

F.A.Q's: Frequently Asked Questions

Lesson 5—Are Miracles Real or a Myth?

OVERVIEW

Bible Passages: Genesis 1:1, Exodus 14:13-16, 14:21-28; 2 Kings 19:32-36;
Luke 1:26-35

BEFORE CLASS

Preparation: *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- What do you believe about miracles?
- How has believing that nothing is impossible to God affected your life?
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Pray for each student by name.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed on Sunday morning.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Discussion

- *Are miracles real or a myth?*
- *How would you define a miracle? (Webster's Dictionary defines "miracle" as "an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs." It comes from a Latin word meaning "to wonder at." ¹*
 - *Has God ever done miracles? If so, give some examples.*
 - *Does God still do miracles?*
 - *Have you ever had a "miracle" in your life?*

CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

CONTACT 1--The first time a student is absent, give him a call.

CONTACT 2--Following the second absence, send him a postcard.

CONTACT 3-- The third week they are absent, pay him a visit.

THINK ABOUT IT: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, "It really doesn't matter if you're here or not." Small things communicate great messages. Let the three "small" things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.

SAY: Today we're going to take a look at the Biblical view of miracles. First, let's take a look at some of the "miracles" in the Bible.

BIBLE LESSON—part 1

Choose volunteers to find and hold their place at the following Scripture passages—Genesis 1:1, Exodus 14:13-16, 14:21-28; 2 Kings 19:32-36; Luke 1:29-33

While they are turning, SAY: The miracles in the Bible are too numerous to count. In fact, even the Bible itself is a miracle. But today we're going to look at several examples:

THE MIRACLE OF CREATION

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Genesis 1:1

SAY: The Bible testifies that God created everything out of nothing.

CHALLENGE: Take the air in front of you and create a painting, or a hamburger, or perhaps something as simple as a white piece of paper. You can't do it. Why? Because you cannot create something from nothing. Scientifically, the first law of thermodynamics states that matter cannot just appear or pop into existence—that all matter comes from matter that already exists.² It may change forms (i.e., a stick being burned that turns to ash or raw material that is processed into plastic) but it is humanly impossible to create something from nothing.

- *How did God create?* (With the spoken word. He spoke all that exists into existence—This is a miracle.)
- *How do some people try to explain away the miracle of creation?* (With evolution or the “Big Bang” theory. Of course, for there to be a “Big Bang,” something had to pre-exist to “bang” together. Scientific theories that try to “explain away” the idea of God have no explanation for where this original matter came from.)

NOTE: Teachers, please do not embark on a long discussion concerning creation vs. evolution. There is a lot of material to cover today—please don't dwell here too long.

BIBLE LESSON—part 2

THE MIRACLE OF GOD'S DELIVERANCE

SAY: On numerous occasions God intervened on behalf of His people. Here are two examples:

Example 1: God parted the Red Sea

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Exodus 14:13-16

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Exodus 14:21-28

- *How was this a miracle?* (Huge seas don't just part and create dry land.)
- *How do you think some people try to explain away this miracle?* (Some people who don't believe in miracles actually say that this really wasn't the “Red Sea” but a shallow body of water through which Moses and the Israelites waded.)

- *What would you say to someone who said this?* (First, that's not what the Bible says. Second, it might be an even greater miracle if the entire Egyptian army was submerged and swept away in knee-deep water!)

Example 1: God's Deliverance from Sennacherib

SAY: Let me give you a background on the verses we're about to read—Hezekiah, the king of Judah, has received a message from Sennacherib (sin-ak-erib), the king of the Assyria. The Assyrians were known for their brutality and destruction of other kingdoms that refused to surrender to them. The message said, "'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you saying, 'Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.' Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, destroying them completely. So will you be spared?'" (2 Kings 19:10-11). King Hezekiah seeks God and the Lord sends the prophet Isaiah to him with an answer. Listen to part of what God said through Isaiah and what happened as King Sennacherib prepared to attack Jerusalem:

Choose a volunteer to read—Read 2 Kings 19:32-36

- *How was this a miracle?* (Big armies don't just die.)
- *How do you think some people try to explain away this miracle?* (Some people who don't believe in miracles actually say that this really wasn't the "angel of the Lord" as the Bible clearly states but that the army left because thousands of rats invaded their camp carrying a disease from which some died. Those same rats chewed their bow strings so that others couldn't fight—The result: The army fled. This actually is a theory proposed by a theologian in an attempt to explain away the miraculous.)
- *What would you say to someone who said this?* (Why are you trying to explain away something that the Bible is so clear about?)

