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7 CONFUSED: DO MIRACLES STILL HAPPEN TODAY?

By Pastor John

Jesus is known for working miracles. Why did he do this? Do miracles still happen?

A miracle is something for which no natural explanation exists. While some have said that a miracle occurs when the supernatural supersedes or breaks in upon the natural world, theologian C. S. Lewis disagreed. He saw miracles as personal or particular applications of God's general power—instances in which *“the incarnate God suddenly and locally does something that God has done or will do in general.”*¹

WHY DID JESUS DO MIRACLES?

John 10:10

“My purpose is to give [my sheep] a rich and satisfying life.”

Jesus did not heal everyone, feed everyone, or bring back to life every dead loved one.

His miracles were a foreshadowing of the day when he would reign in a kingdom with no sickness, no hunger, and no death.²

By performing these miracles, Jesus made a statement about how God intended to deal with the epidemic of sin and brokenness in the human race.³

WHAT KIND OF MIRACLES DID JESUS DO?

Jesus did not have a “stock” miracle.

There was no single “trick” he perfected and repeated to impress people as they gathered around him.

Instead, he did extraordinary things in the course of his ordinary days.

HE REPRESENTED HIS FAMILY AT A WEDDING, and when the wine ran out, he caused casks full of water to become wine.⁴

Jesus’ mother and the wine steward knew they had witnessed a miracle of transformation.

He met a woman at a well;

He offered her the things she most longed for: forgiveness and a new life.

She experienced a miracle of revelation and rescue.

Jesus Healed:

He healed a **Roman official’s dying son** with just a word.⁶

Jesus never saw the boy, never touched him. When the official begged Jesus to go to his child's sickbed, Jesus told him that the boy was already well. When the father returned home, he saw that this was true.

He told a **man who had been crippled for decades** to get up and walk—and when the man tried, he could.⁷

He **restored the sight of a man who was born blind** by rubbing his eyes with spit and dust from the ground.⁸

He did Corporate Healings:

As Matthew reports, "Great crowds came to [Jesus], bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them."⁹

Jesus also performed miracles of provision:

- **Five loaves** of bread and **two small fish** to feed a crowd in excess of **five thousand**.¹⁰

Miracles of power and dominion over the created order.

- He **walked on water** during a storm at sea.¹²
- He **raised Lazarus from the grave - he had been dead and buried for four days**.¹³

WHAT DID THE MIRACLES OF JESUS MEAN?

“With all the miracles Jesus does,” says author Eric Metaxas, “there’s more than meets the eye, and it is meant to point us to something besides the miracle itself.”¹⁴

Miracles are more than just supernatural solutions to temporal problems. They are:

- expressions of the character of God,
- a foretelling of the kingdom of God, and
- evidence of the power of God.

Pastor and theologian Timothy Keller says:

Why did Jesus use His power

- To heal,
- To provide and
- To give life?

Jesus meant miracles to be the restoration of the natural order.

- Jesus has come **to redeem where it is wrong**, and
- **To heal the world where it is broken.**
- **Not just prove that he has power** but
- To **demonstrate wonderful foretastes of what he is going to do** with that power.
- Jesus’ miracles are **not just a challenge to our minds**, but
- They are **a promise to our hearts that the world we all want is coming.**¹⁵

WHAT IS JESUS' GREATEST MIRACLE?

- **Was it the incarnation**—his birth into this world by the womb of a virgin named Mary? (C.S. Lewis). *God being born in human flesh is miraculous.*
- **Was it the resurrection**—Jesus' return to life on the third day after his death? *This is an even greater miracle.*

But perhaps greatest of all is the miracle made possible by **both of these.**

Because of His mission – **the GREATEST miracle** that occurs is

- **When a man or woman whose heart is closed to God comes to believe in God**, to rely on him, and to be changed.

Signs and wonders like those that Jesus did may be less frequent or demonstrable than they were in the past, but men and women from around the world testify that the miracle of belief continues around us every day.

HAVE MIRACLES CEASED?

Some who believe in the miracles of God say that miracles have ceased to happen—that miracles occurred in Jesus' day and in Old Testament times, but they no longer do. Others believe that God still works miracles in the world today. No matter their view of contemporary miracles,

Christians believe that while Jesus no longer walks the earth, his death and miraculous resurrection paved the way for the release of the Holy Spirit into the world. As a result, God's power is available and at work against the forces of darkness and evil, of death and suffering.

FOOTNOTES

¹C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 219.

²See *The Holy Bible, New International Version* © 2011, Revelation 21:4.

³This idea is influenced by Timothy Keller’s book *The Reason for God* (New York: Dutton, 2009).

⁴ John 2:1–11.

⁵ John 4:1–26.

⁶ John 4:46–54.

⁷ John 5:1–9.

⁸ John 9:1–12.

⁹ *The Holy Bible*, Matthew 15:30.

