

## BIBLE MIRACLES VS. MODERN MIRACLES

A news organization, WorldNetDaily reported on 8/30/06 the following tragic event. “An evangelist who tried replicating Jesus’ miracle of walking on water has reportedly drowned off the western coast of Africa. Pastor Franck Kobele, 35 told his congregation he could repeat the biblical miracle, and he attempted it from a beach in Gabon’s capital of Libreville. ‘he told churchgoers he’d had a revelation that if he had enough faith, he could walk on water like Jesus,’ an eyewitness told the Glasgow Daily Record. ‘He took his congregation to the beach saying he would walk across the Komo estuary, which takes 20 minutes by boat, He walked into the water, which soon passed over his head and he never came back.’

What about Bible miracles and the so called miracles performed today. This study will be between the real and the counterfeit, between the true and the false, between the ones who did and those who just talk, between God’s approval and sanction and His strong disapproval and rejection.

Biblical miracles we accept entirely. Modern pretenders and their boastful claims for current signs, wonders and might miracles we reject with adamancy.

“The vast majority of Charismatic believe that the Church is entering the time when miracles, signs, and wonders will become common place. They teach that miracles are the birth-right of the believer and they imply that in the early Church they were common.” *Robert Liichow, Inner City Christian Discernment Ministry.*

When one begin to examine the scriptures you discover that miracles were not common place at all, in fact, miracles were very rare and those that actually worked miracles are less than 20 people. The average Christian did not perform any miracles in the bible. Entire Church groups were not know for their signs and wonders. Miracles were NOT common place in the Bible. They have NEVER been common place in the economy of God or the history of the church. Mass misconceptions relative to miracles saturate the current religious climate.

Let’s look at the genuine miracles of Jesus and the apostles and compare that with the so-called miracle workers of today.

### I. Miracles of Jesus

- A. Power over nature (calming a storm Matt. 8:23-27).
- B. Supernaturally manipulate material objects (water to wine John 2).
- C. Walked on water (Matthew 14:25ff).
  1. Not on an old dock as some claim.
  2. Not on ice as one recently claimed.
- D. Multiplied loaves and fishes (John 6).
- E. Authority over physical disease.
  1. Healed a blind man.
  2. A feat which had never been observed in the history of the world (John 9:1-7, 32).
- F. Raise the dead (Lazarus had been dead 4 days — John 11).
- G. The question arises, were the miracles of Jesus authentic?
  1. What does the evidence of history indicate?
  2. Are there sufficient historical data to warrant the reasonable deduction that Christ did effect certain “signs” which cannot be explained upon any natural basis?
- H. Characteristic of Jesus’ miracles.
  1. The wonders which Jesus did were subject to sense perception.
    - a. Water changed to wine could be tasted (John 2:9)
    - b. Thomas could feel the wounds in his hands and side of the risen Lord (John 20:27).
    - c. The restored ear of the high priest’s servant could be seen (Luke 22:51).
    - d. The signs of Jesus’ ministry were in the form of objective demonstrations, not subjective speculations.
  2. The miracles of Christ were performed in the presence of a wide variety of people.
    - a. There were male and female, educated and uneducated, friends and foe, etc..
    - b. The wonders were done in the synagogues, in the public streets, during the great festivals.
    - c. When the Lord multiplied the loaves and fishes, there were 5,000 men, plus the women and children who witnessed this event (John 6:10).
    - d. The miracles were said to be done in the presence of great crowds (Matt.4:23f)
  3. The miracles of Jesus produced instantaneous results and their effect was complete.

