

Two Ways with Two Books: Answering the Secularist Materialists pt. 2

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[0 : 00] Today, I'm going on to talk about a second book, but before we begin, may I just have a brief word of prayer. Heavenly Father, we ask that you would be with us, that you would open our ears and our hearts as we consider some of the writings that we're looking at.

May they strengthen our walk with you and strengthen our faith and help us with the defense of the gospel against those who would take it apart.

So we pray for this time now, in Jesus' name. Amen. I thank you for coming back, most of you.

I warned you, though, it probably wouldn't be as polished a presentation, but I'm still amazed you came back. Of course, I did do some things to help it along. You see, when Dawkins comes to speak, he packs it out, and you get to pay \$500 a seat to go.

When I talk, I fill it up, and I just have to pay people to come. So those who I promise to pay, I'll pay you five bucks. Okay, no, hopefully it won't be that bad, but it'll be over by Tim.

[1 : 25] I know, okay. That's the book we talked about last week, and I said it was pretty in-depth. It got into serious stuff, right into some heavy particle physics.

And as I said, I haven't dealt with that for years, and it was deeper than I, even I particularly wanted to go. But he did it to be complete, so that somebody who's really of that bent can follow along.

This one is a much broader one, and I'm going to talk more about it. Just to let you know, our main protagonist, his name is Richard Dawkins, and there's his lovely book. Did I say protagonist?

Antagonist, yes. His lovely book. Interestingly enough, Betty was so embarrassed, because I had loaned it to her, because she brought it in a bag, so nobody would notice when she got it. And he looks like a really nice guy.

A lovely Englishman, you think, what a nice guy. By the way, I think he looks like Ed Norman, but don't tell Ed Norman that. He really does. Anyway, I just want to mention one other book that I've just started reading, because I'm going to reference it here already, because I ran a gift to me, and that was The Dawkins Delusion by Alistair McGraw.

[2 : 36] And his old, thin book, he says, there's no point in writing point by point, because it'll be long and boring. He says, I'm just going to hit some highlights and important things. And it really reads well.

It's a really short one to read, and I don't think you're going to get a heavy amount of physics. But let's talk about biology, or whatever you want to talk about there. This is a repeat from last week.

So we've already done this. We're into part two, and the book is Diedish D'Souza's book, What's So Great About Christianity? Okay, just to remind you, I had a whole bunch of terms.

I called my talk the secular materialist, which was a kind of redundant thing. Probably Barr uses the term scientific materialist.

He could be secular humanist. In the end, ultimately, they don't believe in God, and they believe in natural things. Some are more focused on science than others. D'Souza uses atheist.

[3 : 38] McGraw uses the one that was much clearer, but I'm still going to use atheist, because it's just a shorter word. And it's called The Atheist Fundamentalist. And that really says it all, because it's an atheist who presents himself to the world with all the tact of John the Baptist.

This is a term that McGraw uses. So it's probably the best term, and it says more. Because if you say atheist, I mean, I have some lovely atheist friends that don't know the Lord, but that aren't belligerent and aggressively attacking the faith.

Okay. And we're dealing with kind of a different person here. Not one that you should entirely turn the other cheek, but you need to have a defense for what he says. And, of course, we can't forget

the brights.

That's what they think they are, at least. Okay. All right. So who are they? Well, there's a list of some of the ones. And there's a few more that comes through.

And certainly in D'Souza's book, he introduces one or two others that say silly things that I think they sound silly. So anybody's name up there that I put up accidentally? Okay.

[4 : 45] All right. I think I've already said why we want to have a talk about these characters. Because they are expounding their faith in science, generally.

So we're not. And hopefully this will help to deal with people who have bought into what they've said. All right. And you can talk to them meaningfully. They say, no, I haven't parked my brain at the door because I'm a Christian.

Right? Even though these guys have said they are. And the argument you'll come up, you'll hear is that they may have parked their brain at the door. D'Souza, Dainish D'Souza, is a Christian.

He's also a former policy analyst in the Reagan White House. A graduate of Dartmouth College, he is currently the Rishwan Research Scholar at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University.

He's written extensively on American politics and social issues from a conservative perspective.

This book's about 300 pages, written in 2007, and has 26 chapters divided into eight parts.

[5 : 46] We're going to actually, I'm sorry to say this, we're going to go through each chapter. Why? Because each chapter is so independent. And the book has enough in it that I think it's worth saying something about each chapter to give you an idea what's in it.

He has about 25 pages of notes and references so that those that I've checked out I found to be true. It's not like he's made a bunch of fictitious stuff up.

He's pulling out quotes from various people and referring to their writings. He has the references for it. And, by the way, when he got to the science, he had Stephen Barr review his manuscript.

So, there's obviously a sense, the sense that he's just not, he's quite prepared to get help from people that can help him here. And, so, you can read this with a fair bit of confidence when you hit the science part.

He writes much more in-your-face style than Barr. He is clearly replying to the attacks of the atheist. He covers more topics but in less depth.

[6 : 53] But I don't think you'll think he's making wild and supportive claims. Now, you may disagree with me because, unfortunately, I'm going to get into areas that I'm not really comfortable. And there are people out here who are ready to point out my flaws.

So, I will say, I'll try to excuse myself and say that the opinions that are expressed here may not be the opinion of the author or my opinion either.

I'm trying to figure out what he said but I may have misinterpreted it. So, by all means, correct me. Although, I will sneak away as quickly as I can afterwards. Okay.

And I will talk about some points that are helpful. Here's all the chapters. The future of Christianity. We're going to go through them one time. We're going to talk now, initially, about the future of Christianity.

His section. And in it, there are three chapters. Twilight of Atheism is the first one we're going to consider. Which is called, he calls it the global triumph of Christianity.

[7 : 55] And the main point here is that despite the best efforts of these atheists and the liberal church, the Christian church is thriving and growing throughout the world. It makes an interesting point.

