

The Miraculous Jesus

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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In our continuing study tonight of, "Is the Bible believable?", we come to a subject which I've entitled, "The Miraculous Jesus." We've tried to show that in several different ways by talking about inspiration and revelation and some of the reasons we believe the Bible is inspired, the testimony of the writers of Scripture, the Lord Jesus Himself, the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

And then last week we saw that one of the great evidences for the credibility and the validity of the Bible is its miraculous nature. And we said that any book that is the revelation of God would have to contain miracles. Because God, by definition, is supernatural. We are natural. All that is in our world is natural. This is the natural world. So if the supernatural is to be introduced into the natural, it has to be miraculous.

A miracle, you see, is nothing but that, the supernatural interjecting itself into the natural. You cannot have a disclosure of God, who is outside the natural world, unless you have a supernatural act. That's a miracle. So one of the reasons we believe the Bible is truly the revelation of God is because it's so full of miracles. And God must be revealed through miracles, because His supernaturalness must invade the natural world.

And we presented for you last week the very confident belief that if God exists, then miracles must also exist. For if God is, then God does. If God is, then He acts. And so we are not amazed when we pick up the Bible and find miracles. No, no. On the contrary, we say that because there are so many miracles recorded here, this must be God. For these things are beyond men. Now, if you allow for God, then you must allow for God to act, and that's all a miracle is. And God acts, and this is the record of it, and this is the revelation of God. It is not unreasonable to imagine that a God who made everything, who did the stupendous miracle of creation, would continue to be interested in what He made and do other miracles, occasionally intervening directly when it suited His purpose.

Now, we saw last time some of the purposes and the reasons for miracles, and we're not going to go into that again. Let us just say this in review. Miracles are simply acts of God by which He sets aside natural law temporarily.

I suppose a simple way that I can illustrate, I don't know why my mind is on railroad trains today, but it is, but imagine that a man has a very, very sophisticated layout of a model railroad, very elaborate. And he has at one end of his whole situation some transformers by which he operates everything,

and it even is so sophisticated that it has devices by which trains can be diverted to other tracks and switchers can be used, and the whole thing is very complex and very well put together. And normally the man operates the entire system from the handles and the controls that he has at that one point. But imagine that once in a while he just looks over his whole deal, reaches over, grabs an engine, lifts it up and sticks it over here.

Now, God normally operates the universe on the basis of the switches and the controls and the transformers of natural law. But every once in a while God just reaches in and picks something up and sticks it over here. Now, that's God just picking up the engine and putting it where He wants. Now, God may choose to work through the natural sequence of events, or He may intervene in the natural and cause a supernatural act. That's a miracle. But if God is God, and He's running the train, let Him pick up an engine once in a while. That just says He's there. And periodically He wants us to know He's there, historically, and thus He has revealed Himself miraculously.

If there is a God, it certainly is not unreasonable to imagine that that God can do something. And the somethings that He does that are different than natural law tell us He's there. If God only worked through natural order, we'd never know He was there. It's when God violates the natural and does something that is supernatural that we know somebody's out there.

Now, these are purposeful miracles. God doesn't do these things in an irrational, nonsensical haphazard thing, like some of the apocryphal books that appear in some of the versions of the Bible. Miracles were not done haphazardly as gimmicks to entertain people. They were purposeful. God's miracles reveal God, and they reveal the nature of God. The miracles that we see in the New Testament were to reveal the deity of Jesus Christ. They were not nonsensical things.

And so Biblical miracles, then, are very important, for they are the disclosure of God. Now, because the Bible records these miracles, I say it's the revelation of God. Because whenever God discloses Himself, it must be miraculous. Now, there are only three attitudes you can have toward miracles, just three. Let me give them to you.

Number one, miracles never happened. Miracles never happened and never will happen. Now, that's what an atheist would believe. He would say everything's an accident, that the whole existence of the universe is an accident. Nothing ever is miraculous. Nobody made this. It just happened out of nothing. I can't buy that. If you have no miracles, you have no God. If you have no God, you have no explanation for anything.

A second possibility is that miracles did occur in Biblical times but they do not occur now. That's an interesting thought. This means that today, no one is empowered to work miracles as they were in Bible times. Now, that is interesting, because there are many people today who claim to do miracles. And, as I said last time, we throw that term around all over the place. This is a miracle. That's a

miracle. The other is a miracle.

Study the Old Testament sometime and you'll find very interesting things. You'll find great, large portions of passages of Scripture pass by, great sweeping years of history pass by, without any allusion to any miracle. That's interesting. In fact, in the Old Testament there are really only two periods when miracles existed in a normative sense. One was the day of Moses, and miracles were pretty commonplace in the life of Moses, weren't they? Especially in the times when he was leading the children of Israel. The second period of time in the Old Testament when miracles appear is during the time of Elijah and Elisha. And miracles seemed to be normative then. Those are really the only two times where miracles are normative.

