

WHY DID JESUS PERFORM MIRACLES, SIGNS and WONDERS?

- PART 1: Signs - Their Presence and Necessity
 - PART 2: Signs - Their Nature
 - PART 3: The Purpose of Jesus' Miracles
 - PART 4: The People's Response to His Miracles and Signs
 - PART 5: A Few Comments about Some Other Passages in the Bible
-
-

PART 1: Signs - Their Presence and Necessity

A. ABOUT DEMANDING SIGNS [It was not necessarily wrong.]

- 1 Corinthians 1:22 - Jews demand signs...
- John 2:18 - Example (after Jesus "cleansed" the temple): "What miraculous sign will you show us, to prove your authority to do this?"
- [See the Old Testament verses in Part 5, Section B, which explain why it was not always wrong to demand a sign.]

B. ABOUT IGNORING SIGNS AND DEMANDING MORE SPECTACULAR ONES

1. **Wicked people do that**
 - Matthew 12:38-40; 16:1-4; Luke 11:16, 29 - A wicked and adulterous people ask for miraculous signs (having rejected the ones they were already given).
 2. **Sometimes *not* given more signs**
 - Mark 8:11-12 - No sign will be given to this group of people. [They had demanded "a sign from heaven."]
 - John 6:30 - They asked for another sign, but Jesus didn't give them one. Instead, he told them that they needed to focus on *him* and what he said, rather than on the signs!. The sign he had already given them was intended to teach them about *him* ... and they wouldn't listen.
 3. **Sometimes given signs unlike what they wanted**
 - Matthew 12:38-40; 16:1-4; Luke 11:16, 29-30 - No sign will be given except for this one: the prophet Jonah.
-

PART 2: Signs - Their Nature

A. NOT ALWAYS A SPECTACULAR "ON THE SPOT" MIRACLE

- Could be an event from the past: The sign of the prophet Jonah - see Part 1, Section B3, above.
- Could be a future event, not fully understood at the time the sign was given: John 2:18-19 - "Destroy this temple and I will rebuild it in 3 days."

B. SOMETIMES INTENDED FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS OF PEOPLE

- 1 Corinthians 14:22 - Tongues were a sign for *unbelievers* (not for believers) [It was a sign indicating condemnation: Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11-12 to demonstrate this: Even with the sign of tongues, the people would continue to refuse to believe God.]

C. JESUS HIMSELF WAS A SIGN!

- Luke 2:34 - Jesus - destined to be a sign that many people would speak against.
 - Luke 11:30 - Jesus - a sign to the people of his generation, just like Jonah was a sign to the people of Nineveh.
-

PART 3: The Purpose of Jesus' Miracles

A. TO SHOW WHO HE WAS [They were "signs" that pointed to who he was.]

- Acts 2:22 - This was one way that God showed the people his approval of Jesus.
- John 2:11 - His first miraculous sign... in this way he revealed his glory (= he gave them a glimpse of his greatness and power).
- John 3:2 - "We know you are from God; no one could perform such signs unless God were with him."
- John 10:25, 38 - "The miracles I do (in my Father's name) speak for me (proving that the Father is in me and I'm in the Father)... Believe them ..."
- John 14:11 - "Believe what I say (that the Father is in me and I'm in the Father), or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles!"

B. TO BRING PEOPLE TO REPENTANCE AND TRUST IN HIM [It did not always happen, though.]

- Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 10:12-15 - Those who saw the miracles and refused to repent ... it will be horrible for them at the Day of Judgment. Some of the worst people in the Old Testament would have repented if such an opportunity had been given to them! [Implication: The people should have repented when they saw Jesus' miracles.]
- John 20:30-31 - [The miracles mentioned in the book of John ...] written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God... and so that you may have life because of who he is.
- [See also Part 4, Section A1.]

C. NOT A PURPOSE: TO GET ATTENTION!

- John 7:2-5 - Jesus' purpose, according to his unbelieving brothers: to become a public figure. (He did not follow their suggestions - which would have resulted in gaining lots of attention - but went to the feast secretly.)

PART 4: The People's Response to Jesus' Miracles and Signs

A. (NOTE: Their response was often less than what it should have been.)

B. **RESPONSES ASSOCIATED WITH BELIEVING IN HIM (TRUSTING HIM) - OR NOT DOING SO**

1. **People believed / trusted him, when they saw his miracles. [Some did so *only* because they saw them...]**
 - John 2:11 - He revealed his glory... his disciples put their faith in him.
 - John 2:23 - Many believed the signs...
 - John 7:31 - Many put their faith in him, because of the signs...
 - John 4:48, 54 - "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will never believe." [He healed the child...] ... and then the whole family believed / trusted him.

