

# OpenTheo

## Are All Religions the Same? Part 1: Cosmic Origins

June 17, 2023



### **Knight & Rose Show** - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the view that all religions are equally valid paths to God. We start by talking about what truth is, why truth matters, and the difference between objective and subjective truth claims. We discuss how different religions make different testable truth claims. We look at how different religions answer the question "How did the universe get here?". And then we look at what science has to say about that question. This is the first episode of a five-part series.

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## **Transcript**

(intro music) Welcome to the Knight & Rose Show, where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today's topic is, Are All Religions Equally True? I'm Wintery Knight. And I'm Desert Rose.

Welcome Rose. Your voice sounds so much better today. What happened? Oh, thank

you.

Yes, I'm so excited to be among the living. I thought I just had a virus, but it continued and my cough kept getting worse and worse even though I didn't have any other symptoms. And so I started looking into some other possibilities and found out I had mold in my house.

Mold? Yeah, yeah, so gross, right? And so I've been doing house renovations. I called in some professionals to get rid of the mold right away and to clean out the air ducts. And I'm in the process of exchanging the carpet in my house out for luxury vinyl laminate is what they call it.

Oh, that sounds much better. And how's the bird feeder going? Oh, it's so great. I love it so much.

I've been doing my work at a table right next to this huge window where I can see out and look to the bird feeder and watch the birds come and go all day long. And I've had at least a dozen different kinds of birds eat from my feeder and visit daily. And they're so beautiful.

And they're just so fun. They just look like little kids playing in a playground, just flying around the trees and eating my food and playing with each other. It's so great.

Excellent. Okay, let's turn to our topic for today. So when it comes to discussing religion, I often hear people talk about my truth.

And I remember having a conversation with a Mormon woman at a bus stop when I just had come to America and was starting my first job. And I was trying to figure out why she was a Mormon. And her answer was that her entire family was Mormon.

And secondly, that being a Mormon just made her feel good. So is that what religion is about? That's a question. It's certainly not about finding what makes us happy or finding what makes us comfortable or what we like right now.

It's about finding out what the truth is committing to living according to the truth. And I do believe that if we live according to the truth, ultimately, we'll be happier. But it can cause quite a bit of suffering in the short term.

It may not even be until the next life that we experience tremendous happiness as a result of living according to the truth. Does it really matter though? Like, does it really matter if you have true beliefs, if having a good community and having happy feelings kind of work for you? It absolutely matters. Yeah, I mean, for one thing, eventually at some point, your false beliefs are going to bump up against reality and it's going to cause some trouble.

But secondly, there are also eternal consequences for rejecting the truth in order to follow what makes us feel good right now. Well, give us some. Okay.

I actually could give you a whole bunch of them. I've collected these in my mind, at least as I've traveled to about 30 different countries around the world. So in East Africa, where some good friends of mine are missionaries, there's a belief that AIDS is cured by having sex with a virgin.

So in order to make sure they actually are getting a virgin, men will take little girls who are eight or nine years old and actually even infants and they will have sex with them in order to try to cure their AIDS. Obviously, we know that AIDS then gets passed on to these little girls. That's awful.

Yeah. Besides the physical damage that is done for a lifetime, they're also obviously very emotionally and spiritually and mentally damaged as well. Their innocence is taken before they even have a chance to be children.

It's a nightmare. I can give you another example from the Middle East. I could give you several from Islam in the Middle East.

But one of them is the highest honor in life is to die as a martyr in jihad, according to Islam. So taking your own life while also taking the lives of as many non-Muslims as possible is considered the best use of your life. Anyone who does this, who commits suicide and takes the lives of non-Muslims with them is guaranteed to go directly to paradise where they'll have delicious fruits and tasty wines, rivers of wine and perpetual virgins for all eternity.

Okay. I have one now. So have you heard of the practice of sati in Hinduism? Oh, yes.

Yes. That's it. Yeah.

Good example. Yeah. So this is a Hindu custom where the community forces widows to sit or lie down on the funeral pyre of her deceased, of their deceased husbands while his remains are burned up.

So she's burned up. Yeah. She's, she's killed by burning because just because her husband died, even if, even though she's perfectly healthy and usually very young.

Yes. Disgusting. And the funny thing about this is, is that the practice comes out of their religion.

It comes from traditions about the goddess sati. And this practice was going on into the 20th century in India. Even in 1987, they passed a law to restrict people from praising the practice and trying to, you know, kind of tamp down on it.