Now, there may be sporadic occasions when a miracle happens here or there, but it is definitely the exception and not the rule through the rest of Old Testament history. You see, those were times when God designed to do miracles to reveal Himself miraculously and show that He was there. Once that was put down and recorded, that settled the issue.

Because God's miracles were given always in front of eyewitnesses, right? They had to be perceived by the senses, we saw last time. They had to be clearly the operation of God, with no other human explanation. And they always had to have a redemptive purpose, a moral end. And once those miracles were done and recorded, then the Word says that God exists. The Word gives us the record of those miracles. Is there any need for more miracles? There isn't if we believe this Word. Special times, God chose to confirm His existence and His Word miraculously.

Now, as you move into the New Testament, you have two more periods of miracles, the time of Jesus Christ and the time of the early church. And again they were preaching Christ. They were laying down not the Old Testament, but what? The New Testament. And the New Testament was the revelation of God, and, again, God attested His revelation by miracles. And so, in the New Testament, you have a quantity of miracles appearing to substantiate the revelation of God.

So when God disclosed Himself in the Old Testament, which is now written down for all time, and when God disclosed Himself through Christ in the New Testament, which is written down for all time, the miracles were accomplished as a confirmation of that Word. They authenticated Christ. They authenticated Christ's apostles. Once the evidence was complete, and once the witness was written down, it would seem that miracles would no longer be necessary as normative. When the revelation of Christ was complete, when the record of that revelation was written, the miracles no longer had the purpose of confirmation, which was their purpose.

Now, let me just add a couple of verses to your understanding on this so that you have a little more insight. In II Corinthians 12:12, I'll read them to you, it says, "Truly, the signs of an apostle," notice, the signs are identified with an apostle, "were wrought among you in patience in signs, wonders and

mighty deeds." Now, He says here that miracles were signs of an apostle. In other words, He grants miracles to these individuals particularly. In Hebrews 2:3, it talks about salvation. And verse 4 says, "God also bearing them witness," that's talking again about those apostles and prophets of the New Testament, "God bearing them witness with signs and wonders and diverse miracles."

Now, God used miracles to corroborate the witness of the early preachers. When a man would come into town and preach Jesus Christ and then work miracles, people would tend to believe that he truly was from God. And that was the point. Once that was done, and the Spirit gave us the record of it, this testimony is still good. When a court case is completed today, you can go check the records, and that stands as a settled issue. This does, too. The verdict is in. God is revealed in this Book. Miracles attested to it. They're in here. And they have corroborative witnesses of a high quality, and in many cases of a great quantity.

Now, I want you to notice something. As you study through the New Testament, you find there is a progressive lessening of miracles. It's almost as if they begin to fade away as you get to the closing of the New Testament. The more of the New Testament that is written down, the less miracles become necessary. And as it all winds out toward the end, you begin to see a fading away of miracles, at least as normative. Once Scripture was complete, the revelation was complete, the disclosure of God was complete, no longer were miracles the test of truth.

What's the test of truth today? If a man comes to town, how do you know he's a true prophet? By what he does...whether he does miracles or not? No. By what? Whether he agrees with the Word. That's the test. The Bible is the true revelation. Baxter says, "Since the primary purpose for which miracles were performed in Biblical times is no longer operative, it is reasonable to believe that miracles performed through the agency of man as in Bible times no longer are to be seen on earth today." Now, notice this, and I agree. Miracles performed through the agency of man are not normative today.

So-called "miracle workers" are suspect. Now, I don't want you to think that I'm going to shoot down all the people that you care about. And I'm not trying to drop names and attack people. But let me just say this. Miracle workers, healers, people who fall into those categories, believe me, are suspect. And without going into a lot of detail, from all of the study that I've done, and some very, very recently, my suspicions of them are not lessened in any way, shape or form. Amazingly enough, the miracle workers of today do not tackle the raising of the dead. Another thing. They seem to serve no divine purpose.

Beloved, as you study miracles, and I'm not trying to be...I have no axe to grind, and I'm not trying to be unkind to these people. I'm trying to point out to you what I believe is the truth of the Word of God. But you study miracles for yourself in the Bible, and you will find that they happened for a limited time, through limited persons. Not everybody did miracles. The apostles and the prophets and our Lord, in

the New Testament, not everybody. And they were not only for a limited time by limited persons, but they had a limited purpose, to confirm revelation. And once revelation is confirmed, they cease to have that purpose.

