

The Gospel According to John

4-10-2019

1. Last week I taught in part Joh 2:18 by way of the *Doctrine of Miracles* and when the clock tolled 7:45 P.M. we had just raised the question: **What About Miracles Today?**
2. Before we return to our study, I want to give you opportunity to use 1Jo 1:9 as may or may not be necessary.
3. I want to review some of that learned and then begin new material on page three. Let's start the review by looking at an expanded translation of Joh 2:15-18.

Expanded Translation

Joh 2:15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

Joh 2:16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"

Joh 2:17 Later, His disciples remembered what was written in Psa 69:9: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

Joh 2:18 Then several of the Scribes demanded from Jesus, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to rebuild the Temple in three days?"

Doctrine of Miracles

Introduction

1. The age of miracles is not per se over but the gift of miracles has vanished.
2. We must look to the Scriptures for guidance with reference to miracles.
3. Every heart beat in the Devil's world is a miracle, the sick being cured, the baby being born, the Gospel being proclaimed, the Word being taught and many other mundane, everyday occurrences are miracles in this the Devil's domain.
4. Should we therefore pray for the extraordinary? Of course, declares the Scripture.

Nature of the Miraculous

1. Since the term miracle is popularly applied to unusual events, it is not easy to give the word miracle its true biblical significance.
2. Probably the simplest definition was provided by C.S. Lewis “an interference with nature by supernatural power.”
3. J. Gresham Machen in his book, The Christian View of Man said, “A miracle is an event in the external world that is wrought by the immediate power of God ...”
4. A miracle occurs when God does something beyond what could be accomplished according to the laws of nature as we understand them, and may be in violation of them.

The Purpose of Miracles

1. Some tend to view miracles as isolated events. Miracles always have a purpose. Every event in the life of a believer has a definite purpose and though we may not view it as such, it is a miracle.
2. Miracles served to authenticate the message and the messenger of God at critical junctures in the development of the Hebrew-Christian story.
3. They also helped preserve the truth of God from extinction given the many efforts to destroy God’s Word.
4. By all rights the Bible should have been destroyed and yet it is the most accurate book available from antiquity; a miracle!

Old Testament Miracles

1. Moses was a stranger to his people and needed a means to demonstrate that he had been sent by God to lead them from bondage. Moreover, “He needed” a way to persuade Pharaoh to release the enslaved Israelites.
2. God led the Israelites out of Egypt, He had to exercise miraculous power to bring millions of them through the wilderness and into Canaan.
3. Elijah and Elisha ministered to Israel in a day when calf worship and Baal worship threatened to exterminate faith in God. 1st Ki 18:21-40

4. Daniel and his associates were thrust into positions of leadership in a day when the temple and Hebrew political power had been destroyed, and when a large percentage of the leading members of the Hebrew community were exiled, raising many questions in the minds of those exiled ...

5. The miracles performed in Babylon gave ringing answers to all of these questions. (See Pastor Merritt's study books of Daniel chapters, two, three, five and sixteen)

The Miracles of Jesus

1. They had several purposes:

- to demonstrate His Deity and thus to prove that He was sent from God,
- to support His Messiahship,
- to lead His followers to saving faith,
- to help prepare His disciples for the ministry they were to perform.

2. The miracles of the incarnation, the resurrection, and the ascension are part and parcel of the divine provision of salvation for mankind.

The Plausibility of Miracles

1. Men living in the age of science frequently have difficulty accepting the miraculous.

2. God is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, sovereign, righteous, just, eternal life, love, immutable and truth; why would anyone doubt His ability to create miracles? Mar 4:38-41

3. The only hope for victory over Satanic power is through the Incarnate Christ. Luk 8:30-31; 1Co 15:18-23

4. The only hope for the human race rests in Jesus Christ who died for our sins and rose again and ever lives to make intercession for us.

What About Miracles Today?

1. The question is often raised as to whether the modern church may enjoy the same power of performing miracles as the early New Testament church.

2. It must be granted that God is omnipotent and could enable His own to perform miracles today.
3. While it is clear from Scripture and history that God generally and gradually ceased to work through “signs” and “wonders” as the Canon was being completed and distributed, I think we all can agree miracles do occur today.
4. Well-authenticated occurrences of the miraculous are seen today.
5. Among tribal peoples miracles seem to abound, perhaps to attest to the message and messenger or perhaps under the auspices of Satan to confound and obfuscate the saving grace of Christ. Many missionaries attest to being challenged by local magic men who can perform miracles.
6. Wycliffe in his Bible Encyclopedia has written:
 - 6.1 “In ... primitive tribes, miracles apparently did not occur after a church had been established. This is not to imply that miracles have not occurred or will not occur ...”
7. In the third world or tribal lands Satan and his demon hordes seem to work overtly. As a result, it does seem that God often answers Satan with overt miracles of His own.

What About the Gift of Miracles? Is There Evidence of Their Gradual Decline?

1. A categorical study of the early temporary gifts give further documentation that a gradual decline did in fact occur. For example:
 2. Paul, early in his ministry could heal and often did so; the same is true of the other Apostles.
- Acts 19:11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:
Acts 19:12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.
- 2.1 Later the whip gifts vanished as prophesied by Paul in 1st Corinthian Chapter thirteen and Phi 2:25 compared with 2Ti 4:20.

1Co 13:8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, **they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.**

1Co 13:9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part,

1Co 13:10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

1Co 13:11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.

1Co 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

Phi 2:25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

Phi 2:26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

Phi 2:27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

2Ti 4:20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

2.1.2 Unger in his book on Tongues speaks of the temporary gifts as having been hissed off the stage when the Canon of Scripture is completed, i.e., **“when that which is perfect came.”**

2.2 Additionally, both Unger and Thieme conclude that Scripture itself seems to indicate a gradual reduction in the use of temporary or whip gifts as the Bible unfolded.

2.3 I early alluded to the fact that after A.D. 58 there was no evidence of whip gifts being extant. By whip gifts I refer to such gifts as tongues, interpretation of tongues, discerning of spirits, healing, the gift of teaching, the gift of wisdom, the gift of prophecy, etc.

2.4 After the writing of 1st and 2nd Corinthians in c. 56 and 57 A.D., there is no mention of the whip gifts; a significant number of books of the Bible were in fact written and distributed after 1st and 2nd Corinthians.

2.5 For example, we had: Colossians, Galatians, Philemon, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus, 1st and 2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John, Hebrews, Jude and Revelation.

Caveats Concerning Certain Miracles

1. In the Olivet Discourse Christ prophesied that false Christs and false prophets would perform miracles.

Mat 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

2. We must be very careful with reference to analyzing what appears to be a miracle.

2Co 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

2Co 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Mat 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

Mat 7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

End Lesson

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