

Miracles: What They Are, Why They Happen, and How They Can Change Your Life

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An inspirational and enlightening exploration of the phenomenon of miracles from the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Bonhoeffer*, Eric Metaxas.

What are miracles, and why do so many believe in them? Is it for comfort, to explain the inexplicable, or do we simply long for a connection with something larger than ourselves? And why do some people dismiss them out of hand, as if they can never happen?

What *Heaven is for Real* did for near-death experiences, *Miracles* does for the miraculous—provides undeniably compelling evidence that there's something real to be reckoned with, whatever one has thought of this topic before. *Miracles* provides a wide range of real stories of the miraculous and will engage the reader in the serious discussion that this fascinating and rich subject deserves.

Miracles is in some ways a more personal, anecdotal, and updated version of C. S. Lewis's 1947 book on the subject. Metaxas's *Miracles* is an exhortation to view miracles as not only possible, but as far more widespread than most of us had ever imagined.

Eric Metaxas says it is not a question of whether miracles happen—the evidence that they do is overwhelming in this book alone—but rather, what exactly are miracles, why do they happen, and how can we to understand them in our own lives?

Miracles: What They Are, Why They Happen, and How They Can Change Your Life Details

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
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Nancy says

A Scientific Basis for Miracles

The first part of Eric Metaxas book on Miracles, gives a detailed scientific explanation, although written for the general reader, of how miracles are possible. This section pulled me in. I've read a lot of science about the cosmos, but this section was one of the best I've read. Eric points out how amazing it is that the Big Bang occurred and even more amazing that there is life on this planet at all. When you've finished the section you have to agree with him; it is amazing.

Metaxas uses the scientific information to argue that instead of being a closed system, the solar system is open to the point that an outside force, which could be called God, is able to act on human events. This is his explanation for how miracles are possible. I have to admit that first reading the scientific data and then having it used to discuss the miracle of Jesus Christ and his resurrection is very persuasive.

The second part of the book presents stories of miracles from conversion miracles like those experienced by C.S. Lewis and Charles Colson to angelic miracles and miracles of inner healing. He makes the point that miracles can change your life. His life was changed by a miracle. He makes it very believable.

I highly recommend this book. Whether you're a Christian or a skeptic, this book will give you something to think about.

I reviewed this book for Dutton.

Sue says

My hope is that this book changes perspectives on life in the cosmos, on Christ, His life and eternal mark on history, on the desire of God to do something quirky that is so out of the ordinary that the event just cannot be explained in the natural. The first part of the book explores the concept of miracles. "If God could speak the universe into existence, could he not afterward speak into that existence." (p.12) "Miracles point to something beyond themselves." (p. 16) From there, Eric Metaxas gives us science lessons on human life and astronomy (who knew Jupiter has an important part to play in our life on Earth). How life in the universe is calibrated just right through the eons of time is a wonder! Then Eric takes us through the miracles of Jesus, including the greatest, His resurrection, and shows how wondrously applicable the resurrection is to anyone and everyone. The second part of the book compiles stories of miracles in the lives of those people whom Eric knows, and this part is a fascinating read. The miracles detail Eric's conversion to Christ, along with other conversions, and stories of lost keys, a girl and a squirrel, and others beyond comprehension. The book was a joy to read.

Veronika Countryman says

I was almost dissuaded to read this book by its title. It made it sound like the Metaxas was going to put forth pat answers on the who, what, where, when and how of miracles, as well as the formula for securing your own. Happily, the read was much more satisfying than that. Full disclosure: I am a long time Christian and also a long time thinker who is not contented with superficial answers to life's complex issues. He treats the subject in two contexts: the cosmic, creation-related context and the personal, private context. Both are completely appropriate to the subject matter and supportive of each other. There are plenty of scientific data, as well as personal anecdotes which are, by the way, all from people whom the author knows personally. On the other hand, there are instances where the author admits that some things simply can not be known or are not known yet. The author explains beautifully the balance between the knowable and the unknowable, the natural and the miraculous, and even the gray areas that bridge the two. Regardless of where you come from theologically or philosophically, I think you will become enriched and more at ease in musing at life's seeming miracles and mysteries, and you will know that you are in good company when you don't have all the answers.

Dkovlak says

This is an amazing book. It clearly shows how God is still at work in lives today performing miracles that we can not imagine. This is a must read for everyone. The most amazing part is that although the author covers quite a number of miracles, that is only a slight fraction of the miracles that God is performing every day that we never hear about.

