

The Miracles of Christ - The Miracle of Fish

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[0 : 0 0] First of all, to Luke's Gospel, Chapter 4. And while you were turning there, let me give you a little bit of background regarding this miracle that we're going to be undertaking, which is the miracle of the miraculous draft of fish caught early on in the earthly ministry of our Lord, shortly after He'd called not all twelve, but some of His disciples.

He's got about four or five on board at this point in time. We'll be looking at that. But one of the things that I want to stress that I found with a brand new appreciation in my preparation for this particular study is the nuances and differences recorded in the Gospels, all of which, of course, are under divine inspiration, but you've got to realize that each of these Gospel writers wrote from a little different perspective.

And we've already made the point, I think, about John's Gospel, how that it really is radically different in its objective and the things that it emphasizes from the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

And they are called synoptic simply because of the word. S-Y-N is part of the word from which we get the word synonym, which means another word that is the same of.

And then optic has to do with seeing, like opticians and optical, etc. So you put synoptic together. And it simply means Matthew, Mark, and Luke kind of see things together, see things the same way.

[1 : 4 6] That's why they're called synoptics. They emphasize on the same things, but each one with a little different twist so that they are similar, and yet they have their differences, their nuances.

So each one is emphasizing something different. And when you read the Gospels, if you do not take that into consideration, you may very well come up with what appears to be, at least on the surface, a contradiction.

It says this here, but it says this here. What's going on? And it is not in just reading the Gospels that you're going to pick up on it. You've got to study the Gospels.

You've got to give some concentrated time to them. And when you do, you come to some remarkable new conclusions. And I personally have experienced that in connection with this miracle that we're going to look at now.

And the thing that I found most fascinating is that Jesus, time-wise, Jesus is going to begin this whole thing that we're going to be talking about with His baptism.

[2 : 5 5] And that is so critical because in the Levitical priesthood, which our Lord did not belong to, for it is evident our Lord spoke out, our Lord rose out of Judah, not Levi.

So He was still a priest, but as we pointed out, He was a priest of a different order. He was after the order of Melchizedek, and not after the order of Levi and Aaron, as were the other priests.

And when a priest was 30 years of age, or a man who was 30 years of age, that's the time he was inducted into the priesthood. We know that John the Baptist was the second cousin of Jesus because his mother, Elizabeth, and the mother of our Lord, Mary, were first cousins.

And we know that when Mary heard the word from the angel about her pregnancy, she went to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, and stayed with her for some months.

And when she got there, Elizabeth was already six months pregnant, and Mary had just conceived. So they are comparing notes, and this is a remarkable account where Elizabeth says that when Mary made the announcement and told Elizabeth what was going on, that the baby in her womb leaped.

[4 : 25] And we look at that, and we say, wait a minute now, what is this about? Well, all I can say is, for the Spirit of God to include that in the record, has to have some significance.

Nothing is in the Bible for nothing. Everything means something. We often sometimes don't see what it is. We don't make the connection. That doesn't mean there isn't one. So I was always a little bit fascinated about the babe leaping in her womb, and it's already six months alone.

And interestingly enough, John is, when he baptizes Jesus, it's going to be quite remarkable.

This whole scene with John the Baptist and Jesus is really extraordinary, because one of the things John is going to say is that Jesus is preferred before me, for he was before me.

No, he wasn't. He was six months behind him. He wasn't before him. But in his pre-incarnation, in his deity, he was before him.

[5 : 43] I don't know, I'm not at all convinced that John understood or knew what he was talking about. But he said that. He said that. I'm not at all sure that he said it with the idea that actually he was before me because he was the Son of God before he was born of Mary, and he was...

I don't think John understood that at all, because John's later going to have a great lapse of faith, remember? He's going to wonder whether Jesus was even the Messiah after he had already introduced him as the Messiah and said, that's the main purpose that I've come baptizing, that I might introduce him to Israel.

So, then he's going to have this time of tremendous doubt because this thing does not appear to be going to plan. And what's going on here? Remember, he sent his disciples to ask him about if he was the one that should come or are we looking for another and this whole thing, a big mistake.

