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Are Miracles Scientifically Impossible?

KYLE BUTT

You have probably heard stories about miracles. In fact, if you have ever studied the life of Jesus, you know that He performed many miracles. What is a miracle? A miracle is something that is supernatural. The word “supernatural” means something that is “above” or “beyond” nature. For example, according to the law of gravity, it is impossible for a person to walk on water. When Jesus did that, He performed a miracle.

It is important to know that a miracle is

something supernatural. Some people misunderstand miracles, and they call amazing, **natural** occurrences miracles. For instance, sometimes people are cured of terminal cancer when there is only a very small chance that they will survive. Their body naturally defeats the cancer, and no supernatural miracle occurs. Even though their survival is wonderful, and amazing, it is not a miracle. At other times, some events happen at coincidental times that people call miracles. For instance, a plane may crash in the middle of nowhere, but a medical doctor who can help the survivors may happen to be camping right by the spot where it crashed. Even though it is an amazing coincidence, it is not a miracle, since nothing supernatural happened to bring the doctor to the spot or to stop the plane from crashing. Miracles are limited to events that go beyond natural laws.

Because miracles are supernatural, some scientists say that miracles are impossible in our natural world. They claim that science deals with the material world—those things we can touch, see, taste, hear, and smell. They reason that the Universe is a natural place made up of matter and energy. Since the material world is all that exists, according to these people, there cannot be anything supernatural, or beyond

nature. They believe nature is all there is. The problem with this thinking is simply that it is wrong. There is more to the world than matter and energy. God is the eternal Spirit Who created the world. He is not made of matter and energy. Since there is a God, it makes perfect sense that He would sometimes cause miracles to happen in order to communicate with humans to prove to them that He exists and cares about them.

Another idea about miracles is that God created the Universe, but that His activities stopped at Creation. Some people, called deists, believe that God would not “break” the natural laws that He established at Creation. They believe He set the world in motion, and then left it to itself, much like winding up a clock and letting it run. The problem with this idea is that it does not take into account the fact that natural laws do not apply to God, since He is an eternal Spirit. The laws of nature cannot be “broken.” For instance, the First Law of Thermodynamics states that matter and energy cannot be created or destroyed **in nature**. The two words “in nature” must be included for the statement of the law to be worded correctly. Nothing in nature—man, beast, or matter—can break this law. No scientists, regardless of how smart they are, will ever be able to create matter



or energy—the law is impossible to break. However, since God is not part of nature, the law does not apply to Him.


To illustrate, think of the Universe as a room. God created the natural laws that apply to everything in the room, and then He closed the door. It is impossible for matter or energy to be created or destroyed in that room. But now suppose that God opens the door and puts another chair in the room or takes a chair out of the room. Did God break the law He established in the room? No, because everything in the room (the Universe) still functions according to the natural laws. But since God is outside of the room, the laws do not apply to Him.

Miracles are only impossible in a world with no God. But since we know that there is a God, we can understand that miracles are possible. In fact, since God is outside of nature, we can see that He has used miracles to communicate with humans, and to show them that the material world is not all that exists. Since real “science” means following the evidence wherever it leads, then all honest, open-minded scientists should conclude that miracles are possible in a world created by a supernatural God.



If God Exists, Why Isn't He Working Miracles Today?

ERIC LYONS AND DAVE MILLER



Thousands of years ago God miraculously created the Universe and everything in it, including Earth and all life on Earth. In the days of Elijah, as well as in the time of Peter and Paul, God occasionally raised the dead. (Remember Dorcas and Eutychus?) When Jesus was on Earth, He miraculously gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. He healed Malchus' severed ear with the touch of His hand, and changed water to wine simply by willing it to happen. The Bible makes clear that God has worked all manner of miracles in the past, and has the potential to work them at any moment. But, simply because God **can** perform miracles at any time, does not mean that He **chooses** to work such supernatural acts.

Today, the reason we do not see one-armed people miraculously given new arms, or blind people given sight supernaturally, or dead people given new physical life, is not because God cannot do these things. Rather, it is because God has chosen to cease working miracles during this time period. Just as God has every right to work a miracle, He has every right to suspend the working of miracles for whatever amount of time He chooses.

Why would God choose not to work miracles for a certain period of time, even for hundreds or thousands of years? To answer this question, we first need to understand the **purpose** of miracles. Unlike magicians, who perform amusing tricks for entertainment purposes, God did not perform miracles in the past to amuse people. The Bible teaches that miracles



happened in Bible times for a very specific purpose: **to confirm the Word**. Before the New Testament was written, when the apostles and prophets were preaching the Gospel, Mark 16:20 indicates that God worked with them by “confirming the word through the accompanying of signs.” The message that the first-century apostles and prophets preached could be shown to be true by the various miracles that God worked through them (read Hebrews 2:3-4).

