


1-2018

The Miracles of Jesus Christ: Miracles 1-5

Harold Willmington

Liberty University, hwillmington@liberty.edu

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Recommended Citation

Willmington, Harold, "The Miracles of Jesus Christ: Miracles 1-5" (2018). *The Second Person File*. 102.
http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/second_person/102

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THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST

A THREE-FOLD SURVEY OF EACH MIRACLE

Miracles #1-5:

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 demoniac in a Capernaum synagogue

ONE: Turning Water Into Wine (Jn. 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 (Lk. 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 fathers business?" (Lk. 2:48, 49)

2. In Capernaum (Mk. 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." (Mk. 3:31, 32)

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

"When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son.' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home." (Jn. 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."* (Jn. 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."* (Jn. 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."* (Jn. 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."* (Jn. 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; Mt. 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 water pots 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."* (Jn. 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." (Jn. 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 its 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).

TWO: Healing a Nobleman's Son at Cana (Jn. 4:46-54)

SURVEY

A royal official in Cana asked Jesus to come and heal his son in Capernaum. The Savior sends him on his way, saying: *"You may go. Your son will live."*

Upon reaching Capernaum the amazed official discovers the healing had indeed occurred on the previous day at the seventh hour, the exact time Jesus had promised to heal him. This resulted in the father's conversion along with his entire household.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is the only recorded miracle which resulted in the spiritual salvation of an entire household.
- It is the first of five miracles in which a non-Jewish individual was involved. The other four are:
 1. A centurion's servant (Mt. 8:13)
 2. The maniac of Gadara (Mk. 5:8)
 3. A Canaanite girl (Mt. 15:28)
 4. One of the ten lepers (Lk. 17:11)
- It is the first of three miracles performed while the recipient was miles away. The other two are:
 1. The centurion's servant (Mt. 8:13)
 2. The Canaanite girl (Mt. 15:28; Mk. 7:30)

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- The ultimate intended purpose behind Jesus' healing miracles involved the restoration of both bodies and souls.
- This miracle illustrates that all similar prayer requests are instantly heard by and harkened to by God Himself. Various biblical examples record this precious and profound truth:

1. The nobleman

"So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house." (Jn. 4:53)

2. Abraham's servant

"And he said O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water; And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master. And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born

to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder." (Gen. 24:12-15)

3. Isaiah

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." (Isa. 65:24)

4. Daniel

"And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words." (Dan. 10:10-12)

THREE: Healing a Lame Man at the Pool of Bethesda (Jn. 4:46-54)

SURVEY

Jesus heals a man beside this pool near the sheep gate in Jerusalem who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is the first of at least four occasions when Jesus was criticized for healing on the Sabbath. For the remaining three, see miracles nine, twenty-seven, and twenty-eight.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- The statement, "Sir, I have no man," is profound in its spiritual implications. Both Luke and Paul later write concerning its importance:
 1. Luke's testimony – "And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." (Acts 8:30-31)
 2. Paul's testimony – "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:14-15)
- While Scripture is clear that personal suffering is not always a punishment caused by individual sin (Jn. 9:1-3), this case seems to be the exception. Note Jesus' warning to him:

"Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." (Jn. 5:14)

FOUR: First Miraculous Catch of Fish (Lk. 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 four miracles done upon the Sea of Galilee. For the other three, see miracles three, twenty, and twenty-six.
- 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 (Lk. 5:5; Jn. 21:3).
 - b. On both occasions they obeyed Jesus' command and were successful (Lk. 5:5, 6; Jn. 21:6).
 - c. On both occasions Simon Peter was the key figure (Lk. 5:3-8; Jn. 21:7-11).
 2. The contrasts
 - a. On the first occasion the fishing net broke. On the second it did not (Lk. 5:6; Jn. 21:11).
 - b. On the first occasion Jesus instructed Peter to *"catch fish,"* while on the second He would command him to *"feed sheep"* (Lk. 5:10; Jn. 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 Pet. 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 Pet. 5:1-2).

- It should be noted that most of Jesus' apostles were busy at work when He called them, as were the God-called O.T. men. Note:
 1. Moses and David were tending sheep (Ex. 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 (Mt. 9:9).
 6. Andrew, Peter, James, and John were fishing (Lk. 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 masters 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)

FIVE: Delivering a Demoniac in a Capernaum Synagogue (Mk. 1:23-28; Lk. 4:31-36)

SURVEY

Jesus was teaching on this occasion when He was suddenly and violently confronted by a demon-possessed man. The evil spirit immediately recognized Jesus as the Son of God, and, at the Savior's command, left his victim.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is the first of seven miracles where Jesus casts out evil spirits. For the other instances, see miracles 12, 14, 18, 21, 25, and 28.

- This is the first of at least three occasions when evil spirits gave terrified testimony that Jesus was indeed God's Son. Note:

"And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God." (Mk. 3:11)

"And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ." (Lk 4:41)

James would later write of this:

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." (James 2:19)

- This marks the first miracle performed in a synagogue.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- It can be truly said that in the demonic world, unlike the world of sinful men, there are no atheists! These evil spirits knew exactly with whom they were dealing. Note:
 1. The demon called Him *"Jesus of Nazareth,"* acknowledging the Savior's humanity.
 2. The demon called Him, *"thou Son of God,"* acknowledging the Savior's deity.