

Nature and Miracles

Miracles

Do you believe that God still performs miracles today? People who believe in "signs and wonders" say that we're supposed to be doing the same works that Jesus did, "and even greater works than these" (John 14:12). Others claim that the era of supernatural intervention ended at the close of the New Testament period. At this point, the majority of religious writers ask, "What is your perspective?" One of the major religious organizations, "*Focus on the Family*," says that they cannot tell you if miracles still happen today. They recommend consulting the experts in the "faith of your choice" to see what they teach. Why not consult God? The Christian, led by the Gospel of Christ, will ask, "What do the scriptures say?" So, the scriptures provide examples and writings on the subjects of miracles and the providence of God

Let's begin by defining what a miracle is. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary says: "1: An extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs; the healing miracles described in the Gospels. And 2: An extremely outstanding or unusual event, thing, or accomplishment." The biblical usage indicates a "miracle" is a *wonder* or *marvel* that defies rational explanation. It surpasses all known human or natural powers, defying all "laws of nature." Because of this, a miracle has a supernatural cause. In other words, the cause of a miracle is something or someone beyond the boundaries of all that we can observe, measure, and understand. Therefore, if an event is not clearly within the limitations of nature, it must be a miracle. If it is a natural event, it must conform to God's natural laws, set in motion when the earth came into being.

Recognition of what is natural, or an exact cause, is often challenging. It is interesting to note that the United States Treasury department never shows examples of counterfeit bills to their agents. They train so thoroughly on the real they can recognize any difference that appears in time. The knowledge of Christ's gospel truth works the same way. A Christian trained in God's Word (John 17:17) can recognize any false teaching. By teaching various "possibilities," the religious world often misses the simple fact that they cannot all be right. They cannot agree on the answers to the questions of "What if?" OR "Maybe it happened this way?" Or even "How many days did it take to create the earth?" God has declared Himself to be the first and only cause of everything that exists and has happened within His creation. "*Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one'*"(Isaiah 44:6-8)

Those convinced that there is no God attribute supernatural events to any number of impossible coincidences and even visitors from outer space. They view the universe as a complete material unity with no creator and therefore view earthly happenings as material. To them, everything that ever happened occurred because of natural events, governed by the laws of nature. Their convictions suppose that the miracles described in the Bible are lies or myths used for teaching effect. They say that if the Red Sea parted, it was a shallow swamp dried by the wind. Or if Jesus came out of the tomb, He had not been dead. Their views are entirely materialistic and never consider the spiritual world of a superior being.

The Bible tells us, however, that a spiritual being is responsible for the physical world. The creation of the heavens and earth was the first miracle because nature and natural laws did not exist. The creation of the elements and natural laws occurred at the same time in the beginning (Genesis 1:1). Then, using the materials available, God made a man and a woman and caused them to become living beings. They were allowed to bring children into this world by natural means, which continues to this day. God intervened at times to advance His plan for His Son Immanuel to be born, like when He healed the bodies of Abraham and Sarah so they could have a son, Isaac, in their old age (Genesis 21:1-3). Except for Jesus, who was born by an act of the Holy Spirit, the union of one man and one woman has been the cause of each and every birth regardless of where that union took place. One male and one female, each supplying a part, is not a miracle as many people claim it to be today. The miracle occurred with creation, "In the beginning."

Future Blogs will explore the purpose of miracles, the difference between miracles and providence, and praying for a miracle or help from God's providence.