

## Did Jesus Perform His Miracles By The Power Of The Devil?

### Introduction.

- I. The question “Did Jesus perform His miracles by the power of the devil” is one that deserves our consideration.
- II. Men have tried to defame Christ and to explain His miracles in different ways.
  - A. Some **deny that Jesus ever lived**, and contend He then could not have worked miracles.
  - B. Some seek to **explain the miracles of Jesus by affirming they were fake**, and Jesus and the disciples deluded the people into thinking He really did miracles.
  - C. Some say the miraculous of Jesus **were psychological miracles** and not real miracles that superceded the laws of nature.
    1. The people who ate the loaves and fishes were not full from the bread and fish, but were so filled with the teachings of Christ that they no longer felt hungry.
    2. Those with this explanation either deny even the possibility of miracles or seek to explain away every miracle with some natural explanation.
    3. They affirm there is no supernatural; thus, Jesus could not have performed miracles.
  - D. There are others who believe Jesus performed miracles, but emphatically affirm He did it by the power of the devil.
    1. Those who do this must also charge the apostles did their miracles by the power of the devil. (Matt. 10:1-8).
    2. They must charge the seventy did their miracles by the power of the devil. (Lk. 10:1-9).
- III. This particular study will deal with allegation that Jesus did His miracles by the power of the devil.

### I. Miracles Of Jesus

- A. The New Testament records many of the miracles of Jesus but not all of them. (Jn. 21:25).

JOH 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.

1. The words “even the world itself would not contain the books which were written” are not literal, but are a hyperbole meaning it would take many volumes to record all He did.
  - a. Jesus was on the earth about 33 years.

- b. The gospels record the activities of just a few weeks of His life.
- 2. The words “many other things which Jesus did” is not limited to miracles but most assuredly included some or many miracles.
  - a. It did not refer to the saving truth that was delivered to the apostles. .
  - b. The apostles received “all truth” (Jn. 14:26;16:13), and they proclaimed this complete, all-sufficient truth. (Acts 20:20, 27).
  - c. God’s word is complete. (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3).

2TI 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

2TI 3:17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2PE 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

JUD 1:3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

- d. We are neither to add nor take away from it. (Matt. 15:9; Gal. 1:6-8; 2 Tim. 1:3; Rev. 22:18, 19). See Deut. 4:2.; 12:32.

- 3. The New Testament writers never claimed to record all of His miracles. (Jn. 20:30, 31).

JOH 20:30 Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

JOH 20:31 but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

- a. John clearly states he did not record all the miracles of Jesus.
- b. The other gospel writers never claimed to record all His miracles, but did record more miracles than John.
- 4. Each of the writers recorded some of the miracles of Jesus - some were the same miracles and some were different.
  - a. They were recorded to produce faith.
  - b. They were recorded to teach and support vital lessons.
- B. The New Testament records that most often the miracles of Jesus were accepted as real and produced faith.
  - 1. Jesus did miracles that could not be denied.
  - 2. He healed lepers, the lame, the blind, the deaf, etc.
  - 3. He even raised those who were dead. (Jn. 11:43,44; Mk. 5:38-42; Lk. 7:12-16).

C. The New Testament also records that some accepted the miracles of Jesus as real, but argued Jesus did them by the power of the devil.

1. There was no way to deny the miracles of Jesus.
2. They were performed before friends and foes, before believers and unbelievers.
3. They could only challenge the origin.

## II. **The Charged Made Against Jesus** - The charge was made against Jesus that He did miracles by Satan.

A. Matthew records Jesus healed a man that was blind and could not speak. (Matt. 12:22).

1. This miracle created belief on the part of the multitudes. (Matt. 12:23).

MAT 12:23 And all the multitudes were amazed, and began to say, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?"

2. This miracle evoked a quiet different response from His enemies.

MAT 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons."

Beelzebul was a heathen deity. He is believed to be the prince of evil spirits (Matt. 10:25; 12:24, 27; Mk. 3:22; Lk. 11:15-28).

