

Session 9: Signs

Why did Jesus spend so much time doing miracles? Some of them seem so strange, or arbitrary: is there a purpose behind them?

This session will help us to understand and interpret Jesus' miracles in the context of his wider ministry, message and self-understanding.

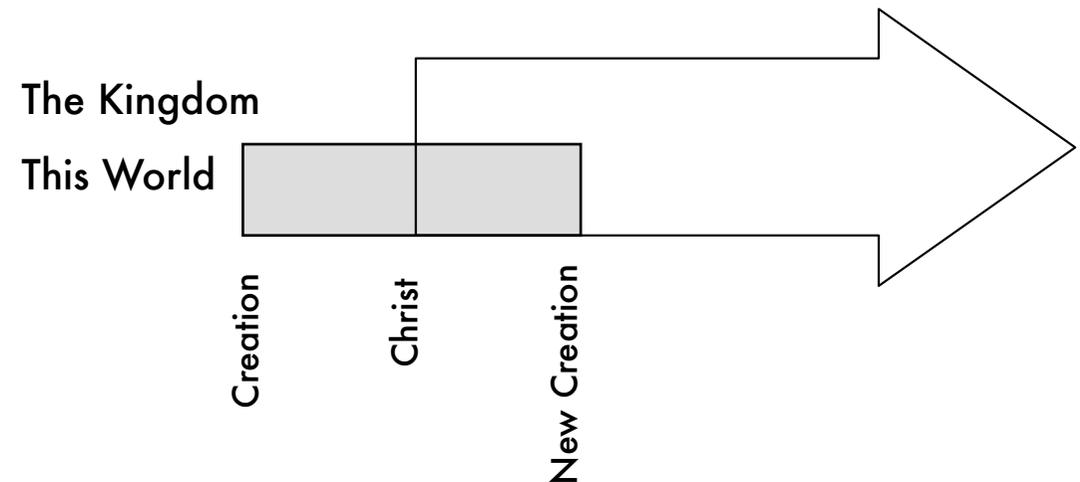
Signs: But signs of what?!

How do Jesus' signs fit within his broader ministry?

'As you go, proclaim this message: "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Heal those who are ill, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.' (Matthew 10:7-8)

"If I drive out spirits by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." (Luke 11:20)

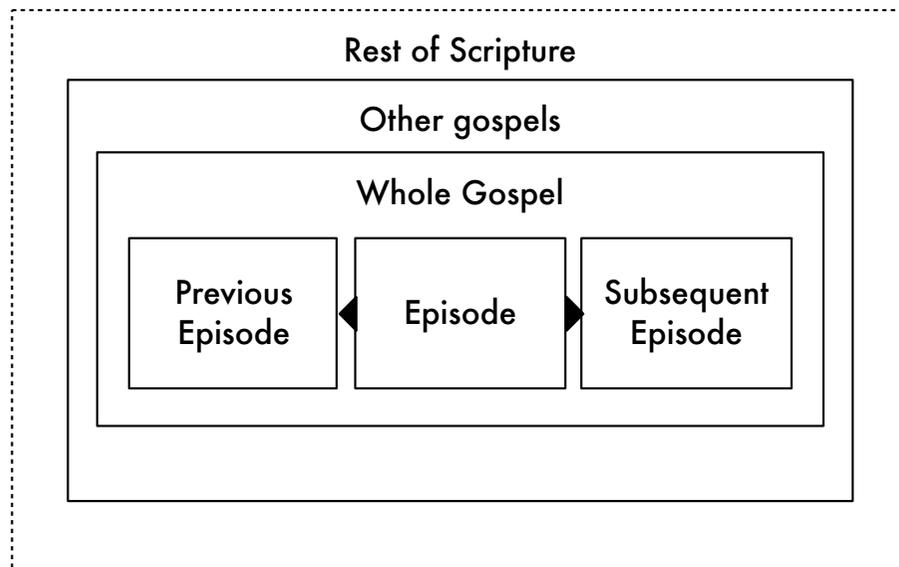
- 'The sovereign and saving rule of YHWH' (Tom Wright)
- 'The king-dominion of God' (D.A. Carson)
- 'All men live on the plane of this world; but from the time of Christ's coming to the end of the world, the inheritors of the kingdom (and they alone) also live on the plane of the kingdom' (D.A. Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount*, p16)



Signs: How should we interpret them?

What clues should we look for to help us interpret a miracle?

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| <p><u>Does the episode give clues?</u></p> <p>Observe people's responses, or author's comments.</p> | <p><u>Look at the wider setting</u></p> <p>What is around it? Parables? Teachings? Other miracles?</p> <p>When, where and to whom did Jesus do the miracle?</p> | <p><u>Look at Jesus' wider ministry</u></p> <p>Does the miracle shed any light on another theme in Jesus' teaching?</p> | <p><u>Look at the use of OT imagery</u></p> <p>Does the miracle include any references to OT themes and prophetic promises?</p> |
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What can we learn from these miracles in their immediate contexts?

The Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-25)

Feeding 5,000 (John 6)

Healing the Blind Man (John 9)

Signs: Why so many different types?

What do these miracles demonstrate about the king and the kingdom?

