

WHY MIRACLES?

“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). The Amplified reads, “There are also many other signs and miracles which Jesus performed in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book. But these are recorded in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ (the Anointed One), the Son of God, and that through believing and cleaving to and trusting and relying upon Him you may have life through His name.”

I have been thinking much about why miracles are not as evident in the church today as they have been in the past. We all agree that Jesus (the Miracle Worker) is the same yesterday, today and forever, therefore, the age in which we live should have no effect on the number of miracles seen in the church. So what is the answer? One of the issues may be our view of signs and wonders. Maybe our field of vision is wrong! Maybe we don't fully understand why the Lord performs miracles! That's what made me dig deeper into this subject. In the opening two verses, John tells us why he recorded certain miracles... *“That we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that through believing we may have life through His name.”* This gives us a glimpse as to why miracles are performed.

However, to grasp it fully we also need to understand the person who was led to record these signs and wonders. John was definitely a very spiritual person but he had a unique quality that made him stand out from the other disciples. That is, his desire to be 'up-close and personal' with Jesus! He was never happy watching from a distance, he wanted to hear the Lord's heartbeat concerning anything He did - including miracles!

Someone once said, "You will never understand the Gospel of John unless you too have placed your head on the Lord's chest." For John to carefully choose seven miracles, from the innumerable signs and wonders the Lord performed in his presence, tells me that he had a definite purpose for selecting them. Remember, the Bible says that the number of miracles performed by Jesus would fill the libraries of the world (if they were to be fully documented). Therefore, we can safely assume that the miracles which John had recorded were chosen to communicate something very specific. This is where we must be careful not to confuse the written events (the miracles) with the importance of knowing the Person they are pointing to - the Christ. John makes it very clear that they were written to cause us to **believe** in the Christ, and as a result of us believing, obtain the very life He came to secure for us. I'm convinced that the seven miracles that John had selected reveal the Lord's heart!

Note, John is not promoting miracles (signs and wonders) but the Miracle Worker Himself - Jesus Christ! Maybe this is where the modern church has missed it? Have we placed more emphasis on the "signs" than on God's Anointed One? We are looking for the supernatural power of God to manifest instead of looking to find Jesus in the midst of our circumstances? Miracles for miracles sake is a fruitless exercise (if it's not causing people to believe that Jesus is the Christ). Notice also that if you believe Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One, your **believing** will manifest the life of God (in His Name). There is a direct correlation between the Anointing and the Life of God. The Anointing brings about the supernatural power contained in the Life source - the Almighty God. Hence, what John is trying to get us to do, is keep our eyes on Jesus - the Christ. For when we do, signs and wonders will follow.

I like how the Amplified puts it, ***"that through believing and cleaving to and trusting and relying upon Him you may have life through His name."***

Believing is more than just a notion or an emotion, it is a having complete trust and total reliance upon the Christ. Right there, is another possible hindrance to the miraculous power of God manifesting. For His intrinsic power to infiltrate the realm of your need, His divine substance (His Life) must be released through (in) His name. People want a miracle without excessing any faith! Remember, faith is having complete trust in the faithfulness of God; and relying on Him totally for the answer to your prayer. It says, *believing and cleaving to Him*, which implies 'clinging to God like a baby clings to its mother'. If you want a miracle from God; cling to Him, trust in Him and rely on Him completely! Knowing that God's Anointed One (the Christ) would like nothing better than to perform signs and wonders on your behalf. This is what's in His heart, and it is what John picked up when seeing the miracles first hand!

Let us now examine the seven "signs" (miraculous deeds of power) that John chose to separate and document; and let's see what significance they have for us today:

- (1) **The water turned into wine** (John 2:1-11): This occurred immediately after the Lord's baptism and acknowledgement by John the Baptist. Jesus indicated that He was reluctant to do something that was not within a divine time schedule. He would not do anything that was merely to fulfil a request. Therefore, this must have been in line with the purposes of God. Besides being the first miracle Jesus performed, John is letting us know that Jesus is the Creator as confirmed by His power over the chemical processes of nature. However, this sign also revealed that He has ushered in a new age (a new dispensation). The law came by Moses - grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No longer do we have to live under the guilt and condemnation of the law, rather, new life in Christ Jesus is ours! However, this also represents the miracle of renewal and restoration that we need on an ongoing basis.

What you have in your hand right now may look like simply water to everyone else, but to Jesus it is an opportunity to start something brand new. Something miraculous that will bring pleasure to those around you and glory to Him!

- (2) **The healing of the nobleman's son** (John 4:46-54): Here John stresses the fact that the means of receiving a miracle is faith. Jesus was approached by a nobleman, who petitioned Him to intervene on behalf of his son who lay seriously ill at Capernaum. Again, Jesus showed reluctance, saying, *"Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe"* (verse 48). Then the genuine concern of this father prompted Jesus' reply: *"Go your way; your son lives. So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way"* (verse 50). Responding in faith, the nobleman made his way home to learn on route that his son had been healed. Jesus had exceeded this man's highest expectation because He did not have to visit the sick child to heal him. The Lord provided ample proof that distance was no obstacle for Him. His power works from wherever He is! This should be of great encouragement to many of you. All the Lord needs to do is say the word!
- (3) **The healing of the lame man at Pool of Bethesda** (John 5:1-17). Here, Jesus takes the initiative and approaches a man who had been waiting at the Pool for thirty-eight years. Due to the belief that the first person to step into the pool when the water was stirred up would receive healing, he had remained there year after year. So Jesus gently questioned him to ascertain whether he really desired to be healed. Then, at Jesus' command he stood up and walked. Despite the long period of helplessness, during which his muscles would have wasted away, he was strong enough to put his bedroll on his shoulder and walk away. Observe how Jesus demonstrated His

power over the damaging effects of time. Jesus took the occasion to assert such authority, not only over the power of disease, but also over superstition and ceremonial law. Purely on the basis of His power to heal, Jesus was able to exercise His spiritual authority. And nothing has changed! The very same authority was handed over to His church. We now have the use of His wonderful name, *“that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth”* (Philippians 2:10).