1. By some Beelzebul is thought to mean {ba'al zebel,} the "dung god," an expression intended to designate with loathing the prince of all moral impurity.
2. It is supposed, at the same time, that the name Beelze{bub,} the Philistine god of flies, was changed to Beelze{bul} ("god of dung") and employed in an approbrious way as a name of the devil.
3. Others prefer to derive the word from {ba'al zebul,} the "lord of the dwelling" in which evil spirits dwell.  
Unger Bible Dictionary.

**We cannot be sure of the meaning of the word, but Jesus' enemies used it as a name for the devil and Jesus did not dispute or deny their usage of the word.**

- a. It is very significant to point out that the Pharisees did not deny Jesus "cast our demons" or did other miracles.
- b. They recognized Jesus did miracles but affirmed He did it by the devil.

B. Jesus' quick response to this horrific charge. (Matt.12:25-26).

MAT 12:25 And knowing their thoughts He said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand.

MAT 12:26 "And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?

Satan's kingdom is "the domain of darkness." (Col. 1:13). See Acts 16:18; Rom.2:19; Rom.13:12).

1. Jesus affirmed that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.
2. He then affirmed that if Satan was casting out demons he would be divided against himself and Satan's kingdom would fall.
3. Even these hostile men did not believe it was reasonable that Satan would be divided against Himself.
4. Satan does not fight against Himself.
5. Only Christians do that. This is abominable to God. (Jn. 17:20-23).

JOH 17:20 "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

JOH 17:21 that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.

JOH 17:22 "And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one;

JOH 17:23 I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.

C. Jesus gave additional arguments against their wicked explanation of His miracles.

MAT 12:27 "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges

- If it be true that one had to be in league with Satan to cast out demons, this would incriminate both them and their disciples.
- Their disciples will condemn them for leading them down a false path.

1. The "sons" (their disciples) made claims to cast out demons.
  - a. If one must be in league with Satan to cast out demons, they were saying that their disciples were in league with Satan.
  - b. They were not ready to accept this nor were they to receive the criticism of their own disciples.
2. Jesus gives the meaning of His miracles done "by the Spirit of God."

MAT 12:28 "But if [since] I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

- a. The word "if" has the force of "since." It is not an "if" of doubt. See Matt. 4:3.
  - b. The fact Jesus was doing miracles by the Holy Spirit indicated "the kingdom of God" had come upon them - that is, it was about to be establish. (Matt. 3:1; 4:17; 10:7; Mk. 9:1).
3. Jesus gives the argument of "the strong man's house."

MAT 12:29 "Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

- a. The devil is the strong man.
  - b. Jesus could only cast out his property [the demons] by binding Satan that would manifest He was not in league with Satan and was more powerful than Satan.
4. The one not for Him was against Him.

MAT 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters

- a. Jesus warns that the one who is not for Him is against Him.
- b. He is showing that they were making themselves His opponents.
- c. It was a very serious thing to oppose One through whom "the Spirit of God" was working.

#### **D. Jesus' grave warning**

MAT 12:31 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.

MAT 12:32 "And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come.

1. Jesus warned that those who blasphemed the Holy Spirit would never be forgiven "in this age, or in the age to come."
  - a. Lit. "in this the age nor in the [one] coming"
  - b. The Greek "aion" means "age, world."
  - c. "Age" is the best translation in this context and has reference to the Jewish Age in which Jesus was living and the Christian Age to follow.
  - d. There is no second chance. (Heb. 9:27).
  - e. There will be no forgiveness of sins in the world to come. (2 Cor. 5:10).
2. Jesus was doing miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:34), but they were saying it was by the power of the devil.

JOH 3:34 "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.

- a. Others had a limited measure of the Holy Spirit.
  - b. Jesus had "the Spirit" (the Holy Spirit) without measure.
3. They were thus calling the Holy Spirit the devil (an unclean spirit) and would not be forgiven for that sin.

4. It will be explained later why possibly the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit was an eternal sin..
5. They could be forgiven if they spoke against Himself (the Son of Man), but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was an unforgivable sin.
6. Peter, Paul and all the apostles sinned against Jesus and were forgiven.
  - a. Judas could have been forgiven if he had repented.
  - b. The other thief on the cross could have been forgiven if he had repented. (Lk. 23:39, 40; Mk. 15:27).
7. We can be forgiven of sins of which we will repent. (1 Jn. 1:7, 9).

