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2025 ANNUAL THEME: “HOPE IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTY”

BIBLE STUDY

June Theme: MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN

“Exploring the Power, Purpose, and Provision of Miracles in the Old Testament”

June 11, 2025

Topics

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SCRIPTURE REFERENCE [Psalm 105:1-6 New Century Version (NCV)]

¹Give thanks to the Lord and pray to him.

Tell the nations what he has done.

²Sing to him; sing praises to him.

Tell about all his [*miracles*].

³Be glad that you are his;

let those who seek the Lord be happy.

⁴Depend on the Lord and his strength;

always go to him for help.

⁵Remember the [*miracles*] he has done;

remember his wonders and his decisions.

⁶You are descendants of his servant Abraham,
the children of Jacob, his chosen people.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- A. Briefly describe an incredible or unbelievable event or outcome in your life that you attribute to God.

- B. What have you done to preserve the memory of unusual or fantastic events that have occurred in your life?

IMPORTANT EMPHASIS

Miracles do happen. Miracles come directly from the triune throne of God. This involves God's omnipotence and His omniscience to perform what he has promised.

What is a miracle? Miracle is an astounding event, astounding because it is extraordinary, and extraordinary because what has occurred is or involves a breach of the usual order.

Kant defines miracles as : "The miracle is faith's favorite child"

Kant further suggests "that miracles are phenomena whose causes and casual laws are and must remain utterly unknown. "We don't know how God did it but we do know that God was the one that did it!"

Biblical Understanding of miracles- The ontological make up of miracle is a sensible fact (opus sensible) produced by the special intervention of God for a **religious end**. **Transcending** the normal order of things usually termed the Law of Nature.

"Events that unmistakably involve an immediate and powerful action of **God designed to reveal his character or purposes**".

Words that are used for the miraculous:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| • Sign | Move of God |
| • Wonder | supernatural |
| • Work | act of God |
| • Mighty work | |
| • Portent | |
| • Power | |

Miracle Defined: The two words most frequently used for miracle and translated sign (ot) and wonder (mophet) they are synonyms and often used together. **Exodus 7:3 , Daniel 6:27 Isaiah 8:16-18**

Old Testament

Sign- may be an object or daily activity as well as an unexpected divine action. **Ezekiel 24:24, Joshua 4:5-6. The basic nature of a sign is that it points people to God!**

Wonders - describe God's supernatural activity , a special manifestation of his power. Wonders can serve as a sign of a future event. **Signs seek to bring belief,**

False prophets – But false prophets can perform actions that people perceive as signs and wonders **Deut. 13:1-3**

New Testament

Sign- (simeion) in the NT is used of miracles taken as evidence of *divine authority*. **Luke 23:8 Acts 4:16, 22**

Wonders- translates a Greek word from which the word “terror” comes. It denotes something unusual that causes the beholder to marvel. **Acts 2:19, Acts 14:3**

Whereas a sign appeal to the understanding, a wonder appeals to the imagination.

Thomas Aquinas maintained miracles stand outside the laws of nature

- **Demonstration**
- **Illumination**
- **Revelation**
- **Participation**

KEY TERMS

- Abraham
- Chosen One's
- Decisions
- Descendants
- Chosen People
- Divine
- Elijah
- Elisha
- Faith
- Give Thanks
- Hannah
- Help

- Isaac
- Jacob
- Joshua
- Lord
- Miracles
- Moses
- Nations
- Obedience
- Power
- Praises
- Pray
- Protection

- Provision
- Purpose
- Rachel
- Rebekah
- Remember
- Sarah
- Seek
- Signs
- Strength
- Trust
- Wonders
- Works

OUTLINE

- I. **The Power of Miracles** (Manifestation of God's Might)
 - A. Miraculous Manifestations
 - B. Powerful Plagues and Partings
 - C. Supernatural Safeguards
- II. **The Purpose of Miracles** (Messages for Mankind)
 - A. Divine Direction
 - B. Fire and Faith
 - C. Deliverance and Devotion
- III. **The Provision of Miracles** (Meeting Human Needs)
 - A. Miraculous Manna and Multiplication
 - B. Plentiful and Potable Provisions for Paupers
 - C. Miraculous Conceptions

INTRODUCTION

The study of miracles in the Old Testament offers a profound exploration of divine intervention, displaying God's power, purpose, and provision throughout biblical history. These miraculous events serve as manifestations of God's might, delivering messages for mankind and meeting human needs in extraordinary ways. By examining these miracles, we gain insights into the **faith** and **obedience** required to witness God's wonders and the transformative impact they have on individuals and communities.

The selected anchor scripture, **Psalms 105:1-6** emphasizes the importance of **remembering** and **sharing the miracles** performed by the Lord. It encourages believers to give thanks, sing praises, and tell others about these miraculous events. By doing so, it highlights the role of miracles in strengthening faith and fostering a sense of belonging among the descendants of Abraham and Jacob. The passage underscores the significance of these miracles as a testament to God's power and decisions, serving as a source of strength and happiness for those who seek the Lord. This focus on miracles is central to understanding the divine interventions and wonders recorded in the Old Testament.

