

Essay on the Supernatural

By Dan Jensen (2024)

(In order to fully benefit from this essay, I recommend reading through my “works for beginners” first. They can be found on my website.)

While most people in our culture believe in the supernatural, as have the overwhelming vast majority of people throughout history, within the halls of academia in the West, Naturalism and Materialism are the reigning philosophies of the day. Most people in our culture naively think that they must believe in Darwinism while still being able to consistently embrace the supernatural. They think that to deny Darwinism is to deny science. It is to deny facts. The problem is that within the halls of academia, to deny Naturalism and Materialism is seen as doing the same thing. This is why so many so-called skeptics merely presuppose these twin philosophies. They often feel no need to justify this stance. It is largely seen as a tautology that to entertain the supernatural is superstitious and is to transport oneself back to the Dark Ages. The fact is that the bulk of these academics are woefully mistaken.

The existence of the supernatural is a proven fact. It is beyond well-attested in the historical record, both the recent record and all past records. Every single society in history has attested to it. I have already provided a scholarly resource to this effect in my essay on apologetics for beginners. That essay can be found on my website. The source is the one by Hugh Ross and others. But, in this essay I would like to briefly build upon that.

Before plunging ahead, I do want to say a few things. My opponents can accuse me of bias on this front all they want, but due to my upbringing I still to this day very much struggle with any claims to the supernatural. To this day it is one of the items I struggle with the most from the biblical witness. When I was first saved, and really began my

search in earnest for theological truth and understanding, I was sincerely hoping that I could take much of the supernatural in the Bible figuratively. When I realized I couldn't do that, I took a very hardline cessationist approach along the lines of that which was advocated by Sproul. I wanted to dismiss all claims to encounters with the supernatural post the closing of the canon. And I wanted to mostly defend the supernatural in the Bible by almost exclusively focusing upon the evidence for the resurrection. There was so much excellent scholarly material on that front, that felt like the most respectable thing to do. It was the approach that made me the most comfortable given my childhood and the immense respect I have for my father.

So, if one wishes to accuse me of bias regarding the Christian faith, fine. I am indeed biased in the extreme. That doesn't mean you get to just dismiss my arguments. You still have to answer them. That aside, the idea that I am so biased in favor of what I am about to say as we proceed in this essay is just plain untrue. There is a huge part of me that didn't even want to write this essay as I know it will be mocked by some. Many of my fellow Reformed brethren will not understand why I have gone in this direction. The fact is that the evidence compelled me a long time ago to reject the hardline cessationism of Sproul. I pride myself on being objective no matter what. I am not saying I always reach that goal, but I do try very hard to hold myself to that standard. And sometimes this means going against the grain. One of my heroes was Steve Hays. One of the things I loved so much about him is that he didn't care what people thought of him. He would not hesitate to use an argument, even if it was out of the mainstream, if it was in fact a good argument.

With all of that laid out, on top of the above resource I mentioned, I recommend watching *The UnXplained* series, season 1. I believe it is still on Netflix. I have only watched the first season. I cannot comment on the rest of the seasons, and my guess is that they are not of the same quality as most shows tend to go downhill. I fully understand that Shatner is silly. I do not in any way deny that much in this first season is nonsense. I do not deny that much of what is detailed probably has a very natural explanation. Further, I am not saying that I believe in aliens or things of that nature. I

have already discussed this to some degree in my essay on the historicity of the Bible. It can be found on my website. I understand that many will dismiss this reference for not being scholarly.

With all of these caveats in place, the first season does cover many things that have been well-documented and that utterly defy naturalistic explanations. Many of those interviewed are actual scholars and so the dismiss out of hand tactic is not valid. I strongly encourage you to further research some of the phenomena that are dissected in the show in-depth. You will be shocked to find how much documentation exists for some of it.

As just one example, the man who testified to a terrifying being hovering over him telling him to leave cannot be summarily dismissed. The man was plainly mortified and it left a mental scar. There is nothing in his background to indicate that he was prone to lying or being unduly open to such experiences. I have personally experienced similar phenomena, although not quite to that degree. I'm sorry, but the supernatural exists. This in no way proves the biblical worldview. But, it does disprove both Naturalism and Materialism, and it strongly buttresses the Christian worldview. That man saw a demon. I have very little doubt about this. Again, that is not an easy thing to say given how I was raised. But, that is where the evidence lands. Deal with it.

None of this means that we have to now accept almost all claims to experiences with the supernatural. We most certainly do not and should not. 95% of what is out there is ridiculous and is rubbish. The same is true with most claims throughout history. However, there remains a small subset of claims that defies all naturalistic explanations. We cannot sweep this evidence under the rug merely because there are so many hoaxes, liars, and unstable people out there. That is not objective. That is not scientific. That is not scholarly.