



General Topics :: The question was not what should I do to be Saved? Discussion of miracles

The question was not what should I do to be Saved? Discussion of miracles - posted by proudpapa, on: 2013/11/1 22:5

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:"

Something that caught my attention recently was that Nicodemus next statement was not him directly inquiring about salvation, it was instead an observation of the ability of Jesus to do miracles :

"The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

edit add : verse 3 was a response to Nicodemus acknowledgement of Jesus ability to do miracles and the reality that it was evidence that God was with Him.

Re: The question was not what should I do to be Saved? Discussion of miracles - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/11/2

There are multitudes who believe in Jesus based upon miracles and signs and wonders. They see the supernatural and are convinced. But this doesn't mean they have come to saving faith. They, like Nicodemus, have only given a calculated, intellectual assent based upon logical deduction. The power to do these miracles must have come from God, and so Jesus must be approved of by God. But this is a far stretch from acknowledging He also took your sin upon the tree and redeemed your soul from hell.

There were a few prophets who had been used by God in miracles in the past, raising the dead, calling down fire, et cetera. The people knew they were from God. Here is yet another prophet working signs and wonders. This is why Nicodemus did not call Him "The Christ, the Son of the Living God" like Peter, and "My Lord and God" like Thomas, but rather boldly "a teacher come from God", thus lumping Him as just another addition in a long list of teachers and miracle-working prophets.

Does not Islam and other religions do this even today? To the Muslim, Jesus is just another Hebrew prophet of God, from the line of Moses. Hindus see Him, I believe as a great Sadhu, a holy man who preached a universal message of love. One Jewish girl I spoke with many years ago told me, "I think Jesus was a beautiful person. A very godly, loving man." Most religions see Jesus as a venerable teacher sent from God. The miracles to them merely substantiate that He was indeed sent from God; they were the seal of His approval and legitimacy.

And that's really all miracles and signs and wonders can do. Jesus would have tremendous crowds of people following Him everywhere because of the miracles and healings. They wanted to see what the prophet would do next! Exciting! But at the end of Jesus' life, He was left with only 11 - the crowds were gone. The miracles themselves could not even create faithful followers, let alone convince a man He was God's Eternal Son, the world's sin-bearer and Messiah.

Nicodemus realizing by the evidence of signs and wonders that God was with Jesus was not enough save him from his sin. He needed the New Birth. This is the point of the exchange. There are multitudes of Nicodemis in churches today, who have been healed, seen others healed through prayer, have seen great things, have danced in God's presence with the crowds and yet who are not born again of the Holy Spirit. When trials and persecution come they abandon ship and return to world. What's more, there are men working these very same miracles - including exorcizing demons - and preaching the gospel who themselves are not born again of the Holy Spirit. This is the amazing quandary.

A healthy normal body - posted by proudpapa, on: 2013/11/2 12:00

A healthy complete normal body has 1 Head, 2 eyes, 2 ears, 1 mouth, two hands, two legs, two feet etc.

Such has been designed by God so that a body is able to correctly function and able to complete the task that it has been designed to do.

A body can still manage many things that it has been designed to do with the loss of some of these parts but we would acknowledge that without all of the normal functioning parts that the body is prevented or restricted and limited in its capacity to work to its fullness, we would call it a handicap.

The Scriptures pictorial of a normal functioning church body is this :

God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

I believe our lack of faith is causing the Church body to perform abnormally in light of the perfect prototype that is set within Scripture.

Re: A healthy normal body - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2013/11/2 12:32

Quote:
-----And that's really all miracles and signs and wonders can do. Jesus would have tremendous crowds of people following Him everywhere because of the miracles and healings. They wanted to see what the prophet would do next! Exciting! But at the end of Jesus' life, He was left with only 11 - the crowds were gone. The miracles themselves could not even create faithful followers, let alone convince a man He was God's Eternal Son, the world's sin-bearer and Messiah.

Well said dear brother. The crying need is true conversions. God has equipped true disciples to be able to preach the Good News and pray for the sick and even cast out demons. Yet that all testifies back to the truth of the Gospel. And the point is for men to receive eternal life and not be amazed by the supernatural. God will give the saints a balance as we go forward Scripturally.

Re: A healthy normal body - posted by Heydave (), on: 2013/11/2 13:02

"God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues".

Proud papa, That is an interesting scripture to consider and I'm not sure the point was made in the other threads about the gifts. So if God has set all these gifts in the church, as you say, it surely is part of His design for how the church should operate. How then can it be, as some say, that the miracles finished with The Apostles.

