

82. List briefly the prophecies made by Jesus pertaining to His Second Coming and the end of our age.
83. Of the various groups of prophecies made by Jesus which we have studied, which is probably the most significant?
84. In view of the many prophecies of Jesus and their obvious fulfilment, what conclusion do we reach with respect to Jesus Himself?

### Lesson Ninety

## JESUS THE WORKER OF MIRACLES

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Scripture Reading: Matt. 8:1-34.

Scriptures to Memorize: "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" (Matt. 8:27). "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed" (Matt. 8:8). "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know" (Acts 2:22). "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2).

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**85. Q.** What fifth aspect of the Jesus of history shall we now proceed to investigate?

**A.** We shall now proceed to study Him as the Worker of Miracles.

Note again the progressive nature of our analysis. First, we studied His teaching, and found it *complete and perfect*; second, His character, and found it *faultless*; third, His claims, and found them *prodigious*; fourth, His fulfilment, in His own person and life and work, of the Old Testament Messianic types and prophecies, and found it *absolute*. Now we shall proceed to study Him as the Worker of "mighty works and wonders and signs." Cf.

Luke 24:19—"Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." Matt. 8:27—"what manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him?" Acts 10:38—"Jesus of Nazareth . . . who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."

**86. Q. What is the first essential characteristic of a miracle in the Bible sense of the term?**

**A. The first essential characteristic of a miracle in the Bible sense of the term, is that it be a space-time incident.**

That is, not a matter of inward experience, intuition or illumination; but an *observable* event, an event palpable to the physical senses; in short, an incident that can be seen and noted by eyewitnesses. Being thus an actual incident, it has an *historical* setting.

**87. Q. What is the second essential characteristic of a miracle in the Bible sense of the term?**

**A. The second essential characteristic of a miracle in the Bible sense of the term, is that it be an event produced for a religious purpose.**

(1) That is, an event produced to serve God's purpose, not man's; hence it cannot be performed by man without the active aid of the Spirit of God. In this sense all miracles are alluded to, in Scripture, as having been wrought by God Himself, the worker of the miracle being merely the instrumentality through whom God operates.

(2) Being an observable incident, a miracle is designed to serve as an objective proof to all who witness it, that the worker of it is divinely commissioned as a religious leader or teacher. *Miracles are, so to speak, the credentials which God confers upon all whom He sends out as His ambassadors.* (3) Thus Moses was given power to perform miracles in Egypt, to attest the divine origin and authority of his mission (Exo. 4:1-9), and thus the Lord worked with the Apostles "and confirmed the word by the signs that followed" (Mark 16:20). Cf. Heb. 2:4—"God also bearing

witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will."

**88. Q. What is the third essential characteristic of a miracle in the Bible sense of the term?**

**A. The third essential characteristic of a miracle in the Bible sense of the term, is that it be an event produced by the immediate agency of God.**

(1) "Not an event without a cause, since it has for its cause a direct volition of God," *i.e.*, an exercise of the Divine Will. (2) "Not a sudden product of natural agencies—a product merely foreseen, by him who appears to work it; it is the effect of a will outside of nature" (Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 117). (3) not a *providential* occurrence, *i.e.*, one occasioned by the operation of God's will in and through natural forces and processes exclusively, such as, *e.g.*, the shining of the sun, the transmutations of energy into matter, the combining and recombining of atoms, etc.; but an event produced by an immediate application of a Force superior to nature. We must not fail to keep in mind this necessary distinction between the strictly *providential* and the *miraculous*.

**89. Q. What is a fourth essential characteristic of a miracle in the Bible sense of the term?**

**A. A fourth essential characteristic of a miracle in the Bible sense of the term, is that it be an event resulting from the transcendence of the processes of nature, for the moment, by a Force superior to nature.**

(1) It has been said, by Hume for instance, that "a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature." This is not true. Miracles, in the true sense of the term, are effected by the operation of the Power which created nature and therefore controls it; and by the application of a Force that is superior to natural law. The miracle is wrought when this superior Force transcends for the moment the forces and processes of nature, for a special divine end. (2) To illustrate: when you go out into the country for a visit to the

old homestead, how you do enjoy going to the old well and drawing up a refreshing drink of cold water in "the old oaken bucket"! Now it is contrary to natural law that water should rise upward, yet the application of a superior force to the rope to which the bucket is attached, temporarily transcends in this case the natural law involved. The boy who throws a ball into the air does not violate or suspend the laws of nature in so doing; rather he brings to bear upon the forces of nature a superior force which temporarily transcends them according to an exercise of his own will. Gravity will draw a piece of iron downward, but the power in a magnet will transcend gravity and draw the piece of iron upward. (3) There is one force in the universe that is not bound by "fixed" laws. That force is Will. Wherever Will is in play, the principle of indeterminateness is also. Take a machine, for illustration, which has been built to turn out a certain product. Being a machine, it will invariably do the work it is designed to do, and always in the same way. But suppose you were to attach a lever to that machine, and then attach a fifteen-year-old boy to that lever: then we guarantee that you will not be able to predetermine just what will happen! When human will enters upon the stage, most anything is liable to occur. Then if human will is capable of projecting such indeterminateness into the field of ordinary events, who has the temerity to set limitations to the operations of the Divine Will? (4) As a matter of fact, our attitude toward miracles is not determined by our belief or disbelief of the miracles themselves, *but wholly by the soundness of our belief in God*. One who truly believes in God is not going to try to limit His powers or acts in any respect, for with God all things consistent with His own nature and attributes are possible. Mark 10:27—"all things are possible with God." Our God is surely not a helpless homeopath who throws up His hands in abject surrender to His own laws of nature! (5) Therefore, we affirm that "a miracle is not a suspension or viola-

tion of natural law, since natural law is in operation at the time of the miracle just as much as before." Moreover, we affirm that "a miracle is not contrary to experience, since it is not contrary to experience for a new cause to be followed by a new effect" (Strong, *ibid.*, p. 117). We do not deny God's use of natural forces and processes, as far as they will go, in the working of a miracle; but they do not go far enough. The additional exercise of the Divine Will, applied by the Divine Word, is necessary to the working of a miracle in the true Bible sense of the term.

