

Why Do Some Miracles Occur and Not Others?

(And three other questions)

Q: Who was the 4th person in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

A: The Bible doesn't tell us.

This event occurs in Daniel 3. What we do know is that God was with them, saving them from death.

Q: Why did God give the Jews dietary laws, and why don't Christians follow them today?

A: God never really explains the purpose behind the regulations, so we have to make our best guess.

These laws are found especially in Leviticus 11 Deuteronomy 14. There are two likely reasons behind them:

1. Health
2. They would have been routine reminders to the Israelite people that they were uniquely set apart as God's people, distinct from all other nations.

After Jesus, God's people were no longer defined by their race or culture, but by turning to Jesus. People from all nations and cultures could now become part of God's family. In Acts 10:9-13, God tells Peter that things have changed, as salvation spreads beyond Abraham's descendants to other people.

Q: Why did God tell the Jews to be circumcised?

A: Once again, God doesn't explain why He commanded circumcision, but based on the context in the narrative and what the rest of scripture says about circumcision, we can speculate.

God commands circumcision in Genesis 17.

Possible reasons:

- It would have been a personal and visible reminder of where their productivity came from. God had promised to cause Abraham and his descendants to flourish, and He would see to it that this happened.
- Since it's likely that the fathers would have circumcised their sons, the shedding of the sons' blood by the fathers would have pointed forward to the shedding of the blood of the Son of God by the Father, through which all nations would be blessed as a fulfillment of the promise that God made to Abraham.

Paul reminds us that circumcision was always about trusting God.

Romans 2:28 CSB - *For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, and true circumcision is not something visible in the flesh.*

1 Corinthians 7:19 CSB - *Circumcision does not matter and uncircumcision does not matter. Keeping God's commands is what matters.*

Galatians 5:6 CSB - *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplishes anything; what matters is faith working through love.*

Q: Why do some miracles occur and not others?

A: God gives us several reasons for this. There isn't just one reason. Because we can only know what God reveals about His ways, there may be other reasons that God hasn't revealed to us.

Reason #1: *The miracle just hasn't happened yet, but it is coming.*

Abraham and Sarah had to wait 25 years for the fulfillment of God's promise.

Reason #2: *We forget to ask.*

James 4:2 CSB - *You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask.*

God wants us to be in *relationship* with Him, so He often waits for us to communicate with Him about what we want, even though He knows what we want without us actually having to ask.

Reason #3: *We ask with improper motives.*

James 4:3 CSB - *You ask and don't receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.*

We might be asking for something that is good, but if our hearts are in the wrong place, God won't give it to us. Bad motives can corrupt good blessings. It's a bigger blessing for God to withhold things from us that would draw us away from Him, even if those things aren't inherently bad or wrong.

Reason #4: *We're asking for something that isn't part of God's plan.*

There are multiple examples of this in scripture:

- David asking for God to spare the life of the son that he had through his adultery with Bathsheba. (2 Samuel 12:15-23)
- Paul asking for God to remove the "thorn in his flesh." (2 Corinthians 12:1-9)
- Jesus asking His Father to - if possible - spare Him from being crucified, though He also said "but not My will, but Your will be done." (Matthew 26:39-44, Mark 14:36-39)

Reason #5: *We lack the necessary faith.*

This is probably the most challenging reason, yet it is the one that scripture, and Jesus Himself, addresses most often. Many times, when a person was healed, Jesus credited the person's faith. (Matthew 9:22, Mark 5:34, Mark 10:52, Luke 7:50, 8:48, 17:19, 18:42) Lack of faith was sometimes the barrier to miracles happening. (Matthew 13:58, Mark 6:5)

Mark 9:23-24 CSB - *Jesus said to him, "If you can? Everything is possible for the one who believes." Immediately the father of the boy cried out, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"*

The story of the disciple's failure to cast out a demon is told by both Matthew and Mark. In Matthew's account, Jesus tells the disciples that the reason for their failure was lack of faith. In Mark's account, Jesus says that "this kind can only come out by prayer." Combining the accounts tells us that faith is increased as we pursue relationship with God through prayer.

It is important to remember that lack of faith is not the case every time we don't receive a miracle we ask for. Scripture is clear that the closer we are to God, the more we'll know what He is desiring to do, which will change what we ask for so that we're more often asking for things that are already God's will. Also, the closer we are to Him, the deeper our faith will be.

Reason #6: *They're occurring everywhere, but we don't see them as miracles.*

We are walking miracles surrounded by miracles! Things are no less miraculous just because they happen all the time.

Miracles you can see every day:

- This amazing universe we live in (Job 38-41, Psalm 19, Romans 1:19-20)
- You, and all of your fellow humans (Genesis 1:26-27, Psalm 8, Psalm 139:13-16)
- Your ability to do work (Deuteronomy 8:17-18)
- Your provision (John 3:27, James 1:17)
- The wisdom you have, no matter how little or much (Proverbs 2:3-6, James 1:5)
- Every single time you turn to God, pray to Him, seek Him, or are used by Him (Philippians 2:13, 2 Timothy 1:9, 1 Corinthians 12:6)
-and MANY more

Hebrews 12:1-2 *Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, **the source and perfecter of our faith.***