But that's a situation where like false beliefs are causing like a lot of trouble. Yeah. And

lest we omit some of the disastrous false beliefs of the secular West where we live, I'm thinking of how if a prepubescent girl says she feels like she's really a boy, the proper response according to secularism is to affirm her delusion, call her by a boy's name, dress her up as a boy, give her puberty blockers to stop her development, chemically castrate her and call it hormone replacement therapy, even chop off her healthy breasts, cut a massive chunk of tissue out of her arm and use it to make a fake penis.

And all of this is an absolute disaster physically, financially, and otherwise. Yeah. My understanding is that the financial costs for maintaining this and, you know, treating treating it going forward is significant.

Absolutely. Yeah. It's a commitment to continuous treatment really for the rest of their lives, daily dilations of an open wound, the loss of sexual pleasure.

And can you imagine being 12 years old and people, adults telling you you can make this lifelong decision that's going to result in you never having any experience of sexual pleasure ever, no possibility of reproduction, even though most people actually change their mind about wanting children when they're adults, when they're in their twenties or thirties. But yeah, it just has so many real world costs. So this is a situation where the community is with you, you know, the public schools and everybody, and you're feeling good about it, you're feeling happy in the moment, but because your beliefs are false, this is going to shipwreck you in the long term.

Yep. So it really does matter that we get it right. Okay.

It sounds to me like we need a way of measuring worldviews to evaluate which of them, if any, correspond to the world as it really is. Because in that case, at least we're going to see things like accurately and be able to make good decisions. For me, when I was very young, this was like life and death.

So when I experienced kind of a low level of parental involvement, I kind of latched on to the New Testament and Shakespeare and my parents' college textbooks to be able to try to quickly come up to speed on the way the world really was in order to make good decisions. So I think that's our ambition, is to get an accurate picture of the world so we make good decisions. And there's a lot of alternative worldviews out there, so we have to be able to evaluate them.

So how would you go about doing that? Well, first of all, we have to ask what is truth? Sadly enough, there's a lot of confusion about even that question in our culture today. So truth is any proposition which aligns with reality. And the truth doesn't change based on my opinions about it, my feelings about it.

It doesn't change whether I like the person who is making the truth claim something that is true remains true, whether I'm informed about it by someone I really dislike or by

someone I love, admire, respect, adore. It doesn't change based on where I am culturally or physically, demographically, etc. Calculus works in China or Cleveland.

Exactly, that's right. And the truth doesn't even change based on whether or not I know what the truth is. There are a lot of truths out there that I don't know.

That doesn't mean they're not true just because I don't know them. So our view of truth is basically called the correspondence view of truth. So if somebody says it's raining outside, and it really is raining outside, then that person's statement is true objectively.

It doesn't matter about what anyone's opinion is or anyone's feelings are, it's objectively true because it corresponds to reality. So let's call truth claims that correspond to reality objective truth claims. And then the opinions and feelings and problems and preferences that people might express, those would be subjective truth claims like your favorite flavor of ice cream that's subjective to you.

But this Advil will cure your headache. That's objective. Okay.

As long as that one works for you. I guess I should use that one. Okay, that light, that traffic light is red, you know, that's objective.

Okay. Right. All right.

So today, a lot of people, they want to talk about my truth rather than the truth, the way that you define it correspondence to reality. So they want to say that all truth claims are subjective, that none of them are really independent of the person stating it. How would you respond to that? Well, take that statement, all truth is relative.

Okay. If all truth is relative, then even that statement would be a statement of opinion or preference. But that's not what the speaker intends.

That's not what they mean. They intend to... Their statement is objectively true. Everybody else is subjective.

Right, exactly. So it's like a self-defeating statement. It's like saying, "I don't speak a word of English in English." Right.

That's right. Exactly. Yeah.

It's like saying every statement is just a personal opinion, but they don't think that their own statement is a personal opinion. They intend that their own statement be objectively true, taken as an objective truth. But that's what they're claiming is impossible.

So yes, like you said, it's a self-defeating statement. Okay. How would you respond to, "We can't know the truth about anything." I hear that one a lot.

So do I. And I first heard this actually when I was working at a church about 20 years ago from church members who were on the staff, from church workers who had backgrounds in ministry and were doing ministry full-time. It was an absolute shock. But anyway, I like to suggest going to the house of those people who make this claim and playing the trumpet in their living room at 4am and seeing if they're able to know whether or not the trumpet is being played in their living room at 4am.

