

Miracles

by Jacob Prasch

Miracles and signs are performed to show the compassion of God, to point to Jesus' messiahship, and to represent something mythologically about salvation.

Duration: 29:54

Scripture: Deuteronomy 18:19, Matthew 7:22, John 5:36

Topics: "Miracles"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the reasons why Jesus performed miracles, signs, and wonders. The first reason is the compassion of God, as Jesus felt compassion for the people who were like sheep without a shepherd. The second reason is to bear witness to the fact that the kingdom of God has broken in and that Jesus is the Messiah and the way of salvation. The speaker emphasizes that these signs and wonders are meant to point people to Jesus and the Gospel, not to prove anything about a person. The sermon also highlights the importance of not reducing ministry to a circus or show, as Jesus refused to do so and warned against false teachers who engage in such practices.

Transcript

Hello, my name is Jacob Prasche. Let's begin looking at another subject today. Miracles, signs, wonders, and healings.

There are two errors which are prolific in the body of Christ today. One error is known as cessationism. This error says that God does not behave this way anymore, that signs, wonders, miracles, and healings are things He no longer does.

They ended with the apostles. They had a special meaning for Jewish Christians because Jews seek a sign, which is true, but they have no further or future purpose. In fact, in Paul's epistle to the Romans, chapter 11, verse 29, we read that the gifts and calling of God go forth without repentance.

His calling on Israel and the Jews remains. Gentile Christians are incorporated into Israel in a spiritual sense, and Jews rejecting Jesus are cut off, but His calling remains. But the next chapter of Romans, chapter 12, begins talking about spiritual gifts.

Those also remain. The idea that the gifts of the Spirit ended with the apostles can only be arrived at by atheism, Jesus, reading things into the text of the Bible that the Bible does not specifically say. The other

error, however, is signs and wonders' emphasis, a focus, miracle crusade.

Jesus never had a miracle crusade. His teaching was that these signs follow. When Jesus healed someone, He normally said, don't tell anybody, that's between us.

He never allowed people to make a big deal or a big show out of healings or miracles. That was never the focus or the intention of His ministry. He always played it down.

Today, we see the opposite. Jesus said, a wicked and adulterous generation seeks the signs. When you see people chasing signs and wonders and going to miracle crusade meetings and the signs and wonders type ministry, that is something that Jesus called wickedness and adultery.

And the body of Christ has no shortage of this wickedness and adultery today. So you have these two errors. One error says there are no more miracles, signs, wonders or healings.

The other is that it becomes the be-all and virtually the end-all. Jesus' message was one of repentance and faith. These signs followed.

We have people today teaching the error that signs and wonders are the key to revival. However, when we look in the Word of God, we find out that this is a lie. In John chapter 5, Jesus castigated the people of His day by saying, Why do you not believe for the sake of the works themselves? At least for the sake of the works, believe the signs He did.

But they didn't. The Jewish Feast of Miracles is also the Jewish Feast of Life. We call it in Hebrew Chanukah, Hanukkah.

But the New Testament calls it the Feast of Dedication of the Temple, which is what Hanukkah means in John chapter 10. Jesus celebrates this Jewish Feast, and we see at this Feast of Miracles, signs, wonders, they try to stone Him. They don't deny He did miracles and signs and wonders, but He says, For which one of the signs and wonders are you stoning me? So while we have false teachers and false prophets today saying signs and wonders are the key to revival, the people who saw the signs and wonders tried to stone Him.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus came, and all they wanted Him to do was put on a show. When He came before King Herod, King Herod wanted to see a show. Jesus refused to put on a show.

He would not do the miracle. He would not reduce His ministry to a circus. And today, so many of my fellow Pentecostal ministers have what they call a ministry, but it's nothing more than a circus.

They're putting on a show. They're degrading the gospel of Jesus, engaging in something that Jesus refused to. Jesus refused to drag His ministry down to the level we see these false teachers doing today.

These signs follow. In the book of Acts, chapter 3, we see the apostles following the pattern of Jesus. Gold and silver have I none, says Peter, but in the name of Jesus, get up and walk.

