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What You Need to Know About Jesus' Miracles: Part 2

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT JESUS' MIRACLES (Part Two)

Special Introduction to the Three-Fold Topical Study Overviewing the Miracles Performed by Jesus Christ

- Study Number One **dealt** with His miracles of healing
- Study Number Two **deals** with His miracles of feeding, financing, judging and protecting
- Study Number Three **will deal** with His miracles of demon casting and resurrecting

Here is a listing of His 33 recorded miracles, followed by an arrangement of the various topical classifications involved.

LISTING OF THE MIRACLES

1. Turning water into wine
2. Healing a nobleman's son at Cana
3. Healing a lame man at the pool of Bethesda
4. First miraculous catch of fish
5. Delivering a synagogue demoniac
6. Healing Peter's mother-in-law
7. Cleansing a leper
8. Healing a paralytic
9. Healing a man with a shriveled hand
10. Healing a centurion's servant
11. Raising a widow's son
12. Healing a blind and mute demoniac
13. Stilling a storm
14. Delivering the Gadarene demoniacs
15. Healing a woman with an issue of blood
16. Raising Jairus' daughter
17. Healing two blind men
18. Delivering a mute demon
19. Feeding the 5,000
20. Walking on the water
21. Delivering a Syrophenician's daughter
22. Healing a deaf mute in Decapolis
23. Feeding 4,000
24. Healing a blind man at Bethsaida
25. Delivering a demon-possessed boy
26. Finding the tax money
27. Healing a man born blind
28. Healing a crippled woman on the Sabbath
29. Healing a man with dropsy

30. Raising of Lazarus
31. Cleansing ten lepers
32. Healing a blind Bartimaeus
33. Cursing the fig tree
34. Restoring Malchus' ear
35. Second miraculous catch of fish

CLASSIFICATION OF THE MIRACLES

A. Healing: Sixteen miracles

1. Lepers (see miracles 7, 31)
2. The blind (17, 24, 27, 32)
3. The deaf (22)
4. The deformed (9)
5. The crippled (3)
6. The fever-ridden (2, 6)
7. The maimed (34)
8. The paralyzed (8, 10)
9. Continuous bleeding (15)
10. Dropsy (29)

B. Casting out of demons: Seven miracles

1. Man in a synagogue (see miracle 5)
2. A blind and mute demoniac (12)
3. The Gadarene demoniac (14)
4. A mute demoniac (18)
5. Daughter of a Syrophenician mother (21)
6. A boy at the base of Mt. Hermon (25)
7. Woman in a synagogue (28)

C. Financing: One miracle

1. Fish with a coin in its mouth (see miracle 26)

D. Feeding: Five miracles

1. Turning water into wine (see miracle 1)
2. First catch of fish (4)
3. Feeding of the 5000 (19)
4. Feeding of the 4000 (23)
5. Second catch of fish (35)

E. Protecting: Two miracles

1. Stilling a storm (see miracle 13)

2. Walking on water (20)
- F. Resurrecting: Three miracles
1. Raising a widow's son (see miracle 11)
 2. Raising Jairus' daughter (16)
 3. Raising of Lazarus (30)
- G. Judging: One miracle
1. Cursing a fig tree (see miracle 33)

STUDY NUMBER TWO: HIS MIRACLES OF FEEDING, FINANCING, JUDGING & PROTECTING

FIVE INVOLVING FEEDING

Turning Water Into Wine (John 2:1-11)

SURVEY

During a wedding in Cana of Galilee, Jesus, at Mary's request, transforms approximately 120 gallons of water into wine, the quality of which is highly praised by the ruler of the feast.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This marks the second of four public encounters Mary had with Jesus. The other three are:
 1. In a Jerusalem Temple (Luke 2:41-52)

"And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"
(Luke 2:48, 49).
 2. In Capernaum (Mark 3:31-35)

"There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee"
(Mark 3:31, 32).

