



Jesus Miracles: Did They Happen?

Plan



This is an apologetics lesson with a practical application for Christian groups.

Aim/s

- Can we believe in miracles?
- Is it possible that the miracles of Jesus in the Bible are fabricated?
- Do miracles happen today?

Key Bible verse

Acts 2:22 People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. NLT

Bible references – select from here or use the appendix

1. John 2:1-11 Jesus turns water into wine (nature)
2. Mark 6:31-44 Jesus feeds 5000 (nature)
3. Luke 8:41-42, 49-55 Raising of Jairus' daughter (healing)
4. John 9:6-33 Man born blind or for a shorter one Matthew 7:27-31 (healing)

Resources

- YouTube video from Reboot: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7zNuaVhbHY>
Tanya Walker explains why we can believe in miracles. 5 minutes if you watch it all.
- Herod's song - Jesus Christ Superstar <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MH6efoYzJE>
This reflects the attitude of the unbelieving world. 4 minutes

Introduction & starters (select)

Many people believe that Jesus existed and was a good teacher but the New Testament gospels are full of stories about miracles that he did.

Does everyone believe in miracles? Why / why not?

Is it possible that the miracles in the Bible are fabricated? Some people certainly attempt to explain them away. I wonder which of Jesus miracles are the hardest for people without faith to believe?

1. Herod's song from Jesus Christ Superstar is a good example of the attitude of the unbelieving world. It mentions healing cripples, raising people from the dead, water into wine, walking on water and feeding 5000. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MH6efoYzJE> 4mins
2. And/or YouTube video from Reboot: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7zNuaVhbHY>
Tanya Walker explains why we can believe in miracles. 5 minutes if you watch it all.
3. Have you – or a friend, ever witnessed a miracle? (or cover this later)

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Some groups will be familiar with Jesus' miracles and others won't, so adapt your approach accordingly. You can cover each story by reading it, telling it, or if you have the time, you can play 'What happened next?' by giving them part of the story and asking them to complete it. However the main point is to discuss whether we can believe them or not.

Take a quick look at the following accounts (or choose from the chart below) and after each one discuss:

- What type of miracle was this?
- Can you think of any other explanation?
- Do you think it was genuine or fake?

1. John 2:1-11 Jesus turns water into wine (nature)
2. Mark 6:31-44 Jesus feeds 5000 (nature)
3. Luke 8:41-42, 49-55 Raising of Jairus' daughter (healing)
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Story 1 The Wedding at Cana: Water into Wine John 2:1-11

Read or tell verses 1-5 and ask What Happened Next?

Either read or let them tell you the rest of the story.

- What happened as a result of that miracle? Verse 11 – his followers believed in him.
- Could the miracle have been fabricated do you think? If so, how?
It is so amazing that why would Jesus' followers try to invent such a tale?

Story 2 Jesus feeds 5000 people Mark 6:31-44 NCV

Read or tell verses 31-38 ³⁸ Jesus asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have? Go and see. "What Happened Next?

Either read or let them tell you the rest of the story.

- How do some people try to explain away this story? It prompted everyone to get out their food and share.
- How does Mark's account show that was not a good explanation? The extra detail in Mark shows how long everyone had been away from home so all food would have been eaten.

Story 3 Jesus raises Jairus' daughter from the dead Luke 8:41-42, 49-55

Read or tell verses 41-42 and 49-53 (43-48 is about another healing)

⁵² All the people were crying and feeling sad because the girl was dead, but Jesus said, "Stop crying. She is not dead, only asleep." ⁵³ The people laughed at Jesus because they knew the girl was dead. What Happened Next?

Either read or let them tell you the rest of the story.

- So do you think the girl was dead or just in a coma?
- Which story about Jesus raising someone from the dead cannot be explained in that way?

Story 4 – Jesus heals a man born blind John 9:6-33

This is long but a great healing story because Jesus' contemporaries tried so hard to deny it. It would be quicker to tell most of it but it is worth reading verses 18-33 which are rather fun.

- Do you think this is a genuine account? Why?

