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Dennis Fisher
In 2006, National Geographic News reported that US and Israeli scientists had come up with a theory that Jesus might have walked on ice rather than on water. Their findings were based on evidence of two periods of climatic cooling in the region 2,000 to 2,600 years ago. The article said the discovery could provide a
scientific explanation for what many people have regarded as supernatural.

What are miracles and why do people struggle or even refuse to accept the miracles of Jesus? What’s at stake? RBC research editor Dennis Fisher takes a look not only at the miracles of Jesus but at their implications as well.

Mart DeHaan
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The word *miracle* is used in many different ways. Newspaper headlines, for example, called it a miracle when the Boston Red Sox stunned the St. Louis Cardinals in the 2004 World Series.

Disney gave the title *Miracle* to a movie based on the true story of Herb Brooks, a player-turned-coach who led an underdog 1980 US Olympic hockey team to victory over a much stronger Soviet team.

Then there was the tragic story of the 2006 Sago mining accident in West Virginia. An explosion had collapsed a coal
mine and trapped 13 miners. A report of a miracle rescue caused a premature celebration when a misunderstood communication indicated that all the trapped miners were alive. Later, however, the newspapers still talked about the miracle rescue and recovery of sole survivor Randal McCloy.

Although these examples fit one of the definitions of a miracle—an outstanding or unusual event, thing, or achievement—none of them describe the kind of miracles recorded in the Bible. Look at how the New Testament gospel of Luke describes the miracles of Jesus:

He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all (6:17-19).

According to Luke, people came great distances to hear Jesus and be healed by Him. The sick and disabled, believing that healing power flowed through Him, strained just to touch Him. He gave sight to blind eyes, restored withered limbs, and caused the deaf to hear.

Those who were cured didn’t know how Jesus healed them, but they didn’t hesitate to spread the word of what His healing touch had done for them. For three years the crowds followed Him asking for and watching Him perform miracles.
Even after 2,000 years there is controversy about Jesus’ miracles. While hundreds of millions stake their lives on the truth of the Gospels, others are not sure that the New Testament should be taken at face value—especially the miracles.

Let’s look at three important questions about the miracles of Jesus: (1) What kind of miracles did Jesus do? (2) Why did Jesus’ miracles create controversy? and (3) Why did Jesus do miracles?

How Does the Bible Use the Term *Miracle*?
The New Testament uses three words to describe a miracle: *sign*, *wonder*, and *power*.


The use of signs to confirm the work of God has roots in the Old Testament. Genuine messengers of God were to be distinguished from false ones by the miracles that accompanied their message (see Deuteronomy 18:15-22).

Because of this heritage, a first-century Jewish audience used miracles as a means of testing the claims of a supposed prophet. In this context, Jesus’ miracles served as an indication that He truly was a messenger from God.

**Wonder** (Greek: *teras*). Another New Testament word associated with miracles is *teras*, translated “wonder.” This refers to the astonishment a miraculous event generated in witnesses.

The Gospel records declare that in the presence of many witnesses, Jesus restored damaged or missing tissue
in human bodies and even brought the dead back to life. The impact on those who watched was one of wonder (Mark 2:9-12; Acts 4:30; 5:12).

This same idea of amazement at seeing the supernatural activity of God is also recorded in the Old Testament. Moses described the effect of the parting of the Red Sea on the people of Israel as one of wonder, fear, and astonishment (Exodus 14:31).

**Power** (Greek: *dunamis*). A third term used to describe a miracle is *dunamis*, the Greek word for power. When used in reference to miracles, *power* is the divine energy that produces them. The New Testament uses this word when describing the “mighty works” performed by Jesus and His apostles (Matthew 11:20-21; 13:54; Acts 19:11).

Within the wider scope of the Bible, God’s power created and sustains the laws of nature (see Psalm 19:1; Acts 14:15; Hebrews 11:3). But at important moments in history, He uses His power to alter natural laws. To confuse the wonders of nature with miracles is to misunderstand why signs are rare and carefully placed events in history.

