

Dr. Robert C. Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 11, Exegesis of Miracle Accounts Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 11, Exegesis of Miracle Accounts, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture from Dr. Newman's Synoptic Gospels course focuses on miracle accounts, particularly the story of the demon-possessed man and the pigs in Mark 5. It explores the genre of miracle stories, identifying typical elements like the problem, request for help, the miracle worker's actions, and the result. Newman categorizes miracles as healings, nature miracles, and resurrections, and he examines the geographical setting and the cultural beliefs about demons prevalent during that time. The lecture analyzes the narrative structure of the chosen passage, highlighting key characters, events, and plot points. Finally, it discusses theological lessons derived from the miracle, emphasizing Jesus' power, compassion, and the importance of personal testimony.

2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 11 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → Synoptic Gospels).



**Newman_Synoptics
_Session11.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 11, Exegesis of Miracle Accounts

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. Robert C. Newman's lecture on Miracle Exegesis in the Synoptic Gospels:

Briefing Document: Exegesis of Miracle Accounts in the Synoptic Gospels

Main Themes:

1. Genre of Miracle Stories:

- Miracle stories are a distinct narrative genre within the Gospels.
- They typically follow a pattern: problem, request for help, actions of the miracle worker, and the result (healing, deliverance, etc.). The function is to reveal Jesus through his actions: "the person of Jesus is seen through his actions...they are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah and have life in his name."
- Miracles also point to the "redemptive activity of God."
- Miracles can be categorized as: healings, nature miracles, and resurrections.

1. Detailed Exegesis of Mark 5:1-20 (Demons and the Pigs):

- Newman provides a translation and detailed analysis of the passage, including geographical considerations (Gerasenes, Gadarenes, Gergesenes) and the significance of the location. He notes the geographical uncertainty due to variant readings.
- He explores the role and nature of demons, acknowledging their widespread belief in traditional cultures and their presence in the Bible. "The Bible is quite specific about their existence, though it says little about what they are."
- He breaks down the narrative structure, identifying actors, events, scenes, and the plot.

1. Theological Lessons from the Miracle:

- The passage reveals Jesus as the Son of God, able to subdue even a "legion" of demons. Newman notes the irony that this identification comes from the demons themselves, whose truthfulness is questionable.

- It highlights Jesus' compassion for those in bondage and his willingness to let people choose their own path (even if it means asking him to leave). "He has compassion for those who are in bondage to Satan...Jesus will allow people to go their own way also."
- Regarding demons, the lecture states, "the Bible is very clear and this passage is very clear that they exist and that they are dangerous, not just a primitive model for insanity." It is implied that these demons possess insight into spiritual realities beyond human perception, recognizing Jesus' identity. Demons are stronger than humans or animals, but are subject to God.

1. **Practical Application for Preaching/Teaching:**

- Emphasis should be placed on the reality of satanic power without promoting fear, underscoring God's ultimate control. "We need not fear satanic power, for God is even now in control, but we must flee to Christ for protection and deliverance."
- Christians should be encouraged to share their personal experiences of God's work in their lives.
- The experience of the villagers teaches us to beware "of putting off God and preferring to go our own way instead."

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Structure of Miracle Accounts:** Problem, request, action, result.
- **Categories of Miracles:** Healing, nature, resurrection.
- **Geographical Considerations:** Uncertainty surrounding the exact location of the Gadarene demoniac incident (Gerasenes, Gadarenes, Gergesenes).
- **The Nature of Demons:** Their existence is affirmed, but their origins and exact nature are largely unknown.
- **Jesus' Power:** Demonstrated through his ability to control demons.
- **Human Response:** Often fear and a preference for material security over spiritual transformation.
- **Personal Testimony:** The importance of sharing one's experience of God's work.

Quotes:

- "the person of Jesus is seen through his actions...they are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah and have life in his name."
- "The Bible is quite specific about their existence, though it says little about what they are."
- "He has compassion for those who are in bondage to Satan...Jesus will allow people to go their own way also."
- "the Bible is very clear and this passage is very clear that they exist and that they are dangerous, not just a primitive model for insanity."
- "We need not fear satanic power, for God is even now in control, but we must flee to Christ for protection and deliverance."
- "of putting off God and preferring to go our own way instead."

