

MIRACLES

“God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles...”

Hebrews 2:3-4

God is always at work in his world, but not everything God does should be described as a miracle. Providence refers to God’s ordinary care and governance through the created order. An answered prayer, successful medical treatment, or remarkable deliverance may rightly be attributed to God’s providential care without being a miracle in the biblical sense. A miracle is an extraordinary act of God that transcends the ordinary processes of nature and displays his supernatural power. Miracles are acts of God, not spiritual techniques humans can summon, control, or reproduce at will.

Scripture contains many miracles, but they are not distributed evenly throughout biblical history. They cluster around major periods of revelation and redemption: Moses and the exodus, Elijah and Elisha, and especially Jesus and the apostles. Miracles frequently served as signs, confirming God’s messengers and their message. Thus, biblical miracles are not mere displays of power; they reveal God’s character, authenticate his messengers, and advance his redemptive purposes. Hebrews says the gospel was attested “by signs and wonders and various miracles” (Hebrews 2:3–4), while Paul refers to “the signs of a true apostle” (2 Corinthians 12:12).

This helps explain a traditional *cessationist* understanding of miraculous gifts. The New Testament connects extraordinary gifts closely with the apostolic mission and the revelation of the gospel. In Acts 8:14–19, for example, miraculous manifestations were imparted to the Samaritans through the apostles’ hands. As the apostolic age ended and the revealed word was delivered to the church, these confirming signs no longer served the same purpose. This does not mean God has stopped acting, answering prayer, or exercising providential care. It means we should distinguish his continuing providence from the revelatory signs and miraculous gifts associated with the apostolic era.

At the center of Christian faith stands the greatest miracle of all: the resurrection of Jesus. Paul insisted before Agrippa that these events had “not been done in a corner” (Acts 26:26). Christianity is unashamedly supernatural. We do not need modern miracle claims to make Christianity credible. Our faith rests on what God has already done decisively in history, above all in raising Jesus Christ from the dead.

What purpose did biblical miracles serve?