

Introduction: As we pause to celebrate Christ's Resurrection, it may come as a surprise that we are focusing on *more miracles than just the Resurrection* in this week's Bible notes, when it is Christ's empty tomb that is the focus of this season. But from the moment God stepped on the scene at the creation of the world, bringing His supernatural power to bear on the world of men, *all* God's miraculous works have displayed the same power which raised Christ from the dead. May we profit, therefore, from the study of all the miracles which God has used to bring about our salvation.

Monday: read Matthew 1:16 and Luke 3:23, 31 & 3:38. We must begin at every Christ-centered holiday with God's Son coming in human flesh. In Matthew, this miracle is testified to by a genealogy traced to Solomon, David's younger son who succeeded him. Joseph descended from this royal line, (Mt. 1:6,7), and married Mary according to Mt. 1:16. On the other hand, Luke's genealogy begins with a looser tie-in between Joseph and Jesus' ancestors. Instead of using Matthew's strict word, "begat" to point to a "father-son" genealogy, Luke speaks of Joseph in a way that could be translated, "son-in-law." He was the "son-in-law" of Heli, Mary's father in Lk.3:23, who was descended in turn *not* from Solomon but from an older son of David, Nathan, (Lk.3:31). This was Mary's line, the legal line of the elder son of David; the physical flesh and blood line. Solomon as the younger brother was the adopted royal line which God chose in grace, to rule after David instead of Nathan or any other older brothers. How wonderful, therefore, that we can trace both Jesus' blood lineage through Mary and His royal line through Joseph! In every way, therefore, the Son of God truly became our royal Savior, the Son of David!

Meditate and Pray: Lord, thank you for your real ties to our human nature. You are the Son of Mary, with her flesh and blood as your own. How wonderful that you were not ashamed to take the very nature of fallen Adam, so that men and women everywhere; from every generation all the way back to our first parents, could call upon your Name as their Savior and Elder Brother – even if they had no claim to Judah, Jerusalem, or to the Throne of David. Sing about the miracle of this Incarnation in this great Easter hymn by Charles Wesley:

*Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!*

*Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!*

Tuesday: read Mark 1:1-13. Mark's Gospel does not begin with an account of the birth or "Incarnation" of Christ. Does this contradict C.S. Lewis' emphasis on the Incarnation as "The Grand Miracle" which gives meaning and purpose to all the other miracles in the Bible? - not if you see the way Mark actually describes that *same* coming of God's Son to earth – not as the birth of a baby, but as the coming of a victorious King marching through the wilderness, (Mk. 1:1-2).

According to Mark, the Son of God did not come to earth merely to be born, but to actually *invade* our world and take up permanent residence here! The "Good News" God declares is that He has sent His Son and has sent His prophets to prepare the way for Him. No wonder the Father triumphantly declares in Mk. 1:11: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Meditate and Pray: Thank God for the reality of "The Grand Miracle" of the coming of Jesus Christ into our world – to stay. He has joined our sad, ragged regiment as the new Captain of our Salvation. And isn't this what lay behind the joy of Christ's disciples when they saw their beloved Savior raised from the dead? Jesus insisted, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see," (Lk. 24:38-39). Christ wanted them to see that not even Hell and Death and the Cross could sever the bond of humanity which He shared with them and shares with us! How do the last verses of Hymn #463 in our Red Trinity Hymnal put it?

*The work which His goodness began, the arm of His strength will complete;
His promise is Yea and Amen, and never was forfeited yet.
Things future, nor things that are now, nor all things below or above,
Can make Him His purpose forgo, or sever my soul from His love.*

*My name from the palms of His hands eternity will not erase;
Impressed on His heart it remains, in marks of indelible grace.
Yes, I to the end shall endure, as sure as the earnest is giv'n;
More happy, but not more secure, the glorified spirits in Heav'n.*

Wednesday: read Luke 4:16-19 and Luke 10:21. C.S. Lewis points out how Christ came into this world to transform life, writing of His sustained commitment to living among men in order to save them, with these words: *The central miracle asserted by Christians is...that God became Man...There is no question in Christianity of arbitrary interferences just scattered about. Christianity relates not a series of disconnected raids on Nature but the various steps of a strategically coherent invasion – an invasion which intends complete conquest and “occupation.”*

Jesus announced this invasion in Luke 4:16-19 and rejoiced in its success in Luke 10:21. And who were the objects of Christ's conquering joy and saving grace? Answer: “The poor, imprisoned, blind and oppressed,” (Lk. 4:18): All those, in other words, most in need of God's favor because of their lowly status and hopeless condition. Look at how Christ succeeded in every chapter of the Gospels, finding the outcasts, lepers, demon-possessed, beggars and the sickest of men: All proof of His willingness to “take up our infirmities and carry our diseases,” (Mt. 8:17).

