

This week we will study a series of Christ's miracles.

Please read the following texts:

Matthew - 9:18-26, 9:27-34, 9:1-8

Mark – 5:21-43, 2:1-12

Luke – 8:40-56, 5:17-26

Pre lesson questions:

Why do you think Christ performed healing miracles?

Can you see any consistent themes across the miracles of Christ's we find in the gospels.?

What are your thoughts on miracles? Were they purely good things or could they have been problematic for Jesus?

How big a role did faith play in Christ's power to perform miracles?

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The term Son of Man appears again in the texts for this week with great significance. Consider the meaning of this phrase. Compare its usage throughout the Torah and the Prophets. Also compare its usage throughout the Old Testament with that of the New Testament.

Study the usage of the term Son of Man in the book of Daniel and compare it with the rest of the Old Testament, does anything strike you about its usage in the book of Daniel?

When Jesus calls himself the Son of man in Matthew 9:6 which definition is he using? That of the book of Daniel or that found in the majority of the rest of the Old Testament? What do you think and why? Justify your answer.

Finally, is it important that we understand what Christ is saying here, and why? Again, justify your answer.

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Why do you think Christ performed healing miracles? & What are your thoughts on miracles? Were they purely good things or could they have been problematic for Jesus?

If Christ heals one paralyzed person, it would be expected for him to heal others as we see in the story.

Of course Jesus cared and healed out of compassion but Christ used his miracles as part of his teaching. In most occasions we read where Christ healed someone, he healed to emphasise the points he is teaching, not to heal in of itself. As can be seen in the miracles covered this week, the miracle is somewhat a prop for the wider message Christ is teaching. But this we will look into later on.

How do you picture the scene leading up to Jesus healing the paralysed man?

It was common practice that people would crowd houses to listen to Rabbi,

It would have taken hours to dig through the roof,

Christ the Rabbi would have been sitting teaching whilst pieces were falling from the roof

Given that it would have taken hours to dig through the roof and that this would have been a distraction to those trying to listen to Jesus, why do you think no one stopped those digging?

What do you think Jesus was teaching on???

We can get a good idea of what Christ was teaching by what he said to the paralyzed man

What was Christ's first words to the paralyzed man?

It is reasonable to conclude that Christ was teaching on forgiveness and who he is and uses this event to perfectly emphasise the point he is making.

But what is the response of his audience and why do they respond in this manner?

Only God could forgive sins, this apparent blasphemy was consistent theme throughout Christ's ministry and has been discussed previous as can be seen in the Lord's prayer during the sermon on the mount where Christ' introduces humanity's involvement in forgiveness.

**Christ's response.** Matthew 9:6 - But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home."

What do you think he is saying?

Son of man has power to forgive sins.

What is your understanding of this phrase 'Son of Man'?

The common usage of son of man throughout much of Israelite history was 'just a man' ('son of Adam') as can be seen in the creation story. This meaning would have been handed down for generations until a new meaning was introduced in the prophets, finally culminating in its use to describe Christ used in Daniel and the New Testament.

Did anyone come across any interesting differences regarding how this term is used in throughout the Torah and the prophets?

The usage of the term 'son of man' differs significantly (rather uniquely) in the book of Daniel to that of much of the Torah and the prophets.

There is overwhelming consensus that the book of Daniel was relatively recently written at the time of Christ. The Israelites had learned the errors of turning away from God which caused the Babylonian exile and were trying to walk the path correctly and yet still were under the power of the Greeks and then Romans, so the Israelite seers during this time were asking the question why? Why is this still happening? So, they studied diligently and came upon the first person to ever be punished/ tragedy befall for doing good.

Can anyone tell me who this was?

Abel, son of man, literally meant son of Adam. The Israelite seers concluded that Abel would return, Abel would return in the clouds and bring justice, correcting all the injustice suffered which has ever been done for doing the right thing. Abel would bring judgement.

And so arose the book of Daniel. Not some prophetic tale of future events yet to come as is taught within Adventism. But instead, a symbolic tale of hope, describing the days of past events of Israel, with a message that times are tough under the romans but look at all we have endured in the past, and look how God has pulled us through. Daniel is a book detailing past events, with a central chiasm of future hope through 'the son of man'. This view of the book of Daniel may come as shock to some but this is the commonly accepted interpretation with overwhelming scholastic consensus.

This relatively new book of Daniel that everyone would had been trying to understand and then waiting for their understanding of events to unfold, Christ is saying is about me, Daniel 7:13 portrays one like a son of man coming to the Ancient of days where he is given dominion and glory and a kingdom. His dominion is described as a dominion that will last very long,<sup>4</sup> and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed (Dn 7:14). Christ is saying "I am the son of man", but I have not come to judge but to forgive. Christ the Rabbi here is introducing something so revolutionary; no one had the audacity before Christ to suggest Abel coming back, looking Cain in the eyes and saying I forgive you. All Israel was waiting for

a judge to come bringing judgement, but Christ is saying: 'that is not what God is about. He is about forgiveness; He is about love.'

Can we have any idea how Christ's audience took this teaching of his?

**Matthew 9:8** – "When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to man."

Their awe at the **authority** given to the son of man for the forgiveness of sins keeps in with this theme and is constant with Christ's teaching surrounding the Lord's prayer; where mankind's involvement in the forgiveness of sin's is first introduced.

