

Solid Evidence About Christ for a Skeptical World

by Dr. John Ankerberg

We're talking about solid evidence about Jesus Christ for a skeptical world. And if you're reading this and you want to know what the evidence is, let me just take a five-minute paragraph and then I'm going to get right to it. I'd like to clear up a couple of other matters.

When you start talking about Jesus Christ or religion, there are some people that say, "I don't care. I'm an atheist. I'm an agnostic." And I have to address those of you that might be in that category. And I'd like to try to get your attention, at least try to entice you, to motivate you, to come on over and look at the evidence. And I believe there's a lot of evidence that I'm going to present to you in just a moment.

What do you say to the person that says, "John, I don't want to listen. I don't want to even look at stuff about religion or Jesus Christ because I'm an atheist."

Very frankly, here's what I would say to you. Please prove to me your point of view. What's the evidence for being an atheist? I don't think that you can be smart enough to be an atheist. Einstein said he had an I.Q. score probably of 204 or 206 and he thought there was a God. Why do I say that you can't be smart enough to be an atheist? Well, what would you have to have in terms of evidence to be an atheist? An atheist says there is no God by definition. What do you need to know in order to prove there is no God? You'd have to have all knowledge. What is having all knowledge? Let me show you how little knowledge we have.

Right now, if I were to say to you, "You know what? You don't know what's happening behind you." In other words, the person behind you, can you tell me what they're thinking? They might be looking at the back of your head and thinking what kind of a hairdo you've got. You don't know what they're thinking or the person ten rows in back of you or the person that's in the building across the street. Or how about people that are over in Hong Kong or in Britain right now?

Put that in terms of God. What if God is behind you? What if God's in the next building? What if God's somewhere where you're not? Do you have the information to say that He's not there? Do you have all knowledge? If you say, "I don't think He's on planet Earth." How about outside of planet Earth? How about our galaxy? Maybe God is hiding behind some planet. Do you have information that He's not there? And then scientists tell us that, in our galaxy right now, traveling at the speed that our astronauts do, if you go about 16 to 20 thousand miles per second, that's not fast enough. You would not be able to get out of our galaxy in a space ship traveling that fast if you were born at zero and you went all the way to 90 years of age, there's not enough time for you to get out of our galaxy. It's too far. So the galaxy is big. Do you know if God is out there? No, you haven't got that information.

And then scientists tell me this, that outside of our galaxy there are trillions and trillions of other galaxies in this thing called the universe. And do you know, maybe God might be out there. Do you have the information about that? No. You don't have that kind of information. You don't have all knowledge so you can't say there is no God. And most of the intellectuals on campus today realize that.

When a person says to me, "I'm an atheist," usually I think of them in terms of a village

atheist. You don't know enough to come from that position someplace else. But then, after a person says he's an atheist and he says, "Well, I don't have enough knowledge," the best you can be is you can be an agnostic.

Now, what is an agnostic? An agnostic is a person that is brilliant in the area of not knowing anything. Thomas Huxley coined the term. It simply means you don't know. You don't know if there is a God. And that's where the intellectuals are at. They say, "We don't have enough information to say we're an atheist but the fact is, we don't know if there is a God. If there's the evidence, we haven't seen it yet."

Now, there's two kinds of agnostics that I've met on campus. There is the ordinary agnostic. The ordinary agnostic says, "I don't know if there is a God, but if you've got the evidence, I'm open to seeing it." I love those kind of people. I just love them. If you are an agnostic and you are an ordinary agnostic that says, "I just haven't seen the evidence yet, but I'm open to it," you've come to the right place.

But there's the second kind of agnostic and that's the ornery agnostic. Now, what's an ornery agnostic? The ornery agnostic is the one who says, "Look, I don't know if there is a God but I know that you don't know there's a God."

And I say, "How do you know?"

He says, "I know." That's the ornery agnostic. In other words, this is the person that says, "Whatever evidence you show me, my mind is already made up. You can't persuade me." That's the ornery agnostic. Now, I've got a little story for you if you're like that.

Did you hear about the man that thought he was dead? There was this young fellow that went around saying to everybody, "Hi, my name is" and then he would say, "By the way, I'm dead." Of course, that bothered his parents a little bit, you know. And so they took him to a psychiatrist.

The guy gave his name and then he went on to say, "Well, doctor, I want you to know this. By the way, I'm dead."

The doctor said, "I see what the problem is."

And so he thought this fellow had this world view, namely that he was dead. And he thought, I need to have one fact from the real world that'll burst that false world view. So he thought, "I wonder what it could be?" He came up with the fact that dead men do not bleed. And he thought, "I've got to persuade this young fellow who thinks he's dead that dead men don't bleed and then I can do a little experiment with him and show him that he's not dead."

So he gave him pathology textbooks. He took him down to morgue and cut dead bodies and showed him that they didn't bleed. And after months and months of research, finally the young fellow said to the doctor, "Okay, doctor, you have persuaded me of the fact that dead men do not bleed."

And the doctor thought, "I've got him, I've got him, I've got him." He said, "Stick out your hand." The kid stuck out his hand. The doctor took one of those little deals that you have in the doctor's office, pricked his finger, and out spurted the blood.

The kid looked at that and he says, "Well, doctor, dead men bleed after all."

Now, that's just to show you that if you hold on to something, a view, strong enough that facts do not bother you, nobody can help you. Nobody can help you but you're in kind of a silly position. You're the ornery agnostic. Now, I hope that if you are an agnostic, if you have not put your faith in Jesus Christ, that you would be open to the evidence. That you would be like the ordinary agnostic that says, "Hey, if you've got something, show me."

All right, so let's get down to the evidence. What is the case for Jesus? Why do you

believe in Him? Let's define terms first of all.

What is Christianity? Christianity is not a philosophy, although it can be made into one. Christianity is not a system of ethics, although it certainly talks about what is right and wrong. Christianity is a relationship with a person that actually lived and Christianity stands or falls on whether this person did live, whether He said the things that He said, and did the things that He claimed. That person is Jesus Christ.

Now, if I was to give you the conclusion of where I'm going, where I think the evidence will take you, it would go something like this: This is who I think Jesus Christ is and how the evidence supports Him. If I was to say to you, "Ladies and gentlemen, backstage is Jesus Christ. In a moment He's going to come out here and He's going to talk to you. But I want you to beware. When He comes out here, what He's going to do is He's going to look at you and He's going to snap His fingers and this building is going to disappear. He's going to look at you and smile and say, 'Don't worry,' snap His fingers and the world will disappear. He'll snap His fingers and the sun will go dark and the stars will quit shining and you and He will be standing in outer space together and Jesus Christ could smile, snap His fingers, and bring it all back together again." Now, that's who I think Jesus Christ is and that's where we're going.

You say, "Well, that's not the Jesus that I know." That's the problem. It's like the old TV show: "Will the real Jesus stand up." We've got so many Jesuses being touted in America today, people don't know which one to believe in or how to get to the bottom line. That's why we have an issue of *Newsweek* magazine with a picture of Jesus on the cover. *Time* and *Newsweek* usually run about two of these a year and the question is, "what can we know about Jesus?" Can we know anything about Jesus? Their idea is that we can know very, very little. I think they're dead wrong and I intend to prove that to you beginning in the next article of this series. We will look at "how do we find out about Jesus," and "how do we come to any conclusions about Him."