Meditate and Pray: Thank Jesus that His miracles show that His coming was no impersonal, “random campaign of deeds of kindness.” In all His miracles, Christ communicated to lost sinners: *I care. I know better than you what you need. Don't be afraid, let me touch your running sore and disease. I can identify with just your kind of problem by not only healing, but forgiving you.* What a Savior! No wonder each miracle in the Gospels is different, tailored specifically to the situation of each individual sinner! Jesus came to dwell among us, and understands us more than we understand ourselves!

Thursday: read Exodus 3:19-20 and 21:5-6. How it should increase our appreciation for God's miraculous grace shown *to us* when we realize that miracles can also serve as weapons against the unbelief of God's enemies. Miracles can coerce and intimidate, as God did Pharaoh in Exodus 3:19-20, compelling him in the end to “let His people go.” In the same way as God was able to move the stony heart of Pharaoh, God can miraculously use even the stones of the temple to testify to His justice. Why, it was absolutely unthinkable to the disciples that the magnificent stones and workmanship of Herod's temple, which they admire in Luke 21:5, (and which took 80 years to complete), would ever be destroyed, leaving “not one stone on another,” (Lk. 21:6). Yet, that is the miraculous power of God to punish those who reject His Son.

Meditate and Pray: How much we owe to God's miraculous grace in our lives, and how we should magnify our salvation, especially when we consider the end of the wicked, described for us in Hymn # 545 by Robert Murray McCheyne:

*When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon glaring sun,
When we stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.*

*When I hear the wicked call
On the rocks and hills to fall,
When I see them start and shrink
On the fiery deluge brink,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.*

Friday: read Matthew 26:39-56. Our Lord Jesus' might is not only in the wonders He performs to save sinners. It is also revealed in what He was willing to endure by *refusing to do miracles that would save Him from the Cross*. As Jesus said to the one who sought to defend Him with a sword, when Judas arrived to betray Him in Matt. 26:53: "Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and He will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" Is not this *refusal* to call to His Father for miraculous intervention proof of the Son of God's commitment to save us? He was willing to drink the cup of our punishment for sin, (Matt. 26:39), "to the dregs," without saving Himself as He had saved so many others! In a real sense, there were no miracles for Jesus in the darkness of the Garden of Gethsamane; no effort on the Son of God's part to protect Himself from the suffering ordained for Him. Yes, an angel appeared to strengthen Him in the Garden, (Lk. 22:43), but only so that He could bear *more* suffering for our sins - not less!

Meditate and Pray: "Lord, help us by faith to discern your greatest glory on display in the truly human sufferings of your Son. His soul was indeed "overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," (Matt. 26:38), precisely because He took no supernatural shortcut to avoid suffering for our sakes. There were no miracles to keep Him from falling to the ground and sweating blood. See Him open His bosom to embrace all the affliction, misery and guilt from which we long to be rescued! What a Savior! Sing about Him in hymn # 257 in our Red Trinity Hymnals.

*Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
See him dying on the tree!
This is Christ, by man rejected;
Here, my soul, your Savior see.
He's the long expected prophet,
David's son, yet David's Lord.
Proofs I see sufficient of it:
He's the true and faithful Word.*

*Tell me, all who hear him groaning,
Was there ever grief like this?
Friends through fear his cause disowning, Foes
insulting his distress;
Many hands were raised to wound him,
None would intervene to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced him
Was the stroke that Justice gave*

Words to ponder: "It was no miracle that Christ should preach powerfully, since He Himself is the Truth. It was no miracle that He should live among us, since He Himself is the Life. It was no miracle that He should rise from the dead, since He Himself is the Resurrection. But that Christ, an everlasting Being, should *die*, and die the Just for the unjust to bring us to God, *this* is miracle. The death that He died was the death of deaths; it was the second death – death under sin. He *savored* this, in all its horror and obscenity and blasphemy against God, and in thus tasting it without sin drew its sting forever." Rev. Tom Swanston, [Death with a Steady Eye](#).