4. Study Guide: Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 11, Exegesis of Miracle Accounts

Synoptic Gospels: Miracles Exegesis Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What are the typical features of the Miracle Story genre as outlined in the lecture?
2. According to the lecture, what is a major function of miracle accounts in the Gospels?
3. What are the three categories Dr. Newman uses to classify miracles in the Synoptic Gospels? Give one example from the source material of each category.
4. What is notable about the geographical variants (Gerasenes, Gadarenes, Gergesenes) associated with the miracle of the demoniac and the pigs?
5. According to the lecture, what makes interpreting a narrative with demons more complicated?
6. In the story of the Gerasene demoniac, what are the possible interpretations of why the pigs ran into the lake?
7. According to the lecture, what are some of the theological lessons that can be derived from the account of the Gerasene demoniac in terms of what it reveals about Jesus?
8. What does the lecture suggest about demons' knowledge of spiritual realities?
9. What are some key characteristics of humans that can be understood from the story of the Gerasene demoniac?
10. According to the lecture, what are some ways to preach or teach the Gerasene demoniac story?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The Miracle Story genre typically includes a problem, a request for help, the actions of the miracle worker, and the result (healing, deliverance, etc.), often followed by a response from spectators or, in the case of demonization, the demon.

2. One major function of miracle accounts in the Gospels is to reveal the person of Jesus through his actions and to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah, leading to belief and eternal life. These stories also demonstrate the redemptive activity of God.
3. The three categories are healings (e.g., man with leprosy), nature miracles (e.g., calming of the storm), and resurrections (e.g., Jairus' daughter).
4. The geographical variants (Gerasenes, Gadarenes, Gergesenes) correspond to the town names Garasa, Gadara, and Gergesa, which helps scholars identify the location of the miracle. Two of these cities, Garasa and Gadara, were Decapolis cities, which is helpful in establishing the location of the miracle.
5. The presence of demons complicates interpretation because it becomes difficult to discern who is acting, whether it's the person who is demonized or the demons controlling their activities. This ambiguity highlights the limits of human understanding regarding the unseen world.
6. The pigs may have run into the lake because the demons drove them there to get rid of Jesus, Jesus drove the pigs into the water to get rid of the demons, or the pigs panicked and committed suicide due to the sudden influx of demons.
7. The account reveals that Jesus is the Son of God, capable of subduing even a large number of demons, has compassion for those in bondage to Satan, and allows people to go their own way even when he can help them.
8. The lecture suggests that demons can see spiritual realities that humans cannot, which allows them to identify Jesus and understand his power.
9. The story highlights that humans may prioritize material concerns over spiritual ones, can be subject to demonic influence, and can witness God's work without needing extensive theological training.
10. The lecture suggests emphasizing the reality of satanic power, the assurance that God is in control, the need to flee to Christ for protection, the danger of rejecting God, and the importance of Christians sharing their personal experiences of Christ's work in their lives.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the narrative structure of the Gerasene demoniac miracle account. How do the elements of setting, character, plot, and theological implications contribute to the overall message of the passage?
2. Analyze the role of demons in the Synoptic Gospels. What do these accounts suggest about the nature of demons, their power, and their relationship to God and humanity?
3. Compare and contrast the miracle accounts in the Synoptic Gospels with those in the Gospel of John. What are the similarities and differences in their purpose, style, and theological emphasis?
4. Evaluate the social and cultural context of miracle accounts in the Synoptic Gospels. How might the original audience have understood these stories, and what impact would they have had?
5. Discuss the implications of the Gerasene demoniac story for understanding mental illness and spiritual warfare. How might contemporary readers interpret this passage in light of modern psychological and theological perspectives?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Exegesis:** Critical interpretation or explanation of a text, particularly of scripture.
- **Genre:** A category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter.
- **Synoptic Gospels:** The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which share a similar perspective and content.
- **Decapolis:** A group of ten cities on the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire, often mentioned in connection with Jesus' ministry.
- **Demoniac:** A person believed to be possessed by one or more demons.
- **Legion:** In the context of the New Testament, a term used to describe a large number of demons, referring to a unit of the Roman army (approximately 6,000 soldiers).
- **Messiah:** The promised deliverer of the Jewish people, often used as a title for Jesus in the New Testament.
- **Redemptive Activity:** Actions or events that lead to salvation or deliverance from sin and its consequences.
- **Variant Readings:** Differences in wording or phrasing between various manuscripts of a text.
- **Narrative:** A spoken or written account of connected events; a story.

