



JONATHAN WOODSTOCK

HAS THE DAY OF
miracles
CEASED?

100 TRUE LATTER-DAY MIRACLES

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Chapter 1

He Is a God of Miracles

*“God has not ceased to be a God of miracles.”
Mormon 9:15*

1 Don't Start the Car!

When Gun Wastlund first stepped into his car, he had an uneasy feeling. Something was wrong. He looked out the windows and into his rearview mirror; he couldn't see anything wrong. He was already late for work, so he put his keys into the ignition.

“Don't start the car.”

This time it wasn't just a bad feeling; it was like a voice spoke inside his mind.

“What?” Gun thought, “Why shouldn't I start the car?”

He opened his car door and looked up and down the driveway—nothing. “This is silly,” he thought. “I've got to get to work.” He reached one more time for his keys.

“Don't start the car!”

The impression was much stronger and clearer now. He later described it as a loud voice compelling him not to start the car. There had to be something wrong. Gun opened the door and walked around the car to make a visual inspection. He didn't see anything, so he got down on his hands and knees and looked underneath the car. He was shocked to find a small boy sound asleep, curled up next to his right rear tire. He was the next-door neighbor's three-year-old “Dennis the Menace,” a kid who was always in trouble. Gun pulled the boy from underneath the car and returned him to his home.

When he finally left for work, Gun was shaken but grateful that he had listened to the impressions of the Spirit. He had participated in a modern-day miracle.⁵

WHAT IS A MIRACLE?

Was Gun's miracle divine providence or a lucky coincidence? That depends on who defines what a miracle is. My worn-out, paperback American Heritage dictionary defined a miracle as, “a combination of accidental circumstances that seems to have been planned or arranged.” Are you kidding me? Are we supposed to believe that Gun accidentally heard a voice telling him not to start the car at the exact moment a child was sleeping

underneath his car?

Contrast that definition with a latter-day prophet of God: miracles are “extraordinary manifestations of the power of God.”⁶

President Howard W. Hunter put it this way: “Among the signs of the true church, and included in the evidences of God’s work in the world, are the manifestations of his power which we are helpless to explain or fully understand.”⁷

Miracles are sometimes hard to explain or to fully understand. Cell phone technology is difficult for me to understand. How in the world is it possible for my voice, with its exact tone and pitch, to be heard instantly 6,000 miles away? Yet, there are people who do understand how that marvel works. Could not the same be said for spiritual miracles? It would be egotistical to think that just because I don’t understand how Gun Wastlund was miraculously warned, that nobody else, particularly God, could understand it either.

Try to explain this modern miracle.

2 *Have You Ever Seen This Book?*

No one sat next to Steven McLaws on his flight from Omaha to Houston, so he left the Book of Mormon on the seat next to him when he got off the plane. He traveled frequently, and he usually tried to discuss the gospel with the person sitting next to him. If possible, he gave him or her a copy of the Book of Mormon.

Two weeks later, he flew from Omaha to Los Angeles and was again ready to place a Book of Mormon. He was surprised when the man seated next to him pulled a book out from his briefcase and said, “Have you ever seen this book?” It was a Book of Mormon.

The stranger explained, “I picked it up a couple of weeks ago in Houston as I was boarding a flight to San Antonio. Someone wrote something about the book in the front and included his phone number, but he didn’t put the area code, so I haven’t been able to call him.”

Steven said, “Let me see that book.”

He opened it and saw his own handwritten testimony written in the front. He took a pen out of his pocket, added the area code to his telephone number, and handed the book back to the man.

They stared at each other in awe for several moments. Steven’s new friend had read about a third of the Book of Mormon in the last two weeks. They spent the remainder of the flight discussing their feelings about the Book of Mormon. Steven later introduced him to the full-time missionaries.⁸

THE WORLD’S VIEW OF MIRACLES

I was surprised to learn that 72% of Americans believe that God still performs miracles today. Almost half of those said they had experienced miracles themselves.⁹

Why then do so many Christian churches today teach that miracles stopped the first century after Christ? One Protestant minister explained his reasoning:

Since the purpose of miraculous gifts has been fulfilled, to reveal and confirm the truth, these gifts have ceased. . . . Also, the means of obtaining the miraculous gifts

has ceased. Only the apostles had the ability, by the laying on of hands, to pass the gifts of the Spirit to another Christian. No apostles are living today to perform these signs, or to impart these gifts; . . . Likewise, there is no one living today who has received a miraculous gift from an apostle. Thus, when the last apostle died and the last person upon whom the apostles had laid hands died, there was no one who could perform miracles!¹⁰

This preacher had the right idea; it does take authority by the laying on of hands to obtain “the means of obtaining miraculous gifts.” But what he doesn’t understand is that the authority *has* been restored to the earth, and that there are once again living prophets and apostles.

