

Has Science Buried God?

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[0 : 00] The scripture reading comes from Acts 17, starting at verse 22. Please follow along on the screen or in your Bible. So Paul, standing in the midst of Areopagus, said, Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.

For as I pass along and observe the objects of your worship, I find also an altar with an inscription, To the unknown God.

What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by men, nor is he served by human hands as though he needs anything.

Since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything, and he made from one man every nation of mankind, to live on all the places of the earth, having determined the longest period and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God and perhaps feel their ways towards him and find him.

Yet he is actually not far from each one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said.

[1 : 39] For we are indeed his offspring. Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by art and imagination of man.

The times of ignorance got overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed the day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the death.

Now when they heard of the resurrection of the death, some mocked, but others said, We will hear you again about this.

Amen. Great. Thank you so much. We're going to now hear from a special guest speaker. It's really exciting for us at Watermark to have Andrew Loke joining us.

Andrew is a Singaporean. As you will tell from his accent, and his wife and family also still live in Singapore at present. He studied and practiced medicine as a doctor, a medical doctor for seven years, before going to do his PhD at King's College in London in religion and philosophy.

[3 : 11] He is now the associate professor in the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Baptist U. And so I'm going to pray for him, and then we're going to hand over to him to hear from him in just a second.

So let me pray for us. Father, thank you that you are the great God, the great creator of everything. And Lord, even as we come and hear about science and God, and just the wrestle that many people have with this, I pray that you would speak through Andrew.

I pray that our hearts would be open to you. Lord, I pray that we would have sensitive ears to hear what you want to say to us. And I pray for him that you would use his words in mighty ways.

In Jesus' name. Amen. So over to Andrew. All right. Good morning, Watermark Church. It's a delight to be here to join you and to speak on this topic, Christianity and Science.

Are they compatible? Now, this is a huge topic, which I usually spend about 40 hours teaching at my university. But this morning, I was only given 30 minutes.

[4 : 25] So I can only give a very brief summary of the most important points. But if you want to find out more information, you can check out the books which I will mention along the way. Now, is this topic important?

Now, we all know that science is important. But we know that it can be used for harmful ends.

Science can be used for good things, but it can be used for bad things. Now, of course, now we know that we are all wrestling with this coronavirus, which has killed so many people around the world.

But nowadays, scientists can actually invent viruses, which are even more deadlier and more infectious than the coronavirus.

So we already have the technology to destroy ourselves. And in addition to the threat of synthetic biology, we also have the threat of nuclear weapons. We can easily wipe ourselves out.

So science can be very dangerous. The problem is that science cannot provide the moral code to govern its use. So science can tell us what will probably happen if we do certain things.

[5 : 30] But science cannot tell us what we should or what we should not do. So let me just give an example. So science can tell us that we will probably die if we jump down from 10 stories.

But science cannot tell us whether we ought to jump or we ought not to jump. So science cannot tell us what is right and wrong. And therefore, without moral guidance, we will end up destroying ourselves.

And the problem with humankind is that we wrestle with this issue of human selfishness, that we can use science for our own selfish ends and end up destroying others.

And that is why we need redemption. But science itself is unable to offer redemption. Now, Professor Alastair McGrath is a scientist at Oxford University, and he's also a theologian, a Christian.

And he's the director of the UNRAMC Center for Science and Religion at Oxford, and he was my PhD supervisor. Now, he says that science is not able to answer questions such as what is the meaning of life, what is good, and evil.

[6 : 33] Now, religion can provide answers to these questions. And therefore, science and religion, if we have these two together, we can have a richer view of reality and of life. Now, many people today think that science and religion are in conflict with each other.

However, when we look at the history of science, we realize that many of the greatest scientists are, in fact, Bible believers. So, people like Johannes Kepler, who is the father of modern astronomy, Blaise Pascal, the father of modern hydrostatics, Robert Boyle, Isaac Newton.

I'm sure if you study science, you will have heard of these names, right? These are the who's who, right, in the history of science. And these people, they are great scientists, and they were also devout Christians.

And even today, we still have many intelligent scientists who are Christians, Bible believers. People like Francis Collins, who was the director of the Human Genome Project, where they charted the human genome back in 2003.

And he's now the director of NIH, the National Institute of Health. You see him in the news very often. They are at the forefront of trying to come up with a vaccine for the coronavirus.

[7 : 45] And he's a very devout Christian. And there is also Cambridge physicist John Polkinghorne and Harvard astronomer Owen Gingerich. And there are many, many others, right? So, you might wonder, why do these great scientists believe that there's a God, right?

Now, you might think that, well, I cannot see God, right? So, how do I, you know, so why should I believe that he exists? And why would these intelligent scientists believe that God exists?

Now, look at this picture. Do you see anyone there? Well, there seems to be no person there, no human being there. But you can look at the words, right? I was here, right? So, we look at the words written on the beach, right?

You know that this, could this have come by chance? Or could this have come about naturally? No way, right? Natural laws or chance wouldn't give rise to these words, right?

