

Resonate

BIBLE STUDY

**DO YOU WANT MORE OUT OF LIFE:
MORE MIRACLES**

Miracles abound in Hollywood movies. This causes one to think they are something of fantasy instead of reality. Miracles take place today. The Word of God proves it. The same God who showcased His power in the past has the same amount of power today. He is the God of miracles.



Today's Scripture:
2 Kings 4:1-7

The Word

Elisha was a prophet in Israel. In fact, he was “the” prophet. While there were others around he was the main one in the nation. A prophet was a spokesman of the Lord. His job was very important. Even the king would consult him. But despite his lofty position, Elisha was approachable.

2 Kings 4:1

¹ The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the LORD. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves."

Verse 1: This woman was at a desperate point. She had lost her husband and now was facing the possibility of losing her sons. In those days, forced labor was rendered upon those who could not pay off debts. She had no means. As a woman, it would be extremely difficult to obtain any type of work. The widow herself was in danger of being left on the streets. But she was not concerned about herself for she was upset about the danger to her children.

Many years ago I watched a movie about a woman who was dying of cancer. She had ten children. Knowing that her husband would be unable to provide for all these little ones himself, she sought out different families to adopt the children. She focused on their lives and future instead of her misery and pain. The children were reunited over twenty years later. Each one commended their mother for her sacrifice on their behalf.

A mother loves her children. She places their welfare above her own. This widow knew the reality of the situation she was facing. She realized that on her own, there was no way out. The mother summoned the courage to speak to Elisha. With humility, she shares her problem openly. The situation was not glossed over. She then waited for the reply.

2 Kings 4:2a

² Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?"

Verse 2: I wonder how many seconds passed between those two questions. Can you imagine her feelings upon Elisha saying, “how can I help you?” Did hope flee her? Did she feel downcast? The second question did not instill much hope either. She had nothing—at least so she thought.

2 Kings 4:2b

"Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a little oil."

Verse 2: Empty cupboards. Empty cabinets. Empty closets. Empty rooms. These were desperate times. She had nothing to eat, much less to use for making money. But she remembered the one thing she did have: a little oil. She offered up the little she had, not knowing what God would do with it.

There was a little girl who had so little to offer but God used her gift in an amazing way.

A first-hand account of it is in a sermon delivered December 1, 1912 by Russell H. Conwell, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Philadelphia. Rev. Conwell said the little girl's name was Hattie May Wiatt. She lived near a church where the Sunday School was very crowded and he told her that one day they would have buildings big enough to allow every one to attend who wanted to. Later, Hattie May Wiatt became sick and died. Rev. Conwell was asked to do the funeral and the girl's mother told him that Hattie May had been saving money to help build a bigger church and gave him the little purse in which she had saved 57 cents. Rev. Conwell had the 57 cents turned into 57 pennies, told the congregation the story of little Hattie May and sold the pennies for a return of about \$250. In addition, 54 of the original 57 pennies were returned to Rev. Conwell and he later put them up on display. This was in 1886 when 57 cents was no small savings account for a little girl from a poor family. Some of the members of the church formed what they called the Wiatt Mite Society which was dedicated to making Hattie May's 57 cents grow as much as possible and to buy the property for the Primary Department of the Sunday school. A house nearby was purchased with the \$250 that Hattie May's 57 cents had produced and the rest is history. The first classes of Temple College, later Temple University, were held in that house. It was later sold to allow Temple College to move and the growth of Temple, along with the founding of the Good Samaritan Hospital (Now the Temple University Hospital) have been powerful testimonies to Hattie May Wiatt's dream.

The Little Girl Who Died and Left Fifty Seven Cents to Build a Bigger Church. [cited March 7, 2007]. Available from <http://www.truthorfiction.com>

From meager beginnings came a huge miracle. The widow would experience this herself. First, she must obey what the man of God told her to do.

2 Kings 4:3-4

³ *Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few.*
⁴ *Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side."*

Verse 3-4: Imagine going door to door and asking for jars. “Do you have any jars?”

“Yes, neighbor, here you go.”

“That is one jar. Do you have anymore? I need every one you have.”

“Why?”

“Because, Elisha told me to get them.” And then you just smile at them.

This was not an easy task. It probably involved some weird looks and many questions. But this woman faced the ridicule and chose to obey. She held onto the hope that God would help her in the situation. She would not be disappointed.