The liberals seem to have a reverse mission, being the world's missionaries to the church. Think about that. It's kind of an interesting thought. And he comments that just other religions, Islam, is growing too.

But it grows by reproduction. Christianity grows by conversion. Which is an interesting thought. He also points out a couple, another fascinating thing that I hadn't thought about before.

There are two kinds of atheism. Practical and philosophical. Now, the latter is what the atheists were calling, I believe, the philosophical. That's the Dawkins and the whole bunch.

But there's a practical atheism. Actually, that is, he comments, that is how most people in North America act. As if God was not there.

[8 : 55] So it's practical atheism. But I have a question for you. Practical atheism is actually a good thing. In what occupation? And don't say liberal bishop or something.

It's actually, he points out later in the book, a scientist. Because a scientist, when he goes off to do his investigation, doesn't say, God's about to do, you know, my experiment came with strange results.

Oh, that was a miracle. I was going to something else. He says, I want to understand the results. And I look for repetitive consistency. So actually, a scientist, as a Christian, when he does his investigation, doesn't assume God is going to break the laws of physics.

Or he's going to let them, he's not going to perform a miracle. And you don't include it in your science. So, kind of an interesting thought. Oh, there. Sorry, I forgot to click at the right moment. Okay, survival of the sacred. Why religion is winning. The atheists don't actually understand Christianity's popularity, particularly among the educated.

[10:04] Anthropologist Scott Etran claims that religion requires taking what is materially false to be true and what is materially true to be false. Daniel Dennett, the ultimate measure of evolutionary value is fitness, the capacity to replicate more successfully than the competition does.

Yet, in the face of it, religion seems useless from an evolutionary point of view. It costs time and money and it induces its members to make sacrifices that undermine their well-being for the benefit of others.

So, this has obviously got them perplexed. D'Souza comments that atheism is not growing in North America, in spite of all their arguments.

So, he asks of the atheist evolutionists to explain atheism. It needs a Darwinian explanation, not Christianity.

They're always trying to explain everything in terms of Darwinian evolution. Okay, God is not great. This is their assault on religion, chapter 3.

[11:11] And there's some sweeping statements about the achievements of eliminating God. Pinker, what is he?

Anyway, I don't care. He's quoted here. Sociologist. Sociologist, thank you. The modern sciences of cosmology, geology, biology, and archaeology have made it impossible for a scientifically literate person to believe in the biblical story of creation, that the biblical story of creation actually took place.

Dawkins said, Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist. These don't sound that bad. Sagan says, as science advances, there seems to be less and less for God to do.

And then from Francis Crick says, all biology is reducible to the laws of physics and chemistry.

Consciousness is no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.

Okay, moving on. Misc, educating the young, saving the children from their parents. It's interesting, there's an outcry of the atheists when the school boards ask for some alternative to Darwinian evolution to be taught.

[12:25] Not to eliminate the Darwinian evolution, but alternative. D'Souza puzzles why teaching less of a subject and teaching something different raises such ire.

He points out that nobody's upset when Boyle's law isn't taught or understood or Newton's mass energy equations aren't understood. What's the upset?

His comment is, brainwashing's okay as long as it's done by the atheist fundamentalists. Dawkins, now here's some really good quotes here. Sorry, I should probably put the key point up here.

The aces are trying to move the false teaching instilled by the parents. Dawkins, faith is one of the world's great evils compared to the smallpox virus, but harder to eradicate. Christopher Hitchens, how can we ever know how many children had their psychological and physical lives irreparably maimed by the compulsory inculcation of faith?

Physicist Steven Weinberg, I personally feel that the teaching of modern science is corrosive to religious belief, and I'm all for that. Okay, anyway, you get the trend here.

[13:42] Okay, Christianity in the West. Let's talk about Render Unto Caesar is the first chapter, and it's the spiritual basis of limited government.

Now, D'Souza, of course, was on the White House staff, and his other books are really very clearly very pro-American, and that's great.

We're going to get some American politics in here, American structure in here, as you'll note shortly. Contrary to popular literature, the Roman Empire did not fall because of evil Christian barbarians, and the interesting thing, Christians replaced many of the gods, pagan gods, with one god.

Now, he points out that the issue of separation of church and state is really important. Now, it tends to be mistaken because people want to think that it's taking faith out of the government.

[14:47] It's actually keeping the government out of faith. It's the way it's set up in the American Constitution. And here's a couple of really good quotes from George Washington, who said, Let us, with caution, indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion.

Now, he understood what the issue was about very soon, right at the beginning. John Adams said, Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.

That's a pretty profound statement. Something to kind of think about. Anyway, let's go on. Evil, I would not. Christianity and human fallibility.

The interesting thing about Christianity, it affirms the little person and his fallibility, where most religions and philosophical systems focus otherwise.

Plato thought that evil was due to a lack of knowledge, and the more you knew, the less evil you'd be. Aristotle felt that there's a job for the low men. You know, the lesser people, that was slavery.

[15:59] Christianity elevated marriage. It encouraged government with respect to the common man. And it actually encouraged capitalism.

You may argue whether capitalism is a good thing, but... Well, actually, you may argue this, but his point is... This is kind of an interesting quote, which I will not defend, but it's worth thinking about. Samuel Johnson said, There are few ways in which a man can more innocently be occupied than in getting money.

Now, think about that. Okay, here's another one that I don't necessarily agree with, but you can think about this one, too. Capitalism civilizes greed in much the same way as marriage civilizes lust. Now, okay. Okay. Created equal. The origin of human dignity. He claims, this is a claim, this is a unique Christian legacy.

It's cherished by everybody. Okay. Thomas Jefferson, he talks about a self-evident truth that all men are created equal. Now, it's a no-brainer to figure out that we're not equal height or weight or stamina or strength or whatever else.

[17:07] How are we equal? We're equal as morals. As moral beings, we're equal. Now, interestingly, you go back to Greek and Rome, human life didn't have much value.

