

A person wearing a white, flowing robe is walking on a body of water. The person's feet are visible, splashing water. The background is a dramatic sunset or sunrise over the ocean, with a bright sun low on the horizon and a sky filled with golden and blue clouds. The overall scene is serene and miraculous.

CHRIST'S MIRACLES

YESTERDAY
AND
TODAY

MARK D. OGLETREE, PH.D.
S. MATTHEW COOK, J.D.

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Chapter 1

The Doctrine of Miracles

Miracles . . . are not for the unbeliever; they are to console the Saints, and to strengthen and confirm the faith of those who love, fear, and serve God.

—BRIGHAM YOUNG

Miracles are an essential part of our theology; they are divine manifestations of God’s power, performed for the benefit of His children. Moroni taught that God’s miracles began at the dawn of time when, by His word, He created the heavens and the earth and when He formed man from the dust of the earth.²¹ These miracles were followed by the many miracles Jesus performed during His earthly ministry, as well as by His Apostles after His ascension into heaven.²² Since God has performed miracles from the Creation, and because “God is the same yesterday, today, and forever,”²³ the logical extension of that teaching is profound: God will continue to perform mighty miracles in our day. If God were to cease performing miracles, it would imply a change in His nature, which would cause Him to “cease to be God.”²⁴ Thankfully, “he changeth not . . . and [he] is a God of miracles.”²⁵

If he withholds miracles from His children, it may be because of the hardness of their hearts. As Moroni explained, “The reason why he ceaseth to do miracles among the children of men is because that they dwindle in unbelief, and depart from the right way, and know not the God in whom they should trust.”²⁶ Elder Ronald A. Rasband taught,

Miracles, signs, and wonders abound among followers of Jesus Christ today, in your lives and in mine. Miracles are divine acts, manifestations and expressions of God’s limitless power, and an affirmation that He is “the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Jesus Christ, who created the seas, can calm them; He who gave sight to the blind can lift our sights to heaven; He who cleansed the lepers can mend our infirmities; He who healed the impotent man can call for us to rise up with “Come, follow me.”²⁷

Elder Bruce R. McConkie also defined miracles and explained how they are brought about when he taught,

In the gospel sense, miracles are those occurrences wrought by the power of God which are wholly beyond the power of man to perform. Produced by a supernatural power, they are marvels, wonders, and signs which cannot be duplicated by man's present powers or by any powers which he can obtain by scientific advancements.

Miracles in the gospel sense are gifts of the Spirit; they take place when the Lord on his own motion manifests his powers or when man by faith prevails upon Deity to perform supernatural events. . . . As gifts of the Spirit (D&C 46:21; 1 Cor. 12:10, 29; Moro. 10:12), miracles are always performed among people who have faith. (D&C. 45:8.) . . .

Faith and righteousness are the powers by which miracles are wrought (2 Ne. 26:13; Mosiah 8:18), and miracles are not manifest until after the foundation of faith has been securely built. (Ether 12:15–16, 18.) Miracles cease when wickedness prevails among a people (Mormon 1:13) . . . Miracles are one of the great evidences of the divinity of the Lords work. They are the signs which always follow the true believers. (Mark 16:14–20; Morm. 9:20–25.) Where there are true miracles, there is the true Church; where these miracles are not, there the true Church is not.²⁸

If God performed miracles at the Creation and continued to perform them throughout ancient times and during Jesus Christ's ministry, then there should logically be miracles performed today. If it seems we lack miracles in our lives, we should examine our faith and trust in Christ. In Mormon 9, we learn that the reason we do not see as many miracles today, as perhaps there were in ancient times, is that we lack belief. Moroni outlined the pattern for receiving miracles: First, we must believe in Christ and not doubt; second, whatever we ask the Father in the name of Jesus Christ will be granted to us. Third, this promise is for everyone—old or young, male or female, rich or humble. All can have miracles in their lives if they can exercise faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ.²⁹ Of these same principles, Elder John A. Widtsoe explained,

If we want something for this Church, and Kingdom, or if we want something for our individual lives, we must have a great, earnest, overpowering desire for that thing. We must reach out for it, with full faith in our Heavenly Father that the gift may be given us. Then it would seem as if the Lord himself cannot resist our petition. If our desire is strong enough, if our whole will is tempered and attuned to that which we desire, if our lives make us worthy of the desired gift, the Lord, by his own words, is bound to give us that which we desire, in his own time and in his

Modern-Day Miracles

Our loving Father in Heaven, through the mercy of His Son, Jesus Christ, continues to orchestrate profound and seemingly inexplicable miracles today, just as He did in ancient times. Take, for example, Fred Day, a ninety-year-old faithful member of the Church living in Provo, Utah. He shared a remarkable experience with the young men of his stake:

I was born and raised in the small rural town of Aurora—population 200 people, in Sevier County, Utah. I am the seventh of ten children, with five older sisters. Growing up, we were a very happy family.