5. FAQs on Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 11, Exegesis of Miracle Accounts, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions About Miracle Accounts in the Synoptic Gospels

1. What defines the "Miracle Story" genre in the Gospels, and what are its typical elements?

The "Miracle Story" genre in the Gospels is a narrative focused on a miracle as its central feature. Common elements include: a description of the problem or ailment, a request for help (though this may be implicit), the actions of the miracle worker (usually Jesus), and the result of the miracle (healing, deliverance, etc.). The narrative may also include the response of spectators or, in the case of exorcisms, the response of the demon.

2. What is the primary function of miracle accounts in the Gospels?

Miracle accounts in the Gospels serve several key functions. They reveal the person and character of Jesus through His actions, demonstrating His power and compassion. They also illustrate the redemptive activity of God, showing God's intervention in the world to alleviate suffering and restore wholeness.

3. How does the lecture categorize the different types of miracles found in the Synoptic Gospels? Can you give examples?

The lecture categorizes miracles into three main types: healings (e.g., healing a man with leprosy, healing the centurion's servant), nature miracles (e.g., calming the storm, feeding the five thousand), and resurrections (e.g., raising Jairus' daughter, raising the widow of Nain's son).

4. What are the geographical considerations when interpreting the miracle of the demon-possessed man and the pigs (Mark 5:1-20)?

The precise location of the miracle is debated due to variant readings in the Gospels. The text mentions the regions of the Gerasenes, Gadarenes, and Gergesenes, corresponding to the towns of Garasa, Gadara, and Gergesa. While Garasa was further inland, Gadara was closer but still a few miles from the lake, and Gergesa (modern-day Kursi) was likely near the lake. The steep slope needed for the pigs to run into the water is present near both Gergesa and the fishing territories of Gadara.

5. According to the lecture, what are some of the interpretative difficulties raised by the presences of demons in Gospel narratives?

The presence of demons raises difficulties in discerning who is acting in a particular situation. It becomes difficult to determine whether actions are the result of the demon-possessed person's own initiative or the control of the demons. In the case of the pigs running off the cliff, the question arises of whether the demons drove them or if the pigs simply panicked.

6. In the specific example of the demon-possessed man and the pigs, what does this account reveal about Jesus?

The account portrays Jesus as the Son of God, with the power to subdue even thousands of demons. It highlights His compassion for those bound by Satan. The account also demonstrates that Jesus respects people's free will, leaving when asked by the villagers.

7. What insights does the lecture provide about demons, based on the Gospels and this particular miracle account?

The lecture emphasizes that the Bible affirms the existence of demons, which are dangerous and can exert control over humans and, perhaps, animals. Demons seem to possess knowledge of spiritual realities beyond human perception. Crucially, demons are subject to God's authority and power.

8. What practical lessons can be drawn from the miracle account of the demon-possessed man and the pigs for contemporary Christian teaching or preaching?

Several practical lessons can be derived from the account. It is important to acknowledge the reality of satanic power while also emphasizing that God is in control and that we need not fear. We should instead flee to Christ for protection and deliverance, placing our trust in Him. Furthermore, the account encourages Christians to share their personal testimonies of what Christ has done in their lives, even without extensive theological training. Finally, one should beware of prioritizing material concerns over spiritual ones and rejecting God's presence and blessings.