You know, pop them into the gladiator ring to chop themselves up. Or, I guess, if they were Spartans, they were quite happy to kill themselves and others left and right. But women had very low status, as they still do in many places today.

Interesting to know that Christianity didn't contest the existing patriarchy but elevated the status of women within it. All right. So that now adultery and divorce are equally serious for men and women. Whereas in some of the earlier, certainly in earlier religions, you can argue in Judaism it's not that clear. Anyway, it's clear for Christians.

Against this, the atheists claim that God, they make this ridiculous claim, but you'll hear that God expects us to keep slaves. You know, and there's alleged approval of slavery in the Bible, even though it was practiced elsewhere in the ancient world.

[18:13] Interestingly enough, the Christians began to see that keeping slaves was not consistent with their faith. And so we find a medieval Christendom replacing slaves with serfs.

And then the Christians started the anti-slavery movement, Wilberforce. And his statement is, beings equal in the sight of God is foundational to the abolition of slavery and to democracy movements in the U.S.

Yes. Okay. Now we get into science. See, we're actually burning right through here. But you realize there's a lot of interesting things to talk about. I may have to go a little quicker.

I hope not. But Christianity and reason, as for our first statement. Okay, we're into the hard stuff.

Okay. Sorry, guys. He comments that Judaism and Islam are religions of law.

Christianity is a religion based on reason. And as such, Christianity encourages scientific disciplines. He points to Aquinas and Anselm, who developed arguments for the existence of God.

[19:19] Now, I'm not going to... I'll give you Aquinas' argument. Basically, it says that everything we see has something that caused it. You know, and somebody made that, put that thing there, the projector there.

Or something put the projector there. There's always a cause. And if you keep working back, what is the cause of the cause of the cause? His argument is you end up with God. Key to his argument

is that he says everything in the universe.

And the statement is that God is not part of the universe. He's outside that. But the atheists... And there's an equally subtle, or more subtle, actually, argument by Anselm, which philosophers take very seriously.

They've looked at the Descartes and Leibniz, considered the arguments valid. But the atheists just dismiss it arrogantly.

Sam Harris says the argument's invalid because who created God? Well, he didn't miss the point, all right? And Dawkins claims that only a complex God would have created a complex universe.

[20 : 25] And we cannot account for one form of unexplained complexity, the universe, by pointing to an even greater one. And so, this is evidence he dismisses the arguments.

Anyway, they've all claimed they've overthrown these arguments, you'll find in their writings. But the fact is that serious philosophers... I mean, go talk to Harvey about them. Don't ask me these questions.

Harvey will answer afterwards for anybody who wants more details on this. But his point was not to argue that the proofs are ones that will bring anybody into belief.

The proofs are evidence of serious intellectual thought that has gone into this. And when the atheists say, you know, we Christians are all brain dead, you've got some difference of opinion. From Logos to Cosmos, Christianity and the Invention of Invention. This I found very, very good, because I hadn't thought about this before.

[21 : 30] The most important principle scientific work is based on is that the universe is rational. If it isn't rational, we couldn't be doing the science that we do. And he argues that this was promoted by Christianity.

It's sometimes called the principle of universality. The laws of nature we discover here and now, in our other bodies, are true everywhere in the universe and have been enforced for all time.

Now, that's not... You can obviously see this may not be universally true, because maybe some... We don't know what's happened over all time, but it's the assumption we work with. And Stephen Weinberg, a physicist, writes all my experiences.

A physicist leads me to believe that there's order in the universe. So, the comment that D'Souza makes is, without the irrational belief in rationality, modern science would be impossible.

So, we have this belief that this is... And that the world is rational, but in fact, it is a belief, right? And we can't prove this. It's interesting to note that, let's see, pre-Presocratics believed in mythical cosmologies, which suggested no predictable cause and effects, that things weren't rational or believable.

[22 : 43] The pre-Socratics, of which I only know one of them, but their names are Thales, Parmendides, Heraclitus, and Pythagoras. We all know Pythagoras, so...

And they propose that the universe operates through discoverable rules of cause and effect. The Socratics abandon this, arguing that the philosophers shouldn't bother with regularities of nature, and they wanted to cling to their pantheon of gods that did everything.

Christianity reasserts the pre-Socratic point. John 1.1, D'Souza argues, in the beginning was the word, and the word was... And the word was with God, and the word was God.

Here, he says, the word logos means reason, including divine reason. Now, I think that's probably one of the meanings it does mean, so it's an interesting thought. Christians, however, do believe in miracles.

Departures are suspension from the natural order, but they believe in the orderliness in nature. He comments that both Muslims and ancient medieval Chinese had no confidence that the laws of nature were understandable.

[23 : 53] As a result, his argument is that most academic institutions were founded as Christian centers of learning, and it goes on from there.

I think his one weak part he does have, and I haven't pursued this, is that he does dismiss Islamic science as nothing, and yet it was very significant in the Middle Ages.

So I think he hasn't got it all covered perfectly there, so there has been some evidence of science out of the Islamic faith, those of Islamic faith.

Okay. Oh yeah, he just lists some of the leading scientists who were Christians. We have Capernaus, Kasklepler, Galileo, Bray, Descartes, Boyle, Newton, Leibniz, Gesendi, Pascal, Mersenne, Cuvier, Dalton, Faraday, Herschel, Jewell, Lebozier, Kelvin, Ohm, Ampere, Steno,

Pastor, Maxwell, Blank, and Mendel.

And I hope about 50% of those names you should have heard. You know, I'm not going to embarrass anybody by asking what they did. By the way, I had to look it all up myself.

[25 : 03] I don't know half of these guys, but I do know half of them, and I've heard their names. They were all believers. In fact, Kepler said that faith was key to his science.

I wanted to become a theologian, but now, however, behold how through my effort God is being celebrated through astronomy. Modern scientists may not be so overt, but many argue that nature should exhibit this rationality, and they exhibit it in a form of simplicity and beauty.

