

Tuesday, August 16, 2016 - What about Modern Miracles?

How many times have you heard the phrase, "that's a miracle..." The thought is well intentioned but is it accurate?

Scripture teaches that miracles occurred for a specific purpose and period of time in God's redemptive plan so the question asked is, "Do miracles still occur today?"

The word "miracles" means "power, inherent ability," and "is used of works of a supernatural origin and character, such as could not be produced by natural agents and means" (W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary). So, the birth of a baby or the unfolding of a flower, both natural events, are not miracles. The birth of Jesus, on the other hand, was a miracle for it is not natural for a woman who has not known a man (that is, had sexual contact with one) to have a child.

The purpose of miracles was to instill faith in unbelievers and to confirm the word the apostles taught. In John 20:31, we read, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." The context of the above passage is where Thomas sees the risen Savior and is told, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (Jn. 20:27-29).

Another reason for miracles in the first century was for confirming the words of the apostles. The writer of Hebrews (2:3-4) wrote, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen" (Mk. 16:20). The word "confirm" comes from a Greek word which means "to make firm, establish, make secure" (Vine's). So, the word of God was proclaimed by the apostles, and God allowed miracles, etc. to be performed to confirm or establish the truthfulness of the spoken words. The words have now been written by the Holy Spirit's inspiration. Once something has been confirmed, it is always confirmed.

God intended us today to obtain faith by that which was written in the first century. It was not God's will to continue miracles or inspired revelation - that is, if we believe the New Testament. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Christians are not to expect miracles today.

For further study, I would refer you to Wayne Jackson's excellent article on "The Providence of God."

<https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/105-a-study-of-divine-providence>