

The Three Messianic Miracles Len Holzapfel

Today I would like to speak about the three Messianic miracles, which the Pharisees and Jewish Rabbi's claimed **that only** the Messiah himself could perform.

Well before Jesus' miraculous birth it was well documented that the Pharisees and other religious leaders could perform certain types of miracles.

However, one of the rabbinical teachings of that day was that there were three types of miracles that only the Messiah himself could perform. The three Messianic miracles were said to be:

First the healing a Jewish leper - the healing of any other leper would not count - the leper had to be a Jew

Second the healing a man who had been born blind.

Again, the Rabbinical law, which went back hundreds of years was specific, the person had to be born blind, not born and then later in life becoming blind.

And the third is the casting out a dumb demon.

The rabbinical law clearly stated that the demon had to be dumb, and by being dumb would mean that this particular type of demon could not be cast out of a person unless the person who was casting out the demon first knew it's name.

These 3 miracles are the three Messianic miracles.

It was also written in the Rabbinical law that in the event that anyone was ever able to perform any of these three miracles then he would be thereby making messianic claims and therefore under their ancient laws their claim had to be investigated.

This process of investigation consisted of two parts. The first stage was **observation**. A delegation was to be sent to observe what was taking place and then report back to Jerusalem.

The Sanhedrim, based upon this observation report, would then determine if this messianic claim was significant or insignificant.

If it was insignificant the matter was dropped.

However, if it was significant then stage two of their investigation would begin.

Then they were to move onto the next stage which was the stage of **interrogation**.

Another delegation would be sent to confront the person who performed any one of the three messianic miracles and after thoroughly questioning that person, they would then again report back to Jerusalem, and this time the messianic claims would either be rejected or accepted.

If you read the four gospels carefully you would have noticed that this process was in fact carried out.

Jesus knew of the existing rabbinical teaching, that is why Jesus provoked the Rabbis, Pharisees and Elders, like he did. Their law was not the law of God and over the many centuries from the moment Moses received the law and wrote it down at Mt. Sinai until Jesus' arrival their law was no longer recognizable in comparison to God's law.

Men throughout the ages have always thought that they could improve God's law, much the same as man today. Man cannot help himself. Either he believes that he can do better than God and incorporates into religious services new customs and observances that cannot be found in the scriptures or he deletes much of the Old Testament, believing that it is outdated and therefore is no longer in force.

The law of Jesus day was based upon the **Mishna**, which was a written commentary produced by ancient rabbi's being their interpretation of the Law of Moses.

In their effort to protect the **holiness of the Law**, they circumvented it, or sidestepped the true meaning and intent of the law.

So now having a little bit more background into the Rabbinical Jewish beliefs and teachings as it was at the time of Jesus' ministry let's now begin by looking at the first messianic miracle.

The Healing of a Jewish leper. As you already know there are two previous recorded cases of a leper being healed in the Bible, before Jesus began his ministry and both took place in the Old Testament.

The first was Miriam who was a Hebrew from the tribe of Levi. However, her leprosy was placed upon her by God because she sinned against Moses and **God healed her of her leprosy.** This story is fully documented in Numbers chapter 12.

And the other case was Naaman the Syria, who as you know was a Gentile and therefore according to rabbinical law **Naaman's leprosy did not count.**

There are two complete chapters written within the Law of Moses - Leviticus Chapters 13 and 14 - which instruct the Levitical priests and religious leaders about how they were to respond in the case of a leper, and about the offering that a leper was to offer once he had been healed.

Apart from Miriam, Moses sister, from the giving of the law at Mt Sinai until the coming of Messiah, not one single case of an Israelite or Jewish leper who had been healed or cured of Leprosy, had ever been reported or recorded.

So, for about 1500 years, these detailed, exhaustive and specific instructions had never been used, because no Jew had ever been healed of leprosy.

I will begin with Jesus healing the Leper, somewhere around the sea of Galilee area.

