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 Faith Bible Church
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<http://fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (31)
 ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTION #22
 (DDR #650)

Objection #22: There was no Jewish expectation in the first century that the Messiah would be a great miracle worker, so all of Jesus' alleged miracles were of no interest to the first-century Jewish leaders, and they are of no interest to me.

Michael Brown's short response:

I think you are misinformed, and I don't believe you are being honest with yourself. First, there most definitely *was* first century Jewish expectation concerning a miracle-working Messiah, in keeping with the predictions of the biblical prophets. Second, if you understood that Jesus the Messiah really did heal the sick, open blind eyes, and raise the dead, and that he is still performing miracles, I think this *would* be of considerable interest to you.¹

With regard to Christ doing miracles today (Christ still performs miracles in answer to prayer although the spiritual gift of healing no longer exists), it is easy for someone to *say* that miracles do not concern them. I submit that it is far different for someone to witness a miracle. If your child was fatally ill, and you prayed and Christ healed her, it would most certainly *interest* you. If you lived in the first century and a member of your family died, and Christ came and raised her from the dead, I guarantee the impact would be life changing—you would never forget it. It is one thing to say that miracles “are of no interest,” it is something else to witness something miraculous—or very powerful. It is easy for someone to say if they were in a tornado, hurricane, or earthquake, they would not be afraid; however, it is far different to actually be in

¹Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections*, 1ST ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), see 98-101 for his full response to this objection. In this work, Brown lists the objection and then gives a short response, which is followed by a more developed response. This DDR series, for the most part, tracks the objection and his *short* response, after which you will find my comments. I highly recommend his book if you are interested in his longer responses (there is far too much material to include in the DDRs).

one of these and not be *moved*. Someone who says that they are not afraid of an earthquake, tornado, or earthquake, never “rode” one out.

While a miracle does not prove divine approval (Satan performs miracles, which will deceive those who do not love Bible doctrine, 1 Thess. 4:7-10), it is naïve to think that they are “of no interest.” All miracles testify to supernatural power (divine or demonic), and they always have some powerful effect.

Regarding the notion that there was “no Jewish expectation in the first century that the Messiah would be a great miracle worker,” this is simply not true. We can see such expectation in Christ’s response when He was asked if He was the Messiah:

Luke 7:20 And when the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?'" ²¹ At that very time He cured many *people* of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He granted sight to many *who were* blind. ²² And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: *the* blind receive sight, *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed, and *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised up, *the* poor have the gospel preached to them. ²³ "And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me [quotation of Isaiah 35].

In Brown’s larger response, he provides a citation from the Dead Sea Scrolls which contain words almost identical to those in the above passage. He also discusses the miracles in the Old Testament Messianic passages of Isaiah 35 and 61. Following this discussion, Brown notes descriptions of the Messianic age of miracles in Talmudic literature. This literature is very early (before later Talmudic literature, in reaction to the well-known first century knowledge of Christ’s miracles, begins to put more emphasis on the Messiah as a teacher or warrior). As later Judaism develops, it develops away from distinct Messianic miracles. Furthermore, because of the priestly ministry of Jesus and the rise of Christianity, Judaism also later ignored Old Testament teaching on the priestly ministry of Messiah.

It is also worth noting that up to this very day when certain Jewish sects believe that their Rebbe is the Messiah, they point to his alleged miracles. In sum, we have expectation of a miracle working Messiah in the gospels, in early Talmudic literature, and also among Jewish sects who cite miracles as proof that their Rebbe is the Messiah.

Priest Hargrove

(We are all priests, not for others, but for ourselves)

Revelation 1:6 and He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.