



When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #6  
When Jesus Heals Malchus' Ear

8/12, 8/19, 8/26, 9/2

**Miracles break this 400 years of “silence”** (mindsets were created as well as civic structure):

- God’s silence is broken by John the Baptist’s declaration of Jesus’ miraculous birth.
- His miracles force us to say “yes” or “no” to Him.
- They authenticate His ministry.
- They reveal His character.

1. **Jesus turns water to wine.** John 2:1–11
2. **Jesus heals a nobleman’s son.** John 4:46–54
3. Jesus provides a great catch of fish. *Luke 5:1–11*
4. Jesus heals a demoniac in a synagogue. *Mark 1:21–28; Luke 4:31–37*
5. Jesus heals Peter’s wife’s mother. *Luke 4:38, 39; Matthew 8:14–15; Mark 1:29–31*
6. Jesus cleanses a leper. *Mark 1:40–45; Luke 5:12–15*
7. Jesus heals a paralytic. *Luke 5:18–26; Matthew 9:2–7; Mark 2:3–12*
8. **Jesus heals a cripple at Bethesda.** *John 5:1–18*
9. Jesus heals a withered hand. *Luke 6:6–10; Matthew 12:9–14; Mark 3:1–6*
10. Jesus heals a centurion’s servant. *Matthew 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10*
11. Jesus raises a widow’s son. *Luke 7:11–17*
12. Jesus stills a storm. *Mark 4:35–41; Luke 8:22–25; Matthew 8:23–27*
13. Jesus delivers a demoniac in Gedara. *Luke 8:27–39; Matthew 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20*
14. Jesus heals a hemorrhaging woman. *Luke 8:43–48; Matthew 9:20–22; Mark 5:25–34*
15. Jesus raises Jairus’s daughter. *Luke 8:41–56; Matthew 9:18–26; Mark 5:22–43*
16. Jesus heals two blind men. *Matthew 9:27–31*
17. Jesus casts out a dumb spirit. *Matthew 9:32–35*
18. **Jesus feeds 5,000 people.** *John 6:1–14; Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 9:10–17*
19. **Jesus walks on water.** *Matthew 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52; John 6:15–21*
20. Jesus heals a Syro-phonician girl. *Matthew 15:21–28; Mark 7:24–30*
21. Jesus heals a deaf and dumb man. *Mark 7:31–37*
22. Jesus feeds 4,000 people. *Matthew 15:30–38; Mark 8:1–9*
23. Jesus heals a blind man. *Mark 8:22–26*
24. Jesus delivers a demonized boy. *Mark 9:14–29; Matthew 17:14–21; Luke 9:37–43*
25. Jesus provides money in a fish’s mouth. *Matthew 17:24–27*
26. **Jesus heals a man born blind.** *John 9*
27. Jesus heals a woman bound by Satan. *Luke 13:10–17*
28. Jesus heals a man with dropsy. *Luke 14:1–6*
29. **Jesus raises Lazarus.** *John 11*
30. Jesus cleanses ten lepers. *Luke 17:11–19*
31. Jesus heals Bartimaeus. *Matthew 20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52; Luke 18:35–43*
32. Jesus curses a fig tree. *Matthew 21:17–22; Mark 11:12–14, 20–24*
33. **Jesus replaces Malchus’s ear.** *Matthew 26:51–56; Mark 14:46, 47; Luke 22:50, 51; John 18:10, 11*
34. **Wonders at Calvary.** Mt 28, Luke 24, Mark 16, John 20
35. **Jesus provides a catch of fish.** *John 21:1–14*

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<sup>1</sup> Richards, L. (1998). *Every miracle in the Bible* (pp. 163–165). Nashville: T. Nelson.



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Chapter 2 opens a new section of the gospel, containing John's account of the public ministry of Jesus from its commencement in Galilee to its climax in Jerusalem. It is organized around seven miracles. John's word for them is 'signs' (*semeia*), which is his alternative to 'miracles' or 'wonders'. John does not of course have any reservation about the operation of the supernatural in respect of these mighty works of power. He is concerned, however, to see beyond the miracles to their significance; they are signs, *i.e.* **special actions by Jesus which reveal his glory to those who believe and which confront others with the need to decide about Jesus.**

It is worth observing that this understanding of Jesus' miracles is somewhat different from that of the synoptic evangelists. Their favourite words for the miracles, *dynameis*, acts of power, and *terata*, portents, miracles, occur in John not at all in the former case, and only once (4:48) in the case of the latter.

The distinction can be put in this way: for the synoptic writers Jesus' miracles are actual occasions of the incursion of the kingdom of God. 'Fundamentally [they] are acts by which Jesus establishes God's reign and defeats the reign of Satan.' **For John, the miracles, though no less real as historical acts of supernatural power, are more symbolic; they point beyond themselves to Jesus and his significance.** Put more succinctly, the synoptic miracles are essentially eschatological, John's essentially christological. For John, faith based on miraculous signs is not regarded as satisfactory.<sup>2</sup> It is, however, at least a step beyond those who willfully refuse to even see the signs.

One other aspect of the 'signs' is worth noting. Jesus commonly refers to them as 'works' (*erga*). 'Works' can also include his words (*cf.* 14:10). The use of 'works' directly links the ministry of Jesus to that of the Father—'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working' (5:17). So close is the union of Son with Father that the works of Jesus can be considered as the Father's works in him (14:10). Thus the signs, like the entire gospel, confront us with Jesus and the inescapable challenge, 'Who are you?' (8:25).

There is some consensus among commentators that the two events in chapter 2, the changing of the water into wine at Cana, and the cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem, establish the terms of Jesus' ministry. They also anticipate Christ's future work. 'To attend a marriage feast and to cleanse the temple were among the first acts of our Lord's ministry at his first coming. To purify the whole visible Church and hold a marriage supper will be among his first acts, when he comes again.'<sup>2</sup>

### **John 20:30-31**

#### **The Purpose of This Book**

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

**[CREATE ALL MIRACLE HANDOUT FOR  
END OF AUGUST]**

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<sup>2</sup> Milne, B. (1993). *The message of John: here is your king!: with study guide* (pp. 62–63). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



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Water to Wine, John 2:1–11

Official's Son Healed, 4:46–52

Paralytic Healed, 5:1–13

Blind Man Healed, 9:1–12

Lazarus Raised, 11:38–44

Great Catch of Fish, 21:1–14

### 6<sup>th</sup> The Large Catch of Fish

Apart from me, you can do nothing and I am STILL HERE with you.

### 5<sup>th</sup>. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus has Power over death.

### 4<sup>th</sup>. Jesus heals a man born blind Jesus creates EYES = Jesus has creation power!

Jesus is the only one who can give light to those lost in darkness (spiritually as well as physically).  
(He can create what is not there.)

### 3<sup>rd</sup>. Jesus heals an unbelieving invalid at Bethesda

Jesus and the Father are ONE. (Master of Time?)\*

As Jesus went to find the man to let him know it was Christ who had the power to heal an unbeliever  
Jesus is the one who can bring Salvation. **Jesus and the Father are ONE:**

- Grace bestowed on anyone He chooses (believer or unbeliever)
- Even on the Sabbath (He is LORD of the Sabbath)
- Power over the hopeless. (38 year invalid)

### 2<sup>nd</sup>. Jesus heals a nobleman's son. John 4:46–54

Jesus' Words are the Power of God [Jesus spoke and what He says is Truth]

- The greatest demonstration of God's deity is His ability to create everything by the power of His word. That's who He is. That's what He does. **His words are not just informative; they are performative.** Divine words spoken long-distance from over eighteen miles away had caused the terminally sick boy to recover.

Jesus Says:

- Believe and inherit eternal life. **John 3:16**
- Your sins are forgiven. **Mark 2:9**
- Faith comes through hearing God's Word. **Romans 10:17**
- His Word exposes our inner thoughts. **Hebrews 4:12**
- His Word cleanses. **Ephesians 5:25-26**
- His Word Sanctifies. **John 17:17**
- His Word bears much fruit when it grows in our life. **John 15:7-8**
- His Word defeats the Enemy of our souls. **Ephesians 6:17**

### 1<sup>st</sup>. Jesus turns water to wine. John 2:1–11

Jesus Transforms

John's Gospel **describes Jesus' miracles as explanatory signs** (σημεία, *sēmeia*); the text never calls them "miracles" (δύναμεις, *dynameis*; Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic*, 88).

Roberts, R. D. (2016). *Miracle*. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

What is Jesus saying to me in this Miracle?  
Do my beliefs about Jesus and His power need to change?  
How, then, should my actions change?



