

MIRACLES¹

INTRODUCTION: ““Do you really believe Jonah was swallowed by a whale? And do you seriously think that Christ actually fed 5,000 persons from five loaves of bread and two fish?” So goes the trend and tone of many modern questioners. Surely, they say, these ‘miracle’ stories in the Bible must be quaint ways of conveying spiritual truth, but they are not meant to be taken literally.” (Paul Little, “Know Why You Believe” [Anzea Publishers: Homebush, NSW, Australia, 1971], p. 61)

DEFINITION OF MIRACLES:

- “*Miracles are improbable, unrepeatable and unique.*”²
- “*A miracle is by definition an event that is unique and without a precedent.*”³
- “*Miracles are events contrary to the nature of our three-dimensional universe*”⁴

THE ACCUSATION FROM UNBELIEVERS: “HOW CAN MIRACLES BE POSSIBLE?”

Skeptics, of course, deny the miraculous. “The following statements, one ancient and one modern, are typical of the response that skeptical people make regarding the miraculous:

“...Nothing can happen without cause; nothing happens that cannot happen, and when what was capable of happening has happened, it may not be interpreted as a miracle. Consequently, there are no miracles... We therefore draw this conclusion: what was capable of happening is not a miracle’ (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2. 28, cited by V. van der Loos in *The Miracle of Jesus*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965, p. 7).

‘For example, there is the record of the life of Jesus Christ in the Bible. That record contained accounts of events which, in light of the facts of the natural order which were known, could not possibly have happened. Children are not born to virgins, angels do not bring messages to people, men do not walk on water, people who die do not return to life, and so on. The story of Jesus Christ was filled with what men had learned were impossibilities; therefore, the story could not be a literal account of the actual happenings. When the New Testament was written, men may have been naïve enough to believe the things that were said about Jesus, and they may have seen no contradiction between the reports and their knowledge of the world, but now all was otherwise’ (*Protestantism*, cited by J. Leslie Dunstan, Washington Square Press, Inc., New York, 1962, pp. 128-129).

McDowell concludes: “Many laugh at the idea of the possibility of miracles. They argue that miracles are a violation of scientific laws, and are therefore are unacceptable to modern man.” (McDowell, p. 79).

HOW DOES THE CHRISTIAN ANSWER SUCH CHARGES? UNAPOLOGETICALLY!

“The Scriptures...from one end to the other contain stories of the miraculous. There are accounts of blind people who immediately received their sight, dead people being raised and extraordinary occurrences within nature, such as a universal flood and the parting of the Red Sea. **The basis for believing in the miraculous goes back to the biblical conception of God.** The very first verse of the Bible decides the issue. ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth’ (**Genesis 1:1**). **If this verse can be accepted at face value, that in the beginning an infinite-personal God created the universe, then the rest should not be a problem.** If He has the ability to do this, then a virgin birth, walking on water, feeding 5,000 people with a few loaves and fish, and the other biblical miracles, become not only possible but expected. Of course, if one does not believe in God, he will not accept the miraculous, but for those who have granted the possibility, it is not at all ridiculous. As the apostle Paul once said to an unbelieving king, ‘Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?’ (Acts 26:8, KJV)...” (McDowell, pp. 79-80)

¹ This material consists almost entirely of quotes from the various sources noted. Compiled by Mike Edwards, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, West Indies, Oct., 2007 (rev. 4/2011 & 5/2012, SVG & 6/2019, Madison, Ohio)

² Norman Geisler, “*False Gods of our Time*”, Part 3: *Miracles, Science or Superstition?* Jeremiah Films: Hemet, CA, 1988

³ Josh McDowell & Don Stewart, “*Answers to Tough Questions Skeptics ask About the Christian Faith.*” [Here’s Life Publishers: San Bernardino, CA, 1980], p. 80

⁴ David DeWitt, “*Answering the Tough Ones*” [Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 1980], p. 26

