

21-09-01-Coincidences Unmasked

miracles, supernatural, angels, prayer, divine intervention

Eccl 9:11

Human reasoning often hides God's miracles beneath coincidences.

### INTRODUCTION:

- **Eccl 9:11** speaks from *personal observation* and *human reasoning*: “*I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all.*” But just as Solomon came to his senses before death, so he ended his book with a proper view of God– **Eccl 12:13-14**, ...here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.
- These final verses **turn from** *reason's naturalistic view* (that “*time and chance*” governs all things) **to** *faith's supernatural view* that everything is being supervised by an Almighty God). **Most often**, God **does** let nature and life flow along on their own, but, **sometimes**, He intervenes.
- Because naturalism is the norm, **HOM.idea**. Some deny them entirely [**Thomas Jefferson** published a NT with all miracles removed.]. Others call them products of natural law's predictable stability. Christians believe them to be supernatural intervention's unpredictable serendipity.
- So-called coincidences get unmasked (**title**) when human rationalizing itself starts looking unbelievable in the face of the inexplicable. Let's take a look at a few modern testimonies of unexplainable miracles:

#### **I. The Flagman** [from Lynn Valentine's book, *Miracles*]

- A. [**Ron Williams**: “I was really looking forward to a weekend away with my family. As soon as I got off work on Friday, my wife, 4-year-old daughter and I started the 6-hour drive to our get-away retreat. // With an hour left to go, my daughter and wife were sleeping soundly, and I was fighting fatigue. I **knew I shouldn't** be driving, but figured we were nearly there, so I continued. Then my eyes locked on a construction flagman in the middle of the road waving for me to turn left. My reaction time was not what it should have been, but I turned just in time to make the detour. // My heart was pounding like crazy. Fully awakened by my near miss, I stopped the car to calm down and got out to see what kind of construction would be going on so late at night. // I was surprised to see no construction and no flagman. // I walked over to see that the road had ended there. Not far beyond that was cliff that we most certainly would have flown over had we not turned when we did.”]

B. **Reason explains:** *“A tired, sleepy man, felt guilty about driving in that condition and probably hallucinated the flagman. But what a coincidence he did so right before driving his family over a cliff!”*

## II. Maureen’s Story [from Joan Wester Anderson’s *Where Miracles Happen*]

A. [**Maureen M.** left at 2:30 AM from a party, on a night she describes as “dark and drizzly, with fog rolling in.” She still had 10 miles to go after dropping off a friend. She says, “Visibility was so poor that I tried holding my car door open, looking down at the road’s white line as a marker.” // Afraid to pull over or try going back to her friend’s, she kept driving as the fog thickened. Then her radio quit. Her headlights dimmed, flickered and went out. She often prayed as she drove. Now she *pleaded*, “Holy Spirit, this is one for You. I can’t see anything at all. You’ll have to drive this car.” // Though without lights, Maureen slowly drove on, clinging as if the steering wheel were a lifeline, and occasionally, for no apparent reason, turning a right or a left, somehow staying on the pavement. Folded in fog in all directions, she could see no outline of the road, no tree shapes, no road signs. It was like driving in gray cotton candy on a journey that never ended. // But finally, the engine died and she prayed, “God take care of me,” as the car rolled to a gentle stop. Hesitantly, she open the door and got out, shuffling alongside the car, her hands out in front of her to feel her way. Then, she saw a shape ahead, about a foot from the car’s front bumper. It looked like the outline of a building. Stepping right up to it, she looked again and again, then got down on her knees in tearful gratitude. She was in her own driveway.]

B. **Reason explains:** *“Isn’t the mind amazing? From years of driving it, her brain recorded the route home, and then, in her extreme time of need, she was drawing upon her flawless memory. If not, of course, what an amazing series of coincidences to get her home!”*

## III. Ken Gaub’s Story [also on TV Episode #1 of *Could It Be a Miracle?*]

A. [**Ken Gaub:** I was driving on I-75 near Dayton, Ohio, with my wife and children. We turned off for a rest and refreshment stop. My wife, Barbara, and our children went into the restaurant. I suddenly felt the need to stretch my legs, so I waved them off ahead, saying I’d join them later. I bought a soft drink, and as I walked toward a Dairy Queen, feelings of self-pity enshrouded my mind. I loved the Lord and my ministry, but I felt drained. My cup was empty. / Suddenly, a telephone ringing nearby jarred me out of my doldrums. It was coming from a phone booth at a service station on the corner. *Wasn’t anyone going to answer the phone? / What if it’s an emergency?* I stepped inside the booth and picked up the phone. / “Hello,” I said casually and took a big sip of my drink. The operator said: “Long distance call for Ken Gaub.” I almost choked. I said, “This can’t be!” / “Is Ken Gaub there?” the operator interrupted, “I have a long distance call for him.” I finally replied, “Yes, he is here.” / I

wondered if I could possibly be on Candid Camera! Still shaken, perplexed, I asked, “How in the world did you reach me here? I was walking down the road, the pay phone started ringing, and I just answered it on chance. You can’t mean me.” Then I heard another voice say, “Yes, that’s him, operator. That’s Ken Gaub.” I listened dumbfounded to a strange voice identify herself. “I’m Millie from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. You don’t know me, Mr. Gaub, but I’m desperate. Please help me.” / “What can I do for you?” I said. She began weeping. / “I was about to commit suicide . . . had just finished writing a note, when I began to pray and tell God I really didn’t want to do this. Then I suddenly remembered seeing you on television and thought if I could just talk to you, you could help me. Then some numbers came to my mind, and I scribbled them down.” / I prayed silently for wisdom to help her. She continued, “I looked at the numbers and thought, ‘Wouldn’t it be wonderful if I had a miracle from God, and He has given me Ken’s phone number?’ I decided to try calling it. I can’t believe I’m talking to you. Are you in your office in California?” / I replied, I don’t have an office in California. My office is in Washington.” A little surprised, she asked, “Oh really, then where are you? I don’t even know what area I’m calling. I just dialed the number that I had on this paper.” / “Ma’am, you won’t believe this, but I’m in a phone booth in Dayton, Ohio!” / Knowing this encounter could only have been arranged by God, I began to counsel the woman. As she told of her despair and frustration, the presence of the Holy Spirit flooded the phone booth, giving me words of wisdom beyond my ability. In a matter of moments, she prayed the sinner’s prayer and met the One who would lead her out of her situation into a new life. I walked away from that telephone booth with an electrifying sense of our Heavenly Father’s concern for each of His children. / What were the odds of this happening? With all the millions of phones and innumerable combinations of numbers, only an all-knowing God could have caused that woman to call **that** number in **that** phone booth at **that** moment in time.]

B. **Reason explains:** *“No, Ken. It’s what lotto-winners experience. The right circumstances, and they’re millionaires! But so amazing how both of you won jackpots by your converging coincidences!”*

## CONCLUSION:

–*Faith* [using Ecc1] answers, *“‘I have seen something else under the sun’: life may depend mostly on ‘time and chance,’ but God can intervene in unexplainable ways! **Human reasoning is wrong to hide His miracles beneath coincidences.** It’s wrong when skeptics illogically stretch the imagination beyond sound limits to try masking God’s *miracles* under a mental *veneer* of *natural coincidences*. In fact, it’s dangerous, because, **“here is the conclusion of the matter:** Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.”*