If they claim, they can't know. If I'm sitting there playing the trumpet in their living room at 4am and they're like, "No, no. I don't know that that's happening." I'll tell them, "Okay, well, you know what? Good news.

I'm going to be here all week since you don't know the difference anyway." I mean, you cannot live consistently with such a ridiculous statement. Yeah. Yeah.

And I do software development for a living and I even tried to show you some of what we do. You learn some HTML and CSS and things like that. So both of us understand how code works.

If you write good code, then you get a functional webpage or you get a functional API, like a functional backend. But if you don't write code that produces results in the real world, then your company fails and you're out of a job. So imagine somebody coming into a software company and saying things like, "All truth is relative and we can't know the truth about anything." So you don't want someone like that trying to write code with you.

That's not a good addition to your team. So what we're looking for is for people who want to find out how the world really works so that they can make good decisions and get to where they're planning to go. Yeah.

I really think this retreat from reality is about wanting freedom from constraint. People seem to choose which definition of truth they want depending on the circumstances. So if they're demanding something from others, they want their statements to be taken as objective truth.

But if they're facing some sort of constraint or responsibility, expectations, obligations, then they tend to fall back to talking about their truth, my truth, that's your truth. They don't seem to want to be accountable to reality. Yeah.

Very interesting point. Okay. So let's turn back to worldviews in general, religions in general.

This is a set of claims about reality. How can we tell whether one is better than the other or which one is correct? How do we evaluate that? Yeah. Well, as we implied when we stated the definition of truth, you can evaluate and test what is true by evaluating which claims best align with reality.

And there are several fields of study that are helpful for evaluating whether a religious or worldview truth claim is false or true. Some of those fields of study include cosmology, biology, biochemistry, physics, history, ethics, logic, philosophy. There are several.

Excellent. Okay. Well, how about we use some of the time on this episode to just look at some of the truth claims from different religions, like in one area and evaluate them using the appropriate field of study in order to see which of their claims aligns with reality and which ones don't.

And if we don't get through a bunch of them today, then we can just keep going in some subsequent episodes. Yeah, that sounds great. Before we get into that though, I want to note that there are grains of truth in each religion.

No religion or worldview is completely and totally wrong in everything that it teaches. So for example, Islam teaches that the universe began to exist. It had a beginning.

Buddhism teaches there's more to the world than just matter. That's true. Marxism even has an element of truth in that Marxism accepts the significance and relevance of science, which is true.

Postmodernism acknowledges the importance of texts and words. So there are elements of truth in every worldview. Just because you find one element of truth, you don't just settle on that and say, "Oh, great.

I'll take it." But there are also contradictory claims in every religion. They can't all be true. Each religion makes claims which are incompatible with other religions' claims.

They're mutually exclusive. So if one is true, then the other has to be false. Okay, let's see an example of that where the different religions are making claims about something in the real world and they have different views.

Sure. Okay. Well, for example, they differ in their view of Jesus.

So Judaism claims Jesus was not the Messiah. He was a false prophet. He was not deity.

And he was killed by crucifixion for blasphemy. Okay. Yeah, so Islam, on the other hand, claims Jesus was the Messiah.

He was a true prophet, but he was not deity and he was not killed or crucified. So they have some claims about reality in common with Judaism and some different. And then Christianity, with regards to Jesus, claims that he was the Messiah.

He was a true prophet and he was deity. He was the only begotten Son of God. He was the eternal Word made flesh and he was crucified for our sins.

So you can see that none of them completely agree. They all have differences. That

when it comes to religion, they could all be wrong, but only one could be right.

Exactly. Because these guys are making different claims, so they can't all be right. Right.

Okay. Do you have another one? Sure. Let's see, on the topic of how to receive salvation, for example.

Buddhism claims salvation is attained by escaping all desire. Hinduism claims you receive salvation by escaping rebirth and you do so by accepting that everything is part of the one supreme soul and all that seems distinct from it is just illusion. Judaism claims it's attained by obeying the Jewish law.

Islam claims salvation is attained by doing more good deeds than bad deeds. Unless you die in jihad, then that's the very, very best deed and that cancels out all your other bad deeds. Good and bad are kind of squishy there.