“If there is a God...then He can do miracles. A supernatural being is capable of supernatural activity...The word miracle, in one sense, is a relative term. A miracle for one type of being might not be a miracle for another...’if there is another type of being beyond man in the universe, then he could do things that would seem miraculous to us’...they were the normal act of a supernatural being. What is unreasonable for a human being in a three-dimensional universe might be commonplace to a creator controlling more than three dimensions. ‘An example comes to mind from my old days as a math teacher. Much of mathematics is designed around two dimensions instead of three. Let’s call it flatland. Imagine a place like a flat tabletop, except spread out all over the room and beyond. If I, a three-dimensional being, took a bowling ball and passed it through the plane, the event would appear as several miracles to the flatlanders. First, a dot would appear. Then it would become a circle. It would get bigger, and then smaller, as I passed the ball through the plane. Finally, it would make a dot again and then disappear. Now flatlanders know dots cannot appear from nowhere. They do not become circles and then dots again by themselves. What is their explanation? It was a miracle. But if they understand that I exist in a dimension beyond theirs, what happened is not unreasonable. In the same way, if there is an all-sovereign, creating God controlling all the dimensions beyond the three we live in, it would be reasonable for him to penetrate our world with the miraculous events described in the Bible.” (DeWitt, pp. 27, 30-31)

ANSWERS TO SOME COMMON QUESTIONS &/or OBJECTIONS **REGARDING MIRACLES:**

1) “DOES IT REALLY MATTER WHETHER WE BELIEVE THE MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE REALLY HAPPENED?”

“The question of miracles is much more crucial for Christianity than for the non-Christian religions. In other faiths, miracles can be disbelieved without affecting the message of the religion itself. In Christianity that is not the case. ‘*If Christ has not been raised,*’ Paul explains, ‘*your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins*’ (I Cor. 15:17). If there were no such things as miracles, the other world religions would remain essentially unchanged. But Christ’s resurrection requires a Christian’s belief in miracles. Contrary to nature events are central to establishing Christianity as true. If there are no such things as miracles, then there was no resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and Christianity is a waste of time. In his book *Miracles*, C.S. Lewis writes, ‘*All the essentials of Hinduism would, I think, remain unimpaired if you subtracted the miraculous and the same is almost true of Mohammedanism (Islam), but you cannot do that with Christianity. It is precisely the story of a great Miracle. A naturalistic Christianity leaves out all that is specifically Christian.*’” (DeWitt, pp. 27-28)

2) “WHY DON’T WE SEE MIRACLES HAPPENING TODAY?”

“It seems that skeptics demand that highly improbable events be *repeated*. But the creation of the universe is not being repeated! So do we deny that the universe exists? Illogically, skeptics do that in regard to miracles. And yet Carl Sagan and others have repeatedly said that only *one* message from outer space would establish beyond question the fact that another civilization exists!! Likewise, the “*Big Bang*” is not being repeated! So do evolutionists & skeptics deny that? No! Why?”

“(Likewise), **Deism says that miracles are impossible** (since deism’s God is a distant, detached God). The question we should ask is, “***Which...view is illogical?***” After all, if God made the whole universe, what’s the problem with Him doing a few more things called miracles? Furthermore, we have good evidence for miracles. Skeptics, conversely, are unable to prove that they can’t occur! And skeptics *DO* believe in singularities, as illustrated above.” (Geisler, op cit.)

“One cannot reject the claim of the parting of the Red Sea 3,500 years ago, by noting that this event does not happen every day. Appealing to the laws of nature to refute the miraculous will not work, since the Bible teaches that an all-powerful God has broken into the natural order from time to time with His mighty acts. **A miracle is by definition an event that is unique and without a precedent.** It is impossible to account for it as we do other events. **The proper way of determining if something happened is not whether we can explain it. The first question to be asked is not *can* it happen, but rather *did* it happen?** If an event can be determined as having happened, yet it defies explanation, we still have to admit to the fact that it happened, explanation or not. The evidence for biblical miracles is as powerful historically as other historical events (such as the fall of Rome and the conquests of Alexander the Great). Just because miracles are outside of our normal daily experience does not mean that they have not occurred and do not occur.” (McDowell, pp. 80-81).

