

CHAPTER 7

The Miracles of Christ

An Abundance of Miracles?

If you were living during the public ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, what miracles would you have heard and seen (Matthew 11:4-5)?

Have you heard and seen such miracles taking place today? _____

Sometimes people think that the Bible is filled with accounts of miracles on every page from Genesis to Revelation. There are many people who are familiar with the four Gospels, but they are not well-acquainted with the rest of the Bible, especially the Old Testament. Of course, the pages of the Gospels are filled with numerous examples of miracles, and such people could wrongly conclude that the same thing is true of the rest of the Bible. Actually, miracles in the Bible are relatively rare--they are the exception rather than the rule. In fact, there were many godly men throughout the pages of the Bible and history, **who never performed miracles.**

Remember, God is free to perform miracles at any time, according to His sovereign will and purposes. For example, in a miraculous way, God protected Daniel from the man-eating lions (Dan. 6:16,22,24), but as far as we know, **Daniel himself never performed any miracles.** Put a check (✓) before those men who actually **performed** miracles (your teacher may need to help you with some of these):

_____ Enoch	_____ Samuel	_____ Ezekiel
_____ Noah	_____ David	_____ John the Baptist (John 10:41)
_____ Abraham	_____ Solomon	_____ the LORD JESUS CHRIST
_____ Isaac	_____ Elijah	_____ Peter
_____ Jacob	_____ Elisha	_____ Paul
_____ Joseph	_____ Daniel	_____ Augustine
_____ Moses	_____ Isaiah	_____ Luther
_____ Joshua	_____ Jeremiah	_____ Whitefield

The Bible, therefore, indicates that there have been only three major periods of miracles in history (that is, times when God gave certain men remarkable powers to perform amazing, undeniable miracles):

1.	<p>DURING THE TIME OF MOSES AND JOSHUA <i>Approx. 1441-1370 B.C.</i> See Exodus and Joshua.</p>
2.	<p>DURING THE TIME OF ELIJAH AND ELISHA <i>Approx. 870-785 B. C.</i> See 1 and 2 Kings.</p>
3.	<p>DURING THE TIME OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES <i>Approx. 28-70 A. D.</i> See the Gospels and Acts.</p>

Apart from these three unique periods of supernatural activity, miracles were the exception, rather than the norm. One of these exceptional outbreaks of miracles took place during the earthly ministry of our Lord. Why did the Lord Jesus perform such miracles?

Which Miracle is Easier?

In Mark 2:1-12 (Matt. 9:1-8; Luke 5:17-26) we find the account of the miraculous healing of the paralytic man. In these verses; the Lord Jesus tells us exactly **why** He healed this man. In Mark 2:5 Jesus made the amazing claim that He could _____. Did the Jews believe that Jesus was able to do this (Mark 2:6-7)? _____ Could these Jews look into the man’s heart and **see** whether or not his sins had really been forgiven? _____

Jesus then asked a puzzling question (see verse 9): **Which is easier**--to say "Your sins are forgiven!" or to say "Arise, take up your bed and walk!"? Is it easier to forgive his sins or heal his body?

How would you have answered the Lord’s question (circle the correct answer)?

- a. It is easier to forgive his sins.
- b. It is easier to heal his body.
- c. It is impossible for man to do either! It would require the power of God to forgive his sins and it would require the power of God to heal his body.

The following chart may be of help:

THE MIRACLE OF HEALING	THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This miracle required God’s working and God’s power. 2. This miracle took place in the physical realm. 3. This was God working in the man’s body. 4. This was a miracle that was clearly seen (Mark 2:12). 5. This was a miracle that could not be denied. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This miracle required God’s working and God’s power. 2. This miracle took place in the spiritual realm. 3. This was God working in the man’s heart. 4. This was a miracle that could not be seen by men. 5. This was a miracle that could be denied by unbelieving men (Mark 2:5-7).

Did Christ really have the power and authority to forgive sins? How could He prove this? How could He demonstrate His authority in the invisible/spiritual realm?

In Mark 2:10 the Lord Jesus tells us the **primary** reason why He healed this man (circle the correct answer):

- that you might know how much I wanted to help this man
- that you might know how compassionate I am towards those who have physical needs
- that you might know that I have the power and authority to forgive sins

Thus, the Lord proved that He had authority in the invisible-spiritual realm by performing a fantastic miracle in the visible-physical realm which no one could deny. If Christ had the power to perform the miracle of healing, then this would prove that He also had the power to perform the miracle of forgiveness!

