

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (September 15 , 2024)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Do you believe in miracles?

A young hospital patient bandaged up from a horrific accident.

Despite all treatments, medications, procedures, his arm has withered and died, the only option is removal. Moments before the amputation he begs the doctor to check his arm again. Without any hope, simply to appease him, the doctor removes the bandage and checks again.

The arm has been fully restored.

Do you believe in miracles?

Most surveys of religious life in America affirm that around 80% believe in miracles. A miracle is not simply an odds-defying, highly improbable, event. A miracle literally breaks the rules of nature.

I believe in miracles. Even as a skeptic (which I admit I am publicly on a regular basis) I've heard too much, seen too much, to chalk up what I've seen and heard to coincidence or fate. I believe in miracles.

A belief in miracles is an absolute requirement of Christian faith.

Without the miraculous, Christianity would not exist. Without the miraculous, Christianity would simply be the most noble (I believe) of all the admirable and competing life philosophies and ethics.

Do you believe in miracles? Christian faith begins with a massive miracle and the miracles keep coming ...

Worship: The Closeness of God (1 Kings 19:9-13, Matt 1:18-25 ESV)

⁹There he (the Prophet Elijah) came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' ¹⁰He said, 'I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.' ¹¹And he said, 'Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord.' And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹²And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. ¹³And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'"

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came

together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel' (which means, God with us). ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus."

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What do we know about Elijah? (For more 1 Kings 18:1-19:8)
2. How did God reveal Himself to Elijah? To Joseph?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. What does, "the Lord was not in the earthquake" mean? v.11
4. What does, "she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit" mean? Matt 1:18
5. What does, "they shall call his name Immanuel" mean? v.23

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

6. How would you define a "miracle"?
7. Share a miracle you, or someone you know, has experienced?
8. If you believe in miracles ... why are there miracles?
9. Share two or three miracles you can think of from the Bible.
10. If you had been Elijah, in that cave, how would God speaking to you ... in a low whisper ... affect you and change you?
11. If you had been Joseph, God speaking to you through a dream, how would that affect you, change you?
12. How does God speak to you now, get your attention today?
13. What is the biggest, most amazing, miracle you can think of?
14. What does it mean that God would come to, and for, you?

As you spend time praying, remember that prayer is meant to be a natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to reveal himself to you. Ask God to open your eyes to the miracles around you this week. Ask God to help you trust Him, see Him, follow Him. He will help us ... because He loves us.