

# OpenTheo

## God's Undertaker: Has Science and Philosophy Buried God | John Lennox

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### The Veritas Forum

John Lennox, Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University, is an internationally renowned speaker on the interface of science, philosophy and religion. In a forum hosted by the Veritas Forum at the University of Georgia, Yohannes Abate, Susan Dasher and Charles Dasher MD Professor of Physics, interviews Dr. Lennox. • Please like, share, subscribe to, and review this podcast.

### Transcript

Welcome to the Veritas Forum. This is the Veritas Forum Podcast. A place where ideas and beliefs converge.

What I'm really going to be watching is which one has the resources in their worldview to be tolerant, respectful and humble toward the people they disagree with. How do we know whether the lives that we're living are meaningful? If energy, light, gravity and consciousness are in history, don't be surprised if you're going to get an element of this in God. Today we hear from John Lennox, Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University, an internationally renowned speaker on the interface of science, philosophy and religion.

In a forum hosted by the Veritas Forum at the University of Georgia, and moderated by Yohannes Abate, the Susan and Charles Dasher MD Professor of Physics at the University of Georgia. It's my great privilege to introduce Professor Lennox. He is an eminent mathematician specializing in group theory.

He's an emeritus professor of mathematics at the University of Oxford and an emeritus fellow in mathematics and philosophy of science at Green Templeton College, Oxford University. He's also an associate fellow of the state business school of the Oxford University. Aside from mathematics, he's known for his books on the interface between science, philosophy and theology.

This includes the book I just mentioned, "God's Undertaker, a Science Buried God" and

more recently books like 2084, Artificial Intelligence in the Future of Humanity. And another book, "Where is God in a Coronavirus World?" He debated against famous etis, including Richard Dawkins, Peter Singer and the late Christopher Hitchens. So the list goes on and on.

He's a busy person. He does a lot of things. He has also a new movie, which is a sort of a summary of all of the things he's been doing.

But this afternoon, what I'm really excited about is this topic of God, science and philosophy. In particular, the cosmic chemistry, do science and car mix. So, without Dr Lennox, thank you for accepting our invitation virtually all the way from London and welcome.

Thank you very much indeed. Actually, I'm nearer to Oxford than London. And it's a great pleasure to be with you in the Veritas Forum today.

Wonderful, wonderful. Thank you. So let's begin with a little bit of background of Dr Lennox.

So your research at Oxford was on group theory and tell us about your academic book very briefly. And how that is enhanced by your face. And also your path really to become a bold speaker and explainer of the Christian face.

It seems like this cosmic mix between God and science has worked out very well for you. Well, it has indeed. And a little bit to my background because to every person that belongs to biography that helps people understand where they're coming from.

I grew up in a small country Northern Ireland, which was at that time, very divided by sectarian violence. But my parents were unusual. They were Christians, but they were not sectarian.

And for me, they did something immensely important. They gave me space to think. And they encouraged me not only to explore the Christian worldview, which they believed, but also other worldviews.

So I grew up in a home that encouraged hard thinking, open thinking and very rapidly in school as a young person. I got interested first of all in languages. And then in mathematics and science.

And because my parents encouraged me to do a great deal of reading. I came across big questions like, how much can mathematics and science tell us, do they tell us everything. And there are limits to scientific understanding and so on.

And so I developed an interest in what I think is best described as the intellectual defense of Christianity, because I came to believe on the basis of evidence as I

understood it. Christianity was not simply helpful, but it was true. It was a true worldview.

And therefore, right through my life, I've been very interested in entering the worldview discussion, because, after all, most people fall into one of three worldviews. They're either theists like me they believe in God who created and upholds the universe, or the atheists who do not believe there is a God, or maybe they're pantheists who believe that God and the universe are one impersonal entity. And the main polarization in the Academy, as I know it is between theism and atheism.

And I didn't of course know when those early days that one day I would come to debate some of the most famous atheists on the planet. I studied mathematics first in school and then a Cambridge where I did my PhD. Then I moved to the University of Wales.

And I spent three years intermittently in the German speaking world doing research and learned the German language. And that enabled me during the Cold War to do a lot of traveling in behind the Iron Curtain as it was called, because I was very interested in countries that were actually driven by atheistic philosophy, in particular, the German Democratic Republic. And so I was able to study the effects of atheistic teaching on the population in general and on young people in particular.

After the Wall fell, because I had earlier done quite a bit of work translating Russian mathematics. I was able to travel to Russia, and that opened up a whole new world of fascination because of course they had been subject to communism for about 75 years and so I was able to enter into dialogues in the academies of science throughout Russia but mainly in Siberia. And that you can imagine was a fascinating time to be there so all of that is background to my entering into public debate, writing books, and standing up for the intellectual defense of Christianity.