We read in Luke 5:12-15 And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy' who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And he charged him to tell no man" but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

This is first recorded Messianic miracle, one of the three that I mentioned earlier.

Jesus, after he healed the leper, instructed him to offer to the priest the **prescribed offering as Moses recorded**. This offering that Jesus instructed this cured leper to give to the priest was a **testimony to his healing**. This then was a sign to the priests saying that something incredible had just happened and alarm bells should have begun to ring out loud and clear. **And they did.**

Luke, a little further down in the same Chapter records that the priesthood did in fact swoop into action.

We read in Luke 5:16 that Jesus withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed. Jesus may have been praying that the offering from this cured leper may cause the fire to be stirred and for sparks to begin to fly. Luke continues in Luke 5:17 *And it came to pass on a certain day as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law, sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem:*

Here is the response; the bells really rang out loud. Not only were there Pharisees and doctors of the law present from Jerusalem but they came from all around Judea out of every town in Galilee and they were, if you notice, just observing Jesus at this time. This was the first stage Observation.

Luke continues in Luke 5:18-24 *And, behold men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in and to lay him before him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, what reason ye in your hearts: Whether is easier, to say thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, rise up and walk? but that he may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

These verses plainly tell us that the Pharisees observed, they did not challenge nor did they interrogate. These verses also make it very clear that Jesus knew their thoughts. Because they themselves did not speak. However, what really caused the fire to flare up in the minds of the Pharisees and doctors of the law was when Jesus went one step further than merely performing a miracle here. Jesus told them by what he spoke to the man suffering from the palsy, that he was God in the flesh.

Why? Because only God can forgive sin.

By saying that he was God only helped to provoke his death sentence. We know this by the thoughts of the Pharisees and lawyers who thought. Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone:

Blasphemy was a crime punishable by death.

And the Pharisees were now looking for every chance to discredit Jesus. Their immediate thoughts were that Jesus was committing blasphemies and they were blinded by their own prejudices, guided by their carnal minds, and not their hearts.

After following and watching Jesus closely for at least 7 days, they again had to meet with the Sanhedrin where serious discussions would take place whether this man was a clever impostor or whether this man was really the Messiah.

If they agreed that Jesus might be the Messiah, then the confrontation and interrogation stage would begin.

However, the Sanhedrim also had another responsibility to carry out regarding the leper who had presented himself to the temple priest with his offering

Firstly, they had to establish if this man was really a leper.

Secondly if this man was a leper, was he really cured of his leprosy.

And thirdly if he was truly cured of his leprosy what were the circumstances were they as he said and if so, on the 8th day they were required, by the law of Moses to begin a lengthy ritual. If you would like to read Leviticus chapter 14, versus 10-22 yourselves you will find the lengthy ritual recorded there.

The Pharisees lawyers and Sanhedrim now had another dilemma on their hands. They now not only had to prove to their satisfaction that Jesus in fact cleansed the leper of his leprosy and because Jesus, in so many words, told them that he was the Messiah, when he made the claim to be able to forgive sin, they may now have to believe He is the Messiah.

These same priests Pharisees and Rabbis taught that if someone healed a leper of leprosy then this was in fact a Messianic miracle.

Jesus cleansed this leper and then sent him to the temple priests to offer his offering.

Jesus then upon the observation stage, virtually told them who he was. They now either had to believe that Jesus was the Messiah or deny this miracle and declare that Jesus was not the Messiah. Jesus knew their thoughts and he knew that they had denied him already in their minds because in their thoughts they accused him of blasphemy.

Jesus did not leave it at that and walk away shaking his head, neither did the Pharisees, Priests and lawyers. Jesus was now under constant 24-hour observation and open to interrogation. No matter where Jesus went, he would be closely followed and no matter what Jesus did he would be challenged at every opportunity.

Let's now move onto the second Messianic miracle.

The casting out of a dumb demon.

