

1

A Study on the Miracles of Jesus

	Introduction and Table of Contents
1	-- An Introduction to Biblical Miracles
2	-- The Nature of Miracles
3	-- The Healing of the Sick
4	-- Casting Out Demons
5	-- Raising the Dead
6	-- Miracles Involving Jesus

**Produced by:
Brian Dowler**

2008

Lesson One

"An Introduction to Biblical Miracles"

What is a "miracle"? How would you define it?

Possible definitions include:

- An act of God, superseding or suspending a natural law
- A supernatural manifestation of divine power in the external world
- A special revelation of the power and presence of God (Although we are for the sake of this study not considering prophecies to be "miracles"...))
- Good definition: *"An event in the physical world enabled by the immediate power of God and intended as a sign or manifestation."*

What are some terms used to describe these types of events?

- Wonders/Amazing (Mk 2:12, Acts 2:22, 43)
- Signs (Heb 2:4, Jn 3:2, 6:2)
- Miracles (Luke 19:37, Jn 14:11)
- Mighty Works or Mighty Deeds (Deut 3:24, 2 Cor 12:12, Mt 7:22, 11:20)

Miracles in the Old Testament

- Manifested by individuals – only during two specific times
 - Moses and Aaron – events surrounding deliverance from Egypt [plagues (Ex 8-12); water from rock (Ex 17:5-7); water of Marah sweetened (Ex 15:23-25)]
 - Elijah and Elisha [Widow's meal and son raised (I Kings 17); dividing Jordan (2 Kings 2), etc.]
- First Occasion – Deliverance (Exodus) from Egypt
- Second Occasion – Within a Theocracy (a form of government in which God is recognized as the supreme civil ruler) – confirming that Elijah and Elisha were bringing direct commands from God – "credentials". This was a "last ditch, all stops" effort by God to allow repentance of Israel – which was rejected, leading to captivity.
- All other OT miracles are miraculous works performed directly by God [Burning bush (Ex 3:2); sun stands still (Josh 10:12-14); Daniel in the Lion's Den (Dan 6:16-23), etc.]

- The last recorded OT miracle was Jonah in the belly of the fish (Jonah 2:1-10), about 800 BC – So it had been 800 years since miracles had been performed when Jesus came to earth (and 900 years since Elisha, ~ 1500 since Moses).

Categories of Miracles

- Power over nature (walking on water, water to wine)
- Bodily Healings (power over disease and sickness)
- People raised from the dead (power over death itself)
- God communicating with man (Burning bush, Ex 3:2; Balaam's donkey, Numbers 22:21-35)
- Defeating enemies of people of God (Jericho, Joshua 6:20; Assyrians, 2 Kings 19:35)
- Punishments (70 men of Bethshemesh, 1 Sam 6:19; Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 6:5-11)

Purposes of Miracles

- Judgment or punishment (Herod, Acts 12:23)
- Confirm a message (Acts 14:3)
- Confirm messengers (Mark 16:17-20; Heb 2:3-4)
- Bring faith (Thomas, Jn 20:26-28) *via confirmation*
 - Jesus showed his messianic link (Isa 42:7, 62:1)
 - Demonstrated his love and compassion for mankind (Jn 13:34)
 - Showed he was from the Father (Jn 5:36; 9:3-4)

Duration of Miracles

- Miracles were primarily clustered into three distinct periods
 - Moses and Aaron (Exodus)
 - Elijah and Elisha
 - Jesus and the Apostles
- Now that the Word has been confirmed – the need for miracles has ceased (I Cor 13:8-13)
- Eph 4:11-14 – Purpose and duration described
- Miraculous gifts imparted by laying on of the apostles hands (Acts 8:14-18; 19:6; Rom 1:11; 2 Tim 1:6)
 - Ceased with the death of Apostles
 - The apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit
 - Today there is one baptism – of water (Eph 4:5)

Discuss whether the following are to be considered miracles:

1. Prophecies (2 Pet 1:20-21)
2. Strength of Samson (Judges 16:28)
3. David killing Goliath (I Sam 17:48-50)
4. Israelites clothes not wearing out (Deut 8:4, also Ex 12:34)
5. Amorites driven out by hornets (Josh 24:12)
6. Uzzah dies after touching the Ark (2 Samuel 6:6-8)
7. Spiritual gifts (I Cor 12:7-11)
8. Someone recovers from sickness after many prayers
9. Work of Angels, communication from angels

Note: There are many such instances in the Bible, which involve God's hand, but may not meet the "strict" definition of a miracle. Sometimes it is difficult to know where to "draw the line" between what is considered a Miracle and what is not. Sometimes God may answer prayers via natural means (healing) that do not clearly display His divine power to believers and to unbelievers.

