“What is a Biblical Definition of Miracle?”

What is a biblical definition of ‘miracle’?

The term “miracle” has lost much of its luster in our day. And it isn’t because we see miracles taking place so often that we no longer are sensitive to their meaning. It’s because our speech has evolved in such a way that today, if I got to work on time this morning, “It was a miracle that I made it, seeing that there was so much traffic on the freeway.”

A biblical model and definition, on the other hand, for a miracle is another thing all together. Not everything hard to believe can be quantified as a miracle according to scriptural standards. Miracles are those acts that only God can perform; usually superceding natural laws. *Baker’s Dictionary of the Bible* defines a miracle as “an event in the external world brought about by the immediate agency or the simple volition of God.” It goes on to add that a miracle occurs to show that the power behind it is not limited to the laws of matter or mind as it interrupts fixed natural laws. So the term supernatural applies quite accurately.

It’s very interesting that a common word used for miracle in the New Testament can also be translated “sign.” A miracle is a sign that God uses to point to Himself; the same way we follow signs to find a museum or an airport.

An interesting question may arise. Does something have to break a natural law for it to be a miracle? C.S. Lewis defines a “miracle” in his work by the same name as an interference with nature by a supernatural power. Obviously, to interfere with natural law may not necessarily mean to break the natural law. In fact, nature and “supernature” become interlocked after a miracle occurs and nature carries on according to the

change wrought by that event. A science example: the law of inertia (Newton's first law of motion) states that an object will remain in rest until an external force is applied. Nature can only move from event to event through supernatural intervention.

Deists believe that it was only at creation that the supernatural and the natural related. But we Christian theists believe that God has intervened in nature by its inception, sustained it by His preserving power, and will redeem it through the final act of intervention. The creation and incarnation of Christ are the perfect examples of supernatural inertia (another way of referring to a miracle), not to mention their conclusion as well, in His second coming. God is still in the business of working miracles. And we wait eagerly for that greatest miracle of them all—the redemption of all creation.

Thanks for your question.

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