When a God-inspired speaker stepped forward to declare God's Word, God confirmed His Word by having the speaker perform a miracle to show that he was from God. The miracle showed the hearers that God was behind the speaker's remarks. Recall how Moses' messages to Pharaoh were accompanied by various miracles (Exodus 5-12). Miracles **authenticated** the spoken word as God's Word. Miracles **verified** the teaching of God's messengers, as over against the many false teachers (read John 3:2).

However, the apostle Paul stated that miracles would cease and be done away when the “perfect” (or completed Word of God) had been revealed (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; James 1:25). Those things that were incomplete and partial (miraculous gifts) would be replaced by the total and complete (the fully revealed Word of God). Once God revealed all of the information that He wished to make available to people, the need for miracles to confirm the oral Word came to an end. Now, people can sit down with a New Testament, the written Word of God, and, with honest and diligent study, conclude that it is God's Word. We have absolutely no need for miracles.

Think about the Bible as a large apartment building and miracles as the scaffolding that is used in the construction of such buildings. When the apartment building is under construction, the scaffolding provides necessary assistance. Framers, steelworkers, bricklayers, and other construction workers stand on the scaffolding to construct the apartment building. However, when the construction of the building is completely finished, there is no more need for the scaffolding. People don't leave scaffolding on the sides of completed buildings for years and years. When it has served its purpose, it is removed.

Similarly, God ceased working miracles to confirm His Word because God's Word has been completely “constructed.” That is, God has “given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). We have no more revelation from God than the Bible, thus we need no more confirmation than what was given in Bible times. Simply put, the Bible teaches that miracles are no longer necessary since we have everything we need to function in this life, to be pleasing to God, and to survive spiritually.



TRUE OR FALSE

1. ___ A miracle is something that is supernatural.
2. ___ There is more to the world than matter and energy.
3. ___ God is made of matter.
4. ___ Since there is a God, it makes perfect sense that He would sometimes cause miracles to happen.
5. ___ Miracles are only impossible in a world with no God.
6. ___ The purpose of miracles was to entertain people.
7. ___ Natural occurrences are miracles.
8. ___ Miracles verified the teaching of God's messengers.
9. ___ People who do not believe in God think that life came from non-living chemicals many millions of years ago.
10. ___ Even though atheists claim that nature is all there is, they rely on "supernatural" explanations all the time.

COMPLETE THE BIBLE VERSES (NKJV)

1. "And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and _____ the word through the accompanying _____" (Mark 16:20).
2. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was _____ to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and _____, with various _____, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" (Hebrews 2:3-4).
3. "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us _____ things that pertain to life and _____, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:2-3).

ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER

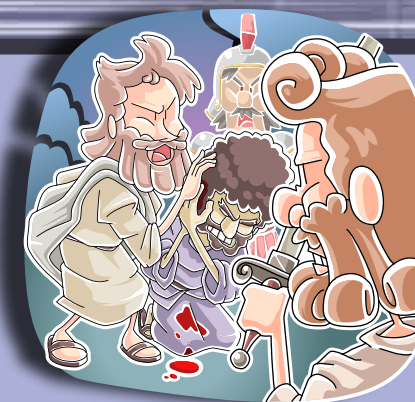
1. Discuss why miracles are possible, but why we do not see God working miracles through His people today.
2. Explain why atheism requires miracles.

MATCHING

1. ___ Something that is "above" or "beyond" nature
2. ___ The eternal Spirit Who created the world
3. ___ The purpose of miracles
4. ___ God used Paul to raise this person from the dead
5. ___ Jesus healed this man's severed ear
6. ___ Miracles were to the message of God, what this is to a building under construction
7. ___ People who do not believe in God
8. ___ Another word for "confirmed"

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| A. Verified | E. Eutychus |
| B. Atheists | F. To confirm the Word |
| C. Scaffolding | G. God |
| D. Malchus | H. Supernatural |

Dear Digger Doug,
How did Jesus put Malchus' ear back on?
—Anna Claire, Florence, AL



Dear Anna Claire,

Thanks for the outstanding question. You know that human ears don't grow overnight. In fact, when a baby is conceived, it takes many weeks for his or her ears to develop. Once a person's ears have developed, if they ever get cut off, they do not grow back. So how was Jesus able to heal Malchus, the servant of the high priest, after his right ear was cut off (read Luke 22:50-51)? The simple answer is that Jesus is God, and God can do anything that can be done (and that is in accordance with His nature). God spoke the world into existence simply using His voice. He created Adam from dust, and Eve from one of Adam's ribs. Since God is all-powerful, or omnipotent, then He can do whatever can be done. God the Father gave miraculous power to Jesus while He was on Earth so that people would know that Jesus is God. Can you imagine how Malchus must have felt when his ear was cut off, but then was completely healed when Jesus touched him? This miracle also helps us to understand how God will give all faithful Christians new, resurrected bodies when Jesus comes back (read 1 Corinthians 15:42-49). Great question, Anna Claire.