My father would bring logs from the nearby hills into the back of our yard. A man in town, who had a large saw, would come and saw the logs into just the right length to fit our large wood-burning kitchen stove. The job of my younger brother David and I was to split the log sections into kindling and keep the wood box full next to the stove.

The year was 1944, and David and I were out to the woodpile splitting logs. We would take turns standing up the sections and splitting them with a large double-headed axe. At the time I was 11½ years old, and David was nine. It was his turn to chop, so I set up a big log section for him. It kept falling over before he could chop, so I set it back up and put my left hand on it to wiggle it down in the dirt. He did not see my hand, and he came down with the heavy axe, chopping off my left hand at the wrist. My hand was just hanging from a small piece of flesh and skin. I grabbed my hand and arm and held them tight to my chest to stop the bleeding, and swiftly ran into the house. My mother was in the kitchen, and I called to her saying, “Mom, I am hurt!”

My mother set me down and sent one of the sisters to get my dad. They helped me into our old pickup truck, and my dad quickly drove us to Salina, five miles away to the hospital. Dr. Noyes looked at my arm and said, “Jess, all we can do is sever the skin and seal the end with a hot iron!” My dad said, “No thank you.” We left the small hospital. I kept holding my arm and hand tightly to my chest to stop the bleeding. Driving slowly home, my dad said to me, “Son, in six months you will be twelve years old and receive the Aaronic Priesthood. You will need your hands to administer in the priesthood. We will just go over to Uncle Levi’s house next door and give you a priesthood blessing.”

With my mother watching and my Uncle Levi anointing with consecrated oil, my father sealed the anointing, giving me a marvelous blessing, healing my hand and arm. My mother wrapped my arm with a dish towel, made with a flour sack and a sling made with another flour sack, and I went out to play.

Three days later, I gave the dish towels back to my mother and felt like I was healed. And it was—my arm had been completely healed! The nerves, veins, and arteries were not stitched, and the bone was not set. But my arm was completely healed. Only a faint scar was left across my wrist. I had complete use of my hand and arm, and I have never had to favor it since that day—ever!

Now the great miracle! It was not just the healing of my hand. The greatness of this miracle was that my dad was not only worthy of his priesthood, but he also had faith in the holy priesthood he held. As a young boy, I also had faith in him and the priesthood power he held. I knew through this sacred power my dad could heal me. My mother also had faith in her husband and brother and priesthood and did not doubt that they could heal my severed hand.

Faith and worthiness in the Holy Priesthood of God always works miracles. I have tried to live by faith throughout my life, keeping myself worthy of the priesthood I hold. I have blessed many people, including my own family, using my hands and humbly exercising faith in the Holy Priesthood of God.³¹

After sharing this experience with many young men of his stake, Fred invited these Aaronic Priesthood holders to approach him and shake his hand—a hand that, when he was their age, was almost completely severed. Fred Day will never forget the Lord’s mercy and kindness, and the miracle he witnessed as an eleven-year-old boy. Neither will those young men who shook his hand.

Through Miracles, the Lord Manifests Himself

Elder Ronald A. Rasband testified, “The Lord performs miracles to remind us of His power, His love for us, His reach from the heavens to our mortal experience, and His desire to teach of that which is most worth.”³² The Lord will continue to pour down miracles upon the Latter-day Saints as long as we are faithful, keep our covenants, and strive to do what is right. He is always with His modern-day children of Israel.

In the New Testament, when Peter and Jesus entered the City of Capernaum, collectors from the temple approached Peter and asked whether they would pay their tribute, which was an annual assessment imposed by Jewish leaders on every Israelite

male twenty years and older.³³ This “ecclesiastical tax” was originally imposed by Moses, and, as Bruce R. McConkie taught, the payment “was in the nature of a sacrifice designed to accompany prayers beseeching forgiveness from personal sins. Jesus, of course, was without sin and needed to offer no such supplication. Indeed, in his days, rabbis and priests generally claimed exemption from this tax.”³⁴ Though Jesus, being without sin, was exempt from the tax, He told Peter to pay the tribute to avoid offending the collectors in the temple.³⁵ The miracle occurred when Jesus told Peter *how* to source the funds to pay the assessment: “Go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when though has opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.”³⁶ The coin miraculously found inside the mouth of that fish provided the funds necessary for Peter to pay the temple tribute.

