

MIRACLES CANNOT GIVE FAITH

A miracle is what is not naturally possible. It is a supernatural occurrence. It is paranormal.

There is no faith without evidence for faith involves seeing that something is likely to be true. The Christian religion must have evidence that Jesus was the infallible Son of God if it is right to believe in him and believe him. Without evidence they would just be saying that they are right for they wish they were right! That is obviously not belief for who could sincerely agree with that twisted logic? It would be extremely unethical for a religion to expect people to suffer for conjectures and Jesus taught that if you are not persecuted for your Christian faith you are doing something wrong.

The devout Jews and their leaders who were religious ministers came to Jesus and asked for a sign. He refused saying they were part of an unbelieving and faithless generation and they would get no sign but that of Jonah. So seeking a sign is an indication of unbelief. But surely as belief is not full certainty asking for a sign does not necessarily imply you are faithless? Jesus begged to differ! It is a case of him making up excuses for doing no real miracles. Scholars doubt the stories of his miracles. Jesus shows that just because you are religious and devout, it cannot be assumed that you necessarily have faith.

Christianity claims that it has evidence for its being the correct faith or religion. This evidence is miracles.

If there is a God who can do miracles that does not mean he does do them. The only reason people believe that God does miracles is because there are witnesses telling them that they saw them happen. They conclude that God does miracles to show which human institution is the true Church or the religion that teaches the truth. To say that we cannot dismiss all these witnesses says only that we must let human testimony tell us what to believe about God. That is a form of idolatry. It is letting man form your image of God and how you relate to him. It is faith in God because of people and not faith in God because of God.

The view that miracles are for causing faith in the word of God is false. Christians, Muslims and Jews have to say it is not false but true for they claim to be intelligent faiths. Without evidence they cannot be taken seriously and it would be bigoted to declare any of them to be the true faith.

Jesus claimed to be our hearts' desire meaning he has to satisfy our rational and intellectual desires as well as spiritual ones. Certainly if these religions attest to faith in the word of man then there is no need to worry about them for man's opinions are just man's opinions and there is nothing intrinsically special or binding or sacred about them so we can reject them if we think they are wrong so the miracles would be a waste of time then.

The religions of the book, that is the cults that think a book is the word of God, are guilty of claiming that their book says is the word of God and therefore it is the word of God. This is illogical. They argue that the miracles recorded in the book prove its true for the book is true! They reject a critical approach. Anything that puts dogmas before logic is bigoted and it is making any concern for humanity it has look superficial for without reason none of us would be alive. It is their opinion that the book is God's word and they want us to treat their opinion ie them as God.

Christians sometimes say that they look for evidence that the Bible is historical and truthful first and then because they trust it, they trust its miracle stories and since they accept the miracles they have to accept it as the word of God (page 138, Answers to Tough Questions). This is a lie because the question that comes first is, "Is the Bible good and right in all its moral teaching and are its doctrines, say that Jesus was the Son of God, respectful towards God and decency." This question is the most important one and without it all the credibility as regards history in the Bible in the world won't help it so it is the question that the other questions are no good without. And the problem with the moral teaching of the Bible is that it often advocates evil in the name of God. And philosophers disagree strongly on what is moral or immoral.

The version of the fallacy of circular reasoning that the Christians use is this, "The Bible is the word of God for all its rules are good even though we can't understand many of them or prove them correct for they are mysteries but we don't care therefore it is the word of God." They cannot bring in miracles to help them here at all. Miracles have no bearing on what teachings are the word of God. There is no connection at all. The Bible being right in history only means it is right in history. It could be wrong in matters of doctrine and morals and philosophy. A priest being an outstanding historian doesn't make his beliefs true. There are atheists who are good historians too. The Christians guess that the Bible is the word of God and use miracles to hide the fact that they are guessing. They use miracles to make people think they believe.

You have to assume the Bible is right before you can believe in it. Evidence has no place or relevance in this. If evidence is

given by Christians, it is not assimilated or accepted but just used as a bait to get attention for their creed.