Now your other question was how does mathematics and science relate to this. Well, very easily really, because I see no incompatibility between science and faith in God, or maybe I should put it better this way faith in science and the scientific method and faith in God, because science depends on faith Einstein once said that he couldn't imagine a genuine scientist without that faith, he didn't mean faith in God. What he meant was faith in the fact that we can do science faith in the rational intelligibility of the universe.

And of course that fits so well with Christian belief. After all, the great pioneers of modern science starting with Galileo Kepler Newton coming up through Clark Maxwell and Faraday, all of them were believers in God. And I think to sum up CS Lewis put it brilliantly.

When he said men became scientific because they expected law in nature, and they expected law in nature because they believed in a law giver. So actually, in a sense modern science is the gift of Christian theology to the modern world. So I'm not actually

ashamed of being both a scientist and a Christian for those reasons.

And because the disciplines of science have got this basic commitment to the mathematical intelligibility of the universe. That means my mathematics fits in perfectly with my conviction that this universe is a creation by the intelligent word of God, it is not a chance product. So that gives you a little bit of a survey of where I'm coming from.

Wonderful, you touched on several things that we will unpack as we go along, but I just want to follow up on, you know, on this, you know, debating with atheists. So you mentioned that it kind of came naturally for you but later on, you mentioned in your books and talks that you actually intentionally take this task to debate or to expose yourself to other well-advocated and you say that clarifies your thinking can you say something about that I mean, that's your, yeah, that started in Cambridge, because inevitably when you come from Ireland, people look at you and you say, of course you're a Christian that's Irish genetics. All you Christians believe in all you Irish believe in God, you fight about it.

And I met that challenge frequently at home, but I met at Cambridge very early on when a student said to me, do you believe in God? And they said, sorry, I shouldn't have asked you that question, because you're Irish. And I thought, right, I have now got a unique opportunity, one of the best universities in the world to really be friend, and I mean that, people that do not share my worldview. So I sought some people out, agnostics, atheists, and I'd been doing it ever since, because I wanted to know whether what I believed and was convinced was true actually could stand up to the criticisms of other world views.

And I discovered that the more I exposed my faith in God, and my reasons for it to people from other worldviews the stronger grew my faith in God, the evidence grew and mounted up. I didn't start debating people like Dawkins until relatively recently my first debate with Dawkins was about what 13 or 14 years ago now. I started small I started interacting with students, listening to them, even more than talking to them so that I could learn.

But the debates came later on and they were organized by somebody else, not by me I didn't walk onto the public stage because I wanted to. I was invited to. Wonderful so I think while we are on this point of world views, let's get into it a little bit deeper so in your books, you talk beautifully argue that you know you, you write beautifully on this idea that there is really no incompatibility between facing God and science, but it is desperately one one task to believe that you know there is a serious conflict right and we're statements like science, and is incompatible with God and that sort of thing so can you address the real issue here.

Well, we're on it, you know the fundamental deals and more importantly, where does evidence point. Well, you're right. I'm afraid many atheists to put up an intellectual smokescreen.

And they tell people that science and God are incompatible so we may forget about God. But you see they forget firstly the history of science that that I have mentioned. And secondly, when you investigate their actual evidence for this, you find out that it's very thin indeed.

What I mean by that is this, a lot of it comes down to explanation. What do we mean by explanation. Now, you're a physicist.

So if you are asked to explain why water is boiling, you might well say it's boiling because of heat exchange, a bunsome flame is the heat from it's been conducted through the metal base of a kettle and that's agitizing the molecules, and therefore the water is boiling. I might say, well, it's boiling because I would very much like a cup of tea at the moment. Now, that's a very simple illustration, but it gets the point across that there are different kinds of explanation.

One of those explanations is a scientific one. Another is an explanation in terms of my volition, my agency, my desire. Now, if you compare those two explanations, they're completely different, but they do not conflict.

They're not at war with each other. They complement each other. And what puzzles me is why people cannot see that more clearly.

I find that young children can see it, but many university professors, I'm afraid, can't see it. And they say the scientific explanation is the only possible one, but that is almost never true. And so the way I would formulate the initial point is that science and God, no more conflict as an explanation for the universe.

Then Henry Ford and the law of internal combustion and physics conflict as an explanation for a motor car engine. They complement each other, and we need both levels of explanation. So people like Richard Dawkins and others who whose basic philosophy is what we now call scientism that science is the only way to truth.

That is very rarely the case. And you will know as a physicist that if we ask the question what does science actually explain and what takes the law of gravity. Many people think the law of gravity explains gravity and tells you what it is, it does not even you didn't realize that the law of gravity gives you gives us a wonderful mathematical way of calculating the effects of gravity, but it doesn't tell us what gravity is no one actually knows exactly what it is.