A similar miracle occurred with the early Saints who were exiled by force from Missouri in 1836. Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner and a group of Latter-day Saints found themselves destitute and at the end of their proverbial rope. As the group gathered on the banks of the Missouri River, they knew that their lives and their safety were dependent on getting to the other side of the river. They hoped to cross the river by ferry, but they did not have enough money to pay for the entire party. The group understood their dire circumstances: anyone in their group who could not afford to pay for the ferry to cross the river would be forced to remain in Missouri and would most likely be killed.

With those prospects, these faithful Saints decided to pursue plan B. Several of the men in the group proposed that they catch some fish with the hopes that the ferryman would accept the fish as payment. With faith, these men threw their lines in the river. While they caught a few small fish, the real miracle came when they pulled in a fourteen-pound catfish. Inside its mouth they found three bright silver half-dollars—the exact amount needed to pay for the entire group to cross the river. Lightner recorded, “This was considered a miracle, and caused great rejoicing among us.”³⁷

Our God Will Deliver Us, and Heal Us

The God we worship is a God of deliverance. When no one else can, or when no one else will, He will intervene to provide relief and help in our trials. Mark learned, as a brand-new missionary, this profound lesson in the mission field. He wrote:

I had been laboring in the Washington Seattle Mission for only three weeks when I was involved in a traumatic accident on a preparation day. Our zone was playing indoor football in the cultural hall at the church. When one of the missionaries threw a pass a few feet in front of me, I stretched for the ball and slammed into a portable wall. In those days, each corner of this cultural hall had folding portable walls on rollers that

unfolded to make temporary classrooms for Sunday instruction.

As I reached out for the overthrown pass, I slammed into this portable wall so hard that it knocked the bolts loose from the cinder block that anchored it to the wall. The 1,000-pound wall came down on top of me, and I felt as though I was being crushed. In fact, I felt my insides being smashed together. Luckily, our entire zone was there that day; it took five or six missionaries to lift the wall off of me. Thankfully, one of the sister missionaries in our zone was a registered nurse and instructed the group not to move me.

As I lay on the floor, writhing in pain, I asked my zone leaders for a blessing, which they gladly provided. However, the words “you will be healed” were never pronounced. I remember thinking that the blessing they gave me did not seem very promising; they blessed me that I would arrive at the hospital safely. Later, the Elder who gave me the blessing shared with me that he wanted desperately to bless me that everything would be well, but he simply could not muster the faith to pronounce that blessing.

After a bumpy ambulance ride to the Seattle Northwest Hospital, I learned that I had crushed my pelvis and had fractured my hip. It was a bad break, as evidenced by the severe pain that shot through my body. I can still remember being told by the doctor the significance of my injuries, and I wondered how I was going to deal with all of this and still be home that night by our 9:30 p.m. missionary curfew. It never entered my mind that I would be in the hospital, in traction, for the next two weeks. That evening a doctor talked to me about the significance of my injuries and asked, “Where are you from?” I said, “Houston, Texas.” This was the evening of November 7. He said, “Don’t worry, you should be home by Thanksgiving.” Home? That thought hadn’t entered my mind.

I was the only member of the Church in my family—I had no desire to go back to my non-member household. I wanted to stay on my mission. Later that evening, my mission president came in to visit me. Before he left, he said, “Elder Ogletree, is there anything I can do for you?” I said, “Yes, President. This doctor has told me I will be home by Thanksgiving. I’m not going home. Can you help the doctor understand that?”

The next day, President Hanks had secured Dr. Steven Bramwell, one of the top orthopedic surgeons in the country, and the team doctor for the Washington Huskies. It also didn’t hurt that Dr. Bramwell was an active, faithful member of the Church. Once Dr. Bramwell took over, I felt much more peace. He understood my desire to stay in the mission field. However, things became worse before they got better.

As if a broken pelvis wasn't enough, the next day my stomach quit working, and it appeared that some of my vital organs—kidneys and bladder, specifically—could have been damaged. As I lay on a hospital table, the doctors and nurses injected a dye into my body to look for tears and damage to those organs. As a brand new full-time missionary, I prayed in a way I never had before. I asked the Lord to help me recover and heal so I could get back out to the work I was just learning to love.

My zone leaders came to the hospital to visit me shortly after this test was administered. They asked me if there was anything they could do. I said, "Yes, how about a real blessing this time—the kind that heals people." Although these two missionaries may have been a bit unsure, I felt confident the Lord would heal one of his missionaries.

Later that day, I learned that my vital organs were okay—bruised, but not torn or ripped. My stomach was shut down, and they would have to pump it out by sticking a tube down my throat into my stomach. The doctors "tricked me" and told me that they would just leave the tube in for a couple of hours. They left it in for several days. I'm still mad about that, and that was forty years ago!

