

## Miracles

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### Modern Day Miracles

- Most Christians still believe that God can perform miracles for everyday people today. This is because in the Bible it talks of miracles, and since God is outside of time, he cannot just 'stop' performing miracles, rather miracles continue to happen, even today.
- However, some Christians argue that supposed miracles cannot be proved on an individual or specific case as there is no hard evidence that divine forces were involved. They don't deny that God could perform miracles, as he is all-powerful, but that he doesn't for some reason.
- Catholic, Anglican and Evangelistic churches are the most enthusiastic about miracles. They say that through the power of prayer, anything can be achieved. In the Bible it consistently tells believers to pray for things to be given. It says for believers to bring their 'prayers and petitions' and 'ask and it will be given', this are significant because it suggests all people have access to God.
- One example of a prayer miracle in the Bible is Hannah who pleads with God to make her pregnant. Another sort of example could be those who communicate with God in the Old Testament and are given instruction, if communication is prayer then this is also an example.
- Jesus told his followers to ask God for good things as a child asks a father for good things. This, he said, would strongly reinforce their faith as they discovered that God blessed them with miracles. Though he also warned them not to use prayer as a test, for a miracle to occur you need faith.
- There are Christians (usually Evangelistic or Pentecostal) who believe that God has blessed people with different gifts. Some say that people can perform miracles as this is a gift from God. One example of these people is Benny Hinn, he said 'they are available to you and me' at what he claimed was the 'biggest healing service ever' in India. Because of the nature of locations that miracles tend to occur, it can be hard to validate their legitimacy, even in the modern day.

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### Lourdes

- The Catholic 'Miracle Site' of Lourdes has been a site of miraculous healings for around 150 years, all starting with a 14 year old girl, Bernadette Soubirous, claiming she saw 18 visions of the Virgin Mary there in 1858, it is of course difficult to validate this claim.
- Over 6500 people claim to have been healed there, only 67 have been confirmed as 'miracles' by the Catholic church's personal physicians. That is just 1% of all potential miracles confirmed.
- One example of a 'modern miracle' is a woman called Anna Santaniello who went to Lourdes with many illnesses, including heart disease and excessive breathlessness. However, when

she was bathed in Lourdes she was miraculously healed in 1952. In 2005, the Catholic Church looked at her case (she was 93 in 2005) and claimed that she was in good health, they declared a miracle.

- Some Christians still argue that miracles cannot happen in the modern day, and that supposed 'miracles' are actually works of nature that have remarkably changed for the better.
  - These Christians also say that God created nature and so abides by it, and also that God already revealed himself through the Bible and Jesus, and so miracles to test his existence are an insult.
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## Figures from Christian History

- Many people in the past have been admirable Christians, modern Christendom may look at these people and think about how to act in certain situations to certain stimuli.
- Some people, such as Elizabeth Fry in the early 1800s, claim that faith caused them to bring about change. She reformed the prison system to show care and rehabilitation rather than punishment. This fits in with the teaching that we should treat others with love and care, to bring them back.
- Other Christians have emphasised they should improve living conditions for the lower classes, George Cadbury (yes the chocolate one) was a Quaker who developed the Bournville Estate which provided better working conditions for workers in his chocolate factories.
- Other Christians believe in the concept of Evangelism, they look to Christians who started a Christian revival (where many people join the church) such as John Wesley in 1738 who opened up to people by preaching the word of God in open fields rather than in a stuffy church.
- Sometimes, looking to the distant past, as far as the disciples, can be useful to influence faith and love for God. Looking at the disciples we see that many were martyred (killed for their faith) and so sacrificed themselves to spread the message of God to those who have never heard of him.
- One example of a sacrificial Christian is John Elliot who travelled on mission to meet the Auca Indians in Ecuador, but was killed. His family forgave the tribe and moved to work with them again showing that he didn't die in vain, that they love these people even though they killed someone.
- James Hudson Taylor was a British missionary who went to China to spread the word of God as he saw so many people dying without ever hearing about God, 'a sad affair' he claimed.
- He is said to have experienced God's power in a church where over a thousand people were rejoicing, this caused him to go out onto the nearby Brighton beach and pray to God to raise up a mission. He then set off with his family to China and by 1866, God's miracle had been achieved.
- There were 24 missionaries across China, aiding the CIM (China Inland Mission) movement to grow. This proved to Hudson that God must be real and active in the world.
- Hudson Taylor's encounter with God meant that the word of God spread into oriental Asia, this dramatic turn didn't have much of a dent in terms of other religious populations, but

meant that other Christians were then made and brought to God as commanded by Jesus to his disciples.

- The one encounter with God in 1865 also meant that God's work is continued today in China, but instead under the name of OMF International rather than CIM.