



“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” Matthew 28:20

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WHAT DID YOU SAY IT WAS?

David B. Smith

Each evening PAX TV airs a series entitled “It’s a Miracle.” The show is devoted to unique circumstances and unusual events which are categorized by the producers/directors as genuine miraculous activities — hence, the name. Those events named are not those found within the pages of Holy Writ, rather the interesting situations of current times. For example, a report was made of a young couple who became aware of the abduction of a five-year-old girl and the license plate number of the suspected kidnapper. As they traveled, they noted a white van with matching plate numbers and immediately phoned the police as to their finding. The van was indeed the property of the suspect, and the girl was recovered. To this event was applied the words, “It’s a Miracle.” Or, consider the account of Lisa Blod (a high school student from Riverside, CA). Lisa had been seriously injured in an auto-accident and was given no chance of full recovery by the primary physician. Much to the surprise of all, Lisa regained both her speech and ability to walk “in time to attend the prom.” To this event was applied the words, “It’s a Miracle.”

The list of supposed miracles is endless: dogs warding off thieves by barking, lost children being found, children calling emergency services for people in need, etcetera. To be sure, many of the accounts are truly remarkable; some are ridiculous. But, are any of these modern occurrences miracles? Are these more than mere coincidence and proper timing?

The problem with this and all shows like it is the failure to consult the source book for divine information and, subsequently, the definitions of divine concepts. Since God is the power behind the miracles wrought in time past, then only those marks of identification

found in the confirmed record [the Bible] constitute the standard for determining what is or is not a miracle.

Perhaps the greater tragedy is the failure to understand the purpose of miracles. Throughout the ages, miracles were wrought in connection to and in confirmation of the revelation from God to man (Mark 16:20). Hence, the confirmation invoked belief (John 20:30-31). And, as such, miracles were restricted from personal gain or application where no need for confirmation existed (cf. 2 Timothy 4:20).

As miracles were connected to the process of revelation, then it is only natural to admit that the completion of the revelation would bring miraculous activity to an end; this is affirmed in numerous passages (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; Ephesians 4:11-13; et al.). To claim that miracles are a present reality would necessarily demand that one have a new revelation from God, which would (a) invalidate the New Testament, (b) make the work of the apostles ineffective, (c) nullify the revelatory work of the Holy Spirit in the first century, (d) do despite unto the Christ Who died to be the sin offering, and such like. Consider the following.

1. A miracle was an “objective” event. The supernatural element of a miracle was undeniable. None who stood by could attribute what occurred to a secondary cause. God was clearly the author. This being the case, how [for example] could a horse being airlifted to safety possibly be styled a miracle? Even more, since miracles ceased to exist at the completion of the written word (1 Corinthians 13:10), and miracles confirmed the revelation of God to man, then what “new truth” is to be confirmed by a dog’s bark which saved a boy from drowning? Not only is it false to assert the existence of miracles today, but attributing such common events as those listed above to the realm of miraculous cheapens the work of God and the worth of true miracles.

2. “A miracle was beyond the laws of the natural universe.” As a result, these events were not subject to duplication. It is not that these were simply events in nature, but that without a breaking or suspending of natural law these events were not otherwise possible. There was no possible earthly explanation for the event. Claims to “modern miracles” are nothing more than unauthorized applications of a divine concept to a non-miraculous, physical event.

3. “A miracle was complete and instantaneous.” True miracles were always complete, not partial. Healing was not the remission of the disease or temporary healing, but a cure such as if the ailment had never existed in the individual. And, the healing was immediate. Not a single moment passed in the miracle and the intended result. Thus, the Hollywood claims of “doing better after the accident” are sure proof that these “modern miracles” are no miracles at all! Even still, the trustworthy text affirms that miracles ceased at the completion of the written revelation.

Other than the obviously absurd cases, how, then, may these supposed “miracles” be explained? Unfortunately, for the love of either fame or publicity, some people intentionally

fabricate the conditions and specifics of an event. Based upon the twisted language it may sound as though an event is quite unique; however, the text of the Bible denies the existence of modern miracles. Some situations exist where a man or woman has been wrongly diagnosed as having a deadly/terminal disease, yet within the space of a few minutes or hours the true condition breaks and is generally labeled a “miraculous process.” But again, the administration of medicines to the body and subsequent treatment by a physician can hardly be called supernatural; hence, it is not a miracle. It is likely that the largest category of the “so-called” miracles fit the category of “psychosomatic” healings. This refers to a “bodily disorder whose nature can be appreciated only when emotional disturbances (that is, psychological happenings) are investigated in addition to physical disturbances (that is, somatic happenings).” The body disorder or malfunction, in these cases, is the direct result of deep-seated mental distress [e.g., grief, worry, stress]. Once the mental anguish is properly addressed, the physical healing will shortly follow. Since this is a natural process, it is not miraculous.