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ATHEISM REQUIRES MIRACLES

KYLE BUTT

People who are atheists do not believe in God. They believe that the natural world is all that exists. They say that everything that exists must “obey” the laws of nature. They insist that nothing, at any time, has ever violated a natural law. This way of thinking, however, runs into some very serious problems.

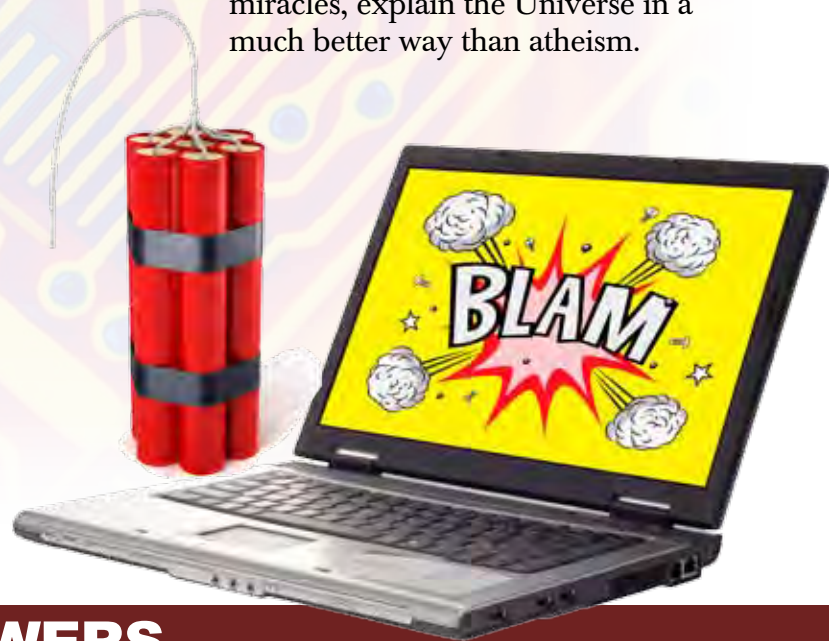
The first problem atheists have is that no natural law can account for how the Universe got here. Most atheists say that billions of years ago a tiny ball of matter exploded in the Big Bang. But when you ask them where that tiny ball of matter came from, they cannot give you a natural explanation. In fact, all the laws of nature prove a tiny ball of matter **cannot** come into existence by itself, neither can it come from nothing. Something that was not operating according to natural laws would have been required to originate the tiny ball of matter in the first place.

Second, those atheists who believe in the Big Bang say that it caused all the order that we see in nature. Again, when we look at how explosions “naturally” act, they do not cause order and complexity. They cause disorder and a mess. If you put a stick of

dynamite in a box with computer parts, the laws at work in nature will never allow the explosion to assemble a working computer. It would literally take a miracle to get a huge explosion like the Big Bang to bring about the order we see in our Universe.

Third, people who do not believe in God think that life came from non-living chemicals millions of years ago. When we study nature, however, we see that such an idea is not possible according to the natural laws at work. In the natural world, life comes only from life of its own kind. Once again, it would take a miracle for life to evolve.

As you can see, even though atheists claim that nature is all there is, they rely on “supernatural” explanations all the time. Miracles have occurred, but not the ones atheists need to defend their ideas. The facts that God exists, and that He has performed miracles, explain the Universe in a much better way than atheism.



ANSWERS

MATCHING: 1. H (Supernatural); 2. G (God); 3. F (To confirm the Word); 4. E (Eurychus); 5. D (Malchus); 6. C (Scarfolding); 7. B (Atheists); 8. A (Verted).
 COMPLETE THE BIBLE VERSES: 1. confirming, signs; 2. confirmed, wonders, miracles; 3. all, godliness.
 TRUE OR FALSE: 1-T; 2-T; 3-F; 4-T; 5-T; 6-F; 7-F; 8-T; 9-T; 10-T.
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