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The Miracles of Jesus Christ: Miracles 31-35

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THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Miracles #31-35:

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

THIRTY-ONE: Cleansing of Ten Lepers (Lk. 17:11-19)

SURVEY

En route to Jerusalem, Jesus encounters ten lepers who call out to Him for mercy and healing. Instantly all ten were cleansed and left to show themselves to the temple priests as instructed by the Levitical law for ceremonial cleansing. Soon, however, one of the ten—a Samaritan—returned, fell at the feet of the Savior and began worshipping and thanking Him.

- Jesus, regarding the thankless nine: *"Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?"*
- Jesus, regarding the thankful one: *"Rise and go; your faith has made you whole."*

SIGNIFICANCE

- This miracle regards the greatest number of specific (ten) healings than any other as performed by Jesus.
- It is the only miracle involving a Samaritan.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- This is the second of three miracles demonstrating the tragic fact that the one (or ones) experiencing physical salvation did not apparently experience spiritual salvation. These three cases are:
 1. The cripple by the pool of Bethesda (Jn. 5:1-16)

"Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath...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. 5:8-9, 14)

2. The nine lepers here in Luke 17.
 3. The servant of the high priest whose name was Malchus (Jn. 18:10). There is no evidence that he accepted Christ after having his severed ear restored.
- The great sin of the nine lepers was that of thanklessness. In some ways this is the ultimate sin, and goes along with pride and self-will, the root of all other sins. Paul says that this transgression in the ancient world caused all mankind to turn from God.

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." (Rom. 1:21-23)

- In essence, the cure for and solution to pride does not involve pious attempts to practice humility, but rather simply to be thankful. A thankful person is, by definition, a humble person! As someone has observed:

*"Be careful for nothing,
Be prayerful in everything,
Be thankful for anything!"*

THIRTY-TWO: Healing Blind Bartimaeus (Mt. 20:29-34; Mk. 10:46-52; Lk. 18:35-43)

SURVEY

Two blind beggars, one named Bartimaeus, sitting outside of Jericho learn that Jesus was approaching. Both immediately cry out for mercy.

The Savior: *"What do you want me to do for you?"*

The sightless: *"We want to see."*

Filled with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes, causing them to instantly reclaim their sight.

SIGNIFICANCE

- Of the sixteen healing events, involving some twenty-six people, only one is named — Bartimaeus.
- This is also the only New Testament miracle associated with the city of Jericho.
 1. The most famous Old Testament miracle concerning Jericho occurred in Joshua 6:20 (the shouting down of Jericho's walls).
 2. The final Old Testament miracle concerning Jericho is recorded in 2 Kings 2:18-22 (the purifying of some poisoned water).

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- This marks Jesus' final visit to Jericho. He will now leave for Jerusalem (see Mt. 20:29). Before this, He had told the story of a man who left Jerusalem for Jericho (the parable of the Good Samaritan—Lk. 10:25-37). But now the original Good Samaritan would reverse the trip, leaving Jericho for Jerusalem, where He would soon "fall among thieves."
- Note the spiritual insight of the blind beggar:
 1. He asked the right person - "*Jesus, thou Son of David.*"
 2. He asked in the right way - "*Have mercy on me.*"

It has been said that God will hush every harp in heaven to hear this kind of prayer!
 3. He asked at the right time - "*And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.*" (Lk. 18:36-37)
 4. He asked for the right thing - "*. . . that I might regain my sight.*"

THIRTY-THREE: Cursing the Fig Tree (Mt. 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." (Mt. 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 to it 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.” (Hos. 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.” (Jn. 15:8)
- Jesus later would say that He was the true vine and His followers were the branches (Jn. 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!

THIRTY-FOUR: Restoring Malchus’ Ear (Lk. 22:49-51)

SURVEY

While in Gethsemane Jesus restores the ear of Malchus, servant of the high priest, which ear Simon Peter had foolishly severed with his sword.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This was the final miracle performed prior to Calvary.
- It was also the last of sixteen healing miracles.
- It no doubt saved Simon Peter from certain death.
- It was the only miracle performed on an enemy.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- It is interesting that although all four gospel writers record the act of Malchus' ear being severed, (Mt. 26:51; Mk. 14:4; Lk. 22:50; Jn. 18:10), only Luke the physician tells us of the

restoration by Jesus (Lk. 22:51). Also, of the four, only John's gospel actually identifies the one who cut off the ear, Simon Peter by name (Jn. 18:10).

- Note Jesus' stern rebuke in regard to this act of violence:

"Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Mt. 26:52-53)

One of Jesus' little known but important roles apparently assigned to Him by the Father was to function as supreme commander of heaven's angelic armies. The O.T. describes this role as being "captain of the Lord's Host" (see Gen. 32:1-2; Josh. 5:13-14; 1 Sam. 17:45). Thus, holding this highest of rank, He could have easily (as was pointed out to Peter) instantly enlisted the aid of twelve legions of heaven's mighty warriors, numbering an elite army some 72,000 strong! BUT HE WOULD NOT! Jesus came to die for sinful men, not destroy them.

THIRTY-FIVE: Second Miraculous Catch of Fish (Jn. 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 (Jn. 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 farther 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." (Mt. 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." (Mt. 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 (Jn. 2) occurred at a wedding. His final miracle (Jn. 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." (Jn. 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." (Jn 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." (Jn. 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 Mt. 26:33.

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