

# Surely you can't believe in miracles?

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Our Bible readings from the book of John chapter 4 to page 1072, John chapter 4 and I'm going to read from verse 43. After the two days Jesus departed for Galilee, for Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honour in his own hometown.

So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast, for they too had gone to the feast. So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine, and at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill.

When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. So Jesus said to him, The official said to him, Sir, come down before my child dies.

Jesus said to him, Go, your son will live. The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering.

So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him. The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, Your son will live.

[ 1 : 3 8 ] And he himself believed, and all his household. This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee. Well, thank you for inviting me to speak on this subject of miracles.

Surely you can't believe in miracles. And it's quite fun for me, because I think the miracles of Jesus, back when I was 18, going up to Cambridge to study natural sciences, would have been one of the biggest obstacles for me to believe in Jesus.

How could you possibly be so gullible as to believe in that? And yet now, I would say they're one of the reasons that most persuade me that I should believe in Jesus. So it's interesting for me, personally.

I hope it will be interesting for you as well. The way I'm going to structure this talk is, I'm going to spend most of the time on the introduction. And I say that so that you don't look at your watch and extrapolate and think, he hasn't even got off the introduction yet.

We'll be here for hours. So I've got two points by way of introduction, which is actually two-thirds of the talk. Firstly, two objections that miracles are unscientific.

[ 2 : 4 1 ] And miracles are unhistorical, if that's a word. And then we're going to look at that passage from John in the last third of the talk and see what Jesus has to say about miracles. So firstly, the objection, miracles are unscientific.

And that used to be my problem with them. The reasoning goes that people used to believe in God in a bygone age when we didn't understand much science. And so we thought that it rained because God had a giant watering can in the sky.

And so people would pray for rain. And then when it did rain, they'd thank God for a miracle. But of course, nowadays, we know that something called the water cycle, evaporation, condensation, and that's why it rains.

People used to believe that you got ill because of demons. But now we know you get ill because of coronavirus. People used to think that God healed you. And now we know that antibodies might develop in time to fight off the infection.

And so surely, I thought, 18-year-old Andrew, as an enlightened scientist, surely it's now time to give up these superstitions like Christianity. And that's for miracles.

[ 3 : 48 ] I mean, come on. Don't you understand the way that the world works? Because if you're dead biologically, you cannot be alive again three days later.

It's against the science. You cannot walk on water at room temperature. I mean, you can walk on water in Latvia in January because the sea freezes.

But you can't do it in the Middle East. And so how could it be so gullible as to believe that Jesus did it? It's just unscientific. That's what I used to think. And I thought it basically because I hadn't done much thinking about it.

And I've done a little bit more now. And I want to try and debunk that objection in just seven words. And it will take a bit of unpacking. But here is my one sentence reply to that kind of thinking.

Don't confuse observed uniformity with divine necessity. Unpack it in a minute. But that's the idea. Don't confuse observed uniformity with divine necessity.

[ 4 : 50 ] Observed uniformity. I just mean the fact that when you look at the world day by day, you find that it works in an orderly, consistent way. So let's imagine I'm a scientist interested in gravity and I want to understand gravity.

And so instead of waiting for an apple to fall on my head, as supposedly Isaac Newton did, I go to the Green Grazer and buy a bunch of bananas. And I decide to time their acceleration due to gravity when dropped from various places.

So I throw one out my window in Greenwich and I time its acceleration and I calculate it to be about 9.81 meters per second per second. And I think, okay, I've done one experiment, but I know in science you have to repeat the experiment.

So I go to the gherkin. And this time I don't just drop it. I have to throw it because the gherkin is curved and I don't want it to slide down the side. So I give it a good lob horizontally, but the vertical velocity increases at an acceleration of 9.81 meters per second per second.

And then I go to the Linden Tower of Pisa and I have various arguments about health and safety, waivers and so on, and persuade them to let me up. And I drop the banana and it's 9.81 meters per second per second.

[ 5 : 58 ] It's uniform for different bananas dropped at different places, but the result is the same. And so that uniformity that I observe is what makes science possible.

I come up with a theory of gravitation and I say, I think that for every banana dropped everywhere on the surface of the earth, the acceleration is always going to be 9.81 meters per second per second.

That's how you do science. But it would be a mistake, I want to suggest, to argue from that observation that it works the same way every time I check, to argue from that that God therefore, if he exists, God therefore must do that the same.