But anyway, the frame I want to mention is that then John is apparently six months into his ministry and he is baptizing as a priest, preaching the baptism of repentance, kingdom of heaven is at hand, etc.

Then along comes Jesus and he is baptized and you know how he's going to refuse to baptize him at first and then Jesus is going to...

[7 : 06] because actually, Jesus was never baptized for the same reason that everybody else was. Everybody else's baptism was in connection for repentance and the remission of sins.

But Jesus didn't qualify because he wasn't a sinner. And I don't know exactly how much John knew about all of this, but John refused initially to baptize him.

And he said, I'm not going to do that. I can't do that. And Jesus said, suffer it now to be so. Allow it now to be so because it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness. And scholars, I think, have rightly concluded that the only reason Jesus submitted to John's baptism was that that was what was being required of obedient, responsive Jews to John's message.

And Jesus did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it and he kept it in every regard and in his submitting to John's baptism, he was also identifying himself with that believing remnant of Israel who anticipated the coming of that kingdom.

So, what we've got is a situation like this, time-wise, if I can just run this by you and then we'll look at the text. Jesus is baptized by John then, time-wise, immediately following, he is led into the wilderness for the temptation that's going to last, you might as well say six weeks.

[8 : 43] It's going to be 40 days. Six weeks. And during that time, of course, publicly speaking, he's out of commission. He's in the wilderness with the adversary.

Then, at the end of that period of time, he comes back to John where John is continuing his ministry and it is then that John will identify Jesus as the Messiah and give that word that this is the one of whom I spoke who comes after me, etc.

And he identifies him as the Lamb of God. And then, when this is taking place, just a couple of disciples, one of whom will be Andrew, is a disciple of John and he is there when Jesus is there and John is identifying him as the Messiah and Andrew latches on to him.

And then, the next thing Andrew does is he finds his brother and that's Peter and he tells him we found the Messiah. So, this discipleship thing is going to grow incrementally and a few disciples are going to be added each time.

And I was always a little fascinated and I thought, wait a minute, how does this work? Because Jesus was walking along the seashore and he came upon the fellows who were washing their nets, cleaning and getting ready to go out.

[10 : 20] And Jesus says, follow me. And they just leave everything and follow him. And I thought, well, that's really strange. What's going on here? And what's going on here is this was not their initial encounter with Jesus.

They knew him from weeks before. And what is taking place is not, Jesus is not walking by there as some stranger and in some mysterious way casts a spell over these men and says, follow me.

And they, kind of like zombies, say, yes, master. And they just begin following automatically. Nothing like that at all. They had a familiarity with him and Jesus is putting together his team.

And it's going to consist of 12 disciples who are going to be promoted in rank to apostles and they are going to be given supernatural powers just like Jesus had.

He will impart them to him. So this is a fascinating thing. When you see the chronology of it and how all of this comes together, one of the best things you can do when you read the scriptures, ask questions.

[11 : 36] Ask questions. How? Who? When? Why? Where? You would be surprised how many times you can come up with an answer and guess what? It fits like a hand in a glove.

And you say, oh, well, now then that explains that. Well, now that fits that. It all comes together. And there is a special blessing involved for those who dig into it and see how these things come together.

It's remarkable. So let's go to Luke's Gospel, chapter 4 and get some of this underway. The temptation has taken place in chapter 4 and then when let's see the temptation begins in chapter 4 and verse 1 and we're going to conclude it in verse 14.

Verse 13 says the devil had finished every temptation and departed from him until an opportunity time. That means he'll be back. The adversary will not leave him. He'll be back.

And verse 14, Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit and news about him spread through all the surrounding district.

[12 : 56] Now, he's already been publicly identified by a number and he's building a reputation and everywhere he goes the crowds are increasing and we are told that he began teaching in their synagogues was praised by all.

He came to Nazareth and this is where he's going to have a set to with the people of Nazareth and the claims that he's going to make in connection with what he will be preaching and he brought down the ire of the home folks.

