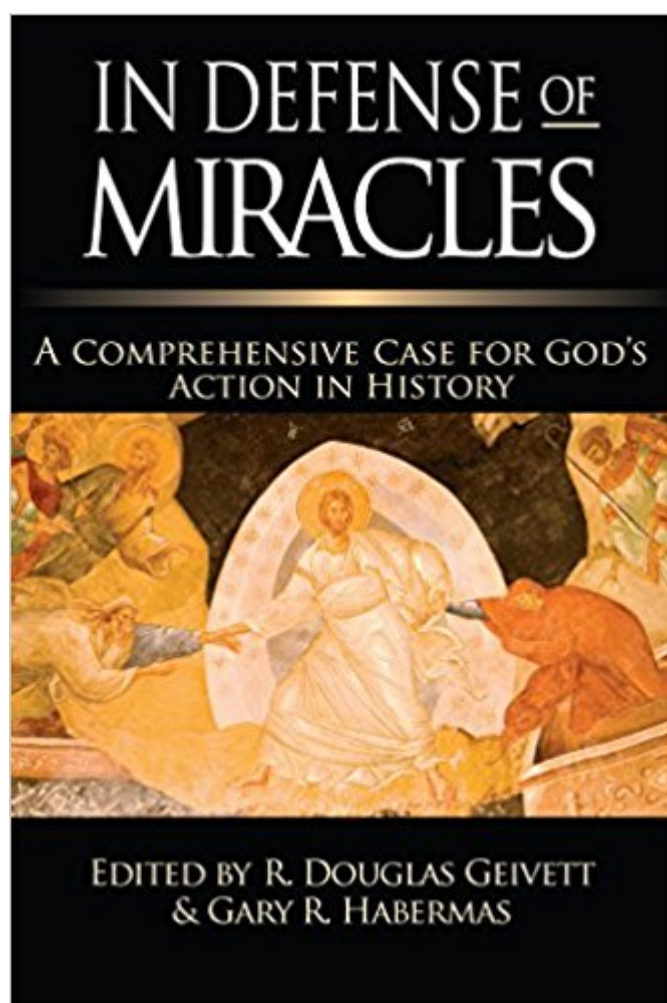


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# In Defense Of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case For God's Action In History



## Synopsis

Rumors of deception have surrounded claims of Jesus' resurrection ever since the soldiers appointed to guard his tomb made their report to the Jewish authorities. But no one has led the philosophic charge against miracles quite as influentially as David Hume with his 1748 essay "Of Miracles." Refined, revised, restated, his arguments still affect philosophic discussions of miracles today. During the twentieth century, strong arguments have been raised by Antony Flew, now professor emeritus at Keele University in England. Flew has contributed a fresh statement of his objections to the idea of God's acting in history just for this volume, which also includes Hume's classic critique as a part of the case against miracles. In response, Douglas Geivett and Gary Habermas have assembled a distinguished team of scholars to rebut the objections and set forth the positive case for God's action in history: Richard Purtill clarifies the word miracle, while Norman Geisler critiques Hume's case against miracles. Francis Beckwith and Winfried Corduan assess how we would recognize miracles in the past and in the present. Ronald Nash examines naturalism's exclusion of miracles and shows its self-referential incoherence. J. P. Moreland discusses whether science properly rules out the possibility of miracles. God's existence and action in history are probed by David Beck and Stephen Davis, while Douglas Geivett argues that within a theistic framework it is reasonable to expect miracles as confirmation of claims to special revelation. David Clark examines miracles within the context of various world religions. Robert Newman, John Feinberg, William Lane Craig and Gary Habermas conclude by investigating fulfilled prophecy, the virgin birth and incarnation of Jesus, the empty tomb, and the resurrection appearances. *In Defense of Miracles* is a comprehensive, up-to-date discussion that should not be overlooked by anyone concerned with the current debate over miracles.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The common arguments against the possibility of miracles are presented along with Christian responses in the book *In Defense of Miracles*. Editors R. Douglas Geivett and Gary R. Habermas have compiled some of the best apologists in the Evangelical fold to respond to the challenge. . . Provides a good overview of the issues and Christian responses to attacks on the miracles of the Christian Faith. It makes a solid reference for Christians seeking to respond to challenges on the matter of miracles by unbelievers. (Christian Book Reviews ([christianbookreviews.net](http://christianbookreviews.net)), September 16, 2008)"This useful volume is an impressive display of the best sort of intellectual work now emerging in the evangelical world." (First Things)

*In Defense of Miracles* is a comprehensive, up-to-date discussion that should not be overlooked by anyone concerned with the issues surrounding the current debate over miracles.