What is a miracle?

According to the Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible, a miracle is an event that seems to defy nature, often seen as a way God reveals himself. However, many biblical miracles use natural phenomena [events, experiences, or wonders]. **Faith** is key to recognizing miracles, as they cannot be proven or disproven purely by logic. In the Bible, terms like "**sign**," "**wonder**," "**power**," and "**work**" describe miracles, highlighting different aspects. In the Old Testament, miracles are acts of God linked to key historical events, like the Exodus. In the Gospel of John, miracles are "**signs**" showing Jesus' true nature, requiring faith to grasp their full meaning.

The Old Testament contains over 80 miracles. However, we will explore those that highlight themes like the power and purpose of miracles in conveying divine messages and meeting human needs. These miracles reveal God's character and His commitment to His people.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the context of the Old Testament, miracles served several purposes.

They were often seen as manifestations of God's power and presence, reinforcing His authority and covenant with His people.

Miracles acted as signs to validate the messages of prophets and leaders, such as Moses and Elijah, and to demonstrate God's intervention in human affairs. They also provided deliverance and protection, as seen in events like the parting of the Red Sea or the provision of manna in the desert.

The impact of these miracles on the faith of the people was significant. They strengthened belief in God's sovereignty and faithfulness, encouraging trust and obedience among the Israelites.

However, the response to miracles was not always uniform; while some were led to deeper faith, others remained skeptical or quickly forgot the divine acts, leading to cycles of faithfulness and rebellion.

Overall, miracles were pivotal [essential, key, crucial, fundamental, critical, central, vital] in shaping the religious and cultural identity of the Israelite community.

Several miracles in the Old Testament demonstrate God's might, convey messages to humanity, and meet human needs. They include miraculous manifestations, powerful plagues, and partings, serving as divine direction and deliverance. Miracles also provide for human needs through events like the multiplication of manna and several miraculous conceptions.

EXPLORING THE TEXT

Proclaim praises, publicize his powerful presence. (Psalm 105:1-2)

¹*Give thanks to the Lord and pray to him.*

Tell the nations what he has done.

²*Sing to him; sing praises to him.*

Tell about all his [miracles].

I. The Power of Miracles (Manifestation of God's Might)

A. **Miraculous Manifestations:** Miraculous events in scriptures highlight God's might:

- the **creation** of the cosmos (Genesis 1:1-27) – powerfully speaking the universe into existence
- the **flood** (Genesis chapters 7 and 8) – control over nature

B. **Powerful Plagues and Partings:**

Demonstrates supernatural and divine dominance over nature and nations.

- **The 10 plagues of Egypt** (Exodus chapters 7-12)
 - Water Turned to Blood (Exodus 7:14-24)
 - Frogs (Exodus 8:1-15)
 - Gnats or Lice (Exodus 8:16-19)
 - Flies (Exodus 8:20-32)
 - Death of Livestock (Exodus 9:1-7)
 - Boils (Exodus 9:8-12)
 - Hail (Exodus 9:13-35)
 - Locusts (Exodus 10:1-20)
 - Darkness (Exodus 10:21-29)
 - Death of the Firstborn (Exodus 11:1-12:30)

- The **parting of the Red Sea** (Exodus 14)

C. Supernatural Safeguards:

Three supernatural events demonstrate God's power, control, and protection:

- sending fire to consume Elijah's sacrifice [1 Kings 18:38 (see 19-40)]
- protecting Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 6:16-23)
- saving three Hebrew boys in a fiery furnace (Daniel 3:19-27)

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is a miracle according to the Bible?

2. What is key to recognizing miracles?

EXPLORING THE TEXT

Sing and seek: Sing songs, seek strength, stay steadfast. (*Psalms 105:3-4*)

³ *Be glad that you are his;
let those who seek the Lord be happy.*
⁴ *Depend on the Lord and his strength;
always go to him for help.*

II. The Purpose of Miracles (Messages for Mankind)

God performs miracles to demonstrate His power, authority, and faithfulness, leading people to acknowledge and trust in Him. These acts serve to confirm His presence, deliverance, and protection, encouraging reverence and belief in His promises.

A. Divine Direction:

The fire and cloud and burning bush stories from Exodus symbolize God's presence and guidance.

- The Burning Bush was not consumed before Moses (Exodus 3:1-4)
- The fire by day showed God's holiness and power, while the Pillar of cloud represents mystery and protection. Together, they highlight God's greatness and constant presence in the universe (Exodus 13:21-22).

B. Fire and Faith:

Miracles like the fire from heaven during Elijah's challenge, affirm God's truth, leading people to faith.

