

QUESTIONS ABOUT JESUS

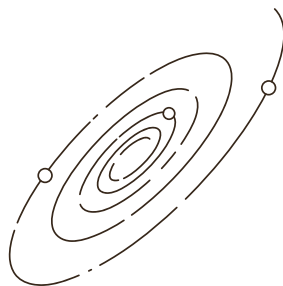
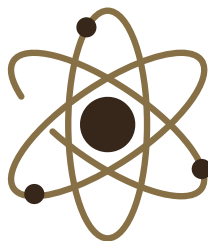
DID JESUS ACTUALLY PERFORM MIRACLES?



QUESTION

DID JESUS ACTUALLY PERFORM MIRACLES?

Before we investigate the works of Jesus, we first need to ask the question, 'Are miracles even possible?' In the 21st century, when scientists have dissected the atom, mapped the human genome, and peered through the Hubble telescope into the distant reaches of the universe, many people believe that the rationality of science should chase away any naive beliefs in God and the possibility of miracles.



However, throughout the 20th century a number of scientific discoveries were made that rather than disprove God's existence, point towards belief in a creator. For example, the discovery that the cosmos is incredibly (almost impossibly) fine-tuned, in just the right way to make it possible for the universe to exist and operate; or the fact that the universe is finite and had a beginning.

For if God does not exist, the universe simply popped into existence out of absolutely nothing billions of years ago. That would be an even bigger miracle than God raising Jesus from the dead, or Jesus healing the sick.



Christian apologist Norman Geisler once observed that, *"The only way to show that miracles are impossible is to disprove the existence of God."* Something no one has ever been able to do.



NORMAN GEISLER

Christian apologist

WITH THAT IN MIND HERE ARE 6 POINTS TO START YOU OFF
IN YOUR INVESTIGATION OF WHETHER OR NOT
JESUS ACTUALLY PERFORMED MIRACLES.



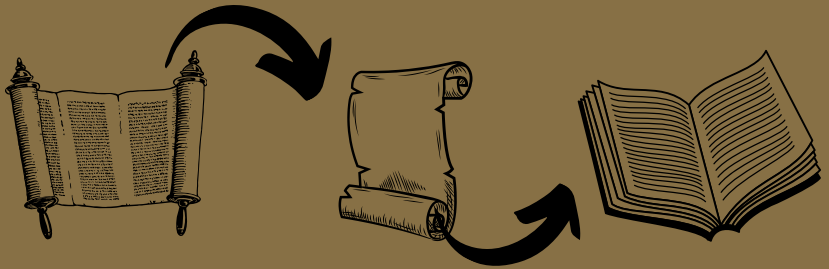
1

THE RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The writings of the New Testament that record Jesus' miracles have been traced back to honest and reliable eyewitness testimony.



Furthermore, these accounts have been accurately and faithfully passed down to us through history. In other words, we can be confident that the writings of the New Testament were truly written by Jesus's earliest followers, who were honest and accurate in their accounts of Jesus's life and works.



We can also be confident that the New Testament we read today is an accurate and reliable reconstruction of the original written in the 1st century AD. Just like a jury in a court of law can trust the testimony of an honest and reliable eyewitness, we can trust the New Testament and its accounts of Jesus performing miracles.

2

THE INCLUSION OF HISTORICAL DETAILS IN THE MIRACLE ACCOUNTS

Christian apologist Lee Strobel notes that some of the miracle accounts include historical elements as incidental details that add to their credibility. For example, specific names, occupations, and locations are recorded.



LEE STROBEL

Christian apologist

First century skeptics would've been able to investigate these claims and prove them false, if they were fabrications. The disciples and other followers of Jesus must've been extremely confident that their accounts were true if they were happy to open themselves up to investigation and scrutiny.

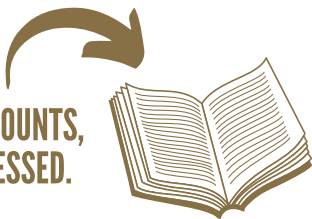
The nature of the gospels is another important consideration. They're sober and simple accounts, almost journalistic in style, unlike the fanciful occurrences described in later apocryphal gospels, which are not included in the Bible.

The inclusion of embarrassing details in some of the miracle accounts further demonstrates their truthfulness and reliability. For example, in the account of Jesus turning water into wine, details are included that are seemingly counterproductive to Jesus. Like the apparently harsh way He spoke to His mother.