So even at the scientific level explanation is limited, but there's one further point I would add that's even simpler and more powerful. And that is this. It's totally obvious that there's no essential conflict between science and belief in God.

Let's go up to the Nobel Prize level in physics. Now, a few years ago, Higgs in Scotland won the Nobel Prize for physics the Higgs boson. He's an atheist.

And then in the United States, you've got a marvelous man who won the Nobel Prize for physics a few years before that. And he is a Christian. Yes.

What's his first name, William Phillips, William Phillips, Bill Phillips. Now, think of those two people. They don't differ on their physics.

They've both won the Nobel Prize. They're geniuses. But what differentiates between them is their worldview.

And in this whole debate, we would find it much easier to understand where the conflict is if we realize it is not a conflict between science and God. And there are scientists on both sides. So the question we really need to ask is, which worldview does science point towards, if any, does it point more towards theism, as I believe, or does it point more towards atheism.

Like Dawkins believes that's the real question. And that brings me to your last point. And that is matters of evidence.

You see, some of this, as I've just been saying has to do with understanding the nature of science and that gives us evidence. As a mathematician, I am absolutely thrilled with the idea and it's amazing thought that a mathematician thinking in her head up here can come up with an equation that appears to describe what's going on out there. And does that come to be so.

And people like Einstein and Eugene Vigner were amazed by it. So much so that Vigner who also won a Nobel Prize talked about the unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics. And then if it worked.

Well, I think Vigner was only right if you assume atheism, then mathematics is unreasonably effective. But if you assume Christian theism, then it's very reasonably effective, because indeed you'd expect it to work. One of the basic claims that Christianity makes is in the beginning was the word.

And the word was with God and the word was God, all things came to be through him that is the word. In other words, this is a word based universe, and mathematics is a set of very precisely defined words that we use in science. And so those things fit together.

Now, to my mind, that is very powerful evidence of the truth of the idea that this universe is word based. It doesn't arise spontaneously by the laws of nature, and you'd have to ask where they came from, of course. It comes from an intelligent God it's a top down causation that's involved, as well as bottom up.

Wonderful. So to just push this a little bit farther so in your famous debate with Richard Dawkins, if you recall, you brought a concern to him I'm going to quote you from that interview. I'm not the one at Oxford.

I feel sometimes your dichotomy either got your science might put some people off science because you prefer God, before they prefer God and that would be a pity and he, he accused you of smuggling magic, when you feel like it, science has not yet explained the origin of life. We don't understand it yet, but that does not mean we should say God did it, and it's suspiciously fall in the category of the old God of the gaps argument. And that's something that I really wanted to ask you.

I think it's worth exploring. I quote, there may as well be gaps, two kinds of gaps in the book you elaborate this as good gaps but gaps. Can you explain that and give us a few examples so we understand this a little bit better.

Sure. Yes, I agree with Dawkins. I do not believe in a God of the gaps and orders he that is, I can't explain it there for God did it.

But if you take that view, of course, as science advances God gets squeezed out. No, I believe that God is God of the whole show the bits we can understand already. And the bits we don't yet understand.

And what is very interesting. When it comes to pioneers of science like Newton, it was the bits they did understand that convinced them that there was an intelligent God because studies of the what I believe to be the created world we call it nature often reveal evidence of an intelligent mind behind it. That's the fascinating thing.

I mean, for instance, you and I have lived to get to know perhaps the most spectacular result of science ever made that is the double helix structure of DNA. And we've realized that in a chemical sense, this is the longest word that we've ever discovered 3.4 billion chemical letters long, all in the right order functioning like, but in a much more complex way, as a database, a computer program, assembling the proteins and all this kind of thing, having a semiotic dimension. Now, it's a word.

When we see words, the very interesting thing is even a short word, like the word exit above a door, exit four letters, we know immediately that whatever automatic or semi automatic processes have been used to create that sign. And there's intelligence behind it, because it bears the mark of intelligence. Now, if I look at a sign called exit, and I say to you there's an intelligence behind that.

And to me, as Dawkins might, ah, that's an intelligence of the gaps you don't need to postulate an intelligence to explain the word exit. You'd probably tell me not to be silly. Postulating an intelligence behind that word exit makes sense of it, because intelligence so far as we know, is the only source of words that carry meaning.

And so I stand by that and say, look, this isn't intelligence of the gaps. There is a gap. If you assume that there's no intelligence, but we're familiar enough with intelligence to postulate intelligence as something that fits that gap.

So we're not having an intelligence of the gaps and invoking magic. We're preferring an explanation that makes sense over one that doesn't make sense that the sign just came to exist and happens to bear a significance. So that's a simple example of how I would have processed DNA 3.4 billion letters long is an overwhelming evidence in this database that is contained in each of the 10 trillion cells in our bodies.

