

Why and How Long? Miracles

Jesus said, *"With God everything is possible"* (Matthew 19:12). The meaning of that statement indicates that God, who created this earth and all that is in it, can act in ways contrary to natural laws. However, He will not violate self-imposed restrictions and will therefore only do what is good for His creation within His plans (Jeremiah 29:11) (Psalms 33:11). Thus, God created the heavens and the earth, formed man and caused him to live, then used the same divine laws to heal blind eyes and make bones for the lame as recorded in the scriptures. The divine laws of creation are not the laws of nature that affect daily life and healing today. Jesus' use of the supernatural divine laws to work miracles proved that Immanuel, God, came in the flesh (Isaiah 7:14); (John 1:14, 20:30-31).

God has always worked miracles for reasons that are important to Him. He aided barren women to have children when His plan required it. When He called Moses to bring Israel out of Egypt, He gave Moses three "signs" to perform (Exodus 4:1-9) so that Israel would believe that God sent Moses. Ten plagues proved to Egypt and Israel that God had unlimited power against all the gods of Egypt (Exodus 10:1-2). God gave food and water miraculously to Israel in the wilderness, proving He cared for them (Numbers 14:11). And God declared future events through the prophets so that people would believe (Isaiah 40:21-22, 41:20, 45:6). Those prophecies proved accurate, and our faith is increased that the promises made to us will also come true. The purpose of miracles was always proof. *"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name"* (John 20:30-31).

Jesus promised that He would return for us (John 14:2-3). As He ascended into heaven, an angel said, *"This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:11). The church Christ built and purchased with His blood on the cross believes and looks forward to His return. Paul's prayer for the church of Christ at Ephesus speaks of the power of God and His Son to keep and protect the church. *"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.* (Ephesians 1:18-23). The Son of God will do whatever is necessary to protect His church.

When Christ took possession of His throne in Heaven, He sent the Comforter, The Holy Spirit, to help the apostles spread the gospel (John 14:16-26). We read in Acts that the apostles worked miracles to prove that they were sent from Christ. *"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, ... let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health. "He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief corner stone. "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:8-12).

Paul wrote that the signs, the miracles given by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1-11), would end when the complete gospel of Christ was delivered and written down. *"If there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away"* (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). Today we have the complete Word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ in our New Testament. Jude wrote that *"the faith was once for all delivered to the saints"* (Jude 3c). And Paul said that the *"gospel of Christ, is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith"* (Romans 1:16-17). Next, we will look at God's providence.

Does God use miracles today? Or does His providence provide for our needs?