I've just noticed that it's what he always does. God always decides to keep the gravitational constant the same every day. But that doesn't mean he has to. And there's nothing to stop God if he wanted to, just adding a zero to the constant G and multiplying gravity everywhere by a factor of 10.

And it would cause havoc in Greengraces' shops all over the world. Suddenly bananas would crash through the shelves. And probably some people would die from accelerating bananas because they'd be going so fast.

[ 7 : 13 ]     Admittedly, there are days, aren't there, when it does seem that someone's multiplied by gravity by 10 when you're lying in your bed in the morning. But the point is that God doesn't usually do that.

The fact he doesn't usually do it doesn't mean that he must do it. And that is the objection against miracles, actually, that God could not do what he doesn't usually do.

And why not? I mean, why couldn't God reverse the ordinary laws of physics that mean if you step out into the sea, you sink up to about your neck because of the air inflating in your lungs?

Why couldn't he, to get everyone's attention, decide, oh, but this time I'll walk on the surface. That will get their attention. Just because ordinarily, when you die, that's it, what's to stop God deciding, exceptionally, to reverse that process three days later to have someone dead come back to life?

The scientist can't say, well, it's impossible because it doesn't usually happen. Of course it doesn't usually happen. That doesn't mean it can't ever happen.

[ 8 : 22 ]     Now, sometimes atheists who've done a bit of reading in philosophy and on the whole subject of miracles, they like to wield the argument of the Scottish philosopher David Hume. And he famously said that no amount of evidence should be enough to overturn our consistent view of the world that miracles don't happen.

So you should never, you know, you'd need infinite evidence to believe in miracles and you haven't got infinite evidence so you shouldn't be so gullible. And people trot that out. But what they don't realize is that in the same treatise, Hume actually attacks the, he's more skeptical than just being skeptical about Christianity, he's actually also skeptical about science because he attacks the principle of induction and says, how do you know the future will be like the past?

And he argues you have no grounds at all for asserting that. I mean, it's true that two days ago was a bit like yesterday and yesterday was a bit like today and the bananas of last week were the same as the bananas of this week.

So I'm observing this uniformity. But he said, yes, but how do you know that the bananas of tomorrow will be like that? That's just an assumption. It's just a guess. And actually he's right. It's caused philosophers a great headache because people scramble to try and answer him with his radical skepticism.

Now I think it's very ironic because actually the Christian has quite a good answer to David Hume. How do you know that the future will be like the past? Well, because the universe is upheld by God who likes to do things in an orderly way.

[ 9 : 55 ]     And God's consistent, unchanging character gives me real confidence in the consistency, the unchanging nature of reality. So it's actually only the Christian who's got a comeback.

And it's ironic, I think, that the atheists use Hume to try and help their case. Don't confuse observed uniformity. People usually, when they die, that's it.

And it's a kind of consistent thing in different countries at different times. That's always the case. It doesn't mean it must be the case. Now of course, by definition, miracles have to be unusual.

I mean, if one in three people who died came back from the dead three days later, then it wouldn't be very surprising if it happened. You go, oh, it's just one of those cases where they come back from the dead as opposed to one of the ones where they don't.

But if it really never, ever happens, that's enough to give you a kind of pattern that you can observe. And the scientists would then describe with a hypothesis and a law, oh, it's a law, I find, of death that it's permanent.

[ 10 : 58 ] Just like it's a law of the acceleration of bananas that it's 9.81 minutes per second per second. And that means that when God changes it, it really gets your attention. So I think the idea that it's unscientific really is just a sort of circular thing.

A God powerful enough to make the universe out of nothing is powerful enough to change the rules if he wants to. Secondly, by way of introduction, miracles are unhistoric.

And the argument goes like this, that Jesus was an inspiring teacher and he got people's attention with some of his incredible moral teachings such as turn the other cheek when your enemy hits you.

Don't fight back, just take it on the chin, we'd say. Or love your neighbor as yourself. Or love your enemy. And people have said rightly, you know, this is teaching such as the world's never seen and it really would transform society.

So people liked Jesus as a moral teacher but then they started to add layers of the supernatural to kind of boost his status as a teacher. And so Jesus, the moral teacher, became Jesus, the miracle worker by layer upon layer of sort of theological evolution.

