

The more unbelievable the claim you make is, the bigger and better the evidence you need to support it ...

To paraphrase it: don't consider not-so-ordinary causes until eliminating the ordinary causes.

Another paraphrase: evidence should be proportional to the claim being made.

The most important and first rule of critical thinking is - don't consider not-so-ordinary causes until eliminating the ordinary causes.

This is often described as extraordinary claims DEMAND and NEED not WANT extraordinary evidence.

By extraordinary evidence we mean:

Hard evidence - Extraordinary evidence then should just mean hard evidence for the extraordinary. If somebody rises from the dead you want to meet him in person. If Bigfoot exists you want to find his body. Nothing matters in comparison to hard evidence.

Cross-examined testimony that definitely has not been tampered with

Having enough good witnesses

Having solid reasons why objections to what is being put forward are wrong or irrelevant

Do not let those who tell you that extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence is asking for an unreasonable standard of evidence away with it. They are lying and casing the joint.

MAIN POINTS:

A miracle is something that nature cannot do such as make a statue come to life.

You cannot say a miracle happened unless you have very good evidence for it. We must be careful to ask for the kind of evidence you might need to put somebody in jail. That is what we should mean by saying an extraordinary miracle needs extraordinary evidence.

Believers falsely accuse all sceptics of bias and demanding too much evidence.

A miracle from God will demand that we examine the evidence before believing for evidence is a gift from God.

Evidence can be distorted or planted but real evidence never lies.

The difference between a miracle and magic is mere semantics.

Some say, "Evidence that supports a belief does not mean the belief is true or probably true." You can have evidence that points to something being true but when is overthrown by new evidence. Thus you are entitled to disbelieve something there is evidence for. Thus there is nothing wrong with somebody saying that no evidence for a miracle means anything. If that attitude is ever called for, it is called for with supernatural or paranormal claims. It makes evidence for them more necessary not less.

None of this article should have been written. It is obvious that if somebody makes a miracle claim then the case for their honesty and sanity and reliability should be exceptional. It is the religious who make us write such articles.

What's a miracle and why care?

A miracle is what is not naturally possible. It is a supernatural occurrence. It is paranormal. By definition, it is unbelievable unless you have good evidence. This evidence needs to be really good and of a high standard.

Miracles are events that seem to be against nature or the way natural law usually runs. In other words, they cannot be explained by nature. Examples are the Blessed Virgin Mary appearing to children, the unexplained cure of incurable illness, blood coming out of nowhere on Catholic communion wafers, the sun spinning at Fatima in Portugal in 1917 and most importantly Jesus Christ coming back to life after being dead nearly three days. It is thought that only God can do these

things.

The evidence never lies. Ever. It can be faked or misread but that is not its fault. Evidence that misleads is false evidence. Assumptions are the enemy of evidence unless you have to assume something. Anything that is not testable is a threat to evidence. It is better to have evidence and see it and then create a non-testable belief in order to get around it than to create a non-testable belief without even looking at the evidence. Why? Because there is hope if you have seen the evidence. The most opposition to evidence is in the person who protects his doctrines from refutation and exposure who has not even looked at the evidence.

Religion uses miracles as evidence for the truth of its claims. God does the magic to show which doctrines taught by religion are true and to point out the true religion. Miracles are seen as advertising! They are propaganda. And they are powerful propaganda when religions like Christianity threaten people who do not believe. For example, if you fail to be converted to Christ you will suffer forever in Hell.

The difference between magic and miracle is mere semantics. A dog's bone turning to gold for ten seconds and a miracle of healing are really the same in the sense that nature is changed.

When some say you need to back extraordinary claims with extraordinary evidence

Unbelievers usually say that extraordinary evidence is needed to support extraordinary claims such as supernatural ones. In fairness, some believers say it too and imagine stupidly that they have the evidence. They overstate the evidence.

What is meant by extraordinary when you call a miracle extraordinary and require exceptionally great evidence for it and require people not to believe until they understand that evidence?

Do you mean the event is rare or very very rare?

Do you mean it is very unusual?

Do you mean it is down to invisible or undetectable causes?

Do you mean these invisible or undetectable causes were supernatural?

Do you mean one or more or all of the above?

You in fact mean the event is rare and strange and unnatural and down to unknown causes. You only assume the event is supernatural and you will hear of many events like it that you do not think are supernatural. You will see that the known facts about the event such as its rareness and how it is inexplicable are banished to relative unimportance to a mere guess.

The supernatural nature is not an extraordinary claim but an extraordinary assumption. If "extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence" is wrong then it does not matter in regard to claimed miracles. You cannot support an assumption with evidence at all but that does not mean you should not. An assumption may be a threat to evidence for it can cloud your vision. An assumption definitely is a threat to evidence when you refuse to be open to new light and repose on an assumption for its own sake. So though an assumption is not a claim you have to treat it like it is and try to get evidence so that you can turn the assumption into a claim.

You need the extraordinary evidence. Then what do you need then for this extraordinary evidence?

You have to be fair and be happy with scientific evidence or seeing the miracle. Testimony is out for it is never good enough in huge matters.

FINALLY

You need really good evidence for the supernatural before you can believe. It needs to be as good as if not higher than say the evidence for a natural event such as x being guilty of murder. You need to examine the evidence yourself. Depending on somebody else is depending on them not on the evidence. That is not okay when it is a big issue though you may have to depend on others for information about other things. Testimony to the supernatural is of little use if you have evidence that people usually lie about such events. Hard evidence is the best. The paranormal is nature behaving in an odd way. The supernatural means a being above nature is acting. Paranormal is inside nature and supernatural is beyond it. Thus if you need exceptional evidence to believe the paranormal you need better to believe the supernatural. To sum up, all that is what we should mean by extraordinary claims - as in paranormal or supernatural - need extraordinary evidence.

Extraordinary claims (meaning of a magical or miraculous nature) need extraordinarily good evidence (but not miraculous evidence or magical evidence - just good normal evidence of an exceptionally high standard). You need something that is

beyond all reasonable doubt. Sometimes one claim is more beyond reasonable doubt than another. We need a miracle to be more beyond. Simple as that.