So, anyway, it's an interesting thing. He does reopen the atheist's fable, as he called it, the Galileo case. And the atheists claim that how the church persecuted Galileo.

Galileo, he disputes the story, going to explain it step by step. I just want to say that, and we can cover the issues that, I think the main reason that Galileo expounded, the two theories, the geocentric, the earth is the center of the universe, and the heliocentric, of course, they're both wrong, because it's not the center of the universe.

The heliocentric, the sun's the center of the universe, that's the Copernican theory, Ptolemaic, Copernicum. The Ptolemaic was used to predict the motion of the planets. It's very complicated. They're called epicycles, because that's what they, they didn't move through the sky properly.

[26 : 30] They wandered. But that was a useful tool. The Copernican theory, Copernicus didn't claim that it actually was a heliocentric theory, that he believed, he just said it's a useful tool.

Galileo said it's more than a useful tool, it's the right thing. But because there wasn't a lot of evidence for it at the time, in a meeting with the inquisitor of the inquisition, who was actually favorably disposed to Galileo, they agreed that he wouldn't preach the topic anymore, because there was not enough data.

In fact, the inquisitor himself said, this is Bellarmine, I think, he said, if there is real proof that the sun is the center of the universe, then we should proceed with great circumspection in explaining passages in scripture that appear to teach to the contrary.

So, that was fine. There was a change of Pope, who was a better friend to Galileo, and Galileo did three dumb things. First of all, while he ignored some data and proposed the theory in a wrong way, he argued that it was the tides that caused, sorry, the earth going around the sun caused the tides, which, of course, is wrong.

But he ignored Kepler's, Kepler had some information that he completely ignored. He wrote a paper about the simpleton who was asking the questions from the Ptolemaic perspective, and he's answering it from the Propernican perspective, how the simpleton was actually clearly a caricature of the Pope, and then he got into theology arguing the Bible is largely allegorical.

[28 : 16] Okay, so he was into trouble, and when they brought, again, before the Inquisition, this time they discovered they hadn't known that he had been already once before them, that there's the change of people. They realized that he had been told not to preach the thing, so that he's probably a liar, you know, can't be trusted.

So, what did they do? They didn't throw him in jail. He didn't get any prison sentence. He got a sentence that required him not to leave his home or his hometown. And that was it.

But, of course, it's made much more by the atheists. Anyway. It's a great science, but it didn't have a lot of sense.

Okay? And it took a while before the data was there. Actually, he actually had, there was one piece of data he had discovered, and that was the phases of Venus.

Because the thing about the phases of Venus, its size changes, and you can see it with a telescope. So, the size changes as it goes around the sun. So, if you'd realized it, and that was the strongest argument, and actually probably would have been conclusive, but he didn't use this very well.

[29 : 22] Okay. We're moving on. From argument to design. Sorry. Argument from design. Sorry. Okay. Universe with a beginning designer planet. Paley was right. Okay. Into some good stuff here.

So, what's his point about God and the astronomers? He argues that Genesis 1-1 is consistent with the modern Big Bang theory, and with the second law of thermodynamics.

You know, as does Barr. All right. And so, I don't want to spend a lot of detail, although it doesn't stop the atheists from saying things like Carl Sagan assertion that cosmos is all there is, or was, or ever will be.

And Weinberg's argument is, as far as we've been able to discover the laws of nature, they are personal, have no hint of a divine plan or any special status for human beings.

So, with modern physics arguing about the Big Bang, this is really upsetting the, upsetting the atheist position. Astronomer Robert Jastrow reflects on creation.

[30 : 24] This I love as well. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance. He's about to conquer the highest peak. As he pulls himself over the final rock, he's greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.

Isn't that a great one? Anyway. What creation does tell us, and the creation story tells us, that God, the creator, he's outside of time and space. He's eternal and spiritual.

And there's a lot of interesting things that we can carry on there, but I don't want to hang on to that interesting topic there. A designer planet. Man's special place in creation.

The place of man in the cosmos is disputed. The atheists think it's just insignificant. The Christians claim it's special. D'Souza talks about the modern anthropic principles, which we'll talk about.

Barr used the term anthropic coincidences, and made a distinction that the principle is only one subset of the anthropic principles in his book.

[31 : 33] A book was written about... Sorry, sorry. Yeah. A recent book was written by Martin Riege called Just Six Numbers.

He argues that if any of the key... Six key physical constants, including the gravitational constants of the strength of nuclear force, there's four more of them, were different by only a few percent, the universe as we know it would not exist.

Astronomer Lee Smolin suggests the probability of accidentally selecting this acceptable set is one in 10 to the 229.

That's 10 with 229 zeros. So, you know, it's like winning the lottery every second of the... The universe has been existed for every molecule of the universe, for every molecule of the universe, for every molecule...

I mean, it just... I mean, it's astronomically improbable. But, of course, you can't prove this, so it's not a thing that the atheists will believe or buy into. The anthropic principle indicates that human beings are part of the intended handiwork of God.

[32 : 40] That's how people have come up with it. And interestingly enough, Jastrow claims that this principle is the most theistic result ever to come out of science. But there's been serious backlash.

And the atheists take three positions. One of them, lucky us, right? Stenger claims the universe is an accident.

That we are here is claimed to be proof of the probability of the conjecture. Think about that one. It's a silly position to be in.

We're here, so it's... It's an accident. We're here. Therefore, it's a lucky accident. Well, my goodness. All right. Anyway. Interestingly enough, atheistic philosopher Anthony Flew has, based on this evidence, has claimed that the evidence leads to God, which has been a remarkable thing. So, yeah. The anthropic principles are... People are strong enough to point it this way. Now, the other option the atheist has is called multiple universes.

[33 : 51] So you can't have... If it's too lucky, then it looks like it's miraculous. And too miraculous looks like there's a hand to somebody in there, right? So you don't want... You can't have that. So what do they do? A lot of them believe in multiple universes.

