

Miracles in Acts

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] We have decided to continue on with the miracles of our Lord because they are not concluded with the Gospels, and simply because we have covered the miracles in the four Gospels does not mean that we have run out of miracles, because they continue right into the book of Acts.

And I would like to indicate something that we need to know and be reminded of up front, and that is this. The miracles that are found in the Bible are not exclusively limited to, but are there in a far greater quantity wherein the subject of the kingdom of heaven is involved, as opposed to now the church, the body of Christ, and the distinction between them.

And the reason that needs to be understood is because with the preaching of the kingdom of heaven coming, that John the Baptist began with his ministry, that Jesus and the Twelve continued, it was necessary that Jesus, who is presented as the Messiah and as the King of Israel, that he had the credentials to authenticate his claim.

How was he going to do that? Two ways. One, through his teaching, because no man ever spoke like this man. He spoke as one having authority and not like the scribes and Pharisees.

So the teaching he had to communicate was astounding compared to what they were used to. And secondly, he vindicated his ministry by the miracles he performed.

[1 : 54] And early on, in John chapter 3, Nicodemus comes to Jesus. He is a well-positioned, authoritative Pharisee, who was one of the rulers among the Jews.

And he made the confession, saying, We know that you are a teacher come from God, because no man can do the miracles you have done unless God is with him.

So right up front, there was recognition that connected Jesus as the Messiah due to the miracles that he performed. And they were never denied. Even those who opposed Jesus did not deny the reality of his miracles.

Some, in an effort to try and explain it away, said, Well, yes, he does do miracles, but he does them through the power of Satan. That's how he does them. Which, of course, was blasphemous.

But that was the only recourse they had, because they could not deny the authenticity of the miracles. They were proof positive that God was in it.

[3 : 03] So I want you to keep in mind the fact that so long as this kingdom thing is a possibility, the door remains open for miracles.

That's why they are going to continue in the book of Acts, because the possibility of the kingdom is still very real.

Even though Christ has been crucified and rejected by Israel, that is not the end of it. There is still an opening for Israel.

We know they will not take it. But the opportunity will be there nonetheless. And it did not end with the crucifixion of Christ. And that's a mistake that I made early on as a young Christian many years ago.

I just kind of took it for granted. I guess you'd say it was a faulty assumption on my part, and I've made plenty of them over the years, that Israel's final answer regarding accepting or rejecting Jesus was demonstrated at the cross.

[4 : 13] That was proof positive that they had rejected him. And I just kind of assumed that that was the end of the opportunity for Israel. It's over and done with.

They're out of the picture. And you know what? That's what most of Christendom has concluded.

Seriously. And that is why many take the position that they do regarding the nation of Israel.

They see Israel as finished totally, completely for good. No comeback for Israel. And that the church, which is the body of Christ, has taken the place of Israel.

And Israel used to be the chosen people of God, but no longer. Now, they have been replaced with the Christian church, and Israel's future doesn't exist any more than Scotland or Ireland or Germany or anybody else.

So, that is a faulty assumption that most of Christendom still holds to today. All of the Roman Catholics and those of the Reformed persuasion, primarily Church of England, Presbyterian, Methodist, and so on, they still hold to that position.

[5 : 35] What, Joe? With Romans, you know, 9, 10, 11, I think, how can they say that? How can they, I mean, if you read the Bible, Romans, how can you... Well, you're right, you're right, yeah, absolutely.

Romans 9, 10, and 11 spells that out as closely as anything. Has God cast away His people whom He foreknew? God forbid! I could wish that I myself were a curse from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belong the promises, and so on and so on and so on.

And Paul still had a hot heart for Israel, and he knew how they thought, because it's the same way he thought before he came to faith in Christ. So, if you want to get the scoop on that, as Joe said, read Romans 9, 10, and 11.

It will tell you what the true status of Israel is. And he makes it very clear that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in.

And all that means is when every non-Jew, every Gentile, has come to faith in Christ that is going to, that completes the body of Christ, the church is removed.

[6 : 49] That's the rapture. The church is taken out. And then God turns to Israel and says, I've got unfinished business with you. And he takes up Israel again.

So, what, Dan? On John 33, they were going to stone Jesus. Yes. And he said, We are not stoning you for any of these, replied the Jews, but for blasphemy, because you and your man claim to be the God.

Yeah. Okay. So, even though he showed the miracles, they still didn't buy it. Yeah, well, they charged him with blasphemy because he called himself, referred to himself as the Son of God. And the Jewish position, typical of that day, when you call someone the Son of, you are saying that they are of the same essence, character, nature, and makeup as that from which you came.