“...suppose we define miracles as events contrary to the nature of our three-dimensional universe—like walking on water and crossing the Red Sea on dry land. The Bible nowhere says that you and I should expect to see these in our daily lives. Most of the people in Bible times didn’t see any of those events either... The Bible does not claim that all people, whether they lived in Bible times or are alive today, should expect to observe contrary-to-nature events. The fact that something happened does not mean it ought to happen to everyone. God does not expect all of us to cross the Red Sea on dry land like the Israelites or walk on water like Peter did... Actually, miracles were most prominent at three points in history: the times of Moses and the children of Israel, Elijah and the prophets, and Christ and the apostles. But even at those periods, most of the people (even the ones who genuinely believed in God) never saw any miracles.” (DeWitt, pp. 26, 29-30)

3) “BUT DON’T MIRACLES VIOLATE NATURAL or SCIENTIFIC LAWS?” “As for the idea that miracles violate natural or scientific laws, we must remember that scientific laws neither dictate events nor do they explain them. They are merely a generalization about observable causes and effects.” (McDowell, p. 80)

Science deals in *regularities*. Science also deals with *probabilities*. *But single events are not the basis of scientific method, since they’re unique and unrepeatable!* Does that mean we shouldn’t believe in them? That is fallacious (misleading) reasoning. For instance, what about making a hole in one in golf? Or being dealt a perfect hand in bridge? **Should we just toss it back and ask for a reshuffle, arguing that we’ve never seen that happen before?**” (Geisler, op cit.)

“David Hume and others have defined a miracle as a violation of natural law. To take such a position, however, is practically to deify natural law, to capitalize it in such a way that whatever god there may be becomes the prisoner of natural law and, in effect, ceases to be God. “In this modern scientific age, men tend to personify science and natural law. **They fail to realize that these are merely the impersonal results of observation.** A Christian believes in natural law—i.e., that things behave in a certain cause-and-effect way almost all the time. But in maintaining this, the Christian does not restrict God’s right and power to intervene when and how he chooses. God is over, above, and outside natural law, and is not bound by it. Laws do not cause anything in the sense that God causes things. They are merely descriptions of what happens. What, in fact, is a miracle? We use the term rather loosely today. If a scared student passes an exam he says, ‘It was a miracle!’... We use the term to mean anything that is unusual or unexpected... In discussing miracles as they are thought of in the Bible, however, the word is used in an entirely different sense. Here is meant an act of God breaking into, changing, or interrupting the ordinary course of things... It is important to note... that miracles are not in conflict with natural law. Rather, ‘Miracles are *unusual* events caused by God. The laws of nature are generalizations about ordinary events caused by Him.’” (Little, pp. 62, 64. Interior quote from J. N. Hawthorne, “*Questions of Science and Faith*” [London: Tyndale Press, 1960], p. 55, italics in the original)

This account of a real conversation between a young man nick-named “Orange” & a Christian named Jay, sheds some light on this question as well:

“‘If the miracles in the Bible are for real,’ Orange went on, ‘why weren’t they recorded in history, and why don’t we observe that sort of thing in science?’ ‘I assume you mean natural history and the natural sciences?’ Jay responded. ‘Uh-huh.’ mumbled Orange. ‘Well, by definition natural history and the natural sciences include only things that are observable today. Christ’s miracles are not. When natural historians or scientists consider the miracles recorded in the Bible, they immediately put them in the category of something other than natural history or natural science. Therefore, they do not accept them as data pertinent to their field of study—so obviously, we don’t find them there. We don’t conclude that dinosaurs never existed simply because we don’t find any at the zoo. The zoo is a collection of living animals, not extinct ones. If we are going to determine whether or not miracles existed as recorded in the Bible, we must ask ourselves if it is reasonable for those events to have happened at that time.’... Science and history deal with that which is ‘natural’ to our universe as we observe it today. Miracles are not natural; so by definition they are not part of the study of natural science or natural history... **the occurrence of miracles does not depend on our observing them in nature, any more than the existence of dinosaurs depends on our observing them at the zoo.** The question is, ‘If we had scientifically recorded facts and history as we observed the life of Jesus of Nazareth, would we have observed what the eyewitnesses of that day claimed to have seen?’ The question is not, ‘Do you see dinosaurs today?’ but rather, ‘Would you have seen them then?’” (DeWitt, pp. 25-26, 29)

