

## When Miracles Seem Ordinary

Would you mind if I talked about Christmas? Hey, the retail stores are already promoting Christmas, so let me join them for a moment. Christians often refer to “the miracle of Christmas,” but let’s unpack what happened at Jesus’s birth from an outsider’s perspective? Take away the visits of the angels and what do you have?

- A young woman (likely a teenager) got pregnant before she was actually married. Perhaps a little scandalous, but Mary was not the first unwed mother.
- Her fiancé married her anyway. Again, Joseph was not the first man to marry his pregnant fiancé.
- A census called for the couple to travel. While in Bethlehem (perhaps for one day or one month—who knows?), Mary gave birth to her son.
- The place where they were staying was crowded, so they improvised and used an animal’s feeding trough as a bed for the baby.

OK, so maybe these events were not everyday occurrences, but they weren’t unheard of. Certainly nothing that screamed MIRACLE!

But it was a miracle nonetheless.

Those just observing these events saw just that—events—but they were unaware of the miracle that was behind it all.

Mary and Joseph knew of the miracle. After all, the angel Gabriel made a personal appearance to each of them and made that clear (Matt. 1:20-21; Luke 1:26-38). In addition to the angel, Mary knew because she was suddenly pregnant and she knew she was a virgin! Even John the Baptist made it clear when, as an unborn infant, he responded to being in the presence of Jesus, the unborn infant (v. 44). And a whole mess of shepherds knew it when an even larger group of angels announced it (2:8-14).

Meanwhile in both Nazareth and Bethlehem, friends and neighbors just went about their business. They were clueless to the miracle occurring in their

village—the Son of God was being carried in a virgin’s womb. Their obliviousness did not make it any less miraculous.

That’s true in your life too. God is at work in your life. Perhaps He’s done something downright marvelous and miraculous for you. A healing from sickness. An answered prayer. An unexpected gift or blessing. It may just seem run-of-the-mill and ordinary to others, but you know: God was at work.

God doesn’t just work in the “fire from heaven” or “parting of the Red Sea” kind of moments. God works in the “ordinary” things of life as well. God works His miracles in even “ordinary” ways, but they are no less miraculous!

I like Wayne Grudem’s definition of a miracle: “A less common kind of God’s activity in which he arouses people’s awe and wonder and bears witness to himself” (*Systematic Theology*, ch. 17).

Some miracles are not for everyone’s eyes. Only a few knew at the time of the miracle of the birth of Jesus. No one else but you may know the miracle He worked in your life, but it is no less a miracle. Just ask yourself:

- Did God arouse my wonder and wonder through what happened?
- Did He lead me to give Him glory?

God’s grace and provision to me is quite miraculous. I cannot explain His transforming power in my life in any other way than God was at work. I cannot explain that in any other way than I know God has transformed me into a new creature. The old has gone; the new has come.

The “ordinary” miracle that happened at Christmas made possible the miracle of what God has done for me. I stand in awe and wonder at both miracles, and I am compelled to glorify Him.

I hope you can do the same.