

God does not ordinarily do great numbers of miracles though he works providentially all the time. But in certain crucial situations--I think there were about 5 in the Bible--in these situations He poured out numbers of miracles in order that his work would remain and continue to have its effect in the world.

The great thing about the Bible is not the wonderful miracles in it. That is important. Of course the greatest miracle of all is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus lived an absolutely perfect life. He lived a life that we should follow in his steps. But most of us are following a long distance behind. The important thing about Jesus is not his example. The important thing is what he did for us in his death on Calvary; s cross to bear our sins. He lived a perfect life and gave us a wonderful example. That perfect life was not so much to set us an example that we should follow in his steps as to prove that he was the perfect lamb of God, the one who was worthy by his death that he did not deserve for his own sins, that he was worthy by his death to bear the sins of all who believe on his name.

But aside from the Lord Jesus Christ practically every individual in the Bible is presented as a human being with good qualities and bad qualities. The Bible gives a marvellously ~~xxxxx~~ balanced picture. In fact I think one of the great evidences of the truth of Scripture is the fact that here is a book--let's take the OT, I'm speaking particularly of that now--here is a book which is the national banner of the people. A book which that people idolizes and venerates; a book which gives the history of that people and yet a book which shows their errors and their faults as hardly any book that any nation has ever published has done about that nation.

Most nations try to hide the criticism of the nation and people. Most nations, at least until very recently, have tended just to praise everything about their nation and tried to forget there was anything that was not perfect about it. But you could hunt the world over and not find any other nation that treasures and considers as vital for its ~~xx~~ nation a book that speaks so scathingly of the sin and evil and wickedness of the people of that nation as the OT does of the people of Israel. That's a miracle. That God so lead that these people would preserve and honor a book that book that spoke so about their nation.

So the Bible presents aside from the Lord Jesus Christ, aside from him it presents people who are sinners, and it shows their good qualities and their bad qualities and it hides nothing. And among those people I think one who in many ways sets a tremendous example for us is Jonah. It is unfortunate that the impression Jonah should make on the Christian world is to some extent blunted by the great amount of argument about the one great miracle in the book. The miracle isn't that the fish swallowed-- some have tried to prove that the whale could not have a big enough throat to swallow any man. It does not say that its a whale. And there are cases where ~~x~~ in a whale's body there has been found a man in full armour that had been swallowed by it!