You know, what would they think is good? We probably wouldn't think is good. Okay. Yeah.

That's a good point across the board. Yeah. With Islam.

Marxism claims that salvation is attained in this world by doing away with private property. Christianity believes that and claims that salvation is attained by trusting in Jesus to save us by grace through faith. Yeah.

Okay. So it's pretty clear from these different truth claims that all religions are not basically the same. They're all making different claims about reality and it's not just about minor issues.

It's about pretty core issues. Yeah. And that's a good point because I hear people say all the time, well, all religions are all basically the same anyway.

It's clearly not true. I mean, we just gave a couple of examples that we could give examples of this for hours, but we also see from these contradictory claims that they cannot all be true, as you said a minute ago. So Jesus could not have been deity and not deity at the same time and in the same way.

He couldn't have been both crucified and not crucified. Salvation can't be based exclusively on human good deeds and also be based exclusively on God's grace. So this idea of pluralism that all paths lead to God or that all religions are equally true, it's logically absurd.

It does not make sense. Okay. Just a minute ago, you were saying that Islam teaches that the universe had a beginning.

Yes. Let's compare a few different religions and just see which of them get that right.



Because whenever I think of the ultimate questions, what I think of is where did we come from? How did we get here? So that seems like a good one.

Like it's an ultimate question. I'd just be curious to see what all the different views are. Absolutely.

That's a great idea. Let's look at, let's consider what is some of the evidence for a beginning of the universe. Okay.

Frank Turek of Cross-examined, he uses an acronym surge to remember that there is a surge of evidence that the universe had a beginning. For the sake of time and simplicity, I'm just going to leave out the G for now and use the acronym SURE. I think it's at least as easy to remember.

We can be sure the universe had a beginning. Ha ha, S-U-R-E. Got it.

Yes. So the S stands for second law of thermodynamics. What people need to know about this is the universe is running out of usable energy.

So I'll give you an analogy. If you have a wind-up toy and you see that the wind-up toy is still running, then you can conclude that it hasn't been running forever. And the same is true of the universe.

There's a finite amount of usable energy needed to keep the lights on, so to speak, and it's running out. If the universe had been running forever, it would have run out of usable energy by now. Yes.

In the universe, stars are the things that can run out of energy just the same way as your car runs out of gas. Car engines are not 100% efficient. Some of the energy from combustion is lost to the surrounding environment.

And it's the same thing with stars. Stars are burning hydrogen as fuel, and they eventually run out of hydrogen and die in a variety of different ways. Nuclear fusion.

Yes, nuclear fusion. And when the universe runs out of burning stars, that's called the heat death of the universe. So you can see the beginning of the universe as loading up the universe with hydrogen, which is like loading up your car with gas, and then it starts burning the gas and running down.

And eventually you run out of gas. Yeah. And I hear a lot of people get confused about the state, the phrase heat death of the universe.

It doesn't mean the universe dies by too much heat. It's by a lack of heat. The stars go up.

The stars stop. Like, I mean, try to, try to support life on earth without the sun. That's not

going to happen.

Right. You know? So if you run out of light from stars, then you can't support life anywhere. Yeah.

So with our acronym, SURE, the U is for universe. The universe is expanding. If the universe had been expanding forever, the stars would be spread so far apart that they would have all gone cold and there would be no life.

We can actually see evidence of the expansion today by measuring the redshift of galaxies at various distances. So galaxies that are moving faster are the farthest from the singularity. And this is called Hubble's law named, of course, after the famous astronomer Edwin Hubble.

Like the Hubble space telescope. Yeah, exactly. Okay.

So sometimes people talk about an oscillating model of the universe. So they give you the expansion of the universe, but then they say that expansion is going to slow down and then the universe will contract like an accordion. So on that model, the universe could be eternal because it would just keep expanding and contracting.

But there's two problems with that. The first problem is that there's no mechanism for a bounce, even if there is a contraction. And then the second problem is, is that there are predictions in that model about what we should see in the universe and our observations do not match what's predicted.

What the observations do say, though, is they match the idea that the universe is going to expand forever and become cooler and darker. So you can kind of think of the beginning of the universe as the beginning of that expansion from nothing. Yeah.

So with our acronym, sure, the R is for radiation. The cosmic microwave background radiation is the heat and light that was produced by the explosion when the universe began to exist. As early as 1948, scientists predicted that this heat radiation would still be out there if the universe had begun to exist.

