

# Enchanted

The  
Problem  
With  
Power



# Recap

**Does the miraculous  
create faith?**

**Encounter**

**Decision**

**Response**



# Recap

Then Jesus began to **denounce** the towns where he had done so many of his miracles, **because they hadn't repented** of their sins and turned to God. **Matthew 11:20**

Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "**Pharaoh will demand, 'Show me a miracle.'**"  
When he does this, say to Aaron, "Take your staff and throw it down in front of Pharaoh, and it will become a serpent."  
**Exodus 7:8-9**



# Recap

The point of the miraculous serves a higher purpose than to just **entertain** us, or **change the outcomes** of our lives in the ways we wish.

And he added, "God blesses those who do not **fall away** because of me." **Matthew 11:6 NLT**

"Blessed is anyone who does not **stumble** (**offended**) on account of me." NIV, ESV

Maybe another way of understanding this phrase might be "blessed are those who aren't disappointed when God doesn't act or behave in ways they think He should"



"Anyway the proper study of Man is anything but Man; and the most improper job of any man, even saints (who at any rate were at least unwilling to take it on), is bossing other men. **Not one in a million is fit for it, and least of all those who seek the opportunity.**"

**Letter to Christopher Tolkien**

Tolkien expert Dr. Thomas Shippey has said that **"the Ringwraiths are Tolkien's most original and distinctive image of evil"** in part because they represent the **danger that power poses in the hands of anyone**, even oneself. Shippey calls this process by which ordinary people who begin with good intentions end up becoming corrupted and twisted as they acquire power the **"wraithing process."**

A silhouette of a person walking is visible in the bottom left corner of the image, partially overlapping the text.

# J.R.R. Tolkien, On Fairy Stories

I would venture to say that approaching the Christian Story from this direction, it has long been my feeling (a joyous feeling) that God redeemed the corrupt making-creatures, men, in a way fitting to this aspect, as to others, of their strange nature. **The Gospels contain a fairystory, or a story of a larger kind which embraces all the essence of fairy-stories.**

They contain many marvels—peculiarly artistic, beautiful, and moving: "mythical" in their perfect, self-contained significance; and among the marvels is the greatest and most complete conceivable **eucatastrophe**.

**eucatastrophe:** the **sudden happy turn** in a story which pierces you with a joy that brings tears

We have forgotten  
**what** we are and  
**who** we belong to

Does the miraculous  
**create** faith?

How much **proof/  
evidence** do you need?



An election can be seen as the public asking the question "who do we trust with power over us"

If you had **access** or **control** over the supernatural, what would you do with it?

When we speak of the supernatural/miraculous what we are really trying to grasp is **power**.



# Scenario 1

When Joshua was near the town of Jericho, he looked up and **saw a man standing in front of him with sword in hand**. Joshua went up to him and demanded, "Are you **friend** or **foe**?"  
Joshua 5:13

"**Neither one**," he replied. "I am the commander of the Lord's army." vs 14



you are about to attack a heavily fortified city, a siege that could take years potentially, You at least want to know that God is with you

"Are you for us or for our enemies?" NIV

"Neither"

# Scenario 1

But I have promised you, 'You will possess their land because **I will give it to you as your possession**—a land flowing with milk and honey.' I am the Lord your God, who has set you apart from all other people. **Leviticus 20:24**

the story of exodus can be seen as the story of God purging Israel from their egyptian roots

"I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. **I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.**"  
**Exodus 5:6-8**



# Scenario 1

Joshua wants God (and His power) on his side. God needs to remind Joshua that He wants Joshua with Him

And the Lord said to Job: "Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? **He who argues with God, let him answer it.**" Job Promises Silence Then Job answered the Lord and said: **"Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further."** **Job 40:1-5**



## Scenario 2

So on January 15, during the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon **led his entire army against Jerusalem.** 2 Kings 25:1

On August 14 of that year, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard and an official of the Babylonian king, arrived in Jerusalem. **He burned down the Temple of the Lord, the royal palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem. He destroyed all the important buildings in the city.** vs 8-9



# Scenario 2

Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, **took as exiles the rest of the people who remained in the city**, the defectors who had declared their allegiance to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the population. But the captain of the guard allowed some of the poorest people to stay behind to care for the vineyards and fields. **vs 11-12**



## Scenario 2

Jeremiah the prophet said to all the people in Judah and Jerusalem, "For the past **twenty-three years**—from the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, until now—the Lord has been giving me his messages. I have faithfully passed them on to you, but you have not listened." **Jeremiah 25:2-3**

Again and again the Lord has sent you his servants, the prophets, **but you have not listened or even paid attention.** **vs 4**

And now the **Lord of Heaven's Armies** says: Because you have not listened to me, I will gather together all the armies of the north under King **Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon** **vs 8-9**



# Scenario 2

**Train** these young men in the **language** and **literature** of Babylon. **Daniel 1:4**

So at the sound of the musical instruments, all the people, whatever their race or nation or language, bowed to the ground and **worshiped** the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. **Daniel 3:7**

Shadrach, Mesaiach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. **But even if he doesn't**, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up." **vs 16-18**

don't fast forward, live in this moment, these three hebrew boys stand before the king because of the sins of a nation



## Two encounters with God's power

Are you friend or foe? "**Neither** one,"

He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. **But even if he doesn't...**

The first scenario teaches us that power is not ours to wield. The second teaches us that the outcome is Gods. **Both are a test.**

All these people died still believing what God had promised them. **They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it.** They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth. Obviously people who say such things are looking forward to a country they can call their own. **Hebrews 11:13-14**



**"No matter how we rationalize, God will sometimes seem unfair from the perspective of a person trapped in time. Only at the end of time, after we have attained God's level of viewing, after every evil has been punished or forgiven, every illness healed, and the entire universe restored—only then will fairness reign. Then we will understand what role is played by evil, and by the Fall, and by natural law, in an "unfair" event like the death of a child.**

**Until then, we will not know, and can only trust in a God who does know."**

**Philip Yancey,  
Disappointment with God**



God stretches the northern sky over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing. He wraps the rain in his thick clouds, and the clouds don't burst with the weight. He covers the face of the moon, shrouding it with his clouds. He created the horizon when he separated the waters; he set the boundary between day and night. The foundations of heaven tremble; they shudder at his rebuke. By his power the sea grew calm. By his skill he crushed the great sea monster. His Spirit made the heavens beautiful, and his power pierced the gliding serpent. **These are just the beginning of all that he does, merely a whisper of his power.** Who, then, can comprehend the thunder of his power? **Job 26:7-14**

