

# A Scientist Looks at the Miracles of Jesus

by H. Tracy Hall\*

It would be audacious for a scientist to attempt to explain the miracles of Jesus. The "how," the "mechanism," or the "working details" by which they were accomplished are simply unknown to us. A miracle is an event that cannot be explained by principles currently understood by man. Certainly, electric lights, nylon, atomic-powered ships, and orbiting satellites—if transported back to George Washington's day—would be miracles to him and his contemporaries. It follows that as we advance along the pathway of time and strive towards the perfection our Father in heaven holds out as being available to all his children, the understanding of how Jesus performed His miracles should become known to us.

## Man's Knowledge Small Compared With Jesus'

Regardless of the fact that we may not understand the principles by which certain things are accomplished, we are blessed by them every day. Most people do not understand the detailed workings of automobiles, telephones, radios, color film, or even the lock to a door. Yet this ignorance does not prevent us from taking advantage of the convenience, and enjoying the blessings these things offer. To operate an extremely complicated (in its internal workings) television set and observe events happening thousands of miles away within a fraction of a second after they occur, it is necessary only to switch a button to "on," turn a knob to a desired channel, and perhaps adjust a volume control. This may even be accomplished while sitting in an easy chair across the room from the set, by means of a tiny, hand-held device that transmits instructions to the TV by remote control, with signals inaudible to the human ear and invisible to the human eye.

Compared with the knowledge possessed by Jesus, man's knowledge is very, very small. Man uses complex, elaborate, and cumbersome procedures (in the light of the Lord's knowledge) to accom-

plish things that Jesus can do by simple command. For example, some small measure of calming a rough sea can be accomplished by pouring thousands of gallons of oil upon the waters. Such a procedure is messy, only partially effective, a fire hazard, and temporary. At one point in Jesus' ministry, He entered a ship with His disciples. While He slept, there arose a great tempest, and the ship was covered by the waves.

*And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, what manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him. (Matthew 8:25-27.)*

By the simple command: "Arise, take up thy bed" (*Matthew 9:6*); "Be thou clean" (*Matthew 8:3*); "Hold thy peace, and come out of him" (*Mark 1:25*); "Peace, be still" (*Mark 4:39*), Jesus healed a man with palsy, cured a leper, removed an evil spirit, and calmed an angry sea.

## We Enjoy Blessings Without Understanding

Just as the ordinary man needs no knowledge of technical details concerning the principles of electricity, light, heat, chemistry, physics, mechanics, nucleonics, etc., to enjoy the fruits of these things (airplanes, stereo, refrigeration, computers, penicillin, etc), neither does any man need to understand the technical details by which Jesus wrought His miracles to enjoy the blessings of these and related things.

Let there be no misunderstanding—as a scientist with an inquiring mind I would very much like to know the detailed principles by which Jesus' miracles were performed. I assume that by living His Gospel according to His laws, the day will come when it will be possible to know them. However, I must

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JESUS STILLING THE STORM

emphasize that our Father in heaven has made available to us the fruits of principles known to Him, without our having to possess His knowledge. They are made available by a simple key called *faith*.

"Thy faith hath made thee whole" (*Matthew* 9:22), "According to your faith be it unto you" (*Matthew* 9:29), said Jesus as He healed the sick and gave sight to the blind.

To acquire faith is obviously important. On one occasion the apostles said to Jesus, "Increase our

faith." Jesus' response was somewhat of a rebuke and implied that faith was something to be earned, not given. He said,

*... If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. (Luke 17:6.)*

At another time He said that if his disciples had faith as small as a grain of mustard seed, they could move mountains. (*Matthew* 17:20.)

#### Faith, the Miracle Worker

The Articles of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints indicate that the first principle of the Gospel is faith. It can be developed and increased by recognizing and repenting of our sins, by living the commandments and Gospel principles, by prayer and by fasting. This is an experiment that can be performed by scientist and non-scientist alike and will increase the faith of both. Faith comes only through righteous living and can be used only for righteous purposes.

Jesus' miracles were performed out of compassion for the unfortunate and to demonstrate, at the appropriate time and circumstance, His power and authority, and to make known that this power (at least in part) was available to His disciples.

Jesus' greatest miracle was His own resurrection, following His crucifixion, wherein He atoned for the sins of mankind and made it possible for each mortal to rise someday from the grave, in a reuniting of body and spirit. Furthermore, those who keep all His commandments will gain eternal life and dwell with Him and our Heavenly Father in realms of indescribable beauty, love, peace, glory, understanding, and satisfaction.

Like the complicated, inner workings of a television set, the atonement and resurrection may be mysteries to us, but the benefits are available to all who will learn the simple principles for putting them into operation. Foremost among them is the principle of *faith*.

Library File Reference: Jesus Christ—Miracles.