This is where he grew up upon his head simply because he made positive references to Gentiles and they didn't appreciate that and that's why they were going to actually they were going to do him in and the text is quite clear about that and then in verse 1 of chapter 5 we read it came about while the multitude were pressing around him and listening to the word of God he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret this is just another name for the sea of Galilee they're one in the same body but sometimes they're called Chenareth sometimes it's called Galilee Lake of Galilee and here it's called Lake Gennesaret but they're all same body of water keep that in mind and he saw two boats verse 2 lying at the edge of the lake but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets and he got into one of the boats which was

Simon's now he already knew Simon because Andrew had earlier introduced Jesus to Simon so he was not a stranger to him and he asked Simon to put out a little while from the land and he sat down and began teaching the multitudes from the boat from a practical standpoint all Jesus was doing was using this boat moved out a little bit from the shore as a pulpit as a speaking platform and the people were all lined up along the shore listening and we read in verse 4 when he had finished speaking he said to Simon this is of course Simon Peter put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch and I'm always amused by some of the things he says like this because he just speaks with such authority that this is a done deal he doesn't say well

Peter let's go out where it's a little deeper and maybe maybe you'll get something maybe they're out there no he already knows where they are there's no question involved let's just move out into the deeper water put down your nets and they're not going to come up empty for a catch now Peter and James and John and Andrew these guys are about as seasoned a fisherman as you're going to find I suspect that time and place in the Sea of Galilee I mean after all these guys were in the business this was a family business they had a cooperative going and the fishing thing was a big deal and I remember when I was there in 1990 and we were visiting this particular area in the Sea of Galilee and I was just absolutely floored at the size of the fish I don't know what kind of fish they were but I'm talking about the size of the fish Ron you would have loved it

[16 : 40] I mean these fish were these fish were like 1824 inches long and when we got off the boat where they were and came to the shore where they were processing the fish they had big tubs actually the tub was was about the size it was it was wooden it was about the size of this table like so and each of those were filled it was about a half a dozen of them each of them were filled with large fish from the most recent catch they just brought them in and I stood there looking and I said good night wow these are whoppers I mean the whole thing was full and they had about six or eight of and I turned to one of the fellows that works there and I said is this what is this really extraordinary or what and he said no he said just a typical night's catch they had them brought them in from fishing all night he said this is usual good night

I had no idea the sea of galilee is not an enormous lake but man it was a fisherman's paradise what they had in those and they were big fish too I mean a couple feet long and so that was just amazing so anyway Peter what Joe this is 1990 you said so they have been pulling fish out like this for hundreds of years well for a couple thousand years and this lake is still supplying and keeping them big well yeah well it was amazing I you know I just I was floored I had no idea that there were in that abundance and the guy shrugged his shoulders and he said no this is just a typical night's catch night good night this is amazing really something so when he tells yeah frankly I imagine they did but I don't know I didn't ask them or didn't go into that but I suspect they probably did they probably did

I can't imagine catching one at a time because this was a business you know I mean that was their livelihood just like it was 2000 years ago and when he says put out into the deep water let down your nets for a catch Simon answered and said and I'm going to inject something here I cannot read these passages without my imagination wandering a little bit and you know what I think Peter did I think he went maybe even rolled okay you know okay okay but under his breath he's saying they're not going to do any good he's a typical fisherman and he just and he has at this point in time he has no idea what they're really up against who this is and that's going to be an amazing revelation Simon answered and said master we worked hard all night which is another way of saying man we're tired you know we're bush and they were washing their nets and

I'm sure they were taking their good old time too and any kind of size okay you say so in other words you think he wants me to do that so I'm going to humor him I'm going to do what he says you know and and when they done this they enclosed a great quantity of fish they didn't just catch some fish I mean it was a great quantity for these guys to be surprised at the size of a catch would really be something because they've been doing this for years this was their business but this catch is going to overwhelm them and it is something they are not prepared for this is not going to be an average catch great quantity of fish and their nets began to break now there's another boat there probably belongs to the same business same configuration and we are told that they signaled to their partners in the other boat hey come on over here and help us man we can't handle these get over here and these guys are saying what do you see he said get over there something is going on so they get in the other guys in the other boat they start making their way over to them and we read they came and filled both of the boats so that they began to sink in danger going on this is what you call a catch and when

