

Dr. Robert C. Newman, Miracles, Session 7, Jesus' Miracles Over the Spiritual Realm Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Newman, Miracles, Session 7, Jesus' Miracles Over the Spiritual Realm, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert C. Newman's lecture series, "The Miraculous and the Miracles of Jesus," continues with a session focusing on Jesus' power over the spiritual realm, specifically demonic beings. This installment examines three Gospel accounts of Jesus performing exorcisms: the Gadarene demoniacs, the Syrophenician woman's daughter, and the possessed boy. Newman analyzes these narratives, contrasting biblical perspectives with liberal explanations and highlighting evidence for their historicity. He draws parallels to Old Testament accounts of spirit influence and notes the significance of these miracles within salvation history, suggesting they foreshadow the ultimate defeat of Satan. The lecture also briefly touches upon the immediate and symbolic effects of these miracles, emphasizing Jesus' authority over not just the natural and human realms, but also the supernatural.

**2. 24 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Newman, Miracles, Session 7 – 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 →
NT Introduction → Miracles).**



**Newman_Miracles_
Session07.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Newman, Miracles, Session 7, Jesus' Miracles Over the Spiritual Realm

Briefing Document: Jesus' Miracles Over the Spiritual Realm and Significance of Miracles

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert C. Newman in Session 7 of his course, "The Miraculous and the Miracles of Jesus," focusing specifically on Jesus' miracles over the spiritual realm (demonic beings) and a concluding discussion on the broader significance of Jesus' miracles. Newman argues against the secular dismissal of demons and explores three key instances of Jesus' power over demonic forces: the Gadarene demoniacs, the Syrophenician woman's daughter, and the possessed boy. He concludes by highlighting the connection of Jesus' miracles to creation, redemption, and their provisional nature as a foretaste of the eschatological future.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Jesus' Authority Over the Spiritual Realm:

- Newman emphasizes that the Bible clearly depicts the existence and activity of demonic beings, a view often dismissed in the modern Western world. He cautions against the theological liberalism that attempts to "edit these out of Christianity."
- The session focuses on Jesus' direct confrontation and victory over these spiritual forces, demonstrating his comprehensive authority.

2. The Gadarene Demoniacs (Matthew 8, Mark 5, Luke 8):

- This event illustrates Jesus' power to directly command and expel demons. The demons themselves acknowledge Jesus as the "'Son of God'" and seem to fear his judgment "'before the appointed time.'"
- Newman addresses liberal explanations that attempt to rationalize the event (myth, mental illness, accidental pig drowning), arguing for the historicity based on details like location, the reaction of the townspeople, and the eyewitness accounts.
- The reaction of the Gadarenes in asking Jesus to leave, likely due to the economic loss of the pigs, is presented as a realistic detail that supports historicity. Newman

notes, "If you were inventing a story, you'd probably have them all excited about this."

- He suggests a possible "deliverance judgment theme" and notes the potential growth of demonic activity in the intertestamental period, possibly in opposition to the coming Christ.
- The episode highlights the decisive victory of Jesus over Satan's powers. Newman poses the question, "Does Jesus use the pigs to rid the area of demons? Possible. Or do the demons use the pigs to rid the area of Jesus? I can't tell for sure."

3. The Syrophenician Woman's Daughter (Matthew 15, Mark 7):

- This miracle showcases Jesus' power to perform remote exorcism based on the faith of the Gentile woman. The woman's persistent and insightful response to Jesus' initial seemingly dismissive remarks ("Yes, Lord," she replied, 'but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs') demonstrates remarkable faith.
- Newman contrasts this with exorcisms found in other contemporary literature, noting that Jesus' method was a simple declaration: "Then he told her, 'For such a reply you may go; the demon has left your daughter.' She went home and found her child lying on the bed and the demon was gone."
- This event is interpreted as a "hint of the gospel to the Gentiles," illustrating that while Jesus' initial focus was on the Jews, his grace extends beyond. Newman sees the woman's experience as a "sample of what will be a very major thing after Jesus returns to heaven."
- The remote nature of the exorcism makes it the "most striking recorded exorcism."

4. The Possessed Boy (Matthew 17, Mark 9, Luke 9):

- This account emphasizes the disciples' inability to cast out a particularly strong demon in Jesus' absence, leading to Jesus' rebuke of the "unbelieving generation."
- The detailed description of the boy's symptoms ("He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid") raises the question of epilepsy, but Newman suggests that demonic possession could manifest in such ways.
- Jesus attributes the disciples' failure to a lack of prayer (and possibly fasting in some manuscripts): "This kind can only come out by prayer." Newman clarifies

that faith isn't a power in itself, but rather trust in God: "If you're really trusting God, then God will do some spectacular things for you."