The prophet Mormon asked a great question: “If there were miracles wrought then [when Jesus and His apostles were on the earth], why has God ceased to be a God of miracles and yet be an unchangeable Being?” (Mormon 9:19). Isn’t God supposed to be the same “yesterday, today, and forever?” (2 Nephi 27:23).¹¹

I testify that God has not ceased to be God. His priesthood authority has been restored to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Living prophets and apostles again have the keys to bestow priesthood authority, which brings the power of modern-day miracles. “God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles” (Mosiah 8:18).

3 *A Day of God’s Power*

Early members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had been driven from New York, then Ohio, and then Missouri. Now mosquitos were threatening to do the same in Illinois. Those who weren’t sick were nursing those who were.

Brother Joseph, as everyone called the prophet Joseph Smith, had opened his home and yard to the sick and dying. He had waited on them until he was worn out. Keep in mind that Joseph had just returned from seven months of miserable confinement in three different Missouri jails. He’d had enough.

Wilford Woodruff called July 22, 1839, “A Day of God’s Power.” It was that morning when the Prophet Joseph Smith called upon God in fervent prayer, and “the power of God rested upon him mightily.”

He healed all those who were stricken ill inside his home and yard; then taking with him several of the apostles, went among the sick laid by the river. “He commanded them in a loud voice, in the name of Jesus Christ, to rise and be made whole, and they were all healed,” testified Wilford.

The prophet of God then crossed the Mississippi River in a ferryboat to the Mormon settlement of Montrose. He found the senior apostle Brigham Young sick in bed. He healed him, and then Brigham joined the group.

They went to Elijah Fordham’s house. He was clearly dying; those with him expected his last breath at any moment.

“I felt the Spirit of God that was overpowering His Prophet,” said Wilford. Joseph removed his hat when he entered the room and held it in his left hand. He walked up to Elijah, took him by the right hand and looked into his eyes. They were glazed like glass beads in his head; he lay unconscious, unaware of anyone

around him. Joseph continued to hold his hand and stare into his eyes for a length of time.

Then, those in the room noticed a change in the dying man's countenance. He looked at Joseph, who said, "Brother Fordham, do you not know me?"

There was no reply, but everyone could feel the Spirit of God resting on him.

"Elijah, do you not know me?"

In a low whisper, Brother Fordham replied, "Yes."

"Have you not faith to be healed?"

"I am afraid it is too late; if you had come sooner, I think I might have been," Elijah said with a little more strength. Wilford later said, "He had the appearance of a man waking from . . . the sleep of death."

Joseph then said, "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ?"

"I do, Brother Joseph."

The Prophet stood erect, still holding Brother Fordham's hand. He was silent for a few moments and then spoke with a loud voice, "Elijah, I command you, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, to arise and be made whole."

Wilford wrote that he spoke "as in the majesty of Jehovah. . . . [T]he words of the Prophet were not like the words of man, but like the voice of God. It seemed to me that the house shook on its foundation."

"Elijah Fordham leaped from his bed like a man raised from the dead," testified Wilford. "A healthy color came to his face, and life was manifested in every act." He dressed, ate a bowl of bread and milk, and then followed the group into the street to visit others who were sick.¹²

WHY ARE MIRACLES STILL NEEDED TODAY?

Indeed, the God of miracles is not dead. The gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth with His priesthood holding the keys to perform miracles in all varieties, but why? Why are miracles still necessary in the latter days? Here are some possible reasons to think about:

1. To witness there is a God.¹³
2. To testify that God still performs miracles.¹⁴
3. To show that God has all power.¹⁵
4. To give us hope.¹⁶
5. To symbolize God's power to heal us not only physically but spiritually also.
6. To witness that priesthood power is again on the earth.
7. To allow us to help and benefit other people.¹⁷
8. To open the hearts of unbelievers.
9. To show that God, when necessary, can and will intercede in our lives.
10. To witness to the world that the true church of God is again on the earth.¹⁸

On a personal level, an important question to ask yourselves is: Why do I need to know, right now in my life, that miracles still occur every day? I asked that question to my oldest daughter Amber, and she replied,

It will take a miracle for us of this generation to escape the evils of the world and rise triumphant at the last day. If the day of miracles has ceased, so has faith. I hold true to the hope that if I remain faithful, my Savior will shower miracles upon me

and my family in our greatest need. We will be surprised when we reach the other side of the veil how many miracles actually occurred in our lives to help us fulfill our missions upon this earth.

I then asked Amber what miracles she had experienced in her life. She shared with me three experiences from her childhood that I had no knowledge of until then. She said, “I think of you and Mom as parents, and how you weren’t even aware of the many miracles that were occurring to protect your family. I pray that the same miracles are occurring in the lives of my own children.” Let me share with you one of the small miracles she shared with me.

4 Go Get Katie

Many years ago, we owned a Ford Ranger pickup with a topper, and something called a “carpet kit.” It slid in the back of the pickup so our small children could play or sleep comfortably while traveling. Seat belts were optional in those days, and we saw no particular danger. There was a sliding glass window from the cab of the truck, so we could communicate with the children.

