

Make the Miracles of Christmas Real In Your Life

Jesus' birth was marked by angelic visitations, prophecies, dreams and miraculous signs. As you celebrate Christmas, expect God's power to flow in your life throughout the coming year.

During the Christmas season we have a special opportunity to reflect on the power of God in our lives. The Christmas story paints a powerful picture of a supernatural God visiting His people with signs, wonders and miracles. It renews our faith in such phenomena as angels, prophetic dreams and outpourings of the Spirit. And it reminds us that we can expect the Lord to move supernaturally in our lives no matter what season we are in.

The Christmas story is a story of supernatural timing. Christ was born at exactly the right moment in world history. Paul said He came in "the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4, NKJV). Looking back, it's amazing to see how accurate those words are. Consider these facts:

- The transportation system of the Roman Empire had paved the way for the message of the gospel to be carried to millions. Also, the empire's military conquests had prompted many to abandon their false gods as they wondered, Why weren't we protected from our enemies?
- Greek culture provided a universal language for communicating the gospel, and the Greeks' worldview eroded many of the deceptive foundations of false religion.

- At the same time, the Jewish people had given birth to the Scriptures and had spread the hope of a coming Redeemer King. The stage was perfectly set for Christ to be born and to rescue a lost world with the Father's love.

Just as God orchestrated circumstances in Jesus' day to make the way for His birth, He works out every detail in our lives "in the fullness of time" and sets the stage for the things He desires to birth in and through us. Christmas reminds us that God has a plan, a time and a way of making everything come together in our lives for our good.

God's plan for our lives unfolds in a progression of "supernatural seasons." In the same way that the world passes through winter, spring, summer and fall, our lives move forward with a certain rhythm that is synchronized with a heavenly timing: "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1).

The key is to look for God's perfect timing and recognize it when it comes. The sons of Issachar understood times and seasons, and that insight helped them to walk in God's purposes (see 1 Chr. 12:32). Since Jesus corrected those who noticed natural seasons but ignored the more important signs of their times (see Matt. 16:3), we need to press in to discover the power of supernatural seasons for ourselves.

Signs, Wonders and Miracles

But Christmas is more than a story of God's supernatural timing. It's also a showcase of the signs, wonders and miracles He can weave into the fabric of our lives every day if we'll just believe Him.

Do you believe in signs? The birth of Jesus was a sign.

Hundreds of years before Christ was born, Isaiah prophesied, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son" (Is. 7:14).

A sign is something placed before us to give us direction. Signs communicate heavenly information and are a part of every believer's life: "These signs will follow those who believe" (Mark 16:17).

There are many signs in the Christmas story. The shepherds were told that the Christ child would be a sign to them (see Luke 2:12). Joseph was visited by an angel in his dreams on three occasions and given prophetic guidance that protected his young family (see Matt. 1:20-21; 2:13,19). And the wise men were directed to the manger through a miraculous sign in the heavens (see Matt. 2:9-10).

The fulfillment of the many specific prophecies from the Old Testament concerning Christ's birth remains a sign to every generation that Christ is truly the Son of God. One commentator says that according to the laws of chance, it would require 200 billion Earths, populated with 4 billion people on each, to come up with one person whose life could fulfill just 100 accurate prophecies. Yet the Scripture records more than 300 that were fulfilled in Christ's coming alone.

The birth of Jesus was also a wonder. Isaiah went on to declare: "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful" (Is. 9:6). Jesus is a wonder beyond compare.

Two thousand years ago, wise men came from far away just to worship Him. And today, His sacrificial love, healing presence and life-changing message draw us to the same

place of awe. He is the One who performs wonders for His people (see Ps. 77:14).

A wonder is something God does that is so unusual it causes you to stop and take notice. It prompts a question-What's the meaning of this?-so that God can generously supply the answer.

Wonders are embroidered throughout the Christmas tapestry. Angels appeared to shepherds and virgins.

A devout priest named Zacharias was worshiping in the temple when a heavenly messenger appeared to tell him his wife, Elizabeth, would conceive. His unborn child, destined to be a messenger of Christ's coming, was filled with the Holy Spirit in Elizabeth's womb (see Luke 1:5-17). These wonders awakened his heart and prepared him to recognize an even greater Child who was to come.