And there is an intelligence behind the universe. In other words, it fits one of the criteria of truth. Well, there are two basic criteria we use of truth.

One is that it's coherent in itself. Secondly, that it fits with reality. And so when I postulate God to explain that fits with reality.

One of my colleagues here, Oxford's a very famous and eminent philosopher Richard Swinburn. And he says science explains. I postulate God to explain why science explains.

So, I guess the gap here is a rise due to the fact that we now know more about, you know, the genetic code, and that makes the question that's kind of got you. Yes, and not only that you see, it's not simply that an intelligence fits. It's that if you try to explain language like the codons and DNA, assuming atheistic philosophy you get nowhere you can't do it.

So here we have two explanatory schemes, one that works. And the other that rapidly disappears, you will know that there were experiments done in 1953, where two people won the Nobel Prize for passing electrical discharges through what they thought represented an original primeval soup and produce some amino acids, but we're no further forward. It was held as a solution to the origin of life, but they had no idea then of the fact that those amino acids had to be ordered in the careful way that is prescribed by the genetic code with its incredible complexity.

And not simply that it's complex, it's the nature of the complexity, the nature of the complexity means that throughout research on genetics, the language of computing has become the most appropriate. And this is the language of mathematics, it's the language of semiotics, it's the language of information, and we're faced with nowadays, as you know my physicist friends tell me, information is one of the things regarded as a fundamental quantity now that's not very useful to matter. Now I would make a point there saying, if that's true, if information is fundamental and not reducible to matter, then of course, information being immaterial means that materialism, which is the basic characteristic philosophy must be false.

So science itself is demonstrating to us the falsity of materialism, you don't even have to go to religion to do that. So, you know, I have a lot of questions but I want to make sure I covered some of the ones that I wanted to ask you. I'm going to move on, push a little bit on this question of worldviews.



So, so your Irish background is going to come get you now. You get you mentioned this a little bit earlier. People tell you that it's not surprising that you believe in God because your Irish, you know some people, you know, born from the early become atheist or Christians as well Muslims in this and so forth.

So, is it possible to be rid of these biases. How do we, how do we know what we believe is right. And where do we begin.

I have concerned myself with that question for all of my life, because I took seriously this criticism. Look, Irish, you believe in God. If you were brought up somewhere else you believe something else.

So, what was very important for me to say, is it possible for someone to change their worldview. Now, over life I've seen this happen again and again and again. And one of the most important instances of it was the first one at Cambridge I entered into dialogue with a student who was agnostic, didn't share my background.

And after two years discussion came to the conclusion that Christianity was true, and he has lived to prove it. He's a very distinguished mathematician today. And when I began to see that people could change their worldview, I realized that the Christian claim was true.

I mean, after all, when Christianity started, there were all kinds of different worldviews. The same as we have today on offer. And the leading Christian intellectual apostle Paul went to the University of Athens, not Athens, Georgia, by the way where you are, but Athens, Greece.

He confronted the philosophers, and what is very interesting that even in one talk in one afternoon, some of those leading philosophers were persuaded of the truth of Christianity. Now, that has always intrigued me and living now I'm in my, well, I'm 77 now I confess it. I have seen again and again people come to faith in Christ, become Christians from all kinds of worldviews.

So that's one answer to your question. People are not fixed. And I met many people who've been brought up in all kinds of different backgrounds, and they've had this sense of God for a long time in their lives and they've searched and they've searched and eventually.

They have discovered an answer to their question and been convinced of the truth of Christianity. And that leads me to believe, of course, that the reason for that search is that there is a space in our thinking in our hearts and in our minds that can only be filled by God. And God has left evidence, he's left evidence.

We've seen some of it in the universe. We can see it in morality, and so on and so forth. There is evidence on which people can make up their minds and come to conclusions

different to the ones that they were taught, say, by their parents.

Okay, so this, this really brings us to the central question of, you know, the question of truth, right? So, one of your colleagues at Oxford, Sarah Tony Kenny, philosopher, once chair the debate between a Christian and a native, and he made the debaters agree on a couple of things so I'm going to use those to ask you a question. First, do you believe that there is such a thing as objective truth, and that is, it's not just an ideological construct to keep the lower classes down or whatever was modern say, and then say, can he say about logic. That is, we think that if two statements, flatly contradict each other, that can't be both true.

This is your, your honor, your, your like logic, I know that from your talks. So there are all kinds of religions right and claims of religious leaders, but, you know, from Jesus makes this exclusive and explosive claim that he says he's the truth in the way. So, so this brings the, makes the question, why trust him, why trust this claim, you know, to the extent that you know we live all, like the gospel asks us to do like Jesus says live all and follow me.