3. At Calvary (John 19:26, 27)

- It is the first of at least five occasions where the word "hour" is used in reference to Calvary ("*mine hour is not yet come*"). Other references would include:
 - (1) At the feast of tabernacles—"*Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come*" (John 7:30).
 - (2) In the temple treasury—"*These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come*" (John 8:20).
 - (3) In the Upper Room—"*Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end*" (John 13:1).
 - (4) On the Mount of Olives—"*These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee*" (John 17:1).

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- Jesus chose a wedding to perform His first miracle, doubtless to emphasize the sanctity of marriage (see Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:3-8; Eph. 5:22-33; Heb. 13:4).
- Earthly weddings thus should serve as a reminder of that grand and glorious future wedding between Christ and His Church! (See 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-9.)
- It should be noted Jesus was invited on this occasion. It is always a wonderful thing when He is made welcome in a wedding!
- Jesus used waterpots to accomplish his first miracle. He desires to do the same today, but now he uses living, earthly vessels. If we allow him, he fills us with the water of God's Word; and when we pour it out (give it out) it becomes the wine of the Spirit.
- While no Christian of course should pray to Mary, all believers would profit greatly from heeding her advice on this occasion:
"His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5).
- Jesus thus did this miracle to accomplish a three-fold purpose:
 1. To solve a difficult problem for Mary
 2. To increase the faith of His disciples
 3. To display His glory

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

- Was this real wine? The Greek word used here, *oinos*, can refer to either grape juice or wine.
 1. Examples in which it means juice:
 - a. *"Neither do men put new wine (unfermented grape juice) into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out"* (Matt. 9:17).
 - b. *"He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"*(Rev. 19:15).
 2. Examples in which it means wine:
 - a. *"Be not drunk with wine"*(Eph. 5:18).
 - b. *"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities"*(1 Tim. 5:23).
- If it was real wine Jesus created, it bore little if any resemblance to the modern product.
 1. In New Testament times wine was first boiled before storage, then diluted with three to ten parts water before serving.
 2. The Old Testament distinguishes between this wine and the strong, coarse, undiluted wine prepared solely to make one intoxicated.
 - a. Both Noah and Lot became drunk on this wine (Gen. 9:21; 19:32-34).
 - b. Drinking this kind of wine may have caused the death of Aaron's two priestly sons, both killed by God (Lev. 10:1-9).
 - c. It was for the sin of national drunkenness that God would destroy Israel (Isa. 28:1-8).
 - d. Daniel refused to defile himself by drinking this kind of wine (Dan. 1:8).
 - e. The book of Proverbs warns against this kind of wine. *"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise"*(Prov. 20:1).
"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder"(Prov. 23:31-32).
 - f. Habakkuk forbids the giving of this wine to one's neighbor (Hab. 2:14).
 - g. Even the pagan Greeks felt only barbarians drank undiluted wine.
 - h. The rabbis held that undiluted wine could not be blessed.
- Whatever the meaning of the word wine here in John 2, the sincere

believer must carefully consider other Scripture passages even in the practice of social drinking.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22).

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God" (1 Cor. 10:31-32).

First Miraculous Catch of Fish (Luke 5:1-11)

SURVEY

Four fishermen (Andrew, Peter, James, and John) had toiled all night without catching one single fish. However, at Jesus' command, Peter rowed out into the deep waters of the Galilean Sea and let down his nets. Immediately they caught so many fish that their nets began to break due to the huge catch, which fish soon filled their boats.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is the first of 4 miracles done upon the Sea of Galilee. For the other 3, see miracles 3, 20, and 26.
- It is the first of two miracles resulting in a supernatural catch of fish. Note the contrasts and comparisons however:
 1. The comparisons
 - a. On both occasions they had unsuccessfully fished all night (Luke 5:5; John 21:3).
 - b. On both occasions they obeyed Jesus' command and were successful (Luke 5:5, 6; John 21:6).
 - c. On both occasions Simon Peter was the key figure (Luke 5:3-8; John 21:7-11).
 2. The contrasts
 - a. On the first occasion the fishing net broke. On the second it did not (Luke 5:6; John 21:11).
 - b. On the first occasion Jesus instructed Peter to "catch fish," while on the second He would command him to "feed sheep" (Luke 5:10; John 21:15-17).