What about you? How can you prove to others that your sins are forgiven? How can you prove to others that Christ lives in you (Gal. 2:20)? How can you show your friends that you really belong to God? Compare 2 Timothy 2:19 – cattle are often branded with a **visible** seal (brand) or mark of ownership; believers are "branded" with an **invisible** seal which only God can see, namely God the Holy Spirit. How can others know that the Spirit dwells in you? The answer is found in the illustration our Lord gave in John 3:8 – How can you know that the wind is really there? Remember, the wind cannot be seen! God wants people to know about the miracle that He performs in the invisible-spiritual realm (Mark 2:10). Has the Saviour done a miracle in your heart? Do others know about it?

Where are the Carpenter's Credentials?

The Carpenter (Mark 6:3) claimed to be **the Christ** (the Messiah)! The Man who had no formal education (John 7:15) taught the people that He was sent from God with a heavenly message (John 7:16,28). What credentials did Jesus have to back up such claims and such teaching? We have just studied that He backed up His claim to forgive sins by performing a mighty miracle of healing!

According to the Old Testament prophets, what would the Messiah do when He comes to earth (see Isaiah 35:5-6; 61:1)?

Thus in John 7:31, the Jews believed that when **Christ** (the Messiah) came, He would do M _____. When Christ performed an undeniable miracle in Matthew 12:22, what was the reaction of the people (Matt. 12:23)? _____ (Note: The expression "son of David" is a Messianic title. The Jews knew that their Messiah would be a descendant of David). When John the Baptist doubted and asked, "Are You the Messiah?" what did Jesus point to as His credentials (Matt. 11:2-5)? _____ Thus, Christ gave the Jews all the evidence they needed to prove that He was everything He claimed to be. God the Father backed up these claims: "Jesus of Nazareth, a _____ approved of God among you by _____ and _____ and _____, which _____ did by _____ in the midst of you." (Acts 2:22)

What are your spiritual credentials? Suppose you share this with your friends: "If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you will receive **complete forgiveness of sins** (compare Acts 10:43)!" **What authority do you have to make such a statement?** What right do you have to make such a promise? How can you speak with such authority about spiritual things? Who will back up that statement? See Hebrews 4:12; Luke 24:44-47; Matthew 28:18-20; 24:35.

"Greater Works Than These"?

Read the amazing promise that Christ gave to His disciples in John 14:12. What did Jesus mean by these words?

The works that Jesus performed during His public ministry were fantastically great. Diseases were banished; demons were cast out; dead men arose; wine, bread, and fishes were created, and mighty storms were instantly calmed. But it must be recognized that each of these miracles was **intentionally superficial and temporary in quality!** In other words, no one was permanently helped by any of them, nor were men's deepest needs met by such works of power! Creating food for one occasion did not automatically supply the need for later occasions. And with regard to bodily ailments, every diseased, crippled, leprous person Jesus ever healed finally died anyway. This was true of every one of them! And poor Lazarus! It is true that Jesus raised him from the dead, instantly and completely, with no convalescence needed. But later on he died again! Would you like to die twice? (Dr. John C. Whitcomb, *Does God Want Christians to Perform Miracles Today?*, p. 11)

Jesus said, "greater works than these shall ye do because I go unto the Father." What can be greater than the miracles of Christ? After the Lord Jesus returned to heaven, Peter preached God's powerful Word (about a crucified and risen Saviour) to thousands of Jews. God did a great work and approximately 3000 people were saved, and their sins were forgiven in one day (Acts 2:41). A tremendous miracle in the invisible-spiritual realm had taken place – the miracle of regeneration. This miracle met man's basic need **permanently and eternally!**

Which Miracles Are Greater?

The Miracles of Healing, Feeding the Multitudes, Casting out Demons, Raising the Dead, etc.	The Miracles of Salvation, the Forgiveness of Sins, the New Birth, Freedom from Sin, etc.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Required God's working and power 2. Took place in the physical realm 3. God's working in man's body 4. Helped man temporarily 5. FINAL RESULT: Physical Death 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Required God's working and power. 2. Took place in the spiritual realm. 3. God's working in man's heart. 4. Helped man permanently. 5. FINAL RESULT: Eternal Life

Read John 6:13-15, 26-27. Which kind of miracle did the Jews really want?

For the last 2000 years the spiritual miracle of salvation has been repeated again and again as God has been adding to His Church daily (Acts 2:47). Has this "greater" miracle taken place in your life? If so, have you been telling others about the crucified and risen Saviour, so that they might trust in Him and experience this miracle as well?

We're just nobodies telling everybody about Somebody who can powerfully and miraculously and permanently and eternally save anybody!
