

WHAT ABOUT MIRACLES?

TEXT: 2 Kings 1-2

1 Kings 22:51-53 ⁵¹ Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. ⁵² He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; ⁵³ for he served Baal and worshiped him, and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done.

2 Kings 1:2-4, 9-10, 17 ² Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria, and was injured; so he sent messengers and said to them, "Go, inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury." ³ But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, '*Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?*'" ⁴ Now therefore, thus says the LORD: 'You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'" So Elijah departed.

⁹ Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So he went up to him; and there he was, sitting on the top of a hill. And he spoke to him: "Man of God, the king has said, 'Come down!'" ¹⁰ So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, "If I *am* a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

¹⁷ So *Ahaziah* died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. Because he had no son, Jehoram became king in his place, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

2 Kings 2:8,11,14, 19-22 ⁸ Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled *it* up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

¹¹ Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

¹⁴ Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.

¹⁹ Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Please notice, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water *is* bad, and the ground barren."

²⁰ And he said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So they brought *it* to him. ²¹ Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.'" ²² So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

INTRODUCTION: What are we to think when we encounter descriptions like these. Have you ever seen anything like this? I have not. Was it real? Is it true? Tonight we are going to consider.

I. WE MUST KNOW THAT MIRACLES ARE REAL, SUPERNATURAL, GOD-ORDAINED EVENTS.

A. Real

1. Some think of the miracle accounts as

- **myths**
- **folklore**
- **embellishments of actual events**
- **writings of a primitive and superstitious people**

2. No! The biblical miracles are real events that happened in history exactly as they are described in the Word of God.

The Lord God created heaven and earth by His mighty word.

The whole world was flooded with water destroying all land life except what was protected in the ark.

The waters of the Red Sea rolled back to let Israel pass through and closed again to destroy the pursuing Egyptians.

The walls of Jericho fell down flat upon the obedient shout of the people of God.

The sun stood still for a day to allow the conquering army of God to complete its task.

Fire fell from heaven and consumed the altar at the prayer of God's prophet.

The ax head floated like balsa wood

Jonah lived 3 days in the belly of the great fish.

The three Hebrews were delivered unharmed from the roaring fiery furnace.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin,
and He:

walked on water

stilled the storm

multiplied the bread and fish
 healed the lame
 gave sight to the blind
 and raised the dead.

3. **Do not be a part of that foolish crowd that says, "It does not matter whether the miracles are real or not."**
4. **Do not say, "I believe the spiritual message they portray even if I do not believe the actual events they describe."**

My friend, that philosophy is a well without water. I know. I lived for a while in that dry and thirsty land early in my ministry.

Let me show you the difficulty that such a philosophy brings to a rational man, and it is most often the man who is making a great attempt to be rational that entertains such thoughts.

5. **One might say, "I do not believe a donkey actually spoke a human language as the Bible says in Num. 22:28."**

Num. 22:28 Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"

6. **Someone might say, what difference does it make if he does not believe that a donkey talked?**

I once knew the chairman of the religion department at a Baptist University who said he was not sure the donkey could talk, but somehow God communicated to Balaam. When I heard that, I wanted to say that comments like that prove that a donkey can talk, but I didn't.

7. **But you see, if you say the donkey did not really talk then that means that the apostle Peter was wrong in**

2 Peter 2:16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

8. **And if Peter was wrong about that, then why could he not be wrong 17 verses before that when He declares in**

2 Peter 1:21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

or any of the other things of which he wrote in both his letters

or any of the things which he declared and is recorded in other books of the Bible such as

Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

You see, my friend, when you deny the reality, the veracity, the truthfulness of one tiny little portion of the Word of God, you are in reality necessitating a denial of it all. It is like the dominoes we stacked as kids: when you pushed over the first, all the rest fell in proper succession.

And once you have said, a part of the Bible may not be true or real, then you have made place for the devil to bring you to question and ultimately reject any and every other part of it. For if God did not protect one part from error, what would make you think He so protected the other parts?

My friend, I confess I have walked that road. It leads to a dry and thirsty land. Praise God He convicted me and led me back, and I repented of my sin of unbelief. And I would spare you, if I can be a clear word of warning and of explanation from falling into that snare of the devil.

B. Supernatural

- 1. Right behind those skeptics who say the miracles are not real are those who say they were real but not supernatural.**
- 2. These are the so called intellectuals who like to prove themselves brilliant with their theories of naturalistic explanations of miracles.**

Maybe you have heard of the 6th grade boy who was new at SS. His dad asked what he learned that day. He said they told a story about a general named Moses who was leading his army in a strategic retreat. They came to a place where they were trapped by the sea, but they unrolled the pontoon bridges and escaped just in time. Then when the enemy got on the bridges, they blew them up with polastic explosives and drowned the whole brigade. His dad said, "Son, is that really what they taught you?" and he replied, "No dad, but if I told it the way they did, you would never believe it."

So sometimes in an attempt to make the Bible more believable, and sometimes because they cannot believe the miraculous themselves, people invent naturalistic explanations of Bible miracles that removes the miraculous and supernatural. For instance,

The Israelites crossed the Reed Sea not the Red Sea. It was just a shallow marsh, a few inches of water at low tide.

(I like the third grade boy's analysis: Wow! Isn't that neat how God drowned the whole Egyptian army in 6 inches of water.)

Or where the bible says that Elisha caused the axe head to float, he really just took a long pole and poked around in the water until the stick went in the hole and brought it to the surface.

But my friend, this negates not only the very point of the story which is not about getting back an axe head but about the power of God and the validity of His prophet; but it also negates the accuracy and honesty of the Word of God.

Is God a preschooler that He cannot write what He means?

Is He a charlatan that He must deceive in order to impress?

Is the message God has to declare so weak that He must lie in order to get us to believe?

C. God-ordained

II. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF MIRACLES.

A. To prove the reality and power of the one true God.

B. To validate God's message and messenger.

The implication for the timing of miracles

the reason for "seasons" of miracles

the reason for "seasons" without miracles

the reason for end time miracles

III. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S GREATEST MIRACLE.

A. It's identity: Salvation

B. It's description:

1. It is a miracle of creation: being born again

2. It is a miracle of transformation:

a. Christ made sin for us

b. We are made the righteousness of God in Him

3. It is a miracle of reclamation

a. sin is forgiven

b. the saved man is made in the likeness of Christ

- 4. It is a miracle of resurrection**
 - a. dead in trespasses and sin**
 - b. made alive to God through Christ**
 - c. to live with Him forever more!**

CONCLUSION:

Who do you know that needs this miracle in the Panama City area? Would you pray for them? relative, neighbor, work associate or class mate, friend?

Do you need this miracle in your life? Sinner's prayer