4) “WEREN’T BIBLICAL MIRACLES JUST MAGIC TRICKS THAT FOOLED THOSE SIMPLE PEOPLE?” “It is often contended that people who lived during biblical times were more simple minded and superstitious than modern man, and could be tricked into believing the miraculous stories contained in the Bible. Today it is claimed we live in a scientific age and have outgrown these superstitions... A close study (though) of the evidence will show that these accounts are not a superstitious reaction to some clever trickster. The response to the miraculous acts of God show the same surprise and anxiety that modern man would have if he were placed in the same situation. The people living at the time of Jesus certainly knew that men born blind do not immediately receive their sight (John 9:32), that five loaves and a few fish would not feed 5,000 people (John 6:14) or that men do not walk on water (Matthew 14:26). Doubting Thomas said, ‘*Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in His side, I will not believe*’ (John 20:25, RSV)... Thus we are not expected to believe the ridiculous, and neither were the people of biblical times. **The people living in those times were no less skeptical than we are today.** It was the unavoidable, the inescapable, the irrefutable fact that caused them to believe... It is only the skepticism of modern man that causes him to deny that miracles occurred.” (McDowell, p. 78)

“It is said that people in ancient times were exceedingly ignorant, gullible, and superstitious. They thought many things were miracles that we now know, with the benefit of modern science, were not miracles at all but simply phenomena which people didn’t understand. For instance, if we were to fly a modern jet over a primitive tribe today, they would probably fall to the ground in worship of this Silver Bird God of the sky. They would think that the sight they observed was a miraculous phenomenon. We, however, know that the plane is simply a result of the applied principles of aerodynamics, and we realize there is nothing miraculous about it at all. The problem with this thesis, which sounds so plausible at first, is that many of the miracles are not of this order. In the case of the blind man (John 9), the people observed that since the beginning of time it had not been known for a man born blind to receive his sight (v. 32). **There is no more ‘natural’ explanation of this miracle now than was available then.** And who, today, has any more explanation, in a natural sense, of our Lord’s resurrection from the dead than was available when it happened? No one! We simply cannot get away from the supernatural aspects of the biblical record.” (Little, pp. 63-64)

5) “AREN’T THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE NO DIFFERENT THAN THOSE IN GREEK & ROMAN MYTHOLOGY?” “Some people feel that the miracles recorded in the Bible...are (to be) compared to Greek mythology and other tales of both the supernatural and bizarre. Instead of investigating their foundation, they class them immediately with legends and folklore. Admittedly, there are many stories from our Lord’s Day among the Greeks and Romans which are so fanciful and ridiculous that they are not worthy of serious consideration. This is in complete contrast to the biblical miracles, which never offer a mindless display of the supernatural. To simply say that, because some reported supernatural events are ridiculous and untrue, therefore any reported supernatural occurrence or miracle is untrue denotes faulty reasoning. **It is ‘guilt’ by association, or a case of throwing the baby out with the bath water.**...The first hand testimony to the miraculous (e.g. Peter in Acts 2:22) is something that does not occur either in other religions or in Greek or Roman mythology. The straightforward account of supernatural works breaking into the natural order is recorded for us in the Bible by eyewitnesses to these events.” (McDowell, pp. 74-75)

