

Is Christianity a Fairy Tale / Fake News?

Although some claim that Christianity is a fairy tale, or simply ‘fake news,’ this workshop argues that there is substantial evidence supporting early Christian accounts, and that the gospel on which Christianity is based continues to be the trustworthy good news it was from the very beginning. This means that dominating critical voices from the sciences, or naturalistic scientism, do not get the final word; there is still room for religion, the divine and the miraculous. This talk will outline the continuity between the pre-Easter Jesus of Nazareth and post-Easter faith in Christ and show the credibility of apostolic New Testament accounts. In addition, it will briefly discuss the subjective side of the Christian faith, with particular emphasis laid on the Danish Christian thinker Søren Kierkegaard’s analysis of the necessity of divine revelation and faith. Faith in Christ’s resurrection was an integrated central feature of the Christian movement from the beginning, and as Paul shows, it must be at the heart of true Christian faith and practice.

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- Introduction: Is Christianity a Fairy Tale / Fake News?

- Part A: Objectively Speaking
 - Voices from the Sciences
 - Elon Musk
 - Stephen Hawking
 - Richard Dawkins

 - Opening Up for Miraculous Accounts
 - David Hume on miracles
 - Craig Keener on miracles
 - Categories and varieties of miracles in the Gospels

- ▶ Early News about Early Christians: Non-Christian Accounts
 - ▶ Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Josephus
 - ▶ Accounts of James – the brother of Jesus
 - ▶ Lessons from non-Christian accounts

- ▶ The Jesus of History: Real or Fake?
 - ▶ Historical facts about Jesus' life

- ▶ Jesus' Resurrection: Real or Unreal?
 - ▶ Sceptics
 - ▶ Defenders
 - ▶ Complexity of the New Testament Witnesses
 - ▶ empty tomb
 - ▶ resurrection appearances
 - ▶ creedal aspects
 - ▶ unapologetical & apologetical features
 - ▶ differences & similarities in the Gospel accounts

- ▶ From Pre-Easter Jesus to Post-Easter Faith
 - ▶ Discontinuity Model
 - ▶ Continuity Model
 - ▶ The Emergence of Christology

- ▶ Part B: Subjectively Speaking
 - ▶ Authority: Appropriating Revelation as Authoritative
 - ▶ The Danish Christian Thinker Kierkegaard on the Primacy of Authority in Revelation

- Faith in a personal God:
 - Kierkegaard on Two Perspectives of the Divine:
God as Personality / God Relating Himself Objectively

Suggested Readings:

Paul Barnett, *The Birth of Christianity: The First Twenty Years* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

Tomas Bokedal, “Revelation: What Forms of Authority, and to Whom?,” in D. J. Gouwens & A. P. Edwards (eds.), *T&T Clark Companion to the Theology of Kierkegaard* (T&T Clark Handbooks; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2020), pp. 279-298.

Craig S. Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*, vols. 1 & 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009).