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God of Creation – God of Miracles

By Everett Coates

As scientific creationists we can, if we are not careful, become focused on our main issue of the historical and scientific accuracy of the Creation/Fall/Flood/Tower of Babel account of Genesis 1–11 to the point that we fail to remember that our greater mission is to uphold the authority of the entire Bible. But our underlying and greatest mission as believers in Jesus is to make disciples as we go into the world. That was the last of all the commands of our Lord Jesus that we are to obey. Our effort to uphold the truth of Genesis is only one important tool that helps Christians to effectively present the gospel as being a reasonable thing for the world to believe by faith. It can enable that world which has been completely cursed by sin and “reconfigured” by paganism, postmodernism, and all sorts of other “isms,” to see that the Bible is true and that it is relevant not only to modern life but ultimately to eternity.

We should always remember that God never changes. Hebrews 13:8 says that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Colossians 1:15 tells us that Jesus is “the image of the invisible God,” meaning that because Jesus is the image of God, what is true of Him as God the Son is also true of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. There are many other Old and New Testament scriptures that clearly present the immutability of God.

Since we are biblical and scientific creationists, we accept as true the miraculous creation of the universe from nothing, including life on earth, and all brought into being by the word (Hebrew “dabar,” which also is translated “speech”) of God. God spoke and the universe of space, time, and matter/energy came into existence instantly where nothing had existed before. We also accept that, although the Bible is not a science textbook, wherever it speaks about the physical world, if there is scientific evidence that bears on what it says, the scientific evidence and the Bible will be seen to agree. And they do. Science has verified many physical aspects of the earth (such as ocean currents and the earth’s sphericity) and the universe (such as the vast number of stars) that were recorded in scripture long before verification was even possible. Genesis contains just the first of many accounts of miraculous events in Scripture, the most important of which is our miraculous salvation to eternal life when we repent of our sins and place our faith in the crucifixion, sacrificial and substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

The New Testament also presents many miracles of healing both by Jesus and by the apostles as they made disciples.

But for some reason, over the last two or three centuries, the church in western countries, especially the US, has lost the belief in the reality of miracles, which is significant since miracles were such a major attestation to the truth of the gospel in the early church. In his two-volume work entitled *Miracles, the Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* Craig S. Keener, PhD makes the scholarly case from scripture and secular history of the continued reality of miracles. He chronicles many hundreds of miracle accounts, both in third-world countries as well as in the US and other western nations, many having medical verification, up to nearly the date of the book’s publication in 2011. In many of the cases, people who were involved with the miracle but who were not believers in Jesus at the time have been saved as a result. So apparently miracles are still attesting to the gospel. Keener believes that the secular humanistic “Enlightenment” of the 18th century, especially the writings of David Hume, soon caused the intellectuals within the church to dismiss the reality of miracles. He also believes that that intellectual dismissal has poisoned the thinking of individual Christians to the present day. Many times I have heard preachers say that miracles stopped with the end of the apostolic age of the church. Is that true? If so, when and why did God change, in contradiction to scripture? Keener’s work demonstrates that miracles are still a reality. With or without supporting scholarship, I stand with the Word of God and say that He has not changed and that miracles do still occur. I have personal knowledge of several.

I will start with a situation that occurred in our church a couple of years ago. A young man was diagnosed with stage IV (advanced, metastatic) colon cancer, and following surgery he was placed on long-term chemotherapy to attempt to slow the progression of the tumors that had spread to many parts of his body. A number of months into that treatment, in obedience to the Holy Spirit’s instructions in James 5:14-15, he called for the elders to anoint him with oil and pray over him. Two or three months later nothing had changed except that over the course of one month certain parameters in his blood tests had dropped, so much so that the chemotherapy treatment could not be safely administered for two months in a

row. At that point the doctors told the young man there was nothing else they could do and that he didn't have much time left to live. But on the third visit to the doctor after receiving that news, a body scan revealed that he was completely cancer free! His doctor, also a Christian, told him that God had healed the cancer since there was no medical reason he could attribute it to. I firmly believe that the Holy Spirit led this young man to call the elders just so God could show the members of my church that He indeed had not changed and that miracles are still a part of the gospel.

But several situations that I personally have experienced, several of which would be quickly dismissed by skeptics as mere coincidences, I believe were interventions by God. I will let the reader decide about those events. However, the last one I will describe can be nothing other than a miracle because, in my opinion, a law of nature seems to have been momentarily suspended resulting in my life being spared.

