

God's Intervention in the world.

Explain what is meant by the bible describing God as a miracle worker?

Miracles have been reported all over the world for thousands of years. In most scenarios miracles are related to God, and the activity of God within the world suggesting God's imminence. The word miracle originates from the word "miraculum" meaning a thing of wonder. It is an interruption to the processes of nature that cannot be explained by natural laws and therefore a transgression. An interruption such as this normally bears some deeper and usually religious significance.

The bible recites many ideas of miracles by either God or through Jesus. Within the old testament the story of Joshua and the Israelites. This story explains how he took his army to defend a place called Gibeon and that God was on the side of Joshua and helps them defeat the enemies of Gibeon. God does this by the interruption of natural laws such as prolonging the days, and throwing down a storm of hail.

Other texts within the bible suggest miracles performed by God. For example during the story of Moses where he parts the red sea in order for the Israelites to escape from the Egyptians. Another way miracles are shown within the bible is through Jesus. This is shown in such miracles as the feeding of 5000 and healing of the paralysed man Jesus was told to even bring people back to life. The bible uses these miracles to show God's immanence within the world and his relationship between God and humanity.

"miracles make it difficult to believe in a reliable god"

The idea of miracles is that they defy the laws of nature. That God is transcendent but shows his power and goodness by interacting within the world as a miracle worker. For many who have experienced miracles they see it as an experience with God, for an example the theophany between God and Moses. However many issues are raised by the idea of God interfering in the lives of others.

Firstly, some people see miracles as being morally unfair. They would say that if God was all good why would he interfere in the lives of some and not others. Why would a good God choose to help certain people and leave others to suffer. For example God helped the Jews many times within the bible whether it be in the story of Moses, Joshua or the feeding of 5000. However let them suffer through persecution so badly during the holocaust of world war two. Not only this but through the stories of Joshua and Moses God is choosing to help some people, in this case the Israelites but not the Egyptians or the enemies of Gibeon if God is the creator of everything in order to be morally correct God should be fair and just. Furthermore in some accounts of miracles from the bible God chooses to help a single person, how would God choose who to help and who to stay in suffering if God was just and fair. A miracle itself therefore contradicts God's omnibenevolence.

Miracles also make God uncertain. According to religious believers God is the creator of everything "creation ex nihilo" and yet for a miracle to exist God must work against his own creation to create a miracle. This questions God's immanence as it goes against the idea that God is omniscient and never changing. By producing miracles the original laws created by God are uncertain and changeable. Why would a God that is all God and powerful need to work against his own creation there should be no need for miracles. "God looked at his work and saw it was good." How could God be the creator of the earth and want to change how it works? Maurice Wiles would agree with this arguing that God couldn't intervene on an individual level without undermining his whole creation. And that a good who could reject some suffering whilst choosing to help others it not worthy of worship.

Although many follow this argument there are those who would say there does not need to be a choice between natural law and miracles, that they can co exist within the same world. That science can only develop by accepting new ideas of which miracles could be one. Also that miracles can have the same sorts of evidence as that of science, accounts by people, memories or physical traces left behind.

David Hume is another philosopher who rejects that a reliable God cannot be a God of miracles. He suggests that miracles have nothing to do with God and that those talk of experiencing miraculous events are "barbarous" "ignorant" and "gullible" By this he means that the idea of God creating miracle is simply an excuse for those who cannot understand the true and natural reason for the occurrence.

On the other hand there are those who would argue with the ideas of Hume and others sharing that opinion. They would say that although it is questionable as to whether miracles exist and are caused by God there is an equal lack of evidence to deny the occurrence of miracles. Equally that for a religious person it is not to question how God interacts within the world, just to have faith and accept that God is omnipotent, omnibenevolent etc and that God must perform these miracles for a reason that is beyond the understanding of humans but is for a good cause.