So what are the compelling reasons for believe, you've asked me about six questions in one there so let's try, let's try as best my old brain could do to separate them. First of all, when I debated Dawkins, one of the things that we did at the press conference was we agreed that we did believe there is such a thing as truth. All people believe there's such a thing as truth.

A friend of mine says, people are usually only postmodern and things they do not regard as important. If you go into a bank, and you want to borrow a hundred thousand dollars to build a house. You imagine saying to the bank, I want to take out a hundred thousand dollars.

And the bank teller says you've only got 50,000 then your account. Oh, that's your truth. It's not mine.

You'll get nowhere. All of life is lived on the basis that truth exists. And all of you watching us right now, you believed that it was true that there'd be a webinar at 1230 Eastern time.

That's where you're there. So the idea that truth is relative is actually logical nonsense. And I can prove that very easily because the statement, all truth is relative.

When somebody says that, they expect you to believe it's an absolute truth. You cannot get away from absolute truth. Now, of course, I did say that often people regard truth as relative in things they don't count important.

And often that's morality as distinct from facts and propositions and so on in science. But we need to get away from this fact that all truth is relative. No science can be done on

that basis.

No life can be lived on that basis. So we, the centrality of truth is there. Now you're quite right.

Jesus made a staggering claim that has fascinated me since I was a boy, because he did not simply say, I say true things, or what I say is true. He did that. He said, I am the truth, which is a spectacular claim.

And of course is absurd, if it is not the case, because he was claiming to be the ultimate truth behind everything that he had created the universe. It was made by him and for him. And the only way to test claims like that is to ask what is the evidence for them.

Now, in science, when we make claims to our colleagues and say, I believe it is true to say x, y and z, they will say, can you test that hypothesis? What is the evidence for it in terms of testing? And very often, I meet people that say to me, well, there goes Christianity, you can't test Christianity. No, of course you can. You see, Jesus not only claimed to be the truth, but he claimed that if we were to repent, that is, be honest about the mess we've made of our own lives and maybe those were others sadly.

And trust him, certain things would happen. One of them is we'd experience real peace. Now that is a meaningful thing.

We would receive forgiveness, which is something we tend to know about, even though we don't admit it. We would also receive a new power to live in a way we haven't been able to do before and fight against the things that hold us down. No, I have had this experience, both in the United States and then virtually every country I've ever been in, where I meet, say, a student.

And I can think of one famous example in Penn State University, where after I gave a veritas for him, I believe it was, the students stood up in the balcony and he said, just look at me. And we all looked, of course, he was beaming and so on. And we listened, all of 2000 of us, a huge crowd.

And he said, you know, six months ago, and he described how miserably been awful life. He felt there was no hope. And then he came into contact with me actually at a previous lecture.

And he said something you said set me off in a search. And eventually, I, now he may have described it in several ways. Eventually I became a Christian, or eventually I became convinced that Christianity was true, or I trusted the Lord or whatever, something like that I was born again.

And he said, look at me now. And it was the most powerful evidence to that whole crowd that Christianity works. And I wouldn't be discussing with you, Professor Abati, for a

moment.

And claiming anything about this, if I hadn't seen in my own life, in the life of my wife and family growing up, and in many other lives. The fact that Christ claims are eventually justified by the fact that they prove themselves to be true in our living experience. So that for me, Christianity has an objective and a subjective side, which is as it should be.

There is evidence from science, from history, from literature. And then there's evidence from experience, from the experience of others, and from my own experience. And all that adds up to cumulative conviction that Jesus Christ is exactly who he claimed to be, the Son of God.

And if we trust him, we can receive life in his name, which is what we were designed for. Wonderful, beautiful. So, it seems from this discussion, this logic correct me.

If God exists, and naturalism is false, and God reveals himself in Jesus, then the kingdom of God is at hand. And this is a great news, isn't it? It is, it's absolutely terrific news. And that's why I'm sitting here talking to you, because this really thrills me.

You know, people understand when you get excited at the ballgame. But this is the biggest news that ever hit the world, and it makes sense. It's big enough to give us a framework to live in.

You know, I meet many people, particularly intellectual people in universities. And they live in a tiny world, their own research, it's important, it's interesting. But they live in a tiny world that is limited by their physical death.

And I inhabit a world where death is not the end, because at the heart of Christianity is the fact that Jesus rose from the death. And that changes everything for me. Absolutely, this actually naturally brings us to AI, of course, subject to really tackle on your recent book, 2084.

The artificial intelligence and the future of humanity. And how should we think about the future? This is a whole, you know, interview by itself, but maybe you can't give us the key things there, because the claims made these days by those you caught on the book is just huge, right? And very contradictory to the Christian one would do that. We can't face.

