

## **Is it reasonable to believe that miracles occur?**

### **(Short abstract)**

Traditionally, miracles have been defined as supernaturally caused events which are outside the scope of scientific explicability. In this talk I will criticize the argument, which is usually offered, that lacking a scientific explanation and being adequately explained by a theistic explanation make the assumption that the event is a miracle the most reasonable conclusion. The aim of this talk is to show that the argument does not work neither from an atheistic point of view, nor from a theistic one.

From an atheistic point of view, the argument fails for two reasons. First, because theistic explanations are intentional explanations and, as such, they only work if we assume that the *explanandum* is the result of the intentional activity of a supernatural rational agent, but this is precisely the claim for which the atheist is seeking justification. Second, because even conceding that the hypothesis of God's existence would provide a possible explanation for certain events which do not fit with our current scientific knowledge, this does not mean that the explanatory power of the theistic explanation *overrides* the ontological cost of positing the existence of a supernatural cause. Indirectly, this is to show that miracles have no apologetic force and, consequently, that there is no possibility of constructing an argument from miracles for showing the existence of God.

Furthermore, I will argue that even inside a theistic world-view in which the reality of God is not questioned, we are not justified in claiming that an event is a miracle. I will argue that the only way to make consistent the selectivity involved in the miracles reported with the alleged all-good character of God is by claiming that we do not have enough knowledge of God's intentions and purposes, which implies that no theistic explanation can constitute an adequate explanation of an event .