

“Physical Phenomena – A Spiritual View”

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With my background in the physical sciences, I have always been interested in the physical phenomena recorded in the Bible. By the term “physical phenomena,” I mean those events, called miracles, that seem to be beyond the ability of the physical sciences to explain, those that seem to defy the laws of nature. Probably the most searched-for explanation is that for the Bethlehem star, but there are many others. For example, to mention just a few, the Jordan River was stopped three times; the Red Sea divided; manna fell from heaven; water came from a rock; the sun and moon stopped moving, and later the sun turned back three hours; the widow’s oil was increased; the storm and the sea were calmed; people were healed of “divers diseases” and raised from the dead. All of these so-called miracles were the result of divine action becoming apparent to human consciousness. Try as one might, there is no definitive physical science explanation for any of these, although many people have tried to find one. However, there are deep spiritual lessons in all of them, and we’ll explore a few of these miracles to learn more about those lessons.

When studying the miracles in the Bible, one must be careful neither to dismiss them as something so extraordinary that it couldn’t possibly happen today (and possibly didn’t really happen then) nor to consider them irrelevant to today’s world. On the surface, Elijah’s burnt offering being consumed by fire seems both extraordinary for the time and irrelevant for today, but we have to ask ourselves, “Is it extraordinary? What is its relevance to us?” For it to be meaningful, we must seek the spiritual significance of these Biblical miracles and apply it to our own lives.

Let’s start by defining the word *miracle*. Webster defines it as “an extraordinary event taken to manifest the supernatural power of God fulfilling his purposes.”¹ A respected Bible dictionary says, “An event, whether natural or supernatural, in which one sees an act or revelation of God.”² Mary Baker Eddy says, “That which is divinely natural, but must be learned humanly; a phenomenon of Science”³ – that’s *Science* with a capital S.

¹“miracle.” Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged. Merriam-Webster, 2002. <http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com> (8 Jun. 2008).

²The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, CD-ROM edition, 1999.

³*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, 591:21.

In English Bibles, translators have used a variety of words as synonyms of *miracle*: sign, wonder, work, mighty work, power, to list the more prominent. Using a concordance to find these words enlarges one's understanding of the continuing occurrence of so-called miracles throughout the Bible. For instance, the Psalmist writes, "We thank you, God, we thank you—your Name is our favorite word, your mighty works are all we talk about."⁴ That's from *The Message*. The King James Version gives a slightly different meaning of the same verse, but still references God's works (miracles): "Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare." Here, the Psalmist is thanking God for all of the miracles that have occurred. His *name* refers to His character and presence. In other words, "Your wonderful works – your miracles – declare that You are present." We know that the Psalmist is referring to the deliverance and establishment of the Hebrew nation. I can only presume that the Psalmist is also referring to physical healings and instances of protection, which he witnessed but are not reported in the Bible.

To accept Biblical miracles as actual events experienced by real people, we must thoroughly understand that God is omnipotent. Conversely, if we don't believe the miracles or we expect a physical explanation, we're expressing doubt about God's actual existence and power. Mrs. Eddy states it very clearly: "There is no power apart from God. Omnipotence has all-power, and to acknowledge any other power is to dishonor God."⁵ After all, the most significant account of God's power is the report of creation in Genesis 1. Physical scientists are spending billions of dollars trying to discover how the universe began and how life was created. Yet, they aren't going to discover the truth about God's creation, because they are looking at the physical universe. Their theories are evolving based on new scientific data. For instance, in early June, Professor Sean Carroll at Caltech used new data from a telescope in space to speculate that perhaps the Big Bang wasn't the beginning of the physical universe.⁶ This is a revolutionary idea in the astrophysical community. Scientific theories help to explain physical phenomena, but they can't explain God's spiritual creation, nor the Deific phenomena that we call miracles. At best, they uncover deeper questions, which lead to more thoughtful considerations. Many people consider the creation of the universe to be supernatural, and yet, as understood in Christian Science, the creation of the spiritual universe, the only universe there is, was and continues to be a divinely natural event. Here we have an example of Mrs. Eddy's definition of *miracle*.

I must say that I have tremendous respect for the intelligence and creativity expressed by astronomers and astrophysicists. They are some of the most thoughtful people I know and it's exhilarating to work with them. They are making important discoveries about the physical universe and demonstrating the benefits of increased depth of thought – itself a manifestation of the limitless nature of man's dominion. As a Christian Scientist, I know that there is a higher order, and physical science will not reveal the spiritual universe, which is the only true creation.

