

THE SMALL GOD SYNDROME

We must not allow the presence of religious frauds and warped emphases to distort our view of God! Men have enough difficulty embracing the true God without teaching them Divine interventions in the affairs of men no longer take place. In passing, the purported miracles of many today would surely look out of place in Scripture. As a rule, they simply are not in the same category as those reported by men who were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Salvation is infinitely larger than we are prone to believe. This is why Paul prayed fervently for those to whom he had preached and written. He prayed they would be able to see *“what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power”* (Eph 1:19). The contemporary church’s employment of Divine power can be likened to a man who inherited a billion dollars deciding to use his new riches to have his shoes resoled. Small thinking among God’s people reproaches God, demeans Jesus, and quenches the Spirit. This exceeding great power is *“toward,”* or devoted to, those who believe! God is looking for someone whose cause He can undergird (2 Chron 16:9)—someone whose heart is perceptive enough to sense the magnitude of the power given to them in Christ Jesus.

In his elaboration of this remarkable power, Paul affirmed to the Ephesians a truth for us also. *“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen”* (Eph 3:20-21). Notice, God can even NOW work in a manner far beyond what we are capable of asking or even thinking—and it is according to the power that works in us! This is not His plan for the Apostolic age, but for His people *“to all generations.”* I am afraid minuscule views of God and His work have pushed the average church beyond the realm of Divine working—into the outer court of mediocrity.

What we have in Christ Jesus is powerful enough to throw down false ideas (certainly a supernatural work). What do you suppose would happen if the church took this seriously. *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ”* (2 Cor 10:4-5). Is that not a mighty work? Moses could not throw down the false notions of Israel—not even with the remarkable miracles he wrought.

Are there miracles today?

It should be evident miracles are not, at the very least, in abundance—at least not in our country. It should also be evident that the rank unbelief that dominates our country prohibits such working. But that does not mean God’s people cannot set their sights high, and aspire to do great things for God—things that require Omnipotence to get done. Those who claim to be miracle workers will have to submit to scrutiny, for we are commanded to *“try the spirits”* (1 John 4:1). Too, they will have to have their message evaluated, for supernatural workings can accompany a false message (Deut 13:1-3). I do not know of any Word from God that admonishes us to develop an official position on miracles. Our position must be *“God is able.”* Equally true, it is our business to make war on unbelief, which prohibits the mighty God from working in our behalf.

If you ask whether or not God works supernaturally, men and women from around the world will rise up to testify that, indeed, He does! People from every age and place will declare strong faith has always been honored by God. There is no reason—absolutely none—to assume it cannot be true of you also. If God can work transcendent to nature, then seek to do something requiring that kind of working. Aspire to rise above the mediocre, and God will surely bless you!

WHAT ABOUT MIRACLES ??????

A brief review of Miracles and their role in the Divine economy
by Given O. Blakely

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the consideration of this subject, a few observations are necessary. **First**, no one may speak for God on this, or any other, subject, where God has not spoken for Himself. **Second**, the confinement of the working of God to nature cannot be justified by Scripture. **Third**, there is nothing in Scripture that indicates an omnipotent God has, or ever will, cease to employ that omnipotence in His dealings with humanity. **Fourth**, claims to miraculous power are subject to testing, just as surely as affirmations of having received a message from God. **Fifth**, while there are extended Apostolic writings on faith, justification, love, hope, etc., no such approach is taken to miracles. **Sixth**, no person, however astute or knowledgeable of Scripture, can affirm miracles ought to exist in every age, or that they have ceased for some ages.

I will not confine myself to an etymological approach to miracles—simply defining them from a lexical, or dictionary, point of view. There are at least six words used to define supernatural works in Scripture. Here are Vine’s comments on that matter.

The supernatural works of Christ and His apostles are denoted by six different words in the New Testament, exhibiting these works under different aspects and from different points of view. These will be considered in detail as they occur. Generally, a miracle may be regarded: (1.) As a *portent or prodigy* (τέρας); as Acts 7:36, of the wonders shown by Moses in Egypt. (2.) As a *sign* (σημεῖον), pointing to something beyond itself, a mark of the power or grace of the doer or of his connection with the supernatural world. So Matthew 12:38. (3.) As an *exhibition of God’s glory* (ἐνδοξον), Luke 13:17; *glorious things*. (4.) As a *strange thing* (παράδοξον), Luke 5:26. (5.) As a *wonderful thing* (θαυμάσιον), Matthew 21:15. (6.) As a *power* (δύναμις); so here (Matt 11:20): a *mighty* work. (Word Studies)

I am using the word *“miracle”* to denote a work that is transcendent to nature, or supernatural. I will show that such works can be either good or evil, from God or from Satan. I will also affirm that the possibility of such works is beyond all question. However, miracles are **not** required to substantiate the Word, convert the soul, or strengthen faith. Mighty works from God are strictly according to His will. They can be for blessing or cursing, and cannot be controlled by men – even holy men. Here is an area governed by God’s good pleasure.