Now, you say, "Well, John, are you saying that there aren't any miracles today?" No. Listen, some of the greatest miracles are gonna happen in the future. You know what the next big miracle's gonna be? The Rapture. Wow, is that a miracle. God's gonna invade this natural world and yank all the Christians out. He's gonna turn off gravity for us, and whoosh, we're gone. That's a miracle. You can read the Book of Revelation and read about the Tribulation. There's gonna be plenty of miracles.

And let me say this. And God can do miracles right now, too. And I'm not saying He can't, because if I say God is, I have to say God can act, right? I mean, I can't stand down here with my little puny theology and say, "Look, God, in order for you to be consistent, don't do anything for a while." I can't say that. I'll tell you, God can do miracles whenever He wants, but I do not believe that He is doing miracles through the agency of men as normative in this age, because the purpose of those was to confirm the revelation. That's done.

Yes, I believe God can supernaturally heal. I believe He does it in response to prayer. I believe God can do the supernatural miracle of the new birth, and that's the one that boggles me the greatest. I believe God can do any miracles that He wants to do. But I don't believe that miracles are normative for today. I notice that the faith healers have to take airplanes to their meetings. They may have read through Acts a lot of times, but they haven't found out how Philip did it yet.

You say, "But, John, aren't you ignoring John 14:12?" No. That's why I brought it up. Turn to it. It says this. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." Now, some people say, "Well, don't you see, John? There's that verse that says we're gonna do what Jesus did."

Beloved, let me give you a good argument on that verse. First of all, I never met anybody yet in my life who did what Jesus did in terms of physical miracles. Have you? Do you know anybody that could at will raise the dead? No. Do you know anybody in this world who knew everything that was in the heart of everybody and never needed to ask any question about anything? Do you know anybody who could go fishing and call all the fish to side of the boat that he wanted them on? Have you met anybody yet who walks on water? Do you know anybody who, when he decided to go to heaven, stood on a cliff and said, "Goodbye," and ascended? No.

You see, that isn't what He's saying. That's obvious. That's obvious. You say, "Well, if it isn't the physical that He's talking about, what is He really saying?" He's saying, watch this, He's saying, "greater." Now, mark this. In a sense, He's talking primarily to His apostles. And He's saying,

"You're going to do greater." Now, I believe the "greater" is not necessarily in power but in extent.

You see, Jesus' ministry was so confined to such a small area, and immediately, when the church was born, the apostles and the prophets went everywhere. And look at Peter, for example. The Bible says everywhere he went people were healed, and people would drag friends into the shadow of Peter, because they thought he had so much power that even his shadow could heal. Thousands upon thousands upon thousands of miracles were done, that Jesus was limited in the volume of miracles, but greater extent, far greater, would be accomplished through the apostles, just by the virtue that they were more than He, and His power, working through them.

And notice that He isn't saying they had the power. No, no. Peter and John at the Gate Beautiful, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And I do believe the implication is spiritual miracles, conversions to Christ, building the church, transformed lives. These did happen. And I think that's what our Lord promised. You know, every time you lead somebody to Jesus Christ, you're in on a miracle, a fantastic miracle.

Well, God intended miracles to authenticate His revelation. And you know the best way to see this is to look at Jesus, and that's what we want to do tonight. That was the introduction. Look at John 5. You know, if I didn't believe the Bible for any other reason, I'd believe the Bible for Jesus' sake. I mean, I cannot get around the person of Jesus Christ. When I read the Bible, I know this is God's Word because of Christ.

You say, "What are you saying?" I'm saying this, friends. Listen. No human genius could ever invent a Jesus Christ. No human mind, and no committee of theologians, could ever dream up an individual like this. This has to be God in human flesh. The human could never even conceive of such a person.

God intended miracles, then, to authenticate His truth. And God recorded for us the miraculous life of Jesus Christ to show us that it was God in human flesh. Jesus Christ was none other than God Himself. Look at John 5, verse 18. "Therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."

It never ceases to amaze me that Jehovah Witnesses are always arguing about the fact that Jesus was not equal with God. It's also interesting that Jesus said He was. Now, whether you want to quibble over John 1:1 or not, and whether it's A God, B God or whatever there, the fact is, Jesus made that claim, to be equal with God. And even if some people in our world haven't figured out that He made that claim, the Jews knew He made that claim, and that's what irritated them so much.

But it was bad enough to make the claim. What really miffed them was, He supported it. You say, "How did He do that?" Look at verse 23. "That all men should honor the Son even as they honor the

Father." Here's the claim again. "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father who has sent Him." Equality. Verse 32. "There is another that bears witness of me, and I know the witness which he witnesses of me is true." Verse 36, "I have greater witness than that of John," watch, "for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father has sent me." What then was the great testimony to His deity? His what? His works.

