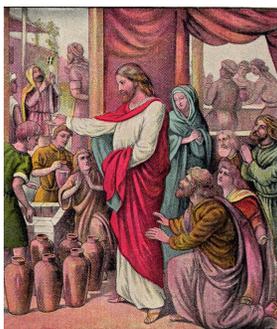




The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Miracles and Faith
Part II: Some Miracles of The New Testament



Miracle at Cana
Public Domain

Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

For our first time listeners, Helen is a Dominican, a youth catechist and is also engaged in music ministry. Sharon is our token cradle Catholic, and I am here to simply ask questions. Anyway, welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray.

Discussion:

Last time, we opened a discussion as to the meaning of miracles to our lives. We noted that miracles appear to us as something we cannot explain, as something out of the common realm of our experience, something which does not appear to be consistent with our understanding of nature or our environment. For some, the supernatural appears as confirmation of a power greater than us. For some, it is a confirmation as to the placement of their faith, while others

resist the notion of miracles with every fiber, assuming a perfectly natural explanation shall be discovered which does not involve divine intervention.

In our modern day, we might be tempted to wonder, why have we never seen a burning bush or the parting of a sea? We might also wonder as to the meaning if we did experience such things. We could also ponder, if we should experience such a miracle, how would it change our lives?

As we continue in our discussion, we will examine such questions as well as those I asked last time, such as; is the power of hindsight always perfect in how we perceive the response of others to miracles of their day, do we have the foresight to ponder how a miracle might ripple through time, and for whom, exactly, is the intended audience for a given miracle?

(Question 1: Today, we will begin to discuss some of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. **When we talk about New Testament miracles, what comes to mind?)**

(Luke 1:26-38)

26 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, 33 and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" 35 And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. 36 And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; 37 for nothing will be impossible for God." 38 Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

(Question 2: Here, we observe the angel Gabriel, a messenger of God, greeting Mary and informing her she was chosen by God to bear His only begotten Son; not what you would call an everyday event for Mary. Let's put ourselves in Mary's place for a moment. **If we were visited by an angel, what might be our response in the moment? How would we share such an event with family and friends?)**

(Question 3: Of course, we recognize the virgin birth as well as the conception of a child by a barren woman as miracles, but what about the visits by the angels? **Are visits by angels miracles? Is there a lesson for us from the response of Mary to the event?)**

(John 2:1-11)

1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4 [And] Jesus said to her,

“Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” 5 His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” 6 Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. 7 Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he told them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it. 9 And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.” 11 Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

(Question 4: This event is reported as the beginning of the miracles of Jesus. What was the nature of the miracle? Who witnessed the event? For what purpose was this divine intervention? What is the meaning of this event to us today?)

(John 2:23-25)

23 While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. 24 But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, 25 and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

(Question 5: Here, we see a reference to the miracles which Jesus performed. We are told that many began to believe because of these signs, but then, we are also told that Jesus would not trust himself to them because He knew them all. What might this mean? What does it reveal to us about our nature?)

(Matthew 14:13-21)

13 When Jesus heard of it, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. The crowds heard of this and followed him on foot from their towns. 14 When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick. 15 When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, “This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.” 16 [Jesus] said to them, “There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.” 17 But they said to him, “Five loaves and two fish are all we have here.” 18 Then he said, “Bring them here to me,” 19 and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full. 21 Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting women and children.

(Question 6: By this time, many are aware of the signs Jesus was able to perform. What is the nature of this miracle? Who were those who witnessed? Who is the target audience of this miracle?)

(Question 7: Today, because it is written in scripture, we accept this miracle, but not everyone

accepted it at the time and many stood in opposition to this “man of signs.” Why do we think that after the reports of such events, there were those who were skeptical? What do we think would happen if such a miracle was experienced today?)

(CCC: 156) What moves us to believe is not the fact that revealed truths appear as true and intelligible in the light of our natural reason: we believe “because of the authority of God himself who reveals them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.”²⁸ So “that the submission of our faith might nevertheless be in accordance with reason, God willed that external proofs of his Revelation should be joined to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit.” Thus the miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, the Church’s growth and holiness, and her fruitfulness and stability “are the most certain signs of divine Revelation, adapted to the intelligence of all”; they are “motives of credibility” (*motiva credibilitatis*), which show that the assent of faith is “by no means a blind impulse of the mind.”

(Question 8: In this paragraph of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we are told that miracles are among the “signs of divine Revelation.” We are also told that “the assent of faith is 'by no means a blind impulse of the mind.’” What does this tell us about God’s use of miracles to gain our attention and what does it mean to the strength of our faith?)

(Question 9: This paragraph of the Catechism also concludes that “...we believe 'because of the authority of God himself...” and that “God willed that external proofs of his Revelation should be joined to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit.” As we reflect on these phrases, what role do we see miracles play in relation to those of faith and those who cling to almost any explanation but God?)

Quotes:

We take for granted the slow miracle whereby water in the irrigation of a vineyard becomes wine. It is only when Christ turns water into wine, in a quick motion, as it were, that we stand amazed.

– *Saint Augustine*

When people truly open their minds, and contemplate the way in which the universe is ordered and governed, they are amazed-overwhelmed by a sense of the miraculous. When people contemplate with open minds the germination of a single seed, they are equally overwhelmed-yet numerous babies are born every day, and no-one marvels. If only people opened their minds, they would see that the birth of a baby, in which a new life is created, is a greater miracle than restoring life.

– *Saint Augustine*

"A person struck by the greatness of miracles shakes in mind and body; and when the person has been stunned by this shaking, the person then thinks about his or her own weakness."

– *St. Hildegard of Bingen*

Final Thoughts:

During our discussion, today, we opened the door to some of the miracles of the New Testament. Some are stories we have heard since childhood, but we should take a moment, from time to time, to examine the full context of the miracle. We might take a moment and reflect upon the environment of the event to include the culture and the surrounding history. We might take a moment and close our eyes to see how we might imagine the miracle if we were there. We should ask ourselves about the skepticism we might have or how we know the event was an act of the divine.

Of course, as we accept God and His Holy Word, we accept the events which His Word describes, but what about events in our day? What about our experience? How do we share with others things which we cannot explain?

As we continue our discussion concerning miracles and faith, we will talk about the impact of such events, not only for the people of the past, but those of our present, as well as our future. We can see that such events stir conversation, but do they also stir belief? We might ask, what do we confront when we experience the divine intervention of God?

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we pick up our discussion with another miracle of the New Testament, the story of the man born blind.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: Miracles and Faith – Part III: The Man Born Blind