Conclusion

- Do you believe that Jesus did perform the miracles as told in the Bible?
- If we believe that Jesus did perform miracles 2,000 years ago the next question we have to ask is whether He still does so today. Do you think miracles still happen?
- Have you ever seen or heard about a miracle? Share any stories you know.

Application

Ask them to write down a miracle for which they would like to pray. Reassure them that you are not asking them to pray **with** someone, just **for** someone or something. If they can't think of anything immediately, that is ok. Encourage them to be bold enough to consider praying for one. Point out that there are many types of miracles.

Remind them that God's power comes from being in God's presence. And God's presence helps us to pray effectively.

Extra notes

What is a miracle? That is quite a deep question. First let's think about -
What different types of miracles are there? How about:

1. Healings: physical, mental, of memories etc.
 2. Nature
 3. Raising from the dead
 4. Reconciliation for broken relationships
 5. Transformation of people's lives
 6. Release from fear
 7. Release from addictions to drugs etc.
 8. Divine coincidences where the timing of something is perfect.
- Other?

Quote from Reboot clip:

Question: Can God do miracles?

Tanya Walker: If a God exists who created the world and everything in it, then it stands to reason that it would be kind of child's play. The person who created the world, the galaxies, the stars, every human being, it would be child's play for him to step into the world, to intervene in some way and to bring about supernatural events.

So the question 'Can he?' – is a fairly straightforward one logically, but the question becomes then 'Has he and will he?'

'Has he?' is a historical question and we need to look at the evidence.

'Will he?' is a question about the heart of God and his intentions for us... 5 minutes long

Further resources:

https://christianity.org.uk/?s=miracles#.XH_keCL7Tb0

<https://strangenotions.com/why-miracles-are-not-incompatible-with-science/>

Fresh Eyes on Jesus' Miracles: Doug Newton

Eucharismatic! Article by Andrew Wilson in Christianity magazine Jan 2019

Writers: Laurie-Ann Price and Brenda Lord; March 2019

Image: <https://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/miracles-of-jesus-10-new-testament-bible-stories>

Appendix

The Recorded Miracles of Jesus (NIV study Bible)

Healing miracles	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Man with leprosy	8:2-4	1:40-42	5:12-13	
Roman Centurion's servant	8:5-11		7:1-10	
Peter's mother-in-law	8:14-15	1:30-1	4:38-39	
Two men from Gadara	8:28-34	5:1-15	8:27-35	
Paralysed man	9:2-7	2:3-12	5:18-25	
Woman with bleeding	9:20-22	5:25-29	8:43-48	
Two blind men	9:27-31			
Man mute & possessed	9:32-33			
Man with withered hand – on Sabbath	12:10-13	3:1-5	6:6-10	
Man blind, mute & possessed	12:22		11:14	
Canaanite woman's daughter	15:21-28	7:24-30		
Boy with a demon	17:14-18	9:17-29	9:38-43	
Bartimaeus + another blind man	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
Deaf mute		7:31-37		
Man possessed, synagogue		1:23-26	4:33-35	
Blind man at Bethsaida		8:22-26		
Crippled woman			13:11-13	
Man with dropsy			14:1-4	
Ten men with leprosy			17:11-19	
The high priest's servant			22:50-51	
Official's son at Capernaum				4:46-54
Sick man, pool of Bethesda				5:1-9
Man born blind – mud / Sabbath				9:1-7
Dead back to life				
Jairus' daughter	9:18-25	5:22-42	8:41-56	
Widow's son at Nain			7:11-15	
Lazarus				11:1-44
Nature miracles				
Water into wine				2:1-11
Catch of fish			5:4-11	
Calming the storm	8:23-27	4:37-41	8:22-25	
Walking on water	14:25	6:48-51		6:19-21
Fed 5,000 men & families	14:15-21	6:35-44	9:12-17	6:5-13
Fed 4,000	15:32-38	8:1-9		
Coin in the fish's mouth	17:24-27			
Fig-tree withered	21:18-22	11:12-25		
Another catch of fish				21:1-11