WHO THEN IS THIS? | MIRACLES | (THE LORD OVER CREATION)

INTRO:

WHY MIRACLES SERIES?

1: Reveals God's power and ability (God's authority)
2: Reveals God's intervening (involved) presence in the world He created (God's care)
3: Teaches us how we can pray.

Miracles Over Creation

The following list includes every miracle account in Scripture in which God acts over creation, setting aside the ordinary workings of nature. Healings, resurrections, and deliverances from demonic spirits are not included. Each event is counted once, regardless of how many Gospels record it.

The total is 95 events: 72 in the Old Testament and 23 in the New Testament.

1. Provision: Creating, Multiplying, or Sustaining (22)

Old Testament (16)

- Marah's bitter water made sweet (Ex 15:23-25)
- Manna (Ex 16; ceases at Josh 5:12)
- Quail, first time (Ex 16:13)
- Quail, second time (Num 11:31)
- Water from the rock at Rephidim (Ex 17:6)
- Water from the rock at Meribah (Num 20:11)
- Israel's clothes and sandals do not wear out for 40 years (Deut 8:4; 29:5; Neh 9:21)
- Water for Samson at Lehi (Judg 15:19)
- Ravens feed Elijah (1 Ki 17:4-6)
- The widow of Zarephath's flour and oil (1 Ki 17:14-16)
- Elijah fed by the angel; one meal carries him 40 days (1 Ki 19:5-8)
- Jericho's spring healed (2 Ki 2:19-22)
- Ditches filled with water without rain (2 Ki 3:16-20)
- The widow's oil multiplied(2 Ki 4:1-7)
- Poisoned stew made safe (2 Ki 4:38-41)
- A hundred men fed with twenty loaves (2 Ki 4:42-44)

New Testament (6)

- Water into wine (Jn 2:1-11)
- The first great catch of fish (Lk 5:1-11)
- Feeding of the 5,000 (Mt 14:13-21; Mk 6:30-44; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-14)
- Feeding of the 4,000 (Mt 15:32-39; Mk 8:1-9)
- The coin in the fish's mouth (Mt 17:24-27)
- The second catch, after the resurrection (Jn 21:1-11)

2. Command Over Sea, Sky, and Weather (19)

Old Testament (13)

- The Red Sea parted (Ex 14)
- The pillar of cloud and fire (Ex 13:21-22)
- The Jordan parted for Israel (Josh 3)
- The sun and moon stand still (Josh 10:12-14)
- Gideon's fleece (Judg 6:36-40)
- Thunder routs the Philistines at Mizpah (1 Sam 7:10)
- Thunder and rain at wheat harvest (1 Sam 12:16-18)
- Drought at Elijah's word (1 Ki 17:1; Jas 5:17)
- Rain returns at Elijah's prayer (1 Ki 18:41-45; Jas 5:18)
- The Jordan parted by Elijah (2 Ki 2:8)
- The Jordan parted by Elisha (2 Ki 2:14)
- The shadow moves back ten steps (2 Ki 20:8-11; Isa 38:8)
- The storm hurled at Jonah and then stilled (Jonah 1:4, 15)

New Testament (6)

- Jesus calms the storm (Mt 8:23-27; Mk 4:35-41; Lk 8:22-25)
- Darkness at the crucifixion (Mt 27:45; Mk 15:33; Lk 23:44-45)
- Earthquake, split rocks, and the torn veil (Mt 27:51)
- Earthquake at the tomb (Mt 28:2)
- The meeting place shaken after prayer (Acts 4:31)
- The Philippian earthquake opens doors and loosens chains (Acts 16:26)

3. Fire From Heaven (7)

Old Testament (6)

- The tabernacle's first offering (Lev 9:24)
- Fire from the rock consumes Gideon's offering (Judg 6:21)
- The angel ascends in the flame of Manoah's offering (Judg 13:19-20)
- David at Araunah's threshing floor (1 Chr 21:26)
- Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Ki 18:38)
- Solomon's temple dedication (2 Chr 7:1)

New Testament (1)

- Wind and tongues of fire at Pentecost (Acts 2:2-3)

4. Matter and Bodies Beyond Natural Limits (25)

Old Testament (17)

- Enoch taken by God (Gen 5:24; Heb 11:5)
- Sarah conceives at 90 (Gen 18:10-14; 21:1-2; Rom 4:19)
- The bush that burns but is not consumed (Ex 3:2)
- The staff becomes a serpent (Ex 4:3; 7:10-12)
- Moses' hand made leprous and restored as a sign (Ex 4:6-7)
- Moses' face shines after meeting with God (Ex 34:29-35)