“**Of the words used in the New Testament for miracles,** the common words are those expressing the ideas of ‘*supernatural powers.*’ These are the words used not only by the New Testament authors, but also by the Greek and Roman writers in their stories and myths. However, in the biblical account **an additional word** is used, seldom if at all used by the Greek and Roman authors. The word used is ‘*sign,*’ (Gk: *Semeion,* cf. *Vine’s Expository Dictionary,* vol. 4, pp. 29-30) which means attesting miracle or a miraculous proof (John 20:30, 31)...” (McDowell, p. 74):

- “The miracle stories as recorded in the Bible are **always for a definite purpose and never to show off.** There is always a logical reason for them (e.g. Luke 9:12-17; John 2:1-11)...
- “The miracles of Jesus were **performed out of love and compassion to those who were afflicted.**
- “They were also **meant to be objective signs to the people that He was the promised Messiah,** since one of the credentials of the Messiah would be signs and miracles. Jesus pointed out this fact when questioned by two messengers of John the Baptist about his identity. (cf. Mt. 11:4-5).” (McDowell, pp. 74-75)

Another author noted: “Miracles recorded outside the Bible do not display the same order, dignity and motive as those in Scripture. But what is more important, they do not have the same solid authentication as the biblical miracles. We have discussed at some length the historical reliability of Bible records. Similar investigations into pagan records of miracles would soon show there is no basis for comparison. The same could be said of many so-called miracles and alleged healings of our own time. They do not stand the full weight of investigation. But to take some ancient pagan miracle or a contemporary claim and to show their great improbability is not fair to biblical miracles. **The fact that some miracles are counterfeits is no proof that all are spurious, any more than the discovery of some counterfeit currency would prove all currency spurious.**” (Little, pp. 67-68)

“The miracles often served as a sort of catalyst to help people believe, but that’s not why they occurred... **They authenticated what God was doing**...but they didn’t create faith. Jesus claimed to be God. His miracles were important because they were something anybody could see as evidence that He was not lying or having delusions of grandeur. They were not done to generate faith in people who had already decided that He was wrong.” (DeWitt, pp. 24-25)

“Biblical miracles, in contrast to miracle stories in pagan literature and those of other religions, were not capricious or fantastic. They were not scattered helter-skelter through the record without rhyme or reason. There was always clear order and purpose to them. **They clustered around three periods of biblical history:** the Exodus, the prophets who led Israel, and the time of Christ and the early Church. They always had as their purpose to confirm faith by authenticating the message and the messenger, or to demonstrate God’s love by relieving suffering. Miracles in the Bible were never performed for personal prestige or to gain money or power. Jesus was tempted by the Devil in the wilderness to use his miracle power in just this way, but he steadfastly refused and rebuked Satan.” (Little, pp. 64-65)

6) “DO MIRACLES PRODUCE FAITH?” “**The purpose of miracles is not to produce faith.** When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the Bible says some believed. But it also says, ‘*the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus to death also; because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus*’ (John 12:10-11). Acts 4:16-17 states that the same thing happened when Peter and John healed the lame beggar. Jesus Himself said, ‘*If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets [i.e. the Bible], neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead*’ (Luke 16:31). If someone is willing to decide to believe, then a miracle could help him decide more quickly or easily. Lighter fluid may help your charcoal burn more readily. But lighter fluid will not start the fire. And if someone is predisposed not to believe, then no amount of miracles will create faith. The reason God provided miracles, was to authenticate that a particular message or messenger was indeed from Himself... The miracles verified that the great message of salvation was indeed from God.” [cf. Heb. 2:3-4; II Cor. 12:12; Acts 14:3; Rom. 15:18-19]. (DeWitt, pp. 28-29)

As an evidence of the truth of the Christian message, however, Jesus referred to miracles frequently. In answer to the direct request of the Jews to tell them plainly if he was the Messiah, he said, ‘*I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness to me*’ (John 10:25). Again he says that if they had any hesitation in believing his claims they should believe him ‘*for the sake of the works themselves*’ (14:11). God confirmed the message of the apostles in the fledgling Church with signs and wonders. The question is often raised, ‘If God performed miracles *then*, why does he not do them *now*? If I *saw* a miracle I could believe!’

