

Monday Week 39 The Miracles of Jesus

Bible Reading: John 2:1-11

Q 153 What was the first miracle Jesus performed?

A. Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine.

The older man was dressed in ruffled and stained clothes. He wore a knitted cap and an old pair of glasses. He seemed no different than any other homeless person. People entering the Trinity Methodist Church passed him without much thought to helping him. When it was time for service to start, the man got to his feet, and to the surprise of the congregation, walked to the front of the church. He took off his cap and removed a wig from his head. The people were surprised to see Derek Rigby, their pastor, standing in front of them. They had not recognized him until he revealed who he was.

When Jesus turned water into wine, he began to reveal who he was. His disciples began to see how great and wonderful he was. They saw that Jesus was different than they were. He did what none of them could do. He had power none of them had. His disciples believed that he really did come from God. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him" (John 2:11).

Thinking Deeper

In the wilderness, Satan had tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread. Jesus had refused. He maintained his mission to act only in accordance with the direction of His Father. Now Jesus had begun his ministry. He was revealing his identity to his disciples. He was beginning his works. He went about doing good. So when wine was needed at the wedding, Jesus furnished it through a miracle. He showed his glory. That is, he began to show who he was. His majesty and wonder began to be displayed.

A skeptic asked a Christian if Jesus did the miracles to prove he was God. The underlying assumption was that Jesus somehow needed miracles to authenticate himself. The Christian answered that Jesus didn't need to do the miracles to prove to himself that he was God. He was God by virtue of his own existence and where he had come from. At the age of twelve he knew who his Father was. But Jesus did the miracles to show others who he was. His disciples needed to see his power and majesty. When they did, they believed on him.

Tuesday Week 39 The Miracles of Jesus

Bible Reading: Luke 8:22-25

Q 154 How did Jesus calm the storm?

A. Jesus spoke and the storm was stilled.

A little boy lay in his bed in the dark night. Everyone else in the house was asleep. He was fearful. He wondered about God. And he wondered if he was saved. What could he do? He got out of bed and found his mother's room. "Mom?" he whispered. She woke up and asked him what was wrong. "Could you pray with me? I don't know if I'm saved." She got out of bed and they knelt at the couch. She told him that Jesus had died for his sins and he could trust Jesus to save him. She prayed with him. The storm of fear in his heart was stilled. He went back to his bed and slept peacefully.

The disciples were fearful that the storm would sink the ship and they would drown. They called on Jesus. He spoke to the storm and it became still. The disciples saw how powerful Jesus was. He could help them through anything. He can also help us through anything.

Thinking Deeper

The great artist Rembrandt depicted this incident in his seascape "Storm on the Sea of Galilee." There are several notable aspects of the painting. Sailors are frantically working with the wind battered sails. One is mightily struggling with the tiller. A wave is sweeping furiously over the bow while overhead the clouds are menacingly black. Near the bottom of the boat a rather incongruous incident is taking place. Two disciples are waking a sleepy looking Jesus. Despite the rush and tumble of activity by both nature and men, Jesus sleeps peacefully until awakened by his worried followers. For them it seems like life and death. For Jesus it is another opportunity to get some rest. It is also another opportunity for him to teach his disciples. Their trouble is no trouble to him. Call on him and he will help. Nothing is too mighty for his power.

We can learn from this lesson Jesus taught them. He is available to us in our storms. All we need to do is call.

Wednesday Week 39 The Miracles of Jesus

Bible Reading: Luke 9:10-17

Q. 155 How did Jesus feed the 5,000?

A. He blessed five loaves and two fishes.

A mother saw that her daughter needed a coat. She prayed about it. The next day in church a woman asked, "Do you need a coat for your daughter? I bought one, but kept forgetting to bring it. This morning the Lord told me to take the coat to church today."

"Oh, thank you," said the mother. "I prayed for a coat for my daughter just yesterday." The coat fit the girl perfectly! And the mother's prayer was answered. In fact, for years after that when the girl needed a coat, it was provided without the mother having to buy it. God showed that he cared about them. He supplied their needs.

When Jesus saw the hungry multitude, he wanted to feed them. The disciples brought him a boy's lunch. Jesus had the people sit down. Then he blessed the boy's food. Jesus fed all five thousand with five small loaves and two fish. It was a miracle! Jesus showed that he cared about their needs. Jesus cares about people in need and he also wants us to care.