Simon Peter saw that he fell down at Jesus feet saying depart from me for I am a sinful man oh Lord things are beginning to dawn on Peter he's got to be asking himself the question what is this who is this I mean I've been fishing this lake for never seen anything like this and he said to put out here in the deep for a cat how do you know that what is going on Peter is stunned and all he knows is this whatever whoever this guy is he is out of my league

[22 : 36] I feel mighty uncomfortable just being here in his presence depart from me he is Peter is in shock this is not happening but it was happening amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken I think we can safely read into this that there had never been a catch like this I mean this was just over the top as experienced as they were and as many times as they drawn in their nets they never had anything like this and these guys are looking at each other and they're saying can you believe this what's going on here what wow and they say just keep pulling on that net and the boats are wow it is it is really something just absolutely amazing because of the catch of fish which they had taken so also

James and John sons of Zebedee who were partners with Simon and don't forget Simon and Peter one and the same Jesus said to Simon don't be afraid don't fear from now on you will be catching men and they've got to be wondering what did he mean by that well we know what he meant by that because it's easy for us to read back into this we can see with great clarity and when they had brought their boats to land they left everything and followed him that was a pretty convincing recruitment act wasn't it I mean these guys are saying we don't know how that worked we don't know how he knew that we don't know what what is all

I know is I won't have any trouble following this guy I mean you talk about yeah follow me okay we sure don't have anything better to do than whatever more of this is this is this is just amazing and they are going to be amazed time and time again so what we've got here is nothing more than one more demonstration concerned so these disciples already have exposure to

Jesus and what he's capable of doing so when he came along and said to them follow me I don't think they had any reservations about it I think oh boy yay he's picking me yeah yeah I'll follow you and off they go it's kind of like being privileged to have been chosen and you all know what that's like from being a kid and choosing up teams on the baseball team or whatever it is and how good it makes you feel to be chosen and especially when you know that you're on a team that's a winning team I'm sorry well we know Peter was married because he had a mother in law you can't get a mother in law without a wife yeah you know they want that team because of the coach colleges hire a popular coach so they can get recruits that's true that's true and when you when you well many of you have been involved in sports and things like that and you know how critical a coach and his disposition and his attitude is

I mean there are coaches who have the ability to motivate people so that they will put out above and beyond their ability and there are coaches who are well liked even loved and and you see this in the military too where there was almost no limit in any of our major conflicts you know where you get a cohesive group behind a squad of men and you got a platoon leader and he has a bonding element with his men and there are men situations in combat where a man would go to hell and back for his commanding officer or for his sergeant or what not well that's kind of like the way Jesus was only better he had a way of instilling not only a love and a loyalty he had a magnetism to him he was an encourager and he was an understander he was everything and I tell you bottom line no other way to slice this we're talking about God in the flesh that's the most amazing thing about all of this this condensation whereby whereby the word the logos the essence of communication became flesh and took upon him the form of a human how else could he better communicate with fellow humans this great kenosis this coming down stepping down one of the most significant things that's ever happened in the history of the universe when God became man man and some critics and some atheists refuse to see this at all and one has actually written a book that was titled when man became

[29 : 34] God you see the point when man became God he's trying to say he wasn't God at all he was just a man but other men made a God out of him and pronounced him God that's the fact that some of the critics and some of the atheist types take and it's of course it's a reversal of when God became man they just turned no no no no God never became man it was man that became God because other men made him to be God or made him out to be God but he wasn't God he never was and that of course is a typical you know atheistic point of view regarding it so fellas once again everything hinges and I mean everything hinges upon the identity of this person if Jesus Christ was not who he claimed to be you've been sold a bill of goods you to understand that everything rises and falls on the identity of this person and I mean everything and the miracles that he performed were nothing more than justifiable reasons for people to come to the right conclusions and someone has said there are those there are none so blind as those who will not see well there are some who just will not see and and they are dealt with and do you know who they are they are the people of that generation and the only generation and the only collective group of people of whom it was ever said or ever will be said that they had committed the unpardonable sin for them there was no hope that was that present generation and for people who worry and fret and do today over thinking that they might have committed the unpardonable sin they don't even know what it is but they're afraid they've committed it

