

The Wonder of Jesus

The Wonder of His Works

Lesson #5 for May 3, 2008

Scriptures: Matthew 4:23-25; 8:25-27; 11:2-6; 12:22,23; Acts 3:19-21.

1. This lesson focuses on the miracles during the life of Christ. In actual fact, we really only have significant amounts of information about two years in the life of Christ—the year He ministered in Galilee and the following year leading up to His crucifixion. We do not have much information about His early ministry in Jerusalem and Judea, and we have very little information about His childhood.
2. Miracles have always fascinated and excited human beings. There are three times recorded in the Bible when miracles became major aspects of the story: 1) The exodus from Egypt and related times during the “wandering” in the desert for 40 years and the conquest of Canaan; 2) The times of Elijah and Elisha; and 3) During the ministry of Jesus and His disciples. There is only an occasional miracle recorded at other times. Why was that? There are 35 individual miracles that Jesus performed as recorded in the Gospels. Those miracles of Jesus can be divided into four categories:

Power over nature: 9 (water to wine; fish; storms; food for thousands; walking on water; trees)
Power over sickness: 19 (paralysis; leprosy; fevers; withered hands; deaf/blind; bleeding; ear)
Power over demon possession: 6 (two of those were also healings: Matt. 9:32-34; 12:22-23)
Power over death: 3 (Jairus’ daughter; Widow of Nain’s son; Lazarus)
3. How many miracles did Jesus perform? In addition to the named miracles, there were, no doubt, thousands of miracles that are not individually identified. What we do have is the following: Matt. 4:23,24; 9:35; 11:5; 12:15; 14:14,35,36; 15:30,31; Mark 1:32-34; 6:5; Luke 7:22; John 6:2.
4. “About them were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house; for He had passed through them, and healed all their sick.” {*ST*, June 17, 1889 par. 9; *DA* 241.1; *SC* 11.2} What does that tell us about His ministry?
5. The disciples also performed miracles. (See Matthew 10:8; Mark 6:7; Luke 9:1,2) We know that in later times, Peter raised the dead, (Acts 9:36-42) and Paul raised the dead. (Acts 20:7-12)
6. But what about some other miraculous events? What about the times when Jesus virtually disappeared “into thin air” and escaped angry crowds? (Luke 4:30; John 7:30,43-44; 8:59; 10:39) What about the times when He read people’s thoughts and predicted their future behavior including that of Peter (Matt 26.31-35; Mark 14.27-31; Luke 22.31-34; John 13:36-38) and that of Judas? (Matt 26.20-25; Mark 14.15-21; Luke 22.21-23; John 13:21-30) There were many other times when Jesus read peoples’ thoughts. (Matthew 9:4; Mark 2:1-13; Luke 5:22, etc.) Should those be considered miracles?
7. Three of Christ’s greatest miracles are recorded only in the Gospel of John: 1) The healing on Sabbath of the man at the pool of Bethesda (also known as Bethsaida or Bethzatha) (John 5); 2) The healing on Sabbath of the man born blind (John 9); and 3) The raising of Lazarus (John 11). Apparently John regarded these three miracles as very important aides to faith. Why do you think the other Gospel writers did not mention them? Were those miracles a direct confrontation of the Jewish leaders and too controversial or “inflammatory” to the Jewish leaders and the traditions of the Jewish people until the time when John wrote—several years after the destruction of Jerusalem and at a time when the Jewish leaders were no longer “in charge” and the Jewish nation did not exist?
8. We read repeatedly about the crowds who gathered around Jesus wanting to be healed. Was that one of the main reasons why they went to Jesus? TV evangelists in our day often perform so-called miracles to attract crowds and to convince people that they have the special power of the Holy Spirit. Is that what Jesus was doing? Ellen White says, “Christ spent more time in healing than in teaching

[or preaching].” {4T 225; MH 19; ChS 132; SpTB08 21.3 (1907)} Why was that? Clearly, Jesus was more than just a charismatic preacher.