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- Peter would later fulfill Jesus' two-fold command to catch fish and feed sheep. Thus:
 1. He caught fish!

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

2. He fed sheep!

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Peter 2:2-3).

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (1 Peter 5:1-2).

● It should be noted most of Jesus' apostles were busy at work when He called them, as were the God-called Old Testament men. Note:

1. Moses and David were tending sheep (Exod. 3:1-2; 1 Sam. 16:11).
2. Gideon was threshing wheat (Judges 6:11-12).
3. Elisha was plowing a field (1 Kings 19:19-21).
4. Amos was herding cattle and picking fruit (Amos 1:1; 7:14-15).
5. Matthew was collecting taxes (Matt. 9:9).
6. Andrew, Peter, James, and John were fishing (Luke 5:1-11).
7. Saul of Tarsus was arresting Christians in his misguided zeal as a Pharisee (Acts 9:1-6).

The intended lesson here seems obvious—God's call upon a person is rarely (if ever) dependent upon his (or her) brain capacity, brawn, blue blooded history, or banking achievements, but rather just how busy that individual is at the time!

Abraham's faithful servant had once given an eloquent testimony to this:

"And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren" (Gen. 24:27).

● Finally, it should be noted that these experienced fishermen did exactly what Jesus told them to do, even though it must have seemed unreasonable at the time. King Solomon once wrote:

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5-6).

Feeding the 5000 (Matt. 14:14-21; Mark 6:34-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:5-13)

SURVEY

With but five loaves of bread and two small fishes, donated by a small lad, Jesus feeds 5000 men plus their wives and children. After all had eaten to their satisfaction, there remained twelve basketfuls of food.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is Jesus' only miracle recorded by all four gospel writers.
- Obviously there were more individuals involved than in any other miracle.
- It is the only miracle where someone (a small boy) contributed something to the action involved.
- It marks the only attempt by an Israelite crowd to crown Jesus as King (John 6:14-15).
- It is the only miracle where He asks His disciples some questions.

"Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" (John 6:5).

"How many loaves do you have?" (Mark 6:38)

- It is the only miracle where He asks His disciples to serve Him:

"Bring me the five loaves and two fishes" (Matt. 14:17-18).

"Have the people sit down" (Luke 9:14-15).

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- At this time, Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of Ezekiel concerning the ministry of the promised Good Shepherd.

"For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day....I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel" (Ezek. 34:11-12, 14).

- In John 10 Jesus would later describe His role as the Good Shepherd, but here He will demonstrate it! Note:

1. He was the sensitive shepherd.

a. He knew the needs of the twelve.

"And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately" (Mark 6:30-32).

The disciples needed this rest, for they had just learned of John the Baptist's martyrdom. In addition, they were approaching the danger of burnout.

b. He knew the needs of the crowd.

"And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:34).

(1) They needed to be taught

Hosea the prophet had once cried out: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"* (Hosea 4:6). To counteract this, our Lord invested a great amount of time during his earthly ministry in teaching the Word of God.

"And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:22). (See also Matt. 4:23; 5:2; 7:29; 9:35; 11:1; 13:54; John 6:59; 7:14, 28; 8:2, 20; 18:20.)

(2) They needed to be healed

"And he healed them that had need of healing" (Luke 9:11).

(3) They needed to be fed

It is estimated that it would have required some fifteen tons of food to feed this great multitude.

2. He was the systematic shepherd.

"And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties" (Mark 6:39-40).

3. He was the sovereign shepherd.

"And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his

disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled" (Mark 6:41-42).

