

## 9. The Miracles of Christ

### 1. We Can't do Miracles Today

Christ could perform miracles, things over and above the course of nature. We can't do that today. We read of two occasions during Christ's lifetime when He gave that power to some of His disciples for certain evangelistic campaigns. And he left His apostles with the power to perform them for a short time after His ascension. The Bible calls them "*signs and wonders*," and we are told they were specifically the signs of an apostle:

2 Corinthians 12:12

*Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.*

But even the apostles didn't have this power for very long. We find that, towards the end of his life, even Paul couldn't heal his friend:

2 Timothy 4:20

*Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.*

What were these miracles? The best list we have is in Matthew 10, on the occasion Christ gave these powers to his twelve disciples for the first time:

Matthew 10:1,8

*And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.... Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*

These are completely different from the "*spiritual gifts*" mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. People often confuse the two. Many today think we can perform miracles like Christ did. And the list of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, includes "*miracles*" and "*healing*":

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

*For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues....*

People assume these are the same as the miracles Christ did. But they're not. The Greek word for "*miracles*" in 1 Corinthians 12 is "*dunamis*," which is usually translated "*power*." The usual word used for Christ's miracles is "*sayimon*," which is usually translated "*sign*." You can argue over what the spiritual gift actually is, but it's not the same as Christ did.

Nowhere in the spiritual gifts do we find miraculous healing of the sick, cleansing lepers, raising the dead, or casting out devils. These were the "*signs*" Christ and the apostles did, not the "*spiritual gifts*," which I suggest we can have today, if interpreted properly. The gifts include "*wisdom*," "*knowledge*," "*faith*," "*helps*," "*governments*," and "*tongues*,"

which are simply other languages. These are nothing at all to do with the “*signs and wonders*” which only Christ and the apostles could do.

So, if aunt Bessie is sick, we don’t go up to her and say, “Be healed in the name of Jesus!” What can we do? We pray. There is a God in heaven who can heal. He is the one we go to. He may heal, or He may not. It may be her time to die. But we still go to Him and accept whatever He has for her. We don’t try to pretend we can heal her ourselves.

## **2. What was the Purpose of the Miracles?**

The miracles were not an end in themselves. Physical healing is not an end in itself. We’re all still going to die:

Hebrews 9:27

*It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment....*

Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, but he still died again later on. The miracles only point to something greater, namely the fact that Jesus was the Christ, the only one who can save us from what our sins deserve. Nicodemus saw He came from God:

John 3:2

*The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

Miracles had hardly ever happened before. The man born blind in John 9 said:

John 9:32

*Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.*

We find miracles only occasionally in the Bible, notably the Exodus and in the time of Elijah and Elisha. Other than that, they are few and far between. But throughout the Bible we constantly see the wonderful miracle of Providence. God keeps His people in remarkable ways. That’s the real miracle we see all around us every day:

Romans 8:28

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

That’s the real Christian life, living our lives trusting in all things working together for good, even when they don’t seem to be. Natural processes aren’t bypassed, as in a “*sign and wonder*” miracle. But things work out in remarkable ways, within the laws of nature.

Christ’s miracles pointed to something greater, His deity. But the people didn’t realise that. They just wanted more miracles now. When people started following Him after miraculously feeding 5,000 men plus women and children from five loaves and two fish:

John 6:26,27

*Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.*

They didn't see the miracles, in other words, what they were pointing to. They were pointing to the fact that He was God, He was the Christ who had come to save His people from the consequences of their sin. The miracles were just pointers, they weren't supposed to be an end in themselves. But that's what the people wanted. Free food. Free healthcare. That's it. Something for nothing all the time. They weren't interested in His teaching. They couldn't care less about salvation to eternal life, about having their sins before God forgiven. And that's all people want today as well. Things here, now.

We are called not to labour for things down here, on this earth, "*which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.*"

### **3. Why Different Ways of Performing the Miracles?**

Christ performed the same miracle in different ways. For example, we read of three blind men receiving sight:

With blind Bartimeus in Luke 18, He just said the word and he was healed:

Luke 18:42  
*Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.*

With a man in Bethsaida in Mark 8 He did it in two stages:

Mark 8:22-25  
*And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.*

And with the man born blind in John 9, He again used spit then told him to wash:

John 9:6,7  
*When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

Christ used a variety of methods to do the same thing. Why is that? Each one of these methods must be teaching us something about our spiritual blindness.

These blind men obeyed Christ in every detail, even if it sounded odd. It worked. Suddenly light. And we should just do what Christ tells us. Allow Him to change us. When we first became a Christian, we have to admit that talking to somebody we can't see is a really odd thing to do. But that's what we did when we first came to know the Lord. We're

we're all born spiritually blind. And when Christ comes into our lives, He makes us see. Suddenly light. The Bible comes alive. The things of God become a reality. We suddenly see the truth. And that's what the miracles are pointing to, a spiritual reality.

With both the man born blind and the man in Bethsaida, Christ used His spit. Isn't that strange? What gives us spiritual light? The Word of God, the words of Christ. That's the picture. If we want spiritual light, we must come to Jesus Christ. Not me, not Mohammed, not Buddha, but Jesus Christ. His words are living and powerful. They convert the soul.

Psalm 19:7

*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.*

Hebrews 4:12

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

So, that's what the miracles of Christ are all about. Only He and the apostles had the power to do them. They were never meant to be an end in themselves, but pointed to the divinity of Christ. And even the way Christ performed them teaches us lessons.