For the most part, in this study we will be reviewing events that are clearly divine miracles that supersede natural laws. True miracles in the Bible were often acknowledged as such by non-believers as well as believers.

Summary

- A miracle is an act of God, superseding or suspending a natural law
- There are different types or categories of miracles
- Miracles performed through Jesus and men were primarily healings, with some power over nature or raising of the dead
- God directly performed miracles such as defeating armies, punishments, communicating with men
- Now that the new covenant has been confirmed, miracles have ceased.

In our next lesson, we begin our focus on the miracles of Jesus.

Jn 20:30-31

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

THE LAND OF PALESTINE AT THE TIME OF JESUS OF NAZARETH



Lesson Two

"The Nature Miracles"

Listing of the Nature Miracles

Water Made into Wine: Jn 2:1-11.

The Tempest Stilled: Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25.

Five Thousand Fed: Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:34-44; Luke 9:12-17; Jn 6:1-15.

Jesus Walks on the Water: Matt. 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; Jn 6:16-21.

Four Thousand Fed: Matt. 15:32-38; Mark 8:1-9.

Tribute Money Provided: Matt. 17:24-28.

The Fig Tree Cursed: Matt. 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-25.

The First Catch of Fish: Luke 5:1-11.

The Second Catch of Fish: Jn 21: 1-14.

Water Made into Wine: Jn 2:1-11.

- Shortly after baptism of Jesus, when he received the Holy Spirit (Jn 1:32-34)
- Cana is near Nazareth

The Wedding

- The bride or bridegroom was likely a friend or relative of Mary and Jesus
- The consumption of wine was part of entertaining guests
 - Sometimes diluted with water to reduce alcoholic content
 - Societal rules made intoxication unacceptable
- The diminished supply of wine would cause embarrassment and great financial expense

Jesus and Mary

- “Woman” was a term of endearment and respect at that time
- The words Jesus spoke were intended to make it clear to Mary that there was now a change in their relationship
 - The mother had to acknowledge Jesus as her Master just like everyone else
 - She was a sinner in need of a savior

- She had no more claim on him than anyone else. Simeon - “a sword will pierce your own soul too...” Luke 2:35

“My Time Has Not Yet Come”

- The time for working miracles...
- The time for working publicly
- Mary kept her hope in Christ’s mercy, that he would help her

The Working of the Miracle

- Each water pot had the capacity for 20-30 gallons
- There was no magic formula, words, display of power, gesture, or sleight of hand
- Normally the making of good wine takes a long time – in this case it happened immediately
- It fooled the headwaiter – who was surprised to find the best wine saved to the last of the banquet!

The Result of the Miracle

- Jesus provides a fitting gift for the newlyweds
- This was the first miracle performed by Jesus
- Jesus turned his five disciples into believers (Jn 2:11)
- Jesus starts to take center stage and increases his reputation

Discussion

Why did Jesus work this miracle if “His time had not yet come”?

How do the healing miracles of Jesus differ from those of so-called faith healers today?

- Healing occurred immediately
- Visible effects such as restoring a withered hand

Discuss the symbolic nature of this miracle – paralleled with the celestial wedding banquet at the end of time. (Jn 3:27-30; Rev 19:7)

- Jesus the Bridegroom
- The Church the bride

Jesus wishes to be present at every wedding:

- Desires to be the head of every family
- Is an unseen guest at every meal
- Jesus blesses marriages that rely on Him for their direction

The Tempest Stilled: [Matt. 8:23-27](#); [Mark 4:35-41](#); [Luke 8:22-25](#)

Jesus was tired after a long day of teaching, healing, and being thronged by the crowds. He was no doubt physically and mentally exhausted. At the end of the day, Jesus boarded a fishing vessel, and told his disciples to head from the western shore to the other side, a Gentile area that most Jews avoided. Having displayed amazing stamina all day long, Jesus now fell asleep.