⁴*The Message*. Psalm 75:1.

⁵*S&H*, 288:25-27.

⁶"The Lopsided Universe," <http://cosmicvariance.com/author/sean/>, June 8, 2008.

How can these apparently supernatural events happen, except that God shows us His power in a way that speaks to human consciousness? During Bible times, there were certainly some impressive examples of God's power, and the people accepted them. In many cases, they didn't even consider them to be miraculous. It was just God doing what God does. This brings up questions for our era: What are the signs that God is giving us today to show his presence and power? Do I recognize them? Am I accepting them as being proofs of God's existence? or, Am I skeptical because of accepting, even partially, a physical creation?

In the Bible, most miracles fall into four periods:

1. The Exodus and foundation of the Hebrew nation under Moses and Joshua;
2. The period of ethical leadership and teaching of Elijah and Elisha;
3. The Exile; and,
4. The works of Jesus and the early Christian workers in the first century.

We may add a fifth period of miracles: The discovery and practice of Christian Science. There is documented evidence of divine miracles occurring in between these five periods. For instance, on a recent trip to Greece, I visited the Monastery of Ossios Loukas or the Blessed Luke, a hermit monk of the 10th century, known for his healing work. Pilgrims still visit this monastery today in the hope of being healed.

In discussing miracles, we need to deal with the topic of faith. Put simply, if one has faith that God is the only power, then one can believe in miracles. As the opening sentence in *Science and Health* says, "The prayer that reforms the sinner and heals the sick is an absolute faith that all things are possible to God, — a spiritual understanding of Him, an unselfed love."⁷ If you don't believe that you can be healed, then you may as well give up trying. On the other hand, Christ Jesus proved through his healing work that all things are possible to God, and he not only healed, he raised the dead and left instructions for us through his teachings. He expected us to do likewise.⁸ Mrs. Eddy showed us that if our faith evolves to understanding, then we, too, can perform so-called miracles. She wrote, "Faith, advanced to spiritual understanding, is the evidence gained from Spirit, which rebukes sin of every kind and establishes the claims of God."⁹ Isn't that what Christian Science treatment is: Rebuking, denying, destroying the false claims of error or mortal mind, and affirming, understanding, practicing the truth about one's being in the image and likeness of God?

So far, we've been talking about the Biblical basis for miracles. Before we actually analyze some of these miracles, we need to talk about the Christian Science view, because without understanding what Mrs. Eddy is saying, her passages about miracles can seem to be

⁷*S&H*, 1:1-4.

⁸See Mark 16:15-18

⁹*S&H*, 23:17.

inconsistent. In one place, she says, “Miracles are impossible in Science...”¹⁰; in another she references the “so-called miracles of Jesus”¹¹; and yet, her definition of *miracle*, previously quoted, is “that which is divinely natural...” It sounds like in one place she’s saying that miracles don’t exist and in another that they are divine events. Why this apparent inconsistency? It’s clearly a matter of context.

Studying all of her passages relating to “miracle,” I found that she’s differentiating between the popular religious thought that a miracle is a supernatural event that is almost incomprehensible to human thought, and the spiritual fact that miracles occur as evidence of God’s omnipotence and His love for us. Let’s see what Mrs. Eddy says about miracles. These quotes are from *Science and Health, Miscellaneous Writings, Retrospection and Introspection*, and *Christian Healing*. I’ve divided them into three groups: miracles as evidence of God’s divine law in action; the role of miracles in Jesus’ ministry; and the Scriptural basis for miracles.

This first group of citations relates to miracles as evidence of God’s divine law in action:

“Miracles are impossible in Science, and here Science takes issue with popular religions. The scientific manifestation of power is from the divine nature and is not supernatural, since Science is an explication of nature.”¹²

In another place, she says, “Nature voices natural, spiritual law and divine Love, but human belief misinterprets nature.”¹³ Therefore, it seems that something that appears to be supernatural or beyond the ability of nature to describe is a spiritual lesson not yet learned.

“The true Logos is demonstrably Christian Science, the natural law of harmony which overcomes discord, — not because this Science is supernatural or preternatural, nor because it is an infraction of divine law, but because it is the immutable law of God, good...There is divine authority for believing in the superiority of spiritual power over material resistance. A miracle fulfils God’s law, but does not violate that law...The miracle introduces no disorder, but unfolds the primal order, establishing the Science of God’s unchangeable law.”¹⁴

“Miracles are no infraction of God’s laws; on the contrary, they fulfil His laws; for they are the signs following Christianity, whereby matter is proven powerless

¹⁰*S&H*, 83:12 (only, to ,)

¹¹*S&H*, 123:24-25

¹²*S&H*, 83:12-16

¹³*S&H*, 240:1-2

¹⁴*S&H*, 134:21-26, 28-32, 135:6-8

and subordinate to Mind.”¹⁵

“Metaphysical therapeutics can seem a miracle and a mystery to those only who do not understand the grand reality that Mind controls the body.”¹⁶

The next set of citations discusses miracles in the context of Jesus’ ministry.

