

CLARITY

CLARIFYING QUESTIONS ABOUT FAITH



WEEK 4: ARE MIRACLES POSSIBLE?

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

OPENING QUESTIONS

(Choose the one(s) that will best get your group talking on this topic)

- Have you ever witnessed a miracle? If so describe what happened?
- Why do you think so many people today don't believe in miracles?

SERMON REFLECTIONS—Sermon from Sunday, October 1, 2017

(Audio and video available at purposechurch.com—Suggestion: bring copies of the sermon outline to look at when you discuss)

- What was most helpful to you?
- What challenged you?
- What encouraged you?

Norman Geisler & Frank Turek, in *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, give this definition of miracles (pg. 201):

A miracle is a special act of God that interrupts the normal course of events. Atheist Antony Flew put it well: "A miracle is something which would never have happened had nature, as it were, been left to its own devices." So we might say that natural laws describe what happens regularly, by natural causes; miracles, if they occur at all, describe what happens rarely, by supernatural causes.

- How is this definition helpful for you in discussions about miracles?

Seminary Professor Ronald Nash gave this illustration to atheists who did not believe in miracles (page 202 of *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*):

Nash began by showing them two small boxes. One was opened, and one was closed. *"Here is the difference between your worldview and mine," he began. Pointing to the closed box, he said, "You believe that the physical universe is closed; that the universe is all that exists, and there's nothing outside it."*

Shifting to the open box he continued, "I believe that the physical universe exists as well; but I also believe the universe is open--that there's something outside the universe we call God." Nash added, "And God created the box!"

He then reached into the box and said, "Just like I can reach into the box to manipulate its contents, God can reach into our universe and perform what we call miracles."

- How can this illustration be helpful to open people's eyes to the idea of miracles?

DIGGING INTO DISCUSSION

Read Exodus 7:8-13

- Why would Pharaoh want a miracle performed?
- How do you think the Egyptian magicians were able to duplicate Moses' and Aaron's miracles?
- What is the meaning of Aaron's snake swallowing up theirs?
- How can we determine if a miracle is from God or some other source?

Read Exodus 7:20-23; 8:6-7; 8:16-19

- What is different about the plague of gnats?
- What does "finger of God" imply (see also Luke 11:20)?
- How come "Pharaoh's heart was hard this time"?
- Describe a time when you hardened your heart in response to God revealing himself to you or working in your life?

The Bible mentions about 250 miracles and most of them are clustered around three distinct time periods: Moses & Joshua, Elijah & Elisha, and Jesus & the Apostles?

- Why do we see more miracles performed during these times?
- How can this be helpful in answering the question: "Why don't we see miracles happening today to the same extent as described in the Bible?"

LIVE IT OUT

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17

- What is the miracle described in this verse? What is some evidence of miracles in your own "old has gone, new has come" experience with Jesus?

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

- Paul asked for a miracle three times but he did not receive one? How did he respond?
- Have you prayed for God to intervene with a miracle in your life? What happened? How has this affected your attitude toward God?
- What can you apply to your life from these verses?
- What kind of miracle are you praying for God to do in your life or the life of those around you?

- Who is someone in your oikos that you feel led to share something from this discussion?

See the Suggested Resources found at purposechurch.com/clarity

Here are some chapters from these resources that focus on this week's topic

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be An Atheist: Chapter 8—Miracles: Signs of God or Gullibility?

The Case For Faith: Objection #2—Since Miracles Contradict Science They Cannot Be True
77 FAQ's About God and The Bible

A New Kind of Apologist—The Scientific Naturalist Juggernaut and What to do About it
Miracles by Eric Metaxas