[ 12 : 15 ] That's the idea. And so often it's said that the later you go in the early church, the more miraculous Jesus becomes. We start off with a sort of scaled down teacher Jesus and then we end up over, as the story's retold and gradually exaggerated, exaggerated, exaggerated, we end up with the sort of super Jesus.

And I want to say straight away that that really doesn't fit the data at all, that assertion. There's various biographies of Jesus in the Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

People generally think that Mark was the first to be written and that John was the last to be written. And as I compare them, I just don't find the evolution towards more supernatural.

Say, for example, in John's Gospel, it describes Jesus healing a blind man, a man who was blind from birth in chapter 9.

Whereas in Mark's Gospel, the one written earlier, it describes Jesus healing two different blind men. In John's Gospel, Jesus raises a man called Lazarus from the dead.

[ 13 : 26 ] In Mark's Gospel, Jesus raises the daughter of a man called Jairus from the dead. I mean, it's just not the case that you get more elaborate miracles the later you go.

You just get the same picture from the eyewitnesses of a Jesus who right from the start did extraordinary things. And I want to explore the history just with a little lacrosse talk.

I've basically got five points, which sounds like a lot. And I thought I'd make it sound like fewer by making it into a nice acrostic. And I thought ages to try and make a word that would fit all my points. And I came up with the word purse, P-U-R-S-E, which unfortunately wasn't related in any obvious way to the theme of miracles.

But I thought, well, you know, it'll have to do. And I was just about to give this talk a little while ago. And I said to somebody, you know, the best I can come up with is purse. Can you think of any way that that might be related to miracles?

And she said, not really, but purse is an anagram of super. Bingo. So there's my new acrostic super.

[ 14 : 27 ] But I'm going to do it in the order of purse because that's how I order it. But you can rearrange it yourself later. So Jesus' miracles were P, public. It wasn't like me saying to you, 20 years ago, in the Forest of Dean, alone, I levitated a fox for 35 seconds.

I mean, I didn't. But I could claim that, couldn't I? But the thing about it is there's just no witnesses. So how would you know? It's a ridiculous example, I know. Actually, though, there are religions of the world that are based on claims like that.

I was in a cave on my own without any witnesses and I met an angel and he dictated me something. So let's change our view of reality because of it.

How do you check? I'd be pretty skeptical about a claim like that. Maybe you can recognize the religion. Or another one, even crazier one. I was in my house and I was visited by an angel who left me some golden tablets which had to be read with special glasses.

And I read them and wrote them down. But unfortunately, they've now disappeared. I mean, like, come on. I mean, that sucks, doesn't it? You'd be skeptical about that. Something that was private. Nobody could confirm it.

[ 15 : 44 ] But Jesus' miracles aren't like that. Jesus' miracles, as they're recorded in the New Testament, they name the people who were there who they happened to.

So Lazarus, who was raised from the dead, he was the brother of Mary and Martha. Jairus' daughter, who was raised from the dead, a 12-year-old girl, was daughter of a man called Jairus.

And he was the ruler of the synagogue in Capernaum. Now, I don't think that's what you do if you make up a fairy story, do you? You just said it vaguely, long ago, far, far away, I levitated the fogs.

But you don't say, this happened in this town to this person, who, by the way, is a local official, because it's just too checkable. The people who are skeptical about it when it's first announced, they can go and check.

Excuse me, can we speak to Jairus? Excuse me, can you tell them about your daughter's illness when she was 12? Is it true that she actually died? How do you know she died? Did her pulse stop? Did you check? Did Jesus really raise her?

[ 16 : 41 ] And public. And again and again, we see not just isolated individuals, but whole crowds of people. Jesus fed the 5,000. We know where it happened, a place called Bethsaida. We know the names of at least 12 of the people who were there personally, as well as there was a huge crowd.

And so when the message of Christianity is first announced, 40 days after Jesus' resurrection, publicly that the early Christians begin to proclaim his message, they say, Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited to you by many miracles, wonders, and signs, as you yourselves know.

I love that phrase, because it was just a given that Jesus did miracles. Everybody knew that, and of course they would do, wouldn't they, in a country the size of Israel? Someone goes around starting to do miracles affecting 5,000 people.

Well, a lot of people are going to know someone who was there. Public. You. They were uncontested. By which I mean that Jesus' opponents, even though they opposed him about many, many things, never tried to claim, well, not never, they seldom tried to claim that the miracles didn't happen.

There is a very amusing account of them being skeptical about the healing of the man born blind in John chapter 9, and I'll come to that in a moment. But by and large, they grant that Jesus did the miracles, and they objected on other grounds.