And then in 1965, it was discovered by Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson. And just as predicted, the temperature of the radiation was 2.7 Kelvin. Yeah, that's what I like to see is when people make a prediction before they observe, then they make the observation and it matches the prediction.

Yeah, exactly. Then we know we're really getting somewhere. All right.

So let me give an analogy about this ambient radiation. So everyone understands it and can talk about it. So imagine you were baking a turkey in the oven for a few hours.

Okay. I've never done this. All right.

But other people have told me it does take a few hours to bake one of these things. So many. Yes.

So while you're baking the turkey, all the heat is in the oven. And then when you take the turkey out, all the heat kind of dissipates to the surrounding room. If your room is, you know, smallish, then the temperature of the room, it could go up a couple of degrees.

And the cosmic microwave background radiation is the same thing. You have a whole bunch of heat in a tiny, tiny universe that's expanding. And then the universe expands to be quite large.

But there's, there's a low level of heat that's left over from the initial very hot state. And there's the current standard model makes a prediction about what that background heat should be. And that's exactly what we observe.

So this is another confirmation of the beginning of the universe. Exactly. Yeah.

And then in our acronym, sure, the E is for Einstein, Einstein's theory of general relativity. And what Einstein proved was that time, space and matter cannot exist without one another. So they must have all begun to exist at the same time.

Excellent. Okay. Yes.

And that's actually, yeah, that's, that's what the, the standard model agrees with. So I wanted to, you know, some people, when they talk about the standard model of the creation of the universe, sometimes people are concerned about the age of the universe or the age of the earth. And I just want to emphasize that if you're talking to a non-Christian, a non-theist, you can just go with the standard science and that will give you a beginning of the universe.

So I wanted to read this quote from an article I found on BBC science focus. And BBC is not, you know, this is the British Broadcasting Corporation, not a Christian source. And this is what they, they write in their article.

And I'm just, there's no dot, dot, dot here. This is just straight, straight quote. "The universe has not existed forever.

It was born around 13.82 billion years ago, matter, energy, space and time erupted into being in a fireball called the Big Bang. It expanded and from the cooling debris, there congealed galaxies, islands of stars of which our Milky Way is one among about 2 trillion. This is the Big Bang theory, a universe popping into existence out of nothing is so bonkers that scientists had to be dragged kicking and screaming to the idea.

But the evidence is compelling. The galaxies are flying apart like pieces of cosmic

shrapnel and the heat of the Big Bang is still around us. Greatly cooled by the cosmic expansion, this afterglow appears not as visible light, but principally as microwave radiation, the cosmic background radiation, which was discovered by radio astronomers in 1965." I love that quote.

You know, I actually find it commonly believed by Christians that the Big Bang was something created by atheists in order to explain away the creation without Christianity. That is not the way things went down at all. As the article you just read said, atheists hated this new information which demonstrated a beginning of the universe.

They wanted to believe that the universe was eternal because of what we're actually going to talk about next. Yes. Yeah.

So just to summarize before we move on, so our point in discussing all of this is that not every religion is comfortable with the idea of a cosmic beginning. So Mormonism teaches that matter is eternal and pre-existing. Hinduism teaches an oscillating universe that's been oscillating forever and therefore existing forever.

Okay? Islam, Judaism, and Christianity teach a beginning of the universe. And so when we're talking about which worldview is correct, we have to compare our beliefs with reality. And this is a good place to kind of make the first cut.

Absolutely. All right. Well, why don't we move on to utilize some philosophy to consider whether the universe needs a creator given what we've just talked about? Mm-hmm.

That sounds like a great idea. All right. So Judaism, Islam, and Christianity hold that the universe had a creator.

In other words, someone or something that caused it to begin while secularism and atheism teach that the universe began by chance. They don't think it needed any sort of creator behind it. So who's right? Well, if the universe had a beginning, and we've just shown a few reasons to demonstrate it did, then the universe must have had a beginner, someone or something that caused it to begin to exist.

So I know that you've prepared a deductive argument that's like similar to that argument we made for the right to life of the unborn in our episode on bioethics. So why don't you tell us what it is? Yes, I love this argument. I share this with people all the time.

So it's known as the Kalam Cosmological Argument. It's a syllogism, which is a logical argument with two statements called premises and a conclusion. If the premises are true and the logic is sound, then the conclusion must be true.