THE MIRACULOUS ORDER

God's Word is filled with supernatural works. Creation, the flood, confusion at Babel, the birth of Isaac, Destruction of Sodom, Lot's wife turned to a pillar of salt, and the closing of the wombs of Abimelech's house. The burning bush, the plagues upon Egypt, the exodus of Israel, passing through the Red Sea, manna from heaven, and water from a rock. Balaam's ass speaking, the fall of the walls of Jericho, the sun standing still, and Elijah fed by ravens. The Word of God is filled with supernatural occurrences! Elijah raised a widow's son from the dead, stopped and started rain by prayer, brought fire from heaven on Ahaziah's army, and divided the Jordan River. Elisha increased a widow's oil, cured Naaman of leprosy, caused an axe head to float, and caused blindness to come on the army of the king of Syria. Who can forget Jonah in the fish's belly, Daniel in the lion's den, or the three Hebrew children in a furnace of fire? The Gospels record 36 of Jesus' miracles, and over 20 wrought by His disciples.

Our faith has been bathed in the supernatural. The resurrection of Christ, His ascension into heaven, the empowerment of the Apostles at Pentecost, and the success of the Word of God can only be explained within the context of Divine working. There IS a miraculous order—a dimension of working that is higher than nature.

The Phenomenon of John the Baptist

John the Baptist stood above his peers. Jesus said a greater had not arisen among those born of woman (Matt 11:11). Yet, something is said of John that will help us get a good perspective of our subject. *"John did no miracle"*—he wrought no sign (John 10:41). Yet, he touched the hearts of the people more than all of the accumulated prophets before him. Filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb (Lk 1:15), supernatural works were wrought through him in another dimension—bringing men to repentance (Matt 3:5-6). He readied the people to receive Christ Jesus, a work of unspeakable magnitude. Who would dare to compare that with making an axe head float, or causing the meal and oil of a widow to multiply. None of those things could have been done without God! Nor, indeed, could John have brought men to repentance without the mighty God.

It would have been absurd for men to assume God has ceased working supernaturally with the advent of John's ministry. Modern scribes would probably have made a good case for that.

An Area Where Delusion Is Possible

The realm of the supernatural is one in which Satan is also active. When Moses confronted wicked Pharaoh and his magicians, he was not the only one who worked miracles. The magician's turned their rods into serpents, turned water into blood, and brought frogs upon the land, (Ex 7:11, 22; 8:7). Their power was inferior to that displayed by Moses, but it was supernatural. Scripture also speaks about Satanic activity characterized by *"all power, signs, and lying wonders"* (2 Thess 2:9). Do not think Satan will overlook those who have an inordinate appetite for the supernatural! Realms of Satanic activity that extend beyond nature include witchcraft, sorcery, false prophets, charmers, enchantment, wizards, necromancers, and divination (Deut 18:10-12; 2 Chron 33:6; Gal 5:20; Acts 16:16; Matt 24:24). Here, then, is an area where we dare not depend upon an academic approach. Nature is not the only realm, and we dare not suppose that it is! We are doing battle *"against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"* (Eph 6:12). We dare not adopt a theology that is confined to nature, and thus devoid of power. Satanic power must be countered with Divine power!

WORKING MIRACLES

Scripture affirms God placed gifts in the church according to His own will (1 Cor 12:1-11). Among them was *"the working of miracles"* (1 Cor 12:10). Scripture does not say **every** church possessed this gift, or that it was a token of unique blessing. This gift was found in Corinth. There is no evidence it existed in the churches in Rome, Ephesus, Colossae, or Philippi. The placing of this gift has always been a Divine prerogative, whether in Moses' day, or the time of the Corinthian church. It was not a sign of superiority, for Corinth was anything but superior (1 Cor 3:1-3).

Miracles Not Wrought at Will

The spiritual environment has more to do with Divine working than the possession of ability. For example, when Jesus came to *"His own country,"* it is written, *"Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief"* (Mark 6:5-6). On another occasion, Jesus confronted a blind man in Bethsaida, a city dominated by unbelief (Matt 11:21). The healing of this blind man is the only occasion where Jesus nearly failed—He had to touch him twice. Because of the unbelief rampant in that city, Jesus led the blind man out of the town in order to heal him (Mark 8:22-25). The absence of miracles, therefore, can also be due to unbelief.

On one occasion, one of Paul's fellow-laborers almost died in his very presence, in spite of repeated prayers (Phil 2:25-27). Paul also told Timothy to *"use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities"* (1 Tim 5:23). The point is that even where the gift was given, it could not be exercised at the will of the possessor. It was still strictly controlled by the Lord Who gave it. This lifts the matter of miracles from the philosophical and speculative realm.