And the theory goes something like this, that there are many of these universes, each with different values of these physical constants, these six physical constants. Now, the universes could be serially.

One occurs, and then the next one occurs, and the next one... Or they could be parallel. Well, we don't know. But they have this concept that has been proposed. And some of them are even eliminated through the process of natural selection, which, of course, appeals to the atheists. However, there's not a shred of evidence, and nor could you ever prove it. True or false. But many of the atheists do embrace it. But, as pointed out by astronomer Owen Gingrich, anyone who can believe in multiple universes should not have trouble believing in heaven and hell.

There's two more universes. Anyway. The other option is a designer universe, which is what we believe in as Christians. And D'Souza says it's...

[35 : 03] The argument for it... One of the arguments, aside from any other, is what we call Occam's razor. That is a statement that... If you're faced with two hypotheses that fit the data equally well, why not pick the simpler one?

You know, if you pick the more complicated one, it's less... It doesn't... Nature tends to towards simplicity and beauty, so pick the simpler one. And his argument, the simpler one, the less miraculous one, well, the less than lucky us, the miraculous accidental one, or the multiple universe one is the designer universe.

Any comments that... This is a comment that Hawkins, Weinberg, Dawkins, and others are all members of the Church of the Infinite Worlds, which I thought was kind of interesting. But many scientists, of course, do believe that there was a creation, moment of creation by a divine creator. Okay, this is an interesting one, and actually has some...

I just learned some more depth to this discussion, just as I was reading various things, because both Barr and DeSouza talk about Paley.

[36 : 19] Paley has a famous watchmaker argument that he said, basically, you're walking along, you see a stone on the ground, you could say, that stone probably has been there forever. But you see a watch on the ground, you say, somebody made that. I'm not sure who it was, but I don't...

It was a creationist following Darwin, I think it might have been Huxley, said, argued that this is invalid, that natural selection or whatever else invalidates this argument.

The evolutionary theory invalidates the argument of design by just noticing that things look like they have a symmetry or pattern or whatever else to it. Dawkins most recently refuted this about 10 or 12 years ago by a book called The Blind Watchmaker.

And curiously enough, I figured it was probably wrong, certainly based on what I've read from these guys, but Alice McGraw actually says it was well written and probably is valid.

So it's an interesting perspective, so that Paley is wrong, still wrong, but he didn't dig deep enough into the physics of the thing, which I think is where the issue is.

[37 : 34] I'm not going to hit all that today. Hopefully you don't want me to hit all that today.

Anyway, but it may be a cause for further discussion. Anyway, in spite of all this, first of all, D'Souza points out, in spite of all this, about 50% of Americans surveyed in 2001 believe that God created human beings pretty much as they are.

Right? So this is very disturbing to the atheist. H.L. Mencken said it would be okay if the ignorant yokels were from cow states who stood obstinately against evolution.

But certainly they don't want his elects thinking about it. An interesting secondary aspect is he makes a distinction between evolution and Darwinism, saying he believes in evolution, Darwinism is the philosophical theory.

We've seen things called social Darwinists. They tend to do awful things like Nazism, Stalinism, Maoism. But the champions of evolution are quick to declare that social Darwinism is a crude distortion of Darwinism's theories and claim that using science for ideological ends is not going on today.

Okay. Quote. The next thing he then says, D'Souza says, Douglas Fudiam in his textbook Evolutionary Biology says, by coupling undirected purposeless variation to the blind and caring process of natural selection, Darwin makes the theory, sorry, makes theological and spiritual explanation of life processes superfluous.

[39 : 05] Yeah, it's not going on today. Right. Tell us about it. Anyway. Okay. I think I, actually, there were some things I did disagree with him and I did disagree with some others around here, baby.

He trots out, clearly, D'Souza believes in the evolution and trots out some things about vestigial organs that I think are invalid and other areas.

However, that's not for the purpose of this discussion so I'm going to slide around that. Okay. What he does say is that evolution cannot explain the origin of life or consciousness and I think we all agree or human rationality or morality.

In fact, it doesn't go very far to explain things of life. So, his interesting comment I thought, we need to avoid the God of the gaps in our belief that, you know, there's something in this process that we can't explain.

There's a gap there. We say that's God. Did it. But there's equally, the opposite one is the atheism of the gaps. We've got this gap here and we say it will be shown that.

[40 : 09] That's equally faith claiming and equally risky that we may, well, that may never prove to be true. Although, I guess you can't wait for that to happen.

All right. Methodical atheism of science. The faulty view of science, D'Souza claims, is that it's a complete framework for understanding man and the universe.

So, unscientific claims should be automatically rejected. He points out that science tells us how, but not why. Scientists like to think of themselves as reasonable people that approach every problem methodically without biases.

So, Carl Sagan's boast is typical. At the heart of science is an openness to new ideas no matter how bizarre or counterintuitive. Yet, the behavior is quite often unreasonable. They become indignant when an unsupported conclusion is questioned or denounced the reasonable positions. He cites an article by John Maddox in Nature calling down with the Big Bang. The reason the theory is opposed is not on the basis of data, but the need to avoid a moment of creation.

[41 : 20] Okay. All right. Now we're getting to the stuff that's really hard for me. So, and I'm going to, I'm just going to pass by fairly quickly.

The first one is Kant on the limits of reason. All right. And Harvey's offered to give a talk on this afterwards. So, sorry, Harvey. But atheists make assumption that their rational scientific approach gives them access to reality.

Kant, with purely secular arguments, shows that assumption to be false. All right. He says, we experience phenomenon of something, but we don't understand the true reality, the, whatever you say that, nouam, noumanum, whatever.

And, and Kant is, is, is a respected and believed philosopher. the result of the atheist's position is that they, they, they, they disagree with this and exercising what the Susan calls the fundamentalism of reason.

