

Questions & Answers w/ Discussion

Summer Sermon Series Sundays, June 16<sup>th</sup>-Sept 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013

#5 Hasn't science disproved miracles and Christianity?

Why would anyone believe the miracle stories in the Bible?

Miracles are just legends, aren't they?

- I. People back then had brains and [intelligence](#) just like people do today.
- II. The nature of scientific proof [limits](#) the scientific method as tool for discovering [all](#) truth.
- III. Your premise ([presupposition](#)) is the key issue.
  1. If your premise is that it is impossible for any force outside the universe to intervene in the universe then your conclusion will be that miracles are not possible.
  2. The key issue is the existence of God. Miracles are possible [since](#) God is there!
- IV. Historical inquiry and [converging](#) lines of evidence disprove the legend/myth theory.

First, consider the [reliability](#) of the document.

Second, consider timing, content and literary form of the gospels verses the "centuries of myth and legend" theory.

1. The timing is far too early for the gospels to be legends.
  - A. The earliest accounts of the resurrection are in Paul's letters written within [15-20 years](#) of the resurrection. (Gal. about A.D. 48, 1 Thess. in A.D. 50, 1 Cor. A.D. 54) So the claim that the resurrection stories developed over decades as myth (legends) and were later incorporated into the gospels is simply baseless. See Galatians 1:1; 1 Cor. 15:3-8; 1 Thess. 1:10 and 4:14)
  - B. The gospels were not written centuries after the events they recount. All the gospels were written by or with the help of eyewitnesses and circulated in the second half of the first century during the [lifetime](#) of the eyewitnesses.
  - C. The four Gospels record 35 of Jesus' miracles, which He did publicly, sometimes before thousands of eyewitnesses, many of whom were His enemies (the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, etc.) Rather than deny the miracles, his enemies accused Him of using demonic powers to perform them. (Matt. 12:24) Peter pointed to the undeniable fact of Jesus' miracles when he preached about Christ. (Acts 2:22)
  - D. The Gnostic gospel of Thomas was written in Syriac in about AD 175, over one hundred years after the four NT gospels were in widespread use and fully accepted as accurate history.
  - E. Irenaeus of Lyons in AD 160 said that there were four and only four gospels.
2. The content is far too [counterproductive](#) for the gospels to be legends. (Keller)
  - A. The gospel accounts do not have Jesus taking sides in the debates that went on in the early church, as you would expect if the gospels were written during the early church era. (c. AD 100-300)

- B. Legend would not evolve a Jesus who was crucified as a criminal, asked if there was any other way to accomplish the mission, or cried out to God asking why He had abandoned Him.
  - C. Women would not have been the first eyewitnesses to the resurrection.
  - D. The apostles, the church leaders, would not be depicted as petty, jealous and slow witted, cowards who denied knowing Jesus with curses and swearing and who all fled away.
  - E. It is not the four canonical gospels that "suck up" to the "powers that be", rather is it the Gnostic gospels that do. The gospel accounts record eye-witness testimony, [actual](#) history, not doctored accounts, legends or myths.
3. The literary form of the gospels is too detailed to be legend. (C.S. Lewis)
    - A. Ancient fiction was not [realistic](#) like modern fiction.
    - B. Recollective memory is selective and often contains irrelevant details.
    - C. Twentieth century speculative historians assume [against](#) the evidence that the early Christians would have felt comfortable changing the stories from the past.

CONCLUSION:

The "oral legends passed down around the fire over decades and centuries" theory has been completely discredited by careful scholarship and common sense.

V. What about miracles today?

1. God used miracles to [authenticate](#) the messengers and messages He sent as being from Him.
  - A. God intended the miracles to confirm in people's hearts and minds that the message and the messenger were indeed heaven-sent and therefore should be [heard](#) and [heeded](#). (Hebrews 1:1-2 and 2:1-4)
  - B. The miracles were [verifiable](#) by physical examination and by eyewitnesses.
  - C. In some cases, people did listen and believe (Luke 19:36-40; Acts 2:43; Acts 8:13; Acts 9:36-42; Acts 19:11). But in many cases, people refused. (Matt. 11:20-24 with Luke 10:13-16; Acts 4:16-18)
2. With the completion of the writing of New Testament and the passing of the Apostles, the age of miracles [ceased](#).
  - A. Second century writers confirm the cessation of miracles among the churches.
  - B. God still can do and still does do miracles, but not to authenticate a new message or new messenger as being from Him. We have testimonies of people who prayed for healing and were healed beyond what the doctors can understand or explain.
  - C. Anyone sent from God, publicly walking around healing the lame, the blind, the deaf, the sick, raising the dead and preaching the gospel would be doing miracles verifiable by physical examination and by eyewitnesses.

Message

The miracles recorded in the Bible are actual history that actually happened.