

100 BIBLE LESSONS

These lessons were originally given at Manila, Philippines, in 1958 and 1959 by former missionary to China, Alban Douglas. Give these lessons to people you visit, youth groups, hospital patients, church visitors and new members. Use them in Sunday School, bus ministry, jail services, nursing homes, Christian schools, small discussion groups and many other places. God's Word will answer your questions and help solve your problems.

LESSON 54 – THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

This subject has for centuries been a battleground on which men have fought. The scientific mind of our twentieth century has attempted to solve the dispute. Today there seem to be two schools of thought. Some accept them and others reject them.

The scientist rejects them because he can neither understand nor prove them. The Evangelical accepts them because he has faith in a miracle-working God.

The word "miracle" is used very loosely today. Someone escapes death in an auto accident and states emphatically, "It was simply a miracle." Actually it was an act of Divine Providence – the protection of guardian angels. At other times we accidentally meet a desired person under the most unexpected circumstances and some say it was a miracle. Actually it was Divine Providence. Then let us begin with an acceptable definition of a miracle.

I. DEFINITION OF THE WORD "MIRACLE"

A simple definition is that a miracle is the setting aside of a lower law by a higher law. The higher law being the law of God that superseded earth's laws. For the apple to fall "up" instead of down would be a miracle. It would be the power of God superseding and changing the law of gravity and centrifugal force.

Here is a more scholarly definition: "An effect in nature not attributable to any of the recognized operations in nature, nor to the act of man, but indicative of superhuman power and serving as a sign or witness thereof." (Lindsell and Woodbridge).

In Acts 4:16, 22 both the Jewish Council and the Holy Ghost call the healing in Acts 3:1-11, a miracle. Ordinarily a 40-year-old man who has never walked, doesn't walk.

II. UNIQUENESS OF JESUS' MIRACLES

The Lord's miracles were performed to prove His Messiahship and accredit His message.

John 2:11, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and his disciples believed on Him."

The prophets (Moses, Aaron, Elijah, Peter and Paul) performed miracles by delegated power (power given them by God, specifically for the task), but Jesus performed His miracles by His own power to demonstrate His Deity.

In all, Jesus performed 35 to 40 miracles (recorded in the Gospels) of various types because “all power” (Matt. 28:18) was His to use at His discretion.

Jesus in the Temptation, Luke 4:3-4, refused to perform a miracle to obey the devil or satisfy His hunger after 40 days and nights of fasting.

III. THE SCOPE OF JESUS' MIRACLES

A. Over nature. Matt. 8:26-27, “And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!”

B. Over devils. Jesus cast out devils in Mark 5:12-13 (demons went out into the swine); Also Matt. 8:28-32; 9:32-33; 15:22-28; 17:14-18; Mark 1:23-27.

C. Over disease. Palsy, Matt. 8:13; 9:6; Impotent man, John 5:9; Curing a withered hand, Matt. 12:13; spirit of infirmity, Luke 13:12; stanching a flow of blood, Matt. 9:22; cured dropsy, Luke 14:2; healed fever, Matt. 8:15; speech to the dumb, Matt. 9:33; sight to the blind, John 9:1-38; hearing to the deaf, Matt. 11:5; cured leprosy, Matt. 8:3; Luke 17:19; Jesus healed at least ten different kinds of sicknesses.

D. Over death. He raised Lazarus from the dead, John 11:43-44; also Matt. 9:18-26; Jairus' daughter; Luke 7:12-15; the son of the widow of Nain.

E. Miscellaneous. Water to wine, John 2:1-11, Feeding of the 5,000, John 6:1-14, Walking on the sea, John 6:15-21, Feeding of the 4,000, Matt. 15:32-39, the blasting of the fig tree, Matt. 21:18-22, Finding of the coin in the fish's mouth, Matt. 17:27, Miraculous draught of fish, Luke 5:1-11; and again in John 21:6.

F. His own resurrection was the greatest miracle of all, 1 Cor. 15:4; Rom. 1:4.

IV. CREDIBILITY OF JESUS' MIRACLES

Jesus' miracles are the warp and woof of the Bible and cannot be separated from it. The records of these miracles are not sensational, or even glowingly presented. These miracles were performed openly in the presence of many witnesses for all to see.

The miracles of healing have never been disproved by scientists or doctors. Neither has anyone been able to reproduce them. Jesus' miracles were unique.

Jesus never performed a miracle for immoral or unworthy purposes. His motives were right.

Jesus' miracles were effected immediately. The healing was instantaneous and supernatural.

Jesus sought to prove to John the Baptist's enquiry that He was the Christ by His miracles that He had done, Matt. 11:3-6.

To attempt to explain the miracles is an insult to the power and integrity of Christ.

The miracles are true and we gladly affirm our belief in the Word of God.

V. OBJECTIONS TO JESUS' MIRACLES

1. Some say that Jesus' personality was so strong that His healings were by strong influences that could cure certain nervous disorders. This is entirely unsatisfactory.
2. Foolish suggestions to explain miracles only make the speaker ridiculous and unbelieving. The sea was shallow and Jesus really walked on the ground. When the lad gave the loaves and the fishes everybody dug into their lunches and gladly shared them. The dead were really not quite dead, just sleeping, etc.
3. Materialism refuses to recognize Divine forces and acknowledges only physical forces, so rejects miracles outright.
4. To the Pantheist who recognizes the laws of nature only, miracles are impossible.
5. Agnosticism denies miracles for it denies the source of miracles – God Himself.
6. Naturalist says that the uniformity of nature excludes miracles.
7. Philosophy argues that miracles interrupt the continuity of thought, so are not desired.
8. To the optimist (or idealist) things are so good that miracles are not necessary.
9. Others reject the miracles simply "for insufficiency of evidence." To us, the veracity of Scripture is such that we accept the Word without question.

VI. VALUE OF JESUS' MIRACLES

To us, the miracles are the credential that identify Jesus as Lord. Jesus proved His Person and His Deity by the miracles that He performed.

Miracles are evidences of superhuman power, 2 Thess. 2:9 (Antichrist's power is from Satan).

Jesus received His superhuman power from somewhere or someone. Whom? From God.

Miracles will not save anyone (John 12:37), but miracles should lead one to faith. Matt. 8:27, miracles certainly strengthened the faith of those who already believed.

Personally, I'm glad that Jesus performed miracles for it shatters any unbelief that I might have and teaches me to believe Him implicitly without fear that He is too weak to complete the work of salvation that He has begun in me, Phil. 1:6.

VII. THE POSSIBILITY OF MIRACLES TODAY

Miracles were performed in the Old Testament by men like Moses, Elijah and Elisha.

Jesus performed many miracles during the days of the Four Gospels.

After the ascension miracles were performed by Peter, Paul and many others.

If miracles are wrought in the power of God, and they most certainly are, then as God never changes, miracles are still possible today, Heb. 13:8.

CONCLUSION

Let us honor the Lord by accepting the miracles at face value as they have been recorded in the Holy Word of God. Let us not insult God with our puny intellect and question His statements in unbelief. Father let us be like the lady who said, "I believe the whale swallowed Jonah because the Bible says so. If the Bible said that Jonah swallowed the whale I'd believe that too!"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why have scientists rejected the miracles?
2. Are all so-called miracles actually miracles?
3. What is a miracle?
4. In what 3 ways were Jesus' miracles unique?
5. List 7 types of miracles that Jesus performed.
6. List 8 diseases and physical defects that Jesus healed.

7. Why should we believe the miracles of Jesus Christ?
8. On what 5 grounds do some object to the miracles?
9. List 3 values of Jesus' miracles.
10. Are miracles possible today?