2. **But many had a temporary or incomplete (or imperfect) faith.**
 - John 2:23-25 - Many believed... but Jesus knew their hearts and did not give himself to them [to be their leader].
 - John 6:26 - Example, after feeding over 5000 people: Their *real* reason for following him was to get more food! When he told them to pay attention to the spiritual significance of the miracle, they turned away from him.
 - John 12:37-43 [Many refused to believe] ... others secretly believed, but were unwilling to publicly admit it. (They loved men's praise more than God's praise.)

3. **Some would refuse to repent and believe, even after they did see miracles. [Sometimes they would even demand *more* miracles! (See also Part 1, Sec. B.)]**
 - Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 10:12-15 - About those who saw the miracles and refused to repent: a horrible (but deserved) judgment awaits them.
 - Matthew 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6 - They took offense and would not trust him or give him the honor due him... so Jesus couldn't do many miracles there (in his hometown).
 - John 6:30 (and following verses) - [After miraculously feeding over 5000 people] they demanded another sign... ("Show us a sign, so that we can believe you!") When Jesus did not give them another (because of their evil motives), they became angry and turned away from him.
 - John 7:31-32 - Many believed... but the leaders wanted to arrest him! [Later, they wanted to kill him.]
 - John 7:31-32+ [Context: The formerly-blind man put his trust in Jesus.] The leaders opposed Jesus; and they also expelled the formerly-blind man from the synagogue.
 - John 12:18-19 - After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead... the leaders were upset, because people were going after him.
 - John 12:37-43 - After all the miracles Jesus had done, many still refused to believe... this was in fulfillment of prophetic Scripture.

C. OTHER TYPES OF RESPONSES (In addition to believing / trusting)

1. **Following him; wanting to see him**
 - John 6:2 - Many followed him, because they saw the miraculous signs... [But see v. 26: It was for the wrong reason.]
 - John 12:18-19 - Many people went out to meet / see him, because of his miracle (raising Lazarus from the dead). [For some, this desire to see him may have been nothing but mere curiosity.]
 2. **Praising God**
 - Luke 19:37 - The people praised God for all the miracles they had seen. [But where were they later, when Jesus was about to be crucified?]
 3. **An awareness that Jesus was from God**
 - John 3:2 - "We know you are from God; no one could perform such signs unless God were with him."
 4. **Considering him a prophet / leader**
 - John 6:14 - When they saw the miraculous sign of feeding more than 5000 people: "This is surely the Prophet..." [But see v. 26: They weren't interested in what he said. They just liked getting free meals.]
 - John 7:31-32 - "How can a sinner do such miracles? Surely he is a prophet!"
 5. **Some hated him and would want to kill him; they were guilty of sin because they rejected the evidence of the miracles.**
 - John 10:32 - "I showed you many great miracles from the Father. For which of them do you want to stone me?" [Verses 25 and 38: they should have believed the miracles...]
 - John 15:22-25 - "They saw the miracles... and hated me and my Father. They are guilty of sin."
-

PART 5: A Few Comments about Some Other Passages in the Bible

A. OTHER VERSES IN THE BIBLE ABOUT MIRACLES

- There are approximately 125 verses in the Old Testament and 100 verses in the New Testament, which contain these words (sign, miracle, wonder, etc.). [Note this study is based on the New International Version. Other words and phrases could also be included, such as "powerful works," but they were not examined in this study.]

B. TWO PASSAGES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, WHICH NEED TO BE CONSIDERED. (God gave directions for distinguishing between *true* and *false* prophets.)

- Deuteronomy 18:21-22 - If what a prophet says does *not* come true, he is a false prophet.
- Deuteronomy 13:1 - Even when a prophet's miraculous signs and wonders do come true, if he attempts to turn you away from the true God, he is a false prophet.

C. A FEW COMMENTS ABOUT NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES NOT INCLUDED IN THE ABOVE STUDY:

- Many verses simply mention Jesus' miracles, without mentioning things specifically applicable to this study.
- Many verses make reference to miracles that the apostles performed. Performing miracles was one of the signs of an apostle. (2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4)
- Some verses make reference to signs that are related to Jesus' second coming.
- Many verses make reference to the existence of *false* signs, wonders, and miracles. (Examples: Matthew 7:22; 24:24; Mark 13:22)

Dennis Hinks © 1998, 2004
Note: Parts of this study are based on the New International Version, but no verses are directly quoted from it.
Any verses quoted are either my paraphrase or common among many translations.
041104