- The event underscores that even powerful demonic forces are subject to Jesus' authority.

5. Significance of Jesus' Miracles (Concluding Remarks):

- Newman compares Jesus' miracles to those in the Old Testament (Moses, Elijah, Elisha), noting that Jesus' method is generally "more direct." He provides examples like Jesus healing with a word versus Elijah's elaborate prayers.
- He highlights the connection of Jesus' miracles to **creation**, illustrated by the turning of water into wine and the multiplication of loaves and fish. C.S. Lewis's perspective is cited: "what Jesus does in turning the water into wine is what God does every year, but God does it providentially through a slow process...and Jesus does it in...a few seconds."
- A strong connection is drawn between Jesus' miracles and **redemption and eschatology**. The healing of the blind, lame, and deaf is linked to Isaiah 35:4-6, a passage describing future restoration. Resurrection miracles foreshadow the ultimate resurrection in the end times (Daniel 12:1-2).
- Newman emphasizes that Jesus' miracles are **provisional** ("already, but it's not yet"). He only healed some, not all, and raised some from the dead, indicating God's timing and the fact that these miracles are "a foretaste of what is to come when he returns."
- Ultimately, Jesus' miracles serve to demonstrate his authority over all realms – nature, disease, death, and the spiritual – and support his claim to be able to forgive sins.

Quotes:

- "Among the more secular inhabitants of our modern Western world, demons are typically relegated to the realm of fairy tales and superstition. This is not the view of the Bible, and we should not be tempted to follow the lead of theological liberals of the 19th and 20th centuries in attempting to edit these out of Christianity."
- "'What do you want with us, Son of God?' they shouted. 'Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?'" (referring to the demons in the Gadarene account).

- "If you were inventing a story, you'd probably have them all excited about this. But in fact, you've got them concerned probably because they lost some pigs..." (regarding the reaction of the Gadarenes).
- "'Yes, Lord,' she replied, 'but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.'" (the Syrophoenician woman's response).
- "'Then he told her, 'For such a reply you may go; the demon has left your daughter.' She went home and found her child lying on the bed and the demon was gone.'"
- "'This kind can only come out by prayer.'" (Jesus' explanation for the disciples' failure with the possessed boy).
- "If you're really trusting God, then God will do some spectacular things for you."
- "what Jesus does in turning the water into wine is what God does every year, but God does it providentially through a slow process...and Jesus does it in...a few seconds." (quoting C.S. Lewis).
- "Jesus' miracles are a foretaste of what is to come when he returns."

Conclusion:

Dr. Newman's lecture provides a compelling case for the reality of Jesus' miracles over the spiritual realm, drawing directly from biblical accounts and engaging with alternative explanations. He emphasizes the decisive victory of Jesus over demonic forces and highlights the profound significance of all of Jesus' miracles as demonstrations of his divine authority, connections to creation and redemption, and provisional signs pointing towards the ultimate eschatological fulfillment.

4. Study Guide: Newman, Miracles, Session 7, Jesus' Miracles Over the Spiritual Realm

Miracles Over the Spiritual Realm: A Study Guide

Quiz

1. According to Dr. Newman, how does the biblical view of demonic beings differ from the typical secular view in the modern Western world?
2. Describe at least two pieces of evidence Dr. Newman presents to support the historicity of the Gadarene demoniacs account.
3. What is Os Guinness's "campfire effect," and how does Dr. Newman relate it to the topic of demonic activity?
4. In the account of the Syrophoenician woman, what does Jesus' initial response to her request reveal about the context of his ministry?
5. What is particularly striking about the exorcism of the Syrophoenician woman's daughter compared to other accounts of exorcism?
6. In the story of the possessed boy, what was the disciples' failure attributed to, according to Jesus?
7. How does Dr. Newman interpret Jesus' statement about faith being like a mustard seed in the context of the disciples' inability to heal the boy?
8. According to Dr. Newman, in what ways were Jesus' methods of performing miracles often different from those of Old Testament figures like Moses or Elijah?
9. What connection does Dr. Newman draw between Jesus' miracles and both creation and redemption (or eschatology)? Provide one example for each.
10. What does Dr. Newman mean when he states that Jesus' miracles are "real and striking, yet they are provisional"?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Dr. Newman states that while secular inhabitants of the modern Western world often view demons as fairy tales and superstition, the Bible does not share this view and treats demonic beings as real entities. He cautions against theological liberalism's attempts to dismiss these accounts.

