

# THE MIRACULOUS: THEN & NOW

by Jim Rutz

A leper is healed in the marketplace.

Water is changed into wine.

A paralytic leaps from his pallet.

A demoniac chained up for years is delivered from demons and speaks to a large crowd, clothed and in his right mind.

A small bit of food feeds a big group.

The gospel is preached in one language, but heard in another.

The sound of a mighty, rushing wind is heard during a meeting of believers . . . yet there is no wind.

The deaf hear; the blind see.

A desperate woman with a flow of blood is healed.

A girl is raised from the dead.

And Jesus appears in a dream to one of his chief persecutors.

Great historic events by any mea-sure. And all have happened in the last ten years.

After 2,000 years of people praying, "Thy kingdom come," it has come.

The long war between God and Satan has turned into a romp. We are now winning the world at an astonishing pace, without growth swept along by a vast array of miracles.

“Be astonished! Be astounded! For I am going to do something in your own lifetime that you will have to see to believe”—Habakkuk 1:5.

## YOU ARE IN A NEW WORLD

Very few people realize that the nature of life on Earth has just gone through a major change.

Since the mid-1980s, we have seen a massive reversal in the direction of human history. Before then, the ancient war between good and evil was almost a stale-mate.

Now all has changed. The God of Israel, the all-powerful Creator whose epic story flows through the pages of Scripture, has broken through the defense lines of the Prince of Darkness and begun to shred the strongholds of evil. We see this new drama played out hourly around the globe. As if to underline the connection with the event in olden times, many of today’s miracles mirror those in the Bible:

In June 1999, two Korean women came to pray for a village in Uzbekistan. Although they spoke only Korean, they were invited (by gestures) to enter a home and pray for an old man who was unable to move.

One of the ladies, Kim, said later, “The lame man began to wriggle, and then stood up as though someone had just cut his chains. He was healed!”

But as he got to his feet, the Koreans suddenly realized that the impression bystanders had no idea why the man was healed. So in desperation, Kim began explaining the gospel in Korean, hoping that they would understand a word or two and catch the drift.

To their amazement, the people listened in rapt attention for the next 20 minutes—because they were all hearing her in their own language! More than 40 people immediately became followers of Christ.

“And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another ... how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?” Acts 2:7-8.

In the summer of 2000, a Christian man went to preach in the marketplace of a village near Chennai, India. He was met by a beggar with advanced leprosy, who asked him for money. He replied that he had no money, but offered to pray for him. The beggar accepted, and was healed instantly, greatly surprising both of them—and the whole town, which had known the leper for many years! Within months, the man's whole village turned to Christ.

“And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed” Matthew 8:3.

On December 11, 1997, the congregation of North Plymouth Community Church had just finished singing, “Shout to the Lord.” One of the men present reported what happened next:

“I have experienced many storms and high winds, living here on the south coast of England, but nothing could compare to what I experienced that Thursday evening. It was ten o'clock, and we had just finished singing when this enormous wind sound started. I

could only throw myself to the ground and crawl from the stage, because I felt so unworthy in God's tangible presence. I switched off the overhead projector, leaving only the sound of the wind.

"For the next 15 minutes, the church was filled with the sound of a storm, but there was not even a breeze to be felt. We all realized that it was no natural phenomenon...

"After 15 minutes, the sound of the wind died down, completely disappearing within 10 seconds. Literally everyone present wanted to commit their life again to God and serve him with all their strength . . .

"When I returned home that evening to my wife, who had been looking after our son, I asked her if she had noticed any wind. She told me that it had been a particularly still evening, and wanted to know why I asked."

I have received two other recent reports of "the sound of a mighty rushing wind" with no wind. One of them, at St. Timothy's Anglican Church in Pond Inlet, Nunavut, Canada, in 1999, was actually recorded by the sound system. It left the congregation "undeniably changed, forever."

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting" Acts 2:2.

A team went on a mission to a remote island in the Philippines, which had a reputation for being gospel-resistant. Fully expecting to be turned away, they were delighted to be welcomed.

After three days of giving medical tips, digging wells, installing a water pump, and telling some Bible stories, they were surprised to see 40 people turn to Christ.

One of them later said, "We knew you were different from the start. Our children always runaway when strangers come, but they ran to welcome you! And, do you remember the family that invited you for a meal? They poisoned your food. So when none of you died, we knew you were from God."

"And these signs shall follow them that believe: . . . and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them" Mark 16:17:18.

In the Punjab state of India, a city called Ferozpur lies next to the Pakistan border. Everyone in that town knew a certain man who was so deranged that he had been kept on a chain like a wild animal for eight years.

