



CONVERSATION KIT

MIRACLES

part 1: what is a miracle?

Summary

Depending on who you're talking with, you might encounter very different definitions of "miracle."

Miracles should be seen as a continuation of God's already-present, not-necessarily-dramatic faithfulness to us.

Defining miracles as "special divine action" allows for the fact that miracles happen when God acts in special ways, but also that God's action more generally is happening around us, all the time.

Conversation Starters

Do you believe that you've ever witnessed a miracle?

Why do you think that sometimes miracles happen and other times they don't?

Diving Deeper:

Read John 9:1-12. The gospels contain numerous accounts of Jesus miraculously healing people. But if you notice, Jesus never heals any two people the same way. Sometimes He speaks a healing word. Sometimes He physically touches others. Sometimes, as is the case here, He makes mud from spit, puts it on a man's eyes, and then tells him to go wash in a particular pool. What do you think it means that Jesus heals different people in different ways?



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part 2: do miracles really happen?

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part 3: the central miracle

Summary

The first-century historians Tacitus and Josephus confirm that Jesus physically existed on this planet 2000 years ago, and died on a Roman cross.

History testifies to the fact that Jesus's disciples were so convinced of his resurrection that they were willing to die for their beliefs.

As it says in Romans 8:11, “The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you (NLT).” The message to the church today is that God is not done with His world.

Conversation Starters

Does it change anything for you to hear Jesus described in historical documents outside the Bible?

What does the resurrection of Jesus mean to you?

Diving Deeper:

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. Some skeptics suggest that the resurrection of Jesus was just a “hallucination” by grief-stricken disciples in the first century. But Paul here talks about Jesus appearing to “more than 500 of the brothers and sisters at the same time.” And of course, when 500 people are “hallucinating” the same thing, that means they’re seeing something real. What stands out to you about this passage from 1 Corinthians?



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part 4: mysteries and manifesting

Summary

Manifesting is about trying to hack the universe into giving us something, whereas prayer is about entrusting ourselves into the care of our Creator.

Miracles don't always happen when we pray for them; and when they do, they often don't happen in a way that we could have predicted.

God invites us to trust Him in the midst of uncertainty and mystery.

Conversation Starters

Have you ever struggled with praying for something and not receiving it?
How are you processing that?

Have you ever prayed for something and received it in a way that surprised you?
What was that story?

Diving Deeper:

Read Mark 8:22-25. This is the only recorded healing in the gospels that happens in two phases. Professor Robert Plummer writes in *The Gospel Coalition* that this two-phase healing can serve as a reminder that, "physical healing and spiritual growth are often not instantaneous... The answers to our prayers may come quickly; or they may come through stages, after extensive waiting; or only in the new heavens and new earth." What questions do you have about this interpretation? Does anything else stand out to you from the passage?



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part 5: hope

Summary

Numerous Christians around the world, including in our Axis Community, have experienced miraculous changes after prayer.

The National Library of Medicine has published peer-reviewed case reports about chronic medical conditions going into remission after prayer.

As Dr. Keener writes in *Miracles Today*, “God usually performs dramatic signs either when people desperately need them or when he is getting people’s attention for the good news of Christ’s love in a special way.”

Conversation Starters

What do you think about the quote, “When we prayed for no-one, no-one was healed. Now we pray for lots of people, and some are healed”?

Is there anything you’d like to ask for prayer about?

Diving Deeper:

Read Revelation 21:1-5. Even though in this life, not everyone will experience a miraculous healing, the end of the Christian story is about the renewal of all things. On that day, every follower of Jesus will be healed—and before that, every single one of us will eventually die. How does this passage about the renewal of all things frame your understanding of miracles?