And the people see this and marvel. But Peter looks, and in verse 12 of Acts 3, he says, Why do you gaze at us? Why do you marvel at us? You're looking at the wrong thing. What you should marvel at is Jesus, the Messiah, who died for your sins.

Once again, these signs follow. We read in Hebrews, chapter 2, that signs, wonders, gifts of the Spirit, they are simply pointers to the gospel. They point people to Jesus.

Signs and wonders never prove anything about a man, only about Jesus. Let's understand this. What happened? Jesus said, Depart from me, I never knew you.

Matthew 7, 22, Lord, Lord, we got to miracles and signs and wonders in your name and cast out demons in your name. Yea, you did. Yes, you did, and you did it in my name.

Now, depart from me, I never knew you. They prove nothing about anyone but Jesus. In fact, as we've looked at already, Pharaoh's magicians and other broadcasts counterfeited the miracles of Moses and Aaron by wicked power.

The Antichrist and false prophets by the power of Satan will do contended signs and wonders the way Pharaoh's magicians did, counterfeiting the authentic work of God. We're told in the last days by Jesus in Matthew 24, in the Hour of the Discourse, verse 24, the Antichrist and false prophet will try to deceive the elect and they'll use signs and wonders to do it. In 2 Timothy, chapter 3 and 4, we again see it is those who come in the character of Jonathan John Briggs, Pharaoh's magicians with their pretended signs and wonders, counterfeiting authentic miracles, even though the power was supernatural, it was demonic, will come, and men wanting to have their ears tickled will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desire, following such rubbish and idiocy.

This deception is prolific today. People following the signs and wonders movement are as wrong on one extreme as are those on the other who say God no longer works this way. There is a balance.

Why did Jesus do miracles? Why did he do signs and wonders and healing? We have to understand it three different ways. The first reason is the compassion of God. Mark, chapter 6, verse 34 forever.

It says, He felt compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he fed these people supernaturally. Elsewhere we see the compassion of God in and through Jesus and he heals people because of the compassion of God.

A second reason Jesus did miracles and why he does miracles today is to bear witness to the fact that the kingdom of God has broken in and he is the Messiah, the way of salvation. That's the second reason. Believe because of the works themselves.

They bear witness to him. Once again on Palm Sunday, the same people who saw Jesus healed people in the temple when they brought the lame and blind and he healed them in Matthew 21. A week later we're healing crucifiers.

Don't believe those people who say that signs and wonders will bring revival. The charismatic movement is 30 years old. But so is the New Age movement.

And in the last 30 years of the charismatic renewal, so-called, New Age, that is Eastern religion, has effectively replaced Christianity as the spiritual consciousness of nations like South Africa, Great Britain, America, Australia and New Zealand. It's a tragedy. They're not the key.

They have their place and their purpose. But their place is never in place of the message of the gospel. Jesus never allowed signs and wonders to be amplified, either did the apostles.

Now let's continue looking at this. So the first reason he did miracles or healings were because of the compassion of God. The second were that they pointed people to him as the Messiah and represented the kingdom of God breaking into a fallen world.

But the third reason has to do with something much deeper. To understand the third reason, we must use midrash, the ways that rabbis interpreted the Bible in the days of Jesus, bearing in mind that Jesus and Paul were Jewish rabbis. Midrashically, what is the interpretation or understanding of miracles? Remember at the pool that Saida, Jesus, heals a paralytic.

Now there are many men at that pool. Only one gets healed. The idea that everyone gets healed is simply not scriptural.

Jesus never did that, nor did the apostles teach it. What we have people teaching us today is absolute rubbish. Yet he does heal.

And he heals this paralytic who was paralyzed and confined to a wooden pallet. Jesus heals this man and he tells this man, pick up your pallet and go your way and sin no more. Notice his emphasis was on repentance from sin, not the healing itself.

Today we have a cheap grace gospel, put your hand up and experience the healing of a miracle. Jesus called people to repentance. The healing was consequential.

Nonetheless, he tells this man, pick up your pallet. Now why would Jesus tell this man, who he just healed of paralysis, to pick up his pallet? The man no longer needed the pallet. He was no longer crippled.