This story is recorded in Matthew 12:22-38 Mark 3:21-30 and Luke 11:14-20

I will read from Matthew Chapter 12 verse 22 to 28 first, followed by a single verse of Luke 11:20.

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, this fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts and said unto them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

And the single verse from Luke 11:20 when Jesus said - But if I with the finger of God cast out devils no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

Those words 'finger of God' is only found 4 times in the whole bible - 3 times in the old testament and only this one time in the New Testament - and with those 6 simple words, Jesus tells us who he is. Jesus was telling the Pharisees, lawyers and anyone else listening to him, as well as everyone who reads the scriptures today that he is the great "I Am" of the Old Testament.

And a bit further down in Matthew verse 38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

Still not convinced about who Jesus was, they still wanted another sign. Jesus was accused of being demon possessed and working for the devil, and Jesus reply was simply, could he be demon possessed when He is the great "I AM".

In those verses I just read out to you it is plain to see that Jesus in fact healed a man possessed with a dumb demon, not only was he possessed with a dumb demon, but he was blind as well.

We aren't told if he was blind from birth, so this miracle of also curing someone of blindness from birth did not count in the eyes of the already biased Pharisees and lawyers.

We are told here that it was the people who witnessed Jesus healing this man possessed with a dumb and blind demon that recognized Jesus as the son of David.

They were a witness against the spiritual leaders because they had been taught by these biased Priests and Pharisees that only the Messiah himself could perform such miracles, they had just witnessed.

Here was the second Messianic miracle having been performed right in front of the very eyes of the Priests, Pharisees and lawyers yet they still refused to believe that Jesus was the Messiah.

Instead they accused Jesus of being demon possessed and of doing the bidding of Satan or Beelzebub.

In this case there was no need to establish who healed this possessed person, because they personally eye witnessed the miracle.

But rather than admit that Jesus was the Messiah or admit that Jesus had performed 2 of the 3 messianic miracles, they immediately went on the offensive and openly said that Jesus was demon possessed, inferring that Jesus was nothing more than an impostor, being himself and agent of Satan.

Because of that accusation and because Jesus knew their thoughts, Jesus used sound reason as his weapon against them, stating very clearly and in plain simple language that they could all understand, just who he was, when he said but if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you,

Jesus had now performed two of the required miracles to prove who he was and by rightful judgment, Jesus should have been recognized **as the Messiah**, but he still was not, he was instead recognized as an agent working for Satan.

The act of casting out demons was not all that unusual in the Jewish world of that day. Even the Pharisees, Rabbis and their followers had the ability to cast out demons.

However, Pharisaic Judaism required a specific ritual that had to be carried out before they could cast out any demon. This ritual consisted of 3 stages.

First - the exorcist had to establish communication with the demon Because they believed that when the demon spoke it used the vocal chords of the person possessed to speak.

Second - having established communication with the demon, the exorcist would then have to find out the demon's name, like what Jesus did in Mark 5 when Jesus asked the possessed man's his name, the possessed man replied legion, for we are many.

Jesus then knew that there were many demons in this man, however he was not told each and every individuals name, he simply cast the lot out.

Jesus did not have to even ask this man his demons name, but maybe it was recorded for our benefit, especially now that we know the requirements that the Jewish establishment, being the Priest, Pharisees, Lawyers and Rabbis had placed upon recognizing the true Messiah. The Jewish establishment were themselves powerless to cast out any demon, unless they first knew its name
And that was the third requirement, once the exorcist had established the demons name, he could only by the use of that name cast out the demon.

So, by their own standard that was set out plainly for them to follow, unless they established communication with the demon and then found out the name of the demon, they were powerless to cast the demon out. And by their own standards, a dumb demon would have been impossible to have been cast out from a person who was possessed. This was only something that the Messiah could do and they just witnessed Jesus casting out a dumb demon, yet they decided to deny that Jesus was the Messiah.