“This question was answered by Jesus himself as he told of a rich man who, in the torment of hell, lifted up his eyes and pleaded with Abraham that someone should warn his five brothers, lest they, too, should come into the awful place. He was told that his brothers had the Scriptures. But the rich man protested that if one should rise from the dead, they would be shaken by the miracle and would take heed. The reply given applies as much today as then: ‘*They have Moses and the prophets,*’ Abraham said, ‘...*If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead*’ (Luke 16:29, 31). And so it is today. Many have made a rationalist presupposition which rules out the very possibility of miracles. Since they know miracles are impossible, no amount of evidence would ever persuade them one had taken place. There would always be an alternate naturalistic explanation for them to advance. [Furthermore] miracles are not necessary today because reliable records are available of those miracles which have occurred. As Ramm observes, ‘**If miracles are capable of sensory perception, they can be made matters of testimony. If they are adequately testified to,**

then the recorded testimony has the same validity for evidence as the experience of beholding the event.' Every court in the world operates on the basis of reliable testimony by word of mouth or in writing. 'If the "raising of Lazarus was actually witnessed by John and recorded faithfully by him when still in soundness of faculties and memory, for purposes of evidence it is the same as if we were there and saw it."' (Little, pp. 65-66, italics in the original)

7) "IS IT LEGITIMATE TO POINT AT THE BIRTH OF BABIES, OR SING ABOUT FLOWERS GROWING, & CALL THOSE EVENTS MIRACLES?" "A person commented to a Christian once, 'I have people tell me that they see miracles every day...They talk about the birth of a baby and the beauty of a flower, and then conclude that the whole world is full of miracles. That seems dishonest to me. They are avoiding the real issue. If those things are examples of what they mean by miracles, then they don't believe in miracles any more than I do. Isn't it being deceptive to say you believe in the supernatural miracles of the Bible and then prove it by telling me about babies and flowers?' The Christian's response was, 'Oh yes...There are two ways to destroy the concept of miracles. One is to say there are no such things. The other is to say everything is a miracle. If everything is a miracle, then nothing is.'...People commonly refer to wonders of nature as 'miracles.' But that only confuses the issue by using two different meanings for the word 'miracle.' **Saying everything is a miracle destroys the concept of miracles as effectively as saying there are no such things.** Certainly, there are wonders of nature that cause us to marvel at God's handiwork. But those are natural not supernatural. The Bible also describes some events that are beyond the nature we observe every day. Those are supernatural. When we say we believe in miracles and then refer to the birth of a baby or the beauty of a flower, we are illustrating the supernatural with the natural—thus denying the existence of anything beyond the natural." (DeWitt, pp. 26-27, 30)

8) "HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT THE TESTIMONY TO THE MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE?" i.e. solid intellectual evidence for the reality and veracity of the miracles recorded in the Bible

"When reading the miraculous accounts in the Bible and especially in the Gospels, **a person has to note the fact that the miracles weren't denied by the critics.** In the life and ministry of Jesus He was never asked if He performed miracles; He was always asked how He was able to do them. They wanted to know where he derived the power and authority (Matthew 21:23). It was impossible for them to deny that He was doing miraculous things; literally hundreds of people had been cured, and there was no other explanation. **The fact of His miracles was not in dispute.** They couldn't be denied.

"On the day of Pentecost, less than two months after the crucifixion of Jesus, Simon Peter told a large gathering, 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know' (Acts 2:22). Peter here, in front of a hostile crowd, states that the people themselves were aware of the miracles of Jesus. Just the fact that He wasn't immediately shouted down demonstrates that the wonders Jesus performed were well known to everyone." (McDowell, p. 75)

"Ramm lists reasons why we may know that the miracles have adequate and reliable testimony. We summarize:

