***Miracles & Providence April 17, 2023***

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*Introduction:*

1. The subject of Miracles/Providence is really a subject about God!
2. This study is of great value for us. I like what one person said, *“Without the miraculous Christianity is false. As Paul argued, Christianity is all a lie without the resurrection of Jesus, 1 Cor 15:13-19. And if there is no miraculous, then there is no resurrection.”*

*The Lesson:*

1. **Miracles**
   1. Let’s first define what a miracle is and then consider some examples.
      1. Richard Purtill states, “An event in which God temporarily makes an exception to the natural order of things, to show that God is acting.”
      2. “He adds that natural laws can be suspended, ‘temporarily and for a particular purpose, by the creator of nature; on this view an exception to the laws of nature can be permitted only by the creator of nature, just as an exception to a legal ordinance can be permitted only by the authority that passed the law (or some higher authority)’.”
   2. The Bible begins with the miracle of creation, Genesis 1-2; Psalm 90:1-2.
      1. God created all time, space, and matter. He is the Uncaused Cause of all things, John 1:1.
      2. He created the natural laws that govern this world and the universe.
   3. The Bible is a book filled with miracles from a Sovereign God! Consider the book of Exodus.
      1. Belief: God provided miracles to Moses to help prepare him for his ministry, Exodus 4:2-9.
      2. Power: Miracles showed the finger of God to Pharoah and the Egyptians, Exodus 8:18-20.
      3. Distinction: Between God and all else, Exodus 9:14.
      4. Law Suspended: The Red Sea miracle demonstrated God’s power, Exodus 14:21-22, 27.
      5. Wonder: The Israelites praised God for His awesome wonders, Exodus 15:11.
   4. Jesus performed many miracles during His ministry, John 20:30-31. They had a purpose!
      1. Signs: They were designed to point people to the message of Jesus.
      2. Wonders: Jesus described His miracles as signs and wonders, John 4:48; Mark 1:27.
      3. Power: Mark 6:47-49.
      4. Jesus gave His apostles power to perform miracles, Acts 2:43; Acts 6:6-8.
   5. Miracles were not constant.
      1. The miracle of creation was completed in six days. The 10 plagues stopped.
      2. Miracles and revelation from God were rare, 1 Samuel 3:1; 1 Kings 3:5; 9:2.
      3. There was a purpose behind the miracles in the first century, Mark 1:37; Mark 16:20.
      4. Do miracles continue today? I don’t believe so. Could they? Yes! God hasn’t lost His power. But with what’s been revealed, it appears they have ceased, Jude 3. The faith has been delivered. Jesus is God’s final spokesmen, Hebrews 1:1-2. What continues are deceivers through Talk, Testimony, and Tricks, Acts 8:9-11.
2. **Examples of Providence**
   1. The same God that performed miracles continues to work providentially on behalf of man.
      1. Defining Providence: “God seeing a need or desired outcome and arranging things through natural means to meet that need, all without overriding man’s free will.
      2. The English word “Providence” is from the Latin ‘providentia;, and the word “provide” from the Latin providere. Etymologically the latter means to foresee: pro – before: and videre, to see; to see before. The word “provide” therefore expresses forethought which rests upon foresight, conveying the idea of provident care. The word “providence” in Acts 24:2.
         1. That same Greek word is used in Romans 13:14 (Foresight, care, make provision).
         2. “There are two parallel Greek words which express the same idea: “pronoeo” which occurs in Romans 12:17; 2 Corinthians 8:21; 1 Timothy 5:8.
   2. The idea of providence is seen throughout the scriptures. God is still at work!
      1. ***Genesis 24:1-5,12-15:*** God answered the servant and Abraham’s prayer. ***He provided.*** Notice how God moved for Abraham and the servant based upon their prayers.
      2. ***Genesis 50:18-20:*** Joseph realized God had been working. God can use even the wicked to bring about His will and God. He didn’t override Joseph’s brothers. He worked through events and history to provide for His people and to establish His people. ***He provided.***
      3. ***Isaiah 38:*1-7**: Hezekiah was about to die. He prayed. God answered. Providence.
      4. ***Nehemiah:*** The entire book is one of providence. Nehemiah prayers. ***God provides***!
      5. ***Acts 9:23-25:*** Paul was delivered by being lowered in a basket. ***God provided.***
      6. ***Acts 23:15-23:*** The Lord provided for Paul and his safety through his nephew. He provided.
   3. So, what is the “So WHAT” in all of this?
      1. Consider - the awesome nature of God! Nothing is too hard for Him.
      2. Believe - the miracles recorded. They are written for us. Write them on your heart!
      3. Understand - how God works. God is not absent from this earth even though miracles have ceased. He is still alive and at work.
      4. Work - Consider the providential nature at work in evangelism, Acts 8:26-34, 39. Are we ready to be used by God to accomplish His work? He’s waiting on YOU!
      5. Pray - like never before! God will move on behalf of our prayers, Acts 12:5.

*Conclusion*

1. Believe in the one who created all things miraculously. Believe in the one raised from the dead.
2. God is still at work. Will you allow Him to transform your life by being born again?