Listen, friends. When a person comes along and says, "I am God," that doesn't end the case. You know, I'd believe Jesus was God because He claimed it, but He supported it. You know, a lot of people might say, "I'm God," like the guy in the mental institution, you know, who said, "I'm Napoleon. I'm Napoleon." Somebody said, "What do you mean you're Napoleon? Who told you that?" He said, "God did." The guy in the next bed said, "Oh, no, I didn't." You know, there are...but there are plenty of people who claim to be God, but there is only one who ever substantiated the claim. You know, there was Theudas, who claimed to be the Messiah, and so he dove off the temple. And the dive was great. The landing killed him.

John chapter 10. Jesus says, "My works are enough to prove who I am." His miracles showed that He was God revealed. John 10:24, "Then came the Jews roundabout Him and said unto Him, 'How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.'" They want to know if He's the Messiah. "Jesus answered them, 'I told you, and you believed not. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.'" His works. Look at verse 37. "'If I do not the works of my Father, don't believe me. But if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in Him.'" Isn't that tremendous?

Listen. The testimony that this is the Word of God is the miracles. The testimony that Jesus is the living Word of God is the miracles that He did. As Christians, we do not stand ashamed of miracles. No. Miracles give validity to the claims of Scripture to be the Word of God and the claims of Christ to be the living Word of God. In John 14:11, Jesus said, "Believe me," or, literally, believe my word, "that I am in the Father and the Father in me." In other words, believe that I'm God, or else, if you're not going to believe my words, believe me for the very, what? Works' sake. How could you deny the things that He did?

You say, "Well, it's only recorded history." Well, look, friend, recorded history doesn't make it less true. Look at all the witnesses of the record. Read its history. This is a history book. It's credible. It's history. The encyclopedias contain more historical data on Jesus Christ than on a lot of other famous historical people. The evidence is in on who He was.

In Luke 7:20, a marvelous interview with John the Baptist and Jesus. And, of course, there's a transition from John to Jesus in the history of Israel. The interview is conducted in the absence of John, who sends some messengers to Jesus. In verse 20, "The men were come unto Him, and they said, 'John the Baptist sent us unto you saying, "Art thou He that should come or look we for

another?"" "Hey, John wants to know if you're the Messiah that he's been announcing."

Verse 21, "And in that same hour He cured many of their infirmities and plagues and of evil spirits, and unto many that were blind He gave sight." They came and asked a question. He didn't answer. He just did miracles, just a whole slew of miracles. "Then Jesus answered, and He said unto them, 'Go your way and tell John what things you've seen and heard, how the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.'" You can imagine, they said, "Okay, okay," and they were gone. The convincing argument for the deity of Christ is not just His words, but His what? His works.

Beloved, I believe the Bible is the Word of God because it contains miracles, and that means God is in the Book. I believe Jesus is God because He did miracles, and that means God was in Christ. I don't back down from miracles. My, I'm so glad for them, because then I know it's God. You give me a book that doesn't have any miracles, and all you've done is hand me another human philosophy, and I'm not interested.

Now, the miracles, then, were for the purpose of revealing the Christ. He says that. "Believe me for the works' sake." Once He had done the miracles, they were recorded in the Book, friends, the evidence is there. And if you're running around expecting another miracle, it'll not happen. Jesus said, "If they don't believe the word, they won't believe though somebody's raised from the dead." This is the testimony. I tell you, I don't see how anybody can study this Book objectively and read it with an open mind and an open heart and conclude anything else but that God wrote it and Jesus is God. It's all here.

So God authenticates Himself, and Christ authenticates Himself as God, in the Bible. And, as I said, I'd believe the Bible alone just for Jesus Christ's sake. Because no man could ever dream Him up. No human deeds could ever be the pattern for this life. No man could ever write the words that Jesus wrote. Nobody's that smart. Nobody could answer the questions that were posed to Him the way He answered them. Always perfect answers. Always perfect actions. Always perfect wisdom.

Philip Schaff said, "The life and character of Jesus Christ is the Holy of Holies in the history of the world." Even the skeptic, H.G. Wells, in the May 1935 edition of Reader's Digest, said this: "When I was asked which single individual has left the most permanent impression on the world, the manner of the question almost carried the implication that it was Jesus of Nazareth. I agreed." Skeptic H.G. Wells.

Schaff said something we're familiar with. "This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed and Napoleon. Without science and learning, He has shed more light on things human and divine than all the philosophers and scholars combined. Without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken

before or since and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet. Without writing a single line, He has set more pens in motion and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times."

Everything about Jesus was miraculous. Everything. Why? He was God revealed. Let's look at Him. First of all, point one, His miraculous birth, His miraculous birth. Turn in your Bible to Matthew, and we'll get to Christmas a little early. Matthew 1. Now, this is the testimony of a man named Matthew, a credible man, a responsible man, a historian, who records this testimony.

