

# Divine Appointments - 02 Marvels of Redemption

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald explores the spiritual truths found in nature and their connection to God's care and redemption in his sermon 'Divine Appointments - 02 Marvels of Redemption'.*

**Duration:** 40:06

**Topics:** "Divine Appointment"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the urgency of salvation and the need to respond to God's call. He highlights that everything around us, including nature, preaches the gospel message. The preacher references verses from the Bible, such as Matthew 24:32-33, to support his point about the significance of the nation of Israel in relation to the end times. He also mentions how James and Jesus himself drew spiritual lessons from nature. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the importance of having one's name written in the book of life and the eternal consequences of not accepting Jesus as Savior.

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## Transcript

Would you turn in your Bibles, please, to Matthew, chapter 6, Matthew, chapter 6. Look at the birds of the air, verse 26, verse 26, Matthew 6, 26, look, look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Verse 28, so why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.

They neither toil nor spin. Yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow was thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? In our preceding meetings together, we were talking about some of the wonders of God in creation and providence and redemption.

I'd just like to take it one final step further, and that is that everything in God's creation and everything in life preaches a sermon. In other words, there's a spiritual connection behind everything natural. Spiritual law in the natural realm.

I don't think you could think of anything today, especially anything that God created, that doesn't have a spiritual meaning connected. How do we know that? Well, the Bible tells us that. You know, James wrote a little book, a letter.

It has only five chapters in it, and 30 times in those five chapters, he plucks things from nature and draws spiritual lessons from it. Pretty good, huh? 30 times in five chapters, you have references in James to natural and to the spiritual lessons that they teach. But you don't have to go to James.

You can go to the ministry of the Lord Jesus himself. That's what we read from this morning, wasn't it? The words of the Lord Jesus. He was always appealing to nature to bring out spiritual truth.

Today, in the verses that we read, he appealed to the birds and to the flowers of the field. The birds tell us the most important thing in life is not spending all your time getting food, and the most important thing in life is not going in one continual shopping spree for clothing. There are things more important than that in life.

You wouldn't think so to look about you in the world today, but there are. Jesus even appealed to the weather. You know, we just take the weather for granted.

We blame it all on the man on KCBS, you know, the weather prognosticator. Jesus said, when it's evening, you say, it will be fair weather, for the sky is red, and in the morning it will be foul weather, for the sky is red and threatening. Hypocrites.

You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. Matthew 16, verses 2 and 3. The weather. He was speaking to the people of his day.

Get the picture. Get the whole picture. Here was the Son of God standing there over in the land of Israel.

God manifests in the flesh. He had come from the throne above, down to this world. He had veiled himself in a body of flesh, and here were these people, and they were all experts.

They could tell you what the weather was going to be like tomorrow. But here there was God standing in their midst, and they couldn't tell him. They didn't discern.

That's what he said to them. You're able to discern the weather, the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. The signs of the times really had to do with his appearance, didn't it? Had to do with his coming here among men.

He appealed to the wind. He said, surely there's no spiritual lesson connected with the wind. The wind just blows.

That's what Jesus said. He said, the wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound thereof, but you can't tell where it comes from and whether it's going. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit.

And the Lord Jesus could hear the wind blowing. That's what happens when a mysterious, miraculous work of the Holy Spirit of God. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit.

What a good illustration that is, too, of the new birth, and of course that's where it's found in John chapter 3 and verse 8. And then the Lord Jesus would see those little sparrows hopping around on the ground and picking up an occasional insect or worm or whatever it might be, and he said, are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? What does that mean? Well, that means they're not worth very much. You don't buy sparrows to prepare a meal for your friends, do you? But he says, are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin, and not one of them falls to the ground apart from your father's will? Do not fear, therefore. You are of more value than many sparrows.

Matthew 10 verses 29 and 31. Jesus could look at sparrows and say, God cares for sparrows. We care for sparrows, but we care for men and women and young men and young women and boys and girls a lot more than we do for sparrows.

You can buy two of them for a copper coin, but the price of a human soul is beyond computation. What shall it profit a man if he'll gain the whole world and lose his own soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? A tree. Plenty of them around, and we'll be talking about them again.

But Jesus said, now learn this parable from the fig tree. When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near at the very door.

Matthew 24, 32, 33. Jesus looked at a fig tree, and he said, well, that's a picture of the nation of Israel. Watch the nation of Israel.

