

# ***Miracle or Coincidence?***

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**C**oincidence: “A sequence of events that although accidental seems to have been planned or arranged” (*American Heritage Dictionary*, 1992).

Just the other day I struck up a conversation with an elderly gentleman during my morning walk. As we talked, he mentioned that he and his wife had visited in New Smyrna Beach, Florida. This just happened to be my hometown.

He then mentioned staying at a particular condominium – Sea Coast Gardens. This is one of about fifty condominium complexes along a fifteen mile stretch of beach. It just so happens that I worked at Sea Coast Gardens while I was in high school. As there are two different complexes that comprise Sea Coast Gardens, I asked which one they had stayed at.

He said, “It was the one with the big, beefy superintendent.” I asked, “Was his name Burrall Boettner?” “Yeah, that’s the guy,” he replied. You guessed it: this was the complex where I worked.

Our lives are full of these little episodes where the most unlikely meetings or happenings occur. But are coincidences miracles? Charismatics who are predisposed to believe miracles still occur claim that every little coincidence is a miracle and results from the leading of the Spirit. This, I believe, is why so many people claim to have seen a miracle. To them, a miracle is simply an unusual event. Since they believe that God has strict control of their life, every unusual event which is to their benefit is identified as a “miracle.”

But a true miracle is the direct overriding or suspension of natural law, not some ambiguous event which can be interpreted in various ways. When Peter and John healed the lame man, the Sanhedrin lamented, “*that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it*” (Ac 4:16).

True miracles were clear, powerful, immediate displays of divine activity which left no doubt as to their source. They served as heavenly credentials for those who were revealing God’s word. If a miracle is nothing more than an event which could have happened naturally, then it loses its value as an undeniable evidence that God has acted.

The fact that so many people claim to see miracles when they are not actually occurring is hurtful to true Christianity.