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**Johannian Signs that are in the other Gospels**

**Other Miracles in John and the Synoptic Gospel:** (Is there a meaning when the miracle is in all four?)

**JESUS RESTORES MALCHUS'S EAR**

[Matthew 26:51-56](#); [Mark 14:46, 47](#); [Luke 22:50, 51](#); [John 18:10, 11](#)

- Jesus leads the disciples from the house of the last supper out into the Jerusalem night.
- they faced a journey of about a mile, first northwards and then east past the great looming shadow of the temple.
- they passed along the streets they would have seen pilgrims celebrating the feast, just as they had done a few minutes before.
- Jerusalem was teeming with visitors,
- a relief to find themselves at last at the city gate and able to move out into the fresher air beyond.
- Their track led first downwards and then across the low valley of the Kidron stream,
- rising gently upwards as they ascended the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives.
- A short climb would have brought them to their destination, an olive grove which was part of the garden area of the city. [Privately Owned]

**John 18:1-11**

**Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus**

*18 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. <sup>2</sup> Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. <sup>3</sup> So Judas, having procured **a band of soldiers** and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. <sup>4</sup> **Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him**, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" <sup>5</sup> They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "**I am he.**"*

**Exodus 3:14** God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I am has sent me to you.'" **Isaiah 41:4** Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he.

- **Verse 3:** The word translated *detachment* could mean a force of a thousand. Such is unlikely here, but it was probably a considerable number. Jesus' popularity with the crowds was known and the Palm Sunday demonstration would not have gone unnoticed by the Romans.
- Knowing ALL – He was orchestrating everything from the beginning to be obedient to scripture.

*Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus said to them, "I am he," **they drew back and fell to the ground.** <sup>7</sup> So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go." <sup>9</sup> This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one." <sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) <sup>11</sup> So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"*

**NOTE:** Thus the forces of evil in that sinister confederacy—personal treason in the person of Judas, corrupt religion expressed by the temple police, political ruthlessness embodied in the Roman soldiery, and behind all, the malignant form of the prince of this world—all fall back before this meek monarch who offers himself up to their will.

Milne, B. (1993). [The message of John: here is your king!: with study guide](#) (pp. 252-256). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



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- **Verse 6: SLAIN IN THE SPIRIT** Whether something of Jesus' divine majesty breaks in upon them for a moment, as Temple suggests, or they experience a sudden wave of terror as they are faced with actually laying hands on one whose supernatural powers were already legend, we are not told. Either way there is a perceptible loss of control on the authorities' part. Jesus, however, relieves the tension of the moment by re-identifying himself and then requesting an assurance of safe passage for the disciples

### JOHN 18:10-11

<sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) <sup>11</sup> So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

- Last miracle before His death.
- The healing of the 'enemy' who had come to take him to His death.
- Healing of the working class.
- The name of the servant is only spoken in John. WHY?  
John came from \$ and Influence and his family would know the High Priest's family and their servants.
- Peter's name is only given in John's account.
- This encounter is made possible due to Judas' betrayal. This is the atmosphere surrounding this miracle.

Those involved in the miracle:

**Jesus.** Although he was being arrested, Jesus was clearly in command of the situation.

**Peter.** Frightened by the crowd, Peter drew a weapon and struck one of the mob that had come to take Jesus away.

**Malchus.** As an important official of the Jewish high priest, Malchus was probably in charge of the detail which had come to bring Jesus in for trial. He was accompanied by a mob carrying torches and weapons. [*"Cut off his ear"* (26:51). Mark uses the diminutive Greek word *otarium* for ear, suggesting that perhaps only the ear lobe was cut off. This would explain why [Luke 22:51](#) indicates that Jesus healed the ear rather than reattaching it. In any case, this was a gracious miracle which he performed for an enemy. ]

- There is this sense of Inevitability.
- And that Jesus is the stage director of all these people. Orchestrating the march to His death burial and resurrection.
- Jesus' last miracle was actually a warning to his accusers, who refused to believe his claims to be the Christ—in spite of the evidence of his signs and wonders.

As Jesus warned them during his trial, "I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven" ([Matt. 26:64](#)).

Those who refuse to accept healing at Jesus' hand will surely face his judgment.

### Small Group Ask:

- Why did Jesus say this? What was He thinking?

<sup>8</sup> Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go."

How would you have responded as a disciple?

How would you have responded as a soldier/bystander?



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**ANSWER:**

**John 17:12** <sup>12</sup> *While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, **that the Scripture might be fulfilled.***

**Acts 1:16-20**

<sup>16</sup> “Brothers, <sup>(A)</sup>the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, <sup>(B)</sup>who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup> For <sup>(C)</sup>he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in <sup>(D)</sup>this ministry.” <sup>18</sup> (Now this man <sup>(E)</sup>acquired a field with <sup>(F)</sup>the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong<sup>[a]</sup> he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. <sup>19</sup> And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called <sup>(G)</sup>in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) <sup>20</sup> “For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

<sup>(H)</sup>“May his camp become desolate,  
and let there be no one to dwell in it”; (**Psalm 69:25**)

and

<sup>(I)</sup>“Let another take his office.” (**Psalm 109:8**)

- **What is John communicating about Christ in this Miracle?** (About Jesus' Divinity and His unique Mission.) “Special actions by Jesus which reveal his glory to those who believe and which confront others with the need to decide about Jesus.”

**My thought:**

Jesus willingly goes to His death. Obedience unto the cross. Obedience unto death.

*“Shall I not drink from the cup the Father has given me?”*

**SELF REFLECTION:**

Spend some time here. Reread John 18:1-11 (from NLT?)

Asking the people to concentrate on what Jesus is saying to them in **this** Miracle.

Once we can answer what He is saying, we can move on to whether our beliefs and actions need to change.

- What is Jesus saying to me in this Miracle? (He Guards His Disciples.)
- Do my beliefs about Jesus and His power need to change?
- How, then, should my actions change?



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## Jesus Is Betrayed and Arrested

**18** After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. <sup>2</sup> Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. <sup>3</sup> The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

<sup>4</sup> Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. "Who are you looking for?" he asked.

<sup>5</sup> "Jesus the Nazarene,"<sup>[a]</sup> they replied.

"I am he,"<sup>[b]</sup> Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) <sup>6</sup> As Jesus said "I am he," they all drew back and fell to the ground! <sup>7</sup> Once more he asked them, "Who are you looking for?"

And again they replied, "Jesus the Nazarene."

<sup>8</sup> "I told you that I am he," Jesus said. "And since I am the one you want, let these others go." <sup>9</sup> He did this to fulfill his own statement: "I did not lose a single one of those you have given me."<sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave. <sup>11</sup> But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?"



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### NotES:

#### Malchus

The Jewish historian **Flavius Josephus** wrote that it was common for the high priest to send a slave to represent him whenever he was expected to be present at an unpleasant event.

At the arrest of **Jesus**, the high priest **Caiaphas** was thus represented by his slave Malchus. The name Malchus is derived from the Hebrew *melech*, “king,” and Caiaphas may have given him that name as a joke. It is also possible that he was an Arab slave from Syria or Nabataea, the desert region east of Judea, where Malchus was a common name.

When the troops entered the garden to arrest Jesus, **Peter** lashed out with his sword and cut off Malchus's right ear (John 18:10). All four Gospels record the event, but only **John** names the slave, and only **Luke** reports that Jesus, after rebuking Peter, healed Malchus's ear.<sup>3</sup>

3124. Μάλχος **Malchōs**, *mal'-khos*; of Heb. or. [4429]; *Malchus*, an Isr.:— Malchus.<sup>4</sup>

**MALCHUS [MAL kus]** (*ruler*) — a servant of the high priest who was present at the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Simon Peter struck Malchus with a sword and cut off his ear (John 18:10).<sup>5</sup>

22:50 PETER'S POOR AIM

**Total confusion reigned in the Garden of Gethsemane as Judas led a band to arrest Jesus. The chaos boiled over when Peter drew a sword and swept the air with a stroke that lopped off the ear of Malchus, one of the arresting party (Luke 22:50; John 18:10).**

Peter's impulsive act could have spelled disaster. Jesus and the Twelve were completely outnumbered and ill equipped to defend themselves against a mob that included soldiers from the Roman cohort. The arresting party might even have been looking for a pretext to use violence against this supposedly dangerous rabbi. Fortunately, Jesus acted swiftly to regain control of the situation by healing Malchus's ear and addressing the crowd (Luke 22:51–53).

Another stroke of fortune was probably Peter's bad aim. It's interesting that the account details an injury to Malchus's right ear. Modern readers might assume that Peter would have swung his sword laterally, with the blade parallel to the ground. But a first-century swordsman was more likely to sweep out his sword and come down on the head of an opponent with a vertical, chopping stroke. In battle, the idea was to place a well-aimed blow on the seam of an enemy's helmet, splitting it open and wounding the head.

Perhaps this was Peter's intention, but he aimed wide to the left. Perhaps, too, Malchus saw the blow coming and ducked to his left, exposing his right ear.

In any event, Peter caused no mortal injury. But he certainly drew attention to himself. Malchus happened to be a servant of Caiaphas, the high priest (see Matt. 26:3). Later, one of Malchus's relatives recognized Peter warming himself by a fire outside Pilate's court. “Did I not see you in the garden?” he asked suspiciously, a claim that Peter denied (John 18:26). ♦

<sup>3</sup> Losch, R. R. (2008). In *All the People in the Bible: An A–Z Guide to the Saints, Scoundrels, and Other Characters in Scripture* (p. 271). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

<sup>4</sup> Strong, J. (1996). *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., & Harrison, R. K., Thomas Nelson Publishers (Eds.). (1995). In *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.