He said, and this was way back 2,000 years ago. When you see the nation of Israel coming back into existence again, and incidentally, it hasn't been in existence since 1948. When you see that, watch out.

It's coming. It's near. It's coming of the Lord.

It's near. And so we really live in very marvelous time in human history, don't we? And you can watch that nation of Israel. A little nation would sit five times into California, and yet all the other nations around are afraid of it.

It seems all the wheels of government are moving in favor of Israel. I was going to say, they can't do anything wrong. Well, I don't mean that they don't do things wrong.

Of course, they do. But everything seems to move in their favor, and they always come out on the top of the heap, don't they? They always come out on the top of the heap. When you see the fig tree putting forth its leaves, you know that the end is near.

He said, at the very doors, which means that the Lord could be coming back at any moment. Then the vine. A lot of vines here in California.

You can't drive very far out in the country without coming across some of them. Jesus said, I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. I am the vine.

You are the branches. He used it as an illustration of the relationship between him and the believer. And he said, now, I'm the vine, and you're the branch.

And the branch derives its life and its vitality from the vine. And I want you to stay in constant fellowship with me so that my life will flow out through you, and you'll be a power for God. I think the poet said it very well.

He talked of grass and wind and rain, of fig trees and fair weather, and made it his delight to bring heaven and earth together. He spoke of lilies, vines, and wheat, the sparrow and the raven, and words so natural, yet so wise, were on men's hearts engraven. Of yeast with bread, and flax and cloth, of eggs, of fish and candles.

See how the whole familiar world he most divinely handled. And Dr. Barnhouse seized upon this great truth, and he turned it into a game with his family. And when he would be driving along, he had the kids so that they would see some object, and they would cry it out, and then he would have to give them some spiritual lesson in the Bible connected with that object, whatever it might be.

For instance, oh, they see a rock, and he'd say, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. They'd go by a house, and they'd see a door, I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find passion.

Maybe someday, not so often, but someday they might even see some sheep, and they'd cry out, sheep, they'd think, we've got them now, and he'd say, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. And it became a game in the Barnhouse family, and a good one. And I think that some of you fathers are going to be on the spot from now on, as you drive along, and your children will ask you for the spiritual meaning of things.

And it's not just natural, creative things. It seems to me that everything tells a story. Everything does.

Everything preaches a sermon. Are you listening? For instance, the San Francisco Chronicle, get any copy of the San Francisco Chronicle, there's a sermon right there on the front page, they say, what? Sin. What's the news? Well, the news is about murder, violence, rape, immorality, shooting, corruption in government, unethical practices in business, abuse, scandals in religious circles, lying, hatred, war, Bosnia, Herzegovina, that's it.

The newspapers daily tell the story of sin. The Bible says, therefore, justice by one man, sin entered into the world, death by sin, so death passed upon all men, because all have sinned. Now, the editor of the San Francisco Chronicle doesn't know he's confirming the truth of the Bible every day, but he is.

God makes man's wrath to praise him. The writer of the Ecclesiastes says, for there's not a just man on the earth who does good and does not sin. An interesting story is told by a Jew named Yahiel Dinur, I don't know whether I'm pronouncing the poor man's name right, D-I-N-U-R, Yahiel Dinur.

He was a survivor of the concentration camp at Auschwitz, and do you remember how Adolf Eichmann, one of the masterminds of the concentration camps, was captured down in Argentina and taken to Israel and put on trial? And Yahiel Dinur was one of the men that was called as a witness, and one day he stepped, the first time he stepped into the courtroom, and he looked and he saw Adolf Eichmann in a booth enclosed in bulletproof glass. He stared at him and then he began to sob and to shriek and to fall to the floor. Why did he fall to the floor? Why did he shriek? Why did he cry? Was it because of the terrible cruelties of the concentration camp? Was it because he saw evil incarnate in Adolf Eichmann's face? No, that isn't why he, that isn't why he did it.

As he later explained, it was because Eichmann was not the demonic personification of evil that he had expected. Rather, he was an ordinary man, just like anyone else, and in that one instant, Dinur came to the stunning conclusion that sin and evil are the human condition. Wait until you hear what he said.

I was afraid about myself, Dinur said. I saw that I am capable to do this exactly like he. It's amazing, isn't it? Yahiel Dinur's shocking conclusion, Eichmann is in all of us.

Scary, isn't it? It's true. It's absolutely true. Eichmann is in all of us.

