

WEEK 12: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION



In this final study we will consider the miracles of Jesus as a whole and the important role they play in the way Christians think and live. There will also be an opportunity to review some of your most important reflections from the various *Gospel Glimpses*, *Whole-Bible Connections*, and *Theological Soundings* encountered through this study.

The Big Picture of the Miracles of Jesus

We began this study by challenging the common assumption that a miracle is something that occurs contrary to nature. While a miracle may be contrary to what is known of nature, as Augustine suggested it is certainly something that belongs to the realm of nature. The reason is made clear in Scripture: the natural world is God's creation, which he orders according to his providence and purposes. We are not wrong, however, to define miracles as "extraordinary operations" of God that intervene in what we perceive to be the natural operations of creation. For that reason miracles are more communicative to us in their power and even purpose. Miracles direct us to look at or think about something in a specific way and for a special reason: the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Rooted in the foundational miracle of the exodus (Exodus 1–18), the first of many "signs" in the unfolding biblical story, the miracles of Jesus do two things: communicate the truth about Jesus and challenge people to trust in him. Miracles not only direct people to the person of Jesus but also summon

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every person to a decision of faith. Jesus does this by performing hundreds of miracles (over forty are recorded in the Gospels), which span the created order, from old creation to the new. In this way Jesus not only displays his role as Savior and Lord over creation but also enacts the entire biblical story of creation until he inaugurates the renewed creation by means of his own resurrection.

The miracles of Jesus can be seen for their ministerial purpose when they are viewed in relation to the biblical story's order of creation. Many of Jesus' miracles are performed in ways that reflect his sovereign reign over the world as it is now, or what we have called the old creation. Miracles of the old creation include miracles of fertility, healing, destruction, and, in some cases, dominion. Each of those kinds of miracles explains various truths about Jesus' person and work. Miracles of fertility, for example, magnify the ways in which God is the provider for his creation. Miracles of healing, then, declare God to be the sustainer of his creation. In what might seem contradictory but is significant in relation to the holiness of God, miracles of destruction reflect God's supreme right to judge his creation, reflective of his role as Lord and King. Finally, miracles of dominion, as in the stilling of the storm (Mark 4:35–41), reflect God's ongoing and constant power over his creation. These types of miracles, then, present in full color the ways in which God rules over and ministers within his creation and on behalf of his creatures, specifically man.

Other miracles of Jesus reflect his intention to bring forth the world that is to come, or what we have called the new creation. Miracles of the new creation include some miracles of dominion but primarily involve miracles of reversal and glorification. Like the miracles of the old creation, each of those kinds of miracles explains truths about Jesus' person and work. But in this case it is a ministry that presents and provides a true redemption of the sinful realities of the old creation. For example, one aspect of the miracles of dominion, such as walking on water (Matt 14:22–33), reflects God's intentions to renew and perfect his people into a new human nature. Miracles of reversal express Jesus' dominion more strongly and reflect his authority and intention to renew all of creation. Finally, miracles of glorification, specifically the resurrection of Jesus, announce the beginning of the new creation in the actual body of our resurrected Lord. These types of miracles, like their counterparts, present the ways in which God is ministering in the world in such a way so as to bring forth a new, perfect world, which he promised from the beginning.

When we study the miracles of Jesus, therefore, we are following the whole biblical story and its ultimate goal of the renewal of all creation. The miracles of Jesus show how the work of the Creator at the beginning of the world is ongoing and magnified especially in the life and ministry of Jesus as he redeems his creation from its brokenness and establishes the promised and perfect world to come. The miracles of Jesus also yield a very practical perspective for the disciples of Jesus. Since the miracles of Jesus fall within the context of creation, we are taught to see every aspect of creation through the lens of the loving and

redeeming work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus' miracles not only explain him but challenge us to trust him. We are pastored to trust, wait, hope, and even lament in light of Christ's purposes and promises as we wait for the redemption of the world and the glory of the new creation.

Read through the following three sections on *Gospel Glimpses*, *Whole-Bible Connections*, and *Theological Soundings*. Then take time to consider the *Personal Implications* these sections have for you.

