

No. 3. The Marks of Special Revelation

In setting out to deal with the subject of *The Miracle in Scripture* we have come to see that the miracles recorded in God's Word were essentially an integral part of the giving of **Special Revelation** to lost and fallen men. If men are to be saved and reconciled to God then the Lord must reveal that way of salvation to them. Due to his deliberate disobedience to his Creator & his God, man was plunged into spiritual darkness and rendered incapable of understanding *General or Natural Revelation* correctly. Therefore, God in His sovereign grace has given to men a special revelation that is redemptive in nature, for it is designed to bring sinners out of their lost estate.

As we have noted, *the miracle* in Scripture is to be understood as belonging to *Special Revelation*. It is one of the three modes of this special revelation, the other two being *theophany* and *prophecy*. A "theophany" was an appearance of God, also called a "Christophany" for it was the second person of the Trinity who made these appearances. Theophany was a mode of special revelation in that when God appeared to men it was the revelation that it was His purpose in redemption to restore fellowship between Himself and men. Then, in *prophecy* God interpreted the plan of redemption that He revealed to men. Man, because of His rebellion and spiritual blindness could not interpret it for himself. And in *miracle*, the third mode of special revelation, the Lord revealed that it was His intention to reverse the effects of the curse that sin had brought on creation and on man himself.

GENERAL & SPECIAL REVELATION NOT TWO SEPARATE REVELATIONS

It is vital to point out that general and special revelation are not two entirely separate revelations. Some have taught that they are completely distinct from one another, but this is not correct. Rather, they both belong to the overall revelation that God has given man, the one given before the Fall and afterwards also -- General Revelation -- and the other only made necessary by the Fall and given subsequent to it -- Special Revelation. Thus, general and special revelation are constituent parts of the whole revelation that God has given to man.

THE RELATION BETWEEN GENERAL & SPECIAL REVELATION

The relation between the two is important and must be understood. In His *special revelation*, God has republished *general revelation*. In other words, in Scripture, which comprises this special revelation, God has presented & explained natural revelation with regard to the present needs of men, and in that way has incorporated them into His special revelation that is redemptive in nature. Thus, in *Special Revelation* as we have it in God's Word, the Lord reveals & explains what man needs to know about natural revelation, vital facts that he would never know and understand if left to himself: the creation itself; its initial state of perfection; its condition due to the entrance of sin; and its being the theatre for the enactment of the whole drama of redemption; and its eventual deliverance from the curse in order to be the eternal habitation of redeemed men. Human reason left to itself could never have arrived at a knowledge of these facts that pertain to natural revelation. Therefore, God, as was already expressed, republishes natural revelation in His special revelation. Thus, we conclude that natural and special revelation are not distinct and separate but are two parts of the divine revelation given to men.

THE MARKS OF SPECIAL REVELATION

Since *the miracle* is one of the modes of Special Revelation, it is important to devote some further study to other details about this special revelation, namely the marks of special revelation.

1. **It is supernatural** As the word signifies, the *supernatural* is above the natural. Special Revelation is not given to men by natural or ordinary means, but through divine intervention. In the supernatural, the natural laws that God has set in motion and that ordinarily operate are suspended while God intervenes in human history and experience. In such a manner, *special revelation* was delivered, thus it is supernatural.
2. **It is inscripturated** Special Revelation comprises the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Having mentioned that it is supernatural, it is with respect to its delivery and its being recorded that we see the proof of its supernaturalism -- special revelation was *God-breathed*, 2 Tim 3: 16. The sense of the language is that the very words that comprise the Scriptures were given by inspiration of the Spirit to the original writers. Therefore, this special revelation that we have in the Scriptures is infallible
3. **It is redemptive** Already we have noted this feature of special revelation -- it is redemptive in essence. It is redemptive because it is the revelation that God in grace has covenanted to redeem men from their sin and its consequences.

This aspect of its being redemptive characterises it in its entirety, both in its record of historical events and its teachings. In fact, the truth of redemption is based on the historical. Christ the Redeemer is the Christ of history. Thus, if we consider the historical events of Christ's life that are recorded for us in special revelation, it will be found that redemptive is squarely based on those historical events. The truths of imputed righteousness and justification rest on the historical facts of Christ's incarnation, impeccable life, atoning death and resurrection. See Rom 4: 25 & 1 Cor 15: 1-7 -- note that Christ's death and resurrection are said to be "*according to the Scriptures*." That is, in special revelation it was predicted that Christ would both die and rise again. The resurrection is the proof that the death is saving and atoning in nature. Thus, note the great build-up of evidence for the historical event of Christ's resurrection. Since His resurrection is a fully attested historical fact, then the truth of redemption is validated, and believers are assured of acceptance with God.

4. **It is complete** Special revelation is the story of redemption. Moreover, redemption is complete in Christ -- His work is finished. Therefore, special revelation cannot be found beyond the Scriptures for they are the record of the great fact that Christ's redemptive work is done.

This is a very important point with respect to *the miracle*. Many claim that miracles continue, but I suggest to you that *miracles in the Biblical sense no longer continue in the light of the fact that special revelation is complete in that redemption is complete*. We must stand firm on this fact that since special revelation is complete, then the miracle does not continue in that it was a mode of this special revelation. When the revelation that God gave is finished then that which was a mode of its delivery must also be finished.