

Miracles

Introduction.

- I. In Matthew the 14 chapter we read of Jesus feeding the multitude with 5 loaves and 2 fish. (Matt. 14:19-21).
Relate Immediately after feeding the multitude, Jesus made His disciples get into a boat and go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. (Matt.14:22-33).
- II. Jesus walking on the water is one of many miracles recorded in the Old and New Testaments. There are two school of thought in reference to these miracles.
 - A. There are many who **reject these supernatural acts** and maintain that it is impossible for a miracle to occur. There attitude is well expressed in the words of a **professor** in one the leading Theological Seminaries.

“An intelligent man who now affirms his faith in miracle can hardly know what intellectual honesty means. The hypothesis of God has become superfluous in every science, even that of religion itself. Jesus did not transcend the limits of the purely human. He never thought of ascribing a pre-mundane existence to himself; nor did he claim to be the judge of the world. It is doubtful if he ever called himself the ‘Son of man.’”
 - B. There are many others, and I include myself in this number, who believe the miracles actually occurred. We fully believe in all the miracles recorded in the Old and New Testaments.
- II. I would like for us to discuss the arguments for and against miracles. As we enter into this relevant discussion, let us define what we mean by a miracle and show the great importance of this subject to Christianity.

I. Miracles Defined

- A. The term “miracle,” as used in the Bible, is something above and beyond the laws of nature, and beyond the natural power of man.
- B. Examples of miracles would be (1) Turning the Nile to blood (2) The dividing of the Red Sea (3) The virgin birth of Christ (4) Jesus walking on the sea and raising the dead.

II. Importance Of The Subject - The great importance of this subject is set forth in three passages in the New Testament.

- A. **John** wrote. (Jn. 20:30, 31).
 1. John states that the miracles of Christ were recorded as a proof of His Sonship and that man might believe in Him.
 2. If these miracles did not occur, Christ’s Sonship has not been proven and He was an imposter because He claimed to perform miracles.
- B. It says in Hebrews 2:4.

1. The miracles the apostles performed showed they were from God.
2. If they did not perform miracles they were not from God and we cannot put any confidence in what they said.

C. **Paul** wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

1CO 15:12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

1. The resurrection of Christ is perhaps the greatest miracle in the Bible as far as the Christian is concerned. His resurrection is the pledge of our resurrection.
 2. Paul contends if this miracle did not occur, we are still in our sins. We are without hope and are to be pitied.
- D. These three passages should show us the great **importance of the miracles of the Bible**. Christianity stands or falls with the proof or disproof of miracles.

III. **Objections** - We are now ready to consider the objections against miracles.

A. Many modernists argue that **“no testimony can prove a miracle.”** They contend, on this premise, that the testimony of the biblical writers about miracles is not reliable. The writers either lied or were mistaken.

1. **David Hume**, the Scottish skeptic, said:

“A miracle, supported by any human testimony, is more properly a subject of derision than of argument.”

2. In other words, he is saying **human testimony is not reliable**.
 - a. According to this reasoning, **our courts are worthless** because they are built upon the belief that human testimony is reliable.
 - b. His argument, if true, also means that we must **reject that which we have not seen with our own eyes** in history.
 - 1) If human testimony is not reliable, we must reject George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and others because none of us have ever seen these men. This should show us the fallacy of Hume’s thinking.
 - 2) Human testimony is reliable and those who reject the miracles of the Bible are rejecting the testimony of

thousands of people who saw them, and who were willing to die for their faith.

B. Others assert that the **uniformity of the laws of nature** makes a miracle impossible.

1. Those who use this objection are **limiting God**.

a. They are saying that God who created the world and put the natural laws into effect cannot work in opposition to them. This is absurd.

b. The God who put the natural laws into force can work in opposition to those laws if He so desires.

2. **Professor George Stokes** has this to say on this point: “We know very well that a man may in general act uniformly to a certain rule, and yet for a special reason may on a particular occasion act quite differently. We cannot refuse to admit the possibility of something analogous taking place as regards the action of the Supreme Being. If we think of the laws of Nature as self-existent and uncaused, then we cannot admit any deviation from them. But if we think of the laws of nature as designed by a Supreme Will, then we must allow the possibility of their being on some particular occasion suspended. Nor is it even necessary, in order that some result out of the ordinary course of Nature should be brought about, that they should even be suspended; it may be that some different law is brought into action, whereby the result in question is brought about, without any suspension whatever of the laws by which the ordinary course of Nature is regulated—It may be that the event which we call a miracle was brought about, not by any suspension of the laws in ordinary operation, but by the super-addition of something not ordinarily in operation, or, if in operation, of such a nature that its operation is not perceived.”

C. **Explanations** - Many who reject the miracles of the Bible try to explain them in one of two ways.

1. Some try to explain the miracles by calling them **acts of psychology**.

a. They look upon Christ, the apostles, and others who performed miracles as master psychologists who deceived or tricked the people.

b. This premise is inadequate to explain the miracles of the Bible. It will not explain the turning of the Nile to blood, the crossing of the Red Sea on dry ground, the virgin birth, Christ walking on the water. This will not explain the restoring of Malchus' ear. It will not explain the raising of Lazarus from the dead nor the restoring of a withered hand. A psychologist, no matter how masterful, cannot do these things.

2. Others try to explain them by **natural means**.

a. The modernists would explain the feeding of the five thousand like this. Jesus used the boy who was willing to share his lunch as an example to the 5,000 of sharing. This caused the selfish people to share their food. Thus a miracle was performed.

b. This **hypothesis** does not explain the fact the Bible clearly states there were only 5 loaves and 2 fish. It does not explain the belief of the multitude, who witnessed the miraculous distribution of the food.

- c. This sign caused them to believe that Christ was “the prophet” (the Messiah) according to John 6:14. The modernists explanation would not have caused this result.

IV. **Basis For Accepting Biblical Miracles** - Let us now consider the basis for accepting biblical miracles.

A. One of the greatest arguments for miracles in the **trustworthiness of the Bible**.

1. The Bible has proven itself time and time again to be completely reliable.
2. If the Bible were an untrustworthy production, then good sense would tell us to reject these miracles. Since the credibility of the Bible has been proven, the miracles cannot be set aside.

B. A second argument for miracles is the **absence of any marks of fakery**.

1. A deceiver would work to obtain **all the publicity possible**, but Jesus often forbade His deed being publicized. (Matt. 8:4).
2. A deceiver would do everything possible to **enhance the value of miracles**. Jesus often discounted the worth of miracles and taught there were things far more important.
3. There is a very interesting account found in Acts 8. (Acts 8:9-13).

C. A third argument for miracles is found in regard to **the enemies of Christ and the apostles**. Even the enemies of Christ and the apostles could not deny their miracles.

1. Matthew 12:22-24
2. Matthew 28:11-15.

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. 12 And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' 14 "And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble." 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.

3. On the day of Pentecost Jews from every nation under heaven assembled. Peter addressed the multitude saying.

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—

4. Acts 3:1, 2, 6-9; 4:16.

D. A fourth argument for accepting miracles is that the **eyewitnesses were not gullible men**. (Jno. 20:25).

Conclusion.

- I. These arguments show us it is more reasonable to believe in miracles than to deny them. The miracles of the

Bible rest on a firm foundation. They rest on an omnipotent God.

II. Earlier in our lesson we mentioned these words found in John 20:30, 31.

III. If the miracles of Christ have persuaded you that Christ is the Son of God, why not confess your faith in Him and be baptized? Mark 16:16. Come as we stand and sing.

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