

Schedule of Readings for “Miracles & Study Guide Questions”

Week (1) of: September 10

Part One: Read the Introduction & Chapter 1, ‘Believing in Miracles’ (pp. xiii-9)

Part Two: Read ‘Introduction to the Miracle Stories’ & the first part of Chapter 9, ‘Conversion Miracles’, The Miracle of C.S. Lewis’s Conversion, and ‘My Conversion’ (pp. 115-128)

Introduction and Believing in Miracles (pp. xii- p. 9)

1. Do you believe there are miracles today? Why or why not?
2. What struck you the most in these chapters?
3. Metaxas opens with this idea that he felt like “a prince exiled from another kingdom and whenever I saw hints of that other kingdom, I hoped to find my way back.” (p. 6) Do you ever feel like an exile? How do miracles help us connect with that other kingdom?
4. How did CS Lewis come to Christ? How did he and Tolkien differ in their response to the horrors of WWI? (p. 7)

Metaxas writes: What if all the myths and fairy tales were pointing to something that was not only true, but also truer than anything we knew in this world, to a realm that was truer and more real? (p. 8)

Because if you believe in just that one miracle it will open up the world of miracles itself, will lead you back into a world of miracles itself, where those miracles themselves point to the larger truth, point to the place where they came from and are signposts to that place, signs for us here to know that there is a place there... (p. 9)

What if those who simply believed in anything where only half-wrong, because their desire to believe pointed to something that was true, not just in the world itself but inside them?

And what if those who knew Santa Clause didn’t really exist were themselves only half-wrong, because the rejection of that kind of sloppy childish belief pointed to a desire to only believe in what was real, what was really real... (p. 9)

At the end of chapter 1, Metaxas asks the following questions, “what if the half-truth of the desire for something beyond us could meet up with the half-truth of the desire for only what is really real and true, which we can know and see and touch in this world too? What if those two halves could touch and become one true truth we were both looking for?” (p. 9)

5. Can you see the glimmer of truth in fairy tales? Explain.
6. Have you ever felt the need to “sift the information” of a story about a miracle? Why or why not?

‘Introduction to the Miracle Stories’ & the first part of Chapter 9, ‘Conversion Miracles’, The Miracle of C.S. Lewis’s Conversion, and ‘My Conversion’ (pp. 115-128)

1. What is your conversion story?
2. Is there something here that even an atheist cannot deny? What would that be?
3. What is a true myth? (p. 125)
4. What were the distinct steps in C.S. Lewis’ conversion?
5. What experiences had caused C.S. Lewis’ to become a confirmed atheist? (p. 123)
6. What are some of the long-term results of C.S. Lewis’ conversion? (p. 126)

Metaxas/My Conversion

1. How might conversion be the crossing of a starting line as opposed to the crossing of a finish line? (p. 128)

2. In what ways did Metaxas experience miraculous transformation at conversion? How did he immediately change in profound ways? (p. 128)
3. What do you think makes a true conversion?

Week (2) of September 17

Part One: Read Chapter 2, 'What is a Miracle'

Part Two: Read the second part of Chapter 9, 'Why these Miracles are so Powerful' (p.128-133), and 'Becoming the Person You were Meant to Be' (pages 134-141)

Open today's discussion by Reading: Hebrews 2:1-4 ESV

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ²For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

1. What is a miracle to you? Do you agree with Hume's definition on page 11 of a miracle? Why or why not? (p. 11)
2. Do you believe that God created the world? Do you think most people do? (p. 12)
3. The big question on (p. 12) is whether or not a rational person can live with the miraculous. What is your opinion of this?
4. Why must we examine miracles with the greatest critical rigor? Why or why not? (p. 13)
5. "True faith is not a leap in the dark; it's a leap into the light." How does this statement from (p. 14) seem different from what we usually think? Or does it?
6. Are real miracles ever in danger of disappearing just because we look at them? (p.15)
7. Does context matter when it comes to miracles? (p. 15)
8. Metaxas says on page 15 that 'miracles are never about themselves; they're about whatever they are pointing toward.' What do you think?
9. Metaxas says that God performs miracles to make himself known to us; that this idea is indeed why we can even call something miraculous. Is this a new idea to you? Do you agree with it? Why or why not? (p. 17)