I love the format of this book. It was great to read from so many different authors who were authorities in their specific field. It built a great cumulative case for Miracles. A must read

Pretty decent coverage of the key philosophical issues.

This book was written as a way to refute David Hume's famous essay "On Miracles." Hume's essay captivated Western minds since the Enlightenment and seemed to offer an air-tight case against the possibility or probability of miracles. This book takes piece after piece of Hume's argument(s) apart and shows he did not put a lid on miracles after all. Written by some of the best Christian Philosophers of our time, it largely avoids circular logic (i.e. The Bible says it is God's Word so the Bible is God's Word) but put a hammer blow to Hume's argument all the same. One of the best apologetic books I have read. I will buy another copy just to keep on my shelf so I can loan another out. This deals with one of the major stumbling blocks in our society today. By loaning it out one can open agnostic minds to the claims of Scripture and have the tools to engage them in productive conversations that reach beyond the walls of Scientism and Naturalism. It can also be of aid to your own faith if you are defending it in a University.

Hard to go wrong in a book with contributions by the ones in this book. There are a couple of contributions by skeptics (Hume and Flew). However, the majority of the contributors are theistic. An outstanding book if you want a single volume on the subject, or for the skeptic who wants an introductory explanation of what Christian philosophers believe.

Gary Habermas (born 1950) is Professor of Apologetics and Philosophy and chairman of the department of philosophy and theology at Liberty University, and is a foremost evangelical apologist who has written many books such as *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*, *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?: The Resurrection Debate*, *Resurrected?: An Atheist and Theist Dialogue*, *Did the Resurrection Happen?*, etc. R. Douglas Geivett is an associate professor of philosophy at Biola University, and has written/edited other books such as *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology* and *Faith, Film and Philosophy: Big Ideas on the Big Screen*. This 1997 book begins with "The Case Against Miracles," reprinting works by David Hume and Antony Flew. Following this are fifteen essays by writers such as Norman Geisler, William Lane Craig, J.P. Moreland, Robert C. Newman, etc., as well as Habermas and Geivett. The editors explain in the Introduction, "many of the most fundamental questions about miracles are philosophical in nature... The first category relates to concerns about whether it is reasonable to think that miracles have occurred... The second category focuses on the role that miracles might play in supporting other religious beliefs... Both sets of questions are the focus of close critical attention in this book." (Pg. 10) Geisler argues, "Hume does not really WEIGH evidence for miracles; rather, he ADDS evidence against them. Since death occurs over and over again and resurrection occurs only on rare occasions at best, Hume simply adds up all the deaths against the very few alleged resurrections and rejects the latter... But this does not involve weighing evidence to determine whether or not a given person, say Jesus of Nazareth ... has been raised from the dead." (Pg. 78) An essayist deals with C.S. Lewis's argument against naturalism: "What metaphysical naturalism does, according to Lewis, is sever what should be unseverable: the link between conclusions and the grounds or reasons for those conclusions... Thus, the thrust of Lewis's argument against naturalism becomes clear. By definition, metaphysical naturalism excludes the possible existence of anything beyond nature, anything outside the box. But the process of reasoning REQUIRES something that exceeds the bounds of nature, namely, the laws of logical inference." (Pg. 126-127) Another essayist says, "many philosophical schools of both Hinduism and Buddhism... assume a pantheistic worldview, a view that identifies 'God' as an impersonal Ultimate Reality. Pantheism has no category labeled 'free act by a divine person.' So

miracles are as alien to all forms of pantheism as they are to theism. A miracle, an act of a personal God, could hardly support the truth of a worldview that denies the existence of a personal God." (Pg. 203) Habermas and Geivett conclude, "one can responsibly believe in miracles without having PROOF that miracles have happened. The demand for proof as a condition for believing is unrealistically and unnecessarily high. Much of what we believe results from thinking about what makes the most sense in light of the evidence at our disposal... Of course, we may also change our minds when we encounter new evidence or when we come to see different relationships among the evidential data. One need not postpone belief in miracles if one has reason to believe that one has investigated an appropriate range of evidence for and against miracles. If one's evidence for miracles is much greater than one's evidence against miracles, then it is intellectually responsible for one to believe that miracles have happened." (Pg. 277-278) As often with such collections as this, the value of the individual essays included varies considerably. Nevertheless, this book will be of keen interest to students of Christian apologetics, and (less so) to students of the philosophy of religion.

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