The Son and the Father, et cetera, you know. And it means you are the same as. And that's the interpretation that they put on. And Jesus never denied it.

[8 : 06] He never said, Oh, wait a minute, Phil. Wait a minute. You got it all wrong. Please, let me correct that. I did not mean to say that I am equal with the Father. I did not mean to...

No, you misunderstood. No, he did not do that. He affirmed who he was. And that's exactly the conclusion they came to.

That's why they were going to stone him because calling himself the Son of God makes him equal with the Father of the same essence, character, quality, nature, and so on.

So that was a blasphemous offense. For one to do that, under the law of Moses, the penalty was kill him. Stone him to death. And that's exactly what they were going to do. Jesus excused himself, went out from their midst.

And the reason he did, it's the same reason he did before. Even in his hometown, Nazareth, when they were ready to throw him over the cliff, Jesus parted in the midst and went out from them simply because his time had not yet come.

[9 : 09] And his time would come when he was facing the cross. Immediately before he went to the cross, he prayed and said, Father, the hour is come.

Glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. And what shall I pray? Save me from this hour, but for this hour came I into the world.

And what he was talking about was the cross. Until the cross, Jesus was indestructible. And the cross is where he met his death.

That's where he who knew no sin was made to be sin for us so that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. That, guys, that remains and always shall be the centerpiece of all history.

That man on the cross, God in the flesh, Emmanuel, being made sin for us. The creator, you know, the hymn writer said, well, might the sun in darkness hide and shut his glory's end.

[10 : 33] when Christ, the mighty maker, died for man, the creature's sin. Wow. You got it right.

Oh, my. That's, this is such good stuff. We've got to get into the book of Acts. Okay, let's go to Acts chapter 1. And, uh, we are going to continue the miracles, at least as they continue on through the book of Acts.

And as long as the miracles, as long as the miracles are clicking along, Israel still has an opportunity. And we will find the time come during, I think, the ministry of Paul when the break occurs.

I am not sure when that is. I know some of my brethren are quite convinced of it, but I just, I just don't know. I do know this. I do know the time is going to come when this one, Paul, accustomed to working many miracles through God, is going to write to Timothy.

I think it's in his last letter. And he says, uh, Trophimus, or Trophimus, have I left at Miletus? [11:56] sick. Obviously, too sick to travel. Paul said, I had to leave him at Miletus because he couldn't travel. And you automatically ask the question, why didn't Paul heal him?

He healed several others. What's going on? How, why did he lose this connection? Well, that speaks volumes because, to me, it says that that time for miracles had already ceased.

And that is why Israel, by that time, had already ceased, too. Remember, Paul writing to the Corinthians says, the Jews require a sign.

What's that mean? The Jews expect miracles. They look for miracles. miracles. I've told you before, Israel cut their teeth, spiritually, on miracles.

From the time God raised up Moses and brought them miraculously out of the Red Sea and the plagues and the crossing of the river, the crossing of the Nile and the parting of the Red Sea and the manna from heaven, all of that was designed for Israel to be able to conclusively identify their God.

[13:26] And the Jew had every reason to look for a sign and Jesus gave them signs. He gave them miracles. But it still wasn't sufficient for them.

Well, let's get into Acts. And the first account, I composed Theophilus. That word, Theophilus simply means, this guy, in the Greek, the word Theophilus means a lover of horses.

It comes from the word, well, this is a lover of God, actually, but it's Theos and Theo is the word from which you get the word theology, which has to do with the study of God.

And the Phileso, the Philes is from the Greek word Phileo, which means to love or to have affection for. And Theophilus was simply a God lover.

And it was reflected in his name about all that Jesus began to do and to teach. What does that imply? It implies he's not finished.

[14:31] He just began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up. And that's what we're going to be looking at this morning if we get there. and that is the ascension of our Lord, which is, I guess we would say, his last earthly miracle.

The day that he was taken up after he had, by the Holy Spirit, given orders to the apostles whom he had chosen. And when he says the first account, he's talking about the gospel that he wrote earlier. This is Dr. Luke, the physician who is writing Acts, and he is the same one who also wrote the gospel of Luke.

And when he talks about the first account, he's talking about the gospel of Luke that he had written earlier about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day when he was taken up after he had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom he had chosen.

To these, he also presented himself alive after his suffering or after his crucifixion by many convincing proofs.