- a. When the Lord healed Peter's mother-in-law, she rose up and "immediately" served others (Luke 4:39) . . . Mark said "straightway" --Mark 5:25-29
  4. There is no evidence that Christ ever failed in attempting to work a miracle.
    - a. His enemies never once accused Him of such.
    - b. The N.T. makes it plain: His success rate was 100%
    - c. Matt. 8:16— "ALL that were sick"
    - d. Matthew 12:15-- "healed them ALL"
  5. The miracles of Christ were always characterized by a stately dignity, they never smacked of the bizarre.
    - a. A worthy motive was always evident.
    - b. They were never performed to satisfy the personal needs of the Lord.
    - c. They were always in the interests of others.
  6. The signs of Jesus were not denied by His contemporaries.
    - a. The Pharisees conceded that he was casting out demons (Matt. 12:24).
    - b. John 11:47
    - c. They could not dispute what he was doing.
  7. Not one time do we have the record of a disciple of Jesus defecting and then exposing the "fakery" involved in the Savior's miracles.
    - a. Judas had the opportunity.
    - b. His miracles were real.
    - c. Jesus did actually perform miracles and thus He is who he claimed to be--the Messiah, the Son of God..
  8. Jesus performed miracles to confirm His Messiahship, to prove God sent Him.
    - a. He performed miracles whether the person helped and healed had faith or not.
    - b. At time He required faith (Matt. 9:27-31).
    - c. Other times that was not an issue (when he raised the dead, e.g. Lazarus)
  - I. Jesus told them that miracles would be to confirm the Word (Mark 16:17-20) (Jo. 20:30-31).
  - J. The apostles worked miracles on occasion.
    1. Paul said it was a seal of his apostleship (II Cor. 12:12).
    2. They were used to serve a purpose, not just for the sake of healing someone.
- II. What about modern miracles?
- A. From the witch doctors of primitive tribes to the Robert Tilton's and Peter Popoff's of 20<sup>th</sup> century America, the "miracle-healer" has always found ready acceptance with many as "the great power of God." (Acts 8:10).
  - B. You do not have to watch TV for very long before you see one of these so-called "miracle workers" doing their routine.
  - C. One article that I found on the Internet was called "My three Prayer Cloths"
    1. He states in the article that over the last several months he had become the blessed recipient of 12 highly anointed prayer cloths, each allegedly endowed with various forms of anointing. (From one he had received several anointed cloths, along with blessed pennies, corneal and oil)
    2. One couple open their show in Haiti where their ministry is helping the poor folks of that nation. You see the small church building they are helping build, the poverty, the hunger.
    3. They close with a special offer--you can write and they will send you FREE their MIRACLE GOLD PROSPERITY PRAYER CLOTH.
    4. Question: If these cloths work, why didn't they pass them out to all them poor folks in Haiti? The reason is they only work on gullible charismatic people in America who have money.
    5. You are suppose to write the amount of money you need (He encouraged the recipient to write more than he needed so he would have a surplus).
    6. Then send it back to them (hopefully with a donation) and they would join their faith with yours and God would answer.
    7. These folks will have a great deal to answer for before the throne of God some day.
  - D. What about Paul and the handkerchief? (Acts 19:11-12)
    1. We are not told why Paul was led to do this.
    2. Possibly because he could not be there in person to minister to these afflicted ones.

3. The only time we read of such.
  4. Paul did not have a “prayer cloth” ministry. His prayer cloths did not bring *prosperity* or *family restoration* or give the recipient an *Anointing for Victory*.
- E. What about the “apparent” success?
1. Some instances of “faith healing” are pure fakery.
    - a. One claimed supernatural ability to give revealed information about people in crowd.
    - b. He was receiving such information through a tiny hearing aid, messages being transmitted by his wife backstage.
    - c. He was also exposed for providing rented wheelchairs for people who could actually walk, then, at his services, he would pronounce them “Healed.”
  2. Some miracle cures are claimed by people who honestly believe that God has healed them
    - a. The fact is, they had nothing really organically wrong with them.
    - b. Their ailment was psychosomatic
    - c. This means that though some bodily feature was actually affected, the real root of the problem was mental or emotional; hence, by suggestion a cure might be affected.
      - (1) A patient had lost her voice and could not speak above a whisper.
      - (2) Condition continued for four years.
      - (3) Examination determined that nothing was wrong with her vocal cords.
      - (4) There was no reason she should not be able to speak, but she would not accept it
      - (5) She was punishing herself because she felt guilty about her husband’s death.
      - (6) They had argued shortly before he died in a traffic accident.
      - (7) When it was necessary for her to have surgery to correct another problem, the doctor told her “when we gave you the anesthetic, we noticed your vocal cords were stuck together just a bit so I spread them apart. By tomorrow I think your voice will be back to normal.” Sure enough, it worked.
    - d. The medical literature is full of cures of hysterical symptoms such as this.
    - e. These are the very disorders “cured” by miracle healers today.
    - f. There is absolutely nothing miraculous about such cases.
  3. There are no alleged “miracles” being performed today by charismatics that cannot be duplicated by various other cults and “non-Christian” sects.
- F. One might ask, “What’s the harm in it?”
1. One of the most immediate and obvious results is the neglect of proper medical care and treatment by those who have been led to believe they are healed. Esp. the children.
  2. When death occurs, God usually gets the blame.
  3. You think about that father who traveled a great distance to have his sight restored, so confident that he would see his little boy the next day for the first time in his life . . . going home in the depths of despair, as blind as ever, and darker than ever in his soul.
  4. Think of the children with all of their pitiful diseases, and not one of them gaining the slightest benefit than anyone could see.
  5. Think of shattered hopes and blighted faith of thousands of people.
  6. That person has been led to expect a miracle, and trusting God with all their heart to produce one, they are disappointed when such is not forthcoming, then accused of unbelief because it didn’t happen.
    - a. They know the sincerity of their own heart, therefore they conclude, either that there is not really a God,
    - b. . . . or else that God doesn’t love them enough to bless them in the same way that he presumably has blessed others.
    - c. The end result is despair.

Con: Christ indeed performed miracles, as his apostles did. The purpose was served and miracles ceased. These modern “miracle workers” are money-hungry and money-motivated, and they deceive thousands on a daily basis. Accept what the Bible says.