The Location

- Sea of Galilee (8 miles West to East)
- Surrounded by high hills, and below sea level – receives water from melting snow on Mt. Hermon to north
- Cool mountain air can sweep in toward hot air over the lake – making sudden storms develop
- Storm waves 6 feet high can suddenly arise
- The disciples (some were fishermen...) feared for their lives

Jesus Response

- The frightened disciples awoke him
- He rebuked the wind, told the waves to be quiet and still
- The lake became calm
- He asked his disciples why they were afraid

The Disciples Were Awestruck

- Had witnessed a miracle of amazing power
- Were saved from a frightening predicament
- “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” – they went from being amazed at the act (water to wine) to being amazed at the man!
- They now realized that Jesus was both human and divine.

Discussion

- Was there a purpose to this miracle in addition to saving them from peril?
- Were the disciples rebuked for their fear, or their lack of faith?
- Read Psalm 107:23-30 – discuss in light of this miracle
- Does fear indicate a lack of faith?
 - Fear drives away faith; faith abolishes fear
 - Fear should drive us to Jesus, not away from Him

Points to Ponder from Other Nature Miracles

Feeding the Five Thousand

- This miracle portrays Jesus as meeting the physical as well as the spiritual needs of his followers
- Discuss the example of Jesus in praying before the meal. How important is it that we follow this example? Should we consider this a command?
- Unlike the fine wine in Cana, here Jesus provides basic sustenance. Jesus promises to provide – but not to pamper.
- Jesus followers no doubt compared what he did with some Old Testament miracles:
 - Elijah – Widow’s flour and oil (I Kings 17:7-15)
 - Elisha feeding 100 men with 20 barley loaves (2 Kings 4:42-44)

Jesus Walking on Water

- Jesus withdrew to a high place to spend time alone in prayer. Discuss our need to find time alone for worship.
- Peter also walked on water when he kept his eyes on Jesus – yet he sank when he diverted his gaze. What life lessons are in this for us?
- There are times when we seem to be making very little progress in our own personal ministries – yet if Jesus arrives with us, we will make good progress (Jn 6:21)

Paying the Temple Tax

- This is a Jewish tax, not a Roman tax
- As a full-time teacher, Jesus could have excused himself from this tax, but the Jewish leaders would have taken offense.
- The emphasis should not be Peter catching the fish, but on Jesus sovereignty over creation
- Jesus knew what would happen before it happened. Does God’s knowledge of what we will do in our lives mean that we have no control over our actions?

When Jesus cursed the fig tree (Matt 21:18-22) this was the only miracle that had no “immediate beneficial effect” on the disciples. What was the purpose of this miracle?

Lesson Three

"The Healing of the Sick"

Peter's Mother-in-Law: Matt. 8, 14-15; Mark 1, 29-31; Luke 4, 38-39.

The Withered Hand: Matt. 12, 9-13; Mark 3, 1-6; Luke 6, 6-11.

The Centurion's Servant: Matt. 8, 5-13; Luke 7, 2-10.

The Nobleman's Son: Jn 4, 48-54.

Woman in the Crowd: Matt. 9, 20-22; Mark 5, 24-34; Luke 8, 43-48.

A Crippled Woman Cured: Luke 13, 10-17.

The Man with the Dropsy: Luke 14, 1-6.

The Servant's Ear Healed: Luke 22, 49-51.

The Blind and Mute Demoniac: Matt. 12, 22-32; Luke 11:14-26

The Deaf Mute: Mark 7, 31-37.

Two Blind Men: Matt. 9, 27-31.

Blind Men at Jericho: Matt 20, 29-34; Mark 10, 46-52; Luke 18, 35-43.

The Blind Man in Bethsaida: Mark 8, 22-25.

The Man Born Blind: Jn 9, 1-38.

The Leper: Matt. 8, 1-4; Mark 1, 40-45; Luke 5, 12-19.

Ten Lepers: Luke 17, 11-19.

The Paralytic Cured: Matt. 9, 1-8; Mark 2, 1-12; Luke 5, 18-26.

The Cure at Bethsaida: Jn 5, 1-15.

The Mute, Lame, and Blind: Matt. 15, 29-31.

Peter's Mother-in-Law: Matt. 8, 14-15; Mark 1, 29-31; Luke 4, 38-39.