He was no longer paralyzed. He could walk. But Jesus says, pick up your pallet and go your way.

It would be like someone being healed of polio. And you tell them to get back into their wheelchair and go out the door when they no longer need the wheelchair. It would be like telling someone with no legs to get back into a wheelchair after Jesus gave them new legs.

It would be like telling someone who's been healed of a severe leg injury to pick up their crutches and go back out the door on their crutches after they no longer have need of them because they've been healed. Why did Jesus tell this person to pick up his pallet? Because midrashically, the pallet was a symbol of the cross. This pallet on which his flesh was confined is a type of the cross.

We are to live a crucified life. Pick up your cross and follow me. You see, a major heretic in the United States who teaches positive thinking and possibility thinking, he's a heretic, said that the biggest error the church has ever taught is death to self.

That's what this heretic from California teaches. The Lord Jesus himself, however, said something different. Unless a man first unites himself, he cannot be my disciple.

Pick up your cross and follow me. Hence, midrashically, in figure, in Jewish metaphor, the Lord Jesus was telling this man he healed to pick up his cross and follow him. Go the way of the cross.

The miracles of Jesus understood midrashically, particularly healings, teach something about salvation. We're all blind. He opens the eyes of the blind man, yes.

But look at John 8 and 9 when he heals the blind man. The blind man first tells the people, I don't know whether he's from God or of the devil. I just know that I was blind, now I see.

You can't argue with a positive testimony. But he never tries to base his doctrine or say that Jesus was right or wrong or good or bad. He just said the miracle happened.

Only later in John 9, when the man goes back to Jesus, does he become a true follower, when he has the full truth explained to him by Jesus. The miracle itself pointed to Jesus, but the man drew no doctrinal conclusion about whether Jesus was from God or not because of the miracle. It was only when Jesus spoke to him.

Today it's different. The miracle settles it. My friends, you have witch doctors who do miracles.

And false signs and wonders will increase in the last days. If possible, the elect will be deceived, and indeed the elect are already being deceived. And I say this as a Pentecostal, as one who himself believes in signs, wonders, miracles, and healings.

I believe in them understood and practiced biblically, which most of what we see today is not. You think of it, dear friends, there was a Christian professor of orthopedic medicine in Australia who published a clinical paper, published in a medical journal, about the phenomena of one leg being shorter than another. He said, when this happens, it is normally due to trauma.

A severed femur in a serious accident. And it's normally corrected with surgery, sometimes screwing bones together. And on top of that, there still may be a discrepancy between the two legs, where it's corrected with an orthopedic shoe, that is, metallic heel, raising the foot to one level of the other.

But he said it's normally due to femur being severed. Due to accident, it comes from trauma. When it's congenital, when someone is born with one leg shorter than the other, he said this is very rare.

It comes about when the zygotes, embryonically, do not pair correctly. Our body is based on something called bilateral symmetry. One side the same as the other, or very close to it.

But one becomes shorter than another. He said again, this is a very rare genetic defect. And it's difficult to diagnose.

Usually the distance is so slight, it has to be measured with a laser. A laser. Because you can't see the difference.

On top of that, he said, it normally doesn't cause any problems, and when it does, again, an orthopedic boot or shoe solves the problem. They don't even need surgery. And he went on to say that most orthopedic specialists, consultants in bone disorders, very rarely see this.

They'll only see it at most a few times in the entire course of their professional practice and career. He said most general practitioners never see it. Yet we see these charlatans, clowns and con artists having it at every meeting.

Pulling legs. That's just what they're doing, pulling your legs. They're con men.

It's all a scam. Nonetheless, let's go back. So Jesus did these healings and miracles for three reasons.

One, the compassion of God. Two, to point to his messiahship and the breaking of the kingdom of God into a fallen world. But third, they represent something mythologically.

In figure they teach something about salvation. We're all blind until Jesus opens the eyes of the blind and then we see the light. We're all lame until we can walk in the spirit.

We're all sick until he heals us. Does the Lord heal everyone in every situation? Well again, at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus didn't. He healed one.

