

Miracles - The Works and Decrees of God

Sometimes when I play golf with friends at my course (which is marked by a high number of water hazards), I will hit a poor shot that heads for a lake and then skips across the surface to land safely on the other side. Because I am a minister, such a feat is greeted by raised eyebrows and the expression, "It's a miracle!" As any child knows, it does not require a miracle to skip a stone across water. Nor does it require a miracle to skip a golf ball over water. As long as the ball has the proper spin and trajectory, it is a simple matter.

The term *miracle* tends to be used loosely today. A touchdown pass, a narrow escape, or the beauty of a sunset are routinely called miracles. But the word *miracle* can be used in three [distinct](#) ways. The first describes common, but nevertheless impressive, events. We speak of the birth of a baby, for instance, as a miracle. In so doing, we honor God for the intricacy and beauty of His creation. We stand in awe of the majesty of the cosmos as God works through the secondary means of natural laws, which are themselves creations of God. Here the term *miracle* refers to common things that point to an uncommon cause in the power of God.

A second way in which we use the term *miracle* is similar to the first. Often in Scripture we read of God's working through secondary means at a most opportune time or place. The star of Bethlehem, for instance, perhaps had a natural, scientific cause. The extraordinary alignment of a group of stars, or a supernova may explain its brightness. To concede this possibility, however, makes the event no less a miracle. The light radiated its brilliance at the time of Christ's birth. It pointed the magi to Bethlehem. The star is then a miracle of timing and placement. Such a miracle honors God as He weaves the tapestry of history in such a way that the event occurred in a miraculous way.

Thirdly, miracles refer to acts of God against nature. This is the more technical usage of the term. Jesus' turning water into wine or [raising](#) Lazarus from the dead are examples of God working against His laws of nature. There can be no natural explanation for these events. They serve to validate Christ as the divine Son of God.

The Bible uses several words to capture the concept contained in the single word *miracle*. The Bible speaks of signs, wonders, and powers. In its narrowest sense, we link miracle to the [biblical](#) word for *sign*. Miracles are called signs because like all signs they point beyond themselves to something more significant. God used miracles to prove or attest His agents of divine revelation (Hebrews 2:3-4). God gave Moses the power to perform miracles in order to demonstrate that He had sent Moses. So also the Father authenticated the Son through the signs that He performed.

Today there are three [distinct](#) views of miracles. The first is the skeptical view that denies that miracles can ever happen. The second view argues that miracles happened in Bible times and continue to happen today. The third view is that true miracles happened in the Bible, but God ceased performing miracles once His revelation was established in Scripture. This view holds that God still works in the world in a supernatural way but no longer grants miracle-working power to human beings.

Summary

1. The Bible speaks of signs, powers, and wonders.
2. The Bible records different types of miracles.
3. All miracles are supernatural events, but not all supernatural events are miracles.

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