

# Miracle Dynamics

*By Bob Enyart*

Sections of the Bible differ in how commonly they record miracles. But there is one thing that common thread that runs throughout: Miracles foster unbelief.

God's great miracles through Moses filled Egypt with undeniable evidence for the God of Israel (Exo\_9:27). Yet neither the Bible nor history records Egyptian repentance, only good riddance (Psa\_105:38; Exo\_12:35-36; Exo\_14:25). Further and more dramatic, consider the effect of those tremendous miracles on Israel. God followed the 10 plagues (Exodus 7:14-12:30) done on behalf of Israel with the parting of the Red Sea (Exo\_14:21-22) and the drowning of the Egyptian army (Exo\_14:26-28). Then daily for 40 years God appeared to the entire nation as a column of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exo\_13:21-22; Num\_14:14; Neh\_9:12; Psa\_105:39). The Lord kept their clothes from wearing out (Deu\_8:4), produced water out of the Rock (Exo\_17:2-6), fed the people with angel's food from heaven (Exo\_16:4-7) and brought meat on demand, literally filling their camp with quail (Num\_11:31-32; Psa\_105:40).

Yet with all this, virtually the entire nation rejected God:

For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? ... Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?  
Heb\_3:16-17

...and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation... was gone. Num\_32:13

Jesus did great miracles and crowds followed Him, but mostly out of selfishness. Of thousands who received His miracles, few worshipped Him. Of 10 lepers healed, only one even said thanks (Luk\_17:17). Generally, Christ's miracles did not win over the crowds (Mat\_8:34; Mat\_11:20; Mat\_13:58; Mar\_15:8-15; Luk\_4:23-28; Luk\_8:37; Luk\_17:17; Joh\_5:8-10; Joh\_10:25-39; Joh\_12:29-30). Even His own city rejected the miracle-working Messiah (Mar\_6:4-6).

## Confronted By Truth

Why would miracles lead to unbelief? Consider this. Ten-year-old Norman bickers with his 12-year-old brother Jack. "We'll probably have left over spaghetti for lunch." Jack says, "No we won't. There's none left, it's all gone. We finished it last night."

Norman: No, there's some leftovers.

Jack: You're wrong, it's all gone.

Norman: No, there's leftovers.

Jack: Nope. We finished it.

Norman: Did not.

Jack: Did too. I saw mom put the rest in the garbage disposal.

Norman: Do you like being wrong?

Jack: I'm not wrong. You're wrong.

Norman: All right, I'll just go in there and prove it.

Norman comes out of the house with a serving bowl half filled with leftover spaghetti. He shows it to his brother.

Question: Is Jack happy that he now knows the truth?

Answer: No. Actually, Jack is angry.

Why? Norman proved him wrong!

People do not like the truth shoved into their faces. Jack may now know that there is leftover spaghetti but he resents his brother for proving the point. These boys quarreled over a minor issue. What is the reaction when the issue becomes more significant?

Often the more serious the issue, the more a man resents those who prove him wrong. Evangelism sees the ultimate application of this principle. He who rejects God is not typically eager for correction. When someone's heart is hardened against God, a miracle shoves the truth in his face. His mind cannot deny God but his heart can resist. Thus countless witnesses of the miraculous have refused to acquiesce. In which three cities did Jesus perform most of His miracles and what was the corporate response of those cities to His works?

Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent... Chorazin... Bethsaida... Capernaum... Mat\_11:20-23

Jesus' miracles benefited the masses, yet entire cities rejected Him. His very reputation for doing miracles hurt His own ministry:

So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. ... And they said, "... Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country." "... So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him... that they might throw Him down over the cliff.

Luk\_4:16-29

In the city where Jesus did His first miracle the people's constant requests discouraged Him. For that reason He chided Cana for their constant need to "see signs and wonders" (Joh\_4:48). In another region, Christ's extraordinary reputation and His visible authority over demons (Mat\_8:28-33) did little to produce repentance: The Lord did many miracles in Jerusalem and its suburbs. Yet even in Jerusalem the crowds were not won over.

For good reasons God determined to provide signs and wonders for and through Israel. Yet even He tired of their demand for service. It's like bratty kids who want more and more, and no matter how much a parent does for them, they just demand more. It gets so that the parent is restrained from doing the good he would have wanted to do, because of the emotional weakness and immaturity of his children. The parent, for the child's own good, wants the child to love him, not for gifts but for himself.

Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign?..." Mar\_8:11-12

Miracles did not effectively teach the crowds for their outward manifestation of faith did not persuade Jesus:

"Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you [believe], but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Joh\_6:26

### **The Rich Kid**

The rich kid expects special treatment. The rules should not apply to him. But his wise earthly father, though he has wealth and power, does not comply. How much more will God, our heavenly Father, encourage His children to live by the rules, without special exceptions? What happens if the rich kid has an imprudent father? His son wants special treatment and gets it. The rules are bent for him, over and over and over. He does not learn the lesson of his failures here on earth. He is shielded from the consequences of his actions. Obviously this hurts the son, but what of the onlookers? What do neighbors think of the powerful dad who pulls strings so his kid gets away with things other kids cannot get away with? What do schoolmates think of the rich kid's privilege? Does it warm their hearts? Are they drawn to respect dad and admire the son?

Breaking the rules for favored sons makes for difficult relationships.

Thus, when God performs miracles for some, He complicates the conversion of others. He knows that. He filled a book with the evidence. He suffers anguish over the selfishness of His children. They ask and ask, mindless of the repercussions. How many perverse generations have demanded special favors of Him? Jesus said: **“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign...”** Mat\_12:39

### **Conspicuous by their Absence**

Why do the Epistle’s have a scarcity of miracles? God miraculously healed every sick person introduced in the Gospels and Acts, but none in the Epistles. For example, Paul’s said, “Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick” (2Ti\_4:20).

Paul’s first letter to his good friend shows that Timothy had a reputation as a physically unhealthy person who suffered from “frequent infirmities.”

...use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and for your frequent infirmities. 1Ti\_5:23

The Epistles tell of no specific miracles. Paul knew of Timothy’s continuing health problems. This means that Paul himself did not heal Timothy of this persistent problem. Further, of course, neither could Timothy nor any of the believers around him heal this ailment. Moreover, Paul does not even instruct Timothy to seek deliverance by praying for healing or anointing with oil.

Notice that Christians who pray for God to miraculously fix their cars only pray for repairs they cannot see with their eyes. If a car does not start, some believers will ask God to fix it rather than asking Him for wisdom in the situation. However, believers never ever pray for a repair of something visibly wrong with the car. For example, Christians never pray and ask God to supernaturally fix a flat tire. Why? If a knob is broken off or a windshield is busted out, Christians do not ask God to fix those things. Why? Because they know, deep within, even if they have a hard time admitting it, that God will not fix those things no matter how much faith they have. However, a mechanical problem that they cannot see presents a blind faith opportunity to deceive themselves. The uncertainty that goes with hidden problems leaves enough chance that the car just might start on the next attempt (as cars so often do). So, Christians claim a miracle when the car starts on the next try.

Christians should admit that they do not possess the physical redemption of their earthly bodies. For if they did possess that redemption, then they would not long for it. So remember to glorify

God in trials and difficulties because that is when His power will shine brightest.

...the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us... For... we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, then we eagerly wait for it... Rom\_8:17, Rom\_8:22-25

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