

This is the second guest post by Michael Shermer, from his Foreword to the new book edited by John Loftus, [The Case Against Miracles](#). ((For the first, see yesterday's post) Michael is on the blog and is happy to respond to comments you have.

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When we are thinking about miracles, as with anything else that happens in the world, what we are after is a causal explanation, and here John Loftus cuts to the chase when he cites my friend and colleague David Kyle Johnson's definition of a miracle—winnowed-down from Hume—as “A miracle is simply an event caused by God.” As Johnson explains, “For any given event, if we knew that God took special care to cause it, we would (and should) call that event a miracle—regardless of whether it involved the violation of natural law.” However, it is important to distinguish this from something that *appears* divinely-caused but was, in fact, simply a highly improbable natural occurrence, along the lines of my million-to-one odds analysis above. We want to distinguish between a natural and a supernatural event when considering miracle claims. This is why I agree with Loftus' definition:

*A miracle is a supernaturally caused extraordinary event of the highest kind, one that's unexplainable and even impossible by means of natural processes alone.*

Pulling back to look at an even bigger picture of what we're after here in thinking about miracles is the question *What is truth?* This is the question I have been trying

This post gets even more interesting — how do you know what is “true”??? Want to keep reading? Join the blog. It's chock full of interesting information and views, and it is crazily affordable — just about two bucks a month. And all the money goes to charity. So why not?

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