

The Wonder of Jesus Lesson 5 2Q 2008

The Wonder of His Works

SABBATH

This week's lesson is about miracles, the miracles of Jesus. How are we to understand the miracles of Jesus?

When God performs a miracle is He violating the laws He created the universe to run upon or is He working in harmony with the law but in ways we can't comprehend?

If we gain understanding into the laws of nature and are able to actually understand how a miracle occurred (i.e. Christ walking on water) would that make it less miraculous? Do we crave the mystical and magical and if so what does that say about us?

Recently a biotech company has developed an experimental treatment for cervical cancer. They have taken the bacterium *Lysteria monocyclogenes* and infected women with cervical cancer. But they have altered the bacterium so it is not infectious and will instead secrete fragments of HPV E7 which is a molecule on the surface of cervical cancer cells. The *Lysteria* bacterium is able to enter a special immune cell called an Antigen Presenting Cell (APC). The APC then presents to the rest of the immune system the "foreign invader" the immune system is to attack. In this case the APC is tricked into presenting the molecule from the cancer cells to the immune system and the immune system attacks the cancer cell.

If we went back in time just 100 years and did this to a woman with cervical cancer and cured her cancer, would not everyone think this was a miracle? Is it? Do God's miracles all have just as sound rational explanations that are simply currently beyond our understanding?

Let's list the various categories or types of miracles:

1. Healing (lepers, lame, blind, deaf, issue of blood)
2. Resurrections
3. Nature – walk on water, calm storm, cursing a fig tree
4. Metamorphosis – water to wine
5. Multiplication – feeding the 5000, 4000
6. Invisibility or vanishing - Disappearing from crowds
7. Flashing of Divinity- night of arrest
8. Casting out demons

What are the common threads running through all these miracles? Use of might and power.

What kind of evidence is this? What do we learn about God from the miracles? All the use of might and power was always for another's good, always to uplift, always to heal, always to protect others.

What about when He disappeared from the crowds who were wanting to stone Him?

When Jesus referred to the blessings given to the Gentiles, the fierce national pride of His hearers was aroused, and His words were drowned in a tumult of voices. These people had prided themselves on keeping the law; but now that their prejudices were offended, they were ready to commit murder. The assembly broke up, and laying hands upon Jesus, they thrust Him from the synagogue, and out of the city. All seemed eager for His destruction. They hurried Him to the brow of a precipice, intending to cast Him down headlong. Shouts and maledictions filled the air. Some were casting stones at Him, when suddenly He disappeared from among them. The heavenly messengers who had been by His side in the synagogue were with Him in the midst of that maddened throng. They shut Him in from His enemies, and conducted Him to a place of safety. {DA 240.1}

So angels protected Lot, and led him out safely from the midst of Sodom. So they protected Elisha in the little mountain city. When the encircling hills were filled with the horses and chariots of the king of Syria, and the great host of his armed men, Elisha beheld the nearer hill slopes covered with the armies of God,--horses and chariots of fire round about the servant of the Lord. {DA 240.2}

So, in all ages, angels have been near to Christ's faithful followers. The vast confederacy of evil is arrayed against all who would overcome; but Christ would have us look to the things which are not seen, to the armies of heaven encamped about all who love God, to deliver them. From what dangers, seen and unseen, we have been preserved through the interposition of the angels, we shall never know, until in the light of eternity we see the providences of God. Then we shall know that the whole family of heaven was interested in the family here below, and that messengers from the throne of God attended our steps from day to day. {DA 240.3}

So while this disappearing was a miracle – it was not one Christ performed for Himself, but one the angels commissioned by His Father performed at the Father's direction. So, nowhere do we find Christ using power to protect self, but always He used His power to uplift others.

What does this tell us about God, Christ and God's use of power?

Notice also, that all of Christ's miracles were over the forces of nature and/or restore individuality and freedom of choice. Christ never used His power to coerce a will into repentance, to reprogram someone's thinking, to force allegiance. A loving God can exercise power over nature, inanimate objects, but not over free moral agents.

Why was Christ able to have this power? Was it because He was divine and using His own inherent divinity? Christ said "of

my own self I can do nothing.” Was it His own power to exercise? Or was He relying on His Father?

Adam was created by God and given dominion over the earth, when he sinned Satan claimed that dominion and thus is known as the ruler of this world or the ruler of the air. Notice, Satan has been able to perform miracles, serpent speaking, storms that destroy (Job 1). But Christ dispute’s Satan’s claim and comes as the second Adam – could He be exercising the authority of dominion that God originally invested in Adam?

The Bible says that whole towns were healed when Christ went through. Does that mean each person who was healed had accepted Christ as their Savior? What about the 10 lepers? Did all of them come back and thank Him?