Verse 18 of Matthew 1, "Now, the birth of Jesus Christ was in this way. When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together," that is, they had never had a sexual relationship at all, "she was found with child," notice, "of the Holy Spirit." She was pregnant, not by Joseph, by the Holy Spirit. "And Joseph her husband, being a just man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately." He had two choices. He could bring her out in the middle of the street and they could stone her to death for adultery, or he could put her away quietly.

He just assumed that the terrible tragedy had happened. She'd had sexual relationships with another man. Even though they were pledged, espoused, doesn't mean they were married. They were just pledged to be married. And his heart must have been broken beyond belief. Because I'm sure Mary was the kind of woman where he would absolutely be totally shocked that this would ever be a possibility. And so he decided rather than stone her, he'd put her away privately.

"But while he thought on these things, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit, and she shall bring forth a son, and thou shall call His name Jesus,'" which means Savior, "'for He shall save His people from their sins.' Now, all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." Isaiah 7:14, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, shall bring forth a son, they shall call His name Immanuel, which being interpreted is God with us." Who was Jesus, then? God with us. You can't argue that.

Well, what a marvelous promise. Do you know the Old Testament had prophesied this? In Genesis 3:15, the Bible had said that there would come one unusually born. God says, "I'll put enmity between thee and the woman." This is talking about Satan, "between thy seed and her seed." What woman ever had a seed? No woman. The seed is where? In the man. Only one time in history did a woman have a seed, and that woman was Mary, and the Spirit of God created a seed in her. What a marvelous prophecy.

Unlike all other men, listen, He did not begin His life at the time He was born. John 6:38, Jesus said, "For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." Jesus did not begin His life when He arrived on earth. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the same was in the beginning with God." That verse 2 says that Jesus Christ existed before He was born. He was in the beginning with God. In fact, "all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." He was the creator. Verse 14 says, "The Word was made flesh." It already existed. Became flesh.

And, of course, verse 15, "John bore witness of Him and cried, 'This was He of whom I spoke, 'He that cometh after me is preferred before me, because He was before me.'"" Did you know that John was born first? Elizabeth had John before Mary had Jesus. But John says, "He was before me." He existed before He was born.

Well, that's a theme of the gospel of John repeatedly. If you were to look, for example, at chapter 8, verse 56, you would hear some interesting words. Jesus says, "Your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad." And they said to Him, listen, "You're not even 50 years old. You haven't seen Abraham." "Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.'" Yes. He was before He was born.

John 16:28, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world again. I leave the world and go to the Father." "I came from God, I'm going back to God," He says. In chapter 17, He says, "Father, I have finished the work you gave me to do. Now, glorify me in heaven with the glory that I had with you before the world began." And so it goes.

Hebrews chapter 10 says that God prepared a body for Christ, who already existed. What a miraculous birth, friends. It was special creation. God didn't need a man to impregnate Mary. God just created an embryo, instant fiat creation. You say, "Oh, but that's biologically impossible." Of course it is. That's why we know God did it. There can be no mistake. It was also biologically impossible to create Adam out of dirt, but He did that. And it was biologically impossible to create Eve out of the side of Adam, and He did that. But biological impossibilities mean nothing to God. He is not natural. He is supernatural.

You know something amazing about the virgin birth? All the historical evidence agrees that the early church believed it completely. People said, "Oh, they just made that up." That can't be true, because the Jews never believed their Messiah would be born this way, so why would they invent something they never anticipated? Why would they invent a deal that they never even believed in? People say, "Oh, the Jewish Christians just invented that virgin birth." Why would they invent a virgin birth when they never even anticipated one? They were shocked. No.

And we know this, too, that it didn't come later on. The early church, from the very beginning, believed in this. Why did they believe it? Because they made it up? No, because it was true. Aristides said, and I quote, "Everything that we know of the dogmatics of the early part of the second century agrees with the belief that at that period the virginity of Mary was a part of the formulated Christian belief." They believed it. And when people argue against the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, that's a product of prejudice and a product of hatred, usually, toward Christ, a denial of his deity. It's not a product of historical fact, because the fact says the people believed it from the very beginning. And when you've got that many people attesting to the validity of it, you've got enough evidence to support its truth.

We have found a genealogical table that dates from 70 A.D. And in that genealogical table, Jesus is listed as the bastard son of a wedded wife. Other records early from the rabbis called Jesus the son of an adulteress. And even the earliest rabbis tell us that His father was Pantera, a Roman legionnaire. Even the Jewish skeptic Hugh Schoenfeld says, "There would be no object in making such a claim for Jesus as an illegitimate child unless the Christian original made some claim that the birth of Jesus was not normal." Even the skeptics know that they wouldn't have said that about Jesus except they were angry over something else that was being claimed about Him.

