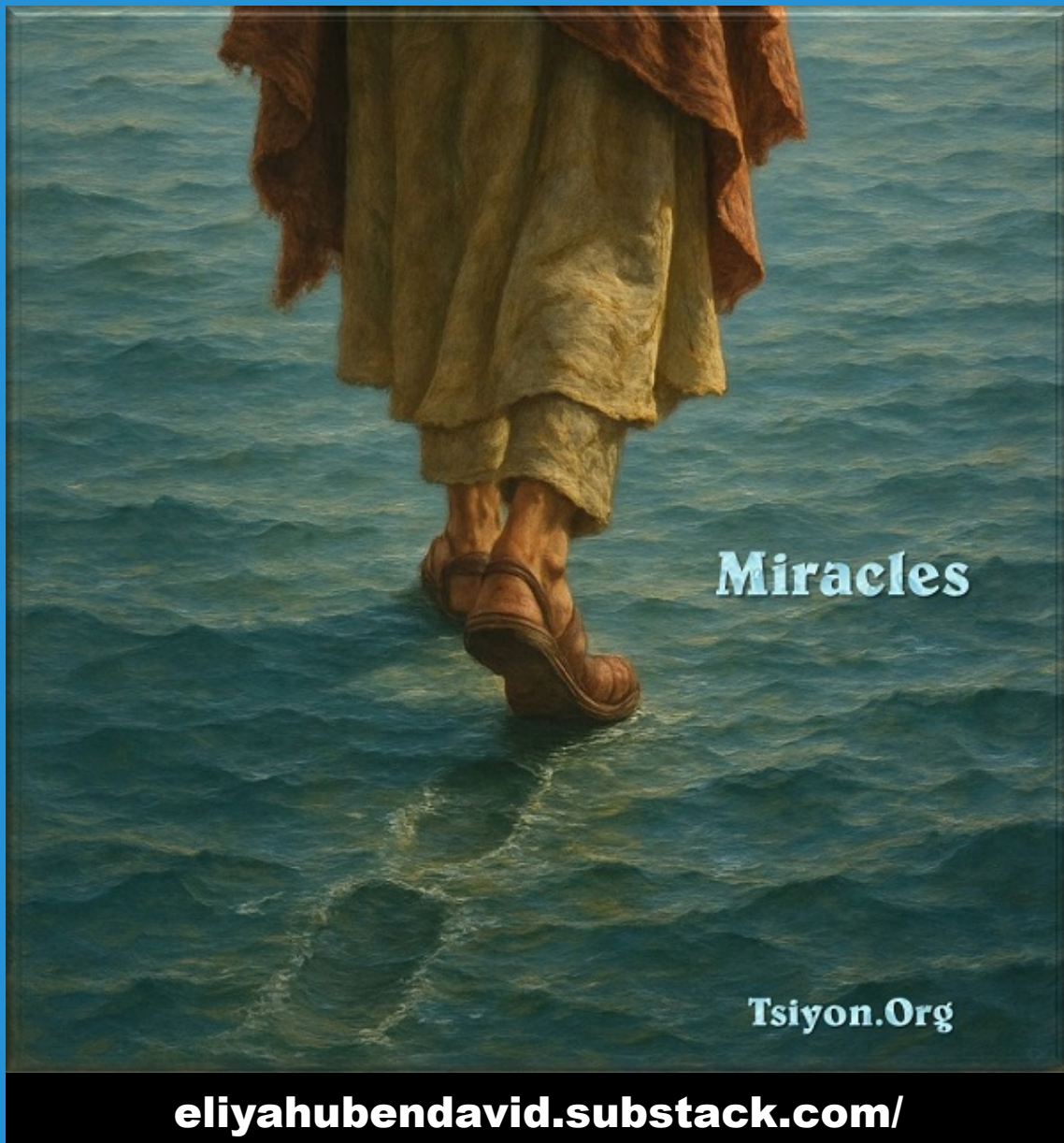


TSIYON NEWS

Tsiyon Messianic Radio Newsletter - Vol 20.34 - 06/14/6025 TAM - 09/06/2025 AD

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From Eliyahu

Back in the 1980s, a group of scholars launched an ambitious project called *The Jesus Seminar*. Their goal was nothing less than to decide what Jesus really said and did, and what they thought was added later by the church. The movement was founded in 1985 by Robert Funk under the *Westar Institute*, and it drew in about 50 biblical scholars along with some lay participants.

The Seminar became famous for its unusual voting method.

Each participant carried a little pouch of colored beads:

Red bead: “Jesus really said this.”

Pink bead: “He probably said something like this.”

Gray bead: “Unlikely.”

Black bead: “Definitely not.”

After discussing each saying or story from the Gospels, the scholars would drop their beads into a common bowl. Then the results were tallied, and the outcome published. This process eventually produced books like *The Five Gospels* (1993) and *The Acts of Jesus* (1998).

But how did they decide what was in or out? They used what came to be known as the ***criteria of authenticity***:

Multiple Attestation – If a saying appears in more than one independent source, it’s more likely authentic.

Embarrassment – If a story would have been awkward for church writers to invent (like Jesus being baptized by John), it probably has historical weight.

Dissimilarity – If it’s unlike both common Jewish teaching of the time and unlike later Christian teaching, it may trace back to Jesus himself.

Contextual Credibility – If it makes sense in the culture and language of first-century Palestine, it has more plausibility.

Coherence – If it lines up with other material already judged authentic, that adds support.