The fact that miracles are exceptions to natural laws is what makes them so important. These supernatural events point to a Person great enough to have created the cosmos and free enough to suspend His own natural laws when it serves His purposes.

With these biblical terms in view, we can offer the following definition of miracle: *The expression of God’s supernatural power by altering natural laws to endorse God’s messenger and advance His purposes, bringing wonder to those who see it.*
The laws of nature have operated since the beginning of time with high predictability. But if the Creator actually came to earth in the God-Man Jesus Christ, there is reason to believe that these laws would obey Him. The uniqueness of His miracles lay in His power over His own creation.

**Power Over Disease**
The Bible teaches that sickness and death entered this world through the misused freedom of our original parents (Genesis 3; Romans 5). Since then, it has been the plight of
humankind to deal with all kinds of diseases and ailments.

Jesus cured diseases by a word or a touch. An example of His power is recorded in Mark 2:9-12. There, Jesus forgives the sins of a paralyzed man—which was blasphemy in the eyes of the religious leaders who had gathered to hear Him teach. They believed God alone had the authority to forgive sins. To prove His authority and identity, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “Take up your bed, and go.”

The man’s healing was immediate. He not only had the use of his limbs but was also given the strength to carry the bed that for so long had been his prison. He left the crowd and headed for home.

What is so significant about this healing is that it cannot be explained as a psychosomatic cure. This was not about a man’s ability to believe, but about withered, twisted legs that became immediately and visibly whole at the word of Jesus.

The effect on the crowd was understandably one of wonder. The Greek word translated “amazed” is existemi (lit. “to be beside oneself”). But the reaction of the crowd was not just awe in response to an unexplainable act. The miracle also prompted them to glorify God (v. 12). The onlookers recognized that the source of the miraculous healing was the Creator who had initiated the healing process by supernatural means. Now they had reason to take Jesus seriously when He offered to forgive sins.

Power Over Nature

American writer and humorist Mark Twain wrote, “Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.” The truth is, all we can do is talk. We really can’t change the weather, no matter how much we wish we could.

In contrast to our inability to control weather, Mark 4:37-41 describes Jesus calming a violent storm with a simple word.

It happened on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus’ disciples, seasoned fishermen who knew the water and the weather, were taking Jesus across the lake. This time, however, they were caught off guard. As Jesus slept in the stern, conditions on the lake suddenly turned bad and the wind began pushing waves over the gunwales of the boat. Jesus’ friends became alarmed and woke Him from His sleep.

But what happened next terrified the men in the boat. Jesus spoke to the wind and sea, “Peace, be still!” (v. 39). “Peace” is perhaps best rendered “Hush” or “Be quiet,” the language used to speak to an agitated child. The atmospheric conditions changed immediately. “The wind ceased and there was a great calm” (v. 39).

Jesus’ disciples “feared exceedingly.” They asked each other, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!” (v. 41). The word translated “obey” was a Greek The wind and water listen to their Creator and let Him alter their process.
word used of a person answering a knock at the door to let someone in. The implication is that the wind and water listen to their Creator and let Him alter their process. The disciples witnessed Jesus’ authority over the laws of nature.

**Other examples in the Gospels that show Jesus’ power over nature:** *Matthew 14:13-33; 15:32-38; 17:24-27; 21:18-19; Luke 5:4-8; John 2:1-10; 21:3-6.*

**Power Over the Spirit World**

Horror films like *The Exorcist* have given many a Hollywood version of demon possession. But the Bible offers quite a different version. It describes fallen angels who came into our world after being expelled from heaven (*Isaiah 14:12-21; Ezekiel 28; Ephesians 6:10-18*). These entities oppose the purposes of God and have at times gained access to human bodies and personalities.

In Mark 5:1-20, we read about a demon-possessed man who lived on the east side of the Sea of Galilee in a cemetery. He could be heard crying out day and night as he cut himself with stones. The demons inhabiting him gave him superhuman strength and he had broken all restraints put on him, even chains.