Reason is so sure of itself that it refuses to consider reasonable criticism. Reason has become irrational and now relies on common sense. He concludes the atheist is now revealed as dogmatic and arrogant and the religious believer emerges as modest and reasonable.

[42 : 45] I like that, even though, even though we're not all modest and reasonable. Right? Why miracles are possible. He goes on to, he, he refused David Hume's arguments about miracles.

Now, David Hume made the following argument that a miracle is a violation of known laws of nature.

Two, we know that laws should be repeated and constant experience. Three, the testimony of those who report miracles contradicts the operation of known scientific laws. Consequently, no one can rationally believe in miracles.

This is greatly influential and D'Souza's argument is that Hume could be refuted by his own arguments because, yes, a miracle is a violation of the known laws of nature.

However, scientific laws are, by Hume's own arguments, not, I haven't presented them, they're empirically unverifiable. You can't actually verify them.

[43 : 45] You can see they work a bunch of times, you just don't know when they're not going to work. So, fundamentally, you can never, ever prove them. And in fact, we call, in my previous talk a few years ago, we talked about Newton's laws don't work.

They don't work any good too fast or too small. So, we have laws that only work in a subset of time. So, now, we wouldn't call that miraculous, but the point is, we can't say we know the laws and know that they're true and unfailing us.

so, this leaves room for miracles, as D'Souza suggests. He goes on to talk, he brings in Karl Popper who says that you can't prove a law from a positive, you can only prove a law from a negative.

I disprove it. Many of these things, a lot of science needs to be proved by falsifying, the theory is tested by falsifying it. All right. And I don't want to get into that, but that's, this is some of the issues here.

And, I guess he concludes this section talking about Pascal and the reasonableness of faith. Pascal recognized that there are two kinds of reason, I'm so sorry, that's not what am I saying.

[45 : 01] He makes an interesting point, D'Souza, is that the natural, the natural position of the believer is the habit of mind of the believer.

That natural habit of mind is doubt in the following way. Mark 9, 17 to 24, the father of the demon possessed boy said, I believe, help thou my unbelief.

And so, what he's common was a Christian has faith even though he is not sure, while the unbeliever refuses to believe because he is not sure.

Both in the same uncertainty, but one has faith. His argument, of course, is that religious faith is not in opposition to reason because we can't discover all truth through purely natural means.

So Pascoe actually uses a Kantian postulate that Kant said, reason's final step is to recognize that there are an infinite number of things that surpass it.

[46 : 07] And he goes on to argue that the highest truths are accessible through faith rather than reason, which you have to think about is really good for all of us because if not, only smart people would get to heaven.

Which I think is a vital thing for all of us to remind ourselves. Pascoe's wager is God is or is not. That's his wager. Which one is it? And he argues that you can't determine it by examining the facts. It requires a step of faith, a gamble.

But his point is if you win by saying God is, you win everything. And if you lose, you lose nothing. So don't hesitate. Wager that he does exist.

Anyway. Okay. Oops. What was that passage there? Sorry. I gotta go back. No. Well, Christianity and suffering.

[47 : 15] Rethinking the Inquisition. This was interesting. You know, the atheists accused Christianity of killing millions of people in the Crusades and torturing millions of the Inquisition.

And D'Souza shows the numbers are greatly exaggerated. He doesn't say that some didn't happen. And of course, a lot of that is a terrible thing. But he says it's just not what the level they suggest at. The interesting thing, the Crusades, he points out that before the rise of Islam, the Middle East was predominantly Christian. It was overtaken by Muslim armies who conquered Africa, Asia, and headed north into Europe, including part of Spain, Italy, and the Balkans.

And if Christians actually hadn't resisted, Europe would have been Islamic since that time. Of course, it probably is going that way right now, but that's beside the issue. They did, and they attempted to recover the heartland of Christianity, which was Jerusalem.

The Crusades were actually a pilgrim response, not a militaristic thing. They weren't in it for gain, and the proof was that most people came back way poorer than they left. They did capture Jerusalem and held it for several decades.

[48 : 23] And then, a guy called Saladin, no relation to our gym, I hope, well, maybe it was, maybe Saladin got converted, reconquered Jerusalem in 1187. Yes, there was rape and murder, there was no doubt about it, but it didn't define the Crusades as a whole.

Similarly, the Inquisition, it's largely concocted by English writers, they said, to say how evil Spain was. But, Henry came and wrote a book called The Spanish Inquisition, a historical revision, and this is the comments, it's long because there's a lot of revising to do.

The Inquisition had authority only over Christians, it didn't target Jews, but those who had pretended to convert, so they could, there was an ex, the Jews were expelled from Spain and that was all bad stuff, but those that had pretended to convert but were still out of practicing were, I guess, subject to the Inquisition.

He called the Inquisition trials a fairer or more lenient than their secular counterparts, and the penalty was often some form of community service. They estimate, though, that about 2,000 people were executed during the 350 years of the Inquisition.

They also point to the Salem witch trials, about 25 people were executed for that, and it's tragic, but the number gets inflated. In fact, this is a lovely, Carl Sagan says, if we're absolutely sure that our beliefs are right and those of others are wrong, then the witch mania will recur in its infinite variations.

[49 : 47] D'Souza points out that Sagan believed in evolution, Big Bang, and lots of other things that he was sure he was absolutely right, and that his enemies, the creationists, the fundamentals were absolutely wrong, but Sagan didn't burn anyone, and so I think it's a very false argument to say that because we're confident in our beliefs, we're going to do these evil things.

In fact, D'Souza points out anyone who really considers the example of Christ knows that they're led away from violence, not to violence. Of course, the license to kill, this is the atheist record, make Christian murders look really insignificant.

