

Take-Home: Deep-Dive, Wouldn't a Miracle Convince Me?

WHAT WE FOUND

We tested the demand for one undeniable sign against Scripture's own case files. The Exodus generation lived inside daily public miracles and built the golden calf weeks after Sinai; God's own summary stands in Numbers 14:11: how long will they not believe, in spite of all the signs? The raising of Lazarus, a public sign with witnesses, led some to believe and moved others to plot the death of both Jesus and the man he raised. And Jesus's verdict closes the parable of the rich man: if they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead. Miracles are real evidence, and the Church still stakes weight on them; but these passages show that even striking signs do not necessarily produce free faith, because the God who wants love ordinarily invites rather than compels. The absence of a compulsion-sign is only evidence against a God who would compel.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

From his *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, in substance: the daily government of the universe is a greater miracle than feeding five thousand, but familiarity has dulled our wonder. We sleep inside a standing miracle.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

In substance, from the *Summa Theologiae* (II-II, q. 5): the demons believe, compelled by what they cannot deny, and it is no virtue and saves them nothing. Compelled assent is not faith, and no spectacle can force the assent love commands.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS

From *Against Heresies* (Book IV): God made man free from the beginning, and there is no coercion with God: he persuades and invites but does not compel; wanting, in this study's gloss of his argument, sons rather than slaves.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Once a day, name one ordinary standing miracle out loud or on paper: something constant you have stopped seeing. Wonder is a discipline before it is a feeling.
- If you have ever prayed for a sign and gotten silence, tell God, honestly, what that did to you. That conversation is overdue and he can bear it.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” John 20:29 (RSV2CE)

GOING FURTHER

Read Psalm 78 this month: Israel preaching the wilderness lesson to its own children, so the pattern would not repeat.

CATECHISM REFERENCES

CCC 156; 548; 549.