When Jesus encountered the man, He confronted the demon within him and asked its name. One demon spoke, “My name is Legion; for we are many” (v. 9). Knowing Jesus’ power and authority, the demons anticipated their expulsion from the man. They feared being sent “into the abyss” (*Luke 8:31*), so they asked to be cast into a large herd of hogs feeding nearby. Jesus granted their request, and the demons
left the man and took over the bodies of the pigs, which then raced down the mountain and drowned in the lake below.

Jesus demonstrated His power over the spirit world and delivered this tormented man, who was later found by the townspeople “sitting and clothed and in his right mind” (Mark 5:15).

This miracle had two different effects. Those who found the man delivered and the hogs destroyed were afraid. They pleaded with Jesus to leave the area. In contrast, the man who had been rescued from his torment had only one desire—to be with the One who had saved him (v. 18).

Other examples in the Gospels that show Jesus’ power over the spirit world: Matthew 9:32-33; 12:22; 17:18; Mark 1:23-26.

Power Over Death

It has been said that the only sure things in life are death and taxes. You may cheat one of those, but not the other. Death visits everyone, and it is never a welcome guest. But the death of a child is especially disturbing and distressing.

In Mark 5:35-43, Jairus, the ruler of a synagogue, was grief-stricken over his dying daughter. In desperation, he sought out Jesus of Nazareth—the miracle worker. Sadly, just when Jesus agreed to go see his daughter, word came that the little girl had died. But Jesus responded, “Do not be afraid; only believe.”

When Jesus arrived at Jairus’ home, He encountered family and friends mourning the death of the little girl. When He said that she was only sleeping, they laughed; they had seen her lifeless body. Behind their ridicule was
the assumption that one can't be roused from death's sleep.

Following the distraught mother and father, Jesus, Peter, James, and John walked into the room where the child's body lay. Picking up a lifeless hand, Jesus said, "'Talitha, cumi,' which is translated, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.'" In response to the power behind this gentle command, the girl got up and walked around.

Although little else is recorded beyond those present being "overcome with great amazement" (v. 42), there must have been tears and hugs between a living, healthy child and her amazed and grateful parents.

In response to Jairus' faith and despite the mourners' disbelief, Jesus showed power over death.

> Other examples in the Gospels that show Jesus' power over death are the raising of the widow's son (Luke 7:11-15) and Lazarus (John 11:41-44).

Jesus' miracles showed the authority He had over disease, nature, the spirit world, and even death. However, despite the fact that Jesus' miracles helped those in need, not everyone thought His miracles were wonderful.
Why Did Jesus’ Miracles Create Controversy?

Today the dividing line between those who believe in miracles and those who don’t is often the same line that divides religious from secular thinking. But in Jesus’ day the controversy surrounding His miracles was primarily among those who regarded themselves as people of faith.

The Religious Legalists’ Objection

A group of religious leaders known as Pharisees focused on the letter of the law. For them, the most important
expression of faith in God was strict obedience to the laws that Moses had given them. And, believing they had the authority of Moses, they added more and more rules that they expected the people to obey.

One of the reasons the miracles of Jesus created so much controversy is that with them He exposed the deep flaw in the Pharisees' thinking—not simply about obedience to the law but about the law itself.

John's gospel describes what happened when, on a Sabbath day, Jesus healed a man who had been blind from birth:

Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them (9:14-16).

The irony is that a man who was born blind had his physical sight restored while the spiritually blind Pharisees could not see beyond their own traditions. By focusing on the letter of the law rather than its intent, they had missed God's purpose for the Sabbath and the significance of what Jesus had done.

Other conflicts grew out of similar miracles. Luke 13:10-16 records the plight of an elderly woman crippled by a chronic back ailment. She too met Jesus on a Sabbath. The Pharisees watched to see if Jesus would
heal on their day of rest. He did, and the ruler of the synagogue stepped forward and indignantly said to the crowd, “There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.” But Jesus replied,

Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath? (vv. 15-16).

The Pharisees were indignant because Jesus didn’t follow the law as they understood it. They misunderstood a miracle that brought healing because they misunderstood the Sabbath—a day originally intended to bring renewal to the people of God. Their loyalty to a code of conduct caused them to miss God’s most basic life lessons. In the process, the virtues of Judaism—faith, justice, and mercy—were lost (Matthew 23:23-24).