Divine Commitments

Faith has always been honored by God! Jesus said, and He has not retracted it, *"If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes"* (Mark 9:23). James (who was not an Apostle) confirms *"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much,"* citing the powerful prayers of Elijah as confirmation of that truth (James 5:14-17).

Having been called into the *"fellowship"* of God's dear Son (1 Cor 1:9), and being urged to *"draw near"* to God Himself (Heb 10:22), it is the height of absurdity to think nothing supernatural, or transcendent to nature, will ever occur. Equally true, those who expect to live in the midst of a steady stream of supernatural phenomenon must acknowledge such a condition has never been a standard for men. Only the earthly ministry of Jesus is an acceptance to that rule.

There Are Things Miracles Cannot Do

There are things miracles CANNOT do. They cannot change a heart! Israel experienced miracles on the grandest scale ever known to man, yet remained obstinate and hard-hearted. The marvelous miracles of Jesus did not change Jerusalem, or cause the people to be gathered together to Him as He desired (Matt 23:37). The unparalleled plagues poured out upon Egypt did not induce them to repent, or cause them to become worshipers of God. Even though Stephen was a great miracle worker (Acts 6:8), he was killed by the very people who beheld those wonders. Miracle power is not the greatest power—else John would have worked miracles, and Jerusalem would have repented at the preaching of Jesus. When men theorize about miracles, they must consider these things, lest they be led into an affection for the supernatural like that of wicked Herod (Lk 23:8)

MIRACLES OF CHRIST'S DISCIPLES

- 001-By the seventy (Luke 10:17-20)
- 002-By other disciples (Mark 9:39)
- 003-By the Apostles (Acts 3:6-16; Acts 9:34-35; Acts 16:19)
- 004-Peter cures the sick (Acts 5:15-16)
- 005-Peter cures Aeneas (Acts 9:34)
- 006-Peter raises Dorcas (Acts 9:40)
- 007-Peter brings death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:5,10)
- 008-Peter and John sure lame man (Acts 3:2-10)
- 009-Peter and other Apostles delivered from prison (Acts 5:19-23; 12:6-9)
- 010-Philip carried away in the spirit (Acts 8:39)
- 011-Paul strikes Elymas with blindness (Acts 13:11)
- 012-Paul heals cripple (Acts 14:10)
- 013-Paul casts out spirits and cures sick (Acts 16:18; 19:11-12; 28:8-9)
- 014-Paul raises Eutychus to life (Acts 20:9-12)
- 015-Paul shakes deadly viper from hand (Acts 28:5)

Before the book of Acts concludes, we begin to see a dissipation of miracles.

SOME MIRACLES DURING THE FIRST 4,000 YEARS

- 001-The flood (Genesis 7)
- 002-Confusion of tongues at Babel (Genesis 11)
- 003-Fire on Abraham's sacrifice (Genesis 15:17)
- 004-Conception of Isaac (Genesis 17:17; 19:12; 21:2)
- 005-Destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19)
- 006-Lot's wife turned to pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26)
- 007-Closing of womb's in Abimelech's house (Genesis 20:17-18)
- 008-Opening of Hagar's eyes (Genesis 21:19)
- 009-Conception of Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:21)
- 010-Opening of Rachel's womb (Genesis 30:22)
- 011-Burning bush (Exodus 3:2)
- 012-Moses' rod turned into serpent (Exodus 4:3-4; 7:10-12)
- 013-Moses' hand becomes leprous (Exodus 4:6-7)
- 014-Ten plagues in Egypt (Exodus 8-12)
- 015-Pillar of cloud and pillar of fire leading Israel (Exodus 13:21-22; 14:19-20)
- 016-Israel crosses Red Sea (Exodus 14:22)
- 017-Pharaoh and army drowns in Red Sea (Exodus 14:23-30)
- 018-Sweetening of waters at Marah (Exodus 15:25)
- 019-Manna for forty years (Exodus 16)
- 020-Quails given to Israel (Exodus 16:13)
- 021-Defeat of Amalek (Exodus 17:9-13)
- 022-Moses' face glows from the Divine presence (Exodus 34:29-35)
- 023-Water from the rock (Exodus 17:5-7)
- 024-Miriam stricken with leprosy (Numbers 12:10-15)
- 025-Destruction of Korah and cohorts (Numbers 16:31-35)
- 026-Aaron's rod buds (Numbers 17:1-9)
- 027-Scourge of serpents (Numbers 21:6-9)
- 028-Destruction of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2)
- 029-Balaam's ass speaks (Numbers 22:22-30)
- 030-Jordan divided (Joshua 3:14-17; 14:16-18)
- 031-Fall of Jericho (Joshua 6:20)
- 032-Midianites destroyed (Judges 7:16-22)
- 033-Destroying hail on confederation of kings (Joshua 10:11)
- 034-Sun and moon stand still (Joshua 10:12-14)
- 035-Dew on Gideon's fleece (Judges 6:37-40)
- 036-Samson's strength (Judges 14:6; 16:3,29-30)
- 037-Samson supplied with water (Judges 15:19)
- 038-Fall of the idol Dagon (1 Samuel 5:1-4)