- The miracle of the fire during Elijah's challenge confirmed God as the true God by demonstrating His power in a direct and undeniable way. Elijah called upon God to send fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice, which He did, despite the altar being drenched in water. This miraculous event proved God's supremacy over the prophets of Baal, whose god failed to respond. Witnessing this, the people recognized the power and reality of the God of Israel, leading them to proclaim, "The Lord, He is God!" This public demonstration of divine power **reinforced their faith and commitment to God.**

C. Deliverance and Devotion:

- Acts of deliverance, such as the Joshua crossing the Jordan (Joshua 3:14-17), and stopping the sun and moon for the Israelites (Joshua 10:12-14) inspire trust and devotion to God's promises.
- These miracles demonstrated God's power and faithfulness, reinforcing trust and devotion among the people. These acts also served as tangible evidence of God's ability to protect and guide them, fulfilling His promises and ensuring their safe passage. Witnessing such extraordinary events firsthand strengthened their belief in God's commitment to their well-being and His overarching plan for their future.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

3. What did God use as “divine direction” or guide for the Israelites?

4. Can you identify a specific miracle from the Old Testament that resonates with you personally, and why does it stand out to you?

EXPLORING THE TEXT

Remember and rejoice: Remember remarkable miracles, rejoice in his righteous reign. (*Psalms 105:5-6*)

⁵ *Remember the [miracles] he has done;
remember his wonders and his decisions.*

⁶ *You are descendants of his servant Abraham,
the children of Jacob, his chosen people.*

III. The Provision of Miracles (Meeting Human Needs)

A. Miraculous Manna and Multiplication:

God showed His ability to sustain life. Several Old Testament scriptures highlight instances where God performs miracles to provide for human needs and desires.

- God sustains the Israelites with manna and quail in the desert, demonstrating His ability to sustain life (Exodus 16).
- God also provides water from a rock in Rephidim (Exodus 17:1-7).

B. Plentiful and Potable Provisions for Paupers:

God's supply is infinite (Philippians 4:19).

- A widow's flour and oil miraculously do not run out during a famine (1 Kings 17:8-16).
- Elisha multiplies a widow's oil, allowing her to pay her debts and live on the rest (2 Kings 4:1-7).
- Elisha purified the brackish [salty, briny] water of a spring in Jericho, which remains a significant fresh-water source today (2 Kings 2:20-22).
- Elisha feeds a hundred men with limited food, leaving leftovers (2 Kings 4:42-44).

C. Miraculous Conceptions: Barren women conceive through divine intervention, fulfilling desires for children and continuation of promised blessings. In the Old Testament, several women barren in their younger years, later miraculously conceived and gave birth to children:

- **Sarah**, the wife of **Abraham** was barren until God promised Abraham that she would bear a son, Isaac, in her old age (Genesis 17:15-19; 21:1-3). Sarah was unable to have children for many years. Despite her old age, God promised Abraham that Sarah would bear a son. This promise was fulfilled when she miraculously gave birth to Isaac.
- **Rebekah**, the wife of **Isaac** was barren until Isaac prayed to God, and she conceived twins, Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:21-26). In the biblical context, Rebekah's barrenness is significant as it highlights the theme of divine intervention in the lives of the patriarchs and matriarchs. This narrative underscores the importance of faith and prayer in overcoming obstacles and fulfilling God's promises.

- **Rachel** the wife of **Jacob** was initially barren but later conceived Joseph after God remembered her (Genesis 30:1-2, 22-24). God remembered Rachel by granting her the ability to conceive a child. Rachel had been barren, and her longing for children was profound. Her husband, Jacob, loved her deeply, but she was envious of her sister Leah, who had already borne several children. Rachel's plea to God was heartfelt, and in response to her prayers and her situation, God opened her womb. This act of divine intervention allowed Rachel to give birth to Joseph, who would later become a significant figure in the history of Israel. God's remembrance of Rachel highlights His compassion and ability to fulfill personal desires and needs through miraculous means.
- **Hannah**, the wife of **Elkanah** was barren and prayed earnestly to God, who granted her a son, Samuel (1 Samuel 1:1-20). Hannah was blessed with a child after being barren because of her deep faith and earnest prayer. In the biblical narrative found in 1 Samuel 1, Hannah was deeply distressed by her inability to have children and prayed fervently to God, promising that if He granted her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord's service. God heard her prayer and blessed her with a son, Samuel, who would go on to become a significant prophet in Israel. This story highlights themes of faith, perseverance, and the power of prayer.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

5. What did the psalm writer tell Israel to remember? (Psalm 105:5-7)

6. What was a common act that caused barren women in the Old Testament to conceive?

Life Application

- What does remembering God's goodness motivate you to do?
- How do you plan to respond to God's faithfulness to you this week?

Resources:

Adam Clarke's Commentary
 Adult LessonMaker Questions [LOGOS]
 Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible [LOGOS]
 The Moody Handbook Theology
 LOGOS Bible Software

