**So, What Is A Miracle?**

**Reading Matthew 6:26-33**

A miracle is "some extraordinary work of deity transcending the ordinary powers of nature and wrought in connection with the ends of revelation."

Notice the three elements: miracles are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or the work of God; they transcend or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_; and they are part of God's means of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ His nature and purposes to us.

***[Acts 2:22] “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—*** Miracles can also be translated \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Signs indicated a relationship between the miracle worker and God. ***[John 5:36] for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.***

What About Fervent Effectual Prayer?

For the one outside of Christ: ***[2 Peter 3:9] The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance***

For the one IN Christ: ***[Philippians 1:21-23] For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain… [23] For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.***

**So, If It Isn’t a Miracle; what is IT? -- .**

We can think of God's involvement in three categories.

First, what we call **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**, which is **God's ongoing work in sustaining the universe** He created and the people in it. ***[Matthew 5:45] He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.***

Second, God is active in what we might call **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**.

***(James 5:14-16) Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. {15} And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. {16} Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.***

God's hand is "visible" in a sense to Christians who have watched all the pieces to one or more of life's puzzles fall into place in a very special way. ***Psalm 37:23-25 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way. [24] Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand. [25] I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread***.

***[Romans 8:28] And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.***

The third is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The hand of God is clearly visible to anyone who doesn't deliberately refuse to believe.

In light of all of the purported miracles that people claim that happen today, we might ask this question: Is it impossible that the event could have taken place without God's special intervention to alter the inevitable course of nature?

To accomplish their role, miracles must remain distinct from that which is simply amazing.

There are some things to keep in mind in regards to the special providence of God.

1. The ultimate end sought is man's \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, not material benefits.

2. Material blessings may come to one as a result of special providence, yet God may also allow financial hardship, illness, or other physical trials to occur if He deems them suitable for our spiritual benefit. ***[Romans 5:3-4] And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; [4] and perseverance, character; and character, hope.***

a. ***[James 1:2-4] My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, [3] knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. [4] But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.***

3. There is a lot of evil in the world and a lot of bad things can happen to very good people out there. Of course, God's special providence helps us overcome such evil. ***[Romans 8:35-39] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? [36] As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” [37] Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. [38] For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, [39] nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

**The Purpose of Miracles**

God has revealed clearly in Scripture that he can do whatever he chooses. God is able to deliver from every disease or affliction. But the question is not what he **can** do, but what he **intends** to do.

Biblical support for the specific purpose for miracles is found in ***2 Corinthians 12:12*** Paul wrote in defense of his apostleship: ***"The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles (works of power & authority)"***

***Acts 14:3*** Paul and Barnabas were at Iconium. ***"was bearing witness to the word of his grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands."***

“Deceivable signs & wonders” were and still are used to propagate error from some preacher’s “ministry”. Consider Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8.

1. Imagine what kind of following he would have developed if he could do REAL miracles?

2. Who’s to say that they still aren’t happening today? ***[2 Thessalonians 2:9-12] The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, [10] and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. [11] And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, [12] that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.***

3. Why do you suppose we have this warning? ***[1 John 4:1] Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.***

Miracles were included in the Spiritual Gifts described in 1 Corinthians. It would stand to reason that all of them would either stand or fall together. ***[1 Corinthians 13:8-10] Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. [9] For we know in part and we prophesy in part. [10] But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.***

1. Therefore, miracles of power [authority] do not continue today.

2. God never promised that miracles of power would continue in Christ's church in this present era.

3. The extraordinary gifts (such as tongues, prophesy and miracles of power) have ceased.

4. They fulfilled their purpose by the end of the New Testament period. What we see today therefore does not pass the biblical test for such wonders.