performed miracles in order to generate faith. **John 14:11; 10:36-38**

This third reason is key to understanding why Jesus performs miracles. Jesus performed miracles so that people would believe in Him and be saved. Jesus said, "I want you to believe my words, but if you can't believe my words, look at my works, so that you will believe in Me. If you look at my works and believe Me, you will eventually look at my words and believe me."

We said earlier that Jesus' miracles serve a purpose. He never did any miracle just for Himself. He didn't make bread out of rocks for Himself. He didn't stop time so He could sleep in late because He was tired. All His miracles were for others, and they were meant to point people to faith in Him. His purpose in His miracles was to generate faith, because as Jesus said in Mark 5:34, faith is what makes a person well.

Question #5 - What application can we make of Jesus' miracles in our lives today?

#1 - Jesus' miracles should strengthen our confidence in what He is able to do for us.

#2 - Jesus' miracles should lead us to see His glory.

#3 - Jesus' miracles should generate faith in our lives.

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