**The Religious Skeptics’ Objection**

In our day, it’s not difficult to find church leaders who deny certain miracles of the Bible. Interestingly, in first-
century Israel a group of religious leaders called the Sadducees were known for their skepticism of miracles. These Sadducees were an aristocratic priestly class who, while emphasizing moral and religious law, did not believe in the resurrection of the dead or the existence of angels.

The Sadducees’ selective interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures got them into ongoing arguments with the Pharisees (see Acts 23:8).

In Matthew 22:23-33, the Sadducees’ skepticism put them at odds with Jesus. In an attempt to question the future resurrection, they confronted Him with a hypothetical situation in which a woman was married and widowed seven times before she herself died.

The Sadducees’ question was this: “Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her” (v. 28). The Sadducees were trying to make the resurrection appear ridiculous. Jesus answered them:

“You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching (vv. 29-33).

Jesus’ words silenced them (v. 34). But in time, the
skeptical Sadducees would have to confront more than Jesus’ explanation.

In John 11:1-44, we read about a man named Lazarus who had fallen ill. Because Jesus was a special friend of the family, Lazarus’ sisters sent for Jesus to come, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick” (v. 3).

What happened next was surprising: “Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was” (vv. 5-6).

Jesus loved the family of Lazarus, but He delayed His response to the sisters’ urgent request. When Jesus finally arrived, two brokenhearted sisters who couldn’t understand why Jesus didn’t come right away confronted Him . . . Lazarus had died.

Although John tells us that Jesus cried when He saw the grief of His friends (vv. 33-35), it is just as clear that Jesus always intended to show His power over death. He said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (vv. 25-26).

Then Jesus went to Lazarus’ grave: “‘Lazarus, come forth!’ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Loose
him, and let him go.' Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him" (vv. 43-45).

Jesus had answered the skepticism of the Sadducees with more than words. He did a miracle that supported His claim to be the source of life and showed their denial of resurrection to be baseless.
Why Did Jesus Do Miracles?

The impact of Jesus of Nazareth on Western civilization is difficult to overstate. Our current calendar is divided into BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini—Latin for “in the year of our Lord”). Kenneth Scott Latourette’s carefully researched study, A History of the Expansion of Christianity, chronicles the amazing influence of Christ’s life and teaching.

Down through history many religious leaders have made great claims for themselves. Why haven’t they had the same impact?
One answer is that Jesus’ claims were confirmed by His miracles. Supernatural signs accompanying His words placed Him in a category apart from all other religious leaders. It was the miraculous that confirmed a series of divine purposes.

To Fulfill Prophecy

Jesus’ miracles confirmed the appearance of the long-awaited, supernatural Messiah. For centuries the people of Israel had waited for the “anointed King” to deliver them from pain and oppression. Many prophecies recorded in the Old Testament anticipated the arrival of the Messiah who would deliver the people of God.

Careful examination of the Jewish Scriptures (the Old Testament) about Messiah reveals many correlations with Jesus of the New Testament. Here are just a few of the striking parallels:

- **Born in Bethlehem** (Micah 5:2; cf. Luke 2:1-7)
- **Born of a virgin** (Isaiah 7:14; cf. Matthew 1:18-23)
- **Rejected** (Psalm 118:22; cf. Matthew 21:42-43)
- **Mocked** (Isaiah 50:6; cf. Matthew 27:31, 39-44)
- **Abandoned** (Psalm 22:1-7; cf. Mark 15:34)
- **Atoned for sin** (Isaiah 53:5-7; cf. Acts 8:30-35)
- **Ascended** (Psalm 110:1; cf. Acts 1:9-11)

Countless people have come to faith in Jesus by considering the scriptural evidence. His miracles fulfilled
the supernatural predictions of the life, death, and resurrection of the promised Messiah.