[ 18 : 08 ] So you even find arguments like this from Jesus' enemies. They say, by the prince of demons, he is casting out demons. We don't doubt he's got supernatural power.

We're just going to attribute it to the devil. But we're not denying the supernatural. They can't deny the supernatural. In fact, we can go even further than that. They even make Jesus' miracles the basis for their case against him.

Now, it's hard for us to understand this argument, but the Jews at the time, the Jewish authorities, had a very strict interpretation of the fourth of the Ten Commandments, the idea that on the Sabbath day, on a Saturday, you shouldn't do any work.

And Jesus says they've interpreted it wrongly, and they make it into a very strict, sort of straitjacket kind of thing. But they get very annoyed at Jesus for doing miracles on Saturdays. And they even set a trap for him, and we read about it in Mark's Gospel, in chapter 3.

A man comes into the synagogue with a hand that is withered, and they watch him carefully to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath.

[ 19 : 15 ] And it's a very interesting experiment, because in their minds, if he does it, that means he's guilty. Now, I think in our minds, if he does it, that means he's got miraculous power. It's quite impressive to be able to touch someone's hand, and then suddenly it's restored.

I've got a friend who's a hand surgeon, and you probably know that hands are amongst the most complicated bits of the human anatomy. So, you know, the top plastic surgeons do faces and hands.

But Jesus touches a hand, and it's better. And I would say, wow, that's quite a significant miracle. And they go, it's on a salivate. There, did you see it? There we go, you see. But they make his miracles the basis of their case against him.

They don't doubt he did them. They're uncontested. Public, uncontested are, because we're still going with purse, but all super if you prefer, are, they are responsive.

I was thinking about this the other day. How do we know Jesus wasn't just a David Blaine? You know, some kind of magician. Well, one of the reasons we know is that Jesus doesn't get to set up the tricks in advance.

[ 20 : 17 ] I mean, it's not like he can go along to this man in John chapter 9 who's born blind. And I don't know, what would he have to meet him as a three-year-old or something? I mean, that's already too late, isn't it?

He meets him somehow before he has any human language and says, excuse me, please, do you mind pretending to be blind for, you know, like your entire life?

And in about 30 years' time, I'll come along and then you can pretend that I've healed you. I mean, it's just not an experiment you can make up, is it? Because this man has been born blind and his parents, well, it's pretty obvious to them that that's the case.

And his friends, it's pretty obvious to them. And the whole village he lives in, it's pretty obvious to them. And Jesus arrives and then he's presented with a blind man and Jesus doesn't get to set it up.

He just has to respond to the situation. Or Jesus' resurrection. I mean, how would you stage a resurrection? This is like that episode of Sherlock. Do you remember where, did he fall off the building or not and how come he's still alive?

[ 21 : 16 ] And it's quite annoying actually because I thought this is going to be a, everyone wanted the next series so he could find out and then they didn't even bother to show you. So I thought it was a bit lazy writing. But anyway, but presumably you could set up a trick like that if you were in control of everything.

You know, exactly the angle at which you viewed the crucifixion so that it looked like he died, et cetera. But Jesus wasn't the one in control of the crucifixion. I mean, it was his enemies who were professional soldiers.

It wasn't like he said, oh, excuse me, but I'm doing a big magic trick. Do you mind helping out? It was a hostile national court that condemned him. It was pagan Roman soldiers who executed him.

And he had to respond to that situation of being dead by coming back from the dead. And public, uncontested, responsive, S, surprising.

I used to have this view that maybe people in the first century were just so credulous that they didn't realise that miracles aren't supposed to be biologically possible. You know, so they watched Jesus walk in water and they go, oh, great, we thought that you sank but obviously not, so let's have a party on the sea or something.

[ 22 : 27 ] But that is not how they respond. They respond in precisely the way that people who know that these things do not usually happen would respond. They are astonished at points they are extremely frightened.

Jesus walks on water, they are very scared. And you would be, I suggest, if you're a fisherman, you know, you don't know about, you wouldn't describe it in terms of the displacement of water, sort of modern scientific terms, but you know pretty well as a fisherman that when you get out your boat, you sink to there.

And they watch somebody who sinks to like there and they are terrified. In other words, they react like the people who know enough science to know that this doesn't usually happen.

Surprising. And then finally, Jesus' miracles are explained. In other words, they're not just arbitrary party tricks levitating a fox.