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### **Luke 22:49-53**

*<sup>49</sup> And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" <sup>50</sup> And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. <sup>51</sup> But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. <sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?<sup>53</sup> When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."*

When Peter struck a member of the mob that had come to take Jesus, he cut off part of the ear of a man named Malchus. Jesus touched the ear and healed it.

**Background of the miracle.** Jesus' last miracle before his death was performed on the night of his capture and trial, just hours before his crucifixion. A mob led by Judas arrested him on the Mount of Olives in the garden of Gethsemane.

Only John, who was from a wealthy family which maintained a large house in Jerusalem, names Malchus. He was "the" servant of the high priest, an important official in his own right and clearly a person whom John knew. **It is ironic that Jesus' last miracle of healing was performed for an enemy who had come with the mob to make sure Christ was arrested.**

**Parties to the miracle.** The miracle is not the focus of the story, but it seems almost an aside. Judas led a mob to Gethsemane to take Jesus prisoner. Peter, named only in John's Gospel, resisted the arrest and struck out with his weapon, cutting off part of Malchus's ear. Jesus restored the ear, then told his disciples not to resist and left with the crowd as they went back to Jerusalem.

*Jesus.* Although he was being arrested, Jesus was clearly in command of the situation.

*Peter.* Frightened by the crowd, Peter drew a weapon and struck one of the mob that had come to take Jesus away.

*Malchus.* As an important official of the Jewish high priest, Malchus was probably in charge of the detail which had come to bring Jesus in for trial. He was accompanied by a mob carrying torches and weapons.

**How the story unfolds.** Jesus had finished a time of prayer and returned to his disciples when a mob led by Judas appeared. Judas pointed out Jesus. As the mob surged forward to seize him, Peter drew a weapon and struck at the group. He cut off part of the ear of the servant of the high priest, whom John identified as Malchus.

Jesus told Peter to put his sword back in its place. Jesus could have called legions of angels to defend him. But the Scriptures had to be fulfilled, so it was necessary that he be taken away.

**"Drew his sword" (Matthew 26:51).** The word for "sword" and "knife" are the same in Greek, so we can't be sure what kind of weapon Peter drew. It is clear that he attacked the crowd with it in an attempt to defend Jesus.

**"Cut off his ear" (26:51).** Mark uses the diminutive Greek word *otarium* for ear, suggesting that perhaps only the ear lobe was cut off. This would explain why [Luke 22:51](#) indicates that Jesus healed the ear rather than reattaching it. In any case, this was a gracious miracle which he performed for an enemy.

**"Put your sword in its place" (26:52).** [Luke 22:38](#) indicates the disciples had two swords, and [22:49](#) points out that other disciples were only awaiting Jesus' word to fight back. But Peter didn't wait for Jesus' command; he drew his weapon and struck! This was so like Peter.

Pacifists have argued for nonresistance from this passage, while their opponents have noted that Jesus told Peter to put his sword back, not throw it away. But this account of Jesus' capture is hardly one on

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<sup>6</sup> [Word in life study Bible](#). (1996). (electronic ed., Lk 22:50). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.



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which to base arguments over pacifism. Jesus himself said he could have called on legions of angels to fight for him, if this had been God's will.

Christ allowed himself to be taken so “the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus” ([Matt. 26:54](#)).

**The meaning of the miracle.** This last miracle, taking place just before Jesus was arrested and sentenced to death, is a striking reminder. **Christ was not forced to the cross.** He was never overpowered by his opponents. He could have escaped the fate they intended for him at any time.

Jesus' last miracle was actually a warning to his accusers, who refused to believe his claims to be the Christ—in spite of the evidence of his signs and wonders. As Jesus warned them during his trial, “I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven” ([Matt. 26:64](#)).

Those who refuse to accept healing at Jesus' hand will surely face his judgment.  
Richards, L. (1998). [Every miracle in the Bible](#) (pp. 246–249). Nashville: T. Nelson.

### Consecration (John 18:1–19:42)

#### a. The arrest (18:1–11)

In the circumstances leading to the apprehension of Jesus, it has already become clear that the whole scenario was anticipated, even planned, by him. **There is a strange sense of inevitability about his arrest and conviction.** Jesus has come from the Father into the world. He goes from the world to the Father. His mission will not have a happy and triumphant conclusion in the eyes of the world. Its wicked rebellion against the claim of God will reach its awful climax in the murder of the Son of God. Only in this way, however, can the darkness be overcome, and the Father's love for the world truly disclosed.

The account of the arrest is narrated in a simple and direct paragraph. After the conclusion of his teaching and his prayer Jesus leads the disciples from the house of the last supper out into the Jerusalem night. **If the traditional sites are to be relied upon they faced a journey of about a mile, first northwards and then east past the great looming shadow of the temple. As they passed along the streets they would have glimpsed, through lighted windows, groups of pilgrims celebrating the feast, just as they had done a few minutes before. Jerusalem was teeming with visitors, and it would have been a relief to find themselves at last at the city gate and able to move out into the fresher air beyond. Their track led first downwards and then across the low valley of the Kidron stream, rising gently upwards as they ascended the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. A short climb would have brought them to their destination, an olive grove which was part of the garden area of the city.**

**Passover law forbade a journey of any length on that evening, but this was permissible. Besides, it was a familiar spot (2). Jesus clearly had a rich benefactor who made his garden available on such occasions. More importantly, on this particular night it was where Judas would know where to find him. Having sent Judas on his foul errand (13:2), Jesus had deliberately sprung the trap and was now offering himself as the bait in a setting ideal for his capture, in the darkness of night with no thronging crowds to rise in his support.**

The synoptic writers fill in other details here—Jesus' renewed sense of heaviness, the exhortation to the disciples to pray, and then Jesus' own lonely vigil through the long hours of the night as he agonized over his terrible obedience and found at length angelic strengthening (Mk. 14:32–42; Lk. 22:39–46).

At last through the darkness came the noise of tramping feet as a throng approached with lights and commotion (3). Judas is there at their head. The Jewish temple police are prominent since they must make the arrest, but a Roman force has also been provided (3). Normally garrisoned at Caesarea on the coast, the Roman troops were brought up to the capital at feast times and stationed (where Jesus would meet them during his examination) in the fortress of Antonia to the north-west of the temple complex. The word translated *detachment* (3) could mean a force of a thousand. Such is unlikely here, but it was probably a considerable number. Jesus' popularity with the crowds was known and the Palm Sunday demonstration would not have gone unnoticed by the Romans.

**Significantly, it is Jesus who takes the initiative. John summarizes the whole event, and indeed the whole passion story: Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out (4). The reference to 'going out' may imply that the grove was walled and Jesus emerged alone at the doorway. Who is it you want? (4). John omits Judas' kiss. It is unnecessary to his account. Jesus' I am (5, *egō eimi*) contains the by now familiar ambiguity. It could be no more than an identification for purposes of arrest. But the**



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reader is being invited to appreciate a deeper meaning, the sacred name for God in the LXX, with clear overtones of Exodus 3:14 and Isaiah 40–55.

The effect of his words is striking. *They drew back and fell to the ground* (6). ‘We are the world to whom our God comes forth in the person of Jesus the Nazarene saying, “Who is it you want?” The world is groping after its true leader: he offers himself, and the world, after yielding for a moment to the impact of his divinity, arrests him and crucifies him.’ **Whether something of Jesus’ divine majesty breaks in upon them for a moment, as Temple suggests, or they experience a sudden wave of terror as they are faced with actually laying hands on one whose supernatural powers were already legend, we are not told. Either way there is a perceptible loss of control on the authorities’ part. Jesus, however, relieves the tension of the moment by re-identifying himself and then requesting an assurance of safe passage for the disciples** (8), in fulfilment of the word Jesus had spoken (9; 6:39) some months before. Interestingly Jesus’ words are cited in a way identical to the Old Testament quotations studied through the gospel.

No doubt immensely relieved at being able to take Jesus without a struggle, the authorities are apparently happy enough to accept his terms. There is a moment of minor scuffle. Peter has probably newly awakened. Overwhelmed with a sense of needing to do his loyal duty by Jesus, and showing no small degree of courage in view of the considerable armed presence, he swings the sword he has brought along and catches the high priest’s servant on the side of the head, taking off his right ear (10). The Greek word used by John, and Mark, could imply that it was only the lobe of the ear that was cut off and not the whole organ. The fact that it was on the right side is an interesting eye-witness detail which Luke also notes (Lk. 22:50). ‘The blow was as clumsy as Peter’s courage was great; the tactic was as pointless as Peter’s misunderstanding was total.’ Jesus staunches the bleeding with a touch (Lk. 22:51) and is led away into the darkness, to drink the cup the Father has filled and placed in his hands (11).

Several things stand out in this account.

