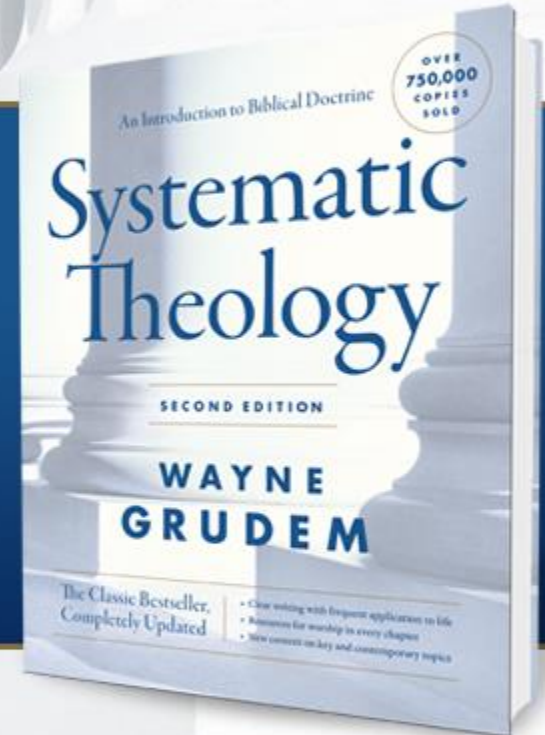


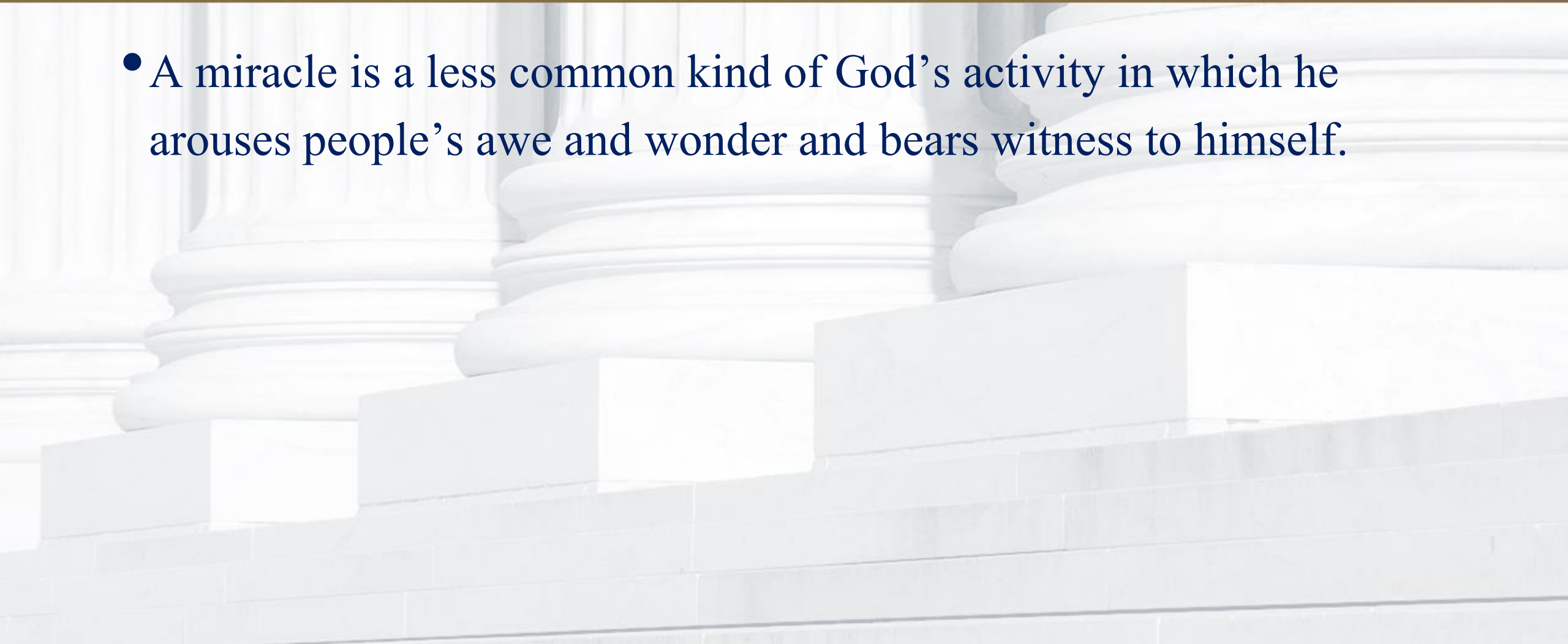
Miracles

Chapter 17



Definition

- A miracle is a less common kind of God's activity in which he arouses people's awe and wonder and bears witness to himself.



Definition

- Other definitions fail:
 - *Direct intervention of God* – But God is always involved in the world; he does not only intervene occasionally.
 - *God working in the world without means* – But the miracles recorded always include some means.
 - *An exception to natural law* – But natural laws do not operate independently of God.
 - And many others like these...

Miracles as Characteristic of the New Covenant Age

- Jesus' miraculous signs attested that he had come from God. (Jn 2:11; 3:2; Acts 2:22)
- In the early church, the apostles and others did amazing miracles that confirmed the gospel. (Acts 2:43; 8:6–8; 9:40–42; etc)
- Miracles even occurred in churches without apostles present. (Gal 3:5; 1 Cor 12:10, 28)
- In the OT, miracles seemed to occur primarily in connection with one prominent leader at a time.

The Purposes of Miracles

- To authenticate the message of the gospel and to give evidence that God is truly at work. (Jn 3:2; Heb 2:4)
- To bear witness to the fact that the kingdom of God has come and has begun to expand its beneficial results into people's lives. (Matt 12:28)

The Purposes of Miracles

- To help those who are in need. (Matt 20:30–34)
- To remove hindrances to people's ministries. (Matt 8:15; Acts 9:36–42)
- To bring glory to God. (Matt 9:8; Jn 9:3)

Were Miracles Restricted to the Apostles?

1. **An Unusual Concentration of Miracles in the Apostles' Ministry** (Acts 5:12–16; 19:11–12)

