

David Hume - Only Superstitious people report miracles

A miracle is what is not naturally possible. It is a supernatural occurrence. It is paranormal. The Bible speaks of God miraculously making Adam the first man from dirt. It speaks of a miraculous world flood - another miracle is how the scientific evidence challenges and attacks this tale! In fact, believing these stories is worse than believing the statue of Mary down the road came alive and spoke to you. At least, you are going by more than just hearsay and legend.

Miracles are important for believers in God for they are seen as signs from God indicating where religious truth is to be found. The main signs for believers are how God seems to answer prayers and comfort them. So non-obvious miracles are really more important for the message than the obvious miracle.

What good would it do if Jesus rose from the dead if praying to God seems to do no good? A miracle by itself is no good. It has to fit into a context. The main element in the context is how there are indications of the love and presence of God at least much of the time. Clearly there is no need for the obvious miracle and it is really an attempt to compel people to believe.

David Hume said that only superstitious ignorant people testify to miracles. He is unjustly accused of bias in this but we all feel that people of centuries ago in fact were superstitious and destructively so. He didn't just say it. He was referring to what he knew of miracle claimants of years gone by.

The Christian reply is that during the time the miracles of Jesus were happening, people were not that stupid. For example, we read that Zechariah didn't believe the angel when the angel promised to cause his wife to have a baby though she was well passed the age. But even a very stupid man would know that! The Christians argue that people do not need a great education to know that a dead man having back to life such as Jesus did was a miracle. So first we are told they were not stupid and then that if they had poor education they would still be the perfect witnesses! And surely if Zechariah refused to believe the miracle promised by the angel, it could be an indication that the people were not at all good at seeing if something was a miracle.

We do see that very superstitious cultures report miracles a lot more than less superstitious cultures.

The Christian claims, "People know the difference between a sick man and a well man and a dead man and a living one. Thus they can easily assess if a sick man was miraculously cured and a dead man has returned to life." When you think about it, why believe in the Christian accounts of healings and resurrection and not in pagan accounts? The Christians act as if Christians alone are in a position to judge miracles as real!

The Christians do not believe their own argument for they will not accept a modern account of healing or resurrection unless it is checked out by science and medicine. No modern Christian miracle is ever put on the same level as a miracle reported in the Bible. That is dishonest of them because they want us to accept mere testimonies and gossip from two thousand years ago and more in preference to miracle tales that have been shown to be at least possibly true by modern science and modern wisdom.

A doctor has to believe that the chemicals in drugs have an effect on our bodies. Imagine one of those doctors. Imagine another - a doctor believed that drugs worked because the stars had decreed that certain chemicals have certain magical effects. Both doctors could do an amazing job. But belief-wise one is rational and right and the other is neither. The believer and unbeliever can see that a man has been sick and suddenly got better. The only difference is that the first sees it as a miracle and the second does not make that assessment of it. This disproves the Christians argument. Knowing the difference between dead and alive and sick and healthy is irrelevant to proving that miracles happen or are possible.

A lot of people read Hume's arguments against miracles and they ring true. If the Bible is really reliable in its miracle tales, it would contain a wise sage's thoughts on miracles that came up with similar objections and tell us how he refuted them. Without that, we have no evidence that the Bible at least intended to be rational in reporting miracle tales. The "Bible Only" believers have to go outside the Bible to defend a major doctrine - the alleged rationality of miracles. The doctrine is wrong and as the Bible is all about miracles and claims to be one itself the whole book is irrational. And its a major catastrophe how it didn't pave the way to help people to rationally believe. Most Christians believe for superstitious reasons and this is the Bible's fault - it is its big sin of omission. And a bizarre omission when you see that there is a lot of useless material in the Bible such as the genealogies in Kings and Chronicles and its repetitive material.

Miracle stories are enjoyable. People find lies more interesting than the truth. So there is a danger of those stories being lies. Another attraction is how people think that when they experience miracles that they are favoured by God and those

who do not have experience are not favoured or not favoured yet. To say that some are chosen to experience miracles is to say that they are favoured over others. It boosts their egos which is why you can be in big trouble if you tell a religious believer in miracles to have some sense.

Some say the paranormal is about using hidden natural forces and powers so they deny there is any need for the miraculous or supernatural. All admit that the paranormal can be mistaken for the miraculous. It can simulate it. The fact of the matter is that the paranormal has been investigated better and much much more than the miraculous so for that reason its conclusions matter more. Science, there is no doubt, regards the paranormal as pseudo science and nonsense. This amounts to saying that miracles are anti-science nonsense as is any supernatural claim such as God or that Jesus rose from the dead.

A poltergeist doing a once off can account for many if not all miracle allegations. Maybe one of them got Jesus' tomb opened by rolling the stone and got a dog to carry him off. From *Beyond the Occult* by Colin Wilson we get a quote from the parapsychologist Playfair's guide and mentor Hernani Andrade,

"To produce a successful poltergeist, all you need is a group of bad spirits to do your work for you, for a suitable reward, and a susceptible victim who is insufficiently developed spiritually to be able to resist." If the paranormal is true then miracles are superstition for they omit the caution that is exercised by parapsychology and the scepticism.

The Hume Society.