4. He was the sufficient shepherd.
"When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten" (John 6:12-13).
- There is a note of sorrow at the end of this otherwise fantastic miracle. Rightfully recognizing him as a prophet, the 5,000 men wrongly attempted to make him their king. But both their motive and their method were wrong.
 1. Their motive was wrong.
Jesus himself would point this out during his sermon on the following day.
"Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:26-27).

In a previous incident, another group of men had made the same mistake.
"Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:23-25).
 2. Their method was wrong.
Jesus did not come to be crowned **by** sinful people, but rather to be crucified **for** sinful people. The Father alone will someday give the Son his rightful kingdom.
"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). (See also Psa. 2:7-12; Dan. 7:13-14; Isa. 6:9-11.)
- At least five reasons have been suggested concerning why this miracle was performed.
 1. To demonstrate Christ's compassion upon people—He was concerned not only with their souls, but also with their bodies.

2. To test His disciples—This undoubtedly strengthened their faith. They would remember it all their lives.
3. To prove His messianic claims—The Jews had a tradition that when the Messiah came, He would feed them with bread as Moses had once done. Note the following dialogue which took place on the next day between the crowd and Jesus:

"Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven . . . And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst"(John 6:31-32, 35).

4. To show the value of small things when given over to Christ—Especially is this seen by the giving of the loaves, not only in matters of quantity (five loaves), but also in quality (they were barley loaves). Wheat loaves were the normal diet back then. Barley loaves were eaten only by the very poor.
5. To illustrate God's faithfulness—In fact, this miracle was simply an unforgettable illustration of a profound principle Jesus had previously taught during his Sermon on the Mount.

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"(Matt. 6:31-32).

Feeding the 4000 (Matt. 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9)

SURVEY

Jesus feeds a hungry crowd who had not eaten in three days, by supernaturally multiplying seven loaves and a few fish. Following the bountiful meal, seven basketfuls of food were collected by the disciples.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is the second of two occasions where Jesus fed the hungry multitudes. See also miracle 19.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- Some have attempted to show the feeding of the 5000 and that of the 4000 were actually the same event, suggesting that the Gospel writers got their details mixed up. But Jesus himself told us that they were two separate and distinct events.

"When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They said unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven" (Mark 8:19-20).

- Note the comparisons and contrasts between these two events:
 1. Compared with the feeding of the 5000: There are several similarities between these two miracles.
 - a. Christ showed compassion toward both groups.
 - b. He asked his disciples what should be done.
 - c. He had the people sit down in orderly groups.
 - d. He supernaturally fed them by multiplying a few fish and loaves.
 2. Contrasted with the feeding of the 5000: There are a number of differences between these two miracles.
 - a. The size of the crowd: One had 5000 men; the other 4000.
 - b. The duration involved: The 5000 men had been with him for one day; the 4000 for three days.
 - c. The original food: Christ used five loaves and two fishes to feed the 5000, while using seven loaves and an unspecified number of fish in caring for the 4000.
 - d. The remains: Twelve baskets were left over at the feeding of 5000, and seven after the 4000.
 - e. The Gospel record: All four Gospel writers record the feeding of the 5000, while only Matthew and Mark speak of the 4000.

Second Miraculous Catch of Fish (John 21:1-11)

SURVEY

A short time following His resurrection Jesus appears to seven of His disciples who were fishing on the Sea of Galilee.

The Savior: "Have you caught any fish?"

The seven: "No."

The Savior: "Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will."

In a nutshell, THEY DID AND THEY DID!

SIGNIFICANCE

- This was Jesus' final miracle and the only one after His resurrection.
- John's gospel alone records both His first and final miracle.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- This is the seventh of the ten resurrection appearances made by Christ, and the third before His disciples (John 21:14).
- It marks the only appearance in which a miracle was involved.
- Some have wrongly faulted these seven for leaving Jerusalem, accusing them of returning to their old trade of fishing. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. On two separate occasions the disciples were instructed to meet Jesus in Galilee after His resurrection!
 1. First occasion:
"But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee"
(Matt. 26:32).
 2. Second occasion:
"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you"
(Matt. 28:5-7).