(i) *The regal poise of Jesus (18:1–7)*

**Throughout the whole episode he occupies the centre of the stage and directs the events.** The soldiers by contrast are background figures. The key statement is at verse 4: *Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen ... went out.* Similarly, this happened *so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled* (9). The sense of Jesus’ control is especially prominent in his *I am*. Significantly, in the Jewish trial before the Sanhedrin, which John does not detail, it is this phrase, unpacked in terms of the Son of Man of Daniel 7, which triggers the frenzied response of the court and the unanimous capital charge of blasphemy (Mk. 14:62f.). On the utterance of these words the temple snatch-team fall backwards, by their posture expressing the overwhelming nature of the revelation of divine majesty. **Thus the forces of evil in that sinister confederacy—personal treason in the person of Judas, corrupt religion expressed by the temple police, political ruthlessness embodied in the Roman soldiery, and behind all, the malignant form of the prince of this world—all fall back before this meek monarch who offers himself up to their will.**

The relevance of this to our world needs no elaboration, for these same forces and many another are still abroad. The hour of darkness lingers, but its mastering is proclaimed here. What is described in these chapters is not simply one more skirmish in the unending conflict between light and darkness, good and evil, so that Jesus’ victory, though impressive in its way, gives no guarantee that next time, or some time in the future, the roles may reverse and the outcome be different. John’s point in writing his gospel is to share the great and glorious good news that this is the decisive conflict, the critical encounter, the outcome of which determines the whole war for ever. That and nothing less is the significance of Jesus’ poise and mastery.

O love of God! O sin of man!  
In this dread act your strength is tried,  
And victory remains with love,  
For he, our Lord, is crucified.

*F. W. Faber*

This truth is as applicable to our personal world as to the larger universe. No matter what dark threat hangs over us, it is less than him who fought and mastered it in his Easter victory. For ‘the devils we meet were all foredamned in the Satan Christ ruined. The devil is in the end a bull in a net, a wild beast kicking himself to death.’



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### (ii) *The caring heart of Jesus*

As he faces the ultimate challenge of his life it is moving to observe Jesus' deep concern for the disciples. The scene is set for this in **13:1**: 'Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own ... he now showed them the full extent of his love.' That same caring heart beats here as Jesus requires that the disciples be freed: *let these men go* (8). He draws the full enmity of the enemy to himself in order to deflect it from them, and this in the context of his *knowing all that was going to happen to him* (4).

That caring heart is our security. Because of it he will not lose one of those the Father has given (9). The good shepherd has committed himself to his sheep. When the wolf comes he will remain and defend the flock he loves. Whatever the wolf may represent in our lives today—guilt and shame from past failures, the accusing voices of criticism, sudden paralysing feelings of inadequacy as they come snapping and snarling at our heels—the good shepherd is there to meet them and to issue his word of command, 'Let my disciple go!'

The action of Jesus in drawing the enmity upon himself for the freeing of the disciples is, more generally, a depiction of his whole work of atonement. He takes our place, absorbing our guilt and all its implications, that we might go free.

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
In my place condemned he stood.

*Philipp Bliss*

### (iii) *The awesome submission of Jesus*

Nothing shines clearer in this account than the fact that Jesus goes willingly to his arrest. He who might have summoned twelve legions of angels, whose regal majesty could send his enemies reeling to the ground, accepts his arrest, trial and death in willing submission. His words to Peter unveil his heart: *Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?* (11). This saying picks up the language of his prayer in the garden as the other evangelists record it: 'Abba, Father, ... everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will' (Mk. 14:36). What does the cup signify? For one steeped in the Old Testament prophets as Jesus was it can have only one meaning. The cup is the symbol of the judgment of God; it is the cup of the wrath of God against human sin. 'In the strange mercy of God the cup of his righteous wrath is given into the hands, not of his enemies, but of his beloved Son. And he will drink it, down to the dregs until the moment comes when "I thirst" gives place to "It is finished".'<sup>1047</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Milne, B. (1993). *The message of John: here is your king!: with study guide* (pp. 252–256). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



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### Jesus feeds 5,000 people

*John 6:1–14; Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 9:10–17*

#### John 6:1-14

##### Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

*6 After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup> And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. <sup>3</sup> Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. <sup>5</sup> Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” <sup>6</sup> He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. <sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii<sup>[a]</sup> worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” <sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, <sup>9</sup> “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” <sup>10</sup> Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. <sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup> And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.” <sup>13</sup> So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. <sup>14</sup> When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!”*

#### Small Group:

- ?TRUSTING Jesus with BIG needs.
- ?Do not underestimate the small offering.
- ?Stepping out in faith – the offering of the lunch by the Boy, the Disciples DOING what Jesus asked
- **What is John communicating about Christ in this Miracle?** (About Jesus’ Divinity and His unique Mission). “Special actions by Jesus which reveal his glory to those who believe and which confront others with the need to decide about Jesus.”

#### My thought:

#### SELF REFLECTION:

- What is Jesus saying to me in this Miracle?
- Do my beliefs about Jesus and His power need to change?
- How, then, should my actions change?

#### NotES:



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Jesus fed a large crowd which followed him into the wilderness, using only a few small loaves and fishes.

**Background to the miracle.** It was the responsibility of the head of each Jewish family at mealtime to look up to heaven while thanking God, and then to break and distribute bread for the meal. One of the most common of such mealtime prayers was, “Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.”

In performing this miracle, Jesus assumed the role of head of the family as well as the role of God, bringing forth bread to meet the needs of his people.

The Gospel writers followed Jewish custom in counting only the men when reckoning the crowd. While the ideal woman of rabbinic lore stayed at home, it is clear from the Gospels and from various references in early rabbinic literature that women went to the market and worked in the fields with their husbands at harvest time. Some have estimated that the crowd Jesus fed, if the women and children were added, might have been fifteen or twenty thousand.

This is an especially significant miracle, for it is reported in all four of the Gospels.

**Parties to the miracle.** The significant figures in this miracle account are Jesus, the disciples, the thousands who had followed Jesus into a wilderness area, and a boy who shared his lunch.

**Jesus.** Jesus’ revealed his deity by creating bread, as if in answer to the usual mealtime prayer.

**Jesus’ disciples.** The disciples showed sensitivity to the needs of the crowd for food and shelter (Matt. 14:15). But their solution, to “send them away, so they can buy bread,” was not acceptable to Jesus. The disciples were stunned when Jesus ordered, “You give them something to eat” (Mark 6:37).

**The crowds.** Great crowds had followed Jesus into a “deserted” (uninhabited) area. They had come hastily, without bringing food to eat on the way. Jesus saw them as sheep, wandering aimlessly, helpless without a shepherd.

**The boy.** The boy who provided the food Jesus multiplied is mentioned only by John (6:9). How strange that in many Sunday school lessons, he is made the focus of this story rather than Jesus.

**How the story unfolds.** Jesus had been surrounded and harried by crowds of people coming and going. He told his disciples it was time to rest, so they set out by boat to find a deserted place.

But other people recognized him as the boat passed. By the time the boat landed, a new multitude had gathered to greet him. Jesus couldn’t escape, even for a moment. Rather than being irritated, Jesus was deeply moved; these ordinary people to him were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began to teach them.

When evening drew near, the disciples reminded Jesus that it was late, and they were in an uninhabited area. Jesus needed to send the people away soon, so they could “buy themselves bread.” Jesus shocked the disciples by his reply: “You give them something to eat” (Mark 6:37).

Confused, the disciples objected. It would take at least eight month’s wages to buy enough bread for such a crowd, even if that much bread were available. Jesus asked, “How many loaves do you have?”

The disciples reported they could come up with five loaves (each about the size of a modern dinner roll) and two small fish. Jesus told the disciples to have the crowd sit down in groups, as they would at mealtime. Christ then blessed the bread [i.e., said the prayer used before eating] and began to break the bread and fish into smaller pieces. The food was miraculously multiplied. After everyone had eaten, twelve flat wicker baskets of food were left over.

Jesus then sent the crowds away. While he went up into the mountains to pray, the disciples set out by boat to cross the sea.

**Sheep not having a shepherd (Mark 6:34).** Jesus’ imagery has deep Old Testament roots. Moses prayed that God would provide a successor who “may lead them [Israel] out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep which have no shepherd” (Num. 27:17). God’s answer in that situation was to set apart Joshua—which is the Hebrew version of the name “Jesus.”

Even more significant is the use of the image in Ezekiel 34. In that passage, the prophet condemned the false shepherds who mistreated God’s flock and who led them astray. God promised,

“Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them....”



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I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord God. “I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick” (Ezek. 34:11–12, 15–16).

What happened that day by the Sea of Galilee identified Jesus with the Lord God of the Old Testament, whose concern was for the well-being of the flock. In Christ, God was seeking out and feeding Israel not only with bread but with truth as well.

**“You give them something to eat” (Mark 6:37).** Jesus didn’t expect the disciples to perform a miracle. But the command, with its emphatic “you” in the Greek, is significant.

*Jesus challenged the disciple’s solution.* The disciples had been concerned for the crowd. But their solution was to send them away so they could “buy themselves bread” (Mark 6:36). But Jesus did not come to send people away. He came to draw them to him. He came because the people could not “buy themselves” what they required to meet their deepest need. Only Jesus could meet that need, and he did so supremely on Calvary.

*Jesus challenged the disciple’s vision.* Jesus was training his disciples so they would be able to meet the needs of the shepherdless. “You give them” was a challenge to help them catch a vision of the mission for which they were being prepared.

*Jesus challenged the disciple’s understanding.* The answer to their confusion on how to fulfill Jesus’ command was not to buy bread but to look to Jesus. Christ never asks us to do anything without providing the needed resources to complete the task.