My daughters Amber and Katie, ages ten and two at the time, were riding in the back. Amber sat with her back against the cab of the truck, facing the rear. Katie sat opposite leaning against the tailgate.

Suddenly, Amber had a very strong impression: “Go get Katie.” She looked at her little sister and wondered why, when almost instantly she heard again, “Go get Katie!”

She felt a great urgency and went and grabbed her, pulling her near the cab of the truck. A few moments later the truck went over a bump, and the tailgate flew open. Had Katie been sitting there, she would have fallen out and most likely have been run over by the cars behind us.¹⁹

As a father, I am grateful for the many miracles that have protected my family even without my knowledge at the time.

THE ROLE OF FAITH

Let’s think about Amber’s story a little more. What if she had ignored the voice believing it was just her imagination? For any miracle to work, there must be faith. Perhaps that is why Jesus referred to His own miracles as “works” (John 10:32).

A scriptural word for “work” is “wrought.” “[A]ll they who *wrought* miracles *wrought* them by faith,” wrote the prophet Moroni shortly before burying the plates. “And neither at any time hath any *wrought* miracles until after their faith; wherefore they first believed in the Son of God” (Ether 12:16, 18, emphasis added).

Another of the keywords in that verse needs to be emphasized—“first.” You must *first* believe, and then miracles follow.²⁰ Miracles do not create faith. In fact, sometimes the opposite happens. Jesus made enemies because of the miracles He performed, as did many of the prophets.

Look at Nephi, the son of Nephi, who later became one of the Savior’s apostles. About the same time Jesus was performing mighty miracles throughout Galilee and

Judea, the prophet Nephi was also performing mighty miracles in the western hemisphere. What kind of miracles did Nephi perform? The same as Jesus—devils cast out, healing of the sick and infirm, “and even his brother did he raise from the dead” (3 Nephi 7:17–22).

Were all the Nephites converted because of the wonderful miracles Nephi performed? No! “And the people saw it, and did witness of it, and were angry with him because of his power” (3 Nephi 7:20).

How is it possible to witness someone being raised from the dead and not be instantly convinced? They did not have faith *first*. Here is a modern example.

5 *It Is the Power of God That Has Healed You*

Most little boys like climbing trees. James Peck certainly did. Unfortunately, he lost his balance and fell out of the tree, breaking his arm.

Dr. Harvey Tate just happened to be visiting with James’s father at the very moment he came screaming into the house. It was painfully obvious the arm was broken. Even if an x-ray machine had been invented at that point in time, one did not need an x-ray to see that the arm just a few inches above the wrist was not supposed to bend at a right angle.

Dr. Tate set the bone and bandaged it. There was no anesthesia or pain medicine to give him. The country doctor did all he could do. James was put to bed and Dr. Tate left.

The boy was still in agonizing pain though; he didn’t know how he could endure it. James begged his father to give him a priesthood blessing, expressing his faith in God’s ability to heal him.

Martin Peck had only been a member of the Church a short time, but he too had faith in the power of God’s holy priesthood. He laid his hands upon his son and blessed him. The pain immediately ceased.

James slept well throughout the night. The next morning, he was playing with his friends as if nothing had ever happened. Martin sent him to the doctor’s house to have him look at his arm.

Dr. Tate was surprised when James picked up a chair with his injured arm and brought it forward to sit with. He carefully examined his arm, had James wiggle his fingers, and move about his wrist.

He asked, “Do you feel any pain?”

“No,” replied the boy.

“It is the power of God that has healed you,” Dr. Tate declared, “Nothing else could have done it in so short a time.”

He was convinced that the Latter-day Saints could perform miracles and was soon baptized.²¹

FAITH FIRST

In this story, Dr. Tate did not believe until after he saw the miracle. What’s wrong with that? There was no foundation to build upon. “The viewing of signs or miracles is not a secure foundation for conversion,” said President Dallin H. Oaks. “Scriptural history

attests that people converted by signs and wonders soon forget them and again become susceptible to the lies and distortions of Satan and his servants.”²²

That is exactly what happened to the doctor. He was baptized in 1836 in Kirtland, Ohio after seeing James Peck’s arm healed and was active in the Church for a short time, but when adversity came, he did not have the faith to continue.

Primary children love to sing, “The wise man built his house upon the rock.” I testify that the rock is Jesus the Christ. When we build our foundation of testimony upon Him and His gospel, we will have a sure foundation from which we cannot fall when “the rains come tumbling down.”²³

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5. Personal Interview recorded with the author on February 14, 2016. Gun Wastlund is the father of my oldest daughter's husband. He is also the "other" grandfather to six of my grandchildren.
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 13. Psalms 77:14.
 14. 2 Nephi 27:23.
 15. Doctrine and Covenants 35:8.
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 17. Mosiah 8:18.
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 19. E-mail communication on February 29, 2016.
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 23. "The Wise Man and the Foolish Man," *Children's Songbook*, 281.

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