But well, they've all got a reason behind them. They're all trying to show us something about a God who only messes with the laws of physics and biology because he really wants us to get our attention and explain something to us.

[ 23 : 40 ] God doesn't do miracles just randomly. If he did, if he did them all the time, they wouldn't even be miracles, would they? They wouldn't be exceptions to the norm. They'd just be the norm. And science would be very difficult to get established because you'd never know whether you were dealing with a normal situation or one of the ones that was an exception.

God almost never does them, but he does these to get our attention. And I want to now come to this particular miracle. So two objections, they're unscientific.

No, don't confuse observed uniformity with divine necessity. Are they unhistoric? No, they are public, uncontested, responsive, surprising, and explained.

Well, let's look at the miracle of Jesus then. And I'll be brief as we come to this. Two points to make and let's look at verse 43.

So if you closed your Bible, it would help me if you can see it. It's on page 1072. And I'm reading from verse 43 in the right-hand column halfway down.

[ 24 : 44 ] After two days, Jesus departed for Galilee. Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honour in his own hometown. When he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he'd done in Jerusalem, for they too had gone to the feast.

Now, sometimes there's bits in the Bible that you read and you just don't understand and they really puzzle you. And I've often found in my study of the Bible that those are the bits that end up being the key to what's going on.

The things I don't at first get. And here's something I didn't get. John tells us, the narrator tells us, verse 44, Jesus had said that a prophet has no honour in his own hometown.

And then Jesus goes to his own home region of Galilee and he seems to be honoured as far as I can see. I mean, people welcome him. They're very excited about him.

An official has a son who's very ill and so they immediately go to him. They think of him as a doctor, a miracle worker, a healer. They give him a massive welcome.

[ 25 : 50 ] And so why does John put in brackets, so by the way, Jesus had warned people that he wouldn't get any honour at home. I didn't get it. I mean, he seems to be honoured at home, isn't he?

In what ways is Jesus dishonoured by this arrival? And there's a little clue because the narrator mentions that these people saw all he had done in Jerusalem at the feast.

So Galilee's up the north, Jerusalem's a capital city down the south and down the south Jesus had been to the big Jewish festival and had done lots of miracles and these people had seen all the miracles.

Let me just turn back a couple of pages and tell you what happened back there because it's a kind of flashback. So turn back a page, chapter 2, verse 23. While he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many people believed in his name when they saw the signs he was doing, the miracles that he was doing.

But Jesus, on his part, did not entrust himself to them because he knew all people. He didn't need anyone to bear witness about a man because he himself knew what was in a man.

[ 27 : 04 ] Here's the weird thing, right? So in chapter 2, Jesus at Jerusalem at the feast, he's doing lots of miracles, doing lots of signs. He's healing people, he's driving back evil in a very tangible way and there's lots of witnesses.

And the witnesses see Jesus do extraordinary things and they trust him. But Jesus doesn't trust them. Verse 24, Jesus did not entrust himself to them.

So here's my slogan, Jesus doesn't trust people who trust miracles. They trust miracles, Jesus doesn't trust them.

Jesus doesn't trust people who trust miracles. Why not? Because Jesus knows there is a kind of fascination with miracles that just becomes a kind of end in itself and that turns God into a genie in my lamp.

Oh it's quite handy Jesus that you can do miraculous things because I got a few miraculous things that I'd like you to do for me. Thanks so much. And power light that you've got would come in quite handy for my agenda.

[ 28 : 11 ] So here are some more miracles Jesus that I'd like you to do. And it can become even a lifestyle of miracle chasing. And that is not what miracles are for.

It's not God's way of permanently fixing this world. Rather they're supposed to be very, very, very exceptional things to get your attention. But they don't get people's attention.

At least they don't get people to pay attention to Jesus. They just pay attention to the miracles. We see this all the way through John's gospel. Jesus does some amazing things. So for example Jesus feeds 5,000 people with just a few bread rolls.

and the people think oh this is excellent because it's quite expensive to buy lunch and now it's free because he can just turn a bit of bread into lots of bread. And so they chase him all the way around the north of Galilee and they turn up again and say oh can we have some more bread please.

So rather than saying wow that was an extraordinary miracle what does it tell me about God. They go that was quite a useful miracle. We'd like another one. In fact we'd like one every day please because that would really cut the grace free bill.