Even reporting this story at all could've fuelled charges that Jesus was a glutton and drunkard. Thus, it's unlikely the church later invented such a story.

THE DISCIPLES APPEAR TO BE
TRUTHFUL AND ACCURATE IN THEIR ACCOUNTS,
SIMPLY RECORDING WHAT THEY WITNESSED.



3

OPPONENTS OF JESUS ADMITTED HE PERFORMED MIRACLES

In the gospel of John, a pharisee named Nicodemus, who was a Jewish religious leader, came to Jesus at night in secret and said, *"Rabbi, we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you."*



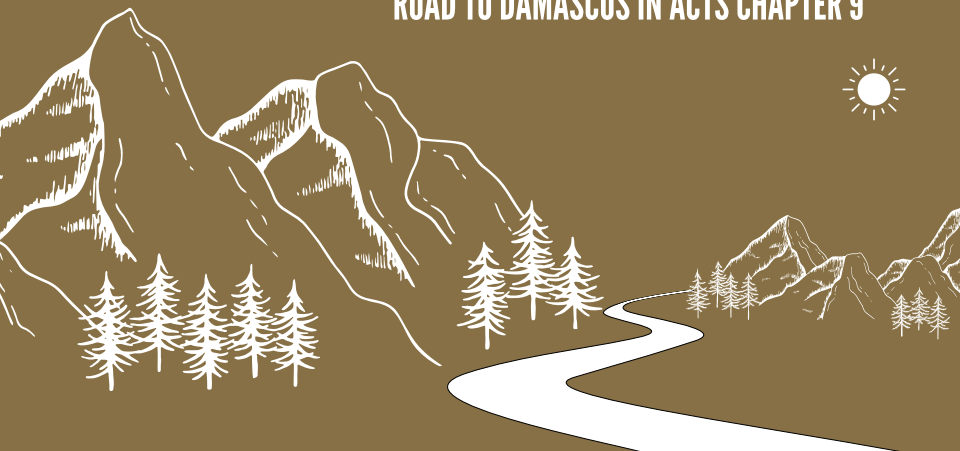
NICODEMUS AND JESUS
—JOHN 3:1-21

THIS IS CONFIRMATION THAT JESUS WAS KNOWN FOR PERFORMING MIRACLES NOT ONLY BY HIS DISCIPLES AND OTHER FOLLOWERS BUT BY HIS OPPONENTS TOO.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul records that both he, who had been a pharisee and persecutor of Christians, and James, Jesus's skeptical half-brother, encountered the miraculously resurrected Jesus and became convinced of His divinity. Paul's radical claims are supported by the men's fully transformed lives.



READ ABOUT PAUL'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE RISEN JESUS ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS IN ACTS CHAPTER 9



4

OPPOSITION SOURCES OUTSIDE OF THE BIBLE CONFIRM JESUS'S MIRACLES

Ancient Jewish writings, known as the Talmud, confirm several historical facts about Jesus. Such as, His existence, His crucifixion, and most relevantly, that He death in the 'supernatural'. The Talmud attributes Jesus's power to sorcery.

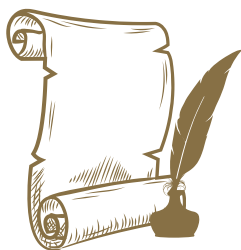


Ancient Greek philosopher and early critic of Christianity, Celsus also implicitly confirms that Jesus performed miraculous signs. Celsus sought to explain away Jesus's miracles by alleging that He was a sorcerer trained by Egyptian magicians.



Another interesting piece of history to consider is a report by ancient Christian apologist Justin Martyr.

Around 150 AD he reported that the '*Acts of Pilate*', an official Roman document that had purportedly been sent to Rome, attested to the crucifixion of Jesus as well as several healing miracles that Jesus had performed.



It's fascinating to note that Justin Martyr encouraged his readers to check out this official Roman document to confirm what he was saying about Jesus. Why would he do such a thing unless he was absolutely certain that Pilate's writings would support his claims about Jesus?



