

No. 6. *The Place of the Miracle in Scripture*

Without a revelation given by God to men, sinners would never come to a knowledge of all that is essential to their salvation. Moreover, due to man's fallen & sinful condition he requires a revelation that is special in the sense that it presents the message of redemption from all the fearful consequences of the Fall. That special revelation is comprised of the Holy Scriptures that God gave by the supernatural power of the Spirit, v.16 – “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...*” or as it literally reads, “*Every Scripture is God-breathed.*” Furthermore, we have also noted that in giving that revelation of Himself to men God employed three modes – *theophany, prophecy and miracle*. In *theophany* He appeared to men, a revelation of the great purpose of redemption to restore the fellowship between God & men that sin had broken. In *prophecy* He explained and interpreted the great scheme and covenant of redemption. And in *miracle* He showed that the ultimate result of redemption was to reverse the effects of the Fall and the curse that sin brought on all creation.

THE PLACE OF THE MIRACLE IN SCRIPTURE

Since the miracle in Scripture is a mode or means of revealing that the purpose of redemption was to reverse the curse that sin caused, we are therefore given a framework within which the miracle in Scripture must always be regarded and studied. The place of the miracle in Scripture or the role that the miracle plays in Scripture is that of drawing attention to the truth of redemption. The miracles recorded in Scripture were never performed as an end in themselves. They must never be regarded as being abstract events with no connection with the central theme of the Word of God, this great theme of redemption. When these miracles were actually wrought the performance of them took place in connection with the redemptive revelation that God was giving to men. Therefore, those miracles that are recorded in the Scripture occupy the role of illustrating and drawing attention to the truth of redemption.

MIRACLES ARE SEEN TO AUTHENTICATE THE PROPHETS WHO DELIVERED THE MESSAGE OF REDEMPTION

This point is plainly underlined in Scripture – since the miracle in Scripture occupied the place of drawing attention to the truth of redemption, then they gave authenticity to the ministry of those who delivered the message.

Moses was the first miracle-working prophet of whom we read in Scripture. Actually he holds the first place in the O.T. in that school of men who worked miracles, see Deut 34: 10-11. But why did God send Moses to perform his miracles? See Ex 4: 1-5 where a clear answer is given. Note v. 1 – Moses could envisage rejection by the people, thus it was for such a contingency that he was given the power to work miracles, so that the people would be convinced of the authenticity of his message, v.5. What was the theme of his message? See ch. 2: 24, 25; 3: 7, 8, 16, 17 – it was the theme of redemption on the basis of the covenant. See ch. 6: 6, where the word “redeem” is used. It is the verb *gaal* from which there is derived the noun that means “kinsman” or “redeemer” – the *kinsman redeemer*. Hence, here are the first recorded miracles in Scripture clearly associated with the theme of redemption, giving authentication to that message.

See also 1 Kings 18: 36 – note in Elijah's prayer that he looks for the miracle to give authenticity to his message and his ministry. He considered that the performance of the miracle would confirm that God was the only true God, that Elijah himself was a genuine prophet, and that the message he preached was authentic. Note also how clearly the miracle here was associated with the message of redemption – the fire of God consuming the sacrifice not the guilty people.

Messianic miracles served the every same purpose as those in the O.T. era. Christ & the Apostles wrought their miracles to authenticate their ministries and message. Regarding Christ, see Deut 18: 15 – Christ as the Prophet predicted by Moses was to be “like unto” Moses in that He wrought mighty miracles, much greater even than those that Moses wrought. See Luke 24: 19, Acts 2: 22 – note that Christ's miracles were the means of His authentication as Messiah, thus authentication of His message as well. John 10: 37, 38 – Christ here, as He did on a number of occasions, draws attention to His mighty acts as a validation & confirmation of His ministry as a prophet and thus of the message He preached, the message of redemption. John 3: 2 – Nicodemus had anxieties & questions, and he knew that Christ could answer them because He worked miracles. The miracles gave Nicodemus the confidence that Christ was a prophet and had an authentic message. See also John 6: 14, 7: 31.

Concerning the Apostles see Acts 14: 3 – note that the signs and wonders wrought by the apostles were the means by which God “*gave testimony to the word of His grace.*” This is a very clear & important statement. The reference is clearly to the message of redemption – “the word of His grace”. And the point is that the miracle was performed in order to authenticate the message. See also Gal 3: 5 – Paul speaks of his own ministry as one of ministering the Spirit and working miracles. To minister the Spirit is synonymous with redemption, see v.v. 13, 14. Redemption through the finished work of Christ was the message Paul preached, but from that message the Galatian churches were in danger of turning away to the works religion of Judaism. Consequently, Paul appeals here to the miracles he had wrought as the evidence that he ought to have been believed, rather than the Judaizers. Paul had gone among the Galatians working miracles even as he preached the Gospel. Those false teachers who were trying to force the Galatians back into ceremonialism did no miracles. Paul's appeal to miracles, therefore, was to the end that his message should have been believed not the message of works.

Heb 2: 1-4 is a vital passage with respect to this issue of the miracle authenticating the Gospel message. Cf. ch. 1: 1 – Christ is God's final prophet through whom He has brought divine revelation to a close. Thus, ch. 2 commences with a call to give heed to the Gospel. Those who heard lesser prophets were judged, thus how will sinners escape who disbelieve Christ. Then v. 4 brings miracles to our attention – Christ and those who were His contemporaries had their ministry and message confirmed by “*God...bearing them witness, both with signs, wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost.*” Thus, the miracles to which reference is made were God's stamp of approval upon the message of the apostles – which was the message of “*so great salvation.*” In other words, it was the message of redemption.

A very obvious conclusion is to be drawn from what we have noted. Since the miracle in Scripture was for the purpose of drawing attention to the truth of redemption and giving authenticity to the ministry of those who delivered that message, *then the Biblical miracle has ceased since God is no longer giving revelation.* We mentioned this issue last week in terms of stating that since the canon of Scripture is complete then miracles have ceased. What we have noted today has added support to that conclusion.