Actually, the backslidden ones were the four who were not there!

- As has been previously noted, John's Gospel alone records both the first and the final miracle of Christ. His first (John 2) occurred at a wedding. His final miracle (John 21) was on a seashore. Both involved food and fellowship. At the wedding there was wine to drink, and at the seashore fish to eat. Both acts were accomplished to increase the faith of his followers.

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

"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"(John 20:30-31).

- There may have been a double miracle involved here, for Jesus already had fish and bread available even before the disciples had brought in their catch.
- Following both the miracle and the meal, Jesus asks Peter a question:

"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs" (John 21:15).

Jesus' question, *"Lovest thou me more than these?"* may have referred to at least one of three things. He could have meant:

1. "Do you love me more than you love these men?"
2. "Do you love me more than fishing?"
3. "Do you love me more than these men love me?" It would seem that Jesus had the third meaning in mind, based on Matt. 26:33.

"Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended" (Matt. 26:33).

- Three times he is asked if he really loves the Savior. Three times he answers in the affirmative. Peter had once denied Christ three times in the presence of the Savior's enemies. Jesus was now giving him the opportunity to affirm his love three times. God is the God of the second chance.
 1. As seen in the life of Jonah—*"And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:1-2).*
 2. As seen in the life of John Mark—This young man had once failed God by abandoning Paul and Barnabas during their first missionary journey (see Acts 13:13; 15:36-39). But Mark, like Jonah and Peter, served the God of the second chance. Years later, just prior to his martyrdom in Rome, the Apostle Paul testified of this: *"Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Tim. 4:11).*

ONE INVOLVING FINANCING

Finding the Tax Money in a Fish (Matt. 17:24-27)

SURVEY

Simon Peter promises a tax collector that Jesus would pay the imposed temple tax. The following dialogue then occurs:

Jesus: *"Peter, from whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own sons or from others?"*

Peter: *"From others."*

Jesus: *"Then the sons are exempt. But so that we might not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."*

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is the only miracle involving a brute creature.
- It is the only miracle resulting in a money coin.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- This temple tax, owed by all Jews from age twenty upward, was two drachma, approximately two days' wages. It was to be used for the temple upkeep and repair. There were three specific occasions recorded in the Old Testament when this tax was collected.
 1. During the time of Moses (Exod. 30:13, 38:26)
 2. During the time of Joash—This Judean king actually had a special chest built and placed outside by the temple gate to receive the tax (2 Chron. 24:9-14).
 3. During the time of Nehemiah (Neh. 10:32)
- Note Peter's thoughtless response to the tax collector's demand:

They ask: *"Doth not your master pay tribute?"*
He answered: *"Yes."*

Here Peter committed a serious blunder. He committed Jesus to do something without first asking Him. Nathan the prophet once did the same thing when advising King David. It also had to do with the temple. Upon hearing David's desire to construct a temple, Nathan responded:

"Then Nathan said to David, Do all that is in thine heart; for God is with thee" (1 Chron. 17:2). But then God stepped in: *"And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in"* (1 Chron. 17:3-4). The conclusion of the matter was that God had already determined that Solomon (David's son) would build the temple.

- Jesus told Peter why he should **not** have to pay the tax:
 1. He owned the temple (Mal. 3:1).

2. He had previously cleansed the temple (John 2:16).
 3. He was the eternal Son of God (Matt. 16:16).
- He then told Peter why he would pay the tax:
 1. To maintain a good testimony—*"Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them."* Here the Savior gave a beautiful example of properly using our Christian liberty, as later echoed by the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 8-10.

"But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some"(1 Cor. 8:9, 12; 9:22).
 2. To increase Peter's faith
 3. To illustrate His work as the second Adam—When correctly understood, this amazing miracle serves to illustrate not only the deity of Christ, but even more, His perfect humanity. What was He doing here? In essence, Jesus was fulfilling the very first command in the Bible given to Adam concerning the world of nature:

"And God . . .said . . . subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth"(Gen. 1:28). Our Lord thus, in some mysterious manner (lost to us after Adam's sin), was able to communicate and exercise control over a fish swimming in the waters of Galilee.
 - It should be noted here that this fish **OBEYED** its Creator!
 1. As did the ravens near a brook

"And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook" (1 Kings 17:1-6).
 2. As did the lions in a den

"Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me:

forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God” (Dan. 6:21-23).

