

## **Miracles & the Burden of Proving Them or showing them to be very convincing**

A miracle is a magical event. For example, if a stone turns into bread then that is a miracle. Religion pretends that miracles are done by God as evidence of his presence and love.

The expression burden of proof leads believers to say we want too much evidence or 100% proof. We do not. We don't want literal proof and should not want it. We should want enough. Hard evidence is not the same as proof but it is better than anything else. By burden of proof we do not mean strict proof.

We all see that people die and stay dead. For those who disagree to say that Jesus didn't stay dead, the burden of proof therefore is on them. It is up to them to prove the resurrection of Jesus. They answer that the burden of proof is on those who deny the resurrection to disprove the resurrection! It is not. It can't be on both sides. If one and one is usually two and somebody says there is an exception then the burden of proof is on that person. Using miracles as signs is fundamentally sectarian and unfair.

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A miracle is seen as exception. Thus the burden of proof is on the person asserting the exception happened.

It is not a simple matter of showing the resurrection of Jesus happened. Because of the burden of proof they have to prove every miracle of Jesus and every other one they say happened individually. That is because if those stories are tricky or worthy of scepticism so is the resurrection. Not every miracle of Jesus can be proven believable or proven taken on its own so clearly Jesus violated the rule and didn't understand it so we can consider his miracles to be superstitious legendary nonsense. To say that a reported miracle by Jesus or anybody else may have happened or was possible is simply to say we should be gullible. Nobody teaches that one must verify miracles to oneself for it is such hard work and there are so many miracles reported. But as impractical as it might be it is still correct.

If you assert that a miracle has happened then the burden of proof is on you no matter who else has proved it to themselves. To say, "I saw the Blessed Virgin in an apparition," is just as serious as somebody saying, "My friend saw the Blessed Virgin in an apparition." One is just as outrageous as the other. So the burden of proof is on the first to prove that he really sees the Virgin and separately on the second to prove that he or she is right to hold that the friend saw the Virgin. It is bigotry to believe in a miracle claim made by another without proving it to yourself. It is not enough for the Church to prove it – you have to see the complete evidence and examine it for yourself. You stand alone in considering claims like that. If God wants us to believe in miracles then he must want us to go through all this! It is ridiculous to think that he does. A better belief is that miracles are mistakes or frauds and God had nothing to do with them.

The person who invites us to believe in a miracle and does not give us proof or adequate evidence is cheating us. Christianity tries to raise children as believers. It is cheating.

The person who says they got a revelation from God that the world is to end next week and the person seeing the Blessed Virgin and getting a harmless message to repent from her, demand the same level of evidence. Why? Doesn't the first person have a more important message than the second? Yes the content is more serious but that is not the point. The method by which both messages came is equal in that it is supernatural. The two messages equally need to be proved reliable and supernatural because they claim to be supernatural. The point is not the importance of the messages but the medium of the message – that is, how the message was given. The content of the messages can have no importance at all unless the supernatural nature of the message can be proven and the supernatural can be proven reliable. Think of it this way, we can't listen to the world end message or the other one just because of what it says. The supernatural has to be proven to exist and be reliable before we can heed such a message.

Therefore small miracles need to be treated as scientifically or sceptically as big ones.

If we say it is unlikely for a man to rise from the dead the believers are forced to answer that we don't know what is unlikely or not. This answer shows the immorality and wickedness of declaring miracles to have happened or possible. Why? If we believe that people can come back from the dead and are in Sweden how do we know that it isn't possible or unlikely for all the dead in Australia to rise this moment? How do we know that Annie's chemotherapy might not put energy into her that draws her down to Hell forever? Those are the hideous consequences of believing in miracles. Miracles urge people to deny the uniformity of life never mind nature. That alone puts the the burden of proof on the believers. And the

burden doesn't get lighter with "small" miracles. Why? Because if we can't say the dead are dead because of our respect for miracles then how can we say that people need to study if God miraculously inspires a schoolboy or schoolgirl regarding the correct answer to a small question in an examination paper?

## Conclusion

A very heavy burden of proof rests on those who assert that miracles happen. However asserts miracles without being able to personally vouch for their plausibility and authenticity is a cheat.

## Further Reading ~

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## THE WEB

The Problem of Competing Claims by Richard Carrier  
[www.infidels.org/library/modern/richard\\_carrier/indef/4c.html](http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier/indef/4c.html)