[15:47] And the word gives the impression that if anybody had any doubt, he made sure the doubt was removed and everybody became a believer. They were persuaded. Convincing proofs appearing to them over a period of 40 days.

and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. I want you to notice something what he is not speaking about.

It does not say he was speaking to them of the things concerning the church. No, no. It's the kingdom of God.

Don't lose sight of it. Fellas, listen, this concept of the kingdom is the big picture. This is the whole shebang.

The church by comparison is small and I'm talking about the church which is the body of Christ is small compared to the kingdom because the church in this dispensation in this administration what

we call the day of grace it is comprised of believers exclusively believers in Jesus Christ as their savior.

[17 : 10] But the kingdom concept includes everybody. It's the whole globe. It is all over everywhere.

And those who are in that kingdom will also be believers because unbelievers by then will have been called out but the kingdom is the big picture and Israel is just a part of it and the church is just a part of it because this kingdom was limited to Israel for its origin but it is to expand all over the entire world and Israel will be the headquarters.

We'll see that. It surfaces again later in this very chapter. So we're talking about he's talking to them about the things concerning the kingdom of God and gathering them together he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the father had promised which he said you heard of from me for or because John that's John the Baptist John baptized with water but there's a conjunction of contrast here something radically different but however you shall be baptized or identified with the Holy Spirit not many days from now something you really need to note about verse five there are two different baptisms in this same verse one is dry one is wet make no mistake about it both are legitimate the concept of baptism means for that which is baptized to be identified and become one with or into that which he is baptized so when a believer comes to faith in

Jesus Christ he is identified with Jesus Christ and becomes one with him as a member of his body got nothing to do with water there's no H₂O in it the H₂O was an outward ritual baptism that signified cleansing and it was exclusively Jewish and if you look at Romans chapter 11 or 12 I think Paul talks about multiple washings and the word is baptisimos in the Greek and it means multiple baptisms the priests who ministered in the temple and in the temple and the tabernacle before they went through multiple washings they were always baptizing same ones over and over again it was a ceremonial cleansing or purification and it signified something entirely different in the priestly connection and in the

Jewish connection and it was necessarily understandably carried over into what is going to become the Christian assembly and they are going to with that faulty assumption well let's go on okay he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem John baptized with water but on the contrary you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now and what he is actually saying even though he doesn't give the time frame it's going to be ten days Jesus spent after his resurrection he spent forty days with the apostles all over the area and he appeared to them in Jerusalem he was with them and we looked at the fish breakfast that he provided for the last time we were together when they were back in Galilee in the Sea of Galilee and in that land and now he is telling them that not many days hence and we know that will be ten days ten days

[21 : 39] Pentecost will arrive and the word Pentecost literally means fifty it's the P-E-N-T-E Pente from which we get the word um Pentateuch which is the five books of Moses and it's called the Pentateuch because in the Greek the word P-E-N-T-E Pente means five and it is related to pentagram we're all familiar with the military headquarters in Washington D.C.

that's called the Pentagon and it's got that name because it's a five-sided figure so when Jesus talks about there being ten days hence he's talking about even though he doesn't mention it here he's talking about the day of Pentecost and we know that will be in Acts chapter 2 what's going to be a very dramatic thing and then in verse six as they are coming together now these guys after the resurrection they've got all kinds of questions I mean just do the best you can to put yourself in their position and you're wondering all kinds of things and you know what has happened you know he was crucified you know he was raised from the dead and you've been with him for 40 days and the logical question then is what's next what are you going to do now what's next on the agenda and the question that automatically stimulates them is the same question that they had before

Jesus got to Jerusalem and was arrested and we're told that Jesus gave them a parable about a man who was to receive a kingdom and went away for a long time and then came back and we're told I think it's in Luke 18 or 19 somewhere there if it didn't move and it said that Jesus told them this parable because they were nearing Jerusalem and they thought the kingdom of heaven was going to start right then Jesus is going into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and he's going to receive accolades from people who will be saying Hosanna Hosanna save now deliver now Hosanna to the son of David blessed is he that comes in the name of the

Lord and his disciples had no idea that Jesus was going to the cross he told them he was told him before he was and Peter rebuked him and told him to stop talking like that that's not true the people

love you look at the welcome you're getting but Jesus knew exactly what his end was and that's why he wept over Jerusalem when he saw the city from afar as he was approaching he wept and he said oh Jerusalem thou that stonest the prophets and killest those that are sent unto thee how often would I have gathered you together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings and you would not and he wept saying if only you knew the things that belong to your peace but now they are hidden from your eyes they didn't understand they were about to crucify the one they had been waiting for for 4,000 years wow that is amazing that is amazing what Joe and then here it's like a second chance and the biggest miracle they've seen now is