Setting:

- Jesus preaching in the temple in Capernaum
- There is a demon possessed man
- He cries out, calls Jesus the Holy One of God
- Jesus rebukes him, the spirit leaves his body

Peter and Andrew ask Jesus to come to Peter's house

- John and James come along also (sons of Zebedee)
- Peter's mother in law has a "high fever"

Luke – the writer of details, wrote from a physician’s perspective:

- A man covered with leprosy
- The withered right hand of a man
- A slave who was ill and near death
- Peter’s mother in law – a high fever – and Jesus touched her hand and rebuked the fever
 - Jesus shows loving, tender care by his actions
 - Although done in private, this miracle shows that Jesus is the Messiah

Some have criticized this as a questionable miracle

- Today we can relieve fevers with medicines
- But this healing was instantaneous

The Power of Jesus Healings:

- Jesus healed by merely speaking a word from a distance
- By a simple touch
- Lepers who had lost parts of their bodies were restored
- A withered hand was restored to normal
- Severed crippling diseases, blindness, all healed

Discussion - Contrast the true healing worked through Jesus and the apostles, in contrast with so-called faith healers of today.

Woman in the Crowd: Matt. 9, 20-22; Mark 5, 24-34; Luke 8, 43-48.

The Woman from Capernaum

- Suffered for 12 years from a loss of blood
- Loss of blood made her ceremonially unclean – therefore was restricted in attending the local synagogue and restricted from the temple in Jerusalem
- Her bed, chair, clothes, anything she touched was unclean – this made her a social outcast
- As a woman, she was restricted from approaching Jesus even if not unclean

The Problem:

- Had tried many remedies
- Had exhausted her finances on doctors
- Was poverty stricken, outcast, without hope or help

The Healing

- Jesus arrives in a fishing boat
- He is surrounded by throngs of people
- She comes up behind him and touches the hem of his cloak
- The bleeding stops immediately - she feels the healing in her body
- Jesus feels the healing power go out of his body into the woman – and he asks who touched him

The Teaching

- The woman falls at his feet and tells him the whole truth
- She expected to be scolded or punished
- Instead, Jesus lovingly tells her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."
- He shows concern for her soul, as well as her body

Discussion - Why do we call Jesus the "Great Physician"? (Luke 4:23)

In Acts 19:11-13, people would touch handkerchiefs or aprons that Paul had touched, and they would be healed. Discuss the power of miracles.

Normally, when something clean touches something unclean, it is soiled. Not so with Jesus – he is able to cleanse us no matter how unclean or soiled we are.

Lesson Four

"Casting Out Demons"

List of Miracles: Casting Out Demons

The Mute Spirit: Matt. 9, 32-34.

The Synagogue Demoniac: Mark 1, 23-28; Luke 4, 33-37.

Demoniac in Gadara: Matt. 8, 29-34; Mark 5, 1-20; Luke 8, 26-39.

The Canaanite Woman: Matt. 15, 21-28; Mark 7, 24-30.

A Possessed Boy: Matt. 17, 14-21; Mark 9, 13-30; Luke 9, 37-43.

Mary Magdalene: Luke 8:1-3; Jn 20:1-2; Jn 20:10-18

Who or What Are Demons?

- There are different opinions and theories
- The best Biblical explanation is that they are fallen angels who were allowed to work their deeds during a special period (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6)
- Demons are an inferior (deity--?) to Satan

What is Their Nature?

- They deceive men with false teaching (I Tim 4:1)
- They tremble before God (James 2:19)
- They recognized Christ as Lord and their superior (Matt 8:29; Luke 4:41)
- Capable of afflicting bodily disease (Luke 13:16)
- Forced humans to hurt themselves (Mark 5:5; 9:22)
- Evil (Luke 7:21; 8:2)
- Some stronger than others (Matt 12:44-45; Mark 9:17-29)
- Could take possession of animals (Mark 5:13)
- Could speak through the one possessed (Luke 4:33-36)
- Like desolate places (Mark 5:2-5; Luke 11:24)
- Caused blindness, deafness, inability to speak, epilepsy, superhuman strength, insanity

Demoniac in Gadara: Matt. 8, 29-34; Mark 5, 1-20; Luke 8, 26-39.

Setting

- Jesus had just “calmed the storm” in the Lake of Galilee
- The group went to the Eastern “Gentile” side of the lake – made evident by a large group of pigs feeding nearby
- Matthew – States there were two men
- Mark, Luke – Mention only one man – who was evidently the “spokesman” or dominant of the two
- The disciples had faced the lake tempest – they now faced the tempest of a deranged man with superhuman strength

His Name Was Legion

- Unclothed, deranged (insane)
- Unable to be captured or chained
- Used sharp stones to cut himself
- The demons drove the man toward Jesus – like moths toward a light at night, drawn to the fire then getting scorched
- A Roman “Legion” was an army group of 6,000 men
- An entire army of demons was arrayed against Jesus

Before Jesus public ministry began, Satan took Him to a high place and offered him all the kingdoms of the world. Now Jesus was invading Satan’s kingdom and coming face-to-face with his power.

