

# Accepting Miracles

In our scientifically minded culture, there are many people who deny that the miracles in the Bible actually happened. While there are many different categories people might put themselves into (naturalists, materialists, rationalists, skeptics, empiricists, etc.), they all basically say that they can't believe something unless it can be tested and explained as some natural occurrence. They reject supernatural explanations for any event, so we can call them "naturalists" for this discussion.

1. What are some of the miracles in the Bible that a naturalist must reject?
2. Are there any miracles in the Bible that you doubt actually happened?
3. If you believe in miracles, why do you believe that any biblical miracles actually happened?
4. If we were to adopt a naturalistic view, what must we conclude about events of the Incarnation, Virgin Birth, and Resurrection of Jesus?
5. Can you be a true Christian and reject the Incarnation, Virgin Birth, and Resurrection of Jesus? (Consider 1 Timothy 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 15:1–8.)
6. If you believe in these events as the miracles the Bible teaches they were, how do you reconcile this with the conclusions of many modern scientists who insist that virgins don't give birth and dead men can't rise from the dead?

The first miracle that Jesus performed was the creation of the heavens and earth from nothing (Genesis 1; John 1). The Bible describes this as happening in six, 24-hour days. Yet modern scientists insist that the universe began through a big bang (which contradicts the order of creation in the Bible). Many Christians accept this explanation of the origin of the universe, though they insist God caused it to happen. Many of these Christians will say, "The scientific evidence is so strong that we must accept the big bang and other evolutionary ideas, or we will be seen as crazy, and no one will want to become a Christian because they will have to abandon science."

7. Are these Christians who accept the "unscientific" miracles of the Virgin Birth and Resurrection being consistent if they reject a six-day creation since it is unscientific? Explain your thinking.
8. If you knew someone who held to this position, how would you attempt to persuade them to a more consistent position?

# Accepting Miracles Teacher Guide

Print one *Accepting Miracles* worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Use this *Accepting Miracles Teacher Guide* to teach this part of the lesson.

As we've talked about in our lesson today, Jesus is not only the Savior of the world, but He is also the Creator of the world. As the Creator of nature and all of the laws that are at work in the universe, He is free to perform miracles. But what is a miracle? Is it a miracle that I finally found my missing car keys? Is it a miracle that a basketball player made a buzzer-beating, game-winning shot? Let's try to define miracles in a biblical sense.

Miracles are events that defy the normal working of the laws of nature—they have no natural explanation. The first miracle of the earthly ministry of Jesus was at the wedding in Cana where He changed water into wine. This was a supernatural event that required Jesus to supersede the normal laws of nature in some way. We have no description of how this happened, but we know it is not normal, and the Apostle John described it as the beginning of the “signs” Jesus performed (John 2:11).

There are many who deny that the miracles in the Bible actually happened. This view was popularized in Western culture during the 17–1800s, especially in Germany, under what is called “higher criticism.” Many tried to explain the miracles away as devices to make a moral point since “we know” that miracles are not consistent with our scientific and rational understanding of the world.

Pass out the *Accepting Miracles* worksheet to the students. In this activity today, you will find some questions to consider regarding acknowledging the miracles recorded in the Bible. Have the students work in groups to consider the questions. Once they are finished, continue with the discussion below.

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As you think about all of the miracles in the Bible, there may be some that strike you as odd. There are surely some that are more fantastic than others. But we accept these things not because we can explain them, but because we know the God who can explain

them—the one who has created the universe and causes it to function moment by moment. If you are having doubts about those events, please talk to someone about those doubts.

We live in a time where many people present us with challenges to believing in these miracles, and they offer what may sound like reasonable natural explanations for some of the events, especially the events of creation. It takes faith in the God we trust to accept these events as true. And beyond that, those who adopt a naturalistic worldview have no explanation for how the universe began or why it obeys the laws we observe. They put their faith in everything being created from nothing even though that violates the laws of nature.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was your conclusion about the consistency of accepting the miracles of the life of Jesus but rejecting His miracles of creation and instead embracing the naturalistic scientific explanations for these events? *While believing in a young earth and a six-day creation is not essential to salvation, it is still inconsistent to accept the miracles performed by and through Jesus (the Virgin Birth, Resurrection, walking on water, etc.), but then reject His miracle of Creation because it runs counter to modern scientific consensus. As we approach Scripture, we should not allow ourselves to pick and choose which miracles we believe but to accept them all by faith knowing that God has revealed them to us.*
2. If we have conversations with those who may hold different views regarding the timing and order of the creation events (e.g., accepting the big bang and other evolutionary ideas), how can we help them to see this inconsistency? *First, it is important to approach them with questions about what they think rather than accusations. Second, we must acknowledge that this is not an issue of salvation, but point them to the idea of the authority of Scripture. Third, it may be helpful to point to the fact that a consistent witness to the miracles of the Bible may be a more compelling testimony to someone who is not a believer than believing miracles in one spot but not another. Ultimately, without a perfect creation and Adam as our head, there is no need for Christ as our substitute (Romans 5:12).*