**The Gospel of Mark**

**Witness to the Son of God #9**

**The Miracles of our Lord in Mark:**

**Gospel Portrait of Jesus**

**The Miracles**

There are 18 miracles of Jesus recorded in the Gospel according to Mark. Only one of them is unique to Mark. The other three Gospel records also contain miracles of Jesus not reported in other accounts, besides references to miracles that do appear in one or more other Gospel records. Matthew has 21 miracles of Jesus, two of which are unique to Matthew; Luke has 18 miracles of Jesus, five of which are unique to Luke; John has seven miracles of Jesus, five of which are unique to John. The miracles of Jesus recorded in Mark are:

* + The Man with an Unclean Spirit (Mark 1:23-26; cf. Luke 4:33-35)
  + Healing Simon's Mother-in-law (Mark 1:30-31; cf. Luke 4:38-39)
  + Healing a Leper (Mark 1:40-45; cf. Matthew 8:2-4; Luke 5:12-14)
  + Healing Palsy (Mark 2:1-12; cf. Matthew 9:2-8; Luke 5:17-26)
  + The Withered Hand (Mark 3:1-6; cf. Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11)
  + Stilling the Storm (Mark 4:35-41; cf. Matthew 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25)
  + The Gadarene Demoniac (Mark 5:1-20; cf. Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39)
  + The Daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:21-43; cf. Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 8:40-56)
  + The Afflicted Woman (Mark 5:25-34; cf. Matthew 9:20-22; Luke 8:43-48)
  + Feeding the Five Thousand (Mark 6:30-46; cf. Matthew 14:13-23; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15)
  + Jesus Walking on the Water (Mark 6:47-56; cf. Matthew 14:24-36; John 6:16-21)
  + Syro-Phenician Woman's Daughter (Mark 7:24-30; cf. Matthew 15:21-28)
  + Deaf and Dumb Man (Mark 7:31-37; cf. Matthew 15:29-31)
  + Feeding the Four Thousand (Mark 8:1-9; cf. Matthew 15:32-38)
  + The Blind Man Near Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26) **Unique to Mark**
  + The Demoniac Boy (Mark 9:14-29; cf. Matthew 17:14-20; Luke 9:37-43)
  + The Blind Man Near Jericho (Mark 10:46-52; cf. Matt 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43)
  + The Withered Fig Tree (Mark 11: 20-25; cf. Matthew 21)

**Etymology**

The English word *miracle*, translated from several Greek words, describes what we categorically refer to as miracles in the Bible. These terms include: power, mighty works, signs and wonders. In the New Testament these four Greek words are principally used to designate miracles:

1. ***Semeion***, a "sign", i.e., an evidence of a divine commission; an attestation of a divine message (Matt 12:38, 39; 16:1, 4; Mark 8:11; Luke 11:16; 23:8; John 2:11, 18, 23; Acts 6:8 …)

2. ***Thaumazo***, “wonders” ([Mark 5:20](http://biblehub.com/interlinear/mark/5-20.htm); [Mark 6:51](http://biblehub.com/interlinear/mark/6-51.htm))

3. ***Dunameis***, "mighty works;" works of superhuman power (Acts 2:22; Rom 15:19; 2 Thess 2:9)

4. ***Ergon***, "works” (Mark 13:34)

**Meaning**

- These words signify the coming of the Kingdom of God and they are all referring to the Person of Jesus.

- They also point to the new life where there will be full human life and freedom from evil.

**Catalogue and settings**

1. In Mark, the first miracle was about the power of Jesus Christ over the spirit world (Mark 1:23-26), the man with an unclean spirit.

2. The second miracle recorded showed Jesus' power over disease (1:30-31), healing Peter's mother-in-law). Like the previous miracle, only Mark and Luke reported this particular miracle. While Luke noted the power of Jesus to speak the disease gone, Mark chronicled the compassion and personal activity of Jesus as he took the sick woman by the hand and lifted her to her feet. Both records mention that Jesus healed several others, too, on that occasion.

