



VERSE

Matthew 9:27–30a, *niv*

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” “Yes, Lord,” they replied. Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be done to you”; and their sight was restored.

SUMMARY

Miracles have long been a source of wonder and amazement. The Bible reports many miraculous events involving people (1 Kings 13:4-6), nature (Exodus 14:21-31), and even time and space (Joshua 10:12-14). But what exactly constitutes a miracle? And what do they tell us about God and how he works? Specifically, what do the miracles of Jesus tell us about Him and His ministry?

Definition of “miracle”:

Theologian Wayne Grudem provides a useful definition of a miracle:

A miracle is a less common kind of God’s activity in which he arouses people’s awe and wonder and bears witness to himself.

C.S. Lewis put it simply, calling miracles “An interference with nature by a supernatural power.” When God, in His sovereign power, intervenes in the normal course of events in a way that produces an unexpected event, the result is a miracle. The New Testament uses four different Greek words to describe the miracles recorded there.

- **Dunamis** carries the idea of supernatural power and mighty works. The focus here is on the power of God to perform such works. Examples include Matthew 11:21; Mark 6:2, 5, 14; 9:39; and Acts 13:10.
- **Terasa** means “wonder” and emphasizes the extraordinary nature of the event. Terasa is always paired with the word *semeion* (signs) to render “signs and wonders”. Examples include Mark 13:22; John 4:48; and Matthew 24:24.
- **Semeion** means “sign” and is used primarily by the gospel writer John. Signs point to something else, and in this case the miracle is pointing to the one with the ability to perform it, namely Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Examples include John 2:11; 4:54; 6:2; 11:47.
- **Ergon** means “works” and is used to describe both ordinary deeds of mercy (Matthew 5:16) and Christ’s miracles. Examples include John 5:20, 36, 7:3; 10:25.

Combining the ideas conveyed by those New Testament words, we might arrive at this definition, adapted from the writings of Hampton Keathly:

A miracle is an unusual and significant event (*terasa*) which requires the working (*ergon*) of a supernatural agent (*dunamis*) and is performed for the purpose of authenticating the message or the messenger (*semeion*).

SUMMARY

Characteristics of Miracles:

- Miracles were not random displays of compassion but were performed with a purpose.
- Miracles were performed in public before witnesses who could testify to their occurrence.
- Miracles were done sometimes in response to faith, and at other times with no reference to faith.

Theological Purpose of Miracles:

- To attest to the true identity of Jesus (Mark 2:1-7).
- To lead people to faith in Jesus (John 20:30-31).
- To reveal to Israel the Messianic identity of Jesus (Luke 7:20-23).
- To illustrate deeper truths (John 6:30-33).
- To preview a world to come (Revelation 21:4).

As Tim Keller writes, “The bible tells us that God did not originally make the world to have disease, hunger, and death in it. Jesus has come to redeem where it is wrong and heal the world where it is broken. His miracles are not just proofs of his power but also wonderful foretastes of what he is going to do with his power. Jesus’s miracles are not just a challenge to our minds, but a promise to our hearts that the world we all want is coming.”

A word to the skeptic...