Now, here’s where things get especially striking: miracles.

When the Jesus Seminar applied their criteria, miracles nearly always got excluded. Why? Because they argued that miraculous events - like walking on water, feeding the 5,000, or raising the dead - failed the “contextual credibility” test. In their framework, such things simply couldn’t be considered historically plausible.

By filtering out the miraculous, they ended up with a Jesus who told parables and offered wise sayings, but not a Jesus who commanded storms or healed the blind.

By filtering out the miraculous, they ended up with a Jesus who looked suspiciously like a modern academic. Critics have rightly pointed out that this approach reflects more about the scholars' worldview than about ancient history. By starting with the assumption that miracles can't happen, they necessarily ended up with a "demiracled" Jesus - one who looked quite unremarkable compared to the Messiah described in the Gospels.

The Jesus Seminar stirred up huge debate in both scholarly and church circles. They forced people to think hard about how we read the Gospels, and whether miracles are real ... or whether miracles can happen at all.

To me, that all seems silly, since we all see far too many miracles every day to doubt that miracles happen.



It is usually so-called rationalists who don't believe miracles happen. In many cases the reason they feel that way is because they don't believe in God. Really, what they don't believe in is miracles from God. I say that because most of them clearly DO believe in miracles. Here is an example of a miracle materialist scientists believe in:

"There was nothing around before the Big, Big Bang."

- Stephen Hawking, aired on the National Geographic Channel

Back then it was common to hear materialists say the universe was created when *nothing* exploded. That was the common claim for quite a while.

Of course, if that had happened it would have been a far greater miracle than everyone on earth walking on water, let alone the Son of God. To begin with, the idea of nothing doing anything is entirely ridiculous, let alone all that exists being derived from such a completely unscientific thing as nothing exploding to create

the universe. This is more akin to the earth on the back of a giant turtle than anything that could be considered rational.

Yet, the same people who believed that said that the Son of God could not multiply a few fish and loaves into more fish and loaves. It seems to me the biblical miracle is infinitely more believable than the “exploding nothing” creating the entire universe (or any part of it for that matter).

The universe created out of the exploding nothing was both ripe and deserving of ridicule, and got plenty of it. Thus, something deemed more plausible, or at least, something deemed only the province of intellectuals, something only THEY could understand, might provide some cover for their naked blunder. Thus “nothing” was replaced with the “singularity.” With that sleight of hand, we got this:

“Roughly 13.7 billion years ago, the entire universe existed as a singularity...” - HowStuffWorks

OK, that sounds more scientific. We’re not starting with nothing anymore, so that looks like an improvement. Unfortunately, we are not told where the *singularity* came from, so this really is not the beginning of everything, is it? Of course, if you don’t have a PhD after your name you don’t even have a right to ask what a singularity is, since only one of the high priests of scientism could possibly understand the term (and anyone else who pretends to agree can also get under the wire). If you haven’t figured this scam out already, this is the license for all of the materialists to gloat over you, because they are part of the elite club that understands - but you aren’t.

See what a great defense that is? It works so long as you don’t look behind the curtain of scientism to see what the wizard has cooking up back there. Poke around a little and you will soon find out that the high priests of scientism themselves endlessly argue over what the so-called “initial singularity” actually was/is/whatever, or if it ever existed/exists at all. Perhaps they can also tell us how many singularities can dance on the head of a pin?

As far as I can gather, they say it was infinitely tiny, and probably had always existed. Somehow, using a mishmash of word salad, it seems to be described as doing something like exploding from that tiniest point to create the entire universe. But why, after an infinite existence would it explode? And really, are we going to believe something smaller than the tiniest cell in your body could create the entire humongous universe out of itself? ...And they have the nerve to accuse people like me of being ignorant because we believe in God! ...Please!

If this still looks like more of a miracle than a sane person could believe, it should also be noted that more than a few scientists also see this singularity nonsense as the gobbledygook that it is. Despite all of that, one fact remains clear. The universe exists, and it is filled with miracles. From whence do those miracles come?

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen 1:1)

Now, when I compare the beauty of this marvelous creation all around us, and the many perfections that keep it all working, I can envision none other than an almighty and loving God creating and sustaining it all. There is design in that. There is intention in that. That is about something. That is going somewhere. The Creator has given the universe something that the imagined singularity could never offer - meaning. Because it means something YOU and I mean something. Now, that's a miracle I can and do believe in, because it is so entirely obvious. That being true, how hard would it have been for the Son of God to walk on water? Really, isn't everything He does a miracle? We see His miracles every day, as we walk with Him.

How do you walk on water? My daughter Abby has this answer: *"One Step At A Time."* That's the theme for tonight's live stream discussion. Join us tonight at 8 Central, at Tsiyon.Net or other video platforms, and get closer to Him.

In His Name, Eliyahu

Don't miss any of the upcoming Month 7 Series - 8 PM Central - Tsiyon.Net



Prophets, Kings, and the King of Kings

Month 7 Messianic Seminar

Sept 21 "Ahab's Folly"
Yom Teruah "Isaiah's Hope"
Sabbath 1 "Just Deserts"
Yom Kippur "A Just Nation"
Sukkot 1 "Kings of Chaos"
Great Day ... "Last Great Chance"
Sabbath 4 .. "Restoration Nation"

8 PM, Central Time
Presented by:
Eliyahu ben David
and the Tsiyon Team

It's Free - Join Us!
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