So, from the very beginning, the church believed He was born of a virgin. He was born by a direct creative act of God. And that's how God bypassed the sin problem, isn't it? Because whatever is born of the flesh is what? Flesh. God just bypassed it. Strong testimony. Oh, the greatest proof of His virgin birth is not the historical evidence. That's good. But you know what the greatest proof of His virgin birth is? His life. Anybody who lived like He lived had to be born like He was born.

That takes us to point two, His sinless life, the miraculous Jesus, born miraculously, living miraculously. What a life He lived. Unbelievable. Hebrews 4:15. Listen. "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet," what? "Without sin." He never sinned. In Hebrew chapter 7, in verse 26, "We have an high priest, holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, higher than the heavens." He never sinned.

I personally do not believe that He could sin. I don't believe that God can sin. Therefore, Christ could not. You say, "That makes the temptation illegitimate." No. It just means that temptation always ran to the farthest possible extremity, because He never gave in. And so He knew temptation to the limits without ever giving in.

You know, even Judas, with such a sick and twisted mind, recognized this in Matthew 27:3-4. He said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed," what? "Innocent blood." He knew Jesus had never sinned. And he was an unbeliever. And he made that judgment. You know he wasn't the only believer that made that judgment? Pilate said five times, "I find no fault in Him." The thief on the

cross said, "We indeed suffer justly, but this man has done nothing." Jesus lived a sinless life. People, that's historical fact. The evidence is in on it. There is nothing in history to corroborate that Jesus ever sinned. Oh, what a marvel He was.

Schaff said, the historian, "In vain do we look through the entire biography of Jesus for a single stain or the slightest shadow on his moral character." In vain. There aren't any. The Roman centurion saw Him faultless. John the Baptist could find no sin in Jesus to be confessed. You know, it's interesting. Jesus could never have written Psalm 51, "Create in me a clean heart, oh God." Jesus could never have written Romans 7. Jesus could never have died like St. Augustine, reciting penitential psalms. He needed no forgiveness. He needed no mercy. He needed no grace. He had no sin. The sinless life of Christ was just the natural result of a supernatural birth.

A third area of miracle, His unsurpassed words. You know, one of the startling things about Jesus are His words. Sholom Ash says, and I quote, "Jesus Christ is the outstanding personality of all time. No other teacher, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, Mohammedan, is still a teacher whose teaching is such a guidepost for the world we live in. Other teachers may have something basic for an Oriental, an Arab, an Occidental. But every act and word of Jesus has value for all of us. He became the light of the world." Then Ash says, "Why shouldn't I, a Jew, be proud of that?" Miraculous teaching.

Beloved, you can't take the New Testament and read it and not conclude that, can you? It's just startling. The Pharisees dispatched the temple police to go get Jesus, and the temple police came back with their eyeballs as wide as silver dollars and their mouths hanging open, and they said, "Never a man spake like that man." His teaching, like His sinless life, was miraculous. He taught about God, angels, men, earth, heaven, hell, past, present, future. He posed questions no man could answer, and He answered questions that were unanswerable. Nicodemus came to Him in the night, and he said this, "We know that you are a teacher," what? "From God." It was obvious. The testimony of skeptic, the testimony of believer alike. His words were supernatural.

Fourthly, His supernatural works. Back to Nicodemus in John 3. What happened? Nicodemus came to Jesus. Nicodemus was not a believer, not a follower of Christ. But he was a teacher of Israel, a highest ranking teacher and authority in Israel. Here's what he said. John 3:2, listen to it. "No man can do these miracles which thou doest except," what? "God be with him." "It's obvious to us that God is with you because of what you're doing." Listen, the supernatural works of Christ are absolutely staggering. I mean, there are eyewitnesses, hundreds and thousands of them. And the records of history are there. Miracles of all kinds.

I think it's interesting that the people who do the miracles of healing today exclusively do that. Not so Jesus, and not so the apostles. They weren't selective. And have you ever noticed that all the miracles of Jesus were never partial, no partial healings, no partial miracles, never temporary and never trivial? Christ's miracles were never selective. They weren't just certain kinds. They never

were partial. They never were temporary. And they never were trivial. And there were witnesses plenty.

He never did, incidentally, do miracles to satisfy curiosity. You know, people wanted Him to do that. They would always say, "Oh, do a trick for us, Jesus, do a trick for us." In Matthew 12:38, "Certain of the scribes said, 'Master, we would see a sign.'" "Do a trick, do a trick." "He said, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign. There shall be no sign given it but the sign of prophet Jonah.'" And then He tells them about His resurrection. "The only sign you're gonna get's the resurrection." He didn't do miracles to satisfy curiosity, and He didn't do miracles to satisfy carnality, either. His miracles revealed His power.