Shelley Sipe says

Knowing Mr. Metaxas' talent for writing biography's, i immediately jumped into the second part of the book wanting to get into "the stories".. I was not disappointed.. Each miracle, fascinating in it's own right, is based on stories of people the author knew well enough to trust their accounts. One amazing story after another. When i went back and read the first part of the book, the theology of miracles.. the hows and whys.. the science of it all, i was pleasantly surprised to find that i loved it even more. When i read the miracle of the universe, my mind was utterly blown. That one chapter is worth the price of the book. Yes i'm a believer, i have had miracles in my own life and have seen them in the lives of others, but had i not, this book would still hold it's own. I found the author not to be preachy but merely offering his readers a safe place to consider the possibility. Thank you to Mr Metaxas for writing another stunning book and opening up the conversation.

Zach says

This a must-read for anyone who has wondered how God communicates with his children. Miracles are a way for our Father to bring us closer to him, by demonstrating awesome insight into each of our lives and the ability to direct any situation toward His purpose.

This is a wonderful exploration into the miraculous existence of human life on Earth and illustration of how

a few of our brothers and sisters have been reminded of God's love.

Katie says

I enjoyed this book so much! I feel it is an excellent read for both Christians and skeptics. There is so much that both sides can learn from. There are two main parts of the book. In the first half, Eric approaches the subject with a scientific and logical mindset. In one chapter, he talks about how improbable it is the Big Bang occurred, which I found particularly fascinating.

In the second half of the book, Eric tells miracle stories that happened in his life and in the lives of a few people he knows personally. They range from all sorts of miracles - healing, conversions, eternity and inner healing. I really appreciated how the miracles occurred in the lives of Christians from a variety of denominations. It is a reminder that God cares about all people of all denominations.

I think that skeptics would find this book interesting and helpful, because Eric approaches miracles from a skeptical standpoint. He brings up questions that many people have God, particularly in the first half of the book and addresses them wonderfully. Too often the subject of miracles can be something that makes those in and outside of the church feel a bit uncomfortable. The subject is rarely discussed logically among skeptics and those in the church assume that miracles no longer happen today.

I feel that this book truly helps both sides to understand the subject of miracles a lot more. It is truly a book for everyone! Congratulations to Eric on writing another wonderful book!

S.C. Skillman says

Metaxas is renowned as the author of a much-admired book on Dietrich Boenhoffer (published in 2011). In this new book, he turns his attention to a vitally important subject: our worldview and how it affects our perception of reality.

In the first half of the book Metaxas examines the rules by which we may determine that an event is “a miracle”. One of his most compelling early chapters is about the miracle of life on earth. As a counterpoint to Stephen Hawking’s observation that “We are just an advanced breed of monkeys on a minor planet of a very average star” Metaxas gives us a taster of the vast number of fine-tuned characteristics which are necessary to support life. As I read this chapter it put me in mind of one of my own favourite quotes, which comes from Joseph Conrad’s novel Lord Jim:

"This is Nature – the balance of colossal forces... the mighty Cosmos in perfect equilibrium produces – this."

Beyond this, Metaxas goes on to consider the picture of God breaking through into the natural world with miracles, like a great tree bursting through concrete. He examines the questions of God’s apparent “selectivity” – why do some people’s lives benefit from miraculous intervention, and others not?

In the second half of the book Metaxas gives accounts of miracles which happened to himself and to people he knows personally. These stories of miracles are robust and compelling. Some are disturbing, creepy and

challenging. Near the end of the book he relates a 9/11 story which holds you transfixed. And he ends with a challenge both intellectual and spiritual.

I found this book thrilling, uplifting and enormously encouraging. Throughout my life there have been times when I've instinctively felt something to be true, without having the necessary resources of intellectual argument to lay it on the table before others. In this book, Metaxas encourages us to fully engage our minds on a subject which is far too easy to talk or think about in a "loose" or "woolly" way.

If you possibly can, find time to read this book and to consider what Metaxas says.

Wesley Roth says

After reading "Amazing Grace" and "Bonhoeffer" (two books which deeply affected me), I was very much looking forward to his new book "Miracles." In the first half of the book, Metaxas does an excellent job introducing the reader to what IS a miracle, and does a great job addressing miracles in the realm of science and the universe: "What if science points us beyond science?" the author asks. He cites Bonhoeffer: "We are to find God in what we know, not in what we don't know." Metaxas does an excellent job defending miracles and also the Christian faith in these early chapters.