And in the book, you know, another book also the against the flow that reminds me of, you know, what would be the role of Christians going forward? The message will help me. Let me take one of those questions. I've given many zoom interviews on my book on AI, and you can see some of them at my website, [JohnLennox.org](http://JohnLennox.org). But just very briefly, there are two kinds of AI.

There's narrow AI, which is the stuff that works, which is a powerful computer with a large database. And an algorithm that recognizes patterns. For instance, you take a million x-rays of people's lungs with COVID.

You have them analyzed by experts, radiographers and labeled. And then you get some problem with your breathing. And you have an x-ray and it's compared with a million and the machine will spit out a diagnosis, which is usually more accurate than you'll get in your local hospital.

That's narrow AI, and it's doing some wonderful work in medicine. Although, of course, it can be used for purposes that aren't so good. Face recognition can be used to invade privacy and that raises all kinds of things.

But the AI that people love to think about is the much more speculative side of artificial general intelligence, which is the notion that of enhancing existing human intelligence to make a super intelligence, or else building one from scratch and basing it on silicon rather than on organic material. And that's where you get books like the book *Homodaeus* by Yuval Noah Harari, who is not a scientist but a historian. But his book is fascinating because it advances what is called the transhumanist agenda.

And very briefly, he thinks that physical death is simply now only a technical problem that will be solved very soon by medical means, so that you allow you can die, you won't have to. And therefore, he concentrates on this agenda for the 21st century, that is to enhance human happiness by moving us beyond the human stage to the transhuman stage, by biogenetic engineering, cyborg, implants, all that kind of stuff, so that we become super intelligences. Now, a lot of it is sheer hype, although there are some distinctly scientists that take it seriously.

What I want to say about it is simply this, and this is a very rapid conclusion to the discussion, but what I want to say about it and do in my book is this. People take these futuristic scenarios of the creation of a super intelligence very seriously, indeed, and there are all kinds of various scenarios. But when I hear those two things, one, we're going to solve the problem of physical death, I want to shout the good news, and I'll do it now, that that problem has already been solved.

20 centuries ago, Jesus, the son of God, rose from the dead. And not only that, he promises that all of us who trust him will one day be raised from the dead, and to use the contemporary transhumanist wording, we will be uploaded into a realm that's even more real than the one we live in today, will be uploaded into where God is, so to speak in heaven. Now, the very interesting thing there, to me, is this, that the transhumanist agenda, this AGI, has very little evidence to support it.

The biblical view that we can know forgiveness, we can know new life, and we can have assurance, certain hope that goes beyond death, COVID-19, and all the rest of it, is

based on firm evidence. And if you're interested in the transhumanist agenda, why not be interested in the biblical agenda, which is far more credibility. That, in a very short space, is what I want to say.

In other words, I'm saying that the Christian good news is directly related to the longing of human beings for some kind of immortality. It grants that, but it doesn't try to do it by technology, because technology can never do it, because you cannot build an immortal future without dealing with a problem of human failure and sin. And that's why the 20th century has been the bloodiest century in history.

They've tried to build new men as the Soviets called them. Eugenetic engineering, all that kind of stuff, and it's ended in a bloodbath. Why? Because it hasn't dealt with a basic problem.

And Christianity doesn't compete with any other worldview here. It's unique in showing us a God who suffered in Christ on the cross. I haven't time to explain that.

But there's plenty of explanation around the place and who rose from the dead. And so I am prepared and have done for the past 70 years, almost in my case, put my trust in him. And I have proved that he has never let me down.

And not only that has filled in the answers and given me a life that's absolutely full of meaning and expectation for the future. Now, there are several questions that came up with Dr. Lennox. So let's go through them as much as we can.

First question, this is from the audience. What would your answer be to a scientist who believes that the perfection of God means he acts through the laws of nature only. No miracles are allowed.

Well, I think that's a confusion of ideas because what is behind that question is the statement by the philosopher David Hume that miracles violate the laws of nature. But they don't. And see us Lewis showed that very easily Hume was wrong, in fact, and his greatest interpreter philosopher from from Reading.

Anthony flew admitted to me that he had been wrong about him. You see, let me put it very simply. If I'm staying in a hotel tonight, and I put a hundred dollars in the drawer and I put a hundred dollars tomorrow night, then I've got two hundred dollars by the laws of arithmetic.

If I wake up on the third morning and there's only 50 dollars there. What do I say? Do I say the laws of arithmetic have been broken or the laws of the United States have been broken. But how do I know that because the laws of arithmetic have not been broken.

You see, the problem is many atheists and this isn't a result of science. It's a philosophical pre belief. Think that the universe is a closed system, of course, in effect.