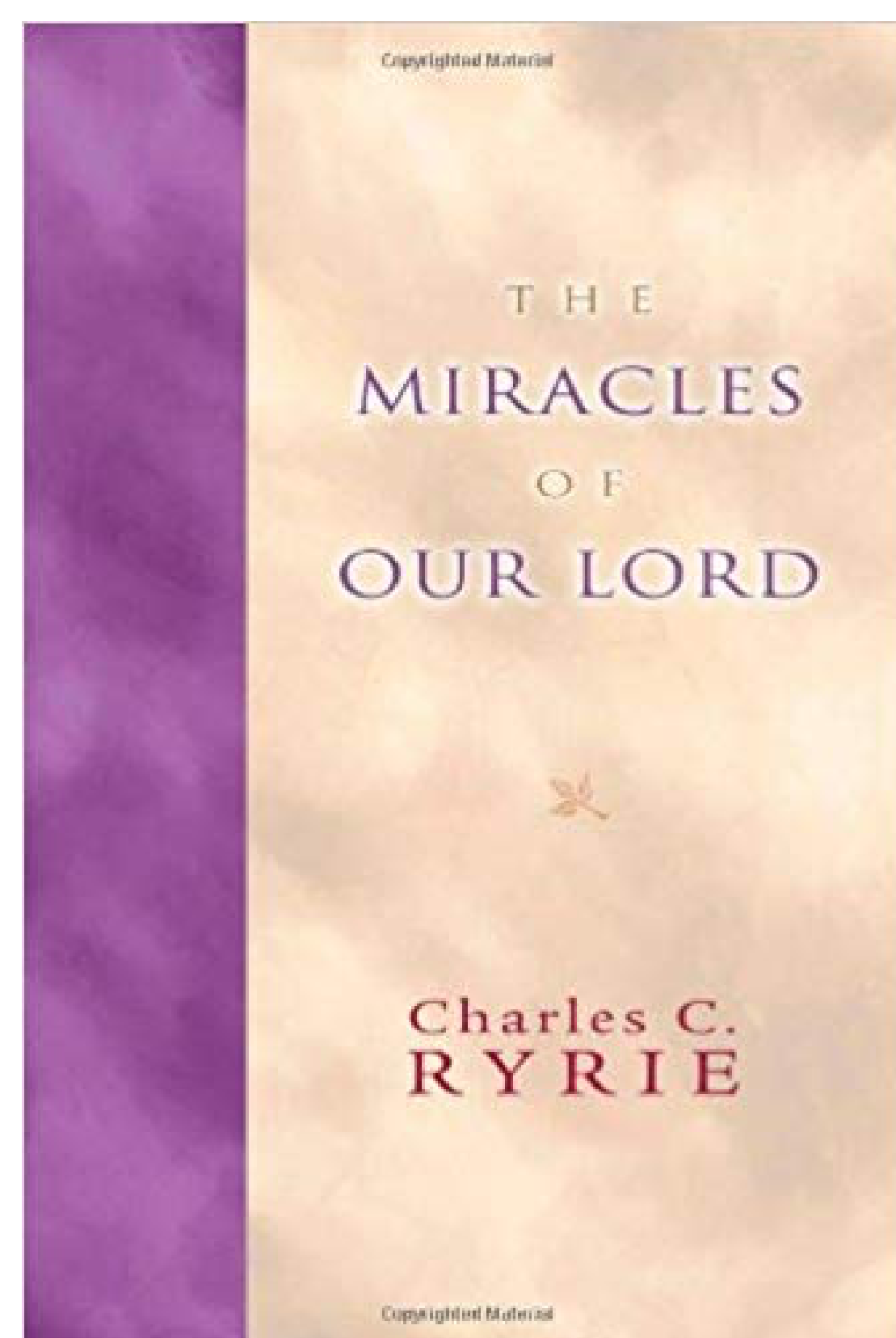
C.S. Lewis said, “A miracle is by definition an exception.” Even those who walked with Jesus struggled with doubt – even after the resurrection! (Matthew 28:16-17) While it is easy to understand why some find miracles hard to believe, the challenge is to let the text speak for itself. If a creator God exists, then there is nothing illogical about miracles being possible. In fact, such a God could intervene in the world whenever He chooses. As Dr. Ryrie writes, “If Jesus of Nazareth was who he claimed to be – God – we should expect that he performed miracles.”

As Moses wrote in his song after the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea,
“Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”
(Exodus 15:11, ESV)

TEACHING SCHEDULE

SAT	SUN	PASSAGE	MIRACLE
1/26	1/27	John 2:1-11	Water to Wine
2/2	2/3	Luke 5:1-11	Miraculous Catch of Fish
2/9	2/10	Mark 4:35-41	Calms the Storm
2/16	2/17	Mark 5:21-43	Raises a girl from the dead and heals a woman
2/23	2/24	Matthew 14:13-21	Feeds the 5000
3/2	3/3	Matthew 14:22-33	Walks on Water
3/9	3/10	John 9:1-12	Heals a man born Blind
3/16	3/17	Mark 9:14-29	Heals a boy with an unclean spirit
3/23	3/24	Luke 17:11-19	Heals Ten Lepers
3/30	3/31	John 11:1-45	Raises Lazarus from the dead
4/6	4/7	Matthew 21:18-22	Withers the fig tree
4/13	4/14		Palm Sunday
4/20	4/21		Easter

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



The Miracles of Our Lord

By: Charles C. Ryrie

This is a book about the miracles of our Lord. It does not attempt to vindicate them but rather to explain them, and in the explaining to show us more facets of the person who performed them. The explanations combine exegesis of the passages involved with the themes that emerge therefrom. Not only is it important to know the facts about each miracle, but also to glean from those facts the insights they give us about the Lord. In addition, I have tried to outline each miracle in a way that will, so to speak, attractively gift wrap the material for you.



Panorama Plus 10

By: Robert Cupp

The 10th movement of Panorama of the Bible, The Life of Christ. This study explores in greater detail the narrative of Jesus's life found in the four gospels.