Let's look at the gospel of St. Luke, chapter 5, verse 17. Luke himself was a physician and had an interest in medical pathology and disease. And we have that emphasis in his gospel.

In Luke 5, 17, we read the power, that is the *dunamis* in Greek, of the Lord was present for the Lord Jesus to perform healing. That power had to be there. You see, Jesus only did what he saw his father doing.

He would not act out of concert with his father. The first Adam acted out of concert with God. Jesus as the second Adam could not.

If Jesus had acted out of concert with his father, if he had done something he didn't see his father doing, he could not have died for our sins. Because he would have made the mistake of the first Adam. He would have established a law unto himself.

Now as God, Jesus could have walked on the water, because he was God. As God, because he was God, he could have said the five thousand by his own divine power. He was fully God and fully man.

But he never did. Jesus never once used his own divine power. What he did, he did by the power of the Holy Spirit at the direction of his father coming through him.

While he was God, we have the theological term, *kenosis*. The best description of it is in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians, where we read about the Lord Jesus the following. In chapter 2, who although he existed in the form of God in verse 6, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant and being made in the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even on the cross.

Jesus was God, he became a man. As God, he could have done anything. But he didn't.

He subjected himself to human limitations and never used his divine power. He only did what he saw his father doing and did what his father did through him. We had an error in the early church.

There were many people who were apostates saying that Jesus was not God. And there was a council held at a place called Chalcedon, where you had two rival schools of thought, the school of Antioch and the school of Alexandria, and they would dispute this issue. They were trying to refute these false beliefs that Jesus was not God.

It's impossible to overstate the deity of God. If he's God, he's God. And you can't overstate the deity of Jesus.

But the mistake that was made at Chalcedon was that they understated his humanity. Hence, Jesus walked on the water because he was God, they thought. Or he said the five thousand because he was God.

This is simply not true. He could have said the five thousand because he was God. He could have walked on the water because he was God, but he did it by the power of his father coming through the spirit in him and through him.

He did not use his own divine power. He only did what he saw his father doing. Now let's understand this.

In trying to refute an error, they made another one. In any event, let's go back to understanding healing. The power was present for him to perform healing.

We can always pray for the sick in the epistle of James that says an oyster is sick with oil. Absolutely true. But to say that we can go around and command someone to get out of a coffin if they're dead or we can tell someone to get out of a deathbed or out of a wheelchair.

That dunamis, that same power better be there than it was for Jesus in Luke 5, 17. Because if that power was not there for him, he couldn't have done it. Unless he did it in his own strength apart from the father.

And we don't even have that strength. He was God and we don't. We can only do it by the father.

Pray for the sick, yes. But command the sick to get up and walk? Command someone to be healed? When the Holy Spirit is leading in a given situation, when that power is there as it was for Jesus in Luke 5, 17, yes, it will work. It will happen.

But when you find people arbitrarily going around, it doesn't. Paul left someone sick at Troas. What do these people know that Paul didn't? The answer is they know nothing.

Paul himself, whatever it was, we can't be sure what kind of an ailment or physical ailment it may have been, but he himself suffered and the Lord did not take it away. What you'll find today are people, usually money-oriented preachers, usually, not always, some are honestly misled, putting condemnation on people. What they are saying is if you don't get healed, you have no faith.

That's not true. It's simply not true. There are other people teaching healing is in the atonement.

In what way is healing in the atonement? And in what way is it not? Let's look at the ways healing is in the atonement. Turn with me, please, to the book of Psalms. And we read something very, very interesting.

In Psalm 32, verse 3, when I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away. We read the same thing in the epistle of James, chapter 5, verses 14 to 16. Sin can cause physical illness.

When someone repents of their sin, healing will follow. Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin. He took our sins upon Himself on the cross, and in so doing, the Lord Jesus Himself, in taking our sins, gives us health.

In a situation where a specific illness or malady is directly caused by sin, yes, He took that sin on the cross, and there can be healing, as we see in James. In a greater sense, healing is in the atonement. Every true Christian will absolutely be healed of everything wrong with them in the resurrection.