That's what I thought about the draw in my hotel room. And if that was true, then no thief could put their hand in and steal a hundred and fifty dollars, but it wasn't. And nor is this universe a closed system of cause and effect.

God who created it, created it to run on certain laws that we can recognize. And the irony of your question is simply this, that if we didn't know the laws, we wouldn't recognize America's laws. We wouldn't recognize America if we saw one because in order to recognize something special that God has done, it's not breaking laws of nature.

It's God injecting something new into the system which the laws take over. So I simply reject the premises and the assumptions. And of course, God works through nature, but the laws stem from him because the laws are simply our descriptions of what normally happens.

If the law of gravity will tell me if I drop a stone, it will fall to the ground. That doesn't stop you catching it halfway down. Okay, here is another question.

Can such a tea stick approach ever give account of the Christian God? What has primacy, faith or knowledge, evidential apologetics or presuppositional apologetics. I'm not sure I understand the question. Maybe you do.

Nor do I. I think the problem is that there are two things in all discourse. There are presuppositions. You can't do science without making certain presuppositions.

And then you make hypotheses and you test them and you ask for evidence. So it's a mixture of both presuppositions and evidence. Okay, this one is more straightforward.

And I probably know the answer that you would say, but let me check. In engaging philosophy of science issues, what Christian philosophers of science do you find most helpful in your work of integrating faith and science? Well, there are several very famous ones. Alvin Plantinga is perhaps the most famous.

There's Richard Swinburne, there's William Lane Craig, there's Norman Geisler, there's all sorts of them. But I find that when I'm asked that question, I say to people, look, you'll help yourself a great deal if you try to find your own. I say to folks, look, if you're reading a book and you enjoy it, look at the footnotes and see what that person is read and that will set you on a wonderful journey in life.

And you find the people that help you most. Okay. JP Moreland was another one I mentioned.

He's very helpful. Okay, very good. Why do we, why do we believe the God of the Bible and Jesus, his incarnation is the correct God.

Why not the God of another face? Well, the only way to answer questions like that is on

the basis of evidence. And you see, let me take an example, the three great monotheistic faiths and I have friends and each of them. Judaism Christianity and Islam.

There are certain factual claims. My Jewish friends believe that Jesus died and didn't rise. My Muslim friends believe he didn't die.

I believe he both died and rose. Those three things cannot be simultaneously true. And I find that my friends and each of those three religions will agree with me on that.

So we have to ask ourselves what is the evidence and rely on our research into it to make up our own mind. That's the first thing. The second thing is there is a difference, a very profound difference between religions.

And it's not so much a moral difference. I would like to emphasize this when I'm talking to people who I greatly respect and other religious traditions because I find it to be the case that often we share basic moral principles in common. And that is hugely important because when we discuss the delicate relationships between religions, we need to be careful that we're not looking down on people and implicitly criticizing the morally certainly not every religion and philosophy, whether it believes in God, gods or no gods has the golden rule do unto others as you would be done by which is a very good basis for society.

Where the differences occur is not so much on the moral level. It's on the level of answering the question on what can I base a relationship with God. That's a key question.

And you see, very often religion as such, and I ask people what they believe they tell me well, it's a bit like a university course. You get started, you have an induction ceremony and then you study and you're helped by professors, all this kind of thing, but in the end you face an exam. And no matter how good the professors are, they cannot guarantee you're going to get a degree.

Why? Because it depends on your merit. Now many people have the impression that religions are like that, indeed many have the impression that Christianity is like that. You have to merit the acceptance of God.

Now what is utterly unique about Christianity is that that is not the case that Christ, now let me put this very carefully. He doesn't compete with any other religion. Why? Because he offers us something that none of them actually offer us.

He offers us forgiveness and acceptance, not at the end of the journey at some judgment day. But he offers that forgiveness and acceptance at the beginning, at the moment we trust him, not because of our merit, but because of what he has done. And that's where you get this unique element, the fact that Christ died to do something on the basis of which God could accept us.



Now this is profound stuff and requires a lot of unpacking, but you see, I'm very happy to share that because it's not competing with anything else on offer. And we've got to ask the question, does it make more sense to base a relationship on acceptance that's unconditional or one that's merited? Because in ordinary life, if you, for example, at least in my country, if I said to a girl, look, I'd like to marry you and here's a cookbook. And if you keep the laws in this cookbook for 40 years, say, I will accept you, she'd throw the book at me.

She would not accept a relationship based on uncertainty and based on her fulfilling a lot of requirements for many years. But that's what many people think of God. They wouldn't insult their fellow human beings by doing that.

And that's why here again, it makes huge sense to me to realize, look, I can't even keep my own standards, let alone God's standards. But here's this wonderful thing that Christ claims to have done something on the cross. He claims to have taken the burden of my sin upon him.