Excellent. So what's the first premise? Well, the first premise is everything that begins to exist has a cause. This premise is also known as the law of causality or the law of cause and effect.

And it's the result of scientific observation throughout human history. Things don't just pop into existence out of nothing. That's why we're not afraid to cross the street when no cars are coming.

We're not afraid one is just going to pop into the space that we are occupying out of absolute nothing. It's why we don't come home expecting to see a giant rhinoceros hanging out on our bed reading our books because he just popped into existence without a cause while we were away. But without the law of cause and effect, science actually wouldn't be possible because we wouldn't be able to discover truths about the laws of nature or how things work because there wouldn't be any rhyme or reason to nature.

Yeah. Yeah. I think this first premise is important because I sometimes listen to debates where atheists get this confused.

They say, "Oh, well, if everything that exists needs a cause, then what caused God?" And that's not what you're saying. You're saying everything that begins to exist requires a cause. Right.

Exactly. Yeah. If the universe were eternal, it wouldn't need a cause.

It wouldn't need a cause. Exactly. Only effects need causes.

Right. Right. So what's your second premise? The second premise is the universe began to exist.

We already discussed the scientific evidence for a beginning of the universe. So the only way to deny this premise is to deny that scientific evidence that we were just talking about. Okay.

And then what's your conclusion? Well, if everything that begins to exist has a cause, premise one, and the universe began to exist, premise two, then the universe must have a cause. So that's the conclusion. The universe must have a cause.

Fantastic. Yeah. That's a nice, simple three-step argument for a supernatural cause of the beginning of the natural universe.

And I hope that everyone listening either knows this already or you can memorize that and have a lot of fun with it. Let me tell you about what we know of the cause of the universe from this argument, from the things that we've already talked about. Okay.

Since time, space, and matter began to exist simultaneously, which we learned from the E in sure, then the cause must be timeless, spaceless, and immaterial. Right. Because whoever or whatever created time, space, and matter couldn't have been confined to time, space, and matter.

Oh, that makes sense. Yeah. Also, because the cause chose to act rather than leave

things the way they were before the creation, this cause must be personal.

Persons act in time. Like, "I'm going to take the garbage out. I'm going to create the universe." You have to make a decision to do it.

Right. Exactly. Yeah.

Jay Warner Wallace and several other apologists said this was actually a big one for them to realize that the cause must have been personal. Another attribute of the cause we can know is because of what we know of the creation event and the heat it left behind, the cause must also be incredibly powerful. And because of recent discoveries about the fine tuning of the universe needed to create and sustain life as we know it, we know that the cause must also be incredibly intelligent.

Yes, indeed. To choose all of those constants and quantities so that the universe will support life. We should do a show on that.

Yes. All right. So now we have a cause that's not made of matter because it created matter and it exists outside of space and time because it created space and time and it's a personal being and it's incredibly powerful and intelligent.

Yes. So I don't know about you, but this cause is shaping up to sound a lot like God. Yes.

Not every religion though, accepts that the universe has a beginning and the necessity for a supernatural cause that's not every single religion. So just encourage people to make sure you only commit to a worldview, a religion that corresponds to reality, like we've said. Yeah.

And I just want to say that like when I was growing up, half of my family on my mom's side is Muslim and the other half of my family on my dad's side is mostly Hindu and some Catholic. And I had to take a look at all three of these religions and go through them and debate with my mom and debate with my dad and not my dad as much, but more like when our relatives came to visit and just work through this, like what are you claiming and let me compare it to reality. Let me compare it to history.

And this was kind of ongoing. So if I can do it, you know, I think that that everyone should do it. And what's more is I kind of run with a, like I have friends who are in the church and they believe in the church and they think that what goes on in most churches is very effective and so on.

Well, some of them are getting a little concerned, but they're noticing declining attendance and declining engagement. And I think what people need to understand is that I think that Christians have a more authority to speak when they're able to show their work and they don't come off as fundamentalists. Like I remember in that first job I was talking about, we had a guy with a PhD from Northwestern, a master's degree from

University of Illinois or Vanish Champaign who had done his bachelor's at Purdue.

I was the only person on my software engineering team that didn't have a graduate degree at that time. I went back and did it later, but I went out to lunch with about a dozen of them and I explained to them how I arrived at my views by using these methods that we're talking about, you know, comparing the claims to history and science and logic. And they said, I said, I'm really, really sorry, but I'm really conservative and you guys aren't going to like that because this was, this was a pretty liberal, you know, company.

