

1036 Jesus healed the son of a royal official and a relevant testimony (Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)

First, we can see that the Gospel of John clearly says the criterion of selecting these particular seven miracles among so many choices. He wanted people to believe that Jesus is Christ. We had discussed the first miracle in Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. Today, we'll share the second miracle of healing the son of a royal official. The word miracle (G4592) in the Gospel of John means sign, which points out that Jesus is Christ. It is not the same as wonders (G5059). Only having wonders for the purpose of showing off is useless. With only wonders, it will often make people believe the person can perform such wonders and make that person easily be proud to the extent that he doesn't realize that he is proud. We should not believe that all supernatural things are from God, which must be consistent with what the Bible says. It is not easy to discern, but we must. We'll present such a testimony at the end. We shouldn't be confused. God often wants us to face our real ourselves.

1. Preface: The standard of choosing miracles in the Gospel of John

In John 20:30-31, it says clearly, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." Jesus Himself said, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life." (John 5:39-40) From these verses, we can see that having life is very important. God emphasizes what we are more than what we do. But we really need both. And we shouldn't be upside down. If we have faith, then we'll have the action from the faith like what it says in James 1:22-24, "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was." If our life is indeed the light and the salt, we can then do the work of the light and the salt.

2. Why does Jesus perform miracles?

In John 4:47-48, it says, "When he (a royal official at Capernaum) heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs (G4592) and wonders (G5059), you simply will not believe.'" We can see the purpose of performing miracles is to have people believe Him. "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing." (John 2:23) His disciples behaved the same as said in John 2:11, "This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him." As a matter of fact, during the period of the Word becoming the

flesh, He performed a lot of miracles, but not a lot of people believed Him! When the Holy Spirit came down at Pentecost, not too many people attended the ceremony when the Church was created.

In John 3:1-2, it describes when a Pharisee saw the fact that the God was with Jesus, so he at last was able to openly express his faith. "Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."" We can see the man came to Jesus by night, not wanting to be seen. At last, he openly expressed his faith. "Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight."(John 19:39)

The word sign (G4592) which is translated as miracle in Chinese appears 69 times, more than the word wonder (G5059), which only appears 16 times and is mentioned together with miracles every time. Only having wonders for the purpose of displaying power is useless. With only wonders, it will often make people believe the person can perform such wonders and make that person easily be proud to the extent that he doesn't realize that he is proud. If it is a miracle, it must be what God does through the person. The power behind miracles is from the God.

3. There are miracles and wonders nowadays.

In the past, there were miracles and wonders as described in Acts 4:29-30, "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." We also have them nowadays as is clearly stated in Acts 2:16-20, "but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel, 'And it shall be in the last days,' ...'And I will grant wonders in the sky above And signs on the earth below, ...Before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come.'" Why do we have miracles? It is as said in Acts 14:3, "Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands." Miracles are there to testify of the word of His grace, not merely saying something so.

Here is an example to demonstrate that which is not from God as described in Matthew 24:24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." Therefore, we must not accept all supernatural things as from the God. We need to check them with what the Bible says. Knowing the purposes of miracles help us to discern if it is from God. As shared before, Satan cannot have foreknowledge, and he can only guess, like weather forecasting. As an example, in Genesis 15:13, "God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years."" Satan cannot know ahead, "The angel of the Lord appeared to him (Moses) in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and

behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed."(Exodus 3:2) As another example, Satan cannot know ahead what was described in Job 38:1, "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind ..."

4. The second miracle of healing the son of royal official

The occasion is recorded in John 4:46-48, "Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe."" In John 4:49-54, we can see that the official showed his great faith by not seeing but believing and its result, "The royal official said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus said to him, "Go; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off. As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed and his whole household. This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee."

In this event, whether his son has faith or not isn't a key point. The Bible doesn't say if his son had faith. What the father did due to love may not even be known by his son! This is an example in which a person can pray for others due to his own faith alone and be granted. In John 20:28-29, it says, "Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."" Thomas followed Jesus for more than three years, but he still wanted to see proof. We cannot blame people that want to see miracles. But we really should know that miracles are to testify the word of His grace. Don't get it wrong and use them just to show off. To be sure, God has the absolute authority. Don't think that they can be granted for sure by just asking. Actually, the fact that the life of Christians can be changed is in itself a great miracle which we cannot do ourselves.

Miracles are indeed not used to show off. He knows when to perform them as said in Matthew 16:1-4, "The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. But He replied to them, "...Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away."

5. Testimony: not all supernatural things are miracles, must be consistent with the Bible

Last year, I had to decide if I would share one thing. After doing what I could do as a human, something supernatural happened to me. One day, when I walked on the greenbelt

(a road so called locally), I suddenly had a thought that I should visit two elderly sisters. They had misunderstanding previously and hadn't talked to each other for more than a year. For a long while, I was hoping that they could make peace. If I went at that time, the situation would become better. The way to their home is not easy for me after I had brain surgery, as evidenced by the fact that I had to ask my wife to give me a ride on my way back. I didn't dare ignore my feeling since in the past I had also been in a similar situation but ignored it that time. I had previously felt like I should visit the husband of one of the sisters. He was well at that time, but after a period of time suddenly passed away. I didn't get a chance to see him at that time. The decision of not going at that time was not easy for me since I was also in a similar situation even before the event of feeling to visit her husband to share the Gospel with a dying friend. After that particular visit, the dying friend was baptized and his wife told me that he was peaceful after baptized until he was passed away. After a while, his wife was also baptized.

To my surprise, the way to their homes was very smooth although there was an uphill area that was very long for me. And they talked to each other the first time after a long while. I decided to share since I had done everything I could and had a peaceful mind. Of course, it was also due to this supernatural event. After this decision, I was stimulated again to confirm it with my wife since God sometimes used her words to reveal to me. So, I showed her the materials I prepared, and she told me, " Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. ..." (Romans 12:17) For the same event, what I came out before was in Romans 12:21, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." At that time, I believed that only God can overcome evil with good. I didn't know what to do, but lost peace. Since there was already a supernatural thing, I prayed correspondingly that I would share for sure unless there was another supernatural thing happened. Out of my expectations, there was an unexplained thing occurred and we couldn't explain even nowadays. The final result was that I didn't share.

For a while, I didn't know why the Holy Spirit prevented me from sharing. Until one day someone said, it had to be consistent with the Bible words. We know that it says clearly in 1 Thessalonians 5:19, "Do not quench the Spirit." The peace gotten from human's effort is very different from the peace God gives. We cannot substitute a peaceful feeling for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. What comes from the Holy Spirit must have peace, but a peaceful feeling doesn't mean such a guidance. We shouldn't make them equal. So, even if we encounter a supernatural thing, it has to be consistent with what the Bible says before we can be sure that it is indeed from Holy Spirit.