“The term CHRISTIAN SCIENCE was introduced by the author to designate the scientific system of divine healing. The revelation consists of two parts:...2. The proof, by present demonstration, that the so-called miracles of Jesus did not specially belong to a dispensation now ended, but that they illustrated an ever-operative divine Principle.”¹⁷

“The mission of Jesus confirmed prophecy, and explained the so-called miracles of olden time as natural demonstrations of the divine power, demonstrations which were not understood.”¹⁸

“Jesus strips all disguise from error, when his teachings are fully understood. By parable and argument he explains the impossibility of good producing evil; and he also scientifically demonstrates this great fact, proving by what are wrongly called miracles, that sin, sickness, and death are beliefs — illusive errors — which he could and did destroy.”¹⁹

“Human theories are inadequate to interpret the divine Principle involved in the miracles (marvels) wrought by Jesus and especially in his mighty, crowning, unparalleled, and triumphant exit from the flesh.”²⁰

The final set of citations establishes the Scriptural basis for miracles.

“In national prosperity, miracles attended the successes of the Hebrews; but when they departed from the true idea, their demoralization began. Even in captivity among foreign nations, the divine Principle wrought wonders for the people of

¹⁵*Mis.* 29:27-30

¹⁶*Mis.*, 5:22-24

¹⁷*S&H*, 123:16-19, 24-27

¹⁸*S&H*, 131:26-29

¹⁹*S&H*, 343:14

²⁰*S&H*, 117:19

God in the fiery furnace and in kings' palaces."²¹

"The so-called miracles contained in Holy Writ are neither supernatural nor preternatural; for God is good, and goodness is more natural than evil. The marvellous healing-power of goodness is the outflowing life of Christianity, and it characterized and dated the Christian era."²²

"The miracles recorded in the Bible, which had before seemed to me supernatural, grew divinely natural and apprehensible; though uninspired interpreters ignorantly pronounce Christ's healing miraculous, instead of seeing therein the operation of the divine law."²³

"From beginning to end, the Scriptures are full of accounts of the triumph of Spirit, Mind, over matter. Moses proved the power of Mind by what men called miracles; so did Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha. The Christian era was ushered in with signs and wonders."²⁴

"The divine Love, which made harmless the poisonous viper, which delivered men from the boiling oil, from the fiery furnace, from the jaws of the lion, can heal the sick in every age and triumph over sin and death...That those wonders are not more commonly repeated to-day, arises not so much from lack of desire as from lack of spiritual growth."²⁵

"Christian Science explains to any one's perfect satisfaction the so-called miracles recorded in the Bible."²⁶

This last point suggests a basic question: Are we reading the Bible as an historical document that records the development of a people who were guided by God? or are we understanding the underlying Biblical message of God revealing Himself to humankind throughout eternity in terms that we can understand, first through the development of the Hebrew nation; second through the revelation of the Christ in the man, Jesus; and third, through the Comforter, which teaches us to fulfill Jesus' promise, "Believe in me when I say that I am in the Father and the

²¹*S&H*, 133:13

²²*Mis.* 199:27-31

²³*Retrospection and Introspection*, 26:12

²⁴*S&H*, 139:4-9

²⁵*S&H*, 243:4-8, 13

²⁶*Christian Healing*, 15:12-14

Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these..."²⁷ That's from the New International Version of the Bible. This is completely consistent with the first Tenet of our church, "As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life."²⁸

In any scientific investigation, it's normal practice to test one's theories. So, before we discuss a few Biblical miracles, let's see if we can develop a "test" with which to evaluate them. Reviewing Mrs. Eddy's writing about miracles, I propose that the following points would characterize a miracle:

1. Manifests God's power
2. Fulfills God's law
3. Unfolds the primal order
4. Proves matter powerless and subordinate to Mind
5. Illustrates divine Principle, continuously operating

By testing miracles against these five criteria, we will be answering the questions posed earlier: Is it extraordinary? What is its relevance to us? Is God revealed?