3. The third miracle is a healing miracle (1:40-45), healing a leper. The disease from which this person was cured was an outwardly visible malady, perhaps even more so than the fever with which Peter's mother-in-law was afflicted. Yet, Jesus healed the leprous man instantly and completely. Consequently, his fame spread and other sick came to him for healing.

4-5. The fourth (2:1-12, healing palsy) and fifth (3:1-6), healing a withered hand. Healing a withered hand is another rather obvious of Jesus’ concern for the health of the human body.

6. The sixth miracle recorded by Mark demonstrated the power of Jesus over nature (4:35-41), stilling the storm. This miracle was done in the presence of the apostles of Christ in the midst of the Sea of Galilee and reinforced with them just with whom they were companions. It proves that Jesus has the divine power of the Creator.

7-8-9. The seventh, eighth and ninth miracles show Jesus victorious over the spirit world (5:1-20), Gadarene possessed with unclean spirits; disease (5:25-34), the afflicted woman; and death (5:21-43), Jairus' daughter.

10. The tenth miracle (6:30-46) appears in *all four Gospel records*, the feeding the 5,000 and is a miracle that proves Jesus the Creator who came to feed humanity. The appearance of this miracle in each of the Gospel records is an indication that the miracles of Jesus were widely known and *amply documented*, thereby, undeniable *evidence*.

11. Only Luke omits the eleventh miracle that Mark recorded, another power for Jesus over creation (6:47-56), Jesus walking on water.

12. Mark's twelfth miracle of Jesus was over the spirit world again (7:24-30), casting out the unclean spirit in the Syro-Phenician Woman's daughter. The miracles of Jesus became commonplace and represented the multiplication of evidence regarding the Deity of Jesus. However, this miracle was unique in that the recipient of this miracle was not Jewish, but a Gentile. This was perhaps a subtle hint that ultimately the ministry of the Christ would affect all of humanity (cf., Genesis 12:1-2; Isaiah 62:2).

13. The thirteenth miracle of Jesus that Mark recorded exhibited Jesus' power over disease (7:31-37), the deaf man with a speech impediment.

14. The fourteenth miracle was over creation as Jesus fed 4,000 this time (8:1-9).

15 - We will skip for now the fifteenth miracle of Jesus that Mark recorded and treat it separately since it is the only miracle of Jesus that was recorded exclusively in the Gospel According to Mark.

16. Mark's sixteenth miracle of Jesus was over the spirit world (9:14-29), a boy with an unclean spirit.

17. The seventeenth miracle recorded by Mark is over disease (10:46-52), healing the blind man near Jericho.

18. Mark's eighteenth miracle of Jesus demonstrated our Lord's supremacy over nature (11:20-25), the withered fig tree.

**Only in Mark (8:22-26) – The Blind Man at Bethsaida**

The combined accounts of the Gospel records provide a full picture of the events that they chronicle, including the miracles of Jesus. However, the Gospel of Mark records one miracle that does not appear in any of the three other Gospel records. This is, by Mark's list, miracle number fifteen, the blind man near Bethsaida and one of the many miracles of Jesus over disease. In Mark 8:22-26 it reads:

*“And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house, saying, neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town" (Mark 8:22-26).*

**Why Bethsaida?**

Bethsaida was at the northeast corner of the Sea of Galilee. Several Galilean cities were on the shore of this important inland body of water in Palestine, including Chorazin, Capernaum, and Tiberius.

This account contains some curious and mysterious elements (i.e., some things not explained in the context). For instance, why did Jesus lead the man out of the city before healing him? The verses immediately preceding this healing find the Pharisees seeking a sign from Jesus and desiring an opportunity to discredit him. But our Lord refused to lend himself to the disingenuous Pharisees who already had ample evidence regarding him, apparently, Jesus would not deny the blind man the miracle of healing that he needed to restore his sight. Hence, Jesus removed the blind man from the arena of the Pharisee's gaping. The audience for this miracle of Jesus was an audience of none other than his disciples, verses (10, 27), and the blind man. Therefore, the miracle was for the benefit of the blind man and our Lord's disciples, and the byproduct of the miracle, healing from blindness, was affected upon the intended pawn of the Pharisees (the blind man).