- **"First, many miracles were done in public.** They were not performed in secret before only one or two people, who announced them to the world. There was every opportunity to investigate the miracles on the spot. **It is very impressive that the opponents of Jesus never denied the fact of the miracles he performed.** They either attributed them to the power of Satan (Mt 12:24; Mk. 3:22; Lk. 11:15) or else tried to suppress the evidence, as with the raising of Lazarus from the dead. They said, 'Let's kill him before the people realize what is happening and the whole world goes after him!'
- **"Second, some miracles were performed in the presence of unbelievers.** It is significant that the miracles claimed by cults and off-beat groups seldom happen when the skeptic is present to observe. It was not so with Jesus.
- **"Third, the miracles of Jesus were performed over a period of time and involved a great variety of powers.**

- **“Fourth, there is the testimony of the cured.** As noted earlier, we have it from those, like Lazarus, whose healings could not possibly have been psychosomatic or the result of inaccurate diagnosis.
- **“Fifth, the miracles cannot be discounted because of the extravagant claim of pagan miracles.** ‘Miracles are believed in non-Christian religions because the religion is already believed, but in the biblical religion, miracles are part of the means of establishing the true religion. This distinction is of immense importance (As noted by C. S. Lewis above).’ (Ramm, cited by Little, pp. 66-68)

“Some attempts have been made to explain miracles on the basis of exaggerated reporting. It has been demonstrated that people are notoriously inaccurate in reporting events and impressions. Playing the simple parlor game of “*Rumour*” is enough to confirm this fact. In the light of this tendency, we are told, it is obvious that the reliability of a human being as an observer may be severely questioned. Consequently (skeptics assert that), the Gospel accounts of miracles can be discounted as the mistaken observations of inaccurate observers.

“It may be answered that, **despite this tendency, law courts have not ceased functioning, and eyewitnesses are still considered able to provide highly useful information.** And though there may be some question about such details of an accident as the time, speed of the cars, etc., **the accident cannot be said not to have happened because of discrepancies in witnesses’ stories.** As Ramm observes, the smashed cars and the injured people are irrefutable evidence on which all agreed. We must be careful to see the limitations of arguments such as the unreliability of witnesses. **It will help to see that some of these arguments, pressed to their outer limits, refute the very assertions they set out to make.** For instance, those conducting the experiments to establish the unreliability of human witnesses must assume their own reliability or they will have to throw out their own conclusions as being the result of human observation, which is unreliable!

“**Another idea sometimes advanced is that the miracle stories must be discarded because they are told by believing disciples and are therefore not ‘objective’** (e.g. atheist David Mills, et al). But the disciples were the ones on the scene who saw the miracles. The fact that they were disciples is neither here nor there. **The question is, did they tell the truth? As has been seen, eyewitness testimony is the best we can get, and most of the disciples faced the test of death as the test of their veracity.** “**We would not say today in a court of law that, in order to guarantee objectivity on the part of witnesses, we will listen only to those who were *not* at the scene of an accident and had nothing to do with it.** Nor would we say that testimony would *not* be acceptable from eyewitnesses, including the victims, because they would be ‘prejudiced’. **The crucial question in each case is *truthfulness, not proximity or relationship to the events.***” (Little, pp. 68-69)

So...WHY ARE MIRACLES REJECTED?

“It is important now to consider why miracles are rejected. **One reason why these miracles are rejected is because they do not fit with many people’s view of the world...** Instead of investigating the evidence for the miraculous, the whole idea is ruled out ahead of time as being totally impossible. This is not a proper way to deal with this issue, since only a person with all knowledge of events past, present and future could exclude the possibility of miracles. (McDowell, p. 76)

“**There is an appropriate historical example of this folly of ruling out something ahead of time because it does not fit with one’s view of the world.** When explorers first came to Australia, they encountered an animal that defied all known laws of taxonomy. They discovered a semi-aquatic, egg-laying mammal, having a broad, flat tail, webbed feet and a snout resembling a duck’s bill. They named this animal **the platypus**. Upon returning to their native land, they related their finding to the world. The people regarded their report as a hoax, since no such animal with the above characteristics could possibly exist. Even though there was reputable eyewitness testimony, it was rejected because of their world view. They went back a second time to Australia, and returned with the hide of a dead platypus. The people accused them of rigging a hoax again. It seems that those people took Benjamin Disraeli’s dictum seriously, ‘*I make it a rule only to believe what I understand.*’ (*The Infernal Marriage*, Pt. 1, Ch. 4.) However, as Charles Caleb Colton has pointed out, ‘*He that will believe only what he can fully comprehend must have a very long head or a very short creed.*’ (Frank Mead, *Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations*.)