Chapter 9

Why These Miracles Are So Powerful

1. What strong evidence do we have that these conversions are authentic? (p. 129)
2. How did Metaxas respond to his orthodox Greek priest? How did Metaxas view his family's Orthodox Greek Church? (p. 130)
3. What happened to Manolis the short-order cook and when did he and Metaxas meet again? What was so exceptional about this encounter? (p. 133)

Becoming the Person You Were Meant to Be (Ed Tuttle)

1. What happened to Ed the first time a “powerful wave” came over him? What was the end result? (p. 134)
2. What happened the second time a similar power came over him and this time he was paralyzed? What was the result? (p. 136)
3. What happened the third time a similar power came over him and there was an extraordinarily bright light? (p. 137) What was the result this time?
4. How did all of this affect his relationship with his wife Donna? (p. 141)
5. Has God ever changed your feelings for someone? What happened and why do you think God chose to do that?
6. What role did humility play in Ed’s story? (p. 139)

Week (3) September 24

Part One: Read Chapter 3, ‘Miracles and Science’ (pp.23-33)

Part Two: Read the third part of Chapter 9, ‘The Golden Fish’, and ‘I am Your Life’ (pp. 142-152)

Open today’s discussion by reading: Isaiah 40:21-26 ESV

Do you not know? Do you not hear?

Has it not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

²² *It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;*

²³ *who brings princes to nothing,
and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.*

²⁴ *Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows on them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.*

²⁵ *To whom then will you compare me,
that I should be like him? says the Holy One.*

²⁶ *Lift up your eyes on high and see:
who created these?*

*He who brings out their host by number,
calling them all by name;
by the greatness of his might
and because he is strong in power,
not one is missing.*

Chapter 3 – Miracles and Science

1. For many people, science and religion cannot exist together. Why do you think they feel this way?

2. Albert Einstein, though not a believer of the God of the Bible, said, “Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind.” (p. 25) Do you think that scientists in today’s world would agree with him? Why or why not?
3. On page 27, Metaxas says that ‘the fundamental laws governing all the matter in the universe were set in place a fraction of a fraction of a second after the Big Bang.’ Do you think we can ever, then, truly pin down the beginning of creation? Why or why not?
4. On page 31 the subtitle is ‘Can we prove that a miracle happened.’ Do you think miracles can be proven? What do you think helps prove them to an atheist?
5. Are you uncomfortable or fearful of mystery? Why or why not? (p. 30)
6. History from the Bible is being proven more and more as we uncover new evidence (see page 33 about the Hittite tablets and the Davidic stele). How can this make the Bible seem more real to you as you read it?

The Golden Fish

1. Where did Eric find himself in the summer of 1988? Where was he living? What kind of work was he doing? Was he happy? (pp. 142-144)
2. What was he desperate to know? (p. 145)
3. What did Eric do next? (p. 146)
4. Describe the dream that Eric had and why was this significant? (p. 147-148)
5. What happened when Eric told others about the fish dream? (p. 148-149)

I Am Your Life

1. What was writer Frederica Mathewes-Green like before she knew Christ? (p. 150) **Fr. Stan’s sermon a few weeks ago.
2. What happened in the summer of 1974 during a trip to Ireland? (p. 151)
3. How did this affect her life? Her goals? (p. 152)

Week (4) of October 1

Part One: Read Chapter 4, ‘Is Life a Miracle’ (pp. 35-45)

Part Two: Read the end of Chapter 9, ‘A Brooklyn Drug Dealer Finds God’ (pp.153-162)

Open today’s discussion by reading: Isaiah 42:5-9

Thus says God, the LORD,

who created the heavens and stretched them out,

who spread out the earth and what comes from it,

who gives breath to the people on it

and spirit to those who walk in it:

⁶ *“I am the LORD; I have called youⁱⁿ in righteousness;*

I will take you by the hand and keep you;

I will give you as a covenant for the people,

a light for the nations,

⁷ *to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.*

⁸ *I am the LORD; that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to carved idols.*

⁹ *Behold, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth
I tell you of them."*