But in April, 1997, God used an evangelist named Daleb to heal and deliver him. And when he later ascended Dale's Crusade platform, with a helper carrying the now-useless chain, the crowd broke out in wild cheering.

"And they came to Jesus, and saw him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were awestruck" Mark 5:15.

Being a bachelor—yet not wanting to die of malnutrition—I always have a cook/housekeeper. The current one is Marilyn Wilson, a high-energy lady who once put on an outreach camp for teenagers at Wilderness Ranch near St. David, Arizona. She and Judy, the other conference planner, only had about \$30, so they prayed earnestly over the choice of food. And after they bought it, they prayed over it again, fervently!

They came to the first meal on Friday, and their two sacks full of chicken, rice, beans, oatmeal, powdered milk, and little else suddenly looked pretty small, as 38 people showed up, more than expected.

But they set up a buffet line, said grace, and stood back as the crowd swept through: 20 adults, 16 boys, and two girls—and the teens were voracious eaters, Marilyn emphasized. They especially swarmed over the chicken, which had all fit neatly into a slightly rounded pile in one cake-type pan about nine by twelve inches (22 x 30 cm).

The few adults who knew about the food situation kept glancing at the pan nervously . . . and were bug-eyed to see that the pile of chicken never went down! The more they ate, the more there was. Perhaps 60 to 90 pieces were taken—much more than they started with. In fact, as Marilyn went to pull out a third piece for herself, she watched the pan intently, and was shocked to see, as she yanked her piece from one end of the pile, the other end jump like popcorn popping. (She was tempted to play with it by pulling out more, but decided, Nooo, that might not be such a good idea.)

In fact, the rice, beans, oatmeal, and milk grew apace with the chicken, and by the end of the meal, there was enough food left over to feed the 17 teens and three adults who stayed for the whole next week.

“And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full” Matthew 14:20.

In 1995, three women evangelists went into the Xinyue district of Henan province, China, where everyone on whom they laid hands felt a burning sensation. The resulting healings were unlike anything known there before. But as they tried to preach Christ in one place, an unbeliever appeared and began cursing them nonstop. After they had paid no attention to him for some time, other non-believers walked up and asked them why they were ignoring the man—and even showing compassion for him. As soon as they had asked this, he fell to the ground, dead. The witnesses were awed, and many repented and accepted Jesus.

“And Ananias hearing these words fell down and died: and great fear came on all them that heard these things” Acts 5:5.

A woman in the state of Tamil Nadu, India, had been suffering from severe hemorrhages. When she heard that an evangelist named Joseph was coming to a nearby church, she asked friends to carry her to the meetings on her bed. Nothing happened on the first day, but on the second day, she got up from her bed and started jumping for joy! That day, 50 people became believers.

“When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the flow of her blood was dried up” Mark 5:27-29.

In Hazard, Kentucky, a local pastor named Ken Gaub visited the hospital a number of times to pray for a sick, one-year-old baby boy at his mother's request. The father didn't believe in prayer—and even got angry when his wife mentioned church—so the mother would meet Gaub and quietly escort him to the boy's room when the father wasn't around.

One day, Gaub happened to be in the hospital alone and decided to peek into the room. No one was there, so he tiptoed and prayed for the baby. Being careful not to awaken him, he softly touched the sheet covering him and prayed, "Lord, raise up this baby for Your glory."

At that point, the baby starts squirming, so Gaub decided to sneak out before he began crying and attracting attention. But as he turned to leave, he saw the doorway blocked by the large frame of his father, glaring at him. To Gaub's distress, the man glanced at the crib and yelled, "Oh, God!" He began screaming, which brought a nurse. Gaub thought, "Oh no! Now I've done it."

The nurse tried to calm the father down, but he kept crying and pointing to the bed with the still-squirming boy. Then she screamed. All the color drained from her face as she backed out the door and ran down the hall.

"The baby must be dying," Gaub thought, "And I'm messing up everything." So, as the father went to the crib and picked up the baby, Gaub quietly left.



About an hour later, Gaub received a call from the hospital to report back. He said to himself, "Either the baby's dead, or they're going to chew me out royally."

But at the hospital, Gaub was flabbergasted when the father rushed up and threw his arms around him. "Preacher, I want to tell you I changed my mind about that religious stuff! I believe now!" He started crying and couldn't talk, so the confused Gaub inquired, "What's going on?"

The mother finally spoke up: "Didn't you know that our baby died two hours before you came?"

"But Peter made them all leave the room; then he knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body said, Tabitha, arise!" Acts 9:40.

James H. Rutz has authored several books. This excerpt from his new book is used by permission.