“Many people, unfortunately, hold this type of attitude and determine the verdict before examining the evidence. **This attitude is not only unscientific, but also it can be dangerous to the one holding the view. If there is a God, and if He has revealed Himself through the miraculous, then an individual is cutting off his only chance of finding this out.** By refusing to accept the possibility of God breaking into history in a supernatural way, he is destroying his only hope of understanding what life is all about. Therefore, it is of the highest importance at least to look into the possibility of miracles occurring because of the eternal stakes which are in view.” (McDowell, p. 77)

THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE: “DOES GOD EXIST?”

“The miracles in the Bible are an inherent part of God’s communication—not a mere appendage of little significance. **The whole question ultimately depends on the existence of God. Settle that question and miracles cease to be a problem.** The very uniformity against which a miracle stands in stark contrast depends on an omnipotent author of natural law who is also capable of transcending it to accomplish his sovereign ends.” (Little, p. 69)

“Behind this...is the familiar issue of whether or not God exists. **For if there is a God then certainly miracles are possible.**” (McDowell, p. 80 -emphasis added)

“With many questions, it is more important to discern the root problem than to become involved in discussing a twig on a branch. This is especially true of questions about miracles. **The problem is generally not with a particular miracle, but with a whole principle.** To establish the miracle in question, would not answer the question. The controversy is with the whole principle of the possibility of miracles. One who has problems with miracles often also has difficulty with the validity of predictive prophecy. These problems stem from a weak view of God. **The real problem, then, is not with miracles or prophecy but with the whole concept of God.** Once we assume the existence of God, there is no problem with miracles, because God is by definition all-powerful. In the absence of such a God, however, the concept of miracles is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to entertain.

“**The question really is, ‘Does an all-powerful God, who created the universe, exist?’** If so, we shall have little difficulty with miracles in which he transcends the natural law of which he is the author. It is important to keep this fundamental question in mind in discussing miracles.” (Little, pp. 61-62) “To disbelieve in miracles you must disprove that God exists. As long as God's existence is possible, miracles are possible.” (Geisler, op cit.)

THE GREATEST MIRACLE OF ALL:

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD!

“**The resurrection is the crowning miracle of Christianity.** The philosopher David Hume said that no one was there to verify it (i.e. the resurrection), so we must reject it! Yet evolutionists believe in the spontaneous generation of life in an original pond... and no one was there to witness that either! **So we too, believe in a singularity.** We believe in this: ***The resurrection of Christ!*** ...and in contrast to belief in the “*Big Bang*” or the spontaneous generation of life, there **WERE** eyewitnesses to that event (hundreds of them!)—unlike the origin of life! Some may respond, ‘*But there are so many different gods and so many nutty ideas about god!*’ That's true! But Jesus was different! **The others did nothing to prove their claims.** Christ not only rose from the dead Himself, He also resurrected others!” (Geisler, op cit.)

Note: For much fuller documentation regarding the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, see the following sources: Nathan Busenitz, *Reasons We Believe* (Crossway: Wheaton, IL, 2008), pp. 188-212; Norman Geisler & Ron Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask* (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI, 1990, 1996), pp. 118-128; Paul E. Little, *Know Why You Believe* (Victor Books: Wheaton, IL, 1967, 1982), pp. 41-51; Josh McDowell: *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville, TN, 1999), pp. 203-284; McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor* (Here’s Life Publishers: San Bernardino, CA, 1980); etc.); McDowell, *A Ready Defense* (Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville, TN, 1993), pp. 215-240 & Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ* (Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, MI, 1998), pp. 191-243