I can assure you on the authority of scripture that you didn't and that you couldn't we've got a kind of a counterpart if you want to think of it along that line in that your final ultimate rejection of Christ and dying in that state that leaves you in a state of unpardoned and there is no possibility for pardon later but in so far as having committed the unpardonable sin that Jesus is referring to those who sin against the son of man shall be forgiven and so on but those who sin against the spirit of God there is no forgiveness that's the unpardonable sin it's all tied together because these unbelieving Jews to whom Jesus was sent to begin with they had I mean the the opponents of Jesus I'm talking about the religious establishment consisting primarily of the Sadducees Pharisees high priests and those of that ilk they were already in a negative relationship with the father see before

Jesus and John ever came on the scene they were already way out of tune with the father and that's what led to their corruption and their collusion with the Romans and their being in bed with them and their interests against their own people over whom they ruled and reigned and they considered them as nothing they were already in a state of corruption and that is why Jesus spoke of them as these people honor God with their lips they go through the motions the ritual and all the rest but their heart is far from him hold it Joe and then he is going to present himself and they're going to be negative toward him and then when the spirit of God presents his case after the resurrection in the early chapters of the book of Acts they're opposed to him so they strike out with the father with the son and with the holy spirit that is the maximizing of their unbelief and they are consigned to that it is a sad sad group to be sure so the reason that they rejected

John the Baptist and this is the same crowd that rejected John remember when they sent a delegation out we've heard about this guy out in the wilderness he's wearing funny clothes he's preaching the king go find out about him so headquarters in the temple send a delegation to John and they say we've been sent by the authorities to find out who you are and what you're doing are you the Messiah and John says I am not well are you are you Elijah or one of the prophets nope I'm not any of those who are you so that we may know what to tell those who sent us who are you I'm a voice crying in the wilderness saying repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand that's my calling and they scratch their head and they go back and tell them and they say well he can't be anything or anyone because we didn't send him he's not under our auspices he can't possibly be legitimate and they rejected

John and John John said you generation of life you sons of snakes who warned you to flee from the wrath to come these people were in a negative mode with John because they were already in a negative mode with the God of heaven who sent John there was a man sent from God whose name was John and they rejected John and they rejected John's message and they rejected John's Messiah in rejecting John they were almost forced to reject the one that John recommended and identified because Jesus and John were in the same package they kind of went together so now they've rejected the father they've rejected John and they'll reject

[36 : 19] Jesus and this is really really significant guys this is really important there's a passage in John's gospel where Jesus said all that the father gives me shall come to me now follow me in order for the father to give disciples or people to the son the father had to have them in order to give them and he did he had believers some of whom probably were the apostles that Jesus is going to choose they were already in line with John because they were already in line with the father and then when Jesus came on the scene accepting and receiving him was not that difficult to do because they were in that acceptance mode and I know my

Calvinist friends say that this is election and that the father gave and I understand not only do I understand it but there was a time when I preached it and believed it but I don't anymore and I you surely can't use that text as a proof text for Calvinism or the principle of election and all it means is that the father gave them to Jesus because the father already had them they were already in a right old testament relationship with the father and that put them in a positive attitude for John and that put them in a positive attitude for Jesus and they were the first ones that signed on now of course there's a somewhat of an exception with Judas he was and by the way Judas was the only guy of the twelve that was not from Galilee all the rest of the apostles were from

Galilee Galilee of the Gentiles it was called because it abutted Gentile territory and I don't know I've often wondered you know Judas was from a town called Cario Judas Iscariot he was from the town of Cario and he had the name of Judas Iscariot and I've often wondered did he feel like he was an odd man out because he wasn't a Galilean or wasn't a fisherman or I wondered did the other guys treat him right did they they had problems among themselves you know these apostles were all but human and there was a time when Jesus was delivering a really serious thing about what was going to happen to him when they got to Jerusalem and James and John are arguing over who's going to be secretary of state and who's going to be this and who's going to be that while that's going on so these guys they were fully human they had their problems you know and Jesus rebuked them on a number of occasions for their attitude because they just demonstrated their humanity all over the place comments or questions anybody yeah