9. If you had been alive in the days of Jesus, would you have gone to see Him? Would His miracles be a major reason for you wanting to go? If you were perfectly healthy, would you want to go just to see Him heal other people?
10. Do you think Jesus healed people of their diseases primarily as a way of attracting them so He could teach them? Or did He heal them just because He had “compassion” for them?
11. Jesus often healed the people who were most desperately ill, (John 5:5,6) especially people who were regarded by the Jewish authorities as being very sinful! Was Jesus trying to teach us something about sickness and about sin? What was it He might have been trying to teach us?
12. What do the miracles in which Jesus controlled the forces of nature teach us about Him? Read Matthew 8:23-27; Matthew 14:25-33; Mark 6.45-52; John 6.15-21. Do you think the storms that Jesus calmed on the Sea of Galilee were “natural” or were they possibly “demon-caused”? Could Satan have seen that as an opportunity to destroy Jesus and/or His closest followers?
13. The miracles which Jesus performed through controlling the forces of nature seem to have had the greatest impact on people. Was that because those miracles involved so many people? Or was it because it was miracles of that type that they were looking for as a manifestation that the Messiah had arrived?
14. In the setting of the great controversy, perhaps the most significant miracles in Jesus “life” were His birth, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension. Why don’t we usually include these among the list of His miracles?
15. Matthew 11 records the story about John the Baptist sending some of his disciples to Jesus to inquire about whether or not He was the Messiah. As evidence, Jesus encouraged them to watch for a whole day. In addition to several miracles that are mentioned, He said, “The Good News is preached to the poor.” Is that miraculous evidence for His “Messiahship”?
16. What would you have done if you were sick in the days of the ministry of Jesus? Despite the animosity of the Jews against Gentiles, we are specifically told that Jesus healed people from Syria, Tyre, Sidon, and Decapolis, in addition to people from Galilee, Judea, and Samaria. Do you think Jesus healed a lot of people from those remote areas? What do you think the Jews and particularly His disciples thought about His reaching out to those other groups?
17. Why do you think Jesus apparently really focused on the poor and needy in performing His miracles? Did Jesus perform any miracles for the rich and the famous? What about the official’s son recorded in John 4:43-54? Does that miracle have anything to do with Joanna? (Luke 8:1-3)
18. Frequently in the Gospels, we are told that Christ was moved with pity and had compassion on the sick and the crowds who were hungry. The wording used in those passages in the Greek suggests a deep and passionate love for those people. He had that deep and compassionate love for some of the most outcast and downtrodden groups in society: those with leprosy (Mark 1:40,41); blindness (Matthew 20:34); widowhood (Luke 7:12,13); and even demon-possession (Mark 9:25). Even ordinary hunger moved Him to compassion. (Matthew 14:14; 15:32)
19. The miraculous events connected with the life of Christ had been predicted in the Old Testament. Read Isaiah 29:18,19; 35:5,6; 61:1-3. Why do you think the scribes, the Pharisees, or even the Sadducees did not recognize the life of Jesus as a fulfillment of those prophecies? Weren’t they supposed to be the Bible scholars? Did the Jewish authorities believe that Jesus was wasting His time on sinners?
20. One of the particular areas of the “miracle ministry” of Jesus was the casting out of demons. What do we know about “demon possession”? Are there demon-possessed people among us today? In light of what we know about the life and ministry of Jesus, what would you have done if you were the

Devil? Jesus had “invaded” Satan’s kingdom. He demonstrated His power to overthrow virtually every aspect of the Devil’s control over this earth. Was the Devil angry? Frustrated? Jealous?

21. Did everyone who was healed by Jesus become a faithful follower of Him? Will they be saved?
22. Many people regard the raising of the dead as perhaps the most impressive of Christ’s miracles. We need to remember that Satan regarded the dead as his “property.” Christ invaded Satan’s kingdom and rescued the lives of people who had succumbed. If Christ can bring us back even from the dead, what possible fear can we have in following Him? Christ claimed that He was the way, the truth, the life, and the resurrection. (John 11:25; 14:6)
23. When it finally comes down to the bottom line, the greatest miracle of all is Christ’s delivering sinners “from” their sin. Romans 8:3 tells us that God sent His Son to “deal with” sin. How did He do that and how does that impact your life?
24. Ellen White stated, “It is a sin to be sick; for all sickness is the result of transgression. Many are suffering in consequence of the transgression of their parents.” {*HR*, August 1, 1866 par. 2; *CH* 37.2} What was she implying? Is it a sin to live a lifestyle that promotes sickness?
25. If faith implies a relationship with God that is growing and dynamic while sin is just the opposite, what is the relationship between faith, sin, and healing? Often, Jesus said that if one had enough faith, he could be healed. (Mark 9:14-29) What did He mean?
26. In one sense, the life of Christ can be summarized in the words of Peter, “He went about doing good.” (Acts 10:38, *GNB*) Would that describe our lives today? Could we be like Jesus in that way? Do we have the same compassion for the poor and needy that He had?
27. Jesus promised that His followers would do greater miracles than He did. (John 14:12) It is hard to imagine any greater miracles than some of the ones which Jesus performed. Interpreters have usually taken that statement to mean that the followers of Jesus would spread all over the world performing miracles in many different places. Or is there another explanation?
28. The final events of this earth’s history will be a time of miracles once again. Satan will perform them and God through His followers will perform them. Why do you think there will be miracles at the end but we do not see them now?
29. Read *Great Controversy*, p. 611,612:

The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the [612] former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close... Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand. {*GC* 612.1}

When will we see those events taking place? Why not now? Or are they occurring now?

30. How would the world—and even our church—respond to Jesus if He came in our day to live a life something like the one He lived 2000 years ago?

© 2008 Kenneth Hart, MD. ***Permission is hereby granted for any noncommercial use of these materials. Free distribution is encouraged. It is our goal to see them spread as widely and freely as possible. If you would like to use them for your class or even make copies of portions of them, feel free to do so. We always enjoy hearing about how you might be using the materials and we might even want to share good ideas with others, so let us know.*** info@theox.org

Last modified: March 22, 2008

C:\My Documents\WPISSTG-Hart\Wonders of Jesus\SS-5-WonderOfJesus-2008-05-03.wpd