**To Authenticate His Claims**

Jesus’ claims to forgive sins and give everlasting life were bound to create questions. No confession was more important to an Israelite than the words of Moses, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!” *(Deuteronomy 6:4).* Jesus’ claims implying His oneness with God convinced many religious leaders that He was dangerous.

**His Divine Nature.** Many who saw the miracles of Jesus were convinced that the long-anticipated Messiah of Israel had come. But when Jesus began talking about Himself in terms that belonged to God alone, many found they could no longer follow Him.

In John 10:30-39, we are told that some even took up stones to kill Him. Jesus’ reaction was interesting:

Do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, “You are blaspheming,” because I said, “I am the Son of God”? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me, but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him (vv. 36-38).

Jesus acknowledged that the crowds would be justified in rejecting His claims if He couldn’t back up His words with the power of God. But because they were seeing miracles, He challenged them to believe their
own eyes as a first step in coming to faith in Him.

**His Ability To Rescue.** If Jesus, the Creator of heaven and earth, came to earth to rescue us (**John 1:1-14; Colossians 1:13-17**), we shouldn’t be surprised that His greatest miracle is related to that mission—a miracle that confirmed His success.

Shortly before He was arrested and put through a trial that would lead to His execution, Jesus said to His disciples, “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also” (**John 14:19**).

Within hours, those same disciples abandoned the One they had known as a miracle worker. In the worst and darkest moment of their lives, they watched their Rabbi and Messiah die a terrible death on a Roman cross.

Then came the event that changed everything. Three days after Jesus’ crucifixion, He rose from the grave. Over the 40 days following His resurrection, the New Testament says that Jesus appeared many times.

Only after Jesus opened the disciples’ minds to see that the prophets of Israel had anticipated His suffering and death to atone for sin (**Luke 24:25-27, 44-47**) did the reality of what had happened settle in the minds of His disciples. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead was proof-positive that He could rescue His followers too.

**His Promise To Return.** Before His death and resurrection, Jesus told His disciples that their relationship with Him was about to change. On the night before His betrayal, in a place described as the upper room, He explained that it
was necessary for Him to go away to prepare a place for them. He assured them, however, that He would return to bring them to His Father’s house (John 14:1-3).

Jesus’ miraculous resurrection and appearances over the 40 days after his resurrection prepared His followers for His final departure—a departure that would reassure them of His promise to return.

In a final meeting on the Mount of Olives, Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit who would make them witnesses to all the world of what they had seen. Then, “While they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9).

The significance of Jesus’ last miracle is important. If He had just walked out of His disciples’ lives, they would have been confused about where He had gone. But by allowing them to witness His ascension into a cloud, He confirmed His promise to return in like manner. Luke wrote:

While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:10-11).

To Show Compassion
Jesus’ miracles also revealed His heart. They showed the compassion that was a mark of the long-awaited Messiah of Israel—the embodiment of God.
In the seventh century BC, the prophet Isaiah had written:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Isaiah 61:1-2).

Many centuries later, Jesus read these words at the beginning of His public teaching and added, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:16-21).

Jesus was the Messiah that fulfilled Isaiah’s prediction. He would be the One to announce good news to the poor and to heal the brokenhearted.

**Compassion for the Bereaved.** In the city of Nain, Jesus and His disciples came upon a funeral procession. A brokenhearted widow had just lost her only son.

When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother (Luke 7:13-15).

A cold corpse miraculously became a living, breathing person once again. Not only was a mother’s grief turned to joy but the miracle also shocked the crowds and became big news around the region.

The literal meaning of the word compassion indicates that Christ’s “heart was moved by” this grieving mother.
He told her not to cry. Then He gave her back her son. The Messiah cared about the brokenhearted.

**Compassion for Outcasts.** In the days of Jesus, leprosy ravaged bodies and turned victims into social outcasts. By law, those with the disease had to shout out, “Unclean!” as they entered the presence of others.

In the region of Galilee and Samaria, Jesus encountered 10 lepers. Standing at a distance apart from the crowd, they cried out, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” Jesus heard their desperate calls for help and gave them back their lives by healing them (Luke 17:11-14).