The 2nd half of the book tell the "miracle stories": conversion, healing, angelic and variety. Reading through each one (some only a couple pages, some longer), deepened my faith. I will continue to recall these miracles in the years ahead and applaud Mr. Metaxas in writing such a great book. I hope the "mainstream" of American culture takes note of this book and its message. It is desperately needed.

Don says

I read nearly 60 books in 2014 and it looks like this is only one that I gave 5 stars to.

Metaxas writes an important book in the tradition of intellectuals like C. S. Lewis. He approaches the subject of miracles from a perspective of logic and science, not blind faith or literal acceptance of scripture.

A rational, open minded, nonbeliever can read this book and come to the conclusion that believing in miracles is actually more logical than trying to explain them away.

My favorite section is where Metaxas discusses the various impossible events that had to happen in order for the universe and earth to exist in order to support life. There are so many extremely unlikely variables that all have to happen, that believing we are here by random chance takes much more faith to belief than to accept that a grand designer is responsible for our existence.

[illegible]

How easy is it to hit this sweet spot? Caltech astrophysicist Hugh Ross explains it this way. Take a bunch of dimes (and I mean a bunch) and use them to cover every square inch of North America. Now stack another layer of dimes, and another, and keep doing it until your North America shaped stack of dimes reaches 238,000 miles to the height of the moon. Now that's a lot of dimes, but we are not done yet. Next step -- do it a billion more times. Then take one dime and paint it red and hide in one of these billion piles. The last step is to blindfold a friend and have him pick out the dime on his first try. If you believe this could happen by random chance, you are either nuts or a closed-minded atheist who refuses to see the hand of God in the creation of the universe.

Let's give our atheist friend the benefit of the doubt and accept the fact that this did happen by dumb random luck. Now it's got to happen more than a hundred times more because there are that many other "impossible" actions that have to happen for us to exist.

Here is just one more. Scientists think that 4.25 billion years ago, the earth was a much smaller size. Then one day a Mars size mass that had been travelling across millions of light years hit the earth perfectly to blast away an old atmosphere that could not support life and give earth the gravitational mass needed to support life. To assume that this was a random event is like believing two bullets randomly shot from guns on opposite sides of the Grand Canyon could collide head on in such a way to cancel out each other's momentum. It's hard to do, but much easier if you are trying to do it on purpose instead of relying again on random chance.

The last part of Metaxas's book retells miracle stories of his personal friends that he vouches for their character that they would be telling the truth. Someone that comes from a background where people do not speak of such experiences, may find these stories hard to believe, but I am familiar with many similar stories from people I know. I believe miracles happen much more frequently than many people would acknowledge.

This is a great book to either confirm your belief in miracles or give you a logical, scientific reason to relook at them and recognize that miracles do happen.

Mary Daberkow says

Eric Metaxas visited my church last week to discuss this topic. I was halfway finished with the book, enjoyed his interview, and enjoyed finishing this insightful book.

He dissects issues of faith, science, and God at the heart of it all. He delves into some of the biblical miracles. The second half of the book is accounts of miracles he knows in his friends' lives. They are soul stretching. This was my favorite part of the book. You will have to read it yourself to get those stories. Here are some of my highlights from other areas of the book.

"All miracle stories are stories of eternity touching time— of Heaven touching Earth, of the creator touching his creation, of the supernatural touching the natural."

"Why do we sometimes feel that we are exiles from someplace glorious? What is this innate feeling that we have shared across cultures, centuries, and continents?"

"Why would I long for something that didn't exist? Where did that longing come from? It was such a deep and innate longing that it seemed to come from a place more real and true and alive than the place I was

currently living in, as though my longing was part of my true nature, before it had become broken off, as though it was a vestige of who I really was and would be again someday."

"Believing that God could create the universe but could not perform any infinitely smaller miracle is illogical."

"True faith is not a leap in the dark; it's a leap into the light."

"Though he is the same God for every one of us, in his tenderness and desire to reach us he is able to speak to us in ways that are very specific to us."

"Miracles of inner healing are instances when God seems to do in a few moments what would typically take years to heal— or which would perhaps never heal."

"And our new life becomes a foreshadowing and a promise of what we will do fully when we die, when we return once and for all to the place for which we were created, beyond time and space."

