



Miracles

Miracles, the Bible is full of them, but what are we to make of them? Do we have to believe them? As well as prophecy, miracles make the Bible stand out from any other book. Sure there are books of fiction that claim amazing feats, that is the spirit of the human imagination, but the Bible isn't the result of human imagination. It is a record of God's dealings with His people and it claims to be the truth. In fact, the Bible makes it very clear about the consequences of claiming that something is from God when it is not. The history of the Jewish people and nation is inextricably linked to these miracles as well as the birth of the Christian faith.

We talk of miracles as "acts of God" where the laws of nature are suspended, but we also believe that the laws of nature were created by God, in fact we see the laws of nature as evidence of God's existence. So why does God need at times to suspend the very laws He created? The Bible says that it is because of people's hard hearts, they deny the existence of God even despite the fact of the laws of nature. Throughout Scripture we find that people had a tendency to turn to other man-made gods or to worship nature itself and it was essential for God to establish His supremacy over other gods. The Bible says that He is "a Jealous God". While other nations turned to other gods, Israel was expressly nominated to carry forward the faith of the one true God. This may sound like favoritism on God's part but it meant that Israel had a special responsibility to maintain the true faith and history shows that God dealt very harshly with them when they disobeyed. People of other nations based their religion on the phenomena of nature to the acts of their god's and so they worshipped the natural phenomena or made god's to resemble what they thought their god was like, while for Israel, nature was based on laws which were established by the Creator and were separate from Him. Today the issue has changed, to that the laws of nature are all there is and there is nothing more, not even an explanation as to why the laws of nature are as they are. The fact that the earth is fine-tuned to allow us to exist or the universe is fine-tuned to allow the stars and planets to exist is surely a powerful argument for God's existence but people today are still as hard-hearted as they were in ancient times. It is because of this that God has had to suspend the laws of nature at various times.

The common belief today is that everything has evolved. I once asked someone "Where did we come from?" and without a moment's hesitation the answer I got was "We've evolved!" To me that's not much of an answer. The theory of evolution has to be justified just like any other belief, it is not proven and by its very nature, can not be proven. The problem is that due to their denial of God the evolutionist must explain everything and that includes religion. The idea that religion started with Animism, Pantheism, Polytheism and then Monotheism, in that order is very popular today, but I believe that it was the other way round. As people turned away from God they turned to superstition and to other god's.

In the New Testament we see Jesus calm a storm and the disciples asking "Who is this man that even the wind and the waves obey Him?" You see even the disciples weren't stupid, they knew that normal people just don't do these sorts of things. Jesus' mother also knew that there was something special about her son when at the wedding in Cana, she asked Jesus to do something about the shortage of wine. Jesus reluctantly accepted and changed water into wine. Now water does turn into wine, quite naturally, but you have to wait quite a while. What Jesus did was turn water into wine quite rapidly and well, that just doesn't happen does it? We determine whether something was natural or a miracle by comparing it with what we know is the normal, natural course of events. Think for a moment about the age of the Earth or the Universe. Scientists say that the Universe is about 15 or 13.8 billion years old while the Earth is about 4.5 billion years old. This is based on the belief that the Universe and the Earth has evolved, so based on this we can assume that if it has occurred naturally then this is how old it should be, however if we find that the Universe and Earth are considerably younger than what they are saying then the idea that it has occurred naturally diminishes by the minute, and we have every right to assume that it is the result of miracle.

One final point, There is a tendency among some circles, to rationalize the miracles of the Bible, I think because some people are perhaps embarrassed by them. I don't believe this is necessary and actually can undermine the unique and special nature of the Bible. For example, it has been argued that the miracles of Exodus can be explained as the result of a volcanic eruption which subsequently caused the resultant plagues which were inflicted upon the people of Egypt. Quite often the charge is made that the writers of the Bible were simple and didn't understand natural phenomenon. I believe that this is a false charge. You find yourself wondering sometimes why the particular writer included some pointless information for example when the waters of the Nile turned to blood, the writer included the fact that even water in the stone jars turned to blood as well. Now how did volcanic mud/silt in the Nile end up in the stone jars? Beside the writer calls it blood and not mud. I know that some people mean well by it but let the Bible speak for itself.

Prayer:- Heavenly Father, In times past you performed wondrous acts of power. Do not allow our hearts to become hard like Pharaoh, who even after ten plagues still hardened his heart. After ten acts of power he still would not heed to your authority. Father soften our hearts so that we do not need to see acts of great power but that we acknowledge your power from what we already see around us. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

By Philip Catherall.