And you know, that's one thing that Christians generally agree on. I've often said it about myself. I haven't committed all the sins in the book, but I'm capable of them.

I'm capable of them as a man in the flesh. It's a terrible thing, isn't it? Sin in human nature. Terrible thing.

Read the San Francisco Chronicle with one hand and hold your Bible in the other. The Chronicle confirms what the Bible has to say. You go down to Safeway.

I better say Safeway, not Lucky's. Gary is here. And you buy your fruit there, and you go out to the checkout stand, and that lady puts your fruit on the scales.

You ever think that the scales preach a sermon? Come on, McDonald. Well, they do really. Takes us back to the book of Daniel.

The time of Belshazzar. The handwriting that came on the wall. Belshazzar looked up through his bleary, drunken eyes, and he read those words.

You are weighed in the balances. You are weighed in the scales and found wanting. You see, people go by what they think about themselves.

It isn't what we think about ourselves, it's what God thinks about us that matters, isn't it? People compare themselves with other people, and they come off pretty well, you know? They look better than us. That's not the point. How does God see you? The scales in the Safeway store say, listen, you're weighed in the balances and found wanting.

Daniel 5, 27. I'll tell you things that preach very loud sermons. The hearse.

I live about a block away from a mortuary, and I go by, and more often than not, there's a hearse at the door there. More often than not, because there are fools going on all the time. A hearse, a mortuary, a funeral, a cemetery.

You know, sometimes I think that people look the other way when they go by Guerrero's funeral home. They don't like to think about it, do they? What? He's talking too loud. He's talking, what's it saying? It's saying it's appointed unto man once to die, after this suggestion.

Now, I know Mrs. Guerrero doesn't intend it to say that. She would like to dress it up, you know, put a lot of rouge on the bodies, and, you know, dress up death so it doesn't seem so terrible. It's saying that.

It's saying, set your house in order, or you shall die and not live. It's saying, the words that we read in Amos, prepare to meet your God. And they talk, I think they talk very loudly, don't you? The hearse, the funeral home, the funeral, the funeral procession going along Estadillo there.

I hear you. And the cemetery itself. Blood preaches quite a sermon, doesn't it? You say, we don't talk about blood in a public meeting.

Well, Howard doesn't hear it perfectly all right. I had a little of it last night. But anyway, even when you boys and girls go to the doctor, oftentimes he puts in a little needle and takes up some blood, you know.

No big deal. No big deal. And sometimes we injure ourselves.

I happened to be wearing a band-aid this morning. The door slammed on my finger. The blood preaches, it says that back in Leviticus chapter 17, verse 11.

It says, for the life of the flesh is in the blood. And I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your soul. So it's the blood that makes atonement for the soul.

What's that saying? He's saying, look, we're all sunk in sin. And it's only by the shedding of blood that those sins can ever be washed away. But if it's my blood, it won't go.

It has to be the blood of a perfect, sinless, innocent victim. A blood of infinite value. Only the blood of the Son of God.

And then again we read in Hebrews 9.22, and according to the law, almost all things are purged with blood. And without shedding of blood, there's no remission. Amazing, isn't it? Without shedding of blood, there's no remission.

Think of that the next time you see a drop of blood. Without shedding of blood, there's no remission. In the Old Testament, thousands of animals were slain and their blood was shed, but it didn't wash away a single sin.

It was just a ritual. It was just a ritual. Only the blood of the Lord Jesus can wash away my sins.

Cross. Anybody here belong to Blue Cross? Nobody? Poor advertisement for Blue Cross. Well, it meets you every year.

You see it in the ads anyway, in the paper. Blue Cross. Red Cross.

It's amazing how often we... I looked up in my dictionary last night and you know there are 18 different kinds of crosses listed in the dictionary. That is the shaping of the cross, 18 different kinds. And not only that, it's amazing to me that when so many governments of the world want to give a tremendous honor to a person, what do they give them? An iron cross, croix de guerre, war, all kinds of crosses.

It was such a symbol. The cross was a symbol of shame, you know. It was a means of execution and yet because the Lord Jesus died on that cross, the whole thought of a cross has become beautiful and now it's an honor by governments to give a cross to a person.

The cross certainly, every time you see a cross in life, think about it, think about it. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross, for our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. We already talked about a tree.

A lot of things in life have a lot more than one meaning. We talked about the fig tree and how Israel is a sign. Israel today is a sign that we're close to the end of the age and the Lord could come at any time.