The jars are collected. The door is shut. The oil is in her hands. With faith, she begins to pour out “the little oil”.

2 Kings 4:5-6

⁵ She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. ⁶ When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one."

But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing.

Verse 5-6: The oil kept flowing. The destitute family received a miracle. They watched the little become much. Only the Lord can take the little we offer him in our lives and multiply it beyond ourselves.

Looking around at the jars and the oil, the woman had a dilemma. “Now what do I do?” She ran to the one who had given her the counsel of God.

2 Kings 4:7

⁷ She went and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left."

Verse 7: The miracle turns practical. God provided the miracle but the woman provides the “leg work”. The oil was not the answer, the money from selling the oil was. The Lord allowed the widow to be involved in providing for her family. I believe this restored her dignity. He also restored her family. The fear of separation was over. For the rest of their lives, they could glorify God for the miracle of the oil.

Up Close and Personal

Praise the Lord for being able to perform miracles.

Do you believe God does miracles today? Why?

How do you determine God's will when you are facing desperate times?

When have you experienced the Lord responding to your needs?



Today's Scripture:

2 Kings 4:1-7; Romans 8:28-29

The Word

Opinions vary on the topic of miracles. Some believe that you claim a miracle and it will happen. Others believe that miracles do not take place. Based upon the Word of God, we can know that the Lord can and will do miracles. However, He alone chooses if and when to perform them.

2 Kings 4:1-2a

¹ *The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the LORD. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves."*

² *Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?"*

Verse 1-2: There were other women in Israel who were probably experiencing similar circumstances. Only this widow is recorded as asking for help. For miracles to happen, we must seek the Lord and ask for His intervention in the situation.

2 Kings 4:2b

² *"Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a little oil."*

Verse 3: Even when asking for a miracle, we need to know what we have to offer. God wants us involved in what He is doing. The involvement may be prayer or it may be giving up something you have. Whatever it may be, we need to know our responsibility in the situation and be willing to do whatever God calls us to do.

2 Kings 4:3-5

³ *Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few.*

⁴ *Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side."*

⁵ *She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring.*

Verse 3-5: The woman obeyed what God told her to do through the prophet Elisha. Today, we have the Word of God. If the Lord gives you a promise from His Word, then you can act on it. You must be diligent in seeking His counsel and be willing to follow through with what He says.

Do not claim someone else's miracle as your own. We cannot demand that God work in our lives the way He has worked in another's. The Lord has His own path for each of us.

Also, we cannot base a miracle upon ourselves by "claiming it by faith". Our faith needs to be rooted in what we learn from the Word of God; it is not based upon what we want to happen in the situation. The Lord directs our steps; we do not guide the Lord. He chooses how to work in the situation. His answer may not be the one we want. Does that mean God cannot do a miracle? No. It simply means that the Lord has chosen to work something else in our life for our own good. We cannot see the whole picture. We must trust Him.

This woman, however, heard the Word of the Lord and because of this had the faith to follow through. Then, she experienced the miracle.

2 Kings 4:6-7

⁶ *When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one."*

But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing.

⁷ *She went and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left."*

Verse 6: The woman had acted in faith, based upon the Word, thus her entire family experienced the miracle. A miracle is to be shared with others. This is not a bragging on ourselves or our "faith", this is to bring glory to God. For thousands of years, people have been blessed by reading this Scripture. God has used the working of this miracle in this woman's life to bring honor to Himself throughout the generations.

I wonder if this woman shared her story over and over again as she sold the oil in the community. How many times was she able to witness about the power of the Lord? He is mighty save. We do not know, but there may have been some people who renewed their commitment to the Lord based upon her testimony.

If this woman had never had a need; she never would have experienced a miracle.

Romans 8:28

²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Verse 28: We do not know how God will answer us in our times of need. But we can be sure that He will work the situation for good. Let me stress, that it is His idea of good not ours.

Romans 8:29

²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Verse 29: Our idea of good is to have an “easy life”. The Lord’s idea of good is to form us into the image of His Son. I guarantee after the working of the miracle, this woman became more of a God-follower than what she was before. Thus, the need plus the miracle worked a greater good in her life. The same is true for us today.

Up Close and Personal

Thank the Lord that He molds us into the image of His Son.