2. Dr. Newman cites the details of the location (the other side, the tombs, the steep slope), the variant names of the region, and the seemingly illogical reaction of the townspeople asking Jesus to leave after losing their pigs as evidence for historicity.
3. Guinness's "campfire effect" describes how in a secularizing culture where Christian influence ("the fire") diminishes, occult interests and demonic activity ("wild animals") begin to re-emerge and become more visible. Dr. Newman suggests this might explain the increased attention to the demonic in intertestamental and New Testament times.
4. Jesus' initial response highlights that his primary mission was to the Jewish people ("the children") and that extending miraculous help to Gentiles ("the dogs") was not the immediate priority. However, the woman's faith-filled reply prompts him to act.
5. The exorcism of the Syrophoenician woman's daughter is notable because it was a remote exorcism, occurring without Jesus being physically present with the child or issuing a direct verbal command to the demon.
6. Jesus attributes the disciples' failure to drive out the demon to their "unbelieving generation" and suggests that "this kind can only come out by prayer" (with some manuscripts adding fasting), implying a lack of sufficient faith and reliance on God.
7. Dr. Newman clarifies that Jesus' statement about mustard seed faith emphasizes the object of faith (God) rather than faith being a power in itself. If one truly trusts in God, God can accomplish great things, but it doesn't mean every attempt at a miracle will succeed.
8. Dr. Newman notes that Jesus' methods often appeared more direct, sometimes working miracles without physical aids like Moses's staff or the elaborate rituals of Elijah and Elisha. He cites examples like Jesus simply telling the wind and waves to be still or telling the royal official's son to live.
9. Dr. Newman connects Jesus' miracles with creation, citing the turning of water into wine as analogous to God's yearly provision through natural processes. He links them to redemption and eschatology by pointing to healings mirroring Old Testament prophecies of the Messianic age (like Isaiah 35) and the theme of resurrection, a key feature of the end times (Daniel 12).

10. By "real and striking, yet provisional," Dr. Newman means that Jesus' miracles were genuine displays of his power, but they were limited in scope (healing only some, raising only a few) as a foretaste of the complete restoration and healing that will occur at his return, in accordance with God's timing.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the significance of Jesus' miracles over the spiritual realm in the broader context of his ministry and claims. How do these miracles contribute to our understanding of his identity and authority?
2. Analyze the various "liberal explanations" for the miracle of the Gadarene demoniacs presented by Dr. Newman. Evaluate the evidence he offers in support of the historicity of this event.
3. Compare and contrast the account of the Gadarene demoniacs with the healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter. What do these two different types of miracles over the spiritual realm reveal about Jesus' power and compassion?
4. Explore the connection between faith and the ability to witness or experience miracles, as discussed in the context of the possessed boy. What implications does this have for believers today?
5. In what ways do Jesus' miracles serve as a "foretaste" of the future kingdom of God, according to Dr. Newman? Consider the themes of creation, redemption, and the defeat of evil in your response.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Demoniac:** A person believed to be possessed by one or more demons or evil spirits.
- **Historicity:** The historical accuracy or authenticity of an event or account.
- **Liberal Explanations:** In this context, refers to interpretations of biblical miracles offered by theological liberalism, often seeking naturalistic or non-supernatural explanations.
- **Synoptic Gospels:** The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which share a similar perspective and contain many of the same stories, allowing them to be "seen together."
- **Decapolis:** A group of ten cities located primarily east and southeast of the Sea of Galilee, known for their Hellenistic (Greek) culture.
- **Intertestamental Literature:** Writings produced during the period between the Old and New Testaments (roughly 400 BC to the time of Christ).
- **Eschaton:** The final event in the divine plan; the end of the world or the ultimate destiny of humanity.
- **Synecdoche:** A figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole or vice versa.
- **Remote Exorcism:** The act of driving out a demon from a person who is not physically present with the exorcist.
- **Transfiguration:** A miraculous event in the Gospels where Jesus' appearance was transformed and he was seen in glory alongside Moses and Elijah.
- **Provisional:** Existing for the present time only and likely to be changed or replaced later. In this context, referring to the limited and temporary nature of Jesus' miracles before the ultimate restoration.