But the tree is also used as a synonym of the cross. You remember Galatians 3.13, it says, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. For it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs upon a tree.

There the tree is synonymous with the cross of Calvary. Cursed is everyone. He was bearing the curse for us there on the cross of Calvary.

And then all the time you read in the papers about maybe a boy that was saved from drowning or miners are saved from a fire in the coal pits. What are they telling us about salvation, aren't they? Salvation. And so much of that in the world today.

Maybe a dog is saved when some motorist gets it off the freeway. Well, it reminds us that there's a way for us to be saved from sin, from the curse of sin, from the punishment of sin. Romans 10 and 9. But if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, he'll believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

But with a heart man believes unto righteousness, and with a mouth confession is made unto salvation. Football game. Football game.

Football game. Surely you don't get any spiritual lessons from a football game. Yes, you do.

And every once in a while a coach sends in a substitute, doesn't he? He takes the place of another player. It's known as substitution. That's exactly what happened at Calvary two thousand years ago.

The Lord Jesus went there to the cross and he died as my substitute. I should have been there on the cross. I should have been there paying the penalty of my sins.

Instead of that, he, the eternal son of God, can't take it in, was willing to go there and bear the wrath of God against my sin so that I might have eternal life with him in heaven. And you read that in the scripture. Christ died for our sins according to the scripture, right? First Corinthians 15, verse three.

And the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. That's marvelous, isn't it? Next time you go to a football game or see it on TV, watch out for the substitute and think of Jesus. And it was no game he played either.

Gift. Gift. Birthday gifts.

Wedding gifts. Shower gifts. I got the order a little reversed there.

Anniversary gifts. Graduation gifts. Gifts preach a lesson, don't they? Huh? The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

For by grace are you saved. And that word grace has the idea of gift in it. What you receive by, when you receive, let's say, a graduation gift, it isn't something that you particularly deserve in this sense.

I give you a graduation gift. I don't have to do that. You give it to, it's just a gift of grace, that's all.

Because salvation is, it's just a manifestation of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Doctor's appointment. Oh, say, come on, this is very clinical.

What a clinical message you're preaching today. Well, a question in my mind. I was there last Thursday.

When I was there before, he gave me a choice of several things to choose. He said, which of these do you want? One of them wasn't death, incidentally. And I said, look, you're my doctor.

I trust your judgment. You know what that was? It was faith. You go to the doctor.

You commit your case to him. You're putting your faith in him, aren't you? You're trusting him to make the right decision. Ostensibly, he knows more about it than you do.

I had that same experience when I had to take an anesthetic a couple of years ago. He said, now, which do you want? I said that same thing to him. I said, well, I trust your judgment.

He said, very well. He wrote something down. Well, by grace are you saved through faith.

That's how a person is saved. When he comes, it just puts his faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. He comes and says, Lord Jesus, I'm lost.

I'm lost in sin and in degradation. But I trust you with the eternal salvation of my soul. The longer I live, the more I realize, you know, our lives, day by day, we live, everything is by faith, practically.

When you write a check, you give a piece of paper to a person. He accepts it for money. It's faith, isn't it? It's faith.

You step on that plane. It's an act of faith. You believe that you're trusting that plane with pilots you don't even know to take you to a destination.

Maybe that's not faith. Maybe that's foolhardiness. I'm not sure.

But you know what I mean. We do it all the time. Our whole society is based upon faith.

It is. Listen, salvation is based upon faith. Nobody is saved apart from that.

Your daily employment. Some of you have jobs. You go to work day by day.

Work. Work. I think one of the clearest passages in the Bible and the whole subject of our soul salvation is found in Romans chapter 4, verses 4 and 5. It says, now to him who works is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt.

But to him who does not work but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness. Let me go over it a little slowly. Now, to him who works, this is in connection with our salvation.

If you're working for yourself, if you were to work for yourself, now to him who works is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt. If you could work for your salvation, it wouldn't be a gift from God. It would be something he owes you.

To him who works is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt. That's the wrong way of salvation. There is no salvation that way.

It says, but to him who doesn't work. What kind of people get saved? Those who don't work for their salvation. That's kind of odd, isn't it? It goes contrary to everything that man believes, but it's what the Bible teaches.

To him who does not work, but what? But believes, believes who? Before you'll ever get saved. You know, it requires a certain desperation to be saved. That might strike you funny, but let me explain.

