

## The bigger the miracle claim the bigger and better the evidence for it needs to be!

A miracle is what is not naturally possible. It is a supernatural occurrence. It is paranormal.

Miracles are acts contrary to the usual workings of natural law or acts according to some definitions that are natural but beyond our understanding of nature. In other words, an event like blood coming from the eyes of a statue without trickery would be a miracle or a statue coming to life.

The Church says God is all-powerful and he does miracles so that we might learn his message directly or indirectly from them. They are for teaching the truth and promoting it.

The person who says they got a revelation from God that the world is to end next week and the person seeing the Blessed Virgin and getting a harmless message to repent from her, demand the same level of evidence. Why? Doesn't the first person have a more important message than the second? Yes the content is more serious but that is not the point. The method by which both messages came is equal in that it is supernatural. The two messages equally need to be proved reliable and supernatural because they claim to be supernatural. The point is not the importance of the messages but the medium of the message – that is, how the message was given. The content messages can have no importance at all unless the supernatural nature of the message can be proven and the supernatural can be proven reliable. Think of it this way, we can't listen to the world end message or the other one just because of what it says. The supernatural has to be proven to exist and be reliable before we can heed such a message. Therefore small miracles need to be treated as scientifically or sceptically as big ones.

If 1 plus 1 is 3 in a village in Spain that calls for as much attention and examination as 1 plus 1 being 3 in the whole of Europe would be. A miracle challenges the way things happen in the same way that that would challenge mathematics. For example, if  $1 + 1 = 3$  is true anywhere it is true everywhere. It's a universal law. If somebody can instantly cure the incurable that means the diseases cured are no longer incurable and this becomes a universal law too.

Imagine that when two natural laws are brought together they result in a specific result that we will call result X. You could say that law 1 plus law 2 is equal to result X. If a miracle interferes with this then the two laws bring about a different result. It's the same scenario as 1 and  $1 = 2$  being changed to 1 and  $1 = 3$ . Believers say that this is wrong. Its law 1 plus law 2 plus miracle law 3 = a different result from X.

It's a matter of worldwide concern when a miracle takes place – though the world wouldn't be concerned it ought to be. The view that the bigger the miracle the greater the evidence is a mistake. True, you need almost unattainable evidence for a big miracle for its big but you are no better off with smaller ones. Why? The manifestation may differ but the nature of the event is the same, it defies what we know of nature. This evidence is so difficult and time-consuming to verify that clearly all believers in miracles are inferring that evidence isn't so important and if so, then we should believe crackpots who claim revelations about the end of the world!

Further Reading ~

- A Christian Faith for Today, W Montgomery Watt, Routledge, London, 2002
- Answers to Tough Questions, Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, Scripture Press, Bucks, 1980
- Apparitions, Healings and Weeping Madonnas, Lisa J Schwebel, Paulist Press, New York, 2004
- A Summary of Christian Doctrine, Louis Berkhof, The Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1971
- Catechism of the Catholic Church, Veritas, Dublin, 1995
- Catholicism and Fundamentalism, Karl Keating, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1988
- Enchiridion Symbolorum Et Definitionum, Heinrich Joseph Denzinger, Edited by A Schonmetzer, Barcelona, 1963
- Looking for a Miracle, Joe Nickell, Prometheus Books, New York, 1993
- Miracles, Rev Ronald A Knox, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1937
- Miracles in Dispute, Ernst and Marie-Luise Keller, SCM Press Ltd, London, 1969
- Lourdes, Antonio Bernardo, A. Doucet Publications, Lourdes, 1987
- Medjugorje, David Baldwin, Catholic Truth Society, London, 2002
- Miraculous Divine Healing, Connie W Adams, Guardian of Truth Publications, KY, undated
- New Catholic Encyclopaedia, The Catholic University of America and the McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc, Washington, District of Columbia, 1967
- Philosophy of Religion for A Level, Anne Jordan, Neil Lockyer and Edwin Tate, Nelson Throne Ltd, Cheltenham, 2004

Raised From the Dead, Father Albert J Hebert SM, TAN, Illinois 1986  
Science and the Paranormal, Edited by George O Abell and Barry Singer, Junction Books, London, 1981  
The Demon-Haunted World, Carl Sagan, Headline, London, 1997  
The Book of Miracles, Stuart Gordon, Headline, London, 1996  
The Case for Faith, Lee Strobel, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000  
The Encyclopaedia of Unbelief Volume 1, Gordon Stein, Editor, Prometheus Books, New York, 1985  
The Hidden Power, Brian Inglis, Jonathan Cape, London, 1986  
The Sceptical Occultist, Terry White, Century, London, 1994  
The Stigmata and Modern Science, Rev Charles Carty, TAN, Illinois, 1974  
Twenty Questions About Medjugorje, Kevin Orlin Johnson, Ph.D. Pangaeus Press, Dallas, 1999  
Why People Believe Weird Things, Michael Shermer, Freeman, New York, 1997

## THE WEB

The Problem of Competing Claims by Richard Carrier  
[www.infidels.org/library/modern/richard\\_carrier/indef/4c.html](http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier/indef/4c.html)