

READING AND DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

Miracles

by

C. S. Lewis

INTRODUCTION

Lewis's lucid, generous-minded, and comprehensive apologetic for miracles is, in its own way, no less compelling than *Mere Christianity* in the case it makes for the overall rationality of the Christian faith. Perhaps even more striking than its careful arguments for why the naturalistic picture of reality is insufficient to describe reality as a whole, is the unusually transparent window it offers us as to what "the *glorious* resurrection of the New Humanity" (p. 246) might be like.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. “What we learn from experience depends on the kind of philosophy we bring to experience” (p. 2). Do you agree?
2. Lewis finds it impossible to make moral judgments and believe, simultaneously, that the conscience is nothing but a product of nature (i.e., has no “tap-root in an eternal, self-existent, rational Being, whom we call God”; p. 43). Do you think that there could be a future in “cut-flower” morality—moral claims without any reference to the supernatural?
3. What is the view of truth that Lewis puts forward in *Miracles*? How does this differ from attitudes toward truth today?
4. Would it be possible, in any sense, for a naturalist to be a Christian?
5. “The ascertained nature of any real thing is always at first a nuisance to our natural fantasies—a wretched, pedantic, logic-chopping intruder upon a conversation which was getting on famously without it” (p. 137). Why does Lewis place so much importance on the “opacity” of existence? Is he right?
6. “If we fully understood *what* God is we should see then that there is no question *whether* He is. It would always have been impossible that He should not exist” (p. 141). Do you agree with Lewis, that our doubt of God’s existence almost always arises from an imperfect understanding of the nature of his being?

7. "... the reason why God has no passions is that passions imply passivity and intermission.... He [God] cannot be affected with love because He *is* love. To imagine that love as something less torrential or less sharp than our own temporary and derivative 'passions' is a most disastrous fantasy" (p. 148). Lewis comments that it is easy to think of God's love as being less intense than human love because it is "passionless." Do you think this "disastrous fantasy" is a common one? How might we combat it?
8. What point is Lewis's humorous fantasy of erudite limpets in chapter 11 designed to illustrate?
9. "A supreme workman will never break by one note or one syllable or one stroke of the brush the living and inward law of the work he is producing. But he will break without scruple any number of those superficial regularities and orthodoxies which little, unimaginative critics mistake for its laws" (p. 153). Do you think Lewis's frequent analogy of God as an author, or an artist, makes it easier for us to accept the credibility of miracles?
10. In what way does Lewis argue that Christianity (especially with its Judaic roots) is "undemocratic"?
11. Lewis writes, "a world in which I was *really* (and not merely by a useful legal fiction) 'as good as everyone else', in which I never looked up to anyone wiser or cleverer or braver or more learned than I, would be insufferable" (p. 189). Why? How might Lewis's ideas here go against modern feeling?

12. Lewis suggests, from looking at the accounts of Christ's appearances after the resurrection, that the old and new nature are not as separate as we think. What do you make of his ideas on the resurrected body and the new nature?
13. What is the picture of heaven that emerges from *Miracles*?
14. In *Miracles*, Lewis in part set out to defend the authenticity of biblical miracles. What might he say about claims that miracles still occur today?

*The material in this study guide is copyrighted by the C. S. Lewis Foundation and was produced in conjunction with Liz Evershed, the guide's principal author. For more information on the C. S. Lewis Foundation's mission, programs, and events, please visit www.cslewis.org.