The Miraculous:
1. OT & NT Miracles

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What is a Miracle?

• Dictionary definition: *Webster’s New World Dictionary* (1966):
  – *An event or action that apparently contradicts known scientific laws.*
  – Not too bad, but this eliminates striking providences, like the quail blown into camp in Numbers 11:31.

• Let’s have a look at biblical terminology for miracles.
Biblical Terminology

- Terms expressing the wondrous or marvelous aspect:
  - Hebrew mofet, niflaot, pele’, temach
  - Greek teras, thauma

- Terms expressing its power:
  - Greek dunamis

- Terms expressing its significance:
  - Hebrew ’ot
  - Greek semeion
What is a Miracle?

• So we suggest a biblical definition of miracle:
  – A Biblical miracle is a striking or wonderful event, displaying supernatural power and intended to carry a certain significance.

• We will operate with this definition, which does not rule out striking providential events.
Old Testament Miracles

A quick tour of their nature & purpose
Creation

• Narrated in Genesis 1-3
• Numerous events here seem to involve the miraculous, even though humans were not present.
• So the miraculous may not occur only for the benefit of humans.
• Or they may occur for the benefit of later generations of humans, e.g., us!
The Flood

• Narrated in Genesis 6-9
• There seems to be both intervention and providence involved here.
• The purposes of the flood are clearly:
  – Judgment, for those not on the ark
  – Deliverance, for those who are
The Patriarchal Period

• Babel (Gen 11) – judgment
• Abraham
  – Flaming torch (Gen 15:17)
    • covenant, revelation
  – Sodom & Gomorrah (Gen 18-19)
    • judgment with deliverance
  – Isaac's birth (Gen 18, 21) – promise
• Joseph's dreams (Gen 37, 40-41)
  – revelation, deliverance, attestation
The Mosaic Period

- Burning bush (Ex 3)
  - revelation, promise, deliverance
- Moses' signs (Ex 4) - staff, hand
  - attestation of message, messenger
- The Plagues (Ex 7-12)
  - attestation, judgment, deliverance
- Crossing Red Sea (Ex 14)
  - deliverance, judgment
The Mosaic Period

- **Provision in Wilderness**
  - Cloud - guidance, protection, attestation
  - Manna, water, quail – provision
  - Clothing, sandals (Deut 29:5) – provision
  - Sinai events - revelation, attestation, covenant
  - Amalek defeated (Ex 17) – judgment, attestation, deliverance
  - Korah, Dathan, Abiram destroyed (Num 16) – judgment, attestation
  - Aaron's rod (Num 17) - attestation
Conquest of Canaan

• Crossing Jordan (Josh 3)
  – attestation (3:10-13, 4:6-7, 22-24)
  – provision (3:15)
• Jericho (Josh 2, 6)
  – judgment, deliverance
• Sun at Gibeon (Josh 10)
  – judgment, attestation
Period of Judges

• Angel of Lord (Judg 2)
  – revelation
• Gideon’s fleece (Judg 6)
  – attestation
• Samson (Judg 13-16)
  – judgment, deliverance
Kingdom Period

• Birth of Samuel? (1 Sam 1) - attestation?
• Samuel's vision (1 Sam 3) - revelation, attestation?
• Ark among Philistines (1 Sam 5-6)
  – revelation, attestation to pagans
  – phenomena surrounding return especially interesting (cart, cows, etc.)
• Call of Saul (1 Sam 10) - attestation (10:7)
Kingdom Period

- Jonathan's exploits (1 Sam 14)
  - attestation (14:8-10)
- David & Goliath (1 Sam 17)
  - judgment, deliverance, attestation
- Disaster moving ark (2 Sam 6) – judgment
- Cloud in temple (1 Kings 8) – attestation
- Sign to Jeroboam (1 Kings 13)
  - attestation, judgment
Kingdom Period

• Sign to Abijah (1 Kings 14)
  – judgment (14:6-11)
  – attestation (14:12,17)

• Ministry of Elijah (1 Kings 17 - 2 Kings 2)
  – See separate slides

• Ministry of Elisha (2 Kings 2-13)
  – See separate slides
Ministry of Elijah

• Drought (1 Kings 17-18)
  – judgement, attestation
• Ravens (17) – provision
• Replenished food (17)
  – provision, attestation
• Resurrection of widow's son (17)
  – deliverance, attestation
• Fire on Mt Carmel (18) – attestation
Ministry of Elijah

