

Summary of Miracles, Chapters 16-17

Chapter 16 – Miracles of the New Creation

- In the earliest days of Christianity, an apostle was, first and foremost, a man who claimed to be an eyewitness to the Resurrection.
- Then, to preach Christianity meant primarily to preach the Resurrection. It's the central theme in every sermon reported in Acts.
- The Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John – were composed later for the benefit of those who already had accepted THE Gospel, the miracle of the Resurrection.
- If early Christians had died without making anyone else believe in the Resurrection, no Gospels would ever have been written.
- They didn't see this just or even primarily as what happened at the tomb of Jesus. They were claiming that, at one time or another, they had met Jesus during the six or seven weeks that followed His death.
- The Resurrection was not the act, but rather the state, of having risen, which was attested to by intermittent meetings during a limited period, terminating in the Ascension.
- It was not seen primarily as evidence for the immortality of the soul, as we see it today.
- It was seen as the first event of its kind in the whole history of the universe, a pioneering event that paves the way for the rest of us. A new chapter in cosmic history was opened.
- The immortality of the soul is more a Greek idea, harking back to Plato, who believed the soul is pure but becomes deformed through association with the body. (Christians have a much higher view of matter and the body, when perfected.)
- The Jews believed in a soul that went to Sheol, a land half unreal and melancholy. Both the Greek and Jewish ideas are irrelevant to the Resurrection story.
- Instead, the Resurrection corroborated another Jewish belief in "the day of Jahweh," when peace would be restored and Israel would have dominion under a righteous King. The belief included the idea that some righteous dead would come back to life. The apostles thought they had seen the first instance of this.
- The Resurrection fulfills Hebrew prophecies of return, restoration and a great reversal.
- If the Resurrection is true, then a wholly new mode of being has arisen in the universe.
- Christ's body (and ours to come) is like but unlike the body His friends knew before death. It eats. It can be touched. It was soon to become different, or go somewhere else.
- The Ascension is the story of Christ and his body going somewhere else, to a life that has its own, new Nature. (And remember, this is a book about Nature and the Supernatural.) Christ goes to prepare a place for us in that whole new Nature, which provides the environment for His glorified humanity, and ours.
- Walking on the water and the raising of Lazarus give us hints of what the New Nature will be like. Nature can be made to do whatever spirit pleases.
- (The evil dream of Magic comes when we long to have such power without paying the price and without being obedient to the Father. We see it in the evil reality of lawless applied science.)

- We live in a universe where organisms are always getting more disordered (entropy), and the film is never reversed. You can almost define the future as the period in which what is now living will be dead and in which what order still remains will be diminished.
- But entropy assures us that while it may be the universal rule in Nature, it is not universal absolutely. A Nature that is “running down” cannot be the whole story. A clock can’t run down unless it has been wound up. There must have been a time of a period of winding up; the Christian claim is that those days are not gone forever.
- Science sees only the winding down, because that’s all there is to observe. It can’t truly see what came before or what is to come.
- The Transfiguration also is a glimpse of something to come (but hard to know what it is). It may reveal some special glorifying of Christ’s manhood, or a glory that all risen men will inherit.
- We tend to see reality as having one level (the Naturalists) or two levels (the Supernaturalists). In fact, there might be many levels. A New Nature is being made from an old one, and we live with and in the excitements of a house being rebuilt.
- We yearn for the highest level, and we want to be united with it in the Sonship of Christ.
- The Ascension belongs to a New Nature; it’s the joint between the old nature and the New.
- We feel a discrepancy between body and spirit; the New Creation will heal that discrepancy.
- (An aside) Scripture leads us to suppose that life in the New Creation will not be a sexual life. It may well be a life of intimacy more powerful than what we know through our present sexuality.
- Heaven will not be just a state of mind. It will be a state of the body as well as part of the New Nature.
- The small, perishable bodies we now have were given to us as ponies are given to schoolboys. We learn to manage them now so that someday, we will be able to command a greater body, and ride with our King.

Chapter 17 – Epilogue

- Go and read the New Testament for yourself. When you turn to modern scholars, watch for their naturalistic assumptions.
- Watch out for “Everythingism.” If starting from God, it leads to Pantheism. If starting from Nature, it leads to Naturalism.
- Counterarguments against Miracle should be given full attention; if Lewis is wrong, he should be refuted, he argues. (Truth is important to him!) But know that your natural feelings against the likelihood of miracles are no evidence that miracles do not occur.
- You are probably right in thinking that you will never see a miracle and that there probably is a natural explanation for anything that has seemed “odd” in your life. God doesn’t sprinkle miracles like pepper into Nature.
- Miracles are found at the great moments of spiritual history, and it would be unlikely that any one person would be near such a moment. Also, we shouldn’t be eager to see one, because “nothing almost sees miracles but misery.”