So, now let's study a few miracles from the Bible. We'll do this in chronological order, starting with the establishment of the Hebrew nation under Moses and Joshua. I've chosen the stopping of the Jordan River when the Hebrews entered the Promised Land. You'll remember from last week's Bible Lesson that the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant walked into the middle of the river stopping the flow and the Israelites crossed on dry ground. The surrounding Bible verses relate that the river was at flood stage, and that as soon as the priests feet touched the edge of the water, the river stopped flowing.²⁹

There are documented historical accounts of the Jordan River's flow stopped by landslides in 1267 CE for 16 hours, 1906 for an unreported amount of time, and 1927 for 21½ hours. Undoubtedly there were more. Some interpreters have used these instances as an explanation of how the Hebrews could have crossed the Jordan. There were more than 100,000 men who crossed, in addition to women and children. Conservatively, that would be about half a million people who needed to cross the river. At the time, it was spring and the river was flooding. It was possibly about two-thirds of a mile wide. The Bible records that they crossed quickly. Let's presume that they were walking really fast, about 4 miles per hour, which is about twice the average speed for a walker, and that they were in ranks of about 100 people. That would mean the column would be 5,000 people long. Of course, they weren't marching in

²⁷John 14:11, 12 (to 2nd ,) (NIV)

²⁸S&H, 497:3 As

²⁹Josh. 3:14-17

formation, but we need to model the situation in a way that some calculations can be done. At 4 miles per hour, it would take a person about 10 minutes to cross the flooded-but-now-dry river bed. Making a lot of assumptions, the entire group could have crossed the river in about an hour, but it's likely they weren't that organized. So, if in fact the crossing of the Jordan River was facilitated by a landslide upstream, historical records show that there would have been enough time to cross before the river started flowing again.

Looking at this as an historical event misses the point. The Hebrews were almost to the Promised Land and they have yet another apparently insurmountable barrier that would keep them from reaching their goal. It's another temptation to believe that God doesn't have the power to deliver them. However, God tells Joshua to prepare the people for a crossing in three days' time. He tells him to be strong and courageous and to obey the Law and to meditate on it. He says not to be afraid nor discouraged and that He, God, will be with them wherever they go. The people were told to watch the Ark of the Covenant and to follow it, because it would show them the way. It's important to note the significance of watching and following the Ark of the Covenant. It represented God's law, because it housed the tablets with the Ten Commandments. In its spiritual significance, the people were being told to hold fast to God's law and obey it, basically, to acknowledge the omnipotence of God and prove it in their lives.

And, the people obeyed. There was no grumbling or dissension as there had been in the past. The people had learned that they could trust God to care and provide for them. It took 40 years, but they learned it. Mrs. Eddy defines "river" as, "Channel of thought. When smooth and unobstructed, it typifies the course of Truth; but muddy, foaming, and dashing, it is a type of error."³⁰ The flooding Jordan would have been "muddy, foaming, and dashing," and the Hebrews proved that their thinking had changed.

Let's test this miracle against our five characteristics:

1. Does it manifest God's power? Yes. What a dramatic example of God's power! In that era, before river dams, who would have thought that a river would quit flowing, especially at flood stage and exactly at the time they needed it?
2. Does it fulfill God's law? Yes. In this case, we are at the end of a cycle of redemption, which is a law of God. Crossing the River Jordan into the Promised Land was the final step of that redemption process.
3. Does it unfold primal order? Yes. The people are returning home, that is, to a more spiritual view of their relationship with God.
4. Does it prove matter to be powerless and subordinate to Mind? Yes, stopping a river to allow people to cross on dry ground is completely contrary to physical

³⁰*S&H*, 593:14-17

laws, and so reveals the superiority of Mind, God, over powerless material laws of nature.

5. Does it illustrate that divine Principle is continuously operating? Yes, this is one more proof in their 40-year wandering that God, divine Principle, cared for them and destroyed all obstacles in their path.

When considered from the standpoint of the Almighty, this was not an extraordinary event. It was divinely natural for God to remove all obstacles. He was again revealing Himself through His power. We can learn from this event and use it when we seem to have obstacles blocking our spiritward path, whether it's the claim of mortal mind that disease is incurable or that we can't depend on God for our daily sustenance. The remedy is to meditate on God's law, realize the presence of His divine order, and follow it.

