

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

Lesson Plan: Miracles (Introduction)

Learning Goals: Students should be able to define the term miracle and list the major characteristics and categories of miracles in the ministry of Jesus.

Question: Do miracles really happen?

Prayer

Discuss Question on Board

Miracles were central to Jesus' Ministry:

- Every gospel tradition connects miracles with the large crowds Jesus attracted (Matthew 4:25, Mark 1:45, Luke 7:11; John 6:2)
- Jesus was known as a "miracle worker" and his name was used by other healers (Mark 9:38)
- Jesus' miracles were sufficient enough to call for repentance (Matthew 11:21)
- Jesus' miracles gave rise to his conflict with authorities.

Definition of Miracle: "An interface with nature by supernatural power." (C.S. Lewis)

Characteristics of Miracles (McLaren):

1. They involve healing rather than destruction.
2. They are related to faith.
 - They can stimulate faith
 - They can come in response to faith
3. Signs and wonders have symbolic or secret meaning.
4. Jesus generally tells people to be quiet about signs and wonders.
5. Miracles aren't in themselves the point - they point to something else.
 - Like road signs, they point to the point.
 - Tourist traps and public-relations stunts draw attention to themselves, but signs point beyond themselves - to a destination, path, or something worth noticing.

Purpose of Miracles:

1. Evidential (gave evidence of who he was - the Messiah)
 - Many of the Messianic expectations centered around miracles
 - Example: Jesus' first sermon in Luke (4:16-30) - "recovery of sight to the blind"
 - Also demonstrated that he was divine (one with God)
2. Evangelistic (proclaiming the Gospel - Good News)
 - Not just talk of the Gospel, but demonstration of the Gospel.
 - See also 1 Thessalonians 1:5
3. Empathetic
 - Jesus had "compassion" on the crowds (splachnizomai - to be moved in the guts)
 - Jesus seemed to connect and attract the sick, poor, hurting (why are many of these same people repelled from the church today?)
4. Eschatological (Announcing the End Times/Kingdom)
 - What is the kingdom like? no pain, death, illness, tears, hunger
 - Miracles are an example of bringing the Kingdom of Heaven into the present
 - Jesus is not only announcing the Kingdom, he is embodying the Kingdom (Incarnation)

- The miracles of Jesus were not signs of the coming of God's reign; they were the kingdom expressed in the lives of those healed.

The mark of a true miracle:

1. He never works a miracle to benefit himself
2. He never uses a miracle in order to simply show the spectacular (refuses to give a sign when the people ask for it)
3. He uses no magical formula, saying, or object

In his miracles, Jesus shows authority over:

1. Sickness/disease/death
2. The forces of evil
3. Created order (nature)

Lesson Summary /Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Miracle
- Through his miracles, Jesus demonstrates power over what three areas?
- What are the four purposes of Jesus' miracles?