When you have a need in your life, what is your first reaction?

Why do we need to base our faith in the Word of God not on the experience of others?

How have you publicly given the glory to God for the way He has worked in your life?

DAY 3

The Word

Today's Scripture:

Isaiah 42:8; Matthew 24:24, 7:15-23

Every week, my grandfather intently watches the news. He is not as interested in viewing current events as he is in seeing the lottery numbers. He keeps hoping for the “miracle” of winning all that money.

Many people view miracles as getting what they want. While miracles are always a blessing, there are three main purposes of a miracle.

The most important is to glorify God. The beneficiaries and observers of the biblical miracles generally responded by glorifying God. This means that when miracles occur today, we should credit God, who is the source of the miracle, not the human agent who is the channel. In biblical times, a second purpose of miracles was to establish the supernatural basis of the revelation which often accompanied them...We note, too, that miracles often came at times of especially intensive revelation. This can be seen in the ministry of our Lord (e.g., Luke 5:24). Finally, miracles occur to meet human needs. Our Lord is frequently pictured as moved with compassion for the needy, hurting people who came to him. He healed them to relieve the suffering caused by such maladies as blindness, leprosy, and hemorrhaging. He never performed miracles for the selfish purpose of putting on a display. (Erickson, Millard J., *Christian Theology*, (Grand Rapids; Baker Book, 1985), p. 409.

A miracle is never to give glory to a person, to an idea, to a philosophy, or anything else. A miracle is to give glory to God alone.

Isaiah 42:8

*⁸"I am the LORD; that is my name!
I will not give my glory to another
or my praise to idols.*

Verse 8: If someone or something else receives glory because of a miracle, you need to beware. The Lord alone is deserving of this honor. If a person is bragging on himself, stay far from him. He is not acting under the authority of the Lord. Let me warn you: evil powers can perform “miracles” as well. Their purpose is to deceive people.

Matthew 24:24

²⁴For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.

Verse 24: Beware of being enraptured by “amazing events” instead of God. The enemy wants to lead people astray from the Lord. Miracles are not conjured up by demand. They are not to impress the crowds. Instead, miracles are to showcase the power of the Lord.

Please know that just because someone claims to be in Christ, does not make them a true believer. Though they may use his name and perform miracles, still be on guard.

Matthew 7:21-23

21"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

Verse 21-23: We live in a day and age that is easily swayed by what people say. We hear a musician say, "Thank You, Lord" for winning their grammy and we consider that person a Christian. Our standards are too low. So when someone claims Christianity and then does a miracle, we assume they are from God. We must be on guard against deception.

I am going to tell you the truth. No where in Scripture did the apostles hold tent meetings and invite all the ill to come to it for healing. Did they heal people? Yes. But only when called by God. For everyone healed, there were hundreds left untreated. When the miracle did occur, there first response was to explain the Person of Jesus Christ.

Miracles do happen. But do not be suckered into false beliefs. Judge miracles against the backdrop of God's Word. He will reveal the truth to you.

Matthew 7:15-20

15"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? 17Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

Verse 15-20: Learn the wisdom from God to discern good versus bad fruit. This will protect you and your loved ones from false prophets who desire to deceive both believers and unbelievers. Beware.

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to help you to grow in the understanding of His Word so that you may have discernment.

How are people swayed into a false belief system?

How will you protect yourself and your family from being deceived?

If someone in your family (or friend) is living under deception, how can you hold out the truth to them?

Who will you ask to join you in praying for your family member (or friend)?



The Word

Today's Scripture:

John 20:30-31; Luke 10:17-20; Matthew 12:38-40; 1 Corinthians 15:17; Acts 3:1-16

Yesterday, we studied the first purpose of a miracle: to glorify God. Today, we will discuss the second purpose which is to show the “supernatural basis of the revelation which often accompanied them.” (Erickson, Millard J., *Christian Theology*, (Grand Rapids; Baker Book, 1985), p. 409. In other words, the miracles themselves were supposed to testify to something beyond themselves. They were like an arrow to a greater truth. This Truth was the person and purpose of Jesus Christ.