Jesus coming back to life right he appeared to all these people when he came back so he's talking to them about the kingdom right exactly there's no question you won't accept it now here I am and what we're saying is the beat goes on what is still the issue front and center the kingdom yes that's all these guys were thinking of they said we thought you were going to establish the kingdom set up the kingdom the first time when you went into Jerusalem and we had it all wrong there was a cross but there was a resurrection and now 40 days with you are you going to do it now now now the kingdom and look at what he said it is not for you to know times or seasons or epochs which the father has fixed by his own authority notice he didn't say yes or no and let me tell you this though this is very very important he didn't say fellas you've got this issue of the kingdom all wrong all I'm talking about is the spiritual kingdom

[26 : 54] I'm not talking about a real actual live kingdom here on earth on this planet a real physical no no that's you missed the whole point I'm talking about a spiritual kingdom and I will be the king of your heart and I will rule and reign in your heart and that's what the kingdom is going to be no way Jose that's not at all what he was saying or implying he does say it's not for you to know times or the seasons which the father hath put in his own power but speaking of power you are going to receive power and the word is dunamis you are going to receive power when the spirit of God comes upon you you will be baptized spiritually not many days hence and as a result you will be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth a witness just has one responsibility and that is to report what they have seen and heard that's all the witness does it's that way in our courtrooms today whenever somebody is called on the witness stand all the judge wants to know and all the jury wants to know is what does this witness know what did he see and what did he hear and that's what these witnesses are supposed to do is to relate and tell people what they've seen and what they've heard someone said being a witness is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread that's being a witness so this concept of the kingdom fellas is not off the front burner it's still on the front burner and we will see that demonstrated in bold relief later but sad to say it is rejected by most of

Christendom even to this day and we are all spiritually speaking the poor forth you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem Judea Samaria even to the uttermost parts of the earth now this kingdom is the kingdom of heaven and I've tried to make this as clear as I can but I'm not going to assume anything the kingdom of heaven is not the same as heaven where God dwells that's demonstrated even in something like what we call what is commonly called the Lord's prayer our father who art in heaven and then he goes on to say thy kingdom come what's the difference there what's the prayer saying what's the prayer asking the prayer is asking for

God who is in heaven in his kingdom in heaven for him to bring his heavenly kingdom down to earth so that thy will will be done on earth as it is in heaven fellas that is so simple and so plain and so confused and so missed how could anything be simpler than that Jesus is going to be the king of that kingdom when it is established on earth and this is not it this kingdom this world is dominated by the god of this age you know who that is 2nd corinthians 4 paul makes it very clear satan is the god of this age he has blinded the minds of those that believe not so that the glorious gospel of christ which is the image of god should shine unto them this is say hey guys where do you think all the wars are coming from where do you think death and disease and heartache where do you think those things are coming from is that the best god can do no that's the worst that satan can do he's having his heyday he is the prince of the power of the air and everywhere he goes he brings deception destruction satan loves a high body count he's the prince of death and description the time is coming when he will be finally defeated but for now he's running the show on this earth and I have described and you may be wondering well I thought god was in charge I thought god was well I have likened this the best description I know to give it satan is like a mad dog on a leash and god is holding the other end of the leash and he in his wisdom determines the parameters of satan's

activity there are things that he will allow him to do and there are things he will not allow him to do remember Job when satan says yeah Job is your boy yeah you have given him everything of course he worships you look at what you have done for him you have given him everything but I tell you what you take it all away from him and he will curse you to your face and the Lord said I think so okay Job tell you what I'm going to do

I'm going to let you have your way with him you can take his health you can take his wealth but I will not allow you to take his life now go ahead do your thing and boy did he ever do a job on Job so much so that his own wife told him as he sat in that pile of ashes scraping the boils on his skin with broken pottery she told him Job don't you know when you had enough curse God and die get it over with man she was agonizing with him and all Job could say was you speak as a foolish woman ought not we who have received good from the

[34 : 25] Lord also receive adversity woman God has given and God has taken away blessed be the name of the Lord and Job didn't cave despite a negative wife and the negative accusations of his three miserable friends Job held steady and you know how the story ended and how it came out and it's a beautiful thing so Satan is in control but it is a limited control and we don't know exactly what his parameters are sometimes we are stunned that God would permit certain things going you know nobody nobody has a greater problem with this than the

