

Lecture 10 – Miracles: Definition & Place in Ministry of Jesus

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. Matthew 4:23 (NIV)

Key Terms

Inclusio

Objectives

- *To reflect on Christ's miracles – proclaiming the kingdom in deed
- *To consider the responses that Jesus gets to His miraculous deeds

Lead Questions

- *How do Christ's miracles verify His message?
- *How does His message verify His miracles?

Miracles: Definition & Place in Ministry of Jesus

I. The Place of Miracles in the Ministry of Jesus (Matthew 4-9)

A. The issue

What is the significance of miracles in Jesus' ministry? Why did He perform them?

B. Gospels connect miracles to the kingdom

1. Matthew 4:23, 9:35 inclusio Jesus came teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the K and healing diseases. See also 10:7-8 "Proclaim that the K is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead..."
 - a. Matthew 5-7, proclaiming the kingdom in words (teaching)
 - b. Matthew 8-9, proclaiming the kingdom in works (healing)
2. Matthew 7:24ff. Miracles are one proof that the kingdom of God has arrived. Through miracles God's reign invades Satan's realm. Some disease is the consequence of sin and some healing is deliverance from bondage to Satan. See Luke 13:16, 4:38-41.

C. Gospels connect Jesus' words and His mighty deeds (Matthew 7-8)

1. Matthew relates Jesus' word, work and person. "All who hear me - these words - and does them, he will be compared to a wise man..." Where does He get authority for His teaching?

2. In Matt. 8 Jesus' words have power. Jesus performs miracles by a word:

- a. The centurion's servant (Matt. 8:8). "Just say the word and he will be healed."
- b. He drove out the spirits with a word (Matt. 8:16).

c. Contrast: Miracles in the ancient world—Josephus:

For I have seen a certain man of my own country whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of [emperor] Vespasian...and the whole multitude of his soldiers...He put a ring that had a root...to the nostril of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down immediately, he abjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations which he composed...He set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man. Josephus, Antiquities, 8.2.5.

3. Luke 4:31-38. People marvel, "What is this word? With authority He gives orders to evil spirits." Greek encourages us to see teaching and the healing as two parts of one message.
4. Miracles seize spectators' attention so they will hear rest of the message. cf. John 2:23-3:2

Is a belief in miracles essential to a saving faith? If no, why are they important? If yes, how would you explain their significance to a post-modern doubter?

II. Miracles of Matthew 8

A. The healing of the leper, 8:1-4

1. The setting
2. The leper's request, "Are you willing?" The significance of Jesus' reply "I am willing."
3. Jesus' touch - a social miracle

B. The healing of the centurion's servant, 8:5-13

1. The setting
2. A Roman - a taste of Jesus' universal ministry
3. The diversity of miracles in Matthew 8-9
4. Centurion as a one-dimensional character: a good confession (but otherwise unknown)

III. Response to Miracles

A. Jesus' miracles fulfill Isaiah

1. The healing of the sick is related to Isaiah 53 and Jesus' atoning work. The Messianic age brings physical and spiritual healing.
 - a. To understand Jesus' ministry, we need to understand it in relation to Isaiah 53.
 - b. Jesus' healing ministry rests on His substitutionary death. Matthew connects forgiveness and healing (cf. Matthew 1:23)
 - c. Signs the Messianic Age has arrived, Isaiah 29:18-20, Isaiah 32:1-4

B. Miracles call forth a response in Matthew 8:18-22

1. A scribe glibly offers to become a disciple
2. "Another" offers himself hesitantly

C. Miracles of lordship

1. Calming the storm. Illustration - inanimate objects
2. Demonstration of Jesus' power in casting out demons, Matthew 8:28-34 and Luke 8:26ff.
 - a. Luke 8:26ff. Severe case of demon-possession. This episode also shows how foolish demons are—uses title from Luke 1:32, demonstrating a knowledge of who Jesus is.
 - b. The main point—the demoniac is changed, sitting calmly, clothed at Jesus' feet
 - c. The people are afraid. The demoniac was more powerful than the people, and now they know that Jesus is more powerful than the demoniac.
 - d. The miracles demonstrated that God has authority over all things, and He will use that authority for the good of those who come under His reign.

Are there still miracles today? How do they communicate similar messages to Christ's miracles? Do they elicit the same responses?