- Run to Jezreel (1 Kings 18)
  - provision? attestation?
- Manifestation at Sinai (19)
  - revelation, provision
- Deliverance of Ahab from Syrians (20)
- Fire falls on soldiers (2 Kings 1)
  - judgment, attestation
- Elijah's ascent, Jordan parted (2 Kings 2)
  - attestation
Ministry of Elisha

- Opening Jordan (2 Kings 2) – attestation
- Healing water (2) - provision, attestation
- Two bears (2) - judgment, attestation
- Water-filled valley (3)
  - judgment, deliverance, attestation
- Multiplication of oil (4) - provision
- Raising Shunemite's son (4) – deliverance
- Canceling poison (4) - provision
Ministry of Elisha

• Multiplication of loaves (2 K 4) - provision
• Healing of Naaman (2 Kings 5)
  – deliverance, attestation to pagan
• Floating axe-head (6) – deliverance
• Heavenly army (6) – attestation
• Blinding Syrians (6) – deliverance, attestation
• Prediction of plenty (7) – attestation
• Resurrection touching bones (13)
  – deliverance, attestation
Kingdom Period

- Uzziah's leprosy (2 Chr 26)
  - judgment, attestation
- Assyrian army devastated (2 K 19)
  - judgment, deliverance, attestation
- Hezekiah healed (2 Kings 20)
  - deliverance
- Sun's shadow reverses (20)
  - attestation
Babylonian Captivity

- Daniel interprets dream (Dan 2)
  - revelation, attestation
- Fiery furnace (3)
  - deliverance, attestation
- Nebuchadnezzar's madness (4)
  - judgment, revelation, attestation
- Handwriting on wall (5)
  - judgment, revelation, attestation
- Daniel in lions' den (6)
  - deliverance, attestation
Summary: OT Miracle Themes

- Attestation of messenger
- Attestation of God
- Judgment (on false belief, sinful practice)
- Protection & Deliverance
- Picturing God's nature
  - Wilderness provisions, Holiness of ark
- Carrying out God's program
  - Abraham, Exodus, Elijah
New Testament Miracles

A quick tour of their nature & purpose
Miracles of Jesus

• His birth
• His ministry
  – Will return to these for the bulk of the course
• His resurrection & ascension
Apostolic Miracles

• Pentecost (Acts 2) (Jesus)
  – fulfillment, attestation
• Healing lame beggar (Acts 3) (Peter)
  – deliverance
• Death of Ananias & Sapphira (5) (Peter)
  – judgment
• Apostles rescued from prison (5) (angel)
  – deliverance
Apostolic Miracles

• Holy Sp to Samaritans (8) (Peter & John)
  – fulfillment, attestation

• Guidance & Transport of Philip (8) (HS)
  – revelation, ministry

• Conversion of Paul (9) (Jesus)
  – deliverance

• Healing paralytic Aeneas (9) (Peter)
  – deliverance, attestation
Apostolic Miracles

• Resurrection of Dorcas (9) (Peter)
  – deliverance, attestation
• Conversion of Cornelius (10) (angel)
  – deliverance, attestation
• Famine prophecy (11) (Agabus)
  – revelation
• Peter rescued from prison (12) (angel)
  – deliverance
Apostolic Miracles

- Death of Herod Agrippa I (12) (angel)
  - judgment
- Elymas struck blind (13) (Paul)
  - judgment, attestation
- Lame man healed at Lystra (14) (Paul)
  - deliverance, attestation
- Macedonian vision (16) (?)
  - revelation
Apostolic Miracles

- Demonized girl at Philippi (16) (Paul) – deliverance
- Earthquake at Philippian prison (16) (?) – deliverance, attestation
- Vision at Corinth (18) (Lord) – revelation
- HS on followers of Jn Bapt (19) (HS) – fulfillment, attestation
- Demonic attack on sons of Sceva (19) (Satan) - judgment
Apostolic Miracles

• Resurrection of Eutychus (20) (Paul)
  – deliverance
• Arrest prophecy (21) (Agabus)
  – revelation
• Vision at Jerusalem (23) (Lord)
  – revelation
• Vision re/ shipwreck (27) (angel)
  – revelation
Apostolic Miracles

• Paul not hurt by snake (27) (Paul)
  – deliverance, attestation

• Healings on Malta (28) (Paul)
  – deliverance, attestation

• Visions to John on Patmos (Jesus, angel)
  – revelation
Summary on NT Miracles

• Much the same as OT re/ themes
• More Christocentric
• Probably all of the miracles of judgment and deliverance have some function as attestation for the miracle worker or for the Gospel and the Christian church.
• No clear evidence in Acts of decrease in miraculous toward end of book.
The End