Jewish people the Holocaust that is still stuck in their collective crawl the Holocaust has done more to produce atheists among Jewish people than anything else and I don't fault them for their reasoning I can understand how they arrived at that you tell me that we are God's chosen people we are the apple of his eye and God allows his chosen people numbering six million to be exterminated like vermin through Adolf Hitler and Adolf Eichmann and we're supposed to be his chosen people well it looks to me like God is out of business or he doesn't even exist and even if he does exist and he would allow something like this to happen

I don't want anything to do with him and so many Jewish people have written God off and have embraced atheism per capita more than any other people in the world and humanly speaking you can understand how they arrive at that I mean is this any way to treat your friends or his chosen people you got to be kidding me so a lot of times we fall into the same kind of problem you know when things come into our life that are very negative and very hurtful and we don't have any explanation for them and all we can think of is why me why now what did I do to deserve this please God clue me in and if I have offended you I want to apologize let me what's going on I thought you loved me this is a typical human response because we really don't believe that

God actually does work all things together for our good for those who love him who are the called according to his purpose yeah I think that's true of maybe a lot of Christians but I'm different it doesn't apply to me oh yes it does God never does anything God never permits anything without taking everything into consideration and he's the only one that can so what is our position to be wherever you are whatever you're doing whatever you're experiencing consider that your present assignment relax in it and thank God for it and if it's negative and painful tell God you don't want to be a slow learner you want to get this behind you and whatever you can do to shuttle this thing along

I want to cooperate with you I want to learn the lesson whatever it is and guys we've all got lessons to learn we are all so incredibly dumb about so many things if we knew how stupid we are about a whole lot of things it would really be embarrassing but we're so proud we think we know everything just like you mentioned Sunday children and adults those child don't know how to behave he doesn't know not to run out of ball in the street and all kinds of stupid things and if you think of the bible it refers to us as children of god the same we don't know what to do we don't know what to pray for we do not know only he knows as long as paul could say that wow as long as paul could say brethren we know not what to pray for as we ought what is he saying i mean good grief if this man who wrote a third of the new testament isn't in touch with god doesn't know how to pray how in the world are we supposed to know how to pray so what we do is we come to god and with prayer and with thanksgiving we let our supplications be known unto him and the peace of god and it doesn't say let your prayer and supplications be made known unto him and he will give you whatever you ask for that's not the way it works you let it be made known and the peace of god will garrison about your heart and you know that sure you give god your request absolutely you tell him what's on your heart you tell him what you think needs to be done and then you leave the decision with him and you say now this is going to be like everything it's going to be father filtered god god

takes my requests and my concerns and my burdens and the things that i ask for and he filters them through his fingers and what he gives me is just what he knows i need and you know what a lot of times i wouldn't agree with that because i have a different perspective my perspective is very very limited god's perspective covers a waterfront he sees it all he knows it all and he considers it all because god never does anything and god never allows anything without taking everything into consideration does that include the unexpected passing of your loved one you bet it does does it hurt hey the pain is indescribable isn't it david indescribable but god makes no mistakes he knows what he's doing and in that guys we are supposed to rest and relax and be ever so grateful that our heavenly father really does know really does care and really is in charge even when it really hurts well so the question is we thought you were going to establish the kingdom before the cross we didn't know all that stuff was coming you see their perspective was different from god's entirely and now that that's over and now that you've come back it looks to us

[42 : 38] like this would be the ideal time and by the way look at what they're asking are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now he's talking about restoring something now if you're going to restore something it had to have already been there before if you're going to restore a vehicle you gotta have a vehicle to work with so when he talks about restoring the kingdom to Israel what they're thinking about is are you going to make Israel the center of the whole thing and Israel will have a kingdom again where is Israel's kingdom when they said this where is the kingdom yeah it's gone it's gone what happened last person to sit on the throne of Israel was Zedekiah King Zedekiah and when the Babylonians came in and invaded

Israel Israel in 586 BC they caught old King Zedekiah and they made him watch the execution of all of his sons and then they put out his eyes and blinded him put him in chains and made him walk all the way to Babylon that was the last king Israel ever had and they haven't had a king since Israel is not a monarchy it's been presided over by the Greeks by the Egyptians by the Romans by just about everybody and they've never had a king since and what they're asking is are you going to restore the kingdom now they hadn't had one since 586 and it's a very legitimate question this is going to be something that will loom very large on through into the book of Acts and we'll see that as we develop it and get further into it hey guys thank you very much for your kind consideration thank you