

“*Miracles* drew me in from beginning to end and was as hard to put down as a great novel. I believe its message will reach everyone at a point of need; from the spiritually searching, to those who are sure of their faith, and everyone between. While easy to read, it takes the reader on a captivating and challenging journey through the ambiguity of life as we experience it, and connects to our own beliefs about God and life. Seldom do I find a book I could see sharing with anyone. This one I will.”

–Ray Vander Kooij
*Senior Pastor, Bethel Christian Reformed Church
Acton, Ontario*

“There is nothing like a true story to bring the truth of Scripture to life. John has done a masterful job at weaving together what God has said in the past, and what God is doing in the present. This book is a God-centered, Jesus-focused, Spirit-empowered account that will stimulate your faith, challenge your complacency; nourish your soul and stir your heart. *Miracles* provides a helpful framework in answering key questions we all have on the journey. Read it and allow God to take you deeper on your journey of faith.”

–Dr. Justin Dennison
*Lead Pastor, Johnston Heights Church
Surrey, British Columbia*

“In our post-rational age when the non-Western world is moving in on the West, we are facing the need for a new apologetic—a new defence of the Christian faith. The modern days of scientific and intellectual evidences which caused us to ask the question “Does God exist?” have been replaced by the post-modern days in which the apologetic question now heard is, “Does God do anything?” This, effectively, is the challenge put to Christianity by both non-Christians and other religions.

Miracles delivers powerful answers by way of stories and accounts of what God is doing. John’s further reflections on the subject are honest and heartfelt; they bring the reader to an understanding of his own concerns as to God’s disposition towards us. The reader is guided toward a normative relationship and walk with the Father. In this honest and courageous work, John provides pastoral guidance from a wealth of experience as a student of the Word, as a family person, and as one who has had ample opportunity to serve as a chronicler of the stories of our brothers and sisters in Eastern Europe.”

–Ian Campbell
*Lead Pastor, Grandview Baptist Church
Kitchener, Ontario*

“Over the course of our lives we have all asked the questions found in this book... John Murray looks squarely at the subjects raised and builds answers on the strength of sound biblical knowledge. This book will be a source of great encouragement and a real faith-builder to all who read it. I highly recommend it to the believer, as well as those seeking to understand the Christian faith.”

–Rev. Dr. Douglas Coombs
Chairman of the Board, Eurovangelism Canada

MIRACLES:

COINCIDENCE OR
DIVINE INTERVENTION?



JOHN MURRAY



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To Rita,
my wonderful wife and friend,
who tirelessly and lovingly
has given me encouragement and support
these past fifty years.

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PREFACE

Is there such a thing as coincidence or is life orchestrated by an invisible hand? At times when the unexpected happens, especially to our benefit, is it a chance event or was it meant to happen on our behalf?

The Oxford Dictionary defines coincidence as a “remarkable concurrence of events apparently by chance.” The last part is particularly significant: “apparently by chance.” This leaves the door open for it *not* being by chance.

When we experience what we consider to be a coincidence in life we mostly accept it as such, and allow it to pass by without giving it much attention. However, when the coincidence has a spiritual element to it, we then begin to give it a second thought and wonder whether it was a coincidence or something more like divine intervention.

Have you ever experienced an unexpected solution to a problem? I have. I’ve experienced unforeseen funds turn up from a stranger to meet a financial crisis. Have you have people cross your path and you sense that it was no accident? How about when someone seemingly arrives from nowhere and is in the right place at the right time to avert serious injury to a family member? How do you view these occurrences? If there is a spiritual aspect to the event, it

naturally causes us to look and think more deeply about its significance.

What are our choices in this matter? Either an extraordinary event or happening turns out to be pure coincidence or it is of divine origin. If the second, then it has to be classified as a miracle. Again the dictionary takes a non-committal position by saying that a miracle is an event which is “supposedly supernatural”—which is quite nebulous. If an occurrence has no rational or natural explanation, then it has to be supernatural. If supernatural, then it is miraculous because any intervention of God in the life of an individual is a miracle.

God created the world and in so doing set in process the laws of nature. We are all subject to those laws and the consequences of the natural process of life, whether we are Christians or not. However, because God brought the natural laws into existence, He has the right to override those laws and can choose to make them non-effective—hence the realm of miracles.

Simply put, miracles occur when God chooses for them to occur; although we may think them to be coincidences. But if that were always the case then some of us Christians have been subjected to a myriad of coincidences in our lives, wouldn't we? Because God is sovereign, all-knowing, and all-powerful, He can intervene in the lives of humans at will.

When the divine intersects with humanity, it will result in an event which is normally inexplicable by man. God is not God *because* He performs miracles. He performs miracles because He is God. Miracles do not make Him who He is, but it is because of who He is that he performs miracles.

This book is about miracles because it is a book about God's intervention in the lives of ordinary people. Some of the stories are personal, others are about people I know, while still others have come from first-hand sources. The book was written as a faith-builder and as a means of encouragement in the Christian walk. If you are looking to be encouraged and have your faith strengthened by seeing God at work, then this book is for you.

If, on the other hand, you have doubts about the occurrence of miracles, that's fine. You read the book and determine for yourself whether there are such things as miracles or should these extraordinary events be written off as coincidence? You decide.

A NOTE ON GROUP STUDY

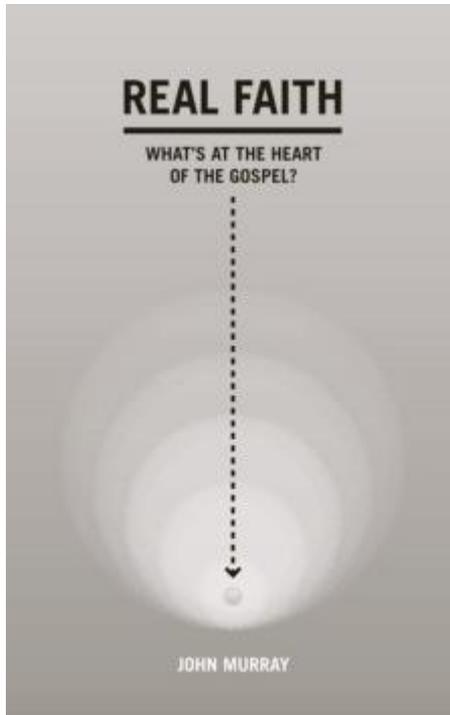
The subjects covered in this book are rich for group discussion. At the end of each chapter you will find questions for that purpose. Prayerfully consider the questions, and be encouraged by stories of God's intervention in the lives of other group members.

As well as promoting a good discussion, hopefully, these questions will help in the personal application of the Scriptural principles learned. Ask God to apply them to your life, so that you might grow in understanding and in your Christian faith.

ALSO BY JOHN MURRAY

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