



December 7, 2014

What Kind of Miracle Are You Expecting?

DISCUSS:

How are you doing so far this season with keeping your focus on Jesus? What helps and what hinders?

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

For the first eight chapters of Isaiah, the prophet describes the need of God's people 700 years before the first Christmas. The need is overwhelming! The northern kingdom has collapsed. The southern kingdom is apostate; it's a wreck. It has been describing a dark, dark scene. Then, a miracle happens! A message from God comes to Isaiah about a future rescue. Isaiah's job is not to perform the rescue but to give the people God's word of hope.

Read Isaiah 9:1-7.

[Q] What does Isaiah say God will do?

[Q] What will be the people's response? What hope do they have?

We know that this prophecy refers to Christ because of the way it is quoted in Matthew 4:13–16.

[Q] Which parts were fulfilled by Christ's first advent? Which parts will be fulfilled by His second advent?

[Q] Which part of this prophecy, or title of Jesus, is most meaningful to you today? Please explain.

"Everlasting Father" does not suggest that the Son is also the Father, for each Person in the Godhead is distinct. "Father of Eternity" is a better translation. Among the Jews, the word "father" means "originator" or "source." For example, Satan is the "father [originator] of lies" (John 8:44, NIV). If you want anything eternal, you must get it from Jesus Christ; He is the "Father of eternity."

Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Comforted*, "Be" Commentary Series

THE PURPOSE OF A MIRACLE

From the weekend message:

There are three basic characteristics of Biblical miracles:

1. They are by nature distinct, they grab your attention
2. They display great power
3. They are bursting with significance and meaning

The *purpose* of a miracle of God...

- brings glory to God, shines a spotlight on Him
- accompanies a message from God – it's His signature
- addresses a real human need

[Q] What are some examples of Jesus' miracles that fit these characteristics and purpose?

APPLY

Are you willing to be used as a delivery system for one or more of God's miracles this Christmas?

[Q] How? Here's an example:

Ask God to help you find someone with a real human need. Ask Him for an opportunity and for ideas to:

- address their need
- shine a spotlight on God
- combine it with a personal message from God to them (That they know the gift is from you is not required.)

Could they use a friend to listen? Could they use some prayer?

Maybe they would be blessed by a meal or a note of encouragement.

Expect that God, through your common, ordinary actions and words –will perform His miracle - meeting their need, showing Himself and speaking a personal message through your mouth.

What are some other possibilities?

Download *5 Big Messages of the Nativity*. Jesus' Birth is all About the Miraculous tinyurl.com/5BigMessages

PRAY

Download 25 days of Advent readings that correlate to the Advent sermon series: valleycommunity.cc/advent
Check out these family Advent resources: valleycommunity.cc/resources/faithathome/faithathomeadvent2014