



### **Does God skip natural laws?**

An insistent (and somewhat impatient) questioner asked me a question regarding an article I wrote. Now that I've finally had time, I've been able to write an answer that I publish

#### **Question:**

Although science does not know everything, nor will ever know, everyone agrees that in our world below there are certain laws (gravity, for example) that are fulfilled to letter (and when not fulfilled, as in black holes, is naturally shaped). These laws were put by God here in creating the universe. A miracle demands to stop those divine laws. Does God do this? We know that in natural disasters, where thousands of creatures die in dramatic circumstances, God has never intervened. Then?

#### **Response:**

According to the doctrine of the Church, God has endowed the created world with natural laws that follow a principle of causality, and through which the process of nature develops. These laws govern the destiny of the universe in a physical and causal way, although theology also teaches us that God is not simply a great watchmaker, as the freemasons and deists would say, but that there is a continuous creation in which God conserves in the to be created, that if it did not exist in Him, it would cease to exist. Thus, theological anthropology does not speak only of creation, but also of conservation in being.

Well, miracles happen because God, the creator of the laws of nature, is not subject to them, but can, as omnipotent it is, alter them. It is necessary to understand this well. The laws of philosophical logic show us how in fact the self is, and therefore, express the same being of the entity. Therefore, God is necessarily congruent with logic, as it expresses the self. An illogical logic would express that what it is not. The logical principle by excellence is the principle of non-contradiction: something cannot be and not be at the same time and in the same direction. Therefore, God cannot bypass the laws of ontological logic: because it is the expression of the same being. That is why God cannot make a square circle, or so he cannot make a rock so heavy that he cannot lift it or himself. Because the circle is by no-square essence, and a rock is not by unliftable essence.

This however does not affect the laws of nature, put by God in congruence with the logical essence of being, and yet do not bind to the divine will which, omnipotent, can alter those laws. It can make a virgin conceive, that a blind man sees and that a dead resurrects. These actions are not illogical, as they respond to the logic of God's creative power over nature, yet they escape the purely natural logic. Therefore, theology speaks to us of a double order, natural and supernatural, mutually interrelated, in no case contradictory, but also mutually irreducible. However, we must not forget in the miracle the character that has a "sign". In fact, the Evangelist Saint John speaks of "Semeia", which are not miracles, but signs. For this evangelist, as for the Christian tradition, miracles are not magic tricks that God makes for us to fun (as Herod asked Jesus), but are signs that stimulate faith, and at the same time presuppose it. That is why God does not do random miracles; this would be illogical, as it would be chaotic: that sometimes God did miraculous things because yes, and others did not. God does not skip the laws of nature, unless that sign follows an act of faith and leads to faith. Our questioner wonders why God does not skip the laws of nature before a natural catastrophe. Natural catastrophes are followed by the natural disorder that man's sin has introduced into nature, which is no longer in harmony and communion with man, because man voluntarily lost harmony and communion with God. They are a mystery, which, however, does not mysteriously escape divine providence. But if God did a miracle by stopping a natural catastrophe, this miracle would lose its character as a supernatural sign that follows the faith of man, and at the same time stimulates it. In the Gospel we read many times that it is the faith of the one who asks for the one who obtains the miracle, sometimes even in the ignorance of Jesus himself, as we see in the episode of the hemorrhoid. Of San Gregorio Thaumaturgo it is said that with his faith he changed the course of a river, and also that he drained a pond with his word. Elijah made it not rain for three years and six months, and Jesus himself tempered the storm. Faith has power even over natural phenomena, but I add once again, as a sign, and not as a trick of supernatural magic.

Thus, summing up, God, creator of natural laws, subject to the logic of being, has power to alter these laws in attention to the salvation of man, and can work a sign moved by faith and moving to faith; this does not affect natural disasters, which follow a course of physical laws in a fallen nature because of original sin, since an alteration of the physical laws in that case could not be held as a miraculous sign that followed the faith.