

A miracle is a supernatural intervention in the natural order of things. In other words, a miracle is something that is not only unlikely to happen—it is *not supposed* to happen according to natural law. There are over 250 miracles reported in the Bible, including the sun standing still to aid Joshua in battle (Jos 10), Jesus' many miracles recorded throughout the Gospels, as well as the miracles done by the apostles in the book of Acts. For many people, miracles discredit the Bible. They think believing in miracles is like believing in the tooth fairy or Santa Claus. We live in an age of science, they say. Reasonable people just don't believe in miracles anymore. Is this correct? Is it foolish to believe in miracles?

There are two main arguments against miracles. The first says miracles *cannot* occur, because such things are literally impossible. The second says miracles *have not* occurred. Let's look at each of these arguments more closely.

*Miracles Cannot Occur.* Some argue that miracles cannot occur, because it is impossible to violate the laws of nature. Miracles, by definition, are events that violate these laws; therefore, they cannot occur. There are two problems with this argument. First, the laws of nature only describe what is normal and repeated in nature. They do *not* dictate what has to happen in the world. Thus, the laws of nature do not dictate that miracles cannot happen. In fact, because the laws of nature tell us what is normal, it is possible for us to recognize miracles if they occur. Second, those who assume that the laws of nature can never be violated assume that nothing exists outside of nature that is capable of acting outside of these laws. This is an *assumption*, not a conclusion from evidence. Christians recognize that God exists outside the natural laws. Further, God is the author of the natural laws and cannot be constrained by them. Thus, He can act outside of them (perform miracles) if He wishes.

Others suggest miracles are impossible because everything can be understood by science. Therefore, it is wrong to suggest that science cannot explain something (like miracles). However, science cannot explain everything. In fact, the statement, "Science can explain everything," cannot itself be proven correct by science. This is another assumption, not a fact proven by evidence.

*Miracles Have Not Occurred.* This argument says that even if miracles are technically possible, it is best to assume they've never actually occurred, since we don't have firm scientific evidence for their reality. This is another example of making an assumption that cannot be supported by evidence. In order for the statement *miracles have not occurred* to be proven true, every miracle claim in history would need to be scientifically examined with great care. This cannot happen, since past events cannot be repeated for scientists to examine today. However, well-documented miracle reports like the resurrection of Jesus Christ have been examined closely by historians and seem to defy all naturalistic explanations. Scientists look for the truth about the natural world. There are features of nature and historical events (such as Jesus' resurrection and the Big Bang) that cannot be explained by natural means alone. If natural causes cannot adequately explain an event, this leaves open the possibility of a miraculous explanation.