

=MIRACLES OF CHRIST=

Lesson 1

Attacks Against the Miracles

AIM: to strengthen my pupils' faith in the miracles and to acquaint them with the different attacks against the miracles.

POINT OF CONTACT: Ask the pupils to name as many miracles in the Bible as they can. See how many miracles they can give. It might be better still to give each pupil a piece of paper and ask the pupils to list as many miracles as they can. You could give a little reward, such as a candy bar or something, to the pupil who lists the most.

INTRODUCTION: We now begin a new series of lessons on the miracles of Christ. Before we discuss the various miracles, we will first gird up our pupils so they may be well-prepared for Satan's schemes to weaken their faith in our miracle-working Saviour.

I. EXAMPLES OF ATTACKS AGAINST THE MIRACLES.

1. Perhaps the biggest attack of all against the miracles of Christ is the attack against the Miracle Worker Himself, in other words, His virgin birth and His sinless life. Both of these are certainly miracles. Harry Emerson Fosdick said, "Of course, I do not believe in the virgin birth of Christ, and I do not know any intelligent minister who does." How wicked!!!
2. Concerning the raising of the dead. Scoffers have tried to say that Jesus never raised the dead, but that these were simply people who were asleep and He woke them up.
3. Concerning the turning of the water into wine. Scoffers have said that Jesus simply poured water into the wine and made the wine weaker. The interesting thing about this is, the guests said that the wine was better after Jesus had done His miracle.
4. Concerning the feeding of the 5,000. Scoffers say that Jesus simply held up the lad's loaves and fishes, and everyone opened up his own lunch and ate.
5. Concerning Lot's wife turning to a pillar of salt. Scoffers say that this was a figure of speech and that turning to a pillar of salt was like if we would say that somebody got scared and "froze" at the wheel. They say this is simply the usage of a figure of speech.
6. Concerning creation. Scoffers have always laughed at the teaching of divine creation. Such foolish ideas have been presented as the idea that man's arms and legs grew from warts on the body that became infected and grew, helping us to obtain mobility. Another foolish assumption is that man was once a hairy ape, and because the female apes preferred the less hairy male apes, we evolved into less hairy creatures.
7. Concerning the parting of the Red Sea. Scoffers have said there was a place in the Red Sea where you could step over or jump over. Some have even argued that there were places shallow enough to walk through. This is against all teaching of the Bible and geographical facts.

II. THE TYPES OF ATTACKS AGAINST THE MIRACLES. Let us look at the different ways people have attacked and do attack the miracles of Christ.

1. The attack that Jesus did perform miracles but that He did it in the power of Satan. Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22-27; Luke 11:15-22. One of the first attacks, very popular among the Jews, was that Jesus did perform the miracles, but not in the power of the Holy Spirit. They accused Him of using the power of the Devil. Jesus Himself called this the unpardonable sin. In other words, they thought He was performing some kind of evil magic.
2. The attack of the heathen religions. The heathen religions believed in the doctrine of polytheism. They believed there were many gods. They believed there were higher powers, middle powers and lower powers. They felt that perhaps Jesus did perform the miracles, but that did not necessarily mean that He was God. In other words, they accepted Him as being a good man who performed some miracles through perhaps one of the intermediate powers of deity. They said Jesus was just another human miracle worker—a good man, but only a miracle worker. The fallacy here is that if indeed He was just a miracle worker, then He was not a good man, for He claimed to be a miracle worker and claimed to be God. If He was not God, then He was an imposter and certainly could not be a good man.