¹⁰ See *The Holy Bible*, John 6:1–14.

¹¹ Matthew 17:24–27.

¹² John 6:16–24.

¹³ John 11:1–44.

¹⁴ Eric Metaxas, *Miracles: What They Are, Why They Happen, and How They Can Change Your Life* (New York: Dutton, 2014), Kindle version, Loc. 1209.

¹⁵ Keller, 99.

¹⁶ Metaxas, Loc. 1700.

| 37 Miracles of Jesus | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| # | Miracle | <u>Matthew</u> | <u>Mark</u> | <u>Luke</u> | <u>John</u> |
| 1 | Jesus turns water into wine at the wedding in Cana | | | | 2:1-11 |
| 2 | Jesus heals an official's son at Capernaum in Galilee | | | | 4:43-54 |
| 3 | Jesus drives out an evil spirit from a man in Capernaum | | 1:21-27 | 4:31-36 | |
| 4 | Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law sick with fever | 8:14-15 | 1:29-31 | 4:38-39 | |

37 Miracles of Jesus

| | | | | | |
|----|---|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
| 5 | Jesus heals many sick and oppressed at evening | 8:16-17 | 1:32-34 | 4:40-41 | |
| 6 | First miraculous catch of fish on the Lake of Gennesaret | | | 5:1-11 | |
| 7 | Jesus cleanses a man with leprosy | 8:1-4 | 1:40-45 | 5:12-14 | |
| 8 | Jesus heals a <u>centurion's</u> paralyzed servant in Capernaum | 8:5-13 | | 7:1-10 | |
| 9 | Jesus heals a paralytic who was let down from the roof | 9:1-8 | 2:1-12 | 5:17-26 | |
| 10 | Jesus heals a man's withered hand on the Sabbath | 12:9-14 | 3:1-6 | 6:6-11 | |
| 11 | Jesus raises a widow's son from the dead in Nain | | | 7:11-17 | |
| 12 | Jesus calms a storm on the sea | 8:23-27 | 4:35-41 | 8:22-25 | |
| 13 | Jesus casts demons into a herd of pigs | 8:28-33 | 5:1-20 | 8:26-39 | |
| 14 | Jesus heals a woman in the crowd with an issue of blood | 9:20-22 | 5:25-34 | 8:42-48 | |
| 15 | Jesus raises Jairus' daughter back to life | 9:18, 23-26 | 5:21-24, 35-43 | 8:40-42, 49-56 | |
| 16 | Jesus heals two blind men | 9:27-31 | | | |
| 17 | Jesus heals a man who was unable to speak | 9:32-34 | | | |
| 18 | Jesus heals an invalid at Bethesda | | | | 5:1-15 |

37 Miracles of Jesus

| | | | | | |
|----|---|----------|---------|----------|---------|
| 19 | <u>Jesus feeds 5,000</u> plus women and children | 14:13-21 | 6:30-44 | 9:10-17 | 6:1-15 |
| 20 | <u>Jesus walks on water</u> | 14:22-33 | 6:45-52 | | 6:16-21 |
| 21 | Jesus heals many sick in Gennesaret as they touch his garment | 14:34-36 | 6:53-56 | | |
| 22 | Jesus heals a gentile woman's demon-possessed daughter | 15:21-28 | 7:24-30 | | |
| 23 | Jesus heals a deaf and dumb man | | 7:31-37 | | |
| 24 | Jesus feeds 4,000 plus women and children | 15:32-39 | 8:1-13 | | |
| 25 | Jesus heals a blind man at Bethsaida | | 8:22-26 | | |
| 26 | Jesus heals a man born blind by spitting in his eyes | | | | 9:1-12 |
| 27 | Jesus heals a boy with an unclean spirit | 17:14-20 | 9:14-29 | 9:37-43 | |
| 28 | Miraculous temple tax in a fish's mouth | 17:24-27 | | | |
| 29 | Jesus heals a blind, mute demoniac | 12:22-23 | | 11:14-23 | |
| 30 | Jesus heals a woman who had been crippled for 18 years | | | 13:10-17 | |
| 31 | Jesus heals a man with dropsy on the sabbath | | | 14:1-6 | |
| 32 | Jesus cleanses ten lepers on the way to Jerusalem | | | 17:11-19 | |

| 37 Miracles of Jesus | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|----------|----------|----------|---------|
| 33 | Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead in Bethany | | | | 11:1-45 |
| 34 | Jesus restores sight to Bartimaeus in Jericho | 20:29-34 | 10:46-52 | 18:35-43 | |
| 35 | Jesus withers the fig tree on the road from Bethany | 21:18:22 | 11:12-14 | | |
| 36 | Jesus heals a servant's severed ear while he is being arrested | | | 22:50-51 | |
| 37 | The second miraculous catch of fish at the Sea of Tiberias | | | | 21:4-11 |

1. Sources

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