It says the kingdom of God suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. You have to come to the place in life where you're desperate for Christ to save you before you get saved. Strive to enter in at the straight gate, it says.

It's not works, but Christ has to be everything to me. That's what it is. To him who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness.

That's the kind of a person who gets saved. The guy who abandons any thought of earning or meriting his salvation. In my hand no price I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.

Could my tears forever flow, could my zeal no rest, but no, all for sin could not atone. Thou must save, thou alone. So, even your daily work is preaching a sermon until you come to the end of the week.

The man gives you your pay, or two weeks or a month, whatever it is. You earned it. That's not salvation.

You don't earn salvation. You receive it as a free gift from God. If you don't deserve it, you deserve the very opposite.

Freeway. There's a freeway. Preach a sermon where it really does, some more than others.

So, I take a 580. Let's see, going east on 580 through San Leandro, and then you come to a fork, and this fork goes off. Well, some of it goes down towards the Nimitz, and some goes into Hayward, and some goes down towards Stockton.

When you come to the fork, you have to make a decision, don't you? You have to make a decision. And that's true with salvation, too. You have to make a decision.

I read that verse before. Let me give it to you again. Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

Most of the people on 580 should go up towards Stockton, and they'll go down toward Livermore and Altamont Pass. It's kind of a narrow way into Hayward at that particular juncture. The Bible says, wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

Because narrow is the gate, and difficult is the way. That's why I say difficult is the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it. Difficult in the sense you've got to be desperate.

You've got to mean business with God. It's not just an easy mental ascent to things. Well, some of you are spending time these days tending to your lawn.

The hills are beginning to grow brown around here, and your lawn will, too, if you don't water it, take care of it. Grass. Grass.

Shortness of life. That's what it's saying. Grass is preaching a thing.

Life at death is very brief. Like the falling of a leaf. Like the binding of a sheep.

Be in time. The Bible says, all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away.

And again, as it speaks about the rich man as the flower of the field, he will pass away. For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass, its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. I tell you, when I think of all these things that are preaching sermons, it's a wonder that you can hear anything.

All these voices screaming to us. They're all there, and they're all preaching their message. Decision.

You've got to make a decision. If you say you can't decide, you have decided. That's your decision.

Seed. Again, some of you are working in your garden. I think some of you have gone and bought burpees.

Seeds. Maybe some of you are going to have some vegetables in your garden. What could be more inconspicuous and seemingly dead than a little bit of seed? What's a preacher preaching? Resurrection.

Let the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die. It dies alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit.

I don't know any more vivid illustration of resurrection than seeds, do you? And Paul uses that in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Fire. Matt and I were at a missionary prayer meeting the other night, and on the way home, the engines were all along the streetway, and we stopped, and there's a house on fire.

Fire preaches a lesson. It really does. It says, and anyone not found written in the book of life was cast into the light of fire.

Solemn, isn't it? Anyone not found written. How do you get your name in the book of life? You've come as a guilty lost sinner. Trust the Lord Jesus.

He writes your name in the book of life, and your eternal destiny is assured. People don't realize it. Here's a man, and he's lighting a cigarette, and he's got the lighter up a little smidgen of hell, two inches from his nose.

He doesn't hear the sermon that's being produced. That's what he's going to suffer for all eternity, if he doesn't turn to Christ. One final thing, here it is on 19.

Watch. A clock. Clock up on the wall.

What's he saying? He's saying, behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. Of course, it says a lot of other things.

If you're a Christian, it says, I must work the works of him that sent me while in his day. The night comes, and no man. So, there you have it.

Everything about us preaches a sermon, and the verses that we use today primarily preach the gospel sermon. The whole way of salvation is told out in things about us today. God calls you through the word.

He calls you through these other things as well. These illustrations of spiritual truth in the natural realm. Of course, our heart's desire is that if you're here today, and you're unsaved, that the Spirit of God will get through to you, that you'll be desperate to come to Jesus.

Shall we pray? And then Daryl will lead us in opposing him. Father, truly, you have not left yourself without witness. If people perish, it certainly is not your fault.

We just pray that we might hear your word to us through the Bible, and through everything around us as well. Help us to discern the times and the seasons. Help us to know that the time is short.

Teach us the value of every minute. And for those who are not saved, we pray that they might close in with your offer of mercy while it is still the day of salvation. We ask it in the Savior's name.

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