But in Nazareth only a few miracles of healing were performed, why?

And all the people Jesus healed of disease, what eventually happened to them all? They died and rest in the grave. Then what was the point of the healings?

Was Jesus performing miracles primarily to relieve physical suffering? Or was there a larger purpose? If it was only to relieve physical suffering then what good did it do they all died? But if it had a larger purpose, to relieve suffering to be sure, but more than that to reveal the truth about God, dispel the lies of Satan and open the way for eternal healing!

Did Jesus ever orchestrate or engineer an opportunity to perform a miracle? What about Lazarus? Why did Jesus wait three days before going?

The disciples marveled at Christ's words when He said, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad . . . that I was not there." Did the Saviour by His own choice avoid the home of His suffering friends? Apparently Mary and Martha and the dying Lazarus were left alone. But they were not alone.

Christ beheld the whole scene, and after the death of Lazarus the bereaved sisters were upheld by His grace. Jesus witnessed the sorrow of their rent hearts, as their brother wrestled with his strong foe, death. He felt every pang of anguish, as He said to His disciples, "Lazarus is dead." But Christ had not only the loved ones at Bethany to think of; He had the training of His disciples to consider. They were to be His representatives to the world, that the Father's blessing might embrace all. For their sake He permitted Lazarus to die. Had He restored him from illness to health, the miracle that is the most positive evidence of His divine character, would not have been performed. {DA 528.1}

Had Christ been in the sickroom, Lazarus would not have died; for Satan would have had no power over him. Death could not have aimed his dart at Lazarus in the presence of the Life-giver. Therefore Christ remained away. He suffered the enemy to exercise his power, that He might drive him back, a conquered foe. He permitted Lazarus to pass under the dominion of death; and the suffering sisters saw their brother laid in the grave. Christ knew that as they looked on the dead face of their brother their faith in their Redeemer would be severely tried. But He knew that because of the struggle through which they were now passing their faith would shine forth with far greater power. He suffered every pang of sorrow that they endured. He loved them no less because He tarried; but He knew that for them, for Lazarus, for Himself, and for His disciples, a victory was to be gained. {DA 528.2}

How are we to regard miracles today? If someone performs a miracle what are we to draw from it? Does a miracle prove someone is from God? Does a miracle prove what they are saying is from God? Is truth determined by miracles?

Are miracles one of Satan's weapons to divert from the truth?
How so?

So what was Jesus doing during His life? What was the purpose of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus?

1. to reveal the truth
 - a. the truth about God
 - b. the truth about Himself
 - c. the truth about Satan
 - d. the truth about the nature and character of sin
 - e. the truth about the people
 - f. the truth about God's law
 - g. the truth about God's use of power
2. to cure this species

What about for judgment? Was the revelation of Christ's use of power to heal and restore part of the judgment?

A group of Pharisees had gathered near, and the sight of them brought to the mind of Jesus the contrast ever manifest in the effect of His words and works. He said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." Christ had come to open the blind eyes, to give light to them that sit in darkness. He had declared Himself to be the light of the world, and the miracle just performed was in attestation of His mission. The people who beheld the Saviour at His advent were favored with a fuller manifestation of the divine presence than the world had ever enjoyed before. **The knowledge of God was revealed more perfectly. But in this very revelation, judgment was passing upon men. Their character was tested, their destiny determined.** {DA 475.2}

Read memory Text – thoughts?

Harassed by who? Helpless over what? Harassed by Satan? Helpless over their own hereditary and cultivated tendencies toward evil? Helpless to cure themselves, heal themselves, restore themselves in righteousness?

What other texts from the Bible describe this state of humanity?

- o Isaiah 60:2 See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.

If you are in darkness what is it you need? Light! What kind of darkness was humanity in? Darkness about what? About the truth about God!

John 1:4- 9 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

What light did Jesus shed on the world? “If you have seen me you have seen the Father.”

How does this light benefit you?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Do we agree that when Jesus comes into contact with sin that Jesus cleanses from sin? Or do we believe that Jesus is defiled by sin?

If we agree that when Jesus or the metaphor “blood of Jesus” comes into contact with sin that the sin is cleansed, that the purity of Jesus wins out, then why do we teach that in the OT sanctuary service when the blood of the sacrificial lamb was taken into the sanctuary it contaminated the sanctuary? That it transferred sin to the sanctuary?

Nowhere in scripture do you find the blood of the sacrificial animal contaminating but everything the blood of the sacrificial animal touches becomes holy.

