

DID THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE REALLY HAPPEN?

Note to the speaker:

Help audience to see that the miracles of the Bible are fully within God's capability and are well attested to by reliable witnesses. Do not belittle or patronize those who are skeptical. Show that Bible miracles alone do not build faith in Jehovah God but are part of the accurate knowledge that does build faith in him

MANY DO NOT BELIEVE IN MIRACLES (4 min.)

Miracles are occurrences that excite wonder, or astonishment, effects that surpass known human or natural powers

Many acts performed by God, although amazing to humans, are merely the exercise of his power (*it-2* 411)

Some theologians disbelieve Bible miracles, contending that they are exaggerations of ordinary events (*w98* 10/15 3; *g84* 2/22 17)

Little wonder that 50 percent of Catholics in France, Italy, and Spain do not believe in the miracles of the Bible (*g96* 4/8 4)

Numerous scientists, philosophers, and others feel that miracles are unscientific and are the result of ignorance and superstition (*w95* 3/1 3; *gm* 72)

However, merely asserting that the miracles did not take place does not prove that they did not (*w91* 10/1 28; *it-2* 411-12)

IDENTIFYING MARKS THAT DIFFERENTIATE BIBLE MIRACLES FROM MAGIC (6 min.)

The Bible's miracles are not fairy tales, exaggerated legends, illusions, or magical feats

Magical feats involve use of charms, secret arts, special staging, or rituals to produce seemingly supernatural effects

Often used to trick observers into believing that practitioner has special powers and to increase his own wealth and fame (*it-2* 293, 413)

Bible miracles are noted for their open and public nature, their simplicity, their purpose and motive

Generally performed without outward display and frequently in response to a chance encounter or request and in an unprepared place (Ex 14:21-31; 1Ki 13:3-6)

Motive of individual performing miracle was not for selfish prominence but for God's glory (Read John 11: 1-4, 15, 40)

Never performed to mystify or just to satisfy curiosity

Always helped others—sometimes in a physical way, always in a spiritual way—turning people to true worship

Jesus' works were done in the open and never to show off (*w95* 3/1 4)

Both his miraculous cures and control over the elements were marked by simplicity (Mr 4:39; 5:25-29; 10:46-52)

He healed all, not failing on pretext that some lacked faith (Read Matthew 8:16; 9:35)

EYEWITNESSES CONFIRM BIBLE MIRACLES (10 min.)

Examining eyewitness testimony and the effect such miracles had on people helps to establish the truthfulness of the events

For example, the miracles performed by Moses and Aaron were public and affected millions (*g74* 4/8 25-6)

The first was demonstrated before Pharaoh, his servants, and his priests and was followed by ten miraculous blows that affected all the land of Egypt (Ex 7:8-12, 19-21; *w96* 1/15 24)

By third plague, even Pharaoh's priests admitted: "It is the finger of God!" (Ex 8:16-19; 9:10, 11)

At Red Sea, Egyptians acknowledged that Jehovah was performing mighty acts in behalf of Israel (Ex 14:25)

When Jesus' resurrection was first reported to the disciples, they refused to believe it (Lu 24:6-11)

Upon seeing the living Jesus, they had to accept that he had indeed been raised from the dead (Lu 24:34-43)

Matthew and John saw Jesus die and also attested to his resurrection (Mt 27:50; 28:16, 17; Joh 21:24; *gm* 82)

Paul and "five hundred brothers" saw the resurrected Christ (1Co 15:3-8)

There are no earthly eyewitnesses today of man's miraculous creation, yet our existence is proof that it happened (*Lmn* 12)

THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S MIRACLES (12 min.)

There are many reasons why Jehovah performed powerful acts that have been called miracles by man

Jehovah's defense of the Israelites proved to the Egyptians that he is God and Sovereign (*w72* 1/15 38-9)

Miracles were often used to establish or confirm the fact that a man was receiving power and support from God (Ex 4:1-9)

Observers came to this correct conclusion about both Moses and Jesus (Ex 4:30, 31; Joh 9:17, 31-33)

Moses, Jesus, and others were known, not as miracle workers, but as teachers and prophets sent by God

Jesus' miracles "made his glory manifest," identifying him as promised Messiah (Read John 2:11) (*it-1* 963-4)

They confirmed that he was the coming Prophet promised through Moses (De 18:18; Joh 6:14)

These powerful works verified Jesus' commission and message and fulfilled prophecy (Joh 5:36-39, 46, 47; 14:11; 20:27-29)

The miracles that Jesus performed were largely related to mankind's problems and illustrated God's interest in his human creation

He healed all types of sickness (Mt 8:14, 15; Lu 6:19; 17:11-14)

He resurrected the dead (Mt 9:23-25; Lu 7:14, 15)

These powerful works proved that he was God's appointed means for freeing mankind from sin and death (Mr 2:5-12)

Miracles used in conjunction with message helped people see that God was backing early Christian congregation (Ac 13:12; Heb 2:3, 4)

In first century, Jehovah's spirit worked mightily, forming congregations and firmly establishing Christianity (Ac 4:4; 16:5; *it-2* 414)

TODAY, MIRACLES NOT NECESSARY TO BUILD FAITH (8 min.)

Jehovah did not intend that miracles be a permanent feature of Christian worship (Read 1 Corinthians 13:8) (*w97* 3/15 6)

Even if miracles were still performed, it would not convince everyone

Not all who were eyewitnesses of Jesus' miracles were moved to accept his teachings (Joh 11:47, 48; 12:37; *w97* 3/15 4-5)

It is not necessary for God to perform miracles today to prove his existence (Ps 19:1; Ro 1:20)

Faith in God is based on solid evidence of things to come; miracles only play a role in building such faith (Heb 11:1)

We have the entire inspired Scriptures to use as a basis for true faith, not the record of miracles alone (2Ti 3:16)

Faith based on the accurate knowledge of God's Word is neither weak nor shallow; it has substance and is powerful

God's servants today 'walk by faith, not by sight,' convinced that all of his inspired Word is true (2Co 5:7)

As you become better acquainted with the Bible's message, you will not be disappointed because of lack of miracles today

It is only through a study of the Scriptures that those seeking God can truly find him (Isa 55:6; Ac 17:26, 27)

BENEFITING FOREVER FROM JEHOVAH'S FUTURE MIRACLES (5 min.)

The Word of God is a storehouse of information vital for a successful life now and in the future (1Ti 2:3, 4)

To benefit, we must acquaint ourselves with all of God's dealings recorded therein (Ro 15:4)

The miracles recorded in the Bible help instill confidence in God

They give strong assurance that God cares for mankind and that he can and will protect those who serve him

Many stupendous acts of God are yet to come

Soon he will destroy this wicked system of things (2Pe 3:7; Re 16:14, 16)

Millions who have faith in God and live in harmony with his laws and principles have the hope of living forever in God's new world of righteousness (2Pe 3:13)

There he will heal and bless faithful humankind forever (Re 21:4)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read or commented on)