[ 29 : 17 ] Later we find that Jesus they try to harness his powers to be a political revolutionary. You probably know that Israel in the first century was occupied by Romans.

The Jews didn't have freedom over their own country and they wanted that and they were desperate to lead a revolution. And they saw Jesus and they watched him do miraculous things like walking on water and they thought this is even better than the SBS.

We'll have him please to lead our naval division and they want to harness him for their ends and Jesus won't jump through those hoops. I've heard people say that to God you know I'll believe in God if and then they give some challenge for God to perform according to their agenda.

And Jesus goes no I'm not doing that. Later the Jesus opponents they start asking for a sign from heaven and Jesus goes I'm not going to give you one.

I mean Jesus actually does quite a lot of miracles but he will not do them on demand. He won't be the genie in their lamp. He won't be their performing chihuahua to jump through their hoop.

[ 30 : 28 ] Jesus doesn't trust people who trust miracles. Maybe you are setting that kind of test for God. I'll trust God if he heals my friend's cancer.

I'll trust God if I get a job after this long period of unemployment. I'll trust God if she says yes when I ask on a date or whatever it is.

I mean a lot of people pray don't they during exams. I noticed that that the Christian Union college prayed all the way through the year and then most other people prayed in the approach to finals.

God you'd be handy right now to do the things that I've worked out that you could do to help me. And Jesus says that is not what miracles are for. And that explains Jesus sort of curiously harsh reply to this man.

A man comes to Jesus desperate because his son is at the point of death. And Jesus says verse 48 back in chapter 4 verse 48 Jesus said to him unless you see signs and wonders you will never believe.

[ 31 : 38 ] And Jesus sounds quite exasperated with him. Actually Jesus isn't speaking just to the man he's speaking to the whole crowd that the word is plural. Unless you people unless you people see miracle after miracle after miracle you are never going to believe he says and he's exasperated.

And yet he heals the man and this brings us on to the point of miracles. John calls them signs and the whole point of a sign is it points to something.

There's no point in a sign just for the sake of the sign. I rather like this sign that says Dulwich two miles and maybe I'll get one for my house or something. I mean signs are pointless apart from if you're trying to go to Dulwich that's quite useful.

And Jesus the miracles are not for their own sake. Miracles are signs. They're only useful if you look at where they're pointing. Jesus doesn't do a miracle on demand.

He just says to the guy okay your son's better. And the man takes Jesus at his word and goes home. It's quite a long way.

[ 32 : 46 ] It's a day's journey. And as he's on his way some officials come and they say oh your son's got better. When did he get better? Oh yesterday at about 1pm.

And he thinks back and thinks yesterday it was about 1pm that Jesus told me that my son would get better. And so we read verse 53 and so he believed and all his household.

Now this is quite an extraordinary miracle. I mean doctors can't do this can they just by remote control. I'm looking at Emily in the front row. I mean you do consultations you administer drugs you do operations.

You don't just say oh I think they'll be better back now from a distance without bothering to go. I mean this is an extraordinary miracle. But it's also a miracle that requires trust because he doesn't get to see it straight away.

He's got to go home and just believe what Jesus says. And this takes us I think to the heart of the relationship between trust and miracles. We're not supposed to trust in spite of evidence.

[ 34 : 02 ] That's what I used to think Christians were after. There's no evidence at all but just take a leap in the dark and trust him. Now there is extraordinary evidence. He gets home he compares the time it was exactly that moment Jesus had said.

Miracles give great grounds for trusting him. God's intention isn't just to send a miracle to solve every problem in each of our lives one by one.

His intention very exceptionally very unusually 2000 years ago was to do a whole cluster of amazing miracles to point to this man as the one who can solve our problems once and for all.

This is the guy who can get you through death. This is the guy who can restore your relationship with the God he made you. This is the one who can tell you what life is about and I'll attest it by many extraordinary miracles, wonders and signs but please take the time to trust him, to listen to him, to look where the sign is pointing.

I mean the miracles are very persuasive, they're public, they're uncontested, they're responding to things, they're surprising, they're explained but they won't do you any good.

[ 35 : 18 ] if you're just coming to God as a genie, rubbing the lamp saying I've got one more for you to do Jesus and then I'll consider believing in you and Jesus says no, no that's not the deal, that's not what it's for.

You come and trust me and the evidence of what I'm showing you and you believe me and follow me as this man did and as many people in this building have done. Thanks so much for listening.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.