

THE POINT OF MIRACLES

People call all kinds of things miracles that are not really miracles. A newborn baby is called a miracle. The avoidance of a near collision is called a miracle. Getting in touch with a long-lost old friend is called a miracle. Almost any wonderful turn of events is called a miracle. But often what is called a miracle doesn't square up with what the Bible defines as a miracle.

Miracles are not to be confused with God's providential working. Both are God-things but they are distinct. A miracle involves God's supernatural intervention bypassing the normal laws of nature. Providence is God's care of His people in keeping with the normal laws of nature involving precise timing and the exact fitting together of circumstances. When you get a loved one to the hospital just in time and just the right doctor who knows is stuff able to revive him, that is PROVIDENCE. A miracle would be God's intervening touch that instantly turns everything around to where there is no need for a hospital or a doctor.

"Providence is when God chooses to remain anonymous in His working; whereas a miracle has His clear signature on it." – Unknown Author

Esther is the book in the Bible that highlights God's providential care of His people. God's name is not mentioned even one single time in the book and yet His providential hand is seen throughout the book.

MIRACLE CLARIFICATIONS:

1. Miracles are supernatural phenomena that bypass the normal laws of nature. In contrast providence speaks to God's sovereign working in keeping with the normal laws of nature involving precise timing and the exact fitting together of circumstances to a predetermined end.
2. There are two sources of miraculous phenomena: God and Satan (cf. Exodus and Rev.). God is all-powerful, whereas Satan is limited, being able to do only what God allows.
3. Miracles that have their origin in God have a purpose relating back to God and HIS GLORY. They have "sign" value that teaches or demonstrates something in relation to God. In the Bible, they most often validate or illustrate a message/messenger from God (cf. John 12:37; 20:30-31; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4).

4. God-related miracles performed through human instruments are essentially demonstrations of power over the normal laws of nature, over demons, and over sickness and disease. They basically fit into one of these three specific categories as performed by the apostles. An exception to this would be Christ Himself, Who, in addition to these categories, also did miracles over nature. Only God does miracles over nature such as when Christ calmed the storm (cf. Psalm 107:29; Mark 4:35-41).

5. God is seen to be performing miracles in one fashion or another throughout history. However, in biblical history, there have been 3 major periods in which sign miracles as performed by God through the vehicle of human instruments have been somewhat the norm.

- 1) Moses and Joshua: (cf. Exodus, Joshua).
- 2) Elijah and Elisha: (cf. 1 Kings, 2 Kings).
- 3) Christ and the Apostles: (cf. the Gospels, Acts).

6. Miracles speak to the issue of LORDSHIP in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, with special emphasis on Christ's LORDSHIP in the New Testament. An essential purpose of miracles is to demonstrate the power and reality of God, showing that He is LORD GOD OVER ALL.

As Christ performed miracles, they verified His Messianic claims on the basis of fulfilled Old Testament prophecy (cf. Isa. 35:5-6; Mt. 11:5). In accordance with Scripture the things Jesus did demonstrated that He was not just an ordinary man, but THE SON OF GOD, LORD, DEITY, INDEED THE MESSIAH (cf. Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7).

As such, the sign-miracles that Christ did proved His Messianic credentials and form the basis of faith going forward (John 20:30-31). God does not need to continually validate Himself but rather expects once His sign-miracles are validated in history that, going forward, that account is fully sufficient for people to come to faith based on the God-established record. It is established in history and the Spirit bears witness to the message. This was true of the once and for all established miracles in the Exodus which were the MAJOR sign-miracles for the whole of the Old Testament era (cf. Ex. 9:16). It is also true of the once-for-all established sign-miracles of Christ which forever establish the truth of WHO He is (cf. Jude 3).

John 20:30–31 (NKJV)

30 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.