The miracle that followed illustrates this principle. Jesus took what the disciples had and multiplied it. No matter how limited our resources, God’s ability to multiply them is as unlimited as they were on that day in the wilderness.

**Twelve baskets of fragments (Mark 6:43).** The Gospel writers report that everyone in the crowd ate and were filled, after which they took up 12 baskets of fragments. Some have seen significance in the number 12. There were 12 tribes of Israel. Messiah’s provision was so generous that even his scraps can supply the needs of Israel, as represented by the 12 surplus baskets.

**“Take him by force to make him king” (John 6:15).** John adds a detail not mentioned in the other Gospels. After the meal, the enthusiastic crowd decided that Jesus must be the prophet promised by Moses (Deut. 18:18). Why not then acclaim Jesus king?

Jesus later commented on their motive. “You seek me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled” (John 6:26). The people had not seen the meaning of the miraculous sign which identified Jesus as the Lord God, their Shepherd. All they knew was that he was someone who could feed them. Self-interest, not faith, lay at the root of their enthusiasm. No wonder they were ready to proclaim Jesus king.

How ironic are the phrases “take him by force” and “make him” king. Those who acclaim a person king will be willing to submit to his will. The crowd intended to make Jesus submit to their will, thus robbing him of his royal authority. Let’s be careful not to do the same. When we come to God in Jesus’ name, may our prayers be for that which is in his will. As true followers of Christ, we should not attempt to cajole him into doing our will.

**Miracle and message (John 6:26–66).** John’s Gospel follows a pattern noted before (p. 186). He describes a miracle, then records a lengthy teaching of Jesus which is related to it. That lengthy teaching in John 6 has been called Jesus’ “Sermon on the Bread of Life.”

In this sermon, Jesus pointed out the selfish motives of the crowds who followed him. But Christ himself is the true bread, the source and sustainer of life. He is the true bread of heaven, who has been sent by the Father to give eternal life to everyone who believes in him. The ancestors of his hearers who had eaten manna in the wilderness were all dead, but those who would appropriate Christ—figuratively eating his flesh and drinking his blood—would live forever.

John notes that after this sermon “many of his disciples [used here in the sense of loose adherents] went back and walked with him no more” (John 6:66). They had eagerly received the bread that sustained physical life, but they rejected the Word that promised eternal life.



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Some people today preach a false gospel, which promises material prosperity to those with enough faith. How eagerly the crowds in Jesus' day would have welcomed such a gospel. And how quickly we turn away from the true gospel as well. The authentic gospel promises us new life, but then it calls us to live this new life not for ourselves but for the Lord.

**The meaning of the miracle.** Commentators tend to follow many side trails in discussing the feeding of the 5,000, but we must not forget this miracle's central message. In each Gospel, this miracle is an acted-out parable. Jesus declared himself to be the Lord God, come to shepherd his people, as he had promised through the prophet Ezekiel.

Richards, L. (1998). *Every miracle in the Bible* (pp. 246–249). Nashville: T. Nelson.

### 9. The fourth sign—feeding the five thousand (6:1–15)

The time-link to the previous section is vague: *Some time after this* (1). The reference to the Passover in verse 4 gives an indicator of duration. A year has passed since the cleansing of the temple (2:13f.). During this time Jesus has ministered largely in and around Galilee, as described by the other three evangelists. This sixth chapter is the only section of teaching in this gospel which is set in the Galilee region. The Galileans were a distinct type, peasants living close to the soil and labouring hard for a subsistence wage. The primary issues for them are the down-to-earth matters of food and the means of livelihood. This was in contrast to the more sophisticated audiences Jesus had encountered in the south, whose concerns were more theoretical: the fulfilment of scriptural prophecies, wrangling about the law and the theological implications of Jesus' claim.

The feeding of the five thousand is the only 'sign', other than the cross and resurrection, to appear in all four gospels, indicating its importance in the minds of the first Christian witnesses. Like the audiences in the south, the Galileans are also attracted by Jesus' miracles (*cf.* 2:23f.; 4:48).

As the synoptics make clear (*cf.* Mk. 6:31), Jesus is seeking privacy at this point. The disciples have just returned from a highly successful preaching tour and are also in need of rest. Jesus takes them to the hills to the east of the sea of Galilee, the area known today as the Golan Heights. Verse 3 refers to *the* hillside, which may imply an often visited spot.

The crowd get wind of Jesus' whereabouts and follow him round the head of the lake. Jesus is seated among the disciples as they approach. The reference to the Passover (4) is critical for the interpretation of this section. 'The movement from the miracle to the discourse, from Jesus to Moses, and above all from bread to flesh is almost unintelligible unless the reference to the Passover picks up 1:29, 35, anticipates 19:36, and governs the whole narrative.' We should also note that the Passover was a great patriotic festival which stirred the Jews' sense of national identity.

Jesus accepts the invasion of his vacation and ministers to the crowd (*cf.* Mk. 6:34). The passing of time raises acutely the question of food and provides Jesus with an opportunity to test the disciples, Philip in particular. He was from nearby Bethsaida and was perhaps the spokesman conveying the disciples' consensus that they had a major problem on their hands. Alternatively, knowing the district better than the others he would be cognizant of the fact that there was no local food source to draw upon. Philip thinks only in terms of the immediate reality of limited resources and makes his calculations accordingly. *Eight months' wages* would buy only a morsel all round (7). Over against Philip's gloomy estimate, Jesus remains unperturbed since *he already had in mind what he was going to do* (6).

This comment is capable of the widest application. Our Lord still surveys the needy world with compassion, just as he surveys the micro-world of our personal affairs. He is not without plans. He 'already has in mind what he will do' in our time and generation, and just as surely with the tangled threads of our personal present and future.

Andrew comes into the picture, to somewhat greater effect than Philip, producing *a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish* (9). The lad has brought a meal with him, the loaves being small rolls or scones, and the fish no more than titbits. John alone mentions the boy in this personal way, a nice eye-witness touch recalling another one in Mark (the 'green' grass, Mk. 6:39), which later detail incidentally confirms the time as around Passover, the only 'green' period of the year in Palestine. Beside the crowd, which with five thousand males alone would probably have totalled at least double that number, such a resource is pitiful in the extreme, as Andrew is not slow to point out (9). But on the basis of this tiny contribution the Master proceeds to make arrangements for a general feeding of the multitude. After thanksgiving the miracle happens. He *distributed ... as much as they wanted* (11). The multitude is fed, and satisfied too! The word for 'giving



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thanks' in verse 11 is *eucharistein*, from which 'Eucharist' is derived, a common term for the Lord's Supper. Too much should not be read into that, however, as it is a fairly common word and John uses terms with some freedom.

Jesus commands that the scraps not be wasted and twelve baskets are filled (12f.). Preservation of this kind of leftovers was a Jewish custom. Jesus here, however, gives his dominical support to a concern for conservation which has many points of application today. Whatever the immediate stimulus, Jesus' directive underwrites our revulsion at the destruction of excess food in a hungry world, as at the wastage of human skills and energy in unemployment, and also more general concerns to reduce waste through recycling. It is a sombre comment on our world that it has taken the threat of environmental pollution, and our planet's diminishing ability to sustain life, rather than a moral repugnance at waste in general, to awaken a concern for conservation.

The twelve baskets may be a fortuitous indicator of Jesus' ability to more than meet the needs of his whole people (*cf.* the twelve tribes of Israel), but more generally makes the point that 'after all have been satisfied there is more left over than there was at the beginning'. Jesus' resources are without limit; he can meet all our needs and more.

The sequel to the miracle is significant and anticipates the dialogue which will follow. The crowd, buoyed up in their nationalistic aspirations by the Passover celebration, see in Jesus the fulfilment of Deuteronomy 18:15–19, *Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world* (14). While this Old Testament passage anticipates a prophetic figure rather than the messianic King, they immediately cast Jesus in the later role (15). The Passover had been instituted during Israel's wilderness wandering, when God had fed his people supernaturally with manna from heaven. The setting was again a 'wilderness' area, where Moses had spoken of the 'prophet' who would come. Surely this was he, a 'second Moses', their long-awaited deliverer. 'It was the custom of Messianic pretenders in Jesus' time to seek credibility by either re-enacting or matching O.T. miracles.'

Jesus, however, will have none of it and *withdrew again to a mountain by himself* (15). Some manuscripts read 'fled back', which a number of commentators think is probably the original reading, copyists arguably making the change to tone down the embarrassing picture of Jesus in flight. Certainly Jesus' rejection of their attempts to set him at the head of a revolutionary mob is an abrupt and decisive one. We can perhaps detect here an echo of the earlier temptation (*cf.* Mt. 4:8f.) to pursue a political route to his kingdom, or perhaps at a deeper level, a messiahship which would by-pass the cross and leave the dominion of darkness intact. We can recall a similar revulsion at Peter's commendation of just such a course at Caesarea Philippi: *cf.* Matthew 16:23, 'Get behind me, Satan!' The disturbing effect of this experience may be reflected also in Jesus' desire to be alone again with the Father as he 'sends' the disciples away, probably to protect them from the insidious influence of this nationalistic fervour.

The application of the miracle is made in the discourse which follows, where Jesus presents himself as the bread of life, the satisfier of the hunger of the human heart (6:25–59).