As stated, there are no miracles today. The purpose of miraculous activity has been served and the written word is complete, once-for-all-delivered (Jude 3). The agenda of such television shows (which profess the existence of “modern miracles”) is devilish; instilling in the hearts of viewers the need to rely upon self as the only true guide for religion. Amazing circumstances do occur [e.g., two lost siblings meet by chance; people are resuscitated after having been immersed in water for long periods of time, etc.]; but, a remarkable situation is hardly akin to a true miracle. And, a contrast between the actual miracles recorded in the Sacred Text and those “so-called” today will readily demonstrate the flippant and blasphemous way the world has defined its own terms. Are the events depicted on the television show “It’s a Miracle” actual miracles? No; and, the church must remain adamant in both her fight against such errors and her presentation of the truth on the matter.

DO WHAT YOU CAN

During a meal at the home of Simon the leper (Mark 14:1-9), a woman came unannounced and anointed Jesus' head with expensive nard. Her action crashed the party and met with criticism. Jesus immediately came to her defense. His comments included: "She has done a good work for Me," and "She has done what she could."

Focus on that last statement: “She has done what she could.” The Lord does not ask the impossible — to do what we cannot do. Why fret about it? Do what you can! We need more like her in the kingdom today!

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Observations and Concerns

August 23, 2023

Welcome Visitors! We are excited to have YOU with us today.

Praise in Psalm: “Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul” (Psalm 25:1).

Declaration of Appreciation: Thanks is extended to all who quietly pray daily for the work of the Oologah church.

Summer Series — This evening's speaker is **Ross Swearingen**. His topic is *"Blessed Is He That Readeth"* (Revelation 1:3).

Please check the **sign up sheets** in the hallway. There are opportunities to serve, as well as a sheet to sign if you would like a songbook.

Our **Gospel Meeting** with Landon Rowell is September 10-14, 2023. There are flyers in the foyer for all to take and hand out. Please make plans now to attend! The theme is Renewed Christians.

There will be a **Youth Devo** for all ages on September 1st at 6:00 PM at the Nelson's house. It will be geared for the youth, but all are invited to come study the Bible and encourage one another. Bring your favorite side or sweet to go with tacos.

Our sympathy is extended to the **family of Fred Phillips** upon his passing last week. His memorial service is Saturday, September 2nd at 2:00 PM at the Owasso church of Christ building.

Remember in Prayer:

- ▶ ***Jim Allison*** continues to see health improvements.
- ▶ ***Dan Dennis*** had a successful port removal.
- ▶ ***Andy Hudson*** and ***Bill Dilks*** were both ill this past Lord's Day.
- ▶ ***Pat Taylor*** is home with Covid.
- ▶ ***Mary Hass*** is recovering from knee surgery.
- ▶ ***Betty Jackson*** is at home recovering from a fall.
- ▶ ***Mark Odell***, cousin of Nelda Hudson, is at a rehab center recovering from a fall.
- ▶ ***LeAnna Shafer*** was in a bicycle accident and had to have surgery on her elbow.

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| <div>Schedule of Services</div> <div>Sundays</div> <div>Bible Classes. . 9:30 AM</div> <div>Worship 10:30 AM</div> <div>Worship 5:00 PM</div> <div>Wednesdays</div> <div>Bible Classes. . 7:00 PM</div> <div>Website: oologahcofc.org</div> | Assignments | | | |
| | | Wednesday, Aug. 23 | Sunday, Aug. 27 AM | Sunday, Aug. 27 PM |
| | Announcements | Chuck Northrop | Chuck Northrop | Paul Praschnik |
| | Song Leader | Doyle Jackson | Ross Swearingen | Doyle Jackson |
| | Prayer | Chris Nelson | Bill Dilks | Ross Swearingen |
| | Lord's Supper (speaker) | | Chris Nelson | Chris Nelson |
| | Lord's Supper | | Doyle Jackson | |
| | Lesson | Ross Swearingen | Paul Praschnik | Chuck Northrop |
| | Prayer / Door Attendant | Paul Praschnik | Chuck Northrop | Bill Dilks / Paul Praschnik |