- Aaron's rod buds, blossoms, and bears almonds overnight (Num 17:8)
- Balaam's donkey speaks (Num 22:28)
- The walls of Jericho fall (Josh 6:20)
- The altar at Bethel splits (1 Ki 13:3-5)
- Elijah taken up in the whirlwind (2 Ki 2:11)
- The axe head floats (2 Ki 6:5-7)
- The three men unharmed in the furnace (Dan 3:25-27)
- The handwriting on the wall (Dan 5:5)
- The lions' mouths shut (Dan 6:22)
- Jonah swallowed and preserved (Jonah 1:17; 2:10)
- The plant, the worm, and the east wind (Jonah 4:6-8)

New Testament (8)

- The virgin conception (Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:26-38)
- Jesus, and briefly Peter, walk on water (Mt 14:22-33; Mk 6:45-52; Jn 6:16-21)
- The transfiguration (Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Lk 9:28-36)
- The ascension (Lk 24:51; Acts 1:9)
- The apostles freed from prison (Acts 5:19)
- Philip carried away by the Spirit (Acts 8:39-40)
- Peter's chains fall and the iron gate opens by itself (Acts 12:6-10)
- Paul unharmed by the viper (Acts 28:3-6)

5. Judgment Through Creation (22)

Old Testament (20)

- The flood (Gen 6-8)
- Sodom and Gomorrah, including Lot's wife (Gen 19:24-26)
- The 10 plagues on Egypt (Ex 7-12)
  - Water turned to blood (Ex 7:14-25)
  - Frogs (Ex 8:1-15)
  - Gnats (Ex 8:16-19)
  - Flies (Ex 8:20-32)
  - Death of the livestock (Ex 9:1-7)
  - Boils (Ex 9:8-12)
  - Hail (Ex 9:13-35)
  - Locusts (Ex 10:1-20)
  - Darkness (Ex 10:21-29)
  - Death of the firstborn (Ex 11:1-10; 12:12-13, 29-30)
- Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:2)
- Fire at Taberah (Num 11:1-3)
- The earth swallows Korah (Num 16:31-33)
- Fire consumes the 250 men (Num 16:35)
- The fiery serpents (Num 21:6)

- Hailstones on the Amorites (Josh 10:11)
- Fire on Ahaziah's captains (2 Ki 1:10-12)
- The bears at Bethel (2 Ki 2:23-24)

New Testament (2)

- The withered fig tree (Mt 21:18-22; Mk 11:12-14, 20-21)
- Herod struck down and eaten by worms (Acts 12:23)

SUMMARY

- When the LORD intervenes, His workings are often supernatural — miraculous
- Sometimes with the purpose of revelation, encouragement or even at times, judgment.
- Sometimes it's for the community, other times for the individual.
- But His miracles are never random or purposeless.
- This morning, let's look at Mark's account of Jesus calming the storm and consider what His purposes might be for such an awesome display of His power and authority over creation (the wind and the waves).

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Mark 4:35–41 ESV

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." 36 And leaving
the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. 37 And a great
windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 But he
was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that
we are perishing?" 39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind
ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41
And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the
sea obey him?"

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OBSERVATIONS:

BEFORE GETTING INTO BIG IDEAS AND APPLICATIONS, LET ME POINT OUT 10 IMPORTANT OBSERVATIONS I MAKE FROM THE TEXT. After we get done noting these observations, I'll draw some big ideas and applications for you.

1. Jesus initiated the trip (it was his idea).
2. The storm was severe
3. Their lives were at risk
    a. Evidenced by:
        i. Waves were breaking into the boat
        ii. The boat was filling with water
        iii. Some of the disciples were experienced fishermen on that sea and they were greatly afraid

4. Jesus was asleep in the stern
5. The disciples address Jesus as ‘teacher’ when they woke him up
6. They accuse Jesus of not caring for their lives
7. Jesus rebuked the wind and spoke to the waves: “Peace! Be still.”
8. The wind and waves obey his voice (this is the actual miracle)
9. Jesus notes their fear (cowardice) and questions their lack of faith.
10. The disciples greatly fear Jesus (more than they feared the storm) and question who Jesus really is (that wind and sea obey him)

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THE MIRACLE OF CALMING THE STORM