**90. Q.** Is a Bible miracle, then, to be defined as an incident which could be satisfactorily interpreted by us as a natural incident if we were familiar with all the natural forces and processes involved in the working of it?

**A.** No. A Bible miracle is an event which, though not violating the laws of nature, the laws of nature, if fully known, would not, without the additional exercise of the Divine Will, be sufficient to account for fully.

It is frequently argued that the incidents presented to us in scripture as miraculous, would cease to be miraculous to us, were we in possession of a thorough understanding of the forces and processes of nature involved in the working of them. *This is another fallacy.* A miracle in the Bible sense of the term is not an event which could ever be interpreted as a purely natural incident, not even if we understood the forces and processes of nature fully. In other words, there is a Power superior to nature which operates in the working of a miracle, else it would not be a miracle in the Bible sense of the term.

**91. Q.** What, then, is this Force which must be in operation in the working of a miracle?

**A.** The Force which must be in operation in the working of a miracle is the Word of God.

The Power which operates in the working of a miracle is the Divine Will. The Divine Word, which is the expression of the Divine Will, is the efficient means—hence the

Force—by which the miracle is actually wrought. Cf. *Psa.* 33:6, 9—“by the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth . . . for he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” (Cf. also *Psalm* 148:1-6) *Heb.* 11:3—“By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God,” etc. *Num.* 20:7—“speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, that it give forth its water; and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock.” *Matt.* 8:8—“only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.” *Luke* 8:25—“who then is this, that he commandeth even the winds and the water, and they obey him?”

**92. Q. What obviously then made Jesus of Nazareth the Supreme Worker of Miracles?**

**A. His having Himself been The Word of God in the flesh made Him the Supreme Worker of Miracles.**

(1) *John* 1:1, 14—“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.” Having Himself been the Incarnate Word, He naturally possessed the Holy Spirit without measure (*John* 3:34). Though having a spirit (personality) Himself (*Matt.* 27:50—“yielded up his spirit”), yet His spirit was so absolutely possessed by the Spirit of God, that in Scripture the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God are alluded to as one and the same Spirit (*Rom.* 8:9, *I Pet.* 1:11, cf. *2 Pet.* 1:21). (2) By virtue of being the Incarnate Word, *Jesus had but to speak and all nature obeyed His voice.* *Mark* 4:39—“He awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace: be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.” He had but to say to demons and unclean spirits, “Go!” and they immediately “came out” of those whom they had been troubling (*Matt.* 8:32, *Mark* 1:25). To the poor leper, He said, “Be thou made clean!” and “straightway his leprosy departed from him” (*Mark*

1:41). To the man afflicted with palsy, He said, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house!" and the man "arose and departed to his house" (Matt. 9:6, John 5:8). To the widow of Nain's dead son, He said, "Young man . . . Arise!" and "he that was dead sat up, and began to speak" (Luke 7:14-15). To the deceased Lazarus, whose body had been in the grave four days, He said "with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth!" and "he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes," etc. *Jesus had but to will or command a thing to be done, and it was done.* He gave no "treatments," either present or absent ones. He did not need to see His "patient" more than once, and He made no charges for His services. How different the procedure of modern "healers"! Cf. Matt. 8:8—"only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." Luke 8:25—"who then is this, that he commandeth even the winds and the water, and they obey him?" (Teachers, impress these truths upon the minds of your pupils so forcefully that they will never forget them).

#### REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON NINETY

85. What fifth aspect of the Jesus of history shall we now proceed to investigate?
86. What is the first essential characteristic of a miracle in the Bible sense of the term?
87. What is the second essential characteristic of a miracle in the Bible sense of the term?
88. What is the third essential characteristic of a miracle in the Bible sense of the term?
89. What is a fourth essential characteristic of a miracle in the Bible sense of the term?
90. Is a Bible miracle, then, to be defined as an incident which could be satisfactorily interpreted by us as a natural incident if we were familiar with all the

natural forces and processes involved in the working of it?

91. What, then, is the Force which must be in operation in the working of a miracle?
92. What obviously, then, made Jesus of Nazareth the Supreme Worker of Miracles?

### Lesson Ninety-one

## JESUS THE WORKER OF MIRACLES

(Concluded)

Scripture Reading: John 11:36-46.

Scriptures to Memorize: "And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I know that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me" (John 11:41-42). "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:30-31).

### 93. Q. What is the design of miracles in general?

A. Miracles are primarily for the purpose of attesting divine revelation.

God's progressive revelations of truth, communicated to men by the Holy Spirit, through human instrumentalities (2 Pet. 1:21—"men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit"), have invariably been attested by miracles. Cf. Exo. 4:1-9, John 20:30-31, Acts 2:22, Matt. 10:5-8, Luke 10:8-9, Mark 16:20, Acts 8:4-8, Acts 19:11-12, Heb. 2:4, etc. (Cf. I Cor. 2:4—"my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," etc.). It will thus be seen that *revelation* and *demonstration* go hand in hand, for the simple reason that they are complementary. Miracles,