He had no one picks three communist, Russia, China, and Nazi Germany, and we have 100 million people murdered, and nor are some of the other guys who aren't very nice either, but the point, and

I'm not going to say any more about it, but just that, you'll hear them argue that that was actually a religious, a religious, you know, Hitler was religious, well he wasn't, he used the church, in fact his own writings say you do that, you know, you lie and do whatever you have to do to move ahead. Okay, Christianity and morality, oops, sorry, wrong button, Christianity and morality, what do we have to say, he argues that morality is not different for different people, there's absolute morality, morality, and he said there are laws, there are different kinds of laws in the world, there are physical laws, there are moral laws, the difference, you can tell, is that physical and natural laws cannot be broken, moral laws can, right, they are not, you're not forced to obey moral laws. And, he claims, D'Souza claims that they, moral laws, anthropologists have seen that moral laws seem to be universal, people don't always practice them, but they seem to be more universal, they're not just by your particular civilization.

[52 : 06] The atheists have a problem with absolute morality, they try to explain it by various ways, and most of them argue that it's internal, it's our own morality, it's not absolute, but it's an individual relativistic, and of course you're now into the problem of you don't have any morality in our country, or our schools, or anything else.

Okay, I think that's all, I've got a lot more notes, but I don't think I want to cover up. Dawkins actually does something interesting in his book called *The Selfish Gene*, because he talks about, about, the gene acting in, it's called kin selection and reciprocal altruism.

You know, I'll do something that's morally right, mostly so I'll save my kids' life, you know, for them to survive, but then it falls apart when you save a stranger's life.

That morality doesn't work, you know, it works only under very limited circumstances. *Ghost of the Machine*, why man is more than matter. That, of course, was talked a bit about in, or a lot about in Barr's book.

The atheist claims there's no evidence of the soul, and therefore it's not real. the soul. But, this is a point out that there's a real problem. The biggest problem, if you don't have the soul, is the issue of the lack of free will.

[53 : 45] Of course, some atheists believe that free will is just an illusion, but based on prior mental activity. They start working on all ways to try to figure out, do we have freedom? And I talked about that last week, so I don't want to hit the same topics.

Pinker is claiming the brain is nothing more than a computer, right? But it goes on to say that happiness and virtue are for us to determine, which is actually free will. It's kind of curious, it just doesn't call it that.

Interestingly enough, people who operate outside the sphere of morality are called psychopaths. So, it was his argument, the ghost and the machine, the soul.

I actually didn't put it up there. The soul. ties to the issue of free will and consciousness. And I didn't bring Kant into here because I can't do it, no.

The imperial lie when self becomes arbitrary morality. Actually, I've actually hit on some of those things a minute ago there. Yes, subjective morality.

[54 : 58] Okay, that's good. I'm going to skip over that. The opiate of the morally corrupt, why unbelief is so appealing. His argument mainly is that it appears and by their own words, they are trying to avoid the judgment and restrictions that faith would have.

I don't know if I want to say any of this thing here.

It was Aldous Huxley, one of the Huxleys wrote, I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning. Consequently, I assumed it had none. The liberation we desired was the liberation from a certain system of morality.

We objected to morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom. It's interesting what atheists don't like the good positive thing, the idea of heaven.

They don't like the idea of judgment. That's what they respond to. That's why unbelief is appealing. It avoids judgment.

[56 : 21] It makes you think you're avoiding judgment. Let's phrase that carefully. The problem of evil. Where is atheism when bad things happen? The issue here is that atheists is not comfort to the suffering.

Other faiths, Hinduism will say that it's what you did in your last life. You deserve it. Atheists may have a better explanation of suffering than the Christian that sin in the world.

The atheists might have a better explanation but it's no consolation for them. Theism which may not have such a good explanation nevertheless offers a better way for people to cope with the consequences.

It's a helpful thing. One of the arguments he says how do you know how do we know that modern science is valid?

The best argument is that it works. But he applied that similar argument to how do we know that Christianity is valid? It works. It works when people are suffering. How do you know that atheism doesn't work when people are suffering?

[57 : 41] I'm sorry it's just the way it is. It's part of evolution. Get used of it. Snap out of it. Oops. That's bad news. That's warning me that I'm supposed to be singing pretty soon.

I think I'm going to have to skip that. Okay. I may not make it. Sorry guys. Well you're hoping I got to run out and sing but I'm not. Well actually the last one I'm going to conclude with Jesus among other gods.

It's an appeal to faith and what he says is that all religions aren't the same. the key difference is what we are sinful and we are rescued by God himself.

And what's denied to us by effort is supplied by grace. And the last one is how Christianity can change your life.

Christ is the most influential figure in history. You go through this and a number of other things. And what it can do for you helps you make sense of the world. It helps you to survive life.

[59 : 01] It recognizes that life on earth is important and it helps with our loneliness and suffering and death. David I think you probably should go.

That was a phone call. Sorry. But I can't. I don't think I go. I'll continue on. No? Okay. All right. Okay. In summary, D'Souza like Barr claims to give evidence of, in the favor of Christianity, evidence, not proof. All right. To counter the atheistic fundamentalists who sometimes argue it's proof.

All right. Now the book covers a wide range of topics. I have done a poor job of covering it. I'll admit that it was hard. I wrote about twice as much notes in this book than I did in the Barr book.

It was very hard. But I think it was very interesting. And every topic is so different that it's worth thinking about. And I think it can be helpful for those whose faith is being attacked by the atheist fundamentalist.

[60 : 03] But the final word I'm going to give to C.S. Lewis from Mere Christianity on atheism. He says, when I was an atheist my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust?

A man does not call a line crooked because he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust? If the whole show was bad and senseless from A to Z sorry, spending too much time on states, so to speak, why did I, who's supposed to be part of the show, find myself in such violent reaction against it?

Thus, in the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist, in other words, that the whole of reality was senseless, I found myself forth to assume that one part of reality, namely my idea of justice, was full of sense.

Consequently, atheism turned out to be too simple. The whole world has no meaning. We should never have found out that it had no meaning. And so, I conclude. thanks.

I will entertain any simple questions for a couple of minutes. questions. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Yes? On purpose, what I'm going to say by telling you to caution everything he has said about the Inquisition, he needs to do a whole lot more research on that.