- (4) **The feeding of the 5,000** (John 6:1-13). The fourth of the miracles or signs, preaches that the Lord Jesus Christ has provided a new food for men (the Bread of Life). This event occurred at the height of the Lord's popularity and drew the biggest crowd. Using a small boy's lunch, Jesus multiplied the unleavened bread and pickled fish so that every man, woman and child in the vast crowd was fed. Notice how Jesus simply kept breaking the bread and fish and distributing it through His disciples without any spectacular ceremony. Quietly but effectively He enlisted the aid of the disciples so that they might come to realise the full extent of His powers. The multitude He had just taught, and whom were fed and satisfied, also realised that Jesus possessed unusual supernatural powers. This sign, which had been given to demonstrate His sufficiency for all human need, proved to be a turning point in the lives of all those close to Him. They may have been unsure of the road ahead, but now they would follow Jesus no matter what! Likewise, if you are looking for a miracle, keep following the Bread of Life!
- (5) **The walking on the water** (John 6:16-21). In this event only the disciples were involved; it was not witnessed by the multitude. Jesus had dismissed His disciples and had sent them back by boat across the Sea of Galilee. But in the rough sea the disciples were struggling to keep direction and were making little progress - if any.

As they rowed with their backs to the wind, they suddenly noticed a mysterious figure approaching them across the lake. As it gained on them they were terrified and cried out in fear, thinking that they were being pursued by a ghost. When Jesus approached them, He said, *"It is I; do not be afraid"* (verse 20). Their fears were dispelled, and shortly after they found themselves on dry land. Because Jesus knew all the challenges that these men were about to face, He wanted them to learn that He was Master of the forces of nature, and that He could avert what seemed to be certain and immediate danger. The Lord's **presence** would be the permanent guarantee of their safety. This revelation is what we need to hang on to in perilous times!

- (6) **The healing of the blind man** (John 9:1-41). Any man born blind meant that he was completely hopeless. But the real importance of this sign, does not concern his physical condition so much as it does his inward spiritual state. The account is given in detail because it concerns a problem far deeper than blindness. Yet, why should this calamity have happened to this man? Why was he cut off from the joys of life which might otherwise have been his? The disciples of Jesus implied this by their question, *"Who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?"* (verse 2) Jesus pointed out that the blindness was not a punishment for any particular sin by the man or by his parents. He did not explain what caused it but rather stated that it provided an opportunity for God to intervene with creative power. Thus confirming that God's divine attitude toward men is always positive, and that human misery is a divine opportunity for God to reveal His love. The "sign" illustrates Jesus' power to change **human destiny**. Not only could He restore sight to the body, but He could also evoke spiritual discernment within a man who seemed to be the victim of an unjust fate. I'm sure we can all relate to this! How many destiny's have been miraculously changed for the better?

- (7) **The resurrection of Lazarus** (John 11:1-45). This is the climatic sign, and the miracle reveals that the Jesus Christ is the very person who provides new life - both new birth and resurrection are all bound up in Him. In this story Jesus is quite late, and the purpose of the apparently unreasonable delay was the development of the **faith** of His disciples. To witness another healing would be no novelty for any of them; they had undoubtedly seen many such miracles. There had also been two occasions on which Jesus had raised the dead: Jairus' daughter, who had been dead only a short time (Matthew 9:18-26); and the son of a widow at Nain (Luke 7:1-17). However, both of these had died only hours before Jesus came; and Lazarus had been dead for four days when the miracle occurred. Therefore, the raising of Lazarus would have been much more profound and convincing to those who observed it. This sign is intended to demonstrate the divine resurrection power manifested in Jesus Christ. It declares Him to be the Master of man's last and most unconquerable enemy, death. By effectively demonstrating the meaning of His bold declaration, *"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies"* (John 11:25), it creates new hope for all of us who must one day face the inevitable - that death will bring an end to all our present hopes and dreams. But the good news is, that's not the end - we just relocate!

The signs we have examined provide us with clear evidence concerning Jesus as the Living Word. They prepare our minds and hearts for the miraculous by showing us that Jesus has shared every aspect of human life:

- its joys in the wedding,
- its anguish when disease strikes,
- its helplessness when paralysis immobilises,

- its hunger when food is scarce,
- its fears when exposed to the uncontrolled elements,
- its hopelessness when facing a future of poverty,
- and its confusion when confronted by the sorrow of death.

Jesus went through all of these things, and His final victory over them - it was the greatest sign of all - **the resurrection**. The seven signs John compiled are examples of what He can do for those who trust Him implicitly. And they serve to confirm the power that is available to those who believe in His name. With Him, nothing is impossible! With Him supernatural miracle-working power is at hand! With Him futures are secure and destinies are fulfilled!

Come now and join John (and me) by putting your head on His chest and hearing His heartbeat. Come and join us as we feel His life giving breath on our brows. Yes, come and experience His **signs** - the miraculous deeds of power that are reserved for Him alone to perform! To God be the glory!