At this point, we note how vividly this story expresses the ministry challenge facing the disciples of Christ in our generation. Today, as never before, we are confronted by the crowds. World population levels will explode through the six billion mark by early next century, and the sheer human reality of the needy masses is an everyday fact for ministry, particularly in the teeming cities and mega-cities of the globe. It is therefore significant to note that Christ faces the crowd and makes his disciples face them also (5). We regularly struggle against that. J. H. Bavinck touches something deep in most of our hearts when he writes:

People wish to remain quiet, in the peaceful little Church under the high Gothic arches; they would brood about God and be preoccupied with the needs of their own souls. They do not want to be shocked by the bewildering idea that there are still many hundreds of millions of people who have never heard the gospel.

But Jesus will not let us brood, he challenges us with the need, both for the 'bread of life' as in Bavinck's quotation, and also for material bread, and every other kind of need that cries out to be met.

Faced with the need, Jesus still asks us individually, and also as church communities, *Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?* (5). This is a *test* of Philip (6); nor is that accidental. Jesus regularly tests his people. We cannot simply 'amble along' with Jesus, for he is concerned more for our growth than for our comfort. To walk with Jesus means climbing.

Sadly, our response to the Lord's testing is too often the same as Philip's. We measure the need, quantify our inadequate resources, and resign in hopelessness. It is all beyond us; the need cannot be met. Even when,



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like Andrew, we identify some limited resource, the possibilities are not significantly improved. *How far will they go among so many?* (9). But this assembling of our resources is a key to the divine provision, for Jesus is not discouraged, as we are, by what we have to offer. Indeed, if we will put it into his hands he will still 'give thanks' for it, a wonder in itself. Our instinct is to put ourselves down and demean what we have to give, particularly when measuring it against raw human need. But Christ is thankful for us! And if we will believe sufficiently in his gifting to trust him with our whole selves, he will take us, break us as need be (Mk. 6:41), and offer us to the Father as in his hands the miracle is repeated, the resource multiplied, and a multitude fed.

The key, beyond our believing in God's ability and will to use us, lies in the wholeheartedness of our surrender to him. William Booth's secret is an open one. Asked to explain the phenomenal impact of his life, he replied, 'For the last eighty years God has had all that there is of William Booth.' Through him Christ fed a multitude.<sup>8</sup>

### JESUS WALKS ON WATER

*Matthew 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52; John 6:15–21*

Jesus walked on a stormy sea and joined his disciples in their small boat.

**Background of the miracle.** After Jesus fed the 5,000, he "made" his disciples get in their boat and go on ahead of him (Matt. 14:22). The strong Greek verb in this passage is often translated "compelled."

What was the urgency?

- Jesus may have sent the disciples ahead to help diffuse the crowd that wanted to make him king (compare John 6:15).
- Jesus wanted to escape both the crowd and the disciples, to get some rest (Mark 6:31–32).
- Jesus definitely wanted to spend some time alone with his Father in prayer (Matt. 14:23).

The separation of Jesus from his disciples provided the occasion for this miracle.

When the disciples first saw Jesus approaching them on the lake, they mistook him for a ghost. Their fear reflected the common first-century belief that ghosts were hostile beings, the shades of malevolent men who had died, and who would harm human beings.

**Parties to the miracle.** Jesus is the central figure. The others involved are the twelve disciples, with the emphasis on Peter.

**Jesus.** After resting and praying Jesus was walking on the surface of the Sea of Galilee, apparently crossing it to join the disciples who had gone on ahead by boat. The miracle displayed Christ's control of the forces of nature.

**The disciples.** The disciples' initial reaction of fear was transformed to worship as the miracle impressed them with the fresh realization that Jesus was "the Son of God" (Matt. 14:33).

**Peter.** Peter is both a good example and a bad example in this miracle account. He alone had faith enough in Jesus to step out of the boat into the stormy sea. But once on the waters, his gaze was torn from Jesus and fixed on his surroundings. We are also asked to risk in response to Jesus' call. Peter's experience reminds us not to take our eyes off Jesus in difficult situations.

**How the story unfolds.** Jesus hurried his disciples into a boat and away from the crowds. It is likely that he told them to wait for him until a fixed time and if he had not arrived by then, they should set out to cross the lake. But the sea was stormy and the wind was in their face. By four o'clock in the morning, the disciples were only halfway across the lake.

When they noticed a figure walking on the water, the disciples were terrified, assuming it must be a ghost. But Jesus called out and identified himself. Peter then asked the Lord to tell him to join him on the waters. Jesus did, and Peter stepped out into the stormy waters. He walked a few steps toward Jesus but was distracted by the raging winds and began to sink.

Jesus caught Peter's hand and lifted him up, calling him a "little-faith" person and asking, "Why did you doubt?" (Matt. 14:31). When Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the winds and the sea calmed down.

Amazed, the disciples worshiped Jesus. For the first time in Matthew's Gospel, they expressed the belief that Jesus was "the Son of God" (Matt. 14:33; see also Matt. 16:16; 26:63; 27:40, 43, 54).

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<sup>8</sup> Milne, B. (1993). *The message of John: here is your king!: with study guide* (pp. 103–109). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #6 When Jesus Heals Malchus' Ear

**"The fourth watch of the night" (Matt. 14:25).** The Romans divided the night into four watches, the Hebrews into three. The Roman system was adopted by all the Gospel writers. Thus, Jesus approached the boat between 3:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M.

**"It is I" (14:27).** The Greek phrase is *ego eimi*, and it may reflect the Old Testament name *Yahweh*, meaning "I AM." No wonder Jesus could encourage his disciples to "take courage" [rendered "be of good cheer" in our text], and "do not be afraid." Since God was with them, they had no reason to fear.

**"Command me to come to You" (14:28).** The incident with Peter offers an interesting commentary on Jesus' words of encouragement.

**"Lord, if it is You" (14:28).** The conditional here has the meaning, "Since it is You." Jesus had announced, *ego eimi* ("it is I"). Peter had confidence that Jesus truly was Lord.

**"When Peter had come down out of the boat" (14:29).** Jesus said, "Take courage." Peter showed his courage by stepping out boldly into the surging waters.

**"He was afraid, and beginning to sink" (14:30).** Jesus had said, "Do not be afraid." Out on the waves alone, Peter did fear. And he began to sink. Fear may overcome us also when we take our eyes off Jesus and concentrate on our circumstances.

**"O you of little faith" (14:31).** It is far better to be a "little faith" person than a "no faith" person. But best of all is to be a person of "great faith."

**"Why did you doubt" (14:31)?** At first, the answer seems obvious. Peter doubted because the circumstances were fraught with danger. But the question encouraged Peter and the disciples to look deeper. Jesus had announced "It is I." No matter how hazardous the circumstances may be, there was no reason to doubt when Jesus was present.

This is one of the most important messages of this miracle for us today. We can become so obsessed with difficulties and dangers that our doubts overwhelm us. Yet if Jesus, the Son of God, is with us, he is in control of every circumstance. We need to be as bold as Peter in walking through our stormy waters, yet wiser than Peter by never forgetting Jesus' presence in our lives.

**"They had not understood" (Mark 6:52).** Mark's account of this miracle displays a slightly different emphasis than Matthew's. Mark draws our attention to the disciples' hardened hearts. The phrase indicates an underlying attitude which accounts for their amazement at Jesus' ability to walk on water and at the immediate calming of the waters when Jesus entered the boat. They had just seen Jesus feed 5,000 people. They should have recognized his claim to be the Lord, come to offer himself as Shepherd to his people (see p. 208f.).

While this emphasis is different from Matthew's, the two accounts are actually in complete harmony. The private miracle performed on the Sea of Galilee taught the disciples what the feeding of the 5,000 had not—that "truly, You are the Son of God" (Matt. 14:33).

**The meaning of the miracle.** With this miracle, we have evidence that the true identity of Jesus was beginning to dawn on his disciples. They would grasp the full meaning of that confession—"You are the Son of God" (Matt. 14:33)—only later, after the Cross and the Resurrection.

Looking back from that perspective today, we can see in this miracle more evidence that Jesus was who he claimed to be. We can see something of what it means to live in relationship with the Son of God.

The life of faith calls for a boldness like Peter's. He was willing to risk leaving the security of the boat to walk alone on the stormy lake. Faith also calls for a continual awareness that Jesus is with us. This will dispel our doubts, no matter how difficult our circumstances may be.<sup>9</sup>

### 10. The fifth sign—walking on the water (6:16–24)

Before the miracle of the loaves is discussed, a further 'sign' takes place, which also appears following the feeding miracle in the synoptic gospels (Mt. 14:22–36; Mk. 6:45–52). The disciples are alone in the boat in the darkness when a storm blows up, as was frequently the case on the lake of Galilee. There is a mood of discouragement underlined by John's observation that *it was dark* (17).

Here is discipleship without the discerned presence of the Lord, and, recalling the traditional image of the church as a boat, it is not difficult to make application. In many parts of the world today, particularly in the West, it would be difficult to find a more telling picture of the church. Here is a small handful of people, seemingly remote from the land where most people live their lives, apparently irrelevant to the great issues confronting the world. It is tossed by the winds of secularism without and controversy and uncertainty within, out of touch with its point of departure, unsure of its whereabouts, and with no clear destination ahead. All the while its members, like the disciples in the story, strain at the oars of good works and ministry, making no apparent headway in the process.

