

Blessings, Signs and Wonders

During these awesome experiences we're having with God, one of the most pertinent questions we could ask ourselves is this, "*Should we be living by **signs and wonders** or should we be residing in God's **blessings**?*" But what is the difference?

[1] Miracles / Signs & Wonders – The ancient Hebrew and Greek words translated **miracles** both have very similar definitions. A "miracle" is a '*wondrous sign of God's divine authority over all creation*', or it is God '*supernaturally intervening in the ordinary course of nature*'.

In **Exodus 16 verses 9 to 15** we find longest working miracle. However, God wanted the children of Israel to get past that miraculous, wondrous sign; He wanted them to **live** in the Promised Land.

Joshua 5:12 says, "***Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the promised land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.***"

[2] Blessings – The ancient Hebrew word signifies *the state of 'prosperity' or 'happiness' which comes when a superior bestows his favour on another*. Therefore, God's favour brings forth *blessings*, and these blessings create *a state of prosperity and happiness*. The Greek word denotes something very similar, 'that *which causes prosperity, creates happiness, or bestows graces upon another*'. Hence, it is safe to assume that *blessings* reflect God's grace and His unmerited favour toward us. But they are secured often through obedience.

And, as a result of being obedient we are '*blessed*' by God and we enter into prosperity and true happiness!

Ephesians 1:3 says, "***Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who HAS blessed us with EVERY spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.***" Held [contained] in Christ is a lifestyle of blessings - prosperity and true joy!

Psalms 35:27 says, "***Let them shout for joy and be glad ... Let the Lord be magnified, who takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.***" God is truly pleased when His servants prosper! The Hebrew word translated here as "*prosperity*", is laden with meaning. It signifies '*safety, wellness, happiness, healthiness, peacefulness and security*'. In fact, the word is often translated '*peace*' because when your needs are met you are always at peace! Therefore, **God's blessings** create in you a state of *peace, prosperity and happiness*. And this in turn spills over and *benefits* others.

Spiritual principle = When God performs a miracle He is working **FOR** us [sovereignly on our behalf], but whenever He blesses us He is working **WITH** us [co-operating within our human efforts through obedience].

So what exactly are the fundamental differences between miracles and blessings?

1. [a] **A MIRACLE IS A UNIQUE MANIFESTATION OF GOD EXERCISING POWER OVER HIS CREATION.** Yet, even in the midst of unbelief sinners and saints alike can receive one.

Examples:

1. Raven feeding the prophet Elijah
2. Peter walking on water

3. The donkey speaking
4. Fire on Mount Carmel
5. The miracles of the plagues
6. Lazarus raised from the dead

A word of caution: You cannot build your lives or base your existence on signs and wonders, only on the blessings of the Lord, because blessings must overflow into the lives of others.

[b] GOD'S BLESSINGS ARE NOT RANDOM MANIFESTATIONS OF HIS DIVINE POWER BUT CONSTANT INCREASING FAVOUR.

Psalm 68:19 says, "*Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits [divine favour]."*

2. [a] MIRACLES OVERRIDE NATURAL LAWS.

(Manna from heaven / Stopping the sun / Making it rain / Calming the storm)

[b] GOD'S BLESSINGS CO-OPERATE WITH NATURAL LAWS [working in harmony with them]

All of God's blessings demand responsibility and obedience. They do not fall out of the sky to be abused or wasted by lazy people. **Psalm 107:36, 37** says, "*There He [the Lord] makes the hungry dwell, that they might establish a city for a dwelling place, and sow field and plant vineyards, that they may yield a fruitful harvest.*" God wants you to work hard and build your future!

Deuteronomy 28:1, 2 declares... "*Now it shall come to pass, IF you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I commanded you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you OBEY the voice of the Lord your God.*"

Notice, you must be obedient, but you must also be moving [doing something], or else, how can the blessings "*overtake you*"?

3. [a] MIRACLES DELIVER US FROM A CRISIS.

(Splitting the Red Sea / Calming the storm / Saving Paul and all the crew from disaster)

At sometime or another we all need a miracle, and when God chooses to exercise His sovereign will, we get one.

[b] GOD'S BLESSINGS KEEP US FROM A CRISIS. **Proverbs 10:22**, "*The blessings of the Lord makes one rich, and with it He adds no sorrow.*" God's prosperity keeps us from sorrow and pain!

4. [a] MIRACLES ARE A SUPERNATURAL SIGN. (Mainly for the unbeliever). **1 Kings 18:38.39**, "*Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now, when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The Lord, He IS God! The Lord, He IS God!'*"

[b] BLESSINGS ARE A SUPERNATURAL EXISTENCE [GOD WORKING WITH US IN EVERY SITUATION]. (They're not necessarily spectacular)! **Acts 17:28** says, "*For IN HIM we live and move*

and have our being.” 3 John 2 declares, “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in ALL THINGS and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”

We, as Christians, should desire to **live** in the *blessings of the Lord*! This is a place of constant supernatural activity! It is a place of true prosperity! And remember, prosperity is the result of God’s grace - granting us favour in all things and working WITH us in every situation.

It is clear that God wants us to prosper. The Greek word translated “**prosper**” in **3 John 2** literally means “*to help on the road to success.*” God works with us and helps us on the road to success [in this life]! Prosperity is not a momentary, passing phenomenon, but rather it is an ongoing, progressing state of success and well-being. What’s more, it is intended for every area of our lives: the **spiritual**, the **physical**, the **emotional** and the **material**.

The conclusion.... Abide in the blessings - your promised land, but expect the miraculous!