- The substance of the story reveals that Jesus as the Son of God, the Creator, indeed has authority over creation.
- He literally rebuked the wind and spoke to the seas and they obeyed.
  - The implication is that it was immediate obedience to His voice
  - NOT a gradual wind down over the course of 30 minutes or the storm simply blowing over (moving past them)
  - RATHER what we see is the creation (wind and waves) immediately responding to its Creator.
- The APPLICATION of the miracle
  - ONE: God can still literally work wonders, overriding the natural laws of science and physics when it aligns with His eternal purposes (not random, casually or gimmicky) — in this case His purposes are both rescuing His disciples from danger AND revealing His identity and nature to them.
  - TWO: Metaphorically (historically, the church has done this with this passage), when we put ourselves in the boat with Jesus, crossing a raging sea, we learn that following Him does not keep us from the storms of life, but it does put us in the company of the One who rules over them. What He did for His disciples on the Sea of Galilee, He is able to do for us: calm the storm, carry us through it, bring us to the other side, and teach us some things along the way.
- Looking back at our 10 observations, I want to bring them together to shape 3 big ideas to encourage your faith this morning:
  - ONE: Recognize the nature of the storms we face
  - TWO: Overcome the crisis of faith that comes in the storm
  - THREE: Discover who Jesus is through the storm

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1: THE NATURE OF STORMS

THE DISCIPLES’ STORM

- The Sea of Galilee was known for these quick evening storms that could pop up due to the geography of the land.

- Some in the group were experienced fishermen and would've been familiar on the water and in these storms.
- By all initial accounts, this storm seems to be of random natural weather conditions
- The storm was severe enough to threaten their lives
  - The waves were breaking over the boat
  - The boat was filling with water (NIV: already swamped)

BUT JESUS' RESPONSE TO THE STORM INDICATES ANOTHER POSSIBILITY AS TO ITS NATURE

- Jesus rebuked the wind and spoke to the waves
- Scholars note that the language used here by Mark resembles that of demonic exorcism. (see quote below)

  The Gospel according to Mark Jesus—Stiller of Storms (4:35–41)

  Mark's description of the stilling of the storm exceeds the Hebrew penchant for personalizing nature (e.g., Ps 104:3–6). In particular, the language of v. 39 is, strictly speaking, proper to that of exorcism. The wind is "rebuked" (or "censured"). The Gk. epitiman has been used twice earlier in Mark of the rebuking of evil spirits (1:25; 3:12). The word is not used in Hellenistic exorcisms; it is rather a technical term in Jewish exorcisms for "the commanding word, uttered by God or by his spokesman, by which evil powers are brought into submission and the way is thereby prepared for the establishment of God's righteous rule in the world." To the waves Jesus orders, " 'Quiet! Be still!' " and they "obey him" (v. 41). The Greek word for " 'Be still!' " pephimōso, carries the sense of "muzzled." It occurs in the second person singular, as though Jesus were addressing a personal being. Its unusual perfect passive imperative form indicates that the condition shall persist, that is, "Be still, and stay still."

  Such language is more appropriate of demonic forces than of inanimate nature (1:25; 3:12; 9:25; cf. 8:33!). Not uncommonly in the OT wind and waters symbolize hostile forces over which God prevails. The stilling of the storm is often regarded simply as a "nature miracle" told with hyperbole and metaphor so as to emphasize Jesus' extraordinary power. The language of v. 39, however, depicts Jesus as the Strong Man (3:27; 1:7) who vanquishes Satan and plunders his evil minions (3:27; cf. 1:7). Jesus' power over the forces of nature, and the language in which it is described, foreshadows his power over the forces that disrupt human nature in the story of the Gerasene demoniac (5:1–20). In both stories Jesus vanquishes hostile forces that attempt to prevent him from extending his ministry into Gentile regions.
- What do we make of that?
  - Is it possible that this storm had supernatural roots?
  - In Job 1:18-19 we hear of a wind storm that struck down Job's house and caused the death of his children. On this occasion it would seem that God allowed this satanic attack—one that included a physical storm.
  - I don't think we can come to an absolute conclusion here, but I do know that some storms we go through in life ARE in fact the result of the enemy's attack on our lives.
- Lastly, sometimes God sends the storms according to His divine purposes.
  - Psalm 107:25 notes in that passage that the Lord 'commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea'.

- Jonah 1:4 mentions that the Lord sent the storm after Jonah
- These storms may be intended to turn us from our path and plans AND back towards Him.