John 20:30-31

³⁰Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Verse 30-31: Jesus' use of miracles was not to say “Look at Me. I am more powerful than all of you combined!” His miracles were for the purpose of validating His Word. He claimed to be the Son of God. Imagine, a son of a carpenter making such a radical claim. This poor guy from Nazareth is claiming to be the Messiah. His words alone seemed ridiculous. Thus, the miracles, or signs, pointed the way to the truth. He could do such things because He truly was who He claimed to be. His words were backed up with power.

To Jesus the miracles themselves were not the highlight of ministry. When the followers of Jesus were first sent out, they did not understand this truth.

Luke 10:17-20

¹⁷The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

¹⁸He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Verse 17-20: The miracles themselves were not the source of joy. Salvation was. The miracles were to point the way to salvation. They were not the “end all” but just a means of proclaiming the good news about Jesus.

Miracles were also not for entertainment purposes or to draw a crowd. In fact, when called to “perform on demand”, Jesus would refuse.

Matthew 12:38-40

³⁸Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

³⁹He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Verse 38-40: Jesus predicted a sign that holds to this day: His death and resurrection. This sign alone validates Jesus’ claims as the Son of God. The resurrection is the crux of Christianity. Without it, our beliefs are in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:17

¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

Verse 15: The resurrection is vital to communicate the salvation message through Christ. Often, we are so familiar with the resurrection of Jesus that we forget how radical it is. Picture this truth as if you have never heard it. The conversation may have been like this:

“I follow a man named Jesus.”

“Jesus,” you answer with surprise, “didn’t He die on a cross in Jerusalem.”

“Yes, He did. But three days later He arose from the dead.”

Wouldn't you wonder about the sanity of the person telling you such an outlandish claim? Who has been resurrected from the dead? It seems weird. Jesus gave His followers the ability to validate the truth with signs.

Acts 3:1-16

¹One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. ²Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

⁶Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." ⁷Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

¹¹While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. ¹²When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

Verse 1-16: The miracle was only to validate what Peter spoke to the people about Jesus. It was a sign directing them to Him.

On a highway, signs clearly mark which exit you should take. If you read the sign and follow it, you will reach your destination. If you choose to ignore the obvious sign, you will be lost. The miracles are the sign to get people from “lost to found”.

Up Close and Personal

Praise the Lord for giving us the greatest sign of all, the resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

How is the resurrection the central point for all of Christianity?

When have the miracles in your life been a springboard in sharing the gospel?

How will you actively seek opportunities to share about Christ?

DAY
5

Today's Scripture:

Luke 8:42-28; Acts 27:13-26, 2:22-39

The Word

While sitting in the doctor's office, I looked through a magazine. It had a picture of a premature baby who was born after only 21 weeks in the womb. She was a miracle baby. In this secular magazine, they could not deny the fact that there was no human explanation as to why this little girl is alive. I can. There was a need and God met the need. He still does miracles today.

We have been studying the purposes of a miracle. The last purpose is the most obvious: to meet a need. There are a variety of needs but they can be categorized into three general categories: physical, emotional, and spiritual. The Lord is able to perform mightily on behalf of people in all of these areas. The following verses give an example for each. I want to encourage you to bring every need to Christ, for He is able to help you.

Physical Need

Luke 8:42b-48

⁴²As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. ⁴³And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. ⁴⁴She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

⁴⁵"Who touched me?" Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you."

⁴⁶But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."

⁴⁷Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. ⁴⁸Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

Emotional Need

Acts 27:13-26

¹³When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. ¹⁴Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the "northeaster," swept down from the island. ¹⁵The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. ¹⁶As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure. ¹⁷When the men had hoisted it aboard, they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. ¹⁸We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. ¹⁹On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. ²⁰When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

²¹After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. ²²But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. ²³Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me ²⁴and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' ²⁵So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. ²⁶Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

Spiritual Need

Acts 2:22-39

²² "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵David said about him:

" I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.

²⁶Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will live in hope,

²⁷because you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

²⁹"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. ³²God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. ³³Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

" 'The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand

³⁵until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet." '

³⁶"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

³⁷When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

³⁸Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

God is powerful. He can perform miracles. If you are a believer, He has already performed a miracle in your life. He brought you from eternal wrath to eternal life. His miracle for you will last forever.

Up Close and Personal

Praise the Lord for the miracles He has done for you.

Name the three purposes of a miracle.

What miracles have you experienced?

When you face a problem do you believe that God can meet your need? How do you prove this belief?