

The Age of Quiet Miracles

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By quiet miracles, I mean miracles that are not obvious to the average person or the average human eye. There are some people who are determined not to believe in miracles. There are other people who are so caught up in this world they are just oblivious to anything else. Then, there are people who are just oblivious to most anything that is going on around them. We lump these people together and I would say, this is the average person who really doesn't have an eye for God's miracles or what's going on.

A lot of those people who do claim to believe in God feel God has gone way off some place and is just keeping His Hands off this world. But God is executing His plan. He has a grand plan for mankind, which is proceeding quite rapidly right now. His Hand really is virtually in everything that is going on.

I would like to start by turning to Acts 3:1.

Acts 3:1 *Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.*

2) *And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple;*

3) *who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms.*

4) *And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us."*

5) *So, he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.*

6) *Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."*

7) *And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

8) *So, he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. (NKJV)*

Over the years, I've heard the question asked:

"If this is true in the church of God, where are the miracles that took place in those early years in the church? Back then, people were healed and demons were cast out—so many miracles back then. So, what happened?"

I had a friend in one of the Church of God splits who was so bothered by this question—obsessed with it—that he started his own group. I think, if you want to start a group you

can normally talk a few people into what you're doing and get them following along. So, he started this little group, looking for miracles, looking for manifestations of the spirit. It wasn't long before they were babbling in tongues and taken over by demons and eventually, they all just dispersed and it all came to naught.

God has different ways of using miracles at different times. People who would say there are no more miracles really just don't have eyes to see them. The Bible is full of accounts of miracles. Some very tremendous—perhaps none greater than God calling Israel out of Egypt, which culminated in them crossing the Red Sea. I would like to look into that for sake of an example. Go back to Exodus 14:21.

Exodus 14:21 *Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided.*

22) *So, the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.*

23) *And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.*

24) *Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians.*

25) *And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."*

26) *Then the LORD said to Moses, Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen."*

27) *And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.*

28) *Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.*

29) *But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.*

30) *So, the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.*

31) *Thus, Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.*

(NKJV)

I would like to continue in Exodus 19 and read a few verses there.

Exodus 19:3 *And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel:*

- 4) *You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles wings and brought you to Myself.*
- 5) *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*
- 6) *And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.” (NKJV)*

One last scripture in what I'm covering right now, Deuteronomy 30:15.

- Deuteronomy 30:15** *See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil,*
- 16) *in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.*
- 17) *But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them,*
- 18) *I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.*
- 19) *I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;*
- 20) *that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.” (NKJV)*

I believe a pattern appears here. God performs a profound miracle such as calling Israel out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea. So, we see God performs a fantastic miracle for a people, a person, an individual and then He waits and watches to see what happens. What is the response? Will they remain faithful? Will they continue to give credit to God for what He has done for them? Will they continue to love and cling to God and obey Him? History is full of mankind failing that test; it is a test. In ancient times, in the early church, in the recent church, in individual lives I think that pattern has held true. In these intervening times, when God is testing us, God is observing and, in His mercy, He hasn't left us alone. He is still there helping when we need help. I would like to go to a couple verses in that respect.

Philippians 1:6 *being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; (NKJV)*

We've heard that scripture many times and it's something we have to hold onto in these times of testing. In Hebrews there is another pertinent scripture.

Hebrews 13:5 *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.* (NKJV)

God shows Himself through various helps and times of need, but in less dramatic ways. I call this "A Time of Quiet Miracles", a time when we have to have eyes to see what God is doing in our lives. It's not a time of some of the tremendous, obvious miracles that we've seen and are described in the Bible. It is a time of testing. This is a method, and a way God is teaching us and teaching mankind. It's seen in the Bible in many places. God uses miracles at the beginning of a calling or at the beginning of a lesson. Quiet and awesome sometimes, sometimes not quite so dramatic and then He gets our attention. Then the time of testing starts.

*Are we going to remain faithful?
What are we going to do with what He has taught us?*

God steps back to see if we remember and continue in faith toward Him.

A prime example, as I just covered, was Israel coming out of the Red Sea. But there are many others. I think one example was the start of the first century church. As I mentioned, Paul healing the crippled man. There were demons cast out, there were many, many healings. Then came the time, as the church progressed. Turn to Jude 3 and 4.

Jude 1:3 *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.
4) For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.* (NKJV)

Down in verse 16.