WE ALL GO THROUGH STORMS TODAY

- Jesus said we would face them:

  John 16:33 NLT

  33 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."
- Some of the storms, trials, and tribulations are just the natural occurrences of life—don't need a devil to blame
  - a sickness or diagnosis
  - a job loss or financial hardship
  - the loss of a loved one
  - the breakdown of a marriage or relationship
  - the failure of a dream or endeavor
- Some storms might indeed be better categorized as a spiritual attack
  - people responding critically to your steps of faith
  - spiritual oppression or opposition since becoming a Christian

NOTICE WHEN THE STORM HAPPENED FOR THE DISCIPLES

- It happened after some time of ministry
- It happened immediately before the deliverance of the man with a "legion" of demons
- It happened when Jesus told them to get in the boat and cross to the other side
  - Jesus was the initiator of this voyage
  - I thought that IF Jesus came up with an idea, NOTHING bad could ever happen on the way!? Right?
  - THIS leads us to a crisis of faith… just like the disciples.

Q: IF GOD IS SOVEREIGN, WHY DOES HE ALLOW STORMS TO COME?

(at the risk of over-generalizing and over-simplifying, let me suggest two possible reasons).

1: He wants to test our faith.

- Not so that we would fail and be discouraged, but so that we can grow.

2: He wants to reveal Himself to us in ways we would otherwise never know.

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2: THE CRISIS OF FAITH WITHIN THE STORM

THE DISCIPLES EXPERIENCE THE STORM AND BECOME AFRAID

- Jesus' rebuke at the end of the passage uses a word for fear that includes the idea of cowardice.
- This storm has made them fear the worst… fear for their lives.

THE DISCIPLES SEEK OUT JESUS AND FIND HIM SLEEPING

- When they need him, where is he? Sleeping.
- Sleeping in the stern. He's asleep where the captain of the ship should be captain-ing.
- "Jesus are you really in control?"
- "Jesus why did you send us out here?"

THEY CALL HIM TEACHER (THEY STILL DON'T KNOW WHO HE IS)

- There are 27 noted events, teachings, and occurrences across all the gospels prior to this storm that should have framed their understanding of Jesus BEYOND simply 'teacher.'
    1. John the Baptist: "Behold, the Lamb of God… this is the Son of God" (Jn 1:29-36)
    2. Andrew: "We have found the Messiah"; Nathanael: "You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (Jn 1:41-49)
    3. Jesus sees Nathanael under the fig tree before they meet and promises heaven opened (Jn 1:47-51)
    4. Water into wine at Cana: "His disciples believed in Him" (Jn 2:1-11)
    5. Temple cleansed: "My Father's house… destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn 2:13-22)
    6. To the Samaritan woman: "I who speak to you am He"; the Samaritans: "the Savior of the world" (Jn 4:1-42)
    7. Official's son healed from a distance with a word (Jn 4:46-54)
    8. Miraculous catch of fish; Peter: "Depart from me… O Lord" (Lk 5:1-11)
    9. Synagogue demoniac: "the Holy One of God"; the crowd: "even the unclean spirits… obey Him" (Mk 1:21-28)
    10. Peter's mother-in-law healed in his own house (Mk 1:29-31)
    11. A whole town healed; demons cry out "You are the Son of God" (Mk 1:32-34; Lk 4:41)
    12. Leper cleansed by His touch (Mk 1:40-45)
    13. Paralytic's sins forgiven and his body healed: "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mk 2:1-12)
    14. Jesus calls Himself the Physician and the Bridegroom (Mk 2:13-22)
    15. Bethesda healing; "making Himself equal with God" (Jn 5:1-18)
    16. "Lord of the Sabbath… something greater than the temple is here" (Mk 2:28; Mt 12:6)
    17. Withered hand restored (Mk 3:1-6)
    18. Demons by the sea: "You are the Son of God" (Mk 3:11)
    19. The Twelve appointed and given authority over demons (Mk 3:13-15)
    20. Sermon on the Mount: "But I say to you"; He taught with authority (Mt 5-7)
    21. Centurion's servant healed from a distance: "Only say the word" (Mt 8:5-13; Lk 7:1-10)
    22. Widow of Nain's son raised from the dead: "God has visited His people!" (Lk 7:11-17)
    23. Jesus answers John with Isaiah's signs: "the dead are raised up" (Lk 7:18-23)
    24. A sinful woman forgiven: "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" (Lk 7:49)
    25. Mary Magdalene freed from seven demons (Lk 8:1-3)

26. “The kingdom of God has come upon you… something greater than Jonah is here” (Mt 12:22-42)
27. Parables taught from a boat: “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom” (Mk 4:1-34)

- My point here is that they have already seen countless miracles, healings, exorcisms.
- But when the raging waves break into their boat and it begins to fill with water… they’re lacking faith.
  - They’re not believing or asking him for anything.
  - Faith and trust would’ve asked him for help, a rescue, a prayer…
  - Rather they accuse him.
- In the background, what’s not written in the text, but likely happening:
  - Every hand is on deck bailing out water as fast as they can—the boat is still filling
  - Whoever’s not bailing out water is rowing furiously towards shore—to get to safety
- But the teacher seems absent. He’s sleeping.