**Now the third Messianic miracle.
Which is Healing a person who was born blind.**

There have been many reports of people who were blind, who suddenly for some unknown reason regained their eyesight. However, there had never been anyone ever recorded or heard of who had been born blind who had somehow miraculously received their eye sight back. Therefore, it was the decision of the Priests Pharisees, Lawyers and Rabbis that no one could cure this type of blindness except the Messiah himself.

This miracle was recorded by John only in John 9:1-41
And John goes into quite some detail to record the healing of this blind man

When Jesus saw this blind man, he was asked by his disciples a twofold question. One "who did sin this man. and two, or his parents that he was born blind?"

The latter part of the question quite obviously relates directly to Exodus 34:7 which says. *Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty: visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.*

However, Jesus response must have taken his disciples completely by surprise. In John 9:3 Jesus answered *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

The result of being blind could have been the direct result of this man's parents, or his grandparents or his grandparent's parent' sin. But Jesus tells them that it was not because of any sin that this man himself had done, or any sin that his family had committed. This man was born blind for a special reason. And that reason we can now understand better because of Jesus own words.

Jesus said, *but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.* However, the disciples question about sin and this man's blindness went a lot deeper, especially the first part, "who did sin, this man" inferring that the blind man sinned before he was even born, which caused his blindness. Jesus knew exactly where this question had come from that is why he set his disciples straight.

According to Pharisaic Judaism teaching, at the point of conception a fetus has 2 inclinations. In Hebrew they are called Yetzer ra, which means the evil inclination and the Yetzer tov, being the good inclination. They believe that these 2 inclinations are already present in the new human being which has just been conceived in the womb. Sometime during the 9 month development period there is a struggle going on in the mothers womb; this struggle is for the control of which inclination the baby will follow and at some point during this 9 month period the evil inclination got the better of the fetus and in a spate of animosity or anger towards the mother the developing baby may have kicked the mother. For this act of sin or animosity the child was born blind. This is the view that the disciples were taught and that is why they asked that question.

And that is why I feel that Jesus set the straight. Jesus quickly dispelled this teaching by saying *but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

This man was born blind through the power of God so that through this man's blindness Jesus would accomplish 3 things. Jesus would cure him of his blindness and in doing so fulfil the third requirement of the 3 Messianic miracles and also through this miracle bring glory to God's glorious name.

of the three Messianic miracles this one is the most well planned and thought out miracle. First, this miracle took place on a high Sabbath day, not just an ordinary Sabbath. Second, this miracle held even more greater significance because Jesus opened this man's eyes during the Feast of Tabernacles, and one more important point, this miracle was performed on the last great day of the Feast.

Just hours before Jesus performed this fantastic miracle Jesus stood during the night portion of the holy Sabbath. This is something that we tend to forget when reading the Bible. I feel that Jesus stood beside one of the two huge light towers that illuminated the temple like daylight and spoke the words "*I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*".

The reason that there were two huge tower lamps is that one represented the pillar of light that guided Israel in the desert and the other pointed to the coming Messiah.

And while it was still during the night portion of the Last Great Day, sometime either just before daylight, or just after, I feel that Jesus was returning back to the temple after resting on the Mount of Olives and that Jesus may have stood at the very spot on the temple where the priests would soon stand themselves to perform a ceremony connected with the last great day of the feast.

We read in John 7:37-38 *In the last day that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

In the beginning of that verse it clearly said - In the last day, that great day of the feast.

And then further on that same day still during the daylight part of the Last Great day in John 9:14 we read - *And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened the blind man's eyes.*

And after Jesus opened his eyes He again taught before departing to the Jordan where John baptised (this all occurred on the same day). Continue reading through chapter 9 and 10. There is no break in time as all this occurred on the same day, the last great day.

It is not until John 10:40 that we read that Jesus left and went beyond the Jordan where John baptised.

This day being the last great day, and a high Sabbath day, there were no Pharisees or Lawyers present to witness this miracle, however, that was no problem to Jesus because of how Jesus brought this man to their attention. It was absolutely ingenious.