Tragically, the only two creatures able to **DISOBEY** their Creator are ANGELS and HUMAN BEINGS!

ONE INVOLVING JUDGING

Cursing the Fig Tree (Matt. 21:18-19)

SURVEY

One morning, a few days before His crucifixion, en route to Jerusalem from Bethany, Jesus views a fig tree. Being hungry, He approached it, only to find much foliage but no fruit. "May you never bear fruit again," the Savior said to the tree, which immediately withered and dried up!

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is the only one of Christ's thirty-five recorded miracles that would cause Him great pain and sorrow. It was so important that years later the Apostle Paul took three entire chapters (Rom. 9-11) to expand upon its theological implications.
- To explain the above, many believe this tree was a symbol of Israel, that divinely favored but utterly fruitless fig tree. Jesus was therefore, if this be true, setting aside the nation due to the absence of fruit. Later, that same day, He made this clear to the Pharisees, those spiritual custodians of the tree:

"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:42-43).

- This particular kind of fig tree found in Israel is different from all other fruit trees in that it bears its fruit before its leaves. This is not the case with apple, pear, cherry, or any other fruit-bearing trees. Even though the tree was apparently blooming earlier than usual, Jesus had the right to see fruit, for the leaves were there.
- This was the first of two miracles performed by Jesus during the final Passover week. See also miracle 34.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- As has been previously noted, Jesus had every right to find fruit upon the tree of Israel. Its green and massive foliage was impressive indeed, for unto Israel was given the tabernacle, the temple, the Old Testament Scriptures, plus the ministries of godly prophets, priests, and kings. But upon close inspection, it bore no fruit.
- The overriding lesson from this miracle is painfully obvious—God desires fruit.
 1. His chosen nation failed to bear fruit. *"Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images"* (Hosea 10:1).
 2. His present plan is for believers to bear fruit. *"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples"* (John 15:8).
- Jesus later would say that He was the true vine and His followers were the branches (John 15:1). The only function therefore of a branch is to bear fruit. Branch wood is never used for firewood or building material! Furthermore it must be realized a branch does not produce fruit (the vine does this), but rather bears it!

TWO INVOLVING PROTECTING

Stilling a Storm (Matt. 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-29)

SURVEY

The disciples were caught in a furious storm on the Sea of Galilee which threatened to sink their boat. Awakening Jesus, who had fallen into an exhausted sleep in the ship's stern, the terrified men cried out: *"Lord, save us from drowning!"* The Savior then stood up and rebuked both the wind and the waves, resulting in a great calm.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is the only recorded reference to Jesus being asleep.
- It is the first of two occasions where Jesus saved His disciples from drowning. See also miracle 20.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- One of the most famous New Testament miracles also had to do with a sleeping Hebrew prophet in a boat during a storm. The Old Testament prophet was Jonah. The New Testament prophet was Jesus. The second would later use the experience of the first as a sign to an unbelieving generation: *"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"* (Matt. 12:40).
- Note the phrase, *"they took him even as he was."* Our Lord was a real man, with dirt under his fingernails, sweat on his brow, and on this occasion, weariness in his bones.
- The Greek word here refers to a violent storm, a furious squall of hurricane proportion. The Sea of Galilee, situated in a basin surrounded by mountains, is particularly susceptible to sudden, violent storms. Cool air from the Mediterranean is drawn down through the narrow mountain passes connecting the two bodies of water, and clashes with the hot, humid air lying over the lake. Thus, in a matter of seconds, the quiet Galilean waters can be turned into a howling, life-threatening watery nightmare for all those sailing upon it.