So, there must have been someone who wrote this, right? There must have been an intelligence who wrote down something that is intelligible, right? This sequence of letters which contain information.

[8 : 49] So, this could have just come about by chance. This must have been written by someone. So, even though you didn't see anyone there, but you can infer, right? That somebody exists, right? And that somebody must be someone intelligent enough, right?

To write this. Now, likewise, when we look at the laws of nature itself, right? We see plenty of evidence that these laws of nature are created by an intelligent creator.

Why? Because there's laws of information in the laws itself. The laws of nature can be described using mathematical equations, right? So, in high school, I'm sure you have studied this, right?

The law of gravitation, right? Which governs how the moon, for example, rotates around the earth, right? And the earth rotates around the sun. And this equation, right?

F, the force, right? The force of the gravitation between the moon and the earth is calculated by multiplying g , the gravitational constant, with the masses of the moon and the earth, and divided by r squared, right?

[9 : 54] The distance between their centers, right? So, where did this equation come from, right? Now, of course, we know that this equation was, but people associate this equation with Isaac Newton, right?

Isaac Newton was one of the greatest scientists in the history of science. And the modern world, which we live in right now, is in a large part credited to him, right?

Because of the laws that he discovered, right? The laws that he formulated, right? The laws of motion, the laws of gravity. The scientists are able to launch rockets, right?

Engineers design buildings, and inventors create motor cars, right? So, when scientists do this, they all use Newton's laws, right?

So, we call this Newton's laws. And so, people would say, we should thank Newton, right, for this, right? However, Newton did not actually create these laws, right?

[10 : 57] Newton only discovered these laws, right? He was not the one who is responsible for putting these laws there, right? He only discovered them. Even before Newton discovered these laws, these laws were already there, right?

So, we need to ask, right? So, who or what put these laws there? Who is responsible for these laws? So, you say, well, we should thank Newton. Newton will say, well, don't thank me. Actually, you should thank God, right?

Because these laws came from God, right? Newton himself said that this most beautiful system of the sun, the planets, and the comets, he used the word system, right?

So, we look at the solar system, for example, right? The planets move around the sun, right? Years, years, and for thousands of years, right? Centuries, after centuries, thousands of years, and even millions of years, right?

According to scientists, it's probably billions of years, in fact, right? So, you know, they rotate in such an orderly manner, right? Now, this system could not have just came about by chance, right?

[11 : 58] The law of gravitation, right, that governs all these motions, you know, could not have just came about by chance. This most beautiful system and the laws must have came from an intelligent creator, right?

That he was the one who put these laws there and set up, and used the laws of nature, right? To create this amazing system, which we see, and which scientists discovered.

And scientists have discovered many, many, many other laws of nature, right? So, it's not just the law of gravitation, right? I mean, that is pretty amazing, right? But in addition to that, right, I mean, if you study science, especially if you study physics, right, you will know that there are plenty of equations, right?

One of the most famous of them, E equals mc squared, right? The energy equals mass times the speed of light squared, right? Now, again, why is it E equals mc squared, right?

Why not E equals mc cubed? Who or what decided that it's E equals mc squared, right? Well, people associate this equation with Einstein, right? But again, Einstein did not create this equation.

[13 : 02] He only discovered it, right? So, who or what put it there, right? So, when we look at all these amazing equations, right? These equations are like a kind of software of the universe, right?

They're a kind of program of the universe. So, once you understand these equations, right, you know how the universe works, right? So, we need to ask where did this software come from, right?

Now, obviously, a software couldn't have came about without a software engineer, right? Plain chance wouldn't give you the software. You need to have intelligence to create this software.

So, the existence of this law of nature and this equation indicates that there is an intelligent creator of the universe. And this is the evidence for the existence of God.

Now, in the words of the well-known scientist, John Polkinghorne, I mentioned that he's a quantum physicist at Cambridge University. He says, scientists feel a genuine sense of wonder, right?

[13 : 59] So, if you are into science, right, you have this sense of wonder, right? You discover how amazing our universe is. Wow, right? And scientists feel this genuine sense of wonder at the rational beauty that is revealed in the scientific inquiry.

Now, science itself can offer no explanation for why the universe should be like this, right? Science can only discover that our universe is like this, right? Science can discover E equal MC squared,

right?

But science cannot answer the question, why is it $E = MC^2$? Why is it like this, right? But the fact of deep and satisfying cosmic intelligibility, this intelligibility does not seem to be something that should be treated as just a happy accident, right, he said.

It's just like when you see the words, I was here, right? You know that this couldn't have just come about as a happy accident. There must be somebody who wrote this, who designed this, right? Likewise, when you look at these equations, you know that there must be an intelligent creator who created and designed these laws, right? And that's why John Polkinghorne goes on to say that science surveys a world whose order makes it appear sought through with the science of a mind, of intelligence.

[15:10] And the religious believer can affirm that this is so because it is indeed the mind of God that is revealed in the works of creation, right? It's like what the Bible says in Romans chapter 1 verse 20, right?