Suicidal Pigs

- The demons knew their fate was to be cast out by Jesus
- They begged to go into pigs as a better alternative than to be sent back to chains of punishment in the bottomless pit
- Although pigs are good swimmers, all 2,000 drowned
- The value of 2,000 pigs today would be > \$250,000

Why did Jesus permit this destruction of the town’s local economy? Didn’t he create growing animosity between the Gentiles and Jews?

Jesus Objectives:

- Liberate a human from the clutches of Satan
- Have him become a useful person
- Have him become an ambassador to tell others about Jesus
- Make the Gentiles appreciate the value of a human being
- Make the gentiles acknowledge the someone with divine power had broken the stranglehold on the man

Jesus demonstrated that the physical and spiritual healing of a man was of greater worth than the cost of a herd of pigs. But the local citizens did not all agree.

In what ways do men put financial concerns above their own souls?

Why did Jesus not allow the man to return with Him?

- He was of better use “preaching” to those in that region

Those converted from the lowest depths often become the greatest ambassadors. Can you think of any examples?

The Canaanite Woman: Matt. 15, 21-28; Mark 7, 24-30.

Barriers the woman had to overcome:

- She was a Gentile, not a Jew
- She was a woman – it was not culturally acceptable for her to speak to a man who was not a relative
- She lived in a pagan culture which worshipped deities
- It would not be culturally acceptable for Jesus to enter the home of a Gentile

Why did Jesus appear to drive this Syro-Phoenician woman away?

- To test her faith to ensure it was genuine
- As a lesson for his apostles that faith supersedes racial and national boundaries
- As a lesson to all of us on the importance of patience and determination in faith

A Possessed Boy: Matt. 17, 14-21; Mark 9, 13-30; Luke 9, 37-43.

Occurs immediately after the transfiguration of Jesus

- Peter, John and James accompany Jesus from Mt. Hermon
- Satan immediately makes himself known after this event in the form of a possessed boy

The Demon

- Had been in the boy “from a child” – for some time
- Intent on causing physical harm
- The boy was the only son (Luke) – hence family heritage was at stake

The Failure of the Disciples:

- Were not able to cast out the demon, showed a lack of faith
- The Father showed faith – but a struggling faith
- Jesus had to personally cast out the demon from the boy
 - As the creator, he had authority over the created
- Jesus said that “this kind comes out only through prayer”
 - Perhaps it was strongly in the boy as it was “with him from the time he was a child”?

Many times our efforts to serve God result in failure, and we wonder what went wrong. The answer often lies in our failure to pray and have faith.

The epilepsy was secondary to the demon possession. Jesus did not attribute all sickness to demons. He knew the difference between sickness and demon possession. In this case, the demon was the cause of the epilepsy and the boy’s attempts to damage himself.

The boy’s father said, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” What do you think was meant by this?

Points to Ponder

With all the evidence shown to them, why were the Pharisees so quick to condemn Jesus than to accept him as the Messiah?

Why did God allow Satan and demons to take an active role during the time of Christ?

Jesus most likely rebuked many demons not written in the scriptures. Why do you think these specific examples were captured for scripture?

Do you believe demons are still able to possess people today? (Col 2:15; I Cor. 13: 8-10; Luke 10:17-18)

Lesson Five

"Raising the Dead"

List of Miracles: Raising the Dead

The Widow's Son: Luke 7, 11-17.

Jairus' Daughter: Matt. 9, 18-26; Mark 5, 21-43; Luke 8, 40-56.

The Raising of Lazarus: Jn 11, 1-44.

The Widow's Son: Luke 7, 11-17.