*16) These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.
17) But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ:
18) how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.
19) These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.*
(NKJV)

In the first century Church, it eventually succumbed to these people who crept in and led people astray. The history of mankind is full of people failing this test. When God called Mr. Armstrong, as we talking about the recent church, I believe the same pattern was there as Mr. Armstrong wrote, there were apparent miracles back in the very

beginning. Money came when it was needed and just exactly what was needed to pay for the broadcast, food was given to them when they were desperate. I believe the obtaining of the property in Pasadena was a tremendous miracle in how they obtained that property for Ambassador College. Now and then, you hear some people say they don't believe Mr. Armstrong was actually called. I believe he was and I think the pattern shows that. In every case of God's calling out a people, few endure the test of time. I think we can see the spectacular miracles happening among crowds of very shallow believers. Jesus Christ said, "many are called but few are chosen". Spectacular miracles bring crowds of shallow believers.

There's a story I've used sometimes in sermonettes, so some may have heard it. An example in my own life of how I think God used this pattern with me. So how did I come into the church? It was while I was in my late teens. My father died when I was ten years old and I was living with my mother and going to college at the time. There was a program of music on the radio—KIRO radio in Seattle, one of the major stations—actually good radio back in those days. It came on at 9:15pm and went until 9:30. I would lay in bed with headphones on connected to a crystal set; some of you will remember crystal sets, we had them when I was a kid. I would listen to the music as a lot of it was from the Broadway musicals. From 9:30 on the World Tomorrow broadcast and came on. So, I just kept listening and pretty soon I got hooked, as a lot of people did. Just a little after this time I started sending for the booklets and reading them and then my mother died and I was alone. So, since I was still in college I moved into a dormitory at the University of Washington. My income at that time was about \$50 per month. I was working on the janitor crew in the dormitory and I happened to get the book on tithing. So, I figured I had better try this.

I put \$5 in an envelope one morning; no note, just anonymous and addressed it to Pasadena. Going off to class, I dropped it into the mail slot. I came back in the afternoon and there was an envelope from my grandmother and it had a \$5 bill in it. She just felt sorry for me, this grandson of hers all alone in the world and felt I needed a little something. She had never sent me any money before and never did after that and it had come on that same day. A month went by and I figured I would try this again. I put \$5 in an envelope, dropped it in the slot, went to class and came back and there was an envelope. There was a check in it for \$5 and a few odd cents. It turned out it was from an insurance company—a dividend. My mother had bought this full life insurance policy when I was a child and I had forgotten all about it. Somehow it had reached me at the University that very day. So, in the third month, \$5 went into an envelope, dropped it off, came back in the afternoon and looked in my mailbox and what do you supposed? Empty. God was saying, if you haven't gotten the lesson, you're pretty dense and that's really how it is. God gives us a lesson but He doesn't overdo it. You either have to see it or you don't. We live in an age of skepticism, an age of final testing. God is filtering out true believers. We can call it this "The Age of Quiet Miracles". Miracles that are obvious to those with eyes to see, but miracles which could be ridiculed by a skeptic, such as....

"The doctor's first analysis is probably wrong; it was just a lucky coincidence".

God is doing a lot of things in our lives that we just have to have eyes to see. God always leaves room for skeptics. God is working in many, many ways and it's not too hard to see if we really look.

As an example, a few years ago Karen and I attended the Feast in Prince Edward Island. Unless you have a private jet, you can't get there in one day so we booked a hotel in Boston. We flew on Alaskan Airlines to Boston, spent the night and then took Air Canada across to Prince Edward Island. Coming back, we had planned to follow the same path, backwards. So, we left Prince Edward Island and we had to change planes in Toronto. As we took off and got near Toronto there was a thunderstorm. So, the plane landed in Montreal and stayed there on the tarmac until the thunderstorm had passed and then went on to Toronto. By that time our plane to Boston had left. There was one more that was almost due to load and I think most of the people on that flight to Toronto had some place else to go and would also miss their flight because there was a line at the service counter about a block long. I told my wife that this was not going to work and about then we noticed a sign behind the service counter that said "International Flights" and it pointed down a hallway. So, I said, "let's go that way". We did; we barged through the counter service line and down this hallway and passed a couple of check points and checked our boarding pass. They let us go even though they didn't really look to see if the flight had already taken off. We finally came to a service counter that said we had already been booked on the later flight. They gave us boarding passes without too much chance of actually catching the flight. We had to go through security and immigration still and we made it to the flight. Luckily it was delayed just enough so that we could scramble on. We got to Boston about midnight and my wife's phone had gone dead. I had a little flip phone that couldn't find a signal. I tried the service phone at the airport; the airport was essentially deserted, so no answer. We went outside and along came a shuttle to the hotel. You could dismiss all this as happenstance but I think it's really a matter of God looking out for us. The lesson He was giving us and also showing us was how He takes care of us in times of trouble. I would call it God looking out for us in times when we are really being tested.