E We find on another occasion that the scribes made the same sinful charge about the miracles of Jesus.

MAR 3:22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

**F. Jesus addressed this serious charge.**

MAR 3:23 And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?"

1. The folly of believing that Satan would be divided against himself.

MAR 3:24 "And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

MAR 3:25 "And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

MAR 3:26 "And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!"

2. Jesus once again used **the strong man argument**.

MAR 3:27 "But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

1. The strong man is Satan, and "his property" here would be the demons.
2. Instead of being in league with Satan, Jesus would have to overpower him to "plunder his house."
3. How could I despoil Satan without overcoming him?
4. This would indicate that Jesus was no mere man, but was God.

3. Jesus warns of the seriousness of this sin.

MAR 3:28 "Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter;

MAR 3:29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but **is guilty of an eternal sin** "--

MAR 3:30 because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

#### 4. **The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is defined.**

- a. Mark's account explains that it was calling the Holy Spirit "an unclean spirit."
- b. This agrees with the idea of speaking against [blasphemy].
- c. Imagine the wickedness of calling the Holy Spirit the devil!
- d. Imagine the hardness of heart that lead to such wicked speech!

#### 5. There are probably two reasons why this is an unforgivable sin.

- a. It came from one who was past repentance.
  - 1) This person could not be touched by the death and life of Jesus.
  - 2) Sin would not be forgiven because of lack of repentance.
  - 3) Sins repented of are forgiven. (1 Jn. 1:7, 9).
- b. The Bible indicates that one can reach this state. (Heb. 6:6; 1 Tim. 4:2; Heb.10:26,27).
- c. This theory, if it became accepted, would make it impossible for the gospel to spread throughout the world. Men would always associate Jesus with the devil rather than God.
- d. Every good and kind deed would be attributed to the devil.

#### **Note:**

- Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is not rejection of the gospel.
  - (1) Those who reject the gospel cannot be forgiven of any sin. (Rom. 1:16; 1 Thess. 1:8,9; Jas.1:18; Mk. 16:15).
  - (2) It is not certain anyone ever committed this sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit in the early church.
  - (3) There is no record of it or warning against it.
  - (4) This may not prove it did not exist, but it certainly indicates it was rare (if it existed at all).
- Jesus warns against committing that sin.
  - (1) It is not certain the sin can be committed today.
  - (2) The miracles of Jesus and the apostles were to confirm the gospel, but once it had been confirmed it is uncertain the sin could be committed.
  - (3) Jesus had already been proven the Son of God. (Matt. 3:16; Jn. 17:5; Rom.1:4; Jn. 20:30,31; Heb. 2:4).

### **III. Other Indications That The Enemies Of Christ Believed He Did Miracles**

- A. Jesus did miracles in the presence of those who did not believe in Him. (Mk. 2:1-7; Lk. 14:1-6).

1. The healing of the paralytic shows Jesus did miracles and His enemies knew it.

MAR 2:1 And when He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home.  
MAR 2:2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them.  
MAR 2:3 And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men.  
MAR 2:4 And being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying.  
MAR 2:5 And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven."  
MAR 2:6 But there were **some of the scribes sitting there** and reasoning in their hearts,  
MAR 2:7 "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"  
MAR 2:8 And immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?"  
MAR 2:9 "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Arise, and take up your pallet and walk'?"  
MAR 2:10 "But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-- He said to the paralytic--  
MAR 2:11 "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home."  
MAR 2:12 And he rose and immediately took up the pallet and went out in the sight of all; **so that they were all amazed** and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

- "all" includes "the scribes." (Mk. 2:6).
- Friend and foe could not deny this miracle.

2. The healing of the man of dropsy showed His enemies He had power from God.

LUK 14:1 And it came about when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching Him closely. 2 And there, in front of Him was a certain man suffering from dropsy. 3 And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" 4 But they kept silent. And He took hold of him, and **healed him, and sent him away**. 5 And He said to them, "Which one of you shall have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?" 6 And they could make no reply to this.