Jesus thought his resurrection proved he was the word of God in person. He was a fake for he was wrong. That is all the proof we need against him even if the evidence for his return from the dead is as good as the Christians (deceitfully) say.

Any person or book that is supposed to give you the word of God is proven to be a fraud if they do miracles to verify this for miracles fail to do that. Faith in divine approval of the person or book is based on circular reasoning. Such faith opposes reason. Yet believers tell you what to believe as if you have no right to believe whatever you feel like while they are believing what they like themselves!

Miracles cannot bring you to the word of God, not really. Therefore miracles are not about God but about people using them to scare you into obedience to their doctrines. All who say that God did the miracles they tell you about, say that God does not want to scare you which is why he only lets a few see miracles though they know fine well that many will be scared nonetheless and that is the way they are – oh the lies they tell! The miracles are anti-God and offer him indignities and blasphemies and they exploit him. Atheists will enter the kingdom of Heaven before the believers do. You couldn't expect anything else for nature could replicate miracles when it can create life so it is wrong to assume any event is a miracle – blame renegade or unusual natural laws - there is never any need to bring in the supernatural.

The Church believes that only the one true religion does miracles. God gives it miraculous powers. So God gave Bernadette of Lourdes the power to see the Virgin Mary in 1858. Miracles cannot verify the Church being the true Church unless they are the work of the Church. The Church investigation of the miracle makes no difference. You believe because of the Church and not because of the investigation even if there is one. Miracles then support the vice of religious pride. You might as well show off your praying and fasting as do a miracle. Yet Jesus said that when you pray do it in secret even though this will be helping people and they will not know prayer and the power of miracle did it. Christianity teaches that genuine prayer that gets in touch with God is a miracle for the Spirit of God does the praying for you (Romans 8) so it is not really you. Prayer is evil. It encourages the dangerous vice of believing that miracles are common.

What miracles are doing is not verifying the dogmas of the Church but highlighting personal supernatural faith in the religion. This can only be done by miracles happening to people who have this faith and they must happen to encourage and strengthen and sustain it. Miracles have to happen only to holy people to do this. Those who report miracles then are glorifying themselves and puffing themselves up. If miracles happen but not always to holy people then something is wrong. They are not from God and fraud must be considered on theological grounds. It is the “virtue” of those who experience the miracle or see the miracle vision and those who “verify” the claims that is being glorified when a miracle is accepted and or promoted. The miracle cannot be accepted otherwise. This is something religion cannot admit and yet if people were rational and knew what they were talking about they would see it. Religion regards pride as the deadliest sin and Jesus said that if you pray or fast you must do so in secret when possible for it is such a danger and we fall into it so readily and easily.

How could miracles help religious faith for it is a crutch that is used out of fear in case one offends a being that might be out there and it is based on fear of death too? Atheism is not a crutch though some say it is. The only way atheism can be a crutch if you want to avoid God's demands and forget them for they are too frightening and unpleasant (page 108, Answers to Tough Questions). This is untrue for right and wrong is right and wrong even if there is no God so the demands will still be there. If the believers are saying you need a God to believe in right and wrong then they are saying you need a God to invent right and wrong for you! Then it is clear that the Atheists are right not to believe so the believers are the ones using the crutch. If they are saying Atheists reject God because they hate the thought of his punishments this is ridiculous for if Atheists fear punishments from God then forgetting about them is a funny way of avoiding them for it is not going to work. And both Atheists and religious cultists believe that threats of punishment should have no influence on our actions which should be good and done because it is right and not to avoid punishment. If they are saying both that you do good to avoid punishment and because it is good then no real difference is made. It is clear that religious faith is a crutch and encourages people to have no guts and to need the crutch. This is superb for the clergy who want people to exploit. Anybody who promotes religion is exploiting whether they realise it or not and those who report miracles and defend them are the worst.

Most atheists have a Humanist self-help system which improves happiness and gives all the benefits of religion without religion. And they do not live reckless hedonistic lives nor fear death. They would find it easier being religionists due to the strength of character and courage it takes to throw off the religious crutch so how dare the Christians suggest that Atheism is a crutch. The atheists are living martyrs. Christian martyrs are used as evidence that the faith is true while atheist ones are treated with indifference! This is so unfair and this is a bad fruit and Jesus said bad trees bear bad fruit.

