

What Was the Point of Jesus' Miracles?

Luke 4:31-44

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"And they were all amazed and said to one another, 'What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!'" And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region." - Luke 4:36-37, ESV

Why did Jesus perform miracles? Many Christians would answer, "To show that He was God." And that may be part of the explanation, but I think it misses the bigger picture.

Many Old Testament prophets performed miracles. Moses called down the ten plagues on Egypt and parted the Red Sea. He was not God and was not trying to prove that he was. He was God's appointed representative to confront Pharaoh, which he did. Joshua was empowered by God to make the sun stand still in the sky, but he wasn't God. Elijah and Elisha also performed many miracles, some of which were similar to those done by Jesus. Again, these miracles did not prove that these prophets were God incarnate, because they weren't.

Romans 1:4 says that Jesus *"was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead,"* not by His miracles. So, why do miracles? It was partly to demonstrate who He was, but more specifically to show that He was the Christ, the long-awaited Anointed One, the Messiah. He acted as God's chosen one, anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

His miracles also authenticated His teaching. Jesus taught with great authority, and then He validated that authority by casting out demons, healing the sick, etc. His actions pointed to the validity of His words. It was His preaching that was most important for people to hear. He says in verse 43, *"I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose."* So, while Jesus did miracles, the purpose for which He was sent was to *"preach the good news of the kingdom of God."* After all, a blind man might receive sight and see for a lifetime, but if He receives the kingdom, He will see forever!

Finally, Jesus' miracles demonstrated His love and anticipated His full kingdom reign. The Gospels tell us that Jesus was moved with compassion for the crowds of people, He was moved by their ignorance of God's kingdom and their need for the truth, but He was also moved by their suffering. Jesus loved the people and served their physical and spiritual needs. He also gave people a preview of what life will be like in His eternal glorious kingdom, when all sickness, blindness, disability and demonic possession will be done away with forever!

We can have confidence that Jesus is the Christ, that His word is truth, that His heart is loving and that His coming again will end all suffering forever all because of His great miracles. To think that such authority and power is exercised at the right hand of God now for us and for our salvation is amazing! It should lead us to worship, gratitude and deeper discipleship.