[61 : 32] Anyway, my question is, why do these scientists not go beyond Genesis? Jesus? Why don't they look at the influence of not just God on humanity but Jesus and the Holy Spirit gets no attention at all?

It's a trying God we believe in and they just, they get stuck in Genesis and they don't seem to go anywhere else. No, no, oh, you mean the atheists who say, say, well, because it's the one place where science clearly, clearly conflicts with religion, right?

You know, I mean, because you can talk about the beginnings, all right? I mean, the Bible is clearly not a science text, so there's not, but there's one, there's certain areas and that's one area where the intersection is really obvious, right?

You know, this is said how it happened, so I don't know, well, the other area they do, they come against us where miracles, right? You know, of course, creation is a miracle in itself, so it's

fundamentally the miraculous, the lack of the consistency in nature, right?

Because they're arguing for consistency throughout forever and we're saying, no, there's been a lack of inconsistency, but scientifically it's argued now that there was the Big Bang. There just isn't argued, yes, there was a miracle in AD 33, AD, and there's, you know, and people will not necessarily argue there's miracles today, which we will often see them happening, so.

[63 : 04] Yeah, thank you, Jack, that was a tour de force. Tour, but not force. I want to find out, really, one of those early slides where you stated that Christianity is a religion based on reason.

Is this D'Souza's point of view? Is it your point of view? Oh, it's D'Souza's point of view. And I know, I think, I think this is a very Catholic perspective.

In fact, he quoted the Pope when he made this infamous, address infamous, it became infamous because it was to a university academic audience and he mentioned the results from Islam are always murdering, bad, you know, the data, and he was only quoting somebody else, but one of the main things he was talking about was the Christianity based on reason.

I think that comes out of the Catholic approach. But that seems to lead to a terrible problem, doesn't it? Because you pointed out later that belief in reason is itself...

Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. No, I just said it's not based on reason. Yeah, okay, reason is, it is not the only basis of reason, all right?

[64 : 18] That's the only basis. Reason is not the only basis. I think that would be, you're absolutely right. If it's just reason, we could arrive there completely, it still requires faith.

But I think he's right in saying that the Jews tend to favor the law, the Torah, as their focus, right? And very much so. And our focus, I think, is that our God is a reasonable, non-capricious God who loves us.

And so, yes, we have both faith, faith, but that aspect is stronger in Christianity. Probably, I think he simplified it, but I would argue it's stronger in Christianity. And it may be another religion from what I can tell, but it's hard to know.

But you certainly couldn't say it's only based. That would be misleading. Good point. Bill? Well, you waved your hand earlier, but you may be just scratching your head.

I've been conversational with an atheist, across the Ederway, of course, but she has a list of contradictions in the script for me.

[65 : 33] I haven't seen them yet, because why? And I doubt, I've formed a doubt, that even though you might give a good explanation about what looks like for your fiction, that they're not really looking for truth.

They don't want to be convinced. They'll just give you another competition. Actually, several people have said it. That position was referenced by D'Souza, and I can't remember who said it.

It's probably one of the great philosophers, but it wasn't. It was in talking about this, arguing about the faith. Ultimately, I want to ask the question, if I answered every one of your objections, would you become a Christian?

And the answer probably is no, because they don't want to give up their way. They're raising objections so that they can maintain the way of life they have. So, yeah, I don't know how fruitful answering the objections are.

I mean, you need to respond. I mean, this is correct to respond to it, but to spend a lot of energy doing it. McGraw, in his book, he wrote a very thin book.

[66 : 48] He said, if I wrote a book covering every one of Dawkins' statements and explaining it and clarifying it and correcting it, it would be a very thick book and very boring.

Nobody would want to read it, because people aren't interested necessarily in the answers to the objections. maybe one is, you know, I can't universalize that, but I think ultimately there may be no effect, right?

They would never admit that atheism is a religion. They would never admit that atheism is a religion.

If you know the definition of religion, it's the ultimate, someone has an ultimate concern, and they try to relate that to the whole life, that is a religion. Yes. I would not say many, I mean, maybe some of them would, but I don't think they'd pretend it's not a religion.

I always like to say to them, I don't have enough faith to be an atheist, because I need a lot of faith, because I have to believe in this miraculous thing that happened all accidentally, and that was just so incredible, that takes more faith than I thought.

[67 : 57] Yes, Betty? You said about why all belief is popular. Atheism is a belief in freedom judgment. If I look back, we all have a built-in conscience that God put there.

So judgment comes throughout the conscience. Very good, yes. Actually, he talked about the conscience to, who's it from?

I think it was from C.S. Lewis who was talking about. The conscience does, plays a very significant role, and we shouldn't, our inner self may tell us wrong things, you know, our inner morality, he said, but the conscience itself is usually a better guide.

I can't say universally, some people have no conscience at all. Yes, Bill, I see the time, and I think I would like to abandon, I've probably missed my choir, but I enjoy babbling on, even though I may have bored you to tears, or not, but I hope I may have at least, I don't get a cut in this, but if you want, I highly recommend this book.

I just want to say one thing, I'm sure a lot of you are aware of this, but at UBC, the Graduate Christian Student Forums, they meet once a month, and they invite eminent Christian scholars, including Francis Collins, and I believe it was Stephen Barr that was here.

[69 : 22] Well, that's actually an inspiration when Stephen Barr came, and I heard his talk. And Phil wrote his book. Phil wrote his book. Absolutely. So anybody that's interested in these events, they're very interesting.

They're usually about 4 o'clock on a Thursday afternoon, so I've never been to them, but I've researched. The last one was on, I can't remember the last name, was on the mine, and from a medical practice, a scientist point of view.

Where are they from? The Woodward building at UBC, which is the schedule. Yeah, it's really, those are who were attending. We had even some very prominent people in our own talk, right? Yes. It was. Okay. Thanks. All right. Come Hong Kong, with you.