Thinking Deeper

In the fall of 2008, after tropical Storm Hanna, thousands of people in Haiti were without food and water. In one city, aid groups set up a place where people could come and get supplies. People were pushing and shoving one another to get some water and food. One woman who had five children came away with five biscuits and some water. She was hoping to make the biscuits last. Later in the same season Hurricane Ike made it worse for the people. Christian groups sent more food and water to help the people.

Followers of Jesus understand their duty to help people in need. Christian groups send food and clothing to people all over the world who have suffered from disasters. Christian teams volunteer to go and work where relief is needed. Following the example of Jesus, Christians feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, and preach the Gospel to the poor. It is Christianity in action to do what Jesus did.

Thursday Week 39 The Miracles of Jesus

Bible Reading: Matthew 17:24-27

Q. 156 How did Jesus tell Peter to pay his taxes?

A. Jesus told Peter to cast a line into the water, catch a fish, and find money in the fish's mouth.

Tiger Sharks will eat almost anything. Here are some of the things found in the stomachs of tiger sharks: aluminum cans, nails, roll of tar paper, empty wallet, shoes, pants, can of peas, bag of potatoes. They seem to eat anything. One Tiger Shark had even eaten a bag of money.

The fish that Peter caught was not a Tiger Shark. But it did have something unusual in its mouth. It had a gold coin. Jesus had told Peter to go fishing and look in the mouth of the first fish he caught. When Peter caught the fish, he found the gold in its mouth. He took it and paid taxes for both him and Jesus.

How did Jesus know Peter would catch a fish? How did he know which fish Peter would catch? How did he know it had gold in its mouth? Jesus knew because he is the Son of God.

Thinking Deeper

He had seen the fish one time. It had drifted out from beneath the grass covered bank when the fisherman had dropped bait upstream, which the current swept in front of the trout. But something spooked the trout and that was that. The fisherman was patient. He waited for several days for the conditions to be right. But he was back. Carefully, he laid his plans and cautiously approached. He knew the fish would be there. Quietly he eased the bait into the stream. There was a flash of fish, and then it was gone. Failed! How had it seen him? The fisherman left the stream with an empty stringer. Sometimes it's tough catching that special fish.

It's amazing that Jesus knew there was one particular fish near the water's edge. It's amazing he knew Peter would go to the right spot. It's amazing that he knew there was a coin in its mouth. It's amazing he knew the fish would bite and Peter would catch it. Why is this account in the Bible? Because the Holy Spirit intended that we see just "what manner of man this is."

Friday Week 39 The Miracles of Jesus

Review the Week's Questions

Q 153 What was the first miracle Jesus performed?

A. Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine.

Q 154 How did Jesus calm the storm?

A. Jesus spoke and the storm was stilled.

Q. 155 How did Jesus feed the 5,000?

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Q. 156 How did Jesus tell Peter to pay his taxes?

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A missionary lady was traveling with some natives in a motor boat. They were a long way from home when the engine sputtered. They had run out of gas! She asked her group to pray for God to intervene. After they prayed they pulled the rope on the engine. It started! They were able to make it home, which was a long way. They praised God for the miracle.

The Bible tells us that God works miracles. He can do anything. He sometimes does miracles for people today. One of the greatest miracles He does is to change people. He takes sinners and makes them into saints. Many Christians are walking miracles because Jesus saved them. They have been changed from the inside out. God still works miracles.

Thinking Deeper

Jesus told his disciples that "the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." From his miracles we see that he is Lord also of matter (turning water into wine), he is Lord also of nature (calming the storm), he is Lord also of increase (multiplying the loaves and fishes), and he is Lord also of circumstance (money in fish's mouth). We who believe Jesus is the divine Son of God have no trouble believing that He can do all of these things. He who created all things has power over all things. He can do it!

Skeptics struggle with the issue of miracles. Miracles don't fit the "scientific" paradigm. If there is no natural explanation, naturalists naturally reject them. So Jesus couldn't have done miracles since miracles are not natural and "science" only deals with natural things. Because of their *a priori* assumptions, they cannot allow the concept of miracles to be seriously discussed. But their argument is really mental sleight of hand. Since the definitions they impose eliminate any supernatural possibility, the miraculous is rejected. "We don't allow any miraculous explanations, therefore miracles are impossible." It is the ultimate in being closed minded.

Believers have a much richer realm of possibilities to draw from than the naturalists. Since God is Creator, He can work in nature, through nature, or suspend natural limitations and work above nature. Our God is an awesome God!