1. In this chapter, Metaxas shows how life on earth is so dependent on everything being exactly as it is. What in this chapter was a WOW moment for you?
2. Do you think it is possible that there is life on other planets after reading this chapter? Why or why not?
3. Metaxas talks about the formation of the moon and the 'final' earth on pages (pp. 41-43). The collision that occurred with 'earth' and the mass that finally enlarged earth and became the moon is not a proven fact, but a theory that has gained support throughout the scientific world. Does this theory leave you breathless with wonder, or skeptical, as science is always in flux with their theories?
4. There are many facts about the moon and the earth's relationship in this chapter. Which one was most amazing to you?
5. Looking at all the evidence in this chapter of a precisely engineered earth, made just for us, the question is: who are we? What do you make of this question? How do you answer it? (p. 45)
6. Read Psalm 139:1-18. (Have your group read aloud from Psalm 139:1-18). The Psalmist speaks of the wonder of his own formation. Looking at this chapter, can you understand the awe with which this psalm was written? If you could write a psalm about this chapter, about the formation of the earth, what would be in it?

“A Brooklyn Drug Dealer Finds God”

1. What kind of prayer was Cisco, when Metaxas first comes in contact with him? (What was Cisco's reputation, and have you ever known anyone like that?) (p. 153) Did that surprise you? Why or why not?
2. What was Cisco's childhood like? (p. 154)
3. Why did Cisco end up in the New York State Correctional System? (p. 157)
4. What did Cisco's friends do to convince him to finally go to the church service? What was their strategy?
5. How did Cisco finally come to Christ? Who did God use in that process? (p. 162)

Week (5) of October 8

Part One: Read Chapter 5, 'The Miracle of the Universe' (pp.47-56)
Begin the discussion this week by reading: Psalm 33:4-11 ESV

For the word of the LORD is upright,

and all his work is done in faithfulness.

⁵ *He loves righteousness and justice;*

the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.

⁶ *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,*

and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

⁷ *He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap;*

he puts the deeps in storehouses.

⁸ *Let all the earth fear the LORD;*

let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!

⁹ *For he spoke, and it came to be;*

he commanded, and it stood firm.

¹⁰ *The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;*

he frustrates the plans of the peoples.

¹¹ *The counsel of the LORD stands forever,*

the plans of his heart to all generations.

1. What role does precision play in the creation and sustaining of the universe? Why is that important? (pp. 48-53)
2. In this chapter, (pg. 54) Metaxas says, "The more science learns, the clearer it is that although we are here, we shouldn't be." Metaxas then asks two questions: 1) why haven't we heard this before? 2) What are we to make of what has been called the "anything but that" theories, "which rather desperately try to find ways around the mounting evidence for—and implications of a finely tuned universe?"
3. How do you respond to the revelation of the miracle of human life being sustained on this planet? With terror, wonder, ancient awe or childlike joy? (p. 56)
4. How do you meld this with the Genesis account of creation? Could the Big Bang be somehow possible within the story of creation?

Part Two: Read the first half of Chapter 10, 'Healing Miracles', 'Cisco and Hector', 'A Simple Healing Prayer', 'Allergic to Everything' (pp. 163-181)

5. What did Hector ask Cisco to do for him? (p. 163) How long had Cisco been a Christian when he prayed for Hector? Did this seem like a bold request given Hector's situation? Why or why not? Was Hector completely healed the first time Cisco prayed?
6. What happened the second time Cisco prayed for Hector? (p. 168-169) How does God speak to people? Has God ever spoken audibly (or silently in your Spirit) to you? Or has God spoken through scripture or through another person to you?
7. What ministry did God call Cisco to after all of this? (p. 170) How do you think God prepared Cisco for this special calling?
8. What happened to Hector? (p. 170)

A Simple Healing Prayer

1. What happened to Michael, the mild-mannered worship leader? (pp. 172-173)
2. What kind of prayer did John pray for Michael? (p. 173)
3. Who gets the credit for Michael miraculous healing? (p.174)

Allergic to Everything

4. Who was Lucy? (p. 175-177) What all did she lose as a result of her illness/allergy?
5. What did all the people Lucy met have in common before she was healed? (pp. 177-179)
6. What happened when Lucy began to read the New Testament? (p. 180)
7. How many days did Lucy pray with the woman who came to pray for her? Why do you think God chose to work in this way and on this timeline? (p.180)
8. What did her doctor in San Francisco tell her? (p. 181)

Week (6) of October 15

Part One: Read Chapter 6, 'Questions about Miracles' (pp. 57-74)

Begin this week's discussion by reading: 2 Chronicles 7:14 ESV

¹⁴“if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Read John 11:38-43 ESV

³⁸ Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” ⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