- Note the words as recorded by Mark's account:

"And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:39).

The language of this verse strongly suggests that the vicious storm may have been caused by satanic activity, perhaps in an attempt to drown Jesus.

1. The Greek word for rebuke is *epitimaō*, a word Jesus used in denouncing both Satan and his demons.
 - a. The rebuking of demons (Luke 9:42; Matt. 17:18)
 - b. The rebuking of Satan (Mark 8:33; Jude 9)
 2. The Greek word for peace, *phimoo*, used only here and in Mark 1:25 (where Jesus denounced a demon), means literally, *"be muzzled, be gagged."* This action often referred to the muzzling of a wild dog.
- There are many lessons to be learned today from this miracle. Three questions should be asked when the storms of life beset the Christian.
 1. Is this storm one of punishment or purification? That is, am I being chastened for my sin (as was true in the case of Jonah), or is this simply a trial allowed by God to purify me (as was true here with the disciples)?
 2. Have I made room for him on board? Am I aware of his presence?

3. What does He want me to do in the time of the storm? In a nutshell, three things:
 - a. He wants me to thank Him **for** the storm. *"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you"* (1 Thess. 5:18).
 - b. He wants me to fellowship with Him **in** the storm. *"Pray without ceasing"*(1 Thess. 5:17).
 - c. He wants me to trust Him **through** the storm. *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths"* (Prov. 3:5-6).

Walking on the Water (Matt. 14:24-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21)

SURVEY

Obeying the command of Jesus, the disciples begin rowing across the Sea of Galilee where they are suddenly caught in a severe, life-threatening storm. Just at the moment when all hope had gone, they see Jesus walking on the water toward them, fearful at first that He was a ghost. At Peter's request (upon recognizing the Savior), Jesus permits him to join in the watery walk. Soon, however, the apostle begins to sink. He is then rescued and gently rebuked by Jesus who calms the stormy elements, thus allowing both men to safely enter the boat.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This marks the first of two instances where the disciples thought that Jesus was a ghost (Matt. 14:26; Mark 6:49). The other occasion would transpire in the Upper Room following Jesus' glorious resurrection:

"And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have"(Luke 24:36-39).

- It records the shortest prayer in the entire New Testament: "LORD, SAVE ME!" (Matt. 14:30).

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- It has been suggested that this miracle serves as a remarkable review of that relationship between Christ and His Church. Note the following comparisons:

1. In Matt. 14, Christ sent His followers away in a boat on the sea and then ascended a hill to pray. The disciples then ran into a great storm on the Sea of Galilee.
 2. In Acts 1, Christ sends all his followers away and then ascends into heaven to pray. *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight"*(Acts 1:8-9). As His disciples we often run into great storms on the sea of life.
 3. In Matt.14, Christ remained on the hill for awhile to pray for His own. In Rom. 8, we are told He will remain in heaven for awhile to pray for us. *"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"*(Rom. 8:34).
 4. In Matt. 14, Christ eventually came for His own. In 1 Thess. 4, Christ will eventually come for us. *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"*(1 Thess. 4:16-17).
 5. In Matt. 14, He spoke peace to the troubled waters. In Isa. 2 He will speak peace to the troubled nations. *"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"*(Isa. 2:4).
- In light of all of this, there are six all-important facts the Christian must realize in the hour of his or her storm:
 1. Christ allowed me to be here, therefore He knows **about** the storm.
 2. He is watching over me and praying for me **during** the storm.
 3. He will come to me at the proper time **in** the storm.
 4. He will help my faith to grow **by** the storm.
 5. He will see me safely **through** the storm.
 6. He will enable me to help others going through a **similar** storm. *"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ"* (2 Cor. 1:3-5).

- It is enlightening indeed to contrast the apostles' reaction following this storm with that of the previous one. Note:
 1. Their reaction following the first storm—*"But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"* (Matt. 8:27).
 2. Their reaction following the second storm—*"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God"* (Matt. 14:33).

In a nutshell, they were learning!

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