The Background

- A widow lived at Nain, in southern Galilee
- She had a son, who died of unknown causes
- She was no doubt overwhelmed by grief

Funerals in Israel

- Customarily held on the day of death or the next day
- The grieving mother would walk at the head of the procession
- Young men would follow, carrying the bier of the deceased
- Family, friends would follow
- There would also be hired "mourners" and flute players

Jesus in Control

- Jesus stops the funeral procession – a very unusual event
- If a person or group met a funeral procession, they were socially expected to join the procession to the place of burial.
- He first addressed the mother with a word of comfort – "His heart went out to her"
- He then commanded the young man to get up
- The young man sat up and began to talk

Historical Significance

- Elijah and Elisha had each raised to life an only son (1 Kings 17:7-24; 2 Kings 4:8-37)
- Now Jesus also had for the first time raised an only son
- Elijah and Elisha did it by laying on the boys – Jesus did it with only a word

The news of Jesus great miracle spread quickly throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

Points to Ponder

Imagine the pain felt by this widow when her son died. In those times, what would her life be like from this point forward?

How do you imagine this young man lived out the rest of his life?

Why do you think Jesus picked out this young man to be raised from the dead – at this time? Why not others?

Jairus' Daughter: Matt. 9, 18-26; Mark 5, 21-43; Luke 8, 40-56.

Jairus

- Lived in Capernaum
- Was the ruler of the local synagogue
- Was likely very accommodating to Jesus in teaching there
- He went to find Jesus as a last resort as she neared death

Jesus Reaction

- Had just come across the Lake of Galilee by boat
- Jairus fell at his feet and begged him to come to his house
- Jesus agreed to go – but the trip was delayed as Jesus healed the woman with the issue of blood
- News came that the girl had already died

"Don't be afraid; just believe."

- The news was devastating to Jairus
- The time for mourning had begun
- Jesus was mocked when he said the girl was only asleep

The Miracle

- Jesus took the parents, Peter, James and John into the room
- He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!")
- The girl immediately stood up and walked around
- He said she should be given something to eat

Points to Ponder

Jesus told the parents not to tell anyone about this. Yet the house was already full of mourners. The miracle would be obvious. Why did he make this request?

What comfort and hope do we gain by reading about this miracle?

Jesus repeatedly told his followers “Do not fear”. What is the relationship between fear and faith? Does a display of fear indicate a lack of faith? (Heb 12:1-3; Heb 11:1)

The first Adam (who had no mother) lived in a perfect world – but through his actions brought corruption and death. The second Adam (Jesus, born of a virgin mother) came into an imperfect world and conquered death, as well as sin and sickness.

The three people Jesus raised from the dead lived their lives but died as normal people later in life. Jesus died, was resurrected, and never died again. Only he has truly conquered death. Yet, in the end, we all can conquer death through His power. (Rom 6:23)

The Raising of Lazarus: Jn 11, 1-44.

Friends in Bethany

- Mary, Martha and Lazarus (his name means, “God helps”) lived in Bethany, about 2 miles east of Jerusalem
- They often entertained Jesus, his disciples, and other people
- A special relationship developed between Jesus and these friends

Lazarus Dies

- Lazarus was very sick – but Jesus was a day’s travel away
- Mary and Martha send a messenger for Jesus
- Yet Jesus tarries for 2 days

Jesus Plan

- Jesus delay was not due to inconsideration – it was purposed
- He tells his disciples that Lazarus is dead – but it is for his glory and their belief

The Faith of Martha and Mary

- Martha comes out first
- ..."if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."
- Martha believes Jesus is talking about the resurrection of the last days
- Martha then calls for Mary to come
- She repeats the words of Martha
- Then Jesus weeps

Jesus' Greatest Miracle

- Jesus was emotionally involved in this miracle more than any other he had done
- Those around doubted Him: "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"
- Lazarus body had been in the tomb for four days – decomposition was well underway
- Jesus announced the purpose: for the glory of God
- After a prayer, Jesus called for Lazarus to come out
- Lazarus emerged with the grave clothes on his face and body

What Is Not In the Story

- Scientific details about how the miracle occurred
- What Lazarus knew about his experience during his four days of death
- Details about how Lazarus lived his life after this event

Points to Ponder

Discuss the symbolism of the words "I am" when Jesus told Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life." (Jn 18:5-6; Exodus 3:13-14)

In 2 Cor 12:1-4, Paul describes being caught up into "the third heaven" and seeing inexpressible things – which he was not allowed to tell about. Perhaps Lazarus was also placed under similar restrictions.