TEACHER, DON’T YOU CARE IF WE DROWN? (NIV)

- The storm has brought such a crisis of faith they now accuse him of NOT caring.
- Everything up til now has revealed the DEPTHS of his care, grace, mercy, steadfast love and compassion.
- But one stormy sea, one swamped boat has the ability to turn what they believe upside down.

THE STORMS OF LIFE THAT WE FACE OFTEN LEAD US TO THE SAME CRISIS OF FAITH

- We question God’s plan: ‘why would you lead us here?’
- We question God’s care: ‘why did you let this happen to us?’
- We question His involvement: ‘where are you? are you sleeping?’
- We may even question His existence: ‘God if you’re real, how could this happen?’
- We pray things and say things in the heat of the moment that aren’t holy… and don’t reflect our faith and trust in Him.

AND YET GOD IS SOVEREIGN. HE ALLOWS THE STORMS FOR HIS PURPOSES.

- This moment might have revealed that their faith was lacking as Jesus soon points out.
- But they already had everything they needed to overcome this crisis of faith:

1: REMEMBER WHAT JESUS HAD ALREADY DONE.

- I listed out the 27 different things they had already heard and experienced that pointed to His divine nature.
- We so quickly forget. We must remember!

2: TURN ACCUSATION INTO PRAYER.

- Rather than accuse God of what we perceive to be His failures, we are to cry out to Him in prayer! (He doesn’t fail)
- Listen, it’s okay to be honest and raw in your prayers… but don’t stop in your frustration or pain.
- Don’t just accuse or yell at God… (share your pain and disappointment)… but then cry out TO Him.

3: HOLD ON TO HIS WORD

- He already told them that they were going to cross to the other side of the lake.
- This storm doesn't change that.
- Looking ahead to Mark 5:1, they make it there!

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3: THE REVELATION OF JESUS THROUGH THE STORM

JESUS WAKES UP AND SPEAKS A WORD OF REBUKE TO THE STORM, BRINGING IT TO AN END

- He says:
  - Siopa - Be silent!
  - Pephimoso - Be muzzled!
- Jesus reveals himself as one who can exercise authority over the natural powers of creation

JESUS QUESTIONS THEIR LACK OF FAITH

- I don't think He's being unkind, but He is addressing their shortcoming.
- The word Jesus uses for 'so afraid' has the weight of cowardice in the meaning.
- Essentially saying… 'why are you fearful, you're acting cowardly, don't you trust God?'
- OUCH!
- I think if this was the first witness of His power it'd have been more understandable, but they had already seen so much and were so quick to forget.

MARK NOTES A SERIES OF 3 'GREATS' IN THIS PASSAGE

- Great windstorm (v37), Great calm (v39), and Great fear (v41)
- This marks their fear moving from the storm to the calmer of the storm
- As noted above, they come to fear Jesus MORE THAN they feared the storm.
  - "Who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Psalm 107:23–30 NIV

23 Some went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. 24 They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep. 25 For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. 26 They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. 27 They reeled and staggered like drunkards; they were at their wits' end. 28 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. 29 He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. 30 They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven.

- The psalmist answers the questions that the disciples asked each other
- The psalmist provides the answer that was sitting right in front of them
- The LORD calms the seas.
  - Jesus just calmed the sea
  - He is the LORD

ACCORDING TO HIS ETERNAL PURPOSES, GOD REDEEMS THE STORMS OF OUR LIVES FOR HIS GLORY

- The disciples thought they knew Jesus, He was their teacher and master.
- But that title fell short of His actual glory
- The storm exposed their faulty theology and knowledge of Jesus
- The storm and Jesus' authority over it — revealed His nature to them
- What God purposes for our storms is that we would come to greater knowledge of who He actually is.
- Think about the storms you've been through:
  - What have you learned?
  - What do you have yet to learn?

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RESPONSE/PRAYER:

WHAT STORM ARE YOU FACING RIGHT NOW?

WHAT DO YOU NEED THE LORD TO DO?

- Some of you need a literal miracle this morning—He's able!

1: Make sure Jesus is in your boat (salvation)
2: Remember He's with you (and at this point—He's not sleeping in heaven)
3: Remember all that He's already done (in His word and for you)
4: Call on Him in prayer (He has the authority, power, and willingness to help)
5: Trust in His word (what has He already spoken)