Jesus said we know prophets who pretend to be from God but who are not by their bad fruits (Matthew 7:15-23). The Church has no right to say any apparition has good fruits though anything from God should have good fruits. Apparitions lead away from God by getting us to misperceive the fruits as good and from God. Faith is the gift of God in Church teaching. It is supernatural. The Church says faith in an apparition such as Lourdes is merely human faith. It is not a gift or

necessarily approved by God. The apparition could cause many who had real saving faith to switch to a faith based on the apparition. The basis of faith would be shifted. Because they love the apparition so much they would lie and say it increased their faith which was a gift of God to avoid bringing the apparition into disrepute.

The Church is clear that there is no obligation to believe in any miracle that is not in the Bible even when the Church decides that the miracle was real and from God. To say otherwise would be to add to the faith taught by the apostles. The Bible and the Roman Church both say that faith is unnatural for us and so it is a gift from God and is caused by the inspiration of God and that this kind of faith is a virtue and is absolutely necessary for salvation. It is a virtue because it is opening your eyes and heart to God so it is a vice and a sin not to believe. Roman Catholicism says that faith, hope and charity are necessary if we are to be saved in Heaven. It says we only believe in miracles outside the Bible with natural faith. The help that God gives us to have faith in Jesus is absent with these miracles – it's our business.

There are Catholics who believe they see the Blessed Virgin. The Church says these apparitions happen because God wants to honour Mary and show that the Catholic faith is the one right religion. They should come out with it and say what they really mean. It is easy to think that it is the statements of the Church that are being backed up. But the Church says being right is no good unless your faith is supernatural. Even the right religion without this is simply human religion and the Devil has non-supernatural faith and is orthodox in it but it is no good to him for it is not supernaturally caused by God (James 2). Your being right has to be a supernatural miracle and gift from God. If so, the experience of supernatural faith is a miracle so any other miracles are useless and to assume they happen is to accuse God of showing off and being undignified. Also miracles then do not make converts at all. They excite human faith which is no good. They verify nothing for the miracle of supernatural faith is its own verification. The proper attitude to miracles is to recognise that they have nothing to do with showing any religion to be true.

If you have faith you will have reasons for it that make you think it is credible. The reasons for faith are a part of the faith – they are distinct but not separate – they are like parts of the whole. The reasons are more important than the conclusions for the conclusions cannot exist without them. If I believe in God because the universe looks designed to me then if my belief in God is a gift from God then the reason that causes it must be a gift too and a bigger one! To sanction the faith is to sanction the reasons for it for they are co-dependent and interlinked. Religion refuses to think about that. It makes it look stupid for most of its past.

Suppose you believe in Jesus. Suppose this belief and faith is the supernatural gift of God. But if that belief and faith is because of the Shroud of Turin and the visions of Lourdes and Fatima then God is telling you that Jesus was who he said he was on the basis of these visions and miracles. But God can't do that for that makes them equal to faith in Jesus. And he has taught that they are not for they are not obligatory for faith and not part of the faith. But we will see no difference in the quality of faith held by the apparition and miracle fan and that of the orthodox believer. But we know that if God gives the same faith in Jesus to a believer in the Shroud because of the Shroud as he does to a believer in Jesus who denies the Shroud and depends on the gospels instead that there is something wrong. If God is behind it then God is a deceiver.

The apparitions and miracles that have not been accepted as real and even rejected by the Church have the same effect on faith for there are always people who will believe in them. Some believe in Catholicism for example because of Medjugorje (considered doubtful by the Church) and others believe because of Fatima (considered to be a real vision from Heaven by the Church).