<sup>9</sup> Richards, L. (1998). *Every miracle in the Bible* (pp. 208–213). Nashville: T. Nelson.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #6 When Jesus Heals Malchus' Ear

Crucially, they have no manifest conviction that Jesus, the Head and Lord of the church, is anywhere in sight. 'It is dark.'

Suddenly, Jesus is seen, or at least an approaching figure is observed walking on the waves towards them (19). Some commentators, who have difficulty with the miraculous, think they find a 'let-out' here, as the Greek of verse 19, *walking on the water*, can be rendered 'by the water'. The suggestion is that the boat has never gone far from shore and Jesus appears walking along the shore line to encourage them. The difficulty with that interpretation lies in its complete inability to account for their terror (19). Besides, if this is not a miraculous appearance of Jesus, then it is difficult to see why the incident is included at this point, bearing in mind the theological undertow of the story. The traditional interpretation is much to be preferred, not least because it corresponds to the accounts in the other gospels where the ambiguity in meaning does not arise (cf. Mt. 14:24; Mk. 6:47). At first the disciples do not recognize him and are terrified, experienced sailors as they are. Clearly something extraordinary is occurring. The disciples are apparently more afraid of the Saviour than they are of the storm.

There are occasions when Jesus' coming seems only to intensify our troubles. That was to be Peter's experience later as Jesus faced him, painfully, with his failure (21:15ff.). It was Paul's experience when he responded to the call of Christ to go to Macedonia and found himself a bloodied victim in a Roman prison (Acts 16:9 with 24). Christ's coming can divide as well as unite (Mt. 10:34–39); it can bring rejection rather than acceptance (15:18–21).

So Jesus comes to them (19). They have never been out of his sight, even if he may have been out of theirs (Mk 6:48). His commitment is unconditional; the church, whatever its limitations, will never be abandoned. He stills the disciples' fear with his word of greeting, *It is I; don't be afraid* (or, more literally, 'stop being afraid', 20). The words *It is I* translate the Greek *egō eimi*, which in other contexts is the divine self-affirmation so often reproduced in this gospel, 'I am'. The words would of course be natural enough in this context as a means of Jesus' identifying himself. It is difficult, however, to believe that John does not intend us to see more here, particularly if we recall the Passover background. The deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt led to the wilderness wandering and their supernatural sustenance by means of the manna. That wilderness experience, however, was reached by way of the Red Sea and the supreme demonstration of the majesty of God as he parted the waters for his people (Ex. 12–14). Jesus appears here as Lord of the waves and the seas, the personal manifestation of the Almighty who walked upon the waters at the Red Sea. 'The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and writhed; ... Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters' (Ps. 77:16, 19). A similar passage in Psalm 107 concludes, 'He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven' (29–30).

This 'arrival' is apparently a further miracle, for *immediately* on Jesus entering the boat they find themselves at their destination (21). The appropriateness is well caught by Godet:

One can scarcely imagine, indeed, that after an act of power so magnificent and so kingly as Jesus walking on the waters he should have seated himself in the boat and the voyage have been laboriously continued by the stroke of the oar. At the moment Jesus set foot on the boat he communicated to it the force victorious over gravity and space, which had just been so strikingly displayed in his own person.

So Christ's presence brings renewed hope and power to his dispirited church, and, where needed, to individual lives. The last word does not lie with the world, no matter how threatening its manifestations. Jesus still comes walking upon the waves, and in a recovered experience of his presence, the church, for all its internal failings, may yet sweep upon its way, and at the last be carried by its triumphant Lord on to that 'eternal shore' for which we are destined.

Verses 22–26 relate the surprise of the crowd at not finding Jesus on the east side of the lake where the miracle of the loaves had taken place. Only one boat had made the crossing and Jesus had not been aboard when it set sail, of that they were sure. He plainly was no longer in the vicinity, however, and so they return to Capernaum, his place of residence at this point, to try and find him. They go, the text says, *in search of Jesus* (24), and that helpfully sets the scene for the long discourse which follows in which the mystery of<sup>10</sup>

### WONDERS AT CALVARY

Jesus performed no miracle while on the cross, but his death was accompanied by wonders.

<sup>10</sup> Milne, B. (1993). *The message of John: here is your king!: with study guide* (pp. 103–109). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #6 When Jesus Heals Malchus' Ear

It is appropriate to note several wonders associated with the death of Jesus on the cross. These, like his miracles, were extraordinary events with a religious purpose caused by God.

***The cross is one focus of fulfilled prophecy.*** It is a wonder indeed that hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, his crucifixion was described in great detail.

Psalm 22 was acknowledged to be messianic long before Christ was born. It contains the following verses:

“My God, My God, why have  
You forsaken Me” (22:1).  
They shoot out the lip, they shake  
the head, saying,  
“He trusted in the LORD, let Him  
rescue Him;  
Let Him deliver Him, since He  
delights in Him” (22:7, 8).  
They pierced My hands and My feet (22:16).  
They divide My garments among them,  
And for My clothing they cast lots (22:18).

As we read the Gospels, we discover that each of these verses describes something that was said or something that happened at Calvary.

Isaiah 53 describes Jesus' death in the company of criminals (Isa. 53:9, 12), predicting that he would be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isa. 53:9). Psalm 34:20 predicts that none of Jesus' bones would be broken. This is a striking prediction, for the legs of the thieves with whom he died were broken to hasten their deaths (John 19:32, 33).

These and other prophecies fulfilled at Calvary on the day Jesus died are one of the wonders of God's Word. They remind us that the Cross was always a central element in God's plan and that the death of Jesus was decreed by the Father, not by human beings.

To find the meaning of the Cross, we must understand it not as a tragedy, but as the key to God's triumph over Satan, sin, and death.

***The wonder of the torn veil.*** Matthew reports that at the moment of Jesus' death the veil of the temple was “torn in two from top to bottom” (Matt. 27:51). The same event is reported in Mark 15:38 and Luke 23:45.

The veil that hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies in the temple was a thick, woven tapestry of multiple colored strands. No known force could rip it apart.

The veil was also spiritually significant. Only once a year could the high priest go behind this veil—and then he carried sacrificial blood to sprinkle on the cover of the sacred ark of the covenant as an atonement for Israel's sins.

The writer of the book of Hebrews reveals that the veil which separated the two inner rooms of the temple indicated that “the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest” (Heb. 9:8). The veil cut off not only the people but even the priests from direct access to God. It was a symbol of the reality that no avenue of approach to God existed in Old Testament times.

But with the death of Christ, a radical change took place. He took our sins upon himself and opened the way to God through his sacrifice. And so the writer of Hebrews declares, “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

The wonder of the torn veil symbolizes the end of one age and the beginning of another. In this new age, all believers can enter the holiest of all boldly and with confidence, knowing that God's throne is a throne of grace for all.

***The wonder of the opened graves (Matt. 27:52, 53).*** Matthew alone reports this extraordinary event. He indicates that an earthquake struck the area at the moment of Jesus' death, opening a number of graves. Many of the saints were restored to life and seen in Jerusalem after Jesus' resurrection.

The implications of this wonder are clear. Jesus' death brought life to some who had been dead. What a symbol of victory over death, and of the resurrection life that Jesus offers to all who trust him as Savior. Richards, L. (1998). [\*Every miracle in the Bible\*](#) (pp. 246–249). Nashville: T. Nelson.

**EASTER MIRACLES—AND BEYOND**



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #6 When Jesus Heals Malchus' Ear

Each Gospel devotes much of its space to the story of Jesus' trial and crucifixion. Yet each Gospel account ends on a note of triumph. Jesus has been falsely accused and foully murdered. Yet death cannot hold Jesus. In an unmatched exercise of the power of God, Jesus is raised from the dead!

The account of events on and beyond the first Easter focus our attention on a number of wonders associated with the Resurrection, which is the greatest wonder of all. As we look first at the associated wonders and then at the Resurrection itself, we realize how utterly central the bodily resurrection of our Lord is to authentic Christian faith.

### WONDERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RESURRECTION

***The tomb's stone seal was rolled away (Matt. 28:2; Mark 16:1-3; Luke 24:1-2).*** The tombs of wealthy first century Jews like Joseph of Arimathea, where Jesus' body was placed, were hewn into rock cliffs. Such tombs generally had several niches carved into the rock, where the bones of several generations of the family could be stored. These tombs were sealed by large stone "wheels," which would be rolled along a track cut into the rock to seal the tomb. When on the first Easter morning several women set out for Jesus' tomb to wrap His body in linen strips interwoven with sweet-smelling spices, they worried. How could they roll away the heavy stone that sealed the tomb?

When they arrived at the tomb, they discovered the tomb already opened! Matthew tells us that an earthquake had jolted the stone from its track, and an angel had moved it away from the tomb's opening!

***The guard posted at the tomb was unconscious (Matt. 28:4).*** The Jewish leaders had asked Pilate, the Roman governor, to put a military guard at the tomb. They remembered that Jesus had promised a return to life, and while they did not believe Him, they thought His disciples might try to steal the body.