3. The attack of saying, “It doesn’t matter.” This seems to be a very popular teaching today. Some say they believe the virgin birth, but that it doesn’t really matter whether Jesus was virgin-born or not. Some say that it is all right to believe the miracles—it depends on how one looks at the Bible. These are simply people who cast reflection upon the Bible and cast doubt as to its accuracy.
4. The attacks of the nature-worshippers. These people believe that Jesus could have performed miracles (or shall we say, God could have performed miracles), but that He made laws Himself of His own imposing which limit Him to nature and that God has bound Himself to nature. They say nature itself is the law of God which God will not break because He made the law. Nothing could be farther from the truth. These people believe that nature is God. We believe that God is the author and controller of nature.
5. The attacks of the skeptics. The skeptics say that if something cannot be explained naturally, then it could not be true. They say that the witnesses who tell of the miracles of Christ were deceived or were deceiving in telling that the miracles took place. They say that the testimony of all experience which has gone before and the unbroken law of nature proves that these witnesses of miracles were deceived or trying to deceive others. These people say that if it cannot be seen, it cannot be believed. In other words, they must have definite facts. These same people cannot understand the television set, but they use it! They cannot understand a pain (they have never seen a pain or heard a pain speak, but they talk about having pain). These are the most inconsistent, no doubt, of all the opposers of the Bible and of the miracles.
6. The attack that the miracles were miraculous to the people at the time, but not miraculous to us. In other words, a savage may believe that the telescope has the power of bringing the far-off close. Of course, this is not a miracle because the telescope does not bring the far-off close; it just appears that way to the savage. These attackers of miracles say that the people in the Bible were of such unlearned stature that they themselves actually thought that these were miracles and were deceived. In other words, they say that they were sincere in saying that miracles were performed, but that these same things would not be miracles to us, for we are enlightened. They say events simply happened which to them were miracles, but that to us, could be proven.
7. Then there are those who are probably as dangerous as any, who say they believe the Bible but believe that everything in the Bible has a spiritual meaning. These call us fundamentalists “slaves of the letter” and say that the miracles did not mean literal events, but that they are to be interpreted spiritually only. These people float around on clouds and are so heavenly-minded that they are no earthly good, trying to explain, in terms they do not understand, doctrines they do not believe, to people who cannot figure them out.

III. PROOF OF THE MIRACLES.

1. Many of the miracles have been proven by archeologists. If one simply would get a good book on Biblical archeological discoveries, one would find many of the miracles are fact, not fancy. Some of these proofs are as follows:
 - 1) The resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is accepted in Roman history as fact. The Roman government put a seal on the tomb and put guards walking around the tomb. Yet to this day, it is a fact of Roman history that Christ rose from the dead.
 - 2) The lost day. Scholars tell us that some way there has been a day lost somewhere in the history of the world. This day, no doubt, was lost when Joshua was fighting the battle against the forces of evil.
 - 3) It has been proven that the walls of Jericho miraculously fell.
 - 4) God miraculously blessed one mountain in Samaria and cursed another. These mountains are side by side. To this day, the mountain of blessing is full of greenery and beauty, and the mountain of cursing, right beside it, is barren and dead.
2. The Bible is true; that is fact! Of course, all the miracles are based on the fact that the Bible is the divinely-inspired Word of God. If we believe the Bible, we believe everything in the Bible. Let us notice a few reasons why the Bible is inspired:
 - 1) Its own claim. It claims to be the Word of God. Twenty-six hundred times the Old Testament claims such. Five hundred twenty-five times the New Testament claims such. Leviticus makes this claim 56 times in 21 chapters.

- 2) Victories over the ravages of time. No other book could have withstood the assaults of history. Thomas Paine once said that the Bible would be extinct in his generation. The same printing press with which he printed this propaganda was used after his death to print Bibles! Countries have outlawed it, dictators have burned it, and yet the Bible remains as the best seller.
- 3) Scientific facts prove the Bible is the Word of God. Many facts that man has accepted or discovered only in recent centuries were printed in the Bible hundreds of years earlier. For example, Isaiah 40:22 tells us the earth is round. Jeremiah 33:22 tells us that stars are numberless. Job 26:7 tells us of the northern empty space. Job 38:35 tells us of the radio. Other scriptures tell us of automobiles, airplanes, hangers for planes, etc. These were written far before man had comprehension that such things could exist.
- 4) The power of the Bible in human lives. The Bible works! There has been no influence in human history as helpful to the human race as the Bible. The society which believed the Bible has been the society which has stood the longest. Deterioration of a society has been in direct proportion to its failure to believe the Word of God. The strength of civilizations and their belief in the Word of God have been in direct ratio.

CONCLUSION: Let us, beyond the shadow of doubt, stress to our pupils that the Bible is true and the miracles are fact!

QUESTION:

- T F 1. When Jesus turned water into wine, actually He just poured water into a jar of wine.
- T F 2. When Jesus fed the 5,000, He actually made enough to feed them from one lad's lunch basket.
- T F 3. Lot's wife did not really become a pillar of salt. This simply was used as a figure of speech.
- T F 4. The Red Sea is very narrow and did not even need dividing; the Israelites just "stepped across" at the most narrow point.