



Sermon Series Notes

“A God of Miracles” (Acts 9:32-43)

Danny Hodges - NT3632

v.32 Lydda is 11 miles SE of Joppa & 9.3 miles SE of Tel Aviv.

v.33 We are not told the reason for his paralysis. His name means praiseworthy, commendable, admirable.

v.35 The plain of Sharon is just north of Lydda.

v.36 Tabitha/Dorcas means a female gazelle; Some gazelles can run as fast as 60 mph.

v.40 Why does Peter send them all out of the room? One of the pastors teaching at the conference in Costa Mesa recently mentioned this passage and suggested that Peter sent them all out of the room in case when he prayed nothing happened.

v.43 Peter’s religious prejudices have been dealt a stinging blow by the truth of the gospel. Normally he would never have stayed at the home of a tanner, because he would have been defiled as a result of a tanner’s regular contact with dead animals. But Peter still has a ways to go, and we will get to that next week in chapter ten. But verses 32-42 have a definite theme, and it is both an exciting one, and a perplexing one. What is the theme? Miracles.

Miracle: An event not explainable by natural or scientific laws.

These miracles have a particular purpose, and that purpose is clearly stated in verses 35 & 42. Read these verses again.

These miracles testified to the truth of the gospel that Peter and the other disciples were proclaiming.

Hebrews 2: 4 God also **testified** to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

The word testified is in the past tense. This was a special time when God did many miracles through the disciples in order to confirm the truth that Jesus is indeed the Messiah.

I have not seen many miracles in my lifetime, and I often wonder why. I have prayed for a few people over the years and God chose to heal them. I have seen God work the gift of prophesying several times while

teaching the Word of God. One time that I will never forget is when I told a story about working with FCA at Northeast high school (Randy Almquist). I have seen God miraculously multiply food (Thanksgiving banquet at the warehouse).

John 10:41...Though John never performed a sign, all that John said about this man was true.

Anybody ever experienced or witnessed a miracle?

Why is it we don't see more miracles?

Before we try to answer that question from the Scriptures, let me mention a couple of things about miracles.

There are degrees of miracles.

- Acts 19: 11-12 God did **extraordinary** miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

Praying for a dead person to be raised is a bigger deal than praying for God to heal someone of a physical illness!

There is a clear connection in the NT to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the miraculous.

- Jesus never performed a miracle until after the Holy Spirit came upon him at the Jordan River (verse?).
- Acts 1:8
- See "Spiritual Power," p.31 & "Fresh Power," p.49

Despite God performing miracles, some people still do not repent and believe.

- The miracles in the Exodus; The miracles of prophets like Elijah and Elisha; The four gospels record 37 miracles Jesus performed, including turning water into wine, healing a leper, raising a widow's son from the dead, raising Lazarus from the dead, stilling a storm, delivering the demon possessed, healing the lame, restoring sight to the blind, multiplying food to feed thousands of people, & of course the most significant miracle – rising from the dead Himself!
- John 12:37 Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.

Just as God testifies to the truth using the miraculous, so Satan seeks to deceive through counterfeit miracles.

II Thess.2:9-10 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those that are perishing...

Rev.13:13-14 And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth...

How to recognize counterfeit miracles?

1. Do they lead me away from the God of the Bible? (Deut.13:1-3)
2. Acknowledgement of Jesus Christ? (1 John 2:22)
3. Do they lead me into sin?

Now let's try to scripturally answer the question as to why we don't see more miracles.

- Miracles have ceased?
 - 1 Cor.13:8-10; Early on in my Christian life I was taught that the "completeness" (perfection) was the completion of the canon of Scripture. But that does not fit the natural meaning of the text. Read 1 Cor.12:7-11.
- Lack of faith
 - Mark 6: 5 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6 And he was amazed at their lack of faith.
 - Luke 8: 24-25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!" He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. "Where is your faith?"
 - Matt.9: 28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied. 29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you";
 - Matt.21:21-22 Jesus replied, Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, "Go, throw yourself into the sea," and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.
 - Faith in faith teaching; While faith in faith teaching is clearly unbiblical, at the same time I want God to increase my faith.
 - Mark 9: 23- 24 "If you can't?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes." Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"
 - Faith must be exercised in order for God to move; Peter had to get out of the boat or he would never have walked on water; Joshua 3 & 4 (They had to get their feet wet before God would part the waters); The widow of Zarephath had to give what little she had to the prophet Elijah before God miraculously provided for her and her son.
 - Sometimes God is able to do more miracles through people who exercise faith and yet may be more carnal than one who is more "spiritual" yet has little faith. For example, God was still doing miracles in the church at Corinth even though they were carnal. This tells me that faith really pleases God (Heb.11:6).
- Not God's will
 - 1 John 5:14-15 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything **according to his will**, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him.
- Not God's time

- Acts 3 beggar at the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day.
- Where ample evidence has already been provided to verify the truth of the gospel, God may choose not to perform a miracle.
 - Herod wanted to see Jesus perform a miracle, but Jesus would not even answer his questions (Luke 23:8-9).
 - John 20:29...Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.
- Reason hidden with God
 - Deut. 29:29 The secret things belong to the Lord...
 - There are many things in the Bible that I do not understand. Paul prayed for many people who were physically healed, but God chose to allow his thorn in the flesh to remain; Epaphroditus almost died, & Timothy was sick often and had terrible stomach problems (I Tim.5:23), despite the fact that Timothy was the most spiritual person on Paul's team (Phil.2:20-21, 27); James was beheaded by Herod, and when he saw this pleased the Jews, he arrested Peter also. But Peter was miraculously delivered by an angel. The one Jesus said was the greatest of those born of women, John the Baptist, was beheaded; Daniel was delivered from the lion's den, while Zechariah was murdered between the altar and the sanctuary (Luke 11:51); Elijah was taken to heaven in a heavenly chariot of fire, while Elisha died of an illness (II Kings 13:14); See Heb.11:32-39.
 - Sometimes the miracle is the supernatural ability to stand in the face of persecution, pain, injustice, and even death.
 - II Cor.1: 8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life...9 But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.
 - "Faith is a life that dares to commit beyond its means, expecting what sense cannot certify, based on God's promise, dependent on God's supply, motivated for God's glory, and confident in God's integrity." (Ken Connolly)

Giving God an opportunity to do the miraculous

- Take that step of faith; How you gonna walk on water if you don't get out of the boat? God won't part the water until you get your feet wet.
- Honor the Lord with your wealth when it doesn't make sense logically (Widow of Zarephath, etc.).
- Have the elders anoint you with oil
- Pray for someone's healing as led by the Holy Spirit
- Die to self and give God an opportunity to resurrect
- Receive Jesus Christ as Lord & Savior (John 3, must be born again; II Cor.5:17).

INVITATION

- God wants to do miraculous things, and much of it He wants to do outside the walls of the church building. Maybe we're not ready to go and pray for a dead person to be raised, but we need to start somewhere. What step of faith does the Lord want you to take?

- Luke 17:5 The apostles said to the Lord. “Increase our faith.”