

Acts 2-Miracles-Wonders-Signs

In **Acts 2:22**, when Luke records Peter using the triad "**miracles, wonders and signs**," he is not just using repetitive synonyms for emphasis. He is utilizing three specific Greek words that together provide a comprehensive view of how God authenticated Jesus' identity.

Christian philosopher [Norman Geisler](#) famously summarized the distinction Luke is capturing: "*From the human vantage point a miracle is an unusual event (**wonder**) that conveys and confirms an unusual message (**sign**) by means of unusual power (**miracle**).*"

The distinct nuances Luke implies behind each word clarify how they build upon one another:

Term in English	Greek Word	What it focuses on	Effect on the observer
Miracles (or Mighty Works)	<i>Dunamis</i>	The Source: Inherent, supernatural, explosive power.	Demonstrates that the act originated from God's divine energy, not human capability.
Wonders	<i>Teras</i>	The Reaction: The sheer astonishment and awe it produces.	Appeals to human imagination, arresting attention and causing amazement.
Signs	<i>Sēmeion</i>	The Purpose: The meaning, lesson, or pointer behind the act.	Appeals to human understanding, pointing past the event itself to validate Jesus' messianic authority.

1. Miracles (*Dunamis*) - The Power Behind the Act

The Greek word **dunamis** (the root of our English word "dynamite") literally means inherent, supernatural might or power. By using this word, Luke points directly to **the origin** of the event. It highlights that Jesus' acts—such as casting out demons or healing the sick—were explosions of raw divine energy breaking into the natural order, proving that God was actively backing Him.

2. Wonders (*Teras*) - The Psychological Impact

The word **teras** refers to something astonishing, marvelous, or even terrifying that causes the bystander to stare open-mouthed. Notably, *teras* is never used alone in the New Testament; it is always paired with another word (like "signs and wonders"). Luke uses this word to capture **the reaction** of the crowd. Wonders are intended to startle people out of their everyday complacency, rattle their imaginations, and command their full, undivided attention.

3. Signs (*Sēmeion*) - The Spiritual Message

The word **sēmeion** refers to a signal or a distinguishing mark. A sign is not just a spectacular show; it has an educational purpose. It acts like a street sign, pointing away from itself toward a larger truth. When Jesus healed a paralytic, the *miracle* was the power used, the *wonder* was the crowd's amazement, but the *sign* was the proof that He had the authority to forgive sins. Luke highlights signs to appeal to the crowd's **understanding and logic**, showing them that these acts legally authenticated Jesus as the promised Messiah.