

9. The Miracles of Christ

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.

[12] 我在你们中间，用百般的忍耐，藉着神迹、奇事、异能，显出使徒的凭据来。

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. 特罗非摩病了，我就留他在米利都。

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.

[1] 耶稣叫了十二个门徒来，给他们权柄，能赶逐污鬼，并医治各样的病症。.... [8] 医治病人，叫死人复活，叫长大？疯的洁净，把鬼赶出去。你们白白的得来，也要白白的舍去。

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....

[8] 这人蒙圣灵赐他智慧的言语，那人也蒙这位圣灵赐他知识的言语， [9] 又有一人蒙这位圣灵赐他信心，还有一人蒙这位圣灵赐他医病的恩赐，

[10] 又叫一人能行异能，又叫一人能作先知，又叫一人能辨别诸灵，又叫一人能说方言，又叫一人能?方言。

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.

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....

[27] 按着定命，人人都有一死，死後且有审判。

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.

[2] 这人夜里来见耶稣，说「拉比，我们知道你是由神那来作师傅的；因为你所行的神迹，若没有神同在，无人能行。」

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.

[32] 从创世以来，未曾听见有人把生来是瞎子的眼睛开了。

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.

我们晓得万事都互相效力，叫爱神的人得益处，就是按他旨意被召的人。

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

26 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.

[26] 耶稣回答说：我实实在在的告诉你们，你们找我，并不是因见了神迹，乃是因吃饼得饱。

27 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.

[27] 不要为那必坏的食物劳力，要为那存到永生的食物劳力，就是人子要赐给你们的，因为人子是父神所印证的。

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."

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.

耶稣说：你可以看见！你的信救了你了。

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.

他们来到伯赛大，有人带一个瞎子来，求耶稣摸他。耶稣拉着瞎子的手，领他到村外，就吐唾沫在他眼睛上，按手在他身上，问他说：你看见甚麽了？他就抬头一看，说：我看见人了；他们好像树木，并且行走。随后又按手在他眼睛上，他定睛一看，就复了原，样样都看得清楚了。

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.

[6] 耶稣说了这话，就吐唾沫在地上，用唾沫和泥抹在瞎子的眼睛上， [7] 对他说：你往西罗亚池子里去洗（西罗亚？出来就是奉差遣）。他去一洗，回头就看见了。

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, you 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 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.

Psalms 19:7

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

[7] 耶和華的律法全備，能苏醒人心。

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.

[12] 神的道是活泼的，是有功效的，比一切两刃的剑更快，甚至魂与灵，骨节与骨髓，都能刺入、剖开，连心中的思念和主意都能辨明。

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.