BIBLE LESSON—part 3
THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Luke 1:26-35

SAY: The Bible is clear that Jesus was born of a virgin. His birth was a miracle! But as Christmas draws near you'll hear people talk about Jesus as if He is just a historical figure or just a good man or as if he was the son of Joseph and Mary instead of God's Son. When this happens there is a big question you might want to ask:

- Do you believe the Bible?
If yes, then that means you must believe the things the Bible says.

SAY: You'll be amazed at how many people claim to believe the Bible but try to explain away so many things on which the Bible is completely clear. If someone truly "believes" the Bible they must believe the things the Bible says, which is that Jesus was born of a virgin because He is the Son of God and that He is Lord or all—not a just a good man or a influential part of history.

- *What are some other miracles of Jesus?* (He healed the sick, the blind could see, the lame could walk, the dead were raised and lived again; he cast out demons, cleansed lepers, and walked on water [which some people have claimed that Jesus didn't actually walk on the water, He just waded into it and the angle of the sun made it look like he was walking on it. Of course this doesn't explain how Peter walked on it and then sank down—What happened? Did he trip?! Nor does it explain the distance the boat was from shore—about four miles!]; then Jesus died for our sins and rose again.
- *Why do you think some people have a hard time believing in miracles?*

Consider the following:

- If miracles are real, then God must be real and some people don't want to acknowledge the existence of someone greater than themselves, especially in a God who has set down a moral code of right and wrong.
 - Some people don't understand miracles because they don't understand God. He intervenes on our behalf because He cares for us—He's not some cosmic cloud that is indifferent to what is going on in your life.
 - Some people don't believe in miracles because they don't believe the Bible, because if they believed the Bible, then they would be admitting that it is a guide for what they should and should not do.
- *Do you believe that the Bible is totally true or are there mistakes in it?*

SAY: This is the truth about God's Word:

- (1) The Bible is God-inspired: The total and complete revelation of God to man. It is God's Word, not man's opinion.
- (2) The Bible is without error: It doesn't contradict itself and every word of it is true. It is entirely dependable.
- (3) The Bible has authority: It is for all generations. Times and cultures may change the truth of God's Word remains unchangeable. It has the authority to tell you what to do and how to live life and is a book for all time.

Consider this story:

Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence and was one of our country's founding fathers, was a Deist. This meant that he believed in a God who created the world and then stepped back to let it run its own course without interference from Him. As a result, he did not believe in anything miraculous. Everything had a scientific and reasonable explanation. He is said (although historically it has been debated) to have clipped from his Bible every story containing anything miraculous.

- *What do you think his Bible looked like when he was finished?*
- *What would you say to someone who believed what he believed? (If God doesn't interfere in human events, then there would be no salvation. The fact the Jesus, the Son of God, came to save Mankind is, in itself, the greatest "interference" of history!)*
- *What would you say is the greatest miracle of all?*

SAY: Without doubt and by far, salvation is the greatest miracle of all—the idea that “He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). Earlier you were asked if you had ever had a miracle in your life—if you’ve given your life to Jesus, then you experienced the greatest miracle known to Man!

WRAP IT UP

SAY: Overall, God’s Word is true. It does not lie and will never let you down. The Bible speaks clearly of thousands of true miracles but the greatest miracle of all is that you can know Jesus.

Prayer Time

Pray specifically today that your students learn God’s Word and know what they believe and why they believe it.

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

¹Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition (Springfield, Mass: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003), 792.

² Charles Colson, “How Now Shall We Live?” (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2001), 44-5.