- But Acts 6:8, 1 Corinthians 12:4–11, 28 and Galatians 3:5 seem to indicate that others also worked miracles.

2. **What Are the “Signs of an Apostle” in 2 Corinthians 12:12?**

- This passage presents these as distinct from the “signs and wonders and mighty works.”
- Paul describes many other things that mark him as a true apostle. (2 Cor 10:3-4, 8-11; 11:1-11, 20–29; 12:1–10)

Were Miracles Restricted to the Apostles?

3. **Norman Geisler's Restrictive Definition of Miracles.**

- 1) Always successful (but see Matt 17:14–21)
- 2) Immediate (but see Mk 8:24–25)
- 3) Have no relapses (but Lazarus died again)
- 4) Confirm God's messenger

Were Miracles Restricted to the Apostles?

4. **Hebrews 2:3–4:** Does this text restrict miracles to apostles?
5. **Conclusion:** Were Miracles Restricted to the Apostles? No.

False Miracles

- False miracles exist. (Ex 8:7; Acts 16:16; 2 Thess 2:9-10; Rev 13:11-14)
- We can reach two conclusions from Scripture:
 - 1) God's power is greater than Satan's power to work miraculous signs, and God's people triumph in confrontations of power with those who work evil.
 - 2) Workers of false miracles are always known through their denial of the gospel. Scripture never indicates that genuine Christians with the Holy Spirit in them ever work false miracles.

Should Christians Seek Miracles Today?

- Not for advancement, fame, entertainment, or a reason to criticize preachers of the gospel. (Acts 8:21–22; Lk 23:8; Matt 16:1–4)
- Yet, there is nothing wrong in seeking miracles:
 - To confirm the gospel message
 - To help those in need
 - To remove hindrances to ministry
 - To bring glory to God

Special Terms

- cessationist
- mighty work
- miracle
- natural law
- sign
- signs of a true apostle
- wonder