5

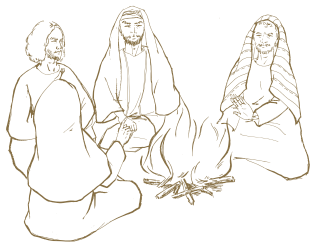
THE RESURRECTION IS ONE OF THE BEST ATTESTED EVENTS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Jesus's climatic miracle was His return from the dead after the Romans crucified Him. There is compelling historical evidence to conclude that Jesus truly rose from the dead.

6

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS FALL SHORT

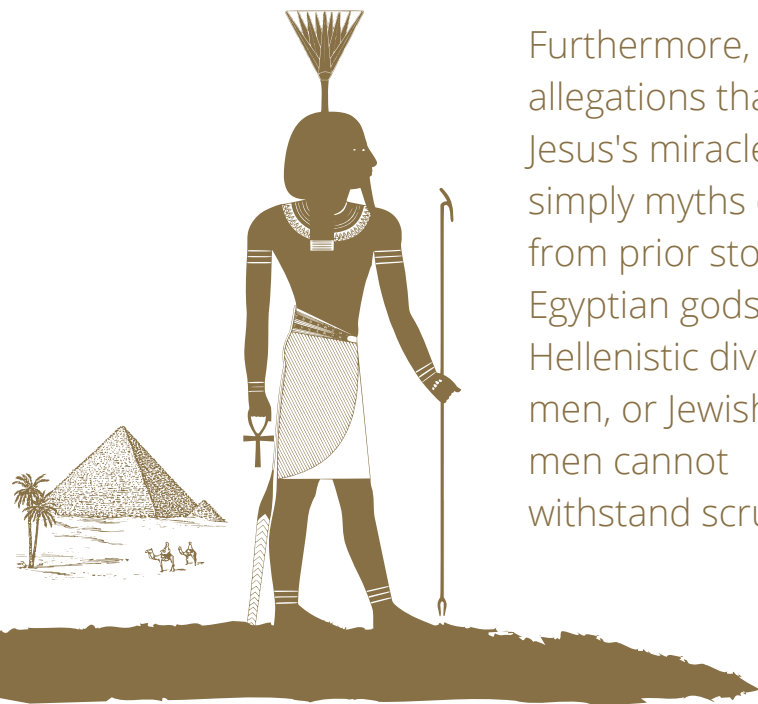
Many skeptics and opponents of Jesus have tried to explain away the miracles He performed. However, all alternative theories and explanations crumble under scrutiny. They fail to adequately account for the range, type and circumstances of Jesus's miracles.



Given all that we know about Jesus's life and ministry, His miracles cannot be explained away by baseless allegations like he was a sorcerer or healed by the power of suggestion, for example.

Neither can the accounts of Jesus's miracles be dismissed as legends that developed over the centuries following His life. We have too much historical evidence that supports the conclusion that the gospel accounts were written early and by honest and reliable eyewitnesses. In addition, as we have seen opposition sources from the first two centuries implicitly admit that Jesus was some kind of miracle-worker.

Furthermore, allegations that Jesus's miracles are simply myths copied from prior stories of Egyptian gods, Hellenistic divine men, or Jewish holy men cannot withstand scrutiny.




After studying the differences and supposed similarities between those stories and the gospels, scholar Gary Habermas concluded that, *"It cannot be proven that ancient parallels account for the gospel reports."*



GARY HABERMAS
Christian apologist

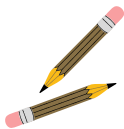
IT IS FAIR TO CONCLUDE THAT NOT ONLY ARE MIRACLES POSSIBLE BUT ALSO THAT JESUS TRULY PERFORMED MIRACLES AS RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. KEEP THESE 6 POINTS IN MIND AS YOU INVESTIGATE THIS MATTER FURTHER.



**THE RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
THE INCLUSION OF HISTORICAL DETAILS
OPPONENTS OF JESUS ADMITTED HE PERFORMED MIRACLES
OPPOSITION SOURCES OUTSIDE THE BIBLE CONFIRM JESUS'S MIRACLES
JESUS'S MIRACULOUS RESURRECTION
INADEQUATE ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS**



QUESTIONS:



**LIST 2 SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES ABOUT THE UNIVERSE
WHICH POINT US TOWARDS THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.**

**LIST THE 6 FACTORS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN
INVESTIGATING WHETHER JESUS PERFORMED MIRACLES?**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.



NOTES:



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THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY**

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