There are several more incidences that I could sight in the last few years that have helped me to think in the same way and see God's Hand working and solving problems. It's a matter of seeing these things and they are quite faith builders once you do see them. This is an important principle to hold onto. We are absolutely surrounded by miracles; we just have to have eyes to see. If you listen to my sermonettes, you have probably noticed that I tend to like to quote song lyrics. For this one, there is one from Rogers and Hammerstein, The Flower Drum Song.

"A hundred million miracles
A hundred million miracles are happ'ning ev'ry day
And those who say they don't agree
Are those who do not hear or see"

So, a hundred million miracles happening every day. I think there are two important principles to think about.

1. We are surrounded by miracles. - We just need eyes to see them.
2. True believers don't need spectacular miracles.

We should be able to see God's Hand working. What about the miracles that surround us? On your computer, for example, when you are working through some program there is normally a little dash in the upper right corner. If you hit that the program goes into background mode; you don't see it but it's still running. I think that's a good analogy. God has innumerable miracles that are going on in our background mode.

The earth God made for us to inhabit is an awesome example. I'd like to turn to Proverbs 3:19.

Proverbs 3:19 *The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens;* (NKJV)

We have telescopes now that are fantastic and which we didn't have too many of decades ago. They can actually look at suns and from the motion of the suns they can determine what the planets are doing. If there are planets surrounding this sun, they can even—from the motion of the sun—estimate the size of the planets from the spectrum of radiation from the sun. They can determine the materials and elements that are present. They are finding out more and more about intelligent design and our bodies and the earth. They prefer not to use that term—"Intelligent Design".

So, men have predicted probably millions of planets in the universe that contain life, now it appears as quite likely that the only place with life is the earth. There is a book, *The Rare Earth* by Ward and Brownlow which talks about habitable zones in the galaxy and the solar system. It's worth looking at some of the things they say that show God's tremendous design which went into the universe and our habitation here on earth.

The Milky Way galaxy is where we are located and we are about half way out from the center. Too close to the center and the stars are too dense and the radiation is quite intense. If we go further out, the telescopes tell us that the stars are deficient in heavy metals or metals that would be needed. We are in just the right spot. It appears for several reasons we are in the right spot in the right kind of galaxy.

What about the solar system? Solar systems have narrow bands of what we call habitable zones; being just the right distance from the sun, in this case plus or minus 5% for our solar system. Two-thirds of the suns we can see by a telescope are binary or multiple suns. We have suns that are orbiting around suns and really, we can't have planets orbiting which would confuse any situation that has any habitable zones. Large suns have mostly ultraviolet radiation. Smaller suns and the planet would have to orbit quite close in order to have enough heat. An example is Mercury which is quite close to

the sun. When that happens, the planet locks up in orbit with one side always facing the sun. When that happens, its dark side atmosphere freezes and there's no more atmosphere. So again, we have the right sized sun and the right distance. Our sun mostly gives off visible light, about 10% ultraviolet. Next out from us is Mars, then Jupiter. Jupiter is about 300 times the mass of earth. It acts like a garbage collector you might say. It attracts asteroids and things that are zooming through the solar system that might impact the inner planets. "Luckily" Jupiter is in a quite circular orbit. Large planets that we have found in other solar systems have very elliptical orbits. If that were the case with Jupiter, it would come too close to the earth and disrupt our orbit.

There are things about the Earth. Earth has a molten core, containing so much iron that we have a magnetic field that deflects energy particles. Mars has a solid core with no magnetic field. The Earth has a large amount of free oxygen at the upper atmosphere that the ultraviolet converts to ozone and the ozone in turn absorbs the ultraviolet light so it's an automatic safety factor there. The combination of the atmosphere, the magnetic field, provides a well-planned safety factor for human life here on this Earth.

Scientists speak about the Earth's enigma; containing unusual and just the right amounts of carbon and water. Too much carbon, which means too much Co2 and the earth gets too hot. Not enough and it gets too cold. There is a Co2 and oxygen cycle involving plants and animals where the plants take in the carbon dioxide and provide oxygen for us. Our atmosphere has just the right amount of oxygen. Too much and things would catch fire too easily. I read once of a contest some college students were having. A contest on who could light a BBQ the fastest. One group somehow got their hands on some liquid oxygen. The result was catastrophic. The BBQ and everything on it were either melted or vaporized. They lost the contest because the BBQ had to survive somehow.

