

Miracles in the Bible



Accounts of Jesus healing the demon-possessed appear in Matthew 8:28–34, Mark 5:1–20, and Luke 8:26–39. In Matthew, to heal **two** men Jesus drives a large herd of pigs into the sea; in Mark, to heal **one** man he sends **about two thousand** pigs to their deaths; in Luke, to heal **one** man he likewise drives a herd of pigs into the water, drowning them, and the patient recovers.



To slaughter an enormous number of pigs without first assessing the severity of the symptoms—especially when this is not a case of raising someone from the dead—is irrational. Sacrificing countless innocent animals to treat a human illness reflects an anthropocentric mindset and a disregard for other living beings. Moreover, two thousand pigs would have represented an immense sum, yet there is no mention of compensating their owners.

Matthew 8 also reports Jesus healing a person with leprosy by a word, and curing a paralytic by sending a word of healing to the patient's master, the centurion. Stories of Jesus or his disciples healing the sick appear frequently, but there is no information on the extent of improvement in the patients' conditions or how long the effects lasted.

Mark 7 tells how, when asked to lay hands on "a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech," Jesus "put his fingers into the man's ears, and after spitting touched his tongue." In 8:23 of the same Gospel, Jesus "spit on a blind man's eyes and laid his hands on him." Mark 6:13 mentions a kind of therapy: "they drove out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them." John 9:6–7 then introduces a new technique: to cure a man blind from birth, Jesus "spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes," telling him to wash in the Pool of Siloam.

If nothing else, anointing with oil or applying mud and washing evokes the idea of a **salve**, and thus sounds far more plausible than curing with spit alone. In any case, although there is no way to verify the outcomes, it is to Jesus and his disciples' credit that, amid the limited medicine of their day, they strove to develop and apply various healing methods.

All four Gospels recount Jesus feeding five thousand. Mark (6:37) and John (6:7) even estimate the cost at **two hundred denarii**. The fact that a sum is mentioned suggests that when Jesus and his disciples gathered people to teach them, they **purchased** food with money they had on hand and **distributed it free**. The heart of the story is that, despite the expense, they gladly spent their **own funds** to gather the hungry and poor, practice charity, and teach. Yet people fixate only on the “miracle” of feeding without cost—like staring at the finger and missing the moon it points to.



John 11 says that for Lazarus—dead four days and already stinking—Jesus uttered the command “Come out,” and he lived again. It seems Jesus showcased such a miracle because Lazarus was the brother of Mary—his beloved—and, though a difficult request, he felt compelled to grant it. But such acts can foster a misunderstanding of death. Far better, perhaps, is the Buddha’s way: when a woman brought her dead child begging for a cure, he replied, “Bring me mustard seeds from a household in which **no one** has ever died,” thus teaching the timeless truth that all mortals must die.

If those whom Jesus raised were still alive—or never died thereafter—one might recognize the special nature of such power. Otherwise, the act is meaningless and

only encourages the illusion that the dead can simply be brought back. Nowhere does Scripture relate how those raised lived afterward. For something hailed as a great miracle, the aftermath is oddly colorless, and the catalogue of wonders reads rather crude.



By contrast, physicians today, wielding the power of modern medicine, relieve or cure a multitude of ailments. The number a single doctor treats and restores in a day far exceeds the total healed by Jesus through "miracles" over his lifetime, and both efficacy and durability of treatments have steadily improved. In Jesus' time people did not know that disease can be caused by germs, bacteria, or viruses, nor did they know anything of genetics. Everyone knows it would be absurd to call modern cures "miracles."

Thanks to vaccination, polio no longer occurs; leprosy is easily treated; and we are protected from hepatitis B, tetanus, measles, pneumonia, chickenpox, and more. Science accomplished this.

Modern medicine enables countless people to live free from disease; in that sense

it achieves wonders surpassing those biblical figures who raised a few from the dead.

To claim the ability to work miracles—or to believe such claims at face value—is, paradoxically, to deny God's perfection. If the creator of heaven and earth is omnipotent, he would not permit phenomena that **break the very laws he made**. If such phenomena were possible, there would exist a realm beyond his control, and such a creator could no longer be called omnipotent.

For miracles to occur, the laws of nature must be set aside; then only a world of chaos—where disorder reigns—would remain. Ideas like these may have offered comfort to ancients who could not properly grasp natural law, but they do nothing for moderns raised on the natural sciences. To exalt as "great" those not-so-miraculous miracles from "once-upon-a-time" fables is, it seems, explicable only as a device for maintaining a religious system.

Sources

1. <https://www.gotquestions.org/alabaster-box.html>
2. Robert W. Funk, **Honest to Jesus**, Korean trans. by Kim Jun-woo, Korea Institute for Christian Studies, 1999, pp. 294–295.