- The symptoms of this disease is a collection of water in the cavities of the body, or on its surface, or in the limbs.
- They knew a miracle had occurred.

B. We also have statements that indicate they accepted Jesus was doing miracles. See above Matt. 12:24 & Mark 3:22.

1. The **words of Nicodemus** reveal Jesus had miraculous power from God.

JOH 3:2 this man came to Him by night, and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a42). teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

1. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and he realized Jesus was doing signs. It is not clear who is included in the "we."
2. We do know that many rulers of the Jews were believers. (Jn. 12:42), but did not submit to Christ.

2. The healing of the man born blind shows the enemies came to believe Jesus did miracles by God.

JOH 9:16 Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "**This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.**" But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them.

They are rejecting the miracle, at this time, not on the basis of a lack of evidence, but they believed God would not work a miracle through one who according to them had violated the Sabbath.



JOH 9:17 They said therefore to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, **since He opened your eyes?**" And he said, "He is a prophet."

**JOH 9:18 The Jews therefore did not believe it of him, that he had been blind, and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight,**

It is noteworthy that the parents and their son had no faith in Jesus before this miracle. Through their testimony the unbelieving Jews are recognizing that a miracle had occurred.

JOH 9:19 and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?"

JOH 9:20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;

JOH 9:21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he shall speak for himself. "

JOH 9:22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

JOH 9:23 For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

**JOH 9:24 So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner."**

This recognizes the miracle had occurred. They do not want to give credit to Jesus, but "to God."

JOH 9:25 He therefore answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

JOH 9:26 They said therefore to him, "What did He do to you? **How did He open your eyes?**"

Once again they are recognized that this man had been healed of his blindness. **It could not be denied.** Even charging Jesus was a sinner could not change the fact of the healing.

### 3. The raising of Lazarus from the dead forced His enemies to recognize He was doing signs.

JOH 11:45 Many therefore of the Jews, who had come to Mary and beheld what He had done, believed in Him.

JOH 11:46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done.

JOH 11:47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs.

1 Here is a clear statement that the Pharisees recognized Jesus "was performing many signs."

2. This is the Sanhedrin - the supreme court of the Jewish nation.

### 4. John states many of the rulers believed in Him.

JOH 12:42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;

1. The Greek literally has "the rulers" rather than the "chief rulers."

2. This would include people such as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and perhaps other members of the Sanhedrin.

3. Most of these men were intimidated by their peers and did not want to be cast out of the Synagogue and lose their positions.

### 5. Peter's statement on Pentecost before the Jewish multitude showed Jesus did His miracles by the power of God.

ACT 2:22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—

1. The Jews did not deny Jesus had done “miracles and wonders and signs” through Jesus, and many who had opposed Christ became baptized believers that day. (Acts 2:37, 38, 41).
2. All through the book of Acts men accepted the fact Jesus did signs and became believers.

## Conclusion

### I. It is interesting that the Jewish historian Josephus wrote:

“Now there was about that time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles.”

II. The Jewish Talmud, written in the fifth century A.D., records that Jesus performed powerful deeds but attributes His miracles to sorcery.

III. It is clear that the enemies of Christ did not deny His miracles, but because of their corruption attributed the miracles of Jesus to the devil.

A. They were not able to deny the miracles of the apostles.

B. A study of the Gospels and Acts reveals that the enemies of Christ did not deny their miracles (Acts 2:43; Acts 5:12), but sought to shut them up by threatening them and persecuting them.

C. It is noteworthy to point out that His enemies did not even deny His resurrection.

MAT 28:11 Now while they were on their way, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened.

MAT 28:12 And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers,

MAT 28:13 and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.'

MAT 28:14 "And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble."

MAT 28:15 And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.

IV. Jesus clearly refuted this wicked, fallacious argument by His words and deeds, and revealed that truly He is “the Christ, the Son of God.”.

JOH 20:30 Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

JOH 20:31 but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

ACT 2:22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—