For the miracle during Elijah and Elisha's leadership, I've chosen the sacrifice being consumed by fire at Mount Carmel³¹. You'll remember that Elijah was trying to return the people to the worship of one God, rather than the many gods of Baalism, against the wishes of Ahab's wife, Jezebel. The prophets of Israel were under attack and at times Elijah felt like he was the only one left who knew that God was the Almighty. Through Ahab, he challenged the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, a pagan goddess, to a contest on Mount Carmel to determine whether the pagan gods or God was more powerful. Elijah gave the false prophets every advantage. He let them go first. He let them choose the bull to sacrifice and build their own altar. They agreed that each would call the name of their god and whichever god answered with fire would be the true God.

You know how the story progresses. The false prophets called on their gods all morning long and there was no answer. Finally, they jumped on their altar and destroyed it. Now it was Elijah's turn. He patiently rebuilt the altar and put the remaining bull on it. Then, he directed that a trench be built around the altar. Over the altar and into the trench he commanded that twelve jars of water be poured, possibly to ensure that the witnesses would be thoroughly convinced that there wasn't already a fire in the altar. At the time of the evening sacrifice, about three in the afternoon, he prayed, "Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."³² At that point, fire fell from the sky and burned up everything – the sacrifice, wood, stones, soil, and even the water. The people were thoroughly convinced of their error in giving power to Baal's gods and declared, "The Lord – he is God! The Lord – he is God!"³³

So what happened physically during this event? Some interpreters have suggested that

³¹I Kings 18:16-39

³²I Kings 18:37 (NIV)

³³I Kings 18:39 (NIV)

Elijah used naphtha, a locally-occurring, highly-flammable, petroleum-based liquid, instead of water. However, he still would have needed an ignition source. More popular is the notion that he really did use water, because this was a time of drought and the sacrifice was meant to help bring on the rains, so showing God a little water might help along the process – not that God needed to be shown! I think we can safely presume that it was water.

What about the fire? Where did it come from? In an attempt to describe the event physically, most interpreters assume that it was lightning, although the Biblical account doesn't speak about clouds being present until after the event. Lightning also poses the problem of electrocution of those near the altar. Even if it was lightning, the timing would have had to have been right, and therefore God-directed. However, a note in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* says, "Some wish to rationalize *the fire of the Lord* by calling it lightning preceding the rain; but it must be borne in mind that the ancient writer intended to describe a miracle."³⁴

Let's test this event against our criteria of a miracle:

1. Does it manifest God's power? Yes. This is another in a string of miraculous events surrounding Elijah's ministry. It is showing that God has the power to do what is necessary to proclaim his sovereignty.
2. Does it fulfill God's law? Yes. To me, it is an instance of putting into practice the First and Second Commandments, no other gods and no graven images.
3. Does it unfold primal order? Yes. The people had been distracted by Baalism and this event "turned their hearts" back to God. It showed them that being lukewarm about God's omnipotence – "halting between two opinions" – was an incorrect attitude.
4. Does it prove matter to be powerless and subordinate to Mind? Absolutely! The gods of Baal and Asherah, material statues, were proven to have no power, because they produced no fire, whereas God showed His Almightyness.
5. Does it illustrate that divine Principle is continuously operating? Yes. Even though the people had stopped worshiping God, or were worshiping Him only part of the time, this event shows that God was always present and always operating. The people just didn't recognize it. In fact, Elijah's entire ministry is an example of the continuous operation of God's law.

From this event, we can learn that splitting our loyalty between God and any other supposed source for our care and well-being is futile. Placing reliance on matter-based systems doesn't bring lasting relief, whether it be for health-related issues or supply or human relationships.

³⁴*The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, p. 454.

The last miracle we'll consider is the Star of Bethlehem. Since the birth of Jesus, Christians have sought a physical explanation for the Bethlehem Star. There is a lot of conflicting conjecture about what it might have been. Was it a miracle or was it an astronomical event? Early in the first millennium, it was postulated to be either a comet or a meteor, neither of which last long enough to be consistent with Biblical record. Others have postulated that it might have been a nova, a star which suddenly increases in light and then fades. In 1604, Johannes Kepler, who discovered the laws of planetary motion, observed a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, later joined by Mars and then a new star, which soon faded. He worked the planetary orbits backwards and found that in about 7 BCE, which is consistent with the time of the birth of Jesus, the planets were in conjunction. When two or more planets appear together as seen from the earth, it's called a "conjunction". From the earth's point of view, the planets are lined up so they appear close together in the sky, even though they are millions of miles apart. Later astronomers point out, however, that in 7 BCE Jupiter and Saturn were not closer together than 1 degree, which is twice the diameter of the moon, so they weren't close enough to appear like a super-star. It seems like there are dozens of theories, informed and uninformed, pushing a narrow religious interpretation or not, about what this astronomical event was, if indeed it was an astronomical event.