Leviticus 6:24-30 The LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron and his sons: `These are the regulations for the sin offering: The sin offering is to be slaughtered before the LORD in the place the burnt offering is slaughtered; it is most holy. The priest who offers it shall eat it; it is to be eaten in a holy place, in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting. Whatever touches any of the flesh will become holy, and if any of the blood is spattered on a garment, you must wash it in a holy place. The clay pot the meat is cooked in must be broken; but if it is cooked in a bronze pot, the pot is to be scoured and rinsed with water. Any male in a priest's family may eat it; it is most holy. But any sin offering whose blood is brought into the Tent of Meeting to make atonement in the Holy Place must not be eaten; it must be burned.

Hebrews 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

What does the Bible says happens to things that come into contact with the blood of the sacrificial animal? They are cleansed, they are made holy.

How do we make sense of this in light of Daniel 8:14? Unto 2300 days and then the sanctuary will be cleansed?

What sanctuary? What options do we have?

1. the earthly tent built at the direction of Moses, replaced by Solomon's and Herod's temple
2. Something of an inanimate nature in heaven where Christ currently resides
3. The Spirit temple constructed of our hearts and minds

Which is most consistent with all the scripture?

When Jesus said unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood where was He wanting the blood applied? To which temple?

When He said destroy this temple and in three days I will restore it, which was He referring to?

In Hebrews 8, the new covenant where is the Law of God placed? In the heart and mind, which represent which temple?

When Lucifer rebelled in heaven where did he want to be enthroned in an empty building by himself or in the hearts and minds of intelligent beings as the one most loved and adored?

2 Thes 2:1-4 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

What temple is this referring to? Did this lawless "man" go into heaven and push Christ off His throne and sit down in some temple in heaven? Or did this man of sin dethrone Christ out of the Spirit Temple by all of the lies and distortions taught about God?

So then, is the 2300 year prophecy talking about the Spirit Temple? Your heart and mind and mine? That a "man of sin" would arise and infect the minds of humanity with distortions about God and Christ and it would be 2300 years before enough truth would be recovered to cleanse our minds from all

the lies told and bring us back into unity – at-one-ment with God through Jesus Christ?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph – “To grasp...” What is amazing to me is that in order to heal a blind man Christ not only had to create or heal the eyes, but the optic nerves, the occipital cortex, the neural pathways that process information and provide a data base to interpret what was being seen, especially for the man who was born blind from birth.

The way the brain works is that during the first 8 years of life neurons that are not used are deleted by the brain, thus a man born blind would have significantly atrophied occipital lobes. Not only that he wouldn't have an image data base to comprehend what he was seeing, unless a data base was uploaded. So, Christ healed all of this.

But notice in making these changes in the man's brain it did not change his character, autonomy, individuality or free will.

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

Why do we not do more miracles? Is it because we are still too selfish and that God's miracles are only worked through people who are selfless and won't seek to promote self or be tempted to think themselves better than others?

TUESDAY

Read bottom pink section – did Christ have personal gain?

Does that mean He didn't have an agenda? Does that mean He didn't want His mission to be well known? Didn't He tell the disciples to go to all nations telling about His kingdom? But

was Jesus wanting the focus to be on Himself or was He promoting the glory of the Father?

WEDNESDAY

The title is sign of a new day and the lesson cites all the miracles of healing Jesus did, what new day did this signify? Didn't all the people Christ healed die and go to sleep in the graves? Then what new day was this signifying? Were the miracles of healing designed to do more than merely relieve suffering but did they have some eternal purpose? If so what?

Were they designed to signify Christ's mission to heal the race from sin? Were they designed to signify the cleansing from sin freely offered by God?

Read last paragraph – “The idea...” notice the Isaiah quotation, how does Matthew apply the Isaiah prophecy about taking our infirmities upon Him? That Jesus healed our diseases? Is this insight into the mission of Christ? He took our condition, our sickness, our terminal state not to pay a legal debt but to cure it?

Bottom pink read – how could they be so blind? Preconceived ideas, do we struggle with certain preconceived ideas that blind us to greater truth? How have you experienced this?

THURSDAY

What is harder for God to do, raise a physical body from the dead or recreate someone in Christlikeness of character?

This was to her the beginning of a new life, a life of purity and peace, devoted to the service of God. In the uplifting of this fallen soul, Jesus performed a greater miracle than in healing the most grievous physical disease; He cured the spiritual malady which is unto death everlasting. This penitent woman became one of

His most steadfast followers. With self-sacrificing love and devotion she repaid His forgiving mercy. {DA 462.2}

Why is death conquered by Christ? What brings death? Severing of the law of life, the law of love, sin/selfishness brings death, but Christ overcame selfishness with love thus Christ vanquished death and restored life into the human race.

FRIDAY

Read 1 and 2 and discuss