How long has it been since you were awakened by the wonders of God in your life? Let the Lord supernaturally open your eyes and help you to see the wonders of His love all around you. Take time to worship Him for all He has done as well as for the new things He is doing.

Above all, the birth of Jesus was a miracle. Miracles send us to God with a simple question: How could this have happened? The answer is always, "All things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23).

The miracle of Christmas is that the Word became flesh in Mary's womb through the power of the Holy Spirit, apart from the involvement of a human father (see Luke 1:35). The Incarnation is a miracle as well as a foundation stone of our faith. As a miracle, it can never be fully understood or explained on this side of heaven.

How could God the Son become a human being without relinquishing His deity? The reality escapes explanation. But as a foundation stone of our faith, it inspires us to embrace the limitless power of God.

The celebration of Christmas is a celebration of God's miracle power. As Spirit-filled believers, we embrace the mysterious and unexplainable and honor the supernatural.

Faith in the signs, wonders and miracles of God is our inheritance. If things are looking difficult, remember: Jesus is the miracle that prompts us to confess, "All things are possible to those who believe."

Fear Not

But just as Herod sought to remove the Christ child, the enemy seeks to pre-empt our miracles. Delays come. The unexpected arises. The enemy tells us we are being misled by God.

Amid the attack, we may lose sight of His faithfulness, and our hearts may shrink. Fear, doubt and unbelief rip at the seams of our confidence, betting we will retreat in discouragement and relinquish our reward.

God's response is consistent and reassuring: "Fear not." These words of comfort are repeated again and again throughout the Christmas story, reminding us to trust Him.

- The angel said, "Fear not," to Mary. "Fear not, Mary. ... The Holy Ghost will come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. ... For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:30,35,37, KJV). Her astonishment at being chosen by God for such an

unimaginable role was understandable. We often struggle with accepting the promises and plans God has for us. His “fear not” reassures us that His power is more than enough.

- The angel said, “Fear not” to the shepherds. “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11). The shepherds struggled to make sense of their circumstances, as we often do. They were reminded that miracles are often born in the least expected times and places.

- The angel said, “Fear not” to Joseph. “Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife” (Matt. 1:20). Faith sometimes means loving someone enough to believe God is at work in his life, even when it might be easier to judge him or cast him away in shame. Joseph’s ice-cold anxiety about how things would appear melted under the warm light of God’s promise: “I am at work in your relationship. Stay faithful.”

When God initiates signs, wonders and miracles in the supernatural seasons of our lives, His promises usually appear incredible and impossible. Be on guard against the unbelief, cynicism and double-mindedness that many have toward supernatural things.

The angel scolded Zacharias because he did not believe the angel’s words, which would be “‘fulfilled in their own time’” (see Luke 1:20, NKJV). Though his faith was slow, the time came when he held the miracle he had been waiting for in his own two hands and offered a song of praise to the God of the impossible (see Luke 1:57-80).

Mary’s faith-response was more timely: “‘Let it be to me

according to your word'" (Luke 1:38). She gave the Spirit of God permission to operate supernaturally in her life. She is a perfect example of the kind of God-confidence that will move you into a miracle.

If we'll respond to His promises as Mary did, we will enter the same dimension of God's unusual power. Who knows where that kind of faith might take us?

Too many of us lose our focus during the holidays. Our misguided materialism drives us into a frenzied pace that leaves our spiritual lives in the dust. The wonder of Christmas soon turns into the weariness of excessive busyness. Our living connection with Jesus is crimped; our God-perspective fades to black.

Don't miss the revolutionary message of Christmas: The birth of Christ reveals God as a living, supernatural force in the lives of His people. His plan is steadily unfolding and will be fulfilled in His perfect timing. Delays may arise, and questions will come, but if the eyes of our hearts are open, we'll see signs, wonders and miracles along the way.

This Christmas, expect the unusual to touch your life. Signs may appear. Angels may come to your aid, and prophetic dreams may give you direction. Receive His timing, and allow an outpouring of the power of God to carry you into your next supernatural season.

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