This then leads us to consider, is the gift of Apostle ceased? As per the 12 appointed by Jesus I would say yes, but Apostle means 'sent one', so is God still 'sending ones' for the work He has purposed for them? Surely all the gifts still God's plan for His church? You don't set in place a foundation and then take it away just as it has started to develop.

Re: The question was not what should I do to be Saved? Discussion of miracles - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/11/2 21:5

The problem with Nicodemus was he came secretly in night and not that he believed in miracles. Jesus himself asked people to believe him at least seeing the miracles he did. There is nothing wrong in believing Jesus for miracles. The 10th Samaritan leper believed seeing the miracle done by Jesus.

Nicodemus came secretly because he was scared of his fellow teachers or Pharisees. But Jesus said unless one is born of the WATER and spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Water baptism that was referred here is a symbol of eternal testimony for believing in Jesus. So Jesus told him unless one takes a bold stand to be a witness for being a disciple of Jesus he is not saved. That is why there is no such concept called secret Christian.

In remote villages in India where the 'man who has most sermons on this site' has set up churches, gospel had never entered for 2000 years and nor people are educated. You cannot explain gospel to them by doing street preaching and exp

ecting that they will become disciples. They initially saw miracles and believed that what we are saying is true. There should be a true god behind these people. Once they came to church, they heard all the disciple making teachings to become a true disciple. Now we have very strong churches there. Even GOSpel for Asia has witnessed many miracles in remote villages in India to spread the gospel.

In short whether a person comes to Jesus by believing in his words or by seeing his works, Jesus will accept him. But the person will be saved only if he becomes a disciple who takes up his cross.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/11/3 8:27

We really don't know why Nicodemus came at night. It could have been the only time he could get away from his work and family affairs to see the Lord on that day. I imagine Jesus was hardly ever accessible for a private conversation (except at night after He sent the crowds home), and Nicodemus himself was a ruler, a very busy man. We are not in a position to judge his motive or heart; as Jesus Himself taught us - never judge a man externally (John 7:24)

Nicodemus said "We believe" (the Pharisees corporately), "that you are a teacher sent by God for only a man sent by God can perform all these miracles." Jesus did not then expostulate Nicodemus for coming to Him secretly, but instead said, "Unless a person be born again of the Holy Spirit, that person cannot be saved." Saying this, Jesus immediately took the focus from the corporate level of the Pharisees and brought it down to the salvific level of the individual, to Nicodemus personally.

Jesus was saying, "You guys believe I am a teacher sent by God because of all the miracles and healings you've seen. But I am much more than this; I am God the Son. In order for you to see who I truly am, and to believe in Me unto salvation, you need to be born again of the Holy Spirit."

Nicodemus was floored. Again, if his alleged cowardice by coming to the Lord at night was a component in disqualifying his salvation, you have to make the case that he already believed Jesus was the Savior. But you can't make this conclusion from the text. Nicodemus was only admitting to a corporate belief in which they as Pharisees saw Jesus was a mere "teacher" sent by God, but not the promised Messiah - and certainly not the Eternal Son of God who takes away the sins of the world.

It is interesting to note in the following chapter, we see Jesus having another one-to-one private conversation with a person, this time at a well. Astonishingly, He revealed to the woman He was the Messiah! And she believed!

Nicodemus and the others regarded Jesus as a godly "teacher", and was told they (each Pharisee individually) must be born again of the Holy Spirit to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. This presupposes knowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord. The woman at the well, on the other hand, was told directly that Jesus was the Lord, believed on it, and the new birth was never preached to her. She gladly sent for all the men of the town!

The pattern is that only after genuine saving faith in Jesus Christ as Messiah and Lord is one compelled to make an external confession. The order is Spirit, then Water.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/11/3 10:56

I agree we clearly cannot say why Nicodemus came in night, I believe he was scared to come in the day and that is why Jesus spoke to him about baptism of water first before spirit.

It could also be because he confessed Jesus as a good teacher sent by God, instead of the Messiah. But certainly not because he believed in the Miracles, if so then how can we compare that with John 14-11:
11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

So the point I was trying to make is there is nothing wrong in coming to Jesus only for miracles like healing. It can be compared to a woman who gets married to a man because her parents wanted her to get married to him, or because he was rich or any reason other than love for the man. But as she starts living with her husband she slowly realises the other great qualities in him like his love for her etc. so she can definitely start loving him after marriage. So are people who come to Jesus for healing, gradually they can realise his love and then become a true disciple.