The Messiah, or Christ, has always existed. The Messiah appeared to human consciousness when the people's concept of God had developed sufficiently that they were ready to receive him. So, what was that Star? Spiritually interpreted, it had to be God's divine direction to the Magi and His announcement to the whole world that the Christ had come. People became conscious of the appearing of the Christ, although they didn't know it yet. The Star announced the light of Christ dawning upon the earth and a few people were alert enough to notice it, understand its significance, and follow it. Evidently Herod did not see it, because he asked the wise men how they knew where the Messiah was. We don't need a physical science explanation for a spiritual event.

Let's test the appearance of the Star of Bethlehem against our five criteria of a miracle:

1. Did it manifest God's power? Yes, the appearance of Jesus as a human representative of the Christ upset the so-called "normal" order of human generation. It still upsets the common theories regarding the appearance of astronomical phenomena. God has the power to make things understood in human consciousness in a way that can't be explained by scientific theory.
2. Did it fulfill God's law? Yes, the Bethlehem star fulfilled God's promise that the Messiah would come and redeem us.
3. Did it unfold the primal order? Yes, that Star brought to human consciousness the eternal existence of the Christ, both as stated by Jesus, "Before Abraham was,

I am;”³⁵ and by Paul, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”³⁶

4. Did it prove matter to be powerless and subordinate to Mind? Yes, because there is no convincing material explanation for the Bethlehem Star. It had to be the result of divine Mind’s activity on the human consciousness. A sufficient number of people had advanced spiritually such that they could see the evidence of the Christ appearing.

5. Does it illustrate the continuously-operating divine Principle? Yes, the appearance of Jesus and his ministry proved that divine Principle is always in operation. Not only that, he taught us and all future generations how to demonstrate that Principle, too.

I think Mrs. Eddy’s opening paragraph in the Preface of *Science and Health* is a nice explanation of the relevance of the Bethlehem Star to us today:

“The wakeful shepherd beholds the first faint morning beams, ere cometh the full radiance of a risen day. So shone the pale star to the prophet-shepherds; yet it traversed the night, and came where, in cradled obscurity, lay the Bethlehem babe, the human herald of Christ, Truth, who would make plain to benighted understanding the way of salvation through Christ Jesus, till across a night of error should dawn the morning beams and shine the guiding star of being. The Wisemen were led to behold and to follow this daystar of divine Science, lighting the way to eternal harmony.”³⁷

We can ask ourselves: Are we “wakeful shepherds”? Are we today’s “Wisemen”?

Finally, I’d like to talk just a little bit about physical healings. During Bible times, both in the Old Testament and in the New, people were healed of incurable diseases. Jesus took this to the ultimate when he overcame death after his crucifixion. These were considered miracles of the time, just as Christian Science healing of physical problems is considered miraculous today. The medical community presents an awful lot of “other gods” that seem to be more powerful than God. Yet, we need to listen to Elijah’s question: “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”³⁸ We could apply our test of a miracle to every physical healing recorded in the Bible and to those happening today

³⁵John 8:58

³⁶Hebrews 13:8

³⁷*S&H*, vii:2

³⁸I Kings 18:21 (NIV)

both in Christian Science and in other Christian churches and they would all pass the five point test. Every instance of true spiritual healing manifests God's power, fulfills His law, unfolds the primal order, proves matter to be powerless and subordinate to Mind, and illustrates the continuously-operating divine Principle.

The world needs us to prove continually that Jesus and Mary Baker Eddy's teachings are true and practical. People are crying out for help with physical problems, economic woes, and relationship issues, both personally and between nations. We need to raise the perception of Christian healing from being a supernatural event to being divinely natural and possible on a broad basis today. We can do this by studying the so-called miracles reported in the Bible and applying their spiritual lessons to our lives, proving that God is the only God and that He is omnipotent.

Today, we've talked about the Biblical basis for miracles and Mrs. Eddy's spiritual interpretation of them. We've looked at three Biblical miracles, tested them against the characteristics of a miracle, and examined their relevance to today. We've learned that we shouldn't be distracted by an apparent need for a physical explanation of Biblical miracles. In each case, something happened that convinced the people that God is omnipotent. We need to accept this as the historical witnesses did and take every opportunity to prove God's omnipotence ourselves. We've learned that faith and spiritual understanding are prerequisites. Let's go forward and prove in our lives that miracles are truly "divinely natural" events.