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THE GREATEST MIRACLE

BY: C.D. COLE

"To him who alone doeth great wonders," Psalm 136:4.

The God of scripture is a wonder-working God. He that sitteth in the heavens performs great marvels. He speaks and it is done, He commands and it stands fast. Many professing Christians are seriously exercised over the subject of miracles. It is one of the points of our faith that is commonly assaulted by the enemies of God. Much that has been written by infidels has shaken the faith of not a few. But it seems to me that if you predicate an Almighty God, that miracles are inevitable.

Now the question we are to take up today is, What is the greatest miracle God ever wrought? I appreciate that it is difficult for the finite mind to make comparisons between things which are supernatural. Our opinions on this question are likely to vary, and it may not be of any great consequence whether any of you agree with me upon this point. We can agree, at least all who are truly saved, that our God is a marvelous Personage, and that the Bible contains a true account of His wondrous works.

In answer to this question, some, no doubt, would point to the many miracles of the Old Testament. Such as the plagues visited by God upon Egypt: the turning of the water into blood; the miracle at the Red Sea, when He made a path for His people to go through dry shod; the miracle of the capture of Jericho; the miracle of the sun standing still; Elijah taken to heaven; the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace; preservation of Jonah, etc. He alone doeth great

wonders.

Others would appeal to the wonders performed by the Lord Jesus in the days of his public ministry: His walking upon the water; turning water into wine; feeding multitudes with a few loaves and fishes; healing most desperate cases of sickness; giving sight to the blind, cleansing the leper; raising the dead. Yes, these too were great wonders. He alone doeth great wonders.

One of the Old Testament titles given to Jesus is "Wonderful," and a most appropriate designation it is. The Saviour God has provided for sinners is no feeble one. In Isaiah 63:1 we are told that He is mighty to save. You face a terrible doom unless you trust Jesus to save you.

But, back to our question, "What is the greatest miracle ever performed?" Some might appeal to the miracle of creation, which by the mere fiat of his lips He spake this stupendous universe into existence.

There are some who might feel that the greatest miracle God ever wrought is in the realm of the new creation, when He puts forth His hand and saves a hell-deserving sinner. And I am in deepest sympathy with this view. Salvation is indeed a wonder of wonders. (1) Wonder of divine wisdom in discovery of a plan to save sinful man and yet uphold the claim of his law. This was done by the gift of His Son, who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (2) Wonder of power in giving man a capacity to trust and love God. In salvation the God-hater is turned into a God-lover. But some do not think man

is as bad as the Bible depicts him.

Some people may have a sentimental feeling towards a god of their invention. But the God of this Bible they hate.

Then there are others (and I think they are right) who would say that the greatest miracles God ever performed were in connection with the person of His own Beloved Son. Incarnation; Word was made flesh; Ancient of Days became a little infant; the Lord of Glory nestled in a woman's arms. What a wonderful resurrection of Christ. And this was a great miracle. He who had been dead three days came forth. And think what an effort was made to keep him in the sepulcher. It was sealed and guarded.

And yet there is one miracle I have not yet mentioned, which in my opinion, is greater than all these, wondrous and stupendous though they be. I refer to the death of Christ. You may not be able to see at first how I can link the word miracle with the death of Christ. It may sound strange to you for me to do so. But, to me the death of Christ is the miracle of miracles. There are four things I want to say about the death of Christ, and in the last one I will emphasize the miraculous aspect of his death. His death was natural, His death was unnatural, His death was preternatural, and His death was supernatural.

His death was natural.

He actually died. I grant a mystery here. How could God the Son die? By becoming man. The pur-

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THE LAST DAYS

BY: C.D. COLE

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be," Matthew 24:37-39.

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring," Luke 21:25.

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded," Luke 17:28.

INTRODUCTION: Our texts tell us that the last days of this age are to be like the days of Noah and Lot. No man can know the exact day nor hour of Christ's return, but the Scriptures do furnish us with a description of conditions that shall prevail at the time of His coming.

I. They are to be days of abounding wickedness. The human race has never been good since the first man sinned. It has been said that blessed is the land that has no history because history is a record of war and blood shed. A study of the Old Testament shows that at no time during the 4,000 years it covers, was there ever more than a small minority of earth's millions that had any respect or reverence for God. Noe was a contemptible minority in his day, and after preaching 120 years, only eight souls were saved--there were millions of people on the earth at that time. Who would think of eight being right and all others wrong. Vex populi, vex deus was not true in that day. The moral condition of that day is told in Genesis 6:5,

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Now the days preceding the coming of Christ are to be characterized by abounding wickedness. *"Wicked men and seducers shall wax worse and worse." "In the last times perilous times shall come."* Times of wickedness and pleasure.

How much worse conditions can and will get, only God knows. This earth is a rebellious province in God's mighty empire; it is a suburb of hell; it is the devil's happy hunting ground; it is an open range for a horde of demons.

Abounding iniquity on the outside is to be associated by amazing lukewarmness among Christians. *"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold,"* Matthew 24:12.