Gospel Glimpses

It is not uncommon for Christians to think the miracles of Jesus are intended to serve as apologetic proofs of Jesus' divinity. As much as Jesus truly is God, the miracles communicate more than his divine identity and ability. The miracles explain the ministry of Jesus and therefore the gospel. The miracles show how Jesus engages and confronts a fallen, broken creation and its creatures and brings healing and redemption in a way that reflects the message of good news revealed progressively in Scripture. In this way the miracles teach us about the ministry of Jesus to redeem and heal his creation, specifically his people.

Review the *Gospel Glimpses* in each section of this study. Each of Jesus' miracles directs our attention to the grace of God provided through Jesus, often in the very details of the miracle story. What are two or three lessons you learned about the kind of grace Jesus provides to us?

As you reflect on the many ways Jesus provides his people with the grace of God through his miraculous works, what is one profound truth about God's grace you learned from this study that motivates you to praise him?

Whole-Bible Connections

The miracles of Jesus offer a retelling of the entire story of the Bible, the complete account of the ways in which God ministers to his creation. This is why it is helpful to classify the miracles according to old creation or new creation, primarily since the miracles reflect God’s intention to care for his creation and bring forth the new creation through the redemptive and completive work of Jesus Christ. The miracles of Jesus, then, provide us with lenses to see the full story of Scripture and the ways the parts connect to the whole. Every individual miracle is, in reality, a subset of the ultimate miracle of the originating and perfecting of creation.

As you review the *Whole-Bible Connections* throughout the study, identify two or three themes that you find especially helpful for your big-picture understanding of the Bible.

The exodus is the foundational “miracle” in the Bible, the first biblical sign upon which all the miracles of Jesus are built. Moses reflects Jesus as he reveals God and proclaims the ministry of redemption God will accomplish. Read the accounts in the exodus story of when the miracles are first depicted as “signs” in Exodus 4:1–9 and 7:1–7. What do the exodus miracles proclaim about God, and how is the use of *sign* in Exodus similar to its use in relation to the miracles of Jesus in the Gospels (see John 20:30–31)?

Theological Soundings

While all Scripture is needed to explain that which God has revealed about his character and purposes, the miracles of Jesus offer a unique perspective on the core doctrines of the Christian faith, notably the doctrine of God. The miracles

display the compassion and intentionality of Jesus as he engages in our broken world and redeems it with his grace and power. The miracles are a perfect blend of grace and truth, with the latter reflecting the theological truths that the miracles teach us about God.

Review the *Theological Soundings* throughout this study. List several doctrinal insights that were new to you or that challenged your understanding of God.

Reflect on how the miracles of Jesus taught you about the person and character of God. In what ways did Jesus show both grace and truth as he dealt with the brokenness of creation and brought healing and redemption? How does Jesus minister in similar ways now in our broken world and lives?

Reflect on how the miracles teach us about both Jesus' divinity and his humanity. In what ways do the miracles of Jesus explain and confirm that Jesus is God? How do the miracles also explain and reflect his humanity, and in what ways does this expand your view of Jesus?

Personal Implications

The miracles magnify for us the brokenness of our creation and its creatures, as well as the authority and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we conclude this

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study, write down some final lines of application for yourself individually and for the church collectively.

What do the miracles of Jesus reveal about the consequences of sin in our world and even in the bodies of its creatures? In what ways does the reality of sin's consequences help you fight against sin in your own life as it also pushes you toward Jesus?

How do the miracles of Jesus aid your ability to trust in Christ with your own battle with the consequences of sin? How has this study changed how you look at or deal with sickness and even death?

How do the miracles of Jesus, especially his resurrection, give you renewed hope in the certainty and glory of the coming new creation? Does the reality of complete healing and redemption in the new creation help you live differently or with a better perspective now?

As You Finish Studying the Miracles of Jesus . . .

We rejoice with you as you finish studying the miracles of Jesus! May this study become part of your Christian walk of faith, day by day and week by week throughout all your life. Now we would greatly encourage you to study the

Word of God on a week-by-week basis. To continue your study of the Bible we encourage you to consider other books in the *Knowing the Bible* series and to visit www.crossway.org/knowingthebible.

Be encouraged to review this study from time to time. Revisit the notes you have written and the things you have highlighted or underlined. Reflect again on the key themes that the Lord has been teaching you about himself and his Word. May these things become a treasure for you throughout your life—which we pray will be true for you, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.