But this we are yet to come to, what about faith and the role of faith in forgiveness.

On many occasions Christ said 'your faith has made you well?', what did he mean by this?

In three Bible passages, Jesus healed people and told them "Your faith has made you well." He healed 10 lepers (Luke 17:11-19), the woman with the bleeding issue (Matthew 9:20-22), and a blind man (Mark 10:46-52).

In some versions of the Bible, the word "well" is translated as "whole." But the word "well" in each of the three passages I mentioned previously is the same word translated in John 3:16-17. "to save". The story of the woman with the heavy bleeding being one of them, but this story we shall get to soon.

Firstly, let's go back to the story of the paralytic.

It was not the paralytic's faith that Christ commends but his friends. Jesus said because of their faith he healed the man????? Nothing about the paralytic's faith only his friends. **It was his friend's faith that made him well? What are we to make of this?**

I have heard it said many times that Christ could not perform miracles due to a lack of faith in those around him (his hometown being the usual example). **How important was faith in the miracles of Christ do you think?**

**Can anyone think of an occasion where faith played no role in a miracle performed by Christ?**

what about john 5:1-11 for example, with the scene of the disabled man at the pool of Bethesda, where multitudes gathered to be healed, but Jesus chose only one man to heal

not the multitudes of sick at the pool. His is an interesting case. Jesus asked the man if he wanted to be made well. His answer was steeped in superstition: there was no one to carry him to the pool, and he wasn't fast enough to get into the water at the right time.

This confused and needy man was healed by God's grace. He had no faith in Jesus; he didn't even know it was Jesus who had healed him until later (John 5:12–13). And yet God healed him anyway, suggesting that a lack of faith is irrelevant in healing and Christ's power to perform miracles.

An interesting study would be why Christ healed this one faithless man only, despite all the other sick and needy all around him, but this is a study for another time.

For now, let's return to the sick woman with the bleeding disorder. Christ points out her faith but what exactly was her demonstration of faith?

Why did the sick woman touch the edge of Jesus' cloak? Why not just ask for healing?

**Numbers 15** -<sup>37</sup> *The LORD said to Moses, <sup>38</sup> "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. <sup>39</sup> You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the LORD, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by chasing after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes. <sup>40</sup> Then you will remember to obey all my commands and will be consecrated to your God. <sup>41</sup> I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD your God."*

**1st Samuel 24** - <sup>4</sup>*Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe. <sup>5</sup> Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. <sup>6</sup> He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the LORD."*

Why was David so conscience-stricken after cutting the corner of Saul's robe?

Cutting off the tassel was an Israelite way to make a point to Saul that he was not being obedient to God. But at the same time that tassel represents God's wings, God's protection over Saul. David came to the realisation of 'who is he to cut off God's protection over Saul, regardless of the misdeeds Saul has done it is not David's place to remove God's protection from Saul.

Considering this, can anyone think of what was so significant about the woman touching Christ's robe?

Let me read you Malachi 4:1-2

***“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. <sup>2</sup> But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.”***

Malachi 4:2... (ESV wings KanaFOE-T version)

Can you draw anything from this passage connecting to the story of the sick woman? Or more so what she understood this passage to mean?

***“the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.”*** Healing in his wings (KanaFOE-T), essentially the prophecy is saying that the messiah will come with healing in his tassels (zeet-ze-auch).

The woman knew who Christ was and this is why she reached out and touched his (zeet-ze-auch) allowing her to be healed. Christ stopped and asked the seemingly strange question who touched me? He was amongst a crowd of people with many people touching him, but he immediately knew one of these people knew the scriptures and understood who he truly was. She had not only exemplary faith but exemplary knowledge also.

There is so much depth within this story, with how a woman who was unclean for the last 12 years and therefore in social and religious isolation, unable to frequent the synagogue and study the scriptures managed to gain such wisdom, Never mind that this unclean woman had the audacity to push through crowds of people to get to Jesus. Such a story fits in perfectly with the mumzar agenda of Matthew.

but we do not have the time to do this story justice so let’s now move on to the story of the blind men.

Can someone please read Matt 9:27&28.

Jesus ducked inside away from crowds in order to heal the blind men. Deliberately not making a public spectacle.

Matthew describes the two blind men following Jesus, crying and pleading with him, but Jesus did not heal them until they followed him into the house. Why do you think this was?

What about after Christ had healed the men. Why did Christ tell the blind men not to tell anyone about the healing in contrast to the demoniacs in the Decapolis where he instructed that the miracle should be spread?

Location, unlike in the Decapolis, Jesus was surrounded by religious people with religious baggage, accusations that his power was from demons is a prime example of this. Perhaps it would have led to more hassle for Jesus than benefit at that time and place?

We have already discussed how Christ's miracles of healing were not done for the sake of healing but in conjunction with his teachings. Despite his love and compassion Christ could not have healed everyone, so instead he used certain occasions to use miracles as a tool to proclaim his message. Do you think something similar applies to miracles today?

Given this and that we cannot appeal to Christ in person or pull on his zeet-ze-auch, should what we have discussed effect how we pray and our requests to God for healing?