But the appearance of the angel and the earthquake shocked the military guard into unconsciousness. Later, when they awakened, some of the guard reported what had happened to the chief priests. These religious leaders who had conspired to see Jesus executed then bribed the soldiers with "a large sum of money" to say that the disciples stole Jesus' body while they were asleep.

The leaders must also have promised the soldiers protection, for the penalty for a Roman soldier who slept while on guard was death. And, of course, if the disciples had actually stolen Christ's body while the soldiers slept, the soldiers could hardly have been credible witnesses. How would they know *what* happened, if they were asleep? Like most political cover-ups, this attempt to confuse the population about Christ's resurrection was destined to fail.

***Angels informed visitors to the tomb that Jesus had risen from the dead (Matthew 28:3; Luke 24:4-7; John 20:12-13).*** This is a third wonder associated with the Resurrection. One or more angels appeared to groups of women who came to the tomb, and testified to Jesus' resurrection. In each case the angels appeared in their natural, radiant state, rather than as ordinary persons. There could be no mistaking the supernatural character of these witnesses to the raising of Jesus.

***The undisturbed graveclothes (John 20:2-10).*** When Peter and John heard that Jesus' tomb was empty they ran to see for themselves. Peter stooped and stepped into the tomb and was stunned by what he saw.

In biblical times bodies were loosely wrapped in strips of linen, and a cloth was placed over the head of the deceased. What Peter saw was the cloths in which Jesus had been wrapped, still in the shape of the body around which they had been done up! But there was no body inside! Jesus had somehow passed through the grave cloths, leaving them as an empty husk!

The apostle John tells us that when he saw this, he believed (John 20:8)!

***Mary saw Jesus Himself (John 20:12-18).*** Even after Mary had seen the angels at the tomb, she wept uncontrollably. She was still convinced that "they" had taken Jesus away.

Then through her tears Mary saw a figure standing nearby. Supposing him to be the gardener she asked the figure where the body of Jesus had been placed. Jesus then spoke only one word to Mary: her name. Immediately Mary recognized His voice.

***Jesus appeared unrecognized to two disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:13-35).*** Another striking incident is reported in Luke. As two disciples return to their home in Emmaus from Jerusalem they are joined by an unknown man. The man questions them, and when they share their vanished hopes that Jesus might have been the Christ, the man leads them through the Old Testament prophets, showing from Scripture that it was foretold that the Christ would suffer as Jesus had!

On arriving home the two travelers invited the stranger to take a meal with them. As the stranger broke the bread and gave thanks for it, in the traditional Jewish table blessing, they suddenly realized that their companion was Jesus Himself, raised from the dead. Jesus then disappeared, and the two hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples that Jesus was alive.

***Jesus appeared in a locked room (Luke 24:36-43; Mark 16:14).*** The text tells us that Jesus came to His disciples and spoke with them personally shortly after the Resurrection. Luke adds a fascinating detail. The room where the disciples had gathered was a locked room, where the disciples were hiding for fear of the religious leaders who had manipulated Jesus' death.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #6 When Jesus Heals Malchus' Ear

The sudden appearance of Jesus in the room is one of the proofs that the resurrection body is not limited in the way our mortal bodies are limited. Jesus appeared and disappeared at will, most likely freely crossing the barrier between the material and spiritual universes which no mortal can cross.

***Jesus' resurrection body bore the marks of crucifixion in its hands and side (John 20:24–31).*** The disciple Thomas had not been present the first time Jesus appeared to the gathered disciples. He would not believe the report of the others that Christ had shown Himself to them, alive. Thomas bluntly stated that he would not believe unless he touched Jesus' hands and side, and confirmed that the One who now lived was indeed the same One who had been crucified.

Yet when Jesus did appear, and invited Thomas to touch His wounds, Thomas found he did not need this confirmation after all. Thomas knew Jesus, and fell down before him, confessing "My Lord and my God."

These events, each closely linked to that first Easter morning, were wonders indeed. Yet they pale in comparison to the event with which they are associated: the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION: *Romans 1:4*;  
*1 Corinthians 15*

Some contemporary "theologians" have argued that it doesn't matter whether the resurrection of Jesus was literal and historical or not. They claim that a "spiritual" resurrection is all that is required. What mattered is not whether or not Jesus' body was raised and transformed. What mattered is that the disciples *believed* that Jesus was raised. What mattered is that they experienced Him in a different way than when He lived among them.

But the Bible makes it very clear that the resurrection of Jesus was a literal resurrection of the material body, and that the Resurrection took place in space and time as a true historical event. Romans 1:4 reminds us that by His resurrection Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power." The Resurrection is the capstone miracle, which confirms once and forever Jesus' claim to be God the Son and Son of God.

The apostle Paul provides a thorough discussion of the Resurrection in chapter 15 of his first letter to the Corinthians. Tracing that discussion we gain some insight into both the nature of Jesus' resurrection, and its significance to our faith.

***Christ's death, burial, and resurrection are all historical events prophesied in the Old Testament (1 Corinthians 15:3–4).*** This is significant, as prophecy which has been fulfilled has invariably been fulfilled literally. We can conclude from this that the death of Jesus was a real death, and the resurrection of Jesus was a real, historical resurrection.

***Christ was seen alive after His resurrection by many witnesses who knew Him, and who could not have been deceived (1 Corinthians 15:5–11).*** Paul not only mentions the Twelve, but also some 500 others, most of whom were alive when Paul wrote the Corinthian letter.

***Christ's was raised as the first of many (1 Corinthians 15:12–20).*** Christian faith promises resurrection to all who believe in Jesus. If Christ was not raised, this critical promise is an empty one. On the other hand, because Jesus did experience a bodily resurrection, our own future resurrection is assured.

***The Resurrection is a critical element in God's eternal plan to destroy death itself (1 Corinthians 15:21–28).*** Adam's sin introduced death. Biblically "death" is not only the cessation of biological life; it is also that corruption of human moral nature which separates human beings from God and brings them under divine judgment. In dying Jesus paid the penalty for our sins. In His resurrection Jesus provided eternal life for those who believe in Him. When God's plan reaches its culmination believers will be resurrected also, and the last taint of sin and death will be forever done away.

The dynamic power of Jesus' resurrection life will accomplish the resurrection transformation of believers, that once again God may be all in all.

***While mortal and resurrection bodies are related, the resurrection body is of a different order (1 Corinthians 15:35–48).*** The great apostle struggles to find analogies that will help us understand resurrection. In a real sense, we will never understand the glorious prospect God holds up to us until the final resurrection comes. Yet Paul does suggest a series of contrasts which helps us sense something of the transformation that took place when Christ was raised, and that will take place when we are raised from the dead.

***Corruption vs. incorruption (1 Cor. 15:42).*** The natural body is subject to dissolution. The resurrection body is not.

***Dishonor vs. glory (1 Cor. 15:43).*** The contrast is explained in the verse. Our natural body is weak and subject to all sorts of disabilities. The resurrection body is infused with power.

***Natural body vs. spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44).*** This contrast points out that our mortal body is governed by principles implicit in the material universe. In contrast, the resurrection body operates on principles that are supernatural, i.e., "spiritual."

***Earthly source vs. heavenly source (1 Cor. 15:47–49).*** The first man, Adam, was molded from the earth, and his material body was infused with life by God. But Christ's origin is heaven itself, as is the origin of the transformation that produced His



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #6 When Jesus Heals Malchus' Ear

resurrection body. In the same sense the essence and origin of our resurrection bodies will be heavenly. In the resurrection “we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.”

The bodily resurrection of Jesus is most certainly one of the three Grand Miracles of our faith, as described on pages 15 through 17 of this book. The literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus also serves as a miraculous confirmation of our own destiny, and as such is foundational to authentic Christian faith.<sup>11</sup>

### **Ephesians 1 Thanksgiving and Prayer**

<sup>15</sup> For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love<sup>[a]</sup> toward all the saints, <sup>16</sup> I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, <sup>18</sup> having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might <sup>20</sup> that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

#### **NLT**

#### **Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom**

<sup>15</sup> Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere,<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>16</sup> I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, <sup>17</sup> asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom<sup>[b]</sup> and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. <sup>18</sup> I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.<sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>19</sup> I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power<sup>20</sup> that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. <sup>21</sup> Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.

Jesus Turns Water into Wine [Nature Jn 2:7-8](#)

Jesus Heals an Official's Son [Healing Jn 4:50](#)

Jesus Heals a Lame Man [Healing Jn 5:8](#)

Jesus Feeds 5,000 People [Provision Jn 6:1-13](#)

Jesus Walks on Water [Nature Jn 6:19](#)

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind [Healing Jn 9:7](#)

Jesus Raises Lazarus [Resurrection Jn 11:43-44](#)

Jesus Rises from the Dead [Jn 20:1-10](#)

Jesus Appears in a Locked Room [Nature Jn 20:19-23](#)

Jesus Appears in a Locked Room for Thomas [Nature Jn 20:26-29](#)

Jesus Provides a Miraculous Catch of Fish [Provision Jn 21:4-6](#)

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<sup>11</sup> Richards, L. (1998). [Every miracle in the Bible](#) (pp. 238–243). Nashville: T. Nelson.