If God gives you faith then he is confirming the reasons you have for that faith. The person who believes in Jesus because of the Bible and the person who believes because of an apparition may have the same conclusion but not the same faith. Faith is more in the premises than in the conclusion for they are more important. The doctrine of faith being a gift from a totally truthful god is meaningless nonsense. If the miracles of the Church testify - as it claims - to the primacy of faith, the basic gift from God that gives light and truth, then they are lying. Faith itself is a miracle for we cannot have it without God's help. If there is a problem with miracles then the same problem exists for the miracle of faith. Religion having believed for the wrong reasons in the past proves that it is not receiving its faith as a miracle from God. The believers create their own faith and pretend that it is God's gift and full of God's authority. They treat themselves as God!

Miracles always testify that the lie that you can love the sinner but hate the sin is true. They act like calls to love sinners and hate sins. All believers know deep down fine well that obeying the calls isn't really possible. They admit that when they say that to say you did a bad thing of your own free will is to say you are a bad person and if you are a bad person you are despicable for bad is despicable.

The Bible teaches total depravity which means that all human goodness is unacceptable to God for it is deformed by selfish ulterior motives and the desire to be free of God. Christians may claim they can do good works but they cannot for the selfishness is always there. So miracles then are a waste of time. They look like the work of a being that is too stupid to see this.

It follows from all that, that the Church should reject all miracles and apparitions and say they are of the Devil if they are real. The Devil works the "miracles" so that the faith that God wants will be replaced by a shoddy substitute that resembles it and to their surprise they will find themselves in Hell when they die because they did not have and were resistant to real Christian faith. The Church officially forbids people to regard the extra-biblical miracles as obligatory to belief as the bible miracles. We are not bound to believe in them. The Church forbids anybody from using the extra-biblicals as the main or, worse, the only ground of faith. Only a handful of the faithful would remember or know of the prohibition and the Devil would get what he wants. And that would be most Catholics having faith that is not a gift of God the kind of faith that the Bible and Catholic dogma says is necessary for salvation. In other words, a counterfeit form of saving faith. The kind of faith that saves has to be based on a divinely inspired insight that the Gospel and its claims about the redeeming death and resurrection are true and reasonable – on the revelation that has full authority in other words. Apparitions and modern miracles are lacking in that authority for they cannot add to the canon of the Bible or be infallible sources of truth like the Church. But when they appeal to the ignorant faithful and have them basing faith on them it is clear that they are trying to substitute for authorised divine revelation.

Even if a miracle doesn't suspend natural law or change it, it still looks and acts as if it has. How a strange event like a miracle looks comes before any other consideration. For example, if you see a kitten in your fridge ice box and it looks like a kitten then you are justified in taking it as an kitten. You have no reason to believe anything else. It is the same with a new employee. You assume he is honest on the basis of his CV even though it could be a fake. You believe in his innocence until evidence to the contrary appears. To report a miracle then is as serious as to report that sperms are no longer going to fertilize ovum. It is as serious as saying a comet is about to appear miraculously in the solar system and hit the earth. (It is actually more serious but we are trying to be kind to the believers!) All these have in common not the consequences which vary but the nature of the event is the same, it's a change in nature.

The Church admits that it cannot conclusively prove every miracle reported of Jesus in the Bible or outside of it when you consider every miracle by itself. The Church for example has only the word of the gospel of John that Jesus turned water into wine at Cana. The gospels say that Jesus even concealed some of his miracles like when he warned nobody to tell that he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. If Jesus does ten miracles and you can verify them all but the last then you can't believe in the last one. You must consider him a liar if he asks you to believe in it and of course he does for in the John gospel he tells skeptics to believe in his works if they can't believe in him. If a man commits ten murders and you can only prove he committed nine of them you are not permitted to believe he committed the odd one out. You need better evidence for miracles than murders for miracles are stranger and more unusual. To claim a miracle happened is such a serious claim that naturally the evidence has to be very serious as in strong and good and convincing and every individual miracle requires it. You can't say the resurrection of Jesus is provable so the other miracles of Jesus must have happened as well. Even if Jesus rose to prove his teachings and claims and miracles to be real as the gospels say, that remains true. Bearing in mind that we need very strong evidence the stranger or more unlikely a claim is this is unacceptable. Every miracle is so serious so it has to be checked out on its own.