For the next ten days, I lay in traction and lived on a diet of pain meds and IVs. My birthday was on November 17. I told the nurse that they couldn't keep me in the hospital on my birthday. She pulled a few strings, and I was able to walk out of the hospital with a walker like a ninety-five-year-old man. It was the happiest day of my life. I was out! I was free! And it was a miracle. Initially, the doctors told me I would be in the hospital for fourteen days, that I wouldn't walk for six weeks, and that I wouldn't run for six months. Miraculously, I walked out of the hospital ten days after being admitted. I was knocking on doors a week after that—on crutches, of course. And by January, I was running again—five months earlier than the doctor said I would.

I believe in miracles.

After a few days of convalescing at the mission home, I was able to return to my area, with a walker. Sometime in mid-December, President Hanks and I traveled to Dr. Bramwell's office in Kirkland, Washington. After a thorough examination, Dr. Bramwell said that he had never seen an orthopedic injury that serious heal so quickly.

My mission president looked at me and winked. We both knew why my healing was a miracle. The priesthood is real. Miracles are alive and well in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Since that experience in the fall of 1982, I have seen hundreds of other miracles in my life, large and small. Every miracle is significant and is evidence of

God's love for and awareness of us.

Elder Donald A. Hallstrom testified, “No matter our ethnicity, no matter our nationality, no matter what we have done if we repent, no matter what may have been done to us—all of us have equal access to these miracles. We are living a miracle, and further miracles lie ahead.”³⁸ Our Heavenly Father wants to bless us. He wants to pour His spirit out among us. He wants to help us receive the righteous things that we desire; He wants to answer our prayers. He will perform miracles in our lives. But we must have faith. We must trust Him, and we must have an overpowering desire for that miracle! Then, He will intervene in our lives, especially if those miracles align with His will³⁹ and His desires for us.⁴⁰

We live in a day of miracles. Miracles abound in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Russell M. Nelson recently taught, “Every book of scripture demonstrates how willing the Lord is to intervene in the lives of those who believe in Him.” Then, he stated, “The Lord will bless you with miracles if you believe in Him, ‘doubting nothing.’ Do the spiritual work to seek miracles. Prayerfully as God to help you exercise that kind of faith.”⁴¹

Have you seen miracles? Do you see God's hand as you walk the covenant path? Can you recognize the miracles that surround you daily? In Matthew 28:20, Christ promised that He would be with us, “always, even unto the end of the earth.” Notice He said “always,” not “always.” “Always” translates to “continually,” “constantly,” and “perpetually.” Jesus Christ will continually be with us. He will orchestrate miracles and deliver us from challenges, heartbreaks, and seemingly impossible situations. He will never leave us! We can always count on Him for deliverance, peace, and safety.

²¹ See Mormon 9:17; See also Mormon 9:11–12.

²² See Mormon 9:18

²³ Mormon 9:9

²⁴ See Mormon 9:19.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Mormon 9:20.

²⁷ Ronald A. Rasband, “Behold! A God of Miracles,” Liahona, May 2021;

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2021/04/52rasband?lang=eng>

²⁸ Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 506–507.

²⁹ See Mormon 9:21

³⁰ John A. Widtsoe, Conference Report, April 1935, 82.

³¹ Fred Day, personal notes in possession of the author, September 12, 2024, used with permission

³² Rasband, Liahona, April 2021.

³³ See D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, Verse By Verse, The New Testament, Volume One—The Four Gospels (2006), 350. See also Alonzo L. Gaskill, Miracles of the New Testament (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, Inc., 2014), 208. “This ‘collector’ of tribute was not a government agent, nor was it an income tax that he was collecting. Rather, it was an ‘ecclesiastical tax’ that he sought, which was to be paid as ‘an atonement for sins.’”

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ See Matthew 17:27. “Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them” Thus, ironically, the only person who lived without any sin agreed to pay a tribute that, at least in part, was intended to accompany the seeking of forgiveness of sin.

³⁶ Matthew 17:27

³⁷ Sarah Harris, “Miracles Helped Pioneer Overcome Obstacles, Move Forward with Faith,” LDS Church News, July 20, 2017; <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/church/news/miracles-helped-pioneers-overcome-obstacles-move-forward-with-faith?lang=eng>.

³⁸ Donald A. Hallstrom, “Has the Day of Miracles Ceased?” Ensign, November 2017;

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2017/10/has-the-day-of-miracles-ceased?lang=eng>.

³⁹ See 3 Nephi 18:20.

⁴⁰ Refer to chapter 12 for a more fulsome discussion of aligning our will to God’s will in the context of hoping for miracles in our lives.

⁴¹ Russell M. Nelson, “The Power of Spiritual Momentum,” Liahona, May 2023;
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2022/04/47nelson?lang=eng>.

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