Roger oh my yeah yeah yeah excellent point Roger's talking about the Lord Jesus being who he was was willing to associate with and minister to fallen frail failing humans and put up with us for three and a half years yeah you're right yeah we don't I've often been I've often been curious about about the about the missing

I call call them missing they're missing to us the missing 18 years of Jesus life because the last thing we hear from him is he's 12 years old and he's at the age of the Jewish bar mitzvah and the bar mitzvah means that you become a son of the law that's your official introduction to adulthood the bar mitzvah the son of the law and a son of responsibility and girls go through the same thing it's called a bat bat mitzvah when a girl comes of age and that's the equivalent of the male bar mitzvah so that's about the age that Jesus was when he was dealing with the doctors of the law in the temple and they were traveling in a large caravan and his parents just assumed that Jesus was in the caravan with some of the other families some of the other boys you know how kids hang together and it was no different then than it is today and they have more in common and they play their games and their riddles and all the rest of it and then they find out that

[41 : 53] Jesus is not with them and when they find him we're told that he was 12 years of age and he was just befuddled the authorities that they're dealing with this 12 year old kid and they're saying who is this kid where does he get this stuff you know how does he know what's and they're amazed at his brilliance and his intelligence and then we've got 18 years of silence and we virtually know nothing about him authoritatively until John baptizes him in the wilderness didn't he just tell his parents that he was about his father's business and that what he said in the temple I mean what's he talking about well his parents were upset just like they would be with any kid he's practically a teenager you know and they rebuke him and they say you worried of sick where have you been what's going on here and Joseph chimes in and he says no way to treat your mother what's wrong and Jesus said

I had to be about my fathers in other words he's saying I have a priority that you're not aware of and then and then the text goes on to say and then he went on and was subject to them Jesus was obedient and we've got a case that was mentioned earlier where it says Mary pondered these things in her heart nobody can ponder over a kid like a mother and Mary is pondering thinking wondering what what is it this goes all the way back to the angel Gabriel you know and she's putting all of this together and she's trying to make sense of it and she's got her humanity to deal with and a lot of these things don't make sense but a lot is really causing her to wonder by that first miracle though she figured it out we know that first miracle she

I think I think you're right I we we just we just love to know what all she knew and when did she know it and and what about Jesus brothers because we know that they they didn't you know his family his brothers did not believe in him as being the Messiah and that's that text is quite clear and if you want to check that out I think you'll find it in Mark's Gospel chapter 3 where it said neither did his brethren believe in him that is apparently they did not believe him to be the Messiah and they're told Jesus is told that they your your mother and your family is without they're waiting to see you there's a huge crowd of people they would like to see you and Jesus turned to those he was talking to and he's my mother and my brother who who is my mother and my brethren my brethren my kin kinsmen are those who hear the word of God and do it they are my brethren and it was a beautiful thing just beautiful thing and it's a turning the water into wine when she came to

Jesus and said I'm running out of wine I'm having wine Jesus said so that's not my responsibility and it's as much as if she looked at him and said you know you could do something here and and then she she turns to him and and Jesus and and then she turns to the servants and said do whatever he tells you and then she leaves and she's thinking he's going to take care of this I don't know how or what he's going to do but she just tells the servants do whatever he tells you and he turned them and he said okay fill all the water pots with water well she was just as positive as Jesus was about those fish being under there it appears that way yeah it appears that way you could do something if you want to the only question is do you want to you do something well that we're going backwards in the miracle hey guys I want to remind you

I'm going to be gone during July but you are being turned over to more than capable hands Tad Holbert is going to fill in and you can be sure he will have content that you will appreciate very much so thank you thank you Tad for being willing to do this I do appreciate it thank other of you are doing I