1. Do you know anyone like Joni, who has been prayed for multiple times and never been healed? What do you think about that? What does Joni think about that?
2. How can God use difficulties to bless us in the long run? (p. 65)
3. If we can thank God for the good things, can we blame him for the bad? Why or why not? (p. 66)
4. Do you think Satan exists? Why or why not? If so, does he have miraculous power that he could use to deceive us? Why or why not? (p. 67)
5. Is the supernatural world all-good? Can we accept a gift from a criminal? Why or why not? (p. 67)
6. Why do you think in our culture people feel uncomfortable with speaking about Satan and evil? (p. 67)

7. According to Metaxas, how does praying for miracles work? (p. 68)
8. Is God bound by time and space? How does that affect the way He works? (p. 69)
9. Do we need to get our thoughts in tune with the universe? Why is this faulty thinking? (p. 70)
10. Can we mentally visualize what we want and make the universe give it to us? Is this in line with Biblical thinking? (p. 70)
11. What is the new age fallacy? What is the Prosperity Gospel/ “Name it Claim It” teaching? (pp. 70-71)
12. Do our prayers for someone depend on the individual’s ability to believe? (p. 71) Why or why not?
13. How can we participate with God in what He is doing? (p. 71)
14. Can we find a verse in the Bible and then “claim” that verse? Why or why not? (p. 72)
15. How much faith did Lazarus have when Jesus prayed for him to come back from the dead? (p. 72)
16. Do all Christians believe in miracles? Why do you think this is? (p. 72)
17. What presuppositions do you bring to your thinking about miracles? How has our current culture influenced your thinking? Why would you need to be brave to believe in miracles today? (p. 74)

Part Two: Read the second half of Chapter 10, ‘Grandfather is Healed’, ‘A Watch Stops’, ‘Nuts’, ‘A Beggar in Ghana’ (pp. 182-204)

18. How did the healing of Christine’s grandfather affect the entire family?
19. Who prayed for the grandfather? What had this person experienced personally right before she decided to pray for the grandfather? What question did the aunt ask the grandfather before she laid hands on him to pray? (p. 183)
20. What happened to Paul while he was speaking to a men’s group? (p. 184)
21. What did doctors tell him? (pp. 185-186)
22. What happened to Paul’s watch? Why do you think God did that? (p. 187)
23. What did God do over the course of 21 days in Paul’s life?
24. What happened with Benny Hinn? How many times did Paul and Rivers attend the Benny Hinn meetings? What was the prophecy Benny spoke over Paul and Rivers? (p. 193-194)
25. Why do some people believe there are no more miracles in our current day? (p. 196)
26. What happened to Juanita (after she was prayed for by Paul Teske)? (pp. 196-201)
27. How did her healing change Juanita’s life?
28. How many different people prayed for Simon, the driver with the sore on his leg? Why do you think more than one person felt lead by God to pray? (pp. 203-204)
29. Have you ever encountered an angel? Why would God send an angel to someone? Where do you see this happening in the Bible? (Gideon, Jacob wrestling with an angel, Mary)

Week (7) of October 22

Part One: Read Chapter 7, ‘The Biblical Miracles’

Part Two: Read the first half of Chapter 11, ‘Miracles of Inner Healing’, ‘Forgiveness’, ‘Seeing Jesus’

October 29

Part One: Read Chapter 8, ‘The Resurrection’

Part Two: Read the second half of Chapter Eleven, ‘God and Marriage’

November 5

Part Two: Read all of Chapter Twelve, ‘Angelic Miracles’ ‘Angels in Church’, ‘Touched by an Angel’, ‘You are not Going to Die’, ‘Changsha Train Station’,

November 12

Part Two: Read the first half of Chapter 13, 'Varieties of Miracles', 'The Dream that Helped Me Write Bonhoeffer', 'The Lost Keys'

November 19 (Thanksgiving Week) -- No Groups

November 26

Part Two: Read the second half of Chapter 13, 'Two Hemispheres, Three Songs', 'One Phone Call', Cali to Bogota' 'A Girl and a Squirrel'

December 3

Part Two: Read Chapter 14, 'Touching Eternity', 'A Sobbing Judge', 'USS Washington, June 1940', 'Beyond Death', 'The Power of God', 'September 11, 2001, New York City', and Chapter 15