The Earth has just the right sized moon and just the right orbit. It stabilizes the tilt of the earth so we have seasons. If the tilt had been allowed to shift, eventually there would be some spot that had no light and our atmosphere would freeze.

So, in summary, the Earth is in the right place, in the right kind of a galaxy. We are in the right place in a solar system that has just the right sized sun. We have unique protection from asteroids and radiation. The earth is made of just the right amounts of materials in perfect balance. We have automatic stabilization of the atmosphere and the axis. Turn to Psalm 8:3.

Psalm 8:3 *When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained,*

4) What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?

5) For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. (NKJV)

We are eating fresh onions out of our garden now. I was showing one to my wife and inside it was a beautiful white color. I told her, how amazing is it that this is made out of dirt; another miracle. Actually, the onion absorbs carbon from the atmosphere as one of its ingredients. People would love to get rid of this pesky Co2 but then we wouldn't have onions or food. God does things in just the right way. It seems like we always want to try and improve on what God has produced; what He has designed. Genesis 2:19.

Genesis 2:19 *Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. (NKJV)*

Genesis 3:17.

Genesis 3:17 *Then to Adam He said, Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it: Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.*

18) Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.

19) In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.” (NKJV)

All things on earth—all living things—are made from the ground and that includes us. What kind of a miracle is that?

The second principle I mentioned is that true believers don't require spectacular miracles. I'd like to turn to Hebrews 11:1—the is the faith chapter.

Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

2) For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

3) By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. (NKJV)

Spectacular miracles are really not necessary if we just have the faith to trust to God and look to Him. *Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God.* That's Romans 10:17. Christ met with His disciples after the resurrection, including doubting Thomas. Look at that in John 20:24.

John 20:24 *Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.*

25) The other disciples therefore said to him, We have seen the Lord.”

So, he said to them, Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

26) *And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace to you!*"

27) *Then He said to Thomas, Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."*

28) *And Thomas answered and said to Him, My Lord and my God!"*

29) *Jesus said to him, Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* (NKJV)

So blessed are those who believe without seeing.

Romans 1:20.

Romans 1:20 *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse ...* (NKJV)

We can see God's Hand in what surrounds us on this earth and this creation. God is saying, "What more could I possibly show you? I've shown you enough so you should have faith". Matthew 12:38.

Matthew 12:38 *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."*

39) *But He answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.* (NKJV)

So, some require some kind of an ominous sign in order to believe. Isaiah 66:1-2.

Isaiah 66:1 *Thus says the LORD: Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?*

2) *For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist," Says the LORD. But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.* (NKJV)

A humble and contrite spirit is a prerequisite for really believing in God and in seeing what God is doing. I called this "The Age of Quiet Miracles" again, but it's a phase. We've had spectacular miracles and now we are going through a phase of what I call "quiet miracles". It's a phase that is temporary. There are things that are going to be happening that are going to bring this world to its knees. God said every knee will bow. There are miracles on the horizon that are really going to eclipse the Red Sea.

Haggai 2:6.

Haggai 2:6 *For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; (NKJV)*

Matthew 24, is an ominous prediction.

Matthew 24:15 *Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),*

16) then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

17) Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

18) And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

19) But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

20) And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

21) For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. (NKJV)

Right now, we are in what I would call ‘the calm before the storm’ and the time of “terrible shaking” is coming. Many people believe that God is way off somewhere and keeping Hands off the Earth but it’s certainly not the case. God is executing His plan. I’d like to turn to Daniel for one final scripture.

Daniel 2:21 *And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. (NKJV)*

I think we can see; God is raising up deposing kings. I think we have seen that in the last year or so. Winston Churchill said, in his address to Congress, way back in 1941:

...he must indeed have a blind soul who cannot see that some great purpose and design is being worked out here below of which we have the honor to be the faithful servants.

So, there are many blind souls who cannot see what God is doing, that He is executing His plan and nearing the fulfillment of it. With a little looking, I think we can see God’s Hand virtually all around us. There are tremendous miracles about to be seen. But in the meantime, seeing the miracles that God has done, looking for the things He has done in our lives, is a great faith builder to open our eyes and see these things. God expects us to use that to build our faith; to keep our eyes open and build our faith through what we see of Him and His purpose.