And they said, you're not a fundamentalist. I said, oh, I am. I'm really conservative.

And they said, you can't be a fundamentalist if you've looked at all the alternatives and rejected them for these reasons that you're telling us, you know, this was a company where I used to wheel my chair back up to a whiteboard and show them the calculations about how likely you are to get a functional protein by chance. And these guys had done courses in this and so they were like tracking with me. So basically my point is show your work.

If you're going to have a conversation with people about which religion is correct, you need to have done your work and then show your work. Yeah, I actually had a conversation with a neighbor a couple of years ago who told me that she really wanted to be a Christian and she thought the values were good, but because she was a scientist, she just could not be a Christian because she had studied the science and didn't think that some of the claims that Christians make were in line with science. And so one of these was a big deal for her was she thought that in order to be a Christian, you had to believe that the universe was no more than 10,000 years old.

And I made, I shared this evidence with her that we've just been talking about and every step we went through, she was like, Oh yeah, that's actually true. Yeah, I do know that. And then she, she would go on and on about the scientific evidence.

She knew at least as much about it probably more than I knew about it. And so when I would make a statement, she would get all excited and tell me even more about that bit of evidence. And so then, you know, I shared the, the Kalam cosmological argument with her and she's like, Oh my goodness, it does make sense.

It is compatible with Christianity. Oh my goodness, I can be a scientist and a Christian really, because I really want to be a Christian. And I was just so excited to buy that conversation.

Yeah, that's the other thing about us doing our work in advance to make cuts, you know, about this one can be true. This one's still a live option. Oh no, this one has, you know, a bit the dust.

It's out because of this. When we've gone through that process of watching these debates and learning all the different alternatives and showing our work to someone, we can talk to people about anything. Like people go, I go, what do you do for a living? I'm a software engineer.

Okay. Let me talk to you about DNA and the origin of life. It turns out that everything in the cell is code and now I'm going to show you how it works.

And they like that. Or you had your friend at the observatory. Remember? Yes.

Yes. Yeah. I've had so many great conversations with him.

He, yeah, he, he studies, he's a scientist, he studies cosmology and astronomy all day long, just for fun now that he's retired. But yeah, also worked at a planetarium, worked at a science museum and all of that. And I've shared this, the whole story on previous episodes.

But again, it was another situation where he agreed with, affirmed absolutely all of the evidence that we've shared for the universe having a beginning. He completely, he had studied all that evidence. He knew again, more evidence than I did that the, for why it is only realistic and logical, sensible to agree that the universe had a beginning.

He had just never thought about the implications of the universe having a beginning. He did know, of course he affirmed the law of causality. He said, yeah, of course I believed in that.

But he had, he had in all of his schooling and studies and reading and teaching, it had never occurred to him that, you know, what happens when you put these two together, that the universe had a beginning and everything that begins needs a cause. And when I asked him, you know, when I raised that and said, you know, so then what do you think the cause was? He was stopped in his tracks and said, wow, I mean, I hadn't thought about it. I mean, I guess we'll never know, huh? We'll just never know.

And I didn't, right. But you know, it's interesting though, people will say things like that in the heat of the conversation, not that it was a heated conversation, but while they're kind of, they feel maybe a little bit on the spot, like they have to have the answer right then and there and they don't, they'll say something like that. Well, I guess we'll just never know or something happened or things like that.

But a lot of people will then go home and when they're, you know, trying to sleep at night or nobody's around, whatever, that will come back into their mind and they'll have to reconcile that if they're willing. And this man came back to me a few months later and he said, I've been thinking about what you said. And actually it does seem to me that Christianity has a really great explanation for the evidence.



And then a few months after that, he came back and said that it had become clear to him that Christianity has the best explanation for the scientific evidence. No faith. No, he's not talking about any faith required, any, any like leap of faith, I guess he would, people could say.

Just looking at the scientific evidence, he now believes that Christianity has the best explanation for reality, for the evidence. Excellent. All right.

Let's look in the episode there. We have more truth claims to evaluate in future episodes and so we will be doing that. So if you enjoyed this episode, please consider helping us out by sharing this podcast with your friends, writing us a five star review on Apple or Spotify, subscribing and commenting on YouTube and hitting the like button wherever you listen to the podcast.

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