Discuss the after-effects of this miracle, as outlined in Jn 12:1-11, and also verses 17-19)

How did the resurrection of Lazarus differ from the resurrection we can expect when Jesus returns? (I Cor 15:51-53; I Peter 1:3-5)

Lesson Six

"Miracles Involving Jesus"

List of Miracles: Those Involving Jesus

The Virgin Birth: Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38

The Transfiguration: Matt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36

The Resurrection: Matt 28:1-8; Mk 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-10; Jn 20:1-8

Post-Resurrection Appearances: Matt 28; Mk 16; Luke 24; Jn 20-21; Acts 1

The Ascension: Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-11

The miracles Jesus performed while on the earth differ from those relating to his birth, transfiguration, resurrection, post resurrection appearances, and ascension. These were done to him, rather than by him. These miracles glorified Jesus and the Father, and are of such magnificence that we cannot even begin to understand how they were accomplished.

The Virgin Birth: Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38

The Virgin Birth

- Is a keystone event to all Christians
- Was announced by the angel Gabriel to Mary
- The Holy Spirit "came upon her" to invoke conception
- This is a divine miracle that cannot be rationally explained

Faith

- Mary showed great faith in accepting the words of Gabriel
- Joseph showed great faith in keeping Mary as his betrothed, as commanded by an angel
- Both Mary and Joseph would have known the social stigmatism of having a child out of wedlock in that society
- They were willing to suffer this for the sake of God

Notes:

Historical Accuracy

- Luke wrote that everything in his Gospel was carefully examined and confirmed by witnesses (Luke 1:1-4)
- Accepted as part of the apostolic writings
- Accepted as fact by early church historians
- Accepted by early Christians as verifiable truth

Points to Ponder

The name Jesus means “the Lord is salvation” or “The Lord helps”. The angel told Mary “He shall save the people from their sins.” What do you think about the choice of this name?

Is it appropriate for someone today to have the name “Jesus”? Is this honoring Jesus, or blasphemous?

Every year millions of Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25 (despite historical evidence showing that he was more likely born in September). What are your thoughts on celebrating the birth of Jesus as a spiritual holiday/celebration?

Thomas would not believe until he himself touched Jesus, despite the testimony of the other apostles. He is often called “Doubting Thomas” because of this. Is this name fair? Do you think he lacked faith, or should he be commended for demanding confirmation?

The Transfiguration: Matt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36

Eight days before his transfiguration, Jesus had disclosed to his disciples his impending death and resurrection. (Matt 16:21-28) They could not grasp what was about to happen – Peter even rebuked Jesus for what he said. Now, Jesus takes Peter, James and John to Mount Hermon, allowing them to see an amazing sight.

The Transfiguration

- The appearance of his face changed and shone like the sun
- His clothes became pure white and as bright as lightening
- Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus, talking of his departure
- A bright cloud enveloped them
- A voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"
- Then Jesus stood alone

Similarities

- The cloud, representing God's presence on earth, was similar to the one that filled the Holy of Holies in the temple
- The transfiguration was like that of Moses on Mount Sinai
- God's statement was identical to that given at Jesus baptism

Symbolisms

- Moses, representing the Law, was buried by God himself
- Elijah, representing the Prophets, did not die but was called into Heaven by a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:11-12)
- Jesus, representing the new covenant, was resurrected then ascended into heaven victorious

Purpose of the Transfiguration

- To strengthen Jesus in advance of his trials and death
- To glorify Christ (2 Peter 1:16-18)
- Verification of Jesus divinity to the apostles and future followers of Christ

Points to Ponder

Why do you think Jesus allowed three of his disciples to see his transfiguration? Why only these three and not all 12?

Jesus came to this earth to live and die for sinners. We are here to live and die for Christ.

The Resurrection: [Matt 28:1-8](#); [Mk 16:1-8](#); [Luke 24:1-10](#); [Jn 20:1-8](#)

In his earthly ministry, Jesus raised three people from the dead. Yet these people eventually faced death again as part of the normal course of human life. Yet Jesus arose being glorified and having conquered death – never to die again. His resurrection was even more amazing and miraculous.

Even with all the pain, Jesus thought of others rather than Himself. His first words from the cross were, " Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing " (Luke 23:34). He thought of His mother, who stood by the cross weeping, and asked his beloved disciple John to take care of her. On either side of Jesus were two thieves executed at the same time. When one of them accepted Jesus as Lord, Jesus shared with him, "today you will be with me

in paradise." (Luke 23:43). Finally, Jesus expressed his complete surrender to the will of God as He said, "It is finished;" (Jn 19:30). "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit " (Luke 23:46).