5. FAQs on Newman, Miracles, Session 7, Jesus' Miracles Over the Spiritual Realm, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Jesus' Miracles Over the Spiritual Realm

1. In the context of Jesus' miracles, what does the "spirit realm" primarily refer to in this discussion? The "spirit realm," as used here in distinction from the human realm, specifically refers to spirit beings other than humans, particularly what are commonly called demonic beings. This perspective aligns with the biblical view, which recognizes the existence and activity of such entities, contrasting with more secular modern viewpoints that often dismiss demons as mere superstition or myth.

2. What was significant about Jesus' encounter with the Gadarene demoniacs, and what evidence supports the historicity of this event? The encounter with the Gadarene demoniacs (mentioned in Matthew 8, Mark 5, and Luke 8) demonstrates Jesus' direct power and authority over demonic forces, as he commands them out of the men and permits them to enter a herd of pigs, which then rush into the sea and drown. Evidence supporting the historicity includes specific details of the location (the other side of the Sea of Galilee, tombs, steep slope), the reaction of the local people who, concerned about their lost pigs, asked Jesus to leave, and the transformation of the demoniacs. The consistency of these details across the Synoptic Gospels, despite some variations, also lends credence to the event. Furthermore, the unusual reaction of the townspeople, prioritizing their economic loss over the healing, is less likely to be an invented detail.

3. How does the Old Testament relate to the concept of demons and Jesus' miracles over them? While the Old Testament doesn't focus extensively on demons, it does provide some background. It suggests that demonic influence may lie behind aspects of pagan religion and possibly contributed to the troubles of King Saul. There are also instances of God (and potentially Satan) influencing animals. However, direct confrontations with and expulsions of demons are more prominent in the intertestamental period and during Jesus' ministry, possibly due to increased interaction with pagan cultures and the direct opposition to Christ's coming work.

4. What are some interpretations regarding the role of the pigs in the Gadarene demoniacs story? There are a couple of interpretations regarding the pigs. One possibility is that Jesus allowed the demons to enter the pigs as a demonstration of their destructive nature and his power over them, effectively ridding the area of their influence in a tangible way. Another possibility is that the demons themselves sought to eliminate Jesus from the region by causing the economic loss and negative reaction from the community, though this is less certain.

5. What is notable about the healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter, and what does it reveal about the scope of Jesus' ministry? The healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter (Matthew 15, Mark 7) is significant because it's a remote exorcism, performed for a Gentile based on the woman's remarkable faith and persistent interaction with Jesus. Even without a physical presence or direct command to the demon, Jesus declares the child healed. This incident hints at the future inclusion of Gentiles in God's grace and the expanding scope of the gospel beyond the Jewish people, illustrating Jesus' compassion and power extending to those outside his immediate cultural and religious context.

6. What insights can be gained from the disciples' failure to heal the possessed boy (Matthew 17, Mark 9, Luke 9)? The disciples' inability to cast out the demon from the boy highlights the importance of faith and prayer in such spiritual battles. Jesus' response, "This kind can only come out by prayer" (with some manuscripts adding "and fasting"), suggests that their lack of success was tied to insufficient faith and reliance on God. It emphasizes that spiritual power is not a technique to be mastered but a result of trusting in God. This passage also touches on the concept of a "faithless generation," which could refer to the people of that time, the Israelites' growing unbelief, or even the general state of humanity after the fall.

7. How do Jesus' miracles compare to those in the Old Testament, and what do they signify in terms of salvation history? Jesus' miracles are presented as being as impressive as, if not more so than, those in the Old Testament, often performed with a more direct and immediate authority compared to the methods of figures like Moses, Elijah, and Elisha. They often demonstrate a connection with both creation (changing water to wine, multiplying food) and redemption/eschatology (healing the blind, lame, and deaf, mirroring prophecies of the end times). These miracles are seen as a foretaste of the ultimate defeat of Satan, the restoration of creation, and the blessings of God's kingdom, signifying Jesus' power over all realms and foreshadowing the future culmination of God's plan of salvation.

8. What does the provisional nature of Jesus' miracles (healing some, not all) indicate?

The fact that Jesus healed only some and raised only a few from the dead is not seen as a limitation of his power but rather as an indication of God's timing and overall plan. It reflects the "already, but not yet" nature of the kingdom of God. Jesus' miracles are a real and striking preview of the complete restoration and healing that will occur when he returns, just as the Lord's Supper is a foretaste of the Messianic banquet. They serve to demonstrate his authority over all things and to provide evidence for his claims and mission.