**Why the Delay?**

Why did Jesus not heal the blind man immediately in this instance? No doubt Jesus could as easily restored sight to this blind man as readily as he had healed countless other persons. The Pharisees put the blind man forth as a challenge to the miraculous powers of Jesus. For the sake of the blind man as well as the Disciples of Christ, Jesus particularly emphasized his ability to perform a genuine miracle in what was put forth by his enemies as a *test case*. Consequently, Jesus enlisted the testimony of the blind man himself as to the progress of the successful application of the miracle. Doubtless, the dramatic restoration of sight emboldened the faith of the blind man and the disciples in the Deity of Jesus.

Jesus told the former blind man not to return to the city for the same reason for which our Lord led the man from the city before performing the miracle. Jesus did not intend for the Pharisees to have the sign they demanded. Again, they and all men in Palestine had ample evidence regarding the miracles of Jesus, etc. With dishonest hearts and spiritually derelict, they had fully demonstrated previously their disdain for God and Jesus, too. Besides, it was not time yet for Jesus to be taken on trumped up charges and put to death for us, which the further aggravation of the Pharisees just then may have precipitated prematurely.

**Not Worthy of Miracles**

Not only the Pharisees, but also the populace of Bethsaida itself was of the sort not worthy of further miraculous demonstrations. Jesus condemned Bethsaida for not being responsive to the signs he performed there. "*Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes*" (Matthew 11:21).

The fact that no one followed Jesus as he led the blind man from the city may also indicate the general disinterest exhibited for spiritual matters by the citizens of that city. There is no indication that even the blind man had any interest or expectation regarding Jesus healing him from blindness. This may shed light on why our Lord performed this healing miracle in *stages*. The blind man's interest was piqued following stage one when his vision began to be restored. Then, when quizzed by the Christ, the blind man articulated an interest in his own healing.

**Lack of Spiritual Interest**

There is a frightening similarity between the blind man and Bethsaida's lack of interest in the ministry of Jesus then to the widespread lack of interest in spiritual matters today. Just as many were apathetic to the actual presence of Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry, now countless souls are impervious to the saving ministry of Jesus Christ through the Gospel.

**Summary – Divine Manifestation**

In summary, true miracles were episodes of immediate divine manifestation to correct and heal humanity, which interventions were intentionally visible to humanity, the purpose of which was to deliver new revelation, while validating the revelation and the Messenger. These miracles evidenced divine power over disease, environment, the spirit world, material things and death. About 18 of our Lord's miracles are recorded in the Gospel according to Mark. Only one of these miracles appears exclusively in Mark.

The Gospel of Mark was written to a Roman readership. Therefore, absent in Mark are most references to the Old Testament and the prophecies found therein, which were more meaningful to Jewish readers. Hence, Mark relies heavily on the miracles of Jesus to prove that he is the Savior of the world. The miracles of Jesus that are recorded in Mark constitute sufficient evidence by which one can confidently develop faith in Jesus Christ.

**The Portrait of Jesus**

1. The teaching and the Person are one entity and can’t be split. Jesus the Healer is the one who touched everything in this life: humans in various conditions, the sick, the enslaved to demons, bread and fish, the storms, etc. He walked on the water, and even died and was buried.
2. The Gospel does not end with the death of Jesus on the cross, but declares his resurrection and thus makes the Jesus who did all these deeds the Lord of the Church and his healing power and divine presence still gives life.

***Pope’s Notes***

*(A note of remembrance: our friend and pastor Russ Blowers encouraged George and E91 to present this weekly class starting back in September 2004. Russ went to be with Jesus Nov. 10, 2007, ten years ago this Friday.)*

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