Just listen to this. There are several areas where His miracles can be cataloged. I'll just give you three. Number one, He ordered nature, and nature obeyed. Have you ever noticed that? I mean, He turned the water into wine. I mean, He filled those jars full. It's a fantastic miracle. His mother came and said, "We're out of wine," at the wedding, and you know what? These were a big deal. They lasted seven days in those days. That's why you had to pay for your bride, because the father had to put up the neighborhood, you know. And, you know, any...depending on the girl, you could pay anything from a couple dozen sheep to a lame chicken, I suppose, depending upon the quality of the girl involved. But...and maybe you got the girl and some sheep thrown in, in some cases. Just as an enticement, you know. But they ran out of wine, and in those days that was a very serious thing. It was a social offense, and it was just a practical necessity.

And so Jesus said to the men there, He said, "Fill the water pots with water." And they were huge water pots. The Bible says they contained two or three firkins apiece, 20 to 30 gallons, and they said, "Fill those water pots with water." So they filled them up until the water was tipping on the brim. And what happened? Jesus said, "Take some out to the architriclinos." That's Greek for head waiter. They scooped it out, took it over to the head waiter, and he drank it and he said, "Now, wait a minute." He tasted the water that was made wine, and he said, "This is unusual. Usually at the end of the week you get the bad stuff. At the beginning you get the good stuff, when you're still sensitive and can taste it. This is the greatest thing I've ever tasted."

Isn't it amazing that it doesn't make any fanfare at all? It doesn't say the angels sang and heaven shook and earth rattled and Jesus stood on the roof and said, "Wine." It doesn't say that. I have a vivid imagination. I think He probably just looked at those stone water pots and went "Psst." I mean, for the one who created the universe, 180 gallons of wine was a small thing. He made that. And there were plenty of witnesses who corroborated. It's recorded right there as living testimony.

He stood on the side of the hill at the Sea of Galilee, and there were probably 20,000 people gathered. Five thousand men plus women and children totals nearly to 20,000 at least. And then He said there was one little boy there who had the loaves and the fish and He fed them all, 20,000

witnesses of the miracle power of Jesus Christ. The testimony is in the pages of Scripture. How can you deny it? And it isn't a lesson in sharing, despite what some say.

He stilled the storm. He looked at the waves and He said, "It's time for you to cease," and they ceased. He did supernatural fishing on several occasions. He multiplied food. He walked on water. When it came time to pay His taxes, He found a fish with the tax money inside. Read it. Matthew 17. He looked at a fig tree and He thought He'd use it for an illustration and it just dried up on the spot, under His power. He ordered nature, friends, and nature obeyed. He made nature.

Listen to this. He spoke to disease, and disease fled. He healed the leper in Luke 5. He healed a paralytic in Mark 2. He healed Peter's mother-in-law's fever in Mark 1. He healed the nobleman's son in John 4. He healed physical illness in John chapter 5. He healed a withered hand in Mark 3. He healed the deaf and dumb in Mark 7. He healed blindness in John 9 and elsewhere. He healed 10 lepers in Luke 17. He healed Malchus' ear. I love that story. Isn't that fabulous? The whole Roman army were witnesses. Peter grabs a sword and whacks off Malchus' ear. He's gonna fight the whole Roman army. Jesus reaches over and gives him an ear. You know what amazes me is not that, but that the people went ahead and crucified Him.

Another area of His miracles. Not only did He order nature and nature obeyed, and spoke to disease and disease fled, but He confronted death and death yielded up its prey. Jairus' daughter, Mark 5. The widow's son, Luke 7. And then the one I love the most, Lazarus. He came down there to the grave of Lazarus. You remember the story? He looked at that grave, and He says, "Get that stone away." And Martha fell apart. And in classic King James English, she said, "By this time, he stinketh." You know, she thought He just wanted to roll the stone away to say goodbye. She didn't understand it.

And He says, "Stay with it, Martha. You're gonna see something." And He says, "Father, I thank you for what's going to happen." And He looked in there and said, "Lazarus, come out." And, friends, that is really the test of power. And Lazarus came out. Can you imagine that? And the people were so shocked that Jesus had to tell them to unwrap him. He said, "Well, loose him and let him go."

You want to hear a marvelous testimony? Julian, the apostate, who was a Roman emperor from 361 to 363, was vehemently anti-Christian. Here is his comment. This is really interesting. "Jesus, he has now been celebrated about 300 years, having done nothing in his lifetime worthy of fame, unless anyone thinks it a very great work to heal lame people and blind people and exorcise demoniacs in the villages of Bethseda and Bethany." Isn't that terrific? One of the great historic testimonies to the miracle power of Jesus Christ from an apostate.