The first was probably the least "spectacular" of God's interventions. While my youngest daughter was in high school, a young male friend of hers through Fellowship of Christian Athletes would meet us for lunch on Saturdays and then come over to our house since he would be alone if he went home. I taught him how to use my wood lathe to make a gift for his father. Often, after eating, he and I would walk down the street and pass out creation gospel tracts. One Saturday I forgot to do that but remembered it a couple of hours later while we were at our house. So the young man and I got into my truck and drove back down town. I had a habit of putting my truck into four-wheel drive to prevent throwing gravel on my sloping driveway. After arriving on Main Street, I heard an ice cream truck nearby that was playing Christmas songs—it was mid-summer so the songs struck me as odd—and seeing no one there to talk to, I drove out to a nearby park. Just after we pulled into the parking lot, the ice cream truck (still playing the same songs) also pulled in and parked, so we got out to get some ice cream. I gave a tract to the young man driving the ice cream truck and spoke with him a few moments until others came up. When we got back in the truck I noticed that the four-wheel drive was still engaged. I knew immediately that God was involved because in *every* occasion, before or since, when I forgot to disengage the four-wheel drive, the steering and manual transmission immediately seized up when all four tires were on the pavement. I could only coast back onto my gravel driveway, which allowed the tension in the front transfer case to release so I could steer and shift again. *Every* occasion. Yet on this occasion I had driven five or six miles with not even the slightest difficulty in steering or shifting. God had intervened, I am convinced, so that my daughter's friend could see that He was still in the miracle business and possibly just so the ice cream truck driver could be exposed to the gospel and the truth of Genesis. But that was just a fluke coincidence, right?

On another occasion I had left a TASC board meeting to drive back home. That particular day there was a severe thunderstorm in full force along with a tornado warning. As I drove very slowly along the interstate highway, I was asking God to let me know if I needed to stop. As I approached each overpass, I saw that they were occupied by other vehicles that had been pulled off the road—that actually is not a good idea in the event of a tornado. As I came up to another overpass, I saw that it was unoccupied. I felt a strong sense that I should stop, so I pulled over. A large work truck of some type pulled up right behind me, which blocked the wind from hitting my truck directly. Within a minute of stopping, the wind started blowing with a strength I had not seen since Hurricane Fran. Within another minute, the force of the wind dropped again, and I pulled back onto the interstate. No more than about a mile down the road, I saw where the tornado had just crossed, heading northeast. A quick mental math calculation told me that if I had not stopped, both the tornado and I would have gotten to that point at about the same time. Just another coincidence?

But the last event I will describe is a bit more difficult to dismiss as random or coincidental. Several years before the first event I described above, I was working in my shop on Saturday. I had just bought a new table saw and was using it to rip a short piece of wood so I could put it on my lathe to turn a candlestick. One of the few things I learned from my father was that safety features on power tools and machines are in the way and are to be removed—just like parking under an overpass in a tornado, removing a safety feature is a bad idea—so I had removed the kickback prevention device. Now this saw is a contractor's saw and has a very powerful motor, which turns at 3600 revolutions per minute. I was using the rip fence to get a straight cut on the block. However, I had not checked to be sure that the fence was perfectly parallel with the blade. That is important because if they are not parallel the fence can push the piece of wood against the spinning blade causing the blade to kick it out. That is the reason for the prevention device.

Pushing the piece of wood using a push stick placed my face about two feet away from the blade. As the near end of the wood passed the cutting edge of the blade I had an unusual sense of things somehow slowing down and the thought crossed my mind that the piece of wood was binding. In literally the next instant, I was standing just to the side of the table saw; and my hand, still holding the push stick, was where my face had just been. The block of wood I was ripping kicked back and hit my wrist, causing a cut. I turned off the saw and stood there for a moment as I slowly thought through what had just occurred. After putting a bandage on the cut I took a few minutes to run through some calculations. Using the revolutions per minute of the blade, the 10-inch blade diameter, and the distance from the blade to my face, I came to the result that if the block had come off the saw at anything close to the speed of the blade rotation, it would have taken less

than 0.02 seconds to travel the two feet to my face; and if I had still been standing where I had been the instant before, the impact of the wood block would have crushed the front of my skull, almost certainly killing me. For a man my age—I was about 55 at the time—I was reasonably quick, but I have never been that quick! I doubt that I would have even had the time to think about the wood binding, much less move out of the way. But not only did I move, but my arm got to the place where my face had been before the block got there in order to be hit with enough force to cut it! My conclusion was that in that instant God slowed or momentarily stopped time and moved me out of the way but still allowed me to be struck so that the resulting scar would be a constant reminder that God still performs miracles.

Those things did not happen because I have some special place in God's plan of action in the world; I am a very ordinary member of His kingdom. I have no idea why God chose to show the members of my church fellowship (in the case of the young man's healing from cancer) and me (in the case of His personal interventions) that He still performs miracles. I just know that He did, and it may prove to be very important for us to remember those events at some point in the future. I became a Christian a number of years before all of those events so, to my knowledge, neither I nor anyone else was saved as a result. But I am convinced beyond even a mere shadow of a doubt that God is the same as He has been from eternity past and will be until eternity future and that He loves us beyond anyone's ability to describe. His power is just as great now as it was at the first moment of creation. And He still demonstrates His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). ☞

COMING EVENTS

**Thursday, June 14, 7:00 pm, Providence Baptist Church,
6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, Room 207**

Everett Coates will present a DVD by Spike Psarris entitled *Our Created Universe*. It will reveal the numerous scientific fallacies underlying the Big Bang Theory and why the creation account in Genesis more satisfactorily explains the existence of everything we see.