"But into our lazy reverie Jesus makes the statement: "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it."

Ginni Brinkley says

Disclaimer: I had access to a pre-release digital copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. I saw Eric Metaxas speak at NewDay, a Christian youth camp held in Norwich. I wasn't a camper, I took my daughter that one evening to see Matt Redman, who was signing. Eric was a bonus! He mentioned following him on Twitter, so I did. A few weeks ago he tweeted about people being part of his book launch team, so I filled in the most atrociously poor request form, dangling the carrot of making Miracles my 100th book of the year (I was on 91 at the time) and waited. When I got the email saying I was part of the team I realised I needed to do some serious adding, and fast, to get to book 99, so I could make good my promise to have Miracles as book 100! Several novellas later... TAHDAH!

****BOOK 100 of 2014 - MIRACLES by Eric Metaxas****

Miracles is a book of two parts, both extremely readable, both exciting but in different ways.

Part 1 deals with what miracles are, and includes lots of fabulous science facts about the world, the universe, the moon, gravity, and the amazing precision of it all. I want to write all of these down so you can wonder at them all right now, but I do not do spoilers (not after my enjoyment of a long anticipated book was ruined by an Amazon reviewer who started her reviewing with the spoiler to end all spoilers). The science in Miracles isn't controversial to non Christians who might pick up a copy, though the conclusions may be challenging! It'll be challenging to some Christians too. My inner science geek is a geek with faith, so the science stuff in part 1 was grand all round. There's also a good look at Bible miracles and why they happened. Loved, loved the exposition of the story of Lazarus as it gave me new pieces of the jigsaw I didn't know before. I'd buy Miracles for part 1 alone.

Part 2 covers actual modern day miracle stories, all the tellers of these stories are known to the author, deliberately so - he felt it would add a layer of credibility to some pretty incredible stories if he didn't just use

hearsay but firsthand accounts from people he could trust. There are lots of them, grouped into different types. I tore through this second section in one afternoon whereas the first 8 chapters were consumed more slowly, with lots of asides to my husband, saying, "did you know..."

Overall reading this book was a very positive experience, and I think it has plenty for people of faith and people who don't believe but have an interest in the subject and an open mind to what they might read.

Sharon says

My favorite part of this book was 'The Introduction to Miracle Stories' and the accounts of the miracles given in that portion of the book. When I attended a Socrates in the City Event I had the opportunity to meet and visit with three of the people the author wrote about, so I was delighted to 'meet' them again via the pages of this book. Personal instances of God's intervention in the lives of individuals happen, and these stories need to be told. As I read, I reflected on friends in my own circle who have experienced miracles.

If you are a skeptic, I would like to challenge you to read the accounts in this book, follow the criterion, and perhaps conduct your own inquiry? This, I think, would be very scientific of you. I dare say there are those in your own town who have experienced miracles.

Curtis says

This is a miracle book of a different sort. The author begins the book by setting forth a case that believing in the miraculous is both perfectly logical and sensible given what we know from science today. He explores the 'most recent scientific discoveries' to show how strongly all signs point to the supernatural and miraculous origins and continuation of the universe. While I don't agree with the basis of his argumentation I found it an interesting one to follow. The way I see it, belief or outlook about all that there is comes before what one believes is 'rational' and 'logical'. In my mind, of course the author believes these discoveries prove the strong rationality and logical nature of miracles and the supernatural. I doubt others who do not already share his perspective on creation will readily be convinced. As I see it, argumentation and scientific discoveries rarely lead one to faith in a personal loving God. One must experience it to believe.

I found the discussion about what miracles are and how they affect this world thought provoking. I'm not sure if I entirely agree with the distinction between natural and supernatural but it was good to be presented with the argument. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and the way in which it sought to 'normalize' the experience of miracles in our daily life. I heartily agree that this should be the norm. Exploring many different types of miracles, from the 'fantastic' to the seemingly 'mundane', the author gives testimony of a breadth of experience not normally explored in the mainstream.

Much more could be said but I would recommend this one to any who aren't quite sure what to think or believe about miracles and want to be presented with some thought provoking arguments and stories about how the supernatural invades our world every day.

February says

As I started reading this book I wanted to highlight a quote I liked however, as I continued reading I realized that nearly every page had so much good content that my pages began to look like a class on annotation! Miracles is a rich book, full of life that penetrates the heart!
