

WHY “HIS DISCIPLES BELIEVED IN HIM”— BECAUSE OF CANA’S “SIGN”

Jn 2:1-11; Act 2:22; Heb 2:3-4

I. JOHN’S EMPHASIS: “SIGNS” [i.e. miracles] REVEALING JESUS’ IDENTITY

- A. Nature miracles: water to wine; feeding the multitude; walking on water; raising Lazarus
- B. Healing miracles: nobleman’s son; paralytic at pool; blind man
- C. Appreciating “sign”—“mark, token, sign, image, seal”
 - 1. Gestures—e.g. sign language, various physical acts standing for thoughts
 - 2. Marks—e.g. road signs
 - 3. As “signs,” Jesus’ miracles *means* to the end (belief in Savior), not end itself
- D. Sacramental perspective (sacrament: “visible sign of invisible reality”)—spiritual sensing
- E. “Christianity . . . is precisely the story of a Great Miracle” (C.S. Lewis, *Miracles*, p. 68).

II. APPRECIATING/UNDERSTANDING/BELIEVING MIRACLES

- A. Definitions:
 - 1. “A miracle is a less common kind of God’s activity in which he arouses people’s awe and wonder and bears witness to himself” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 355).
 - 2. “I use the word *Miracle* to mean an interference with Nature by supernatural power” (CSL, *Miracles*, p. 5)
- B. As “signs,” miracles enable us to discern Divine Reality—Supernatural Reality/Activity
 - 1. Naturalism presupposes impossibility of any exceptions to natural processes—rooted in mechanical, mechanistic philosophy dominant in modern thought (e.g. Deism) and the notion that “laws of nature” are mere regularities (e.g. Hume)
 - a. “What naturalism cannot accept is the idea of a God who stands outside Nature and made it” (C.S. Lewis, *Miracles*, p. 9)—illustrated by Richard Lewontin’s declaration: “Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door” (*New York Review of Books*, January 9, 1997).
 - b. Consciousness, human intentionality and reasoning, effectively refute naturalism, since “something beyond Nature operates whenever we reason” (CSL, *Miracles*, p. 25).
 - c. Morality effectively refutes naturalism, for “If we are to continue to make moral judgments . . . then we must believe that the conscience of man is not a product of Nature” (CSL, p. 38).
 - 2. Theism presupposes/presents reality of supernatural activities: creating; sustaining; *signing* nature (cf. Stephen Meyer’s *Signature in the Cell*); “The Supernatural is not remote and abstruse: it is a matter of daily and hourly experience, as intimate as breathing” (CSL, p. 41).
 - a. NB: using our (super-natural) minds we reshape, alter course of nature
 - b. Our minds have “come into Nature from Supernature: each has its tap-root in an eternal, self-existent, rational Being, whom we call God” (CSL, p. 28).
 - c. Thus God, in accord with His Nature (i.e. Supernature) easily acts within (both routinely and exceptionally) upon natural world

III. CHRISTIANS DISCERN AND PRAY FOR (episodic? ubiquitous?) MIRACLES

- A. Contending Convictions:
 - 1. Some Christians think miracles ceased with the New Testament
 - 2. More Christians think miracles continually (if rarely) occur
 - 3. Many Christians think miracles constantly occur and may be expected inasmuch as faith strong
- B. Historical record replete with descriptions, testimonies, persuasive evidences
 - 1. Lourdes’ record & “devil’s advocate” scrutiny
 - 2. *Breakthrough* recent chronicle
 - 3. Personal witness—Jackie Peterson
 - 4. Historical providence—D-Day weather; George Washington evacuates New York, etc.

Nelson, Dean. *God Hides in Plain Sight: How to See the Sacred in a Chaotic World* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, c. 2009).

“But I also believe that grace goes before us as a way for God to say, ‘Welcome! I got here before you. I’ve been expecting you.’” (p. 14).

“... in his [Augustine’s] *Confessions*, he stated, ‘God is always present to us and to all things; it is that we, like blind persons do not have the eyes to see’” (p. 15).

“As Eugene Peterson said, ‘We are always coming in on something that is already going on’” (p. 15).

“‘Listen to your life,’ [Frederick] Buechner said. ‘See it for the fathomless mystery that it is . . . There is no event so commonplace but that God is present within it, always hiddenly, always leaving you room to recognize him or not to recognize him’” (p. 15).

“‘We may ignore, [said C.S. Lewis] but we can nowhere evade the presence of God. The world is crowded with him. He walks everywhere incognito. And the incognito is not always hard to penetrate. The real labor is to remember, to attend, in fact, to come awake. Still more, to remain awake’” (p. 22),

“John Wesley said: ‘The pure of heart see all things full of God’” (p. 23).

“Jean-Pierre de Caussade, in . . . *The Sacrament of the Present Moment*, says that God’s activity permeates all things, even the most trivial and annoying. Look for God backstage, he says, not center stage. ‘No moment is trivial,’ he said, ‘since each one contains a divine Kingdom.

“‘The present moment is like an ambassador announcing the policy of God’” (p. 24).

“True spirituality is about seeing, about letting the invisible inform the visible, about letting the internal world inform the external world, about seeing the beyond in our midst” (p. 26).