Of the 10 leprous men who were healed, one had an additional stigma. He was a Samaritan. Samaritans were regarded by the Jewish people as racially and spiritually unclean.

Ironically, the Samaritan was the only one of the 10 lepers who returned to thank Jesus and glorify God. He had experienced a miracle of compassion that did more than heal his body. He had seen the heart of Jesus reach out to him across boundaries of racial and religious prejudice.

> Jesus’ response, “Your faith has made you well” (Luke 17:19) uses language that refers to salvation, not simply to physical healing.

**Compassion for Gentiles.** As we read the New Testament, we see that Jesus spent most of His time with His Jewish countrymen. His mission, however, had global implications. From the days of Moses, the prophets of Israel made it clear that Messiah would fulfill God’s promise to bless the whole world (see Genesis 12:1-3).
A Syro-Phoenician Woman (Mark 7:24-30). This account tells us of a mother who asked Jesus to deliver her daughter from demon possession. At first look, Jesus’ response sounds heartless. To her desperate appeal, He replied, “It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs” (v. 27).

Referring to Jewish people as children and Gentiles as dogs seems anything but compassionate. But it’s important to understand that the Greek word used to record what Jesus said does not refer to a wild dog or a dog of the streets. Instead, it’s “kunarion,” a puppy, a small housedog.

In response to Jesus, the Syro-Phoenician woman replied, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children’s crumbs” (v. 28). Moved to compassion by her faith, He healed her daughter, and in the process He reached beyond the borders of Israel.

A Centurion (Matthew 8:5-13). Because first-century Israel lived under the heavy heel of Roman authority, it’s interesting to see the way Jesus responded to a Roman military officer who came to Him on behalf of his ailing servant.

When Jesus offered to go to the man’s home, the centurion indicated that he was not worthy of such a visit. Instead, being a man who understood authority, he asked Jesus merely to say the word and his servant would be healed. The text indicates that Jesus marveled at the centurion’s faith and healed his servant. Once again Jesus bridged human boundaries and showed the love of God for all.
Are Jesus’ Miracles Still Important?

If the reports of Jesus’ miracles are only myth and tradition, their significance is minimal and easily dismissed. But the writers of the New Testament were convinced that His miracles had a time, a place, credible witnesses, and, most important, a role in fulfilling the Jewish prophecies.

If the Gospel writers are right, then Jesus’ ability to heal diseased bodies, deliver from demons, and raise
loved ones from the dead demonstrates His timeless significance to all of us.

Have you ever thought about what it would be like to be one of the blind or the lepers whom Jesus healed or the dead to whom He gave life? If so, your heart may resonate with the Bible passages that tell us we have all been born spiritually blind and diseased with a fallen human nature inherited from Adam.

If your experience is consistent with what the Bible says about human nature, then you may be ready to see that Jesus’ death and resurrection are the miracles that offer forgiveness and everlasting life to anyone who believes.

*See John 3:16-18; 5:24; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 John 5:11.*

But salvation is just the beginning of what God is planning. Beyond personal salvation is His promise to renew all of heaven and earth.

In the last book of the Bible we find a vision of the future that brings fulfillment to everything that began in the book of Genesis. In his Revelation, John wrote, “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away” (*Revelation 21:1*). This passage provides us with God’s intention to recreate our world: “Behold, I make all things new” (v. 5). The universe we now know will be replaced with something wonderfully new.

But this promise of everlasting life in the presence of God requires a positive response from you. You can
accept or reject God’s payment for your sin.

The significance of this decision is beyond measure. How each of us responds to Christ’s payment for the debt of our sin will determine where we will spend the future—in God’s presence, or separated from Him for eternity (20:11-15).

If you have not yet received Christ’s offer of forgiveness, you must first admit that you have sinned (Romans 3:23) and that your sin has separated you from God. Then you can go to God in prayer to receive His pardon and the gift of eternal life. Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24).

If the Gospel writers are right, then Jesus’ ability to heal bodies and raise loved ones from the dead demonstrates His timeless significance to all of us.
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