II. They are to be days of materialism. In the days of Noe men were putting emphasis on material things to the neglect of God and his service. They were eating, drinking, etc. They were following earthly pursuits and ignoring God.

There is no harm in eating and drinking and marrying but it is sinful to be engrossed in such things to the neglect of God and eternal things. They were absorbed in material pursuits in the face of impending doom. Like

Belshazzar engaged in revelry as God's hand was about to write his doom upon the plaster of the wall. The materialist emphasizes time and forgets eternity. He barter the heavenly for the earthly. He sells his birthright of eternal happiness for the pottage of temporal gratification.

A man was hastily summoned to the bedside of a friend who was dying. As he approached the bed, the dying man, in the most piteous way, said, "I find that I have been putting the wrong world first." We talk about the forgotten man, but in reality it is the forgotten God. It was said to Israel: *"Of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee,"* Deuteronomy 32:18.

III. They are to be days of skepticism and infidelity. Job is the oldest book of the Bible. Here is a reference to the flood: *"Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood: Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them: Yet he filled their houses with good things: but the counsel of the wicked is far from me,"* Job 22:15-18. This reveals their attitude towards the preaching of Noe the preacher of righteousness. They scoffed at Noe's

CORRECTIONS

In last month's listing of "Churches Organized By The Bryan Station Baptist Church," Grace Independent Baptist Church, Balfate, Colon, Honduras, Central America, organized April 5, 1996, was omitted.

South Park Baptist Church, Seattle, Washington, was listed incorrectly.

The name for the new church organized July 18, 1996, in Mahinhin, Philippines, is Sovereign Grace Baptist Church.

preaching, but at last when the ark was finished and Noe entered it and shut the door their jeering and ridicule was soon over. When the old ship began to ride the waves, the jeers and sneers soon gave way to cries and shrieks and groans from drowning men and women.

Peter tells us that there shall be scoffers in the last days. *"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,"* II Peter 3:3-4.

And Paul says the last days shall be a turning away from the word of God. A pastor in a town in Ohio told a woman not to take the coming of Christ too seriously.

IV. They are to be days of distress among the nations. *"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring,"* Luke 21:25. The nations are certainly in distress today. One meaning of the word perplexity is "no way out." A picture of bewilderment. The governments of the world are bewildered. So involved and entangled with one another till they can see no way out; all talking peace and making war.

If there is any truth established by fact, it is human failure. There is no ideal government upon earth. The ideal government is not a democracy, with sovereignty in the hands of the people, or a monarchy with the reins of government in the hands of a human king; or an oligarchy with government in the hands of a few; or Sovietism with the authority in the hands of the working class; the ideal government is a Theocracy, the reign of God. And we will have a theocracy when Christ comes to reign. Not until the government is upon His shoulder will there be stability and happiness for the world.

V. They are to be days of the long-suffering of God. We are told that the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah. *"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water,"* I Peter 3:20. It is God's long-suffering that keeps Him from letting loose His wrath upon sinners.

There was once a judge in England whom they called "the sleeping judge," because of his appearance on the bench. He had a drowsy look as if he were asleep and not listening to the case in court. But he was not asleep as his decisions clearly proved. Many seem to think that God is asleep and takes no notice of what is going on, but one of these days their notion will be confuted.

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pose of the incarnation was that He might die. He says *"To this end was I born."* I believe God allowed the Roman soldier to pierce his side to furnish us with unequivocal evidence that he actually died. For the same reason, God permitted His Son to lie in the grave three days and nights.

His death was unnatural.

Death had no legitimate claim upon Him. His death was abnormal. He was made under the law. What did the law say? It said "The man that doeth them shall live in them." That is, obey me and live, disobey and die. Christ obeyed. He did all that the law demanded. Death was the wages of sin and He was the sinless one, therefore his death was unnatural and abnormal. The only way to explain the death of Christ is on the ground of substitution. His death was a redemptive death, he died for others.

His death was preternatural.

His death was appointed and ordered beforehand. Christ was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. His death was not an accident. It was not unexpected. It was in fulfilment of God's eternal purpose.

His death was supernatural.

It was a stupendous miracle. He was active in his death. He was victor not victim. Every other man has been passive in death. When the king of terrors lays his clammy hands on us, man has no power to resist. Neither will-power, nor wealth, nor medical skill, nor ministrations of loved ones can cope with death. When death comes to man he is helpless. Not so with Christ. He offered Himself, a sacrifice to God. He poured out His soul unto death. *"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings,"* John 10:18-19. Christ did not die from a broken heart. He did not die from the thrust of a Roman spear. He did not die from the attack of Satan. His life was not taken from him. He laid it down of himself. It was the Prince of life who died. It was the source of life who died.

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God," I Corinthians 1:23-24. Have you ever noticed in Revelation that all heaven is moved to its profoundest praise, not when the King of Kings comes forth crowned with many diadems, but when it sees the Lamb standing as it had been slain.