And he rose from the dead to prove that this is acceptable to God and therefore, instead of having to earn his forgiveness, he's saying, look, you can have it. All you need to do is repent and receive it. That makes sense to me.

But in the end, we've got to decide on the evidence. And of course, my experience has been that is an utterly transformative and unique idea. Wonderful.

So there are a number of questions related to the pandemic. But before that, let me just ask you one more. And then I would wrap up with the last question.

Given the object, given the object failure of logical positivism, why do we still have positivist epistemology? That's materialism. Championed among 80s scientists today. Well, you need to ask them.

I never understood logical positivism because it refutes itself. And most serious philosophers have given it up a long time ago. It's now an intellectual back quarter, I'm afraid.

I don't want to upset anybody. But to explain why people hold on to these things is very difficult. It's not simply logical positivism.

It's atheism itself, materialism. When science is telling us absolutely that there's an immaterial dimension to physics, why do people keep being materialist? And I fear that part of the answer is not the business of intellectual and logical argument. It's because of the way they want the universe to be.

And some people have been very honest and said, I don't want there to be a God. Well, that is at least honest. There's no evidence that there is no God.

They don't want there to be a God. Why? Because God to them is going to cramp their style, which is one of the greatest lies that have ever been spread around the world. The God that created human beings in the universe is not boring and he's not going to cramp anybody's style unless that style is utterly perverse.

So it seems to me that what this question amounts to is there are reasons other than intellectual for rejecting God, which often masquerade as intellectual, but they're to do with the will and morality. Huxley, one of the Huxleys once said, oh, the relief he experienced when he discovered there was no God because it meant he could behave as he liked. So that's a moral reason.

And of course, I can't second guess anybody's reason. Everybody has to answer this for themselves, but it's very important to realize that when Christ appears on the scene, it's not merely a question of intellectual and rational argument, although that's hugely important. It's also moral conviction.

And the question whether I'm willing to follow what my head tells me to do. It's hard and head together. Does your view of the problem of evil in another difficult question fall into the skeptical tears come that we cannot expect to know what good reasons God would have for allowing evil.

This is a question. This is a huge question. And, you know, it's a seriously important question.

It's the hardest question that any of us have to face whether we're a Christian or not. And I would strongly recommend that people who want to see what I have to say about it. I have to Google my name and New Zealand, because I arrived there three days after the earthquake hit in 2011.

And I had to face this question again and again on television and so on and so forth. And I can say about it briefly and very and adequately now, as we come to a conclusion is that atheism claims to have solved it by saying, well, it's just the way the universe is. Many of my atheist friends think they've removed the problem.

Well, maybe they have in their own mind, but they haven't removed the suffering. And they could well have made it worse because they've removed all hope as well. I face the problem because I still do believe in God.

And the reason I believe in God is that Christianity reveals uniquely a God to me who has himself suffered. Jesus claimed to be God incarnate. And there he is on a cross.

And if his claim is true, then we can ask the question. Why is God on a cross? And it shows at least, as I've said to many people, that God has not remained distant from the problem of human suffering, but has become part of it. Now, I have no simplistic answers to this that would banish the suffering.

It's part and parcel of the way the universe is. There may well be reasons for that that are complex and have to do with the way sin and evil were introduced into the world. But since that is so, the thing that transforms everything for me, and it's why I believe there is good news, is that the resurrection of Jesus casts a completely different light on everything.

I am locked down now. If I get COVID and it kills me, well, I know where I'm going. I have real hope for the future.

And I mean that seriously as someone who came within a few seconds of death some years ago because of heart problems. I know what it is to have said goodbye to my wife. And at that moment, I had complete peace because of the certain day I have in my heart.

So what Christianity offers is not some simplistic answer that acts like a kind of magic wand that dissipates the suffering. But it's far deeper than that. It offers us a relationship with God that transcends suffering and death and can take us through it safely to the other side.

And I've put some of this in my little book which for many of you will be free on the internet. And that is where is God in a coronavirus world. But I'll have to leave it there because that's a huge important question.

Yes, I think that's a very good place to end. And as I said, a lot of the things that were talked about mentioned are all on the chat window. So, really has been doing a great job posting all the information there.

So maybe that's a good place for you to go. Thank you again Dr Lennox for your time and wonderful really elaboration of some of the hard questions and thank you also everyone for joining us the last hour. Well, it's my pleasure absolutely and I'd just like to say folks who are watching.

Thank you for watching. And I firmly believe that if you follow this up and think it through, you'll find an answer because Jesus said he that seeks will find. If you like this and you want to hear more, like share review and subscribe to this podcast.

And from all of us here at the Veritas Forum. Thank you.