Not until we get a glorified body will total healing be fully realized. Yes, He did it for us on the cross and in His own resurrection. But not until our resurrection can we all experience total healing.

The reason? No matter how many times you get healed, you're still going to get older, and unless the Lord comes first, you're going to become ill at some point and die. Is healing in the atonement? Yes, but not in the way these people are teaching you today. It's not fully realized until the resurrection.

Now, the Bible does talk to us from Isaiah chapter 53, and it tells us about by His scourging we are healed in Isaiah chapter 53, verse 5. That's true. But let's look at how the New Testament understands this healing. In 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 24 and 25 in the New Testament, we will understand the way the apostles interpreted and understood it.

In 1 Peter chapter 2, Peter comments on this verse. He Himself bore our sins in His body, that we might rise to sin and live to righteousness. For by His wounds you were healed.

For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you've returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls. Notice the New Testament interprets by His strikes we are healed as a spiritual healing, not a physical one. This is not to deny there's a physical healing.

There is. And sometimes Jesus does heal people today of the worst diseases imaginable. I've experienced physical healing and I've seen dramatic healing, things that were medically impossible.

Remember, the healings that Jesus did, there was no natural medical cure in His day. And so today, in most cases where you see healing, at least in most cases, it is places where there's no natural medical cure. There are people dead today because they claimed healings that have never happened.

In the United States there's a false money preacher who's out to get money out of people and we have it on video, on television, where he proclaims two people totally healed, one of them a child. They both stopped taking medication, vital medical treatment, and both are now dead. And of course they'll justify themselves by saying, well, they had no faith.

That's a lie. You can only have faith in God on the basis of what God has said and taught. Not the distortion these people are giving you.

But let's continue. Why else did Jesus do miracles, signs, and wonders? We read in the book of Deuteronomy that the Messiah would be a prophet like Moses. Moses supernaturally fed people in the wilderness.

So in the gospel of St. Mark, what do we see Jesus doing? Supernaturally feeding people in the wilderness. It's trying to show Jesus was the prophet like Moses predicted in Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 18. All of the Old Testament prophets were types or shadows of Jesus.

But the two which the gospels most closely associate with Jesus are Moses and Elijah. Let's look at another example of Elijah. Jesus had the people recline on the grass in groups of 50 and fed them supernaturally, didn't he? When there was no food.

We read the story of Elijah and Elisha with the sons of the prophets. There were 50 of them. They were fed through Obadiah in groups of 50.

So too, Peter in his state of tribulation in the gospel of St. Matthew chapter 14 walks on the water and he's delivered by the power of God. This paints Jesus as a second Moses. The Jewish people were delivered out of tribulation through the water supernaturally.

The theological term is corporate solidarity. Peter represents the collective body or the corporate body of Israel, the Jewish people. And as they walked on the water so did Peter out of tribulation delivered supernaturally through the water.

Midrashically and through biblical typology it tries to show Jesus as a second Moses. Now let's conclude by looking at these things. Jesus did and still does signs, wonders and miracles and they're still done in his name.

But signs and wonders, gifts of the Spirit occur in the occult. Witch doctors, cult groups play in tongues. There's the real and there's the counterfeit.

Much of what you see today is not real. Not necessarily all demonic but certainly the product of men's imagination. Even though there is a real.

Signs, wonders, healings they point people to Jesus they never vindicate the ministry of a man. And neither Jesus or the apostles or the Old Testament prophets ever allowed signs and wonders to be the focus of their ministry as you see people doing today. Jesus refused to have a miracle crusade.

He had a repentance crusade. Sometimes he healed people and sometimes he didn't. Sometimes the apostles did sometimes they didn't.

Is healing in the atonement? Not in the sense that every Christian will always be healed. Face reality. We get old and sick and die.

The New Testament, the apostles tell us by his stripes we are healed means mainly a spiritual healing. Yes, by his stripes we are healed because he took our diseases on himself when sin is the cause of an illness it's different. Also, he does indeed heal people.

But not until the resurrection when we receive a glorified body will we all finally and totally be healed with bodies that will live forever that will never become ill and that will never die. Because he is risen we shall rise. Because he died we shall live.

God bless you.

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