Evidence of the Death of Jesus

- Water and Blood poured from his side. Medical experts have written that when death is due to a rupture of the heart, the clotted blood separates from the watery pericardial serum, so the fact that John witnessed the "blood and water" pouring out from the spear wound is exceptionally strong evidence that Jesus died from a ruptured heart (rather than suffocation.).
- Jesus ceased breathing in a very visible way
- The Roman soldiers were professional killers – and could recognize death. They know not to break the legs of Jesus as he was already dead.
- Jesus was in the grave from Friday until Sunday morning.

Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus

- Nail marks in his hands and sword scar on his side
- Seen by over 500 people
- The guards at the tomb witnessed a violent earthquake and were “paid off” to cover up what happened
- The actions of the first century believers demonstrated that they were willing to die based on belief in the resurrection – and many of them paid this price

Paul outlines clearly in 1 Cor 15 that without the resurrection:

- We have nothing to preach
- We have nothing to believe
- We are lying about god
- Our faith is a delusion
- We are still lost in our sins
- Our hope is for this world only
- We deserve more pity than anyone else in the world

Points to Ponder

How is the resurrection key to the gospel? (1 Cor 15:1-4)

What hope do we gain from reading about Jesus resurrection?

Even on the cross, Jesus thought of others first. His first words from the cross were, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). He thought of His mother, who stood by the cross weeping, and asked his beloved disciple John to take care of her. When one of the two thieves accepted Jesus as Lord, Jesus told him, "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Finally, Jesus expressed his complete surrender to the will of God as He said, "It is finished" (Jn 19:30).

Post-Resurrection Appearances: Matt 28; Mk 16; Luke 24; Jn 20-21; Acts 1

There Were Many Witnesses Of The Resurrection...

- Paul lists many of these witnesses in 1 Co 15:3-8
- Jesus was seen by Cephas (Simon Peter) - cf. Lk 24:34
- The twelve (apostles) - cf. Lk 24:36-43; Ac 1:2-3
- He was seen by five hundred people at one time (probably in Galilee) - cf. Mt 28:10,16-17
- He was seen by James, the Lord's brother
- He was seen by Paul, on the road to Damascus - Ac 22:6-10

Other Appearances Are Recorded In the Scriptures

- Mary Magdalene - Mk 16:9; Jn 20:14
- Other women returning from the tomb - Mt 28:9,10
- Two disciples on the road to Emmaus - Lk 24:13-33
- The apostles, Thomas absent - Jn 20:19-24
- The apostles, Thomas present - Jn 20:26-29
- Seven disciples by the Lake of Tiberias (Sea of Galilee) - Jn 21:1-23
- The apostles at the ascension - Ac 1:3-12

These Were Undeniable Events

- For forty days they were given infallible proofs - Ac 1:3
- They ate and drank with Jesus - Ac 10:41
- They saw, heard, and touched Him - Jn 20:24-28; 1 Jn 1:1-2

Points to Ponder

The first person to see Jesus after his resurrection was a woman, Mary Magdalene. While many of his disciples fled, faithful women stayed with Jesus at the cross. What does this say about the character and strength of women?

What does it say about the attitude of Jesus toward women, as opposed to the societal standard of the day?

Cleopas and “another disciple” met Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Some have speculated that this other disciple is the wife of Cleopas, Mary, from Jn 19:25. But this cannot be verified.

Although Jesus was resurrected with a physical body (the apostles could touch his nail scars, he ate food, etc.) he could appear and disappear at will. Though still physical, he was not bound by physical laws. This in itself was a miracle.

The Ascension: Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-11

There was a 40-day period between Jesus resurrection and his ascension at Bethany.

Purpose of the Ascension

- Visible evidence that Jesus had ended his earthly ministry and ascended *permanently* into heaven
- His appearances over the 40 days were temporary interruptions of his heavenly return

Jesus Changed From Physically Present To Spiritually Accessible

- He intercedes for us (Rom 8:34)
- He speaks in our defense (1 Jn 2:1)
- God always hears Jesus (Jn 11:41-42)
- He is our priest and intercessor (Heb 7:23-35)

Jesus Future Return

- He will return in the same way he left (Acts 1:11)
- No-one knows when this will occur (Matt 24:35-36)
- Jesus will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. The dead in Christ will rise first. Those who are alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thess 4:16-18)
- When he appears we will be “like him” (1 Jn 3:2)

Points to Ponder:

Are you ready for Jesus second return?