There's more. Another miraculous dimension of His life was His miraculous influence. Oh, how He influenced people. Do you realize that every man in the entire world has an eternal destiny

dependent upon the Lord Jesus Christ? My. "Neither is there salvation," Acts 4:12, in what? "In any other." Philippians 2, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." There has never been a person like Him. Even Regnon, the French atheist, said, "Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed." An atheist.

Napoleon. He said, "I know men, and I tell you, Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other man in the world, there is no possible term of comparison." Bernard Ram says, "A historic person named Jesus gave certain men such an impact as to be unequalled by far in the entire annals of the human race. After nearly 2,000 years, the impact is not at all spent, but daily there are people who have tremendous revolutionary experiences which they associate with Jesus Christ, be he dead or risen in heaven." The personality of Jesus is without parallel, it is unique, and He is incomparable.

Is it not astounding that this very day somebody turned their life over to this historical person who lived 2,000 years ago and knew an eternal transformation? That's exciting. I'll tell you something, friends. You may think of Jesus as history, but He is as alive to me as you are and more so. Amen? He's a living Christ. He is master of hungry crowds and angry Pharisees, clever theologians and bitter sinners, stupid disciples and smart governors. He is master. He is master of His own self. He struggles in the midnight of Olive. He fights sweat, blood and tears and comes forth victorious in complete dedication to God. In the terrible agony of the cross, He is master. All the people around Him are in fury, and He is calm, and in control.

All you have to do is listen to His words as He dies. He passes forgiveness on to a penitent thief and opens the doors of paradise to him. He remembers His dear mother and His beloved friend, John. And when the effects from the loss of blood and the shock and the trauma, the exposure and the torture of crucifixion finally get to Him, He calmly fulfills the last prophecy by saying, "I thirst," and in obedience to the Father's will, yields to death.

No one has ever been born like Him. No one has ever lived like Him. No one has ever died like Him. There is none to compare. He has influenced the world. Do you know what He promised? Just listen. "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, which is in heaven."

"All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father. Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him." "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away." "Before Abraham was, I am." "Upon this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "I am the door of the sheep. All that come before me are thieves and robbers." "I and the Father are one." "I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger." Statements of promise that He fulfills. Jesus, miraculous person.

We see His tremendous miraculous power, lastly, in His resurrection. I'm telling you, you can't look at the resurrection of Jesus Christ without seeing it. The power over death. Do you know He ordered His own death? Hanging there on the cross, according to John 19:28, He just watched all the prophecy being fulfilled. And it was time. He fulfilled the last prophecy. He said, "I thirst." And then He died.

From the grave, He controlled His own burial, making sure that they got Him in the right place in the right time so that He would be sure to cover the space of time in the grave that He had promised He would cover. And then when the time came for Him to leave the grave, He left. You say, "Is that a proven fact?" Check it out. The tomb's empty. And it's been empty since three days after He was put there. And the history of the Scripture is absolutely loaded to support the resurrection of Christ. If you have questions, we can provide you with some tapes on that very subject. He conquered death.

Well, you shouldn't be surprised. Why, death is a natural consequence and God is what? Supernatural. Death isn't any big thing. But the marvelous thing is that when He conquered death, He not only conquered it for Himself, He conquered it for me. Is that great? "Because I live," what? "You shall live also."

Listen. An interesting proposition has been posed that I think would be worth your consideration. What if God became man? Dropping all of the things that we've talked about, in a sense, what if God became man? What would we expect? One, if God became a man, we would expect Him to have a unique and miraculous entrance into this world. Wouldn't we? Jesus did. Secondly, if God became man, we would expect Him to be sinless and live a godly life. Jesus did.

If God became a man, we would anticipate His words to be the clearest, most authoritative, truest and purest words ever spoken. Jesus' words were. If God became a man, we would expect Him to manifest supernatural power. Jesus did that. If God became a man, we would expect Him to have a universal and permanent influence on men's lives. Jesus did that. If God became a man, we would expect Him to have power over death. Jesus had that. Friends, if God became a man, Jesus is God. Let's pray.

Thank you, Father, for Jesus Christ, for coming in human flesh. Thank you that we can come to Him and have our needs met. Thank you that He can be Lord in our lives, that He can transform us. Thank you that we can know Him as Savior. Thank you that you're a God who has in the past worked miracles to confirm your revelation. The greatest miracle was the miracle of incarnation as you became man.

Thank you, Father, that even today, if you so design, you can do wondrous things. You're still on the throne. We wait for that glorious miracle when we're translated into your presence. Father, we know that many people believe Jesus existed and maybe believe many of these things about Him, but they've never made Him personal Lord and Savior, maybe because they're afraid to sacrifice some area of sin in their life. Break that down, Father, tonight. We thank you, in His blessed name. Amen.

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