039-Cows return the ark of the covenant (1 Samuel 6:7-14)
040-People struck with hemorrhoids (1 Samuel 5:9-12; 6:1-5)
041-Destruction of people at Bethshemesh (1 Samuel 6:19-20)
042-Uzzah struck dead (2 Samuel 6:1-8)
043-Jeroboam's hand withered (1 Kings 13:3-6)
044-Elijah fed by ravens (1 Kings 17:6)
045-Elijah fed by an angel (1 Kings 19:1-8)
046-Elijah increases widows oil and meal (1 Kings 17:9-16)
047-Elijah raises widow's son (1 Kings 17:17-24)
048-Elijah prays it will not rain (1 Kings 17:1)
049-Elijah prays it will rain (1 Kings 18:41-45)
050-Elijah brings fire on Ahaziah's army (2 Kings 1:10-12)
051-Elijah divides Jordan (2 Kings 2:8)
052-Elijah translated (2 Kings 2:11)
053-Elisha divides Jordan (2 Kings 2:14)
054-Elisha sweetens waters of Jericho (2 Kings 2:19-22)
055-Elisha increases widow's oil (2 Kings 4:1-7)
056-Elisha raises Shunammite's son from dead (2 Kings 4:18-26)
057-Elisha heals pottage (2 Kings 4:38-41)
058-Elisha feeds 100 men (2 Kings 4:42-44)
059-Elisha cures Naaman's leprosy (2 Kings 5:1-9)
060-Elisha puts leprosy on Gehazi (2 Kings 5:26-27)
061-Elisha causes axe head to float (2 Kings 6:6)
062-Elisha reveals counsel of king of Syria (2 Kings 6:12)
063-Elisha prays eyes of his servant will be opened (2 Kings 6:17)
064-Elisha smites Syrian army with blindness (2 Kings 6:18)
065-Dead man restored when touching Elisha's bones (2 Kings 13:21)
065-Destruction of Sennacarib's army (2 Kings 19:35; Isaiah 37:36)
066-Shadow on sun dial turned backward ten degrees (2 Kings 20:9-11)
067-Three Hebrews children delivered from fiery furnace (Dan 3:23-27)
068-Daniel delivered from lion's den (Daniel 6:22)
069-Jonah in fish's belly (Jonah 1-2)
070-Jonah's gourd (Jonah 4:6)
071-Jonah's gourd destroyed by a worm (Jonah 4:7)

Period covered - 4,000 years – Average, a miracle every 50 years, if not clustered

MIRACLES OF JESUS

001-Water into wine (John 2)
002-Heals nobleman's son (John 4:46-54)
003-Draught of fishes (Luke 5:1-9)
004-Heals demoniac (Mark 1:23-26)
005-Heals Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-17)
006-Cleanses leper (Matthew 8:1-4)
007-Heals paralytic (Matthew 9:1-8)
008-Heals impotent men (John 5:1-9)
009-Restores withered hand (Matthew 12:9-13)
010-Restores Centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13)
011-Raises widow's son from the dead (Luke 7:11-16)
012-Heals demoniacs (Mark 3:11)
013-Stills the tempest (Matthew 8:23-27)
014-Casts demons out of Gadarene (Matthew 8:23-34)
015-Raises Jairus' daughter from the dead (Matthew 9:18-26)
016-Cures woman with issue of blood (Matthew 9:20-22)
017-Restore sight to two blind men (Matthew 9:27-31)
018-Heals demoniac (Matthew 12:23-30)
019-Feeds 5,000 (Matthew 14:15-21)
020-Walks on raging sea (Matthew 14:22-30)
021-Heals Syrophenician woman's daughter (Matthew 15:21-28)
022-Feeds 4,000 (Matthew 15:32-39)
023-Restores deaf and dumb (Mark 7:31-37)
024-Restores blind man (Mark 8:22-26)
025-Restores lunatic child (Matthew 17:14-21)
026-Tribute money from fish's mouth (Matthew 17:24-27)
027-Restores ten lepers (Matthew 17:11-19)
028-Opens eyes of man born blind (John 9:1-9)
029-Raises Lazarus from the dead (John 11)
030-Heals woman with spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:10-17)
031-Cures man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-6)
032-Restores two blind men near Jericho (Matthew 20:29-34)
033-Curses a fig tree (Matthew 21:17-21)
034-Heals ear of Malchus (Luke 22:49-51)
035-Second draught of fish (John 21:6)
036-Resurrection from the dead (Acts 13:30)