The place where Jesus sent this man to wash the clay out of his eyes was the very place where the Priests and Pharisees would be present themselves.

Jesus sent the blind man to the only pool in Jerusalem being the Pool of Siloam, where the Priests went to gather water from for the special ceremony held on the last great day. This ceremony was called "the outpourings of water" which Jesus spoke about himself as being the living water in John 7:37-38.

With thanks to David Bolshart's web page on Jewish tradition - I copied this article from his page about this ceremony.

On the eighth and final day of the feast, the high priest of Israel, in a great processional made up of priests and tens of thousands of worshipers, descended from the Temple Mount to pause briefly at the Pool of Siloam. A pitcher was filled with water, and the procession continued via a different route back to the Temple Mount. Here, in the midst of a great ceremony, the high priest poured the water out of the pitcher onto the altar.

Jesus knew this because Jesus knew their traditions and ceremonies and Jesus knew exactly at what time and where the high priest, the Pharisees, lawyers and Rabbis would be, right at this pool, that is why Jesus sent the blind man there.

Reading onwards from the miracle we discover that the blind man can now see. Also, the Pharisees were questioning the man to find out if he was really blind from birth, which if he was, again, would confirm that this was indeed a Messianic miracle.

We read in John 9:8-16 that the neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, this is he; others said, he is like him; but he said I am he therefore said they unto him, how were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, a man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, go to the pool of Siloam and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, where is he? He said, I know not.

They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, he put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Therefore, said some of the Pharisees said, *this man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, how can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.*

The "do such miracles" in that verse I feel can only be referring to Messianic miracles.

Continuing on in verses 17-20 *They say unto the blind man again, what sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked the, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, we know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:*

This was all the confirmation the Pharisees needed to know by their own teachings that this was in fact a messianic miracle and therefore the one who performed this miracle was the Messiah himself. And Jesus performed this miracle on the last great day which should have held more significance in the minds of these blind Pharisees.

From this point on Jesus had only about 6 more months to live and instead of believing that Jesus was the Messiah, the priesthood decided to kill him.

Especially after Jesus raised Lazarus. We read in John 11:53 *Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.*

Throughout all that had happened to Jesus, I just love Jesus' sense of humour, even though he was rejected as being the Messiah, and robbed of his rightful glory Jesus knew that he would soon be sentenced to die, so what did Jesus do, and you have to just love this.

Luke 17:11-19 tells us that Jesus healed 10 lepers and sent them to the priests. It was Jesus' way, I suppose, of rubbing salt into the wound.

When we read about Jesus' miracles, unless we understand that some of them held a particular, special meaning, and that Jesus performed them to prove exactly who he was, we simply say to ourselves as I used to do - wow Jesus has done some great miracles.

But to prove to the Sanhedrim, the Jews and to us today that he was the Messiah and that he really did come as prophesied these 3 special miracles had to be performed.

Even though Jesus was rejected almost 2000 years ago by the disbelieving Jews, and sad to say, even today 2000 years further on, there are some who still feel that Jesus was just a man born of a woman. However, we who read the scriptures today, with a believing heart, understand that through the significance of these 3 miracles which prove, without a show of doubt, that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah and that this same Jesus Christ is our savior - God in the flesh.

If we cannot believe that Jesus is the savior of the world then we are as blind as the Pharisees who said to Jesus in John 9:40 *re we blind also?*

Jesus time and time again rebuked the Pharisees and Elders because they followed the traditions of men and they regarded their precious traditions above the law of God and in many cases replaced God's law with their own precious traditions.

Jesus said in Mark 7:13 *Making the word of God of non effect through your traditions, which ye have delivered; and many such like things do ye,*

It is up to us - do we believe in Jesus or are we like the disbelieving Jews and Pharisees who had their heads buried in the sand and were too blind to see.

Jesus said to Thomas *"ye believe because you have seen Blessed are, they that have not seen that believe."*