For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities and divine attributes have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse, right? So even though we cannot see God, but we can see what he has made, right?

And from what he has made from the universe itself, we can infer, we can know that God exists. So we have very good evidence for thinking that God exists.

And if you want to find out more, you can check out my books. I have written a book called God and Ultimate Origins, which you can find in your libraries. And this book is published by Springer Nature. It's one of the leading academic press, one of the world's leading academic press. And in this book, I presented the evidence and the arguments to show that our universe must have come up from a first cause, a creator who freely brought about the beginning of time, the beginning of the universe, and who designed the universe, right?

[16:20] In such a way that we can see the order that's around us, right? And I've written some materials in Chinese as well, so if you read Chinese, you can check this out too.

Now, I really presented the evidence for the existence of a creator of the universe, right? And by the way, a creator is what... So when Christians refer to God, right, what we are referring to is the creator of the universe, right?

But some of you may ask, so why think that this creator is a Christian God, right? Why not the God of Islam, for example, right? I mean, Muslims also believe that there is a God who created the universe.

So why is it the Christian God? Well, when we look at those great scientists whom I mentioned earlier, you'll find that many of them have actually looked into the historical evidence and concluded that Jesus rose from the dead, right?

So the resurrection of Jesus is the reason why they choose to believe in a Christian God. Now, the resurrection of Jesus is highly significant.

[17:28] Why? Because it is the central claim of Christianity. In the book of Acts in the Bible, it says that, for God has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed.

He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead, by raising Jesus from the dead. So the resurrection of Jesus is a miracle which is supposed to be the proof, the evidence that God has revealed himself in history through Jesus, to let us know that there will be a day of judgment for everyone.

And this is a highly significant miracle because it concerns the overcoming of one of humanity's greatest problem. Now, we know that one of our greatest problems is that we are all going to die one day, right?

And there's no way that we can reverse this, right? No matter how science is developed, we will all still die one day. But the resurrection of Jesus shows that death can be overcome, right?

And the God who created the universe can overcome death, right? And so this is a highly significant event. And the context is very significant as well.

[18:40] Because Jesus is no ordinary human being, right? He, well, a lot of people know of him as a great teacher, but he also claimed to be divine. He claimed to be God.

And his resurrection is supposed to be a confirmation of his claim, right? So if Jesus truly rose from the dead, this confirms that Christianity is true.

But if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Christianity is false. And therefore, the resurrection of Jesus is highly significant if it did happen in history. And what you might be astonished to find is that the historicity of this event is still being defended today in peer-reviewed journals, books published by the world-leading academic press, such as Cambridge, University of Harris, Oxford, University of Harris, Blackwell, Rutledge, right?

So these are the top academic publishers in the world. Now, you will not find Cambridge or Oxford publishing books that say that, well, there's historical evidence to show that Hercules exists or that Hercules killed the nine-headed monster.

Now, of course, we know that those are legends, right? There's no historical evidence whatsoever for those claims. However, you will find Cambridge, Oxford, Rutledge, Blackwell published books that present the historical evidence to show that Jesus rose from the dead.

[20 : 03] So this is not something that we can just dismiss as a legend. We need to look into the evidence and to consider this seriously. Because if this is really true, then Christianity is true. And there's huge implication for all of humanity.

Now, some of you may find this incredible to believe, right? I find it very hard. And some of you may say, well, I find it very hard to believe. Why? Because you might say, well, I believe in science, and so I don't believe in miracles.

Why? Because isn't miracles supposed to be a violation of science? Isn't miracles supposed to be a violation of laws of nature, which scientists study?

Why? Now, actually, this objection to miracles is actually based on a misunderstanding. Why?

Because, first of all, we need to ask, is it really true that miracles violate the laws of nature?

Now, we know that. Okay, so let me illustrate. Now, if I let go of this, it will drop, right? Why?

Because of the laws of nature, right? Because of the laws of gravity. Now, what if I hold on to this, right?

[21 : 07] So it doesn't drop, right? Am I violating the laws of nature? Now, of course not, because the law is still there, right? The law of gravitation is still there. But the reason why this does not drop is because there is something causing this not to drop, right?

My hand exists a force that prevents this from dropping. Now, suppose that God exists, right? So if God hold on to this, right? If God hold on to this, this will be a miracle, right?

But will this be a violation of the laws of nature? Now, again, not, right? Because the law is still there, right? The law of gravitation is still there, right? But it's just that there is a cause, something causing this not to drop. Again, right?

So miracles, if you understand this correctly, you understand that actually miracles is not a violation of laws of nature. Rather, a miracle is supposed to be an event which will not have been produced by the natural causes operative at a certain time and place.

So what this means is that a miracle is supposed to be an event that is caused by a cause that is outside of nature, right? Outside of the natural system. So, therefore, unless we assume that causes other than natural causes do not exist, now if you assume that causes outside the natural causes do not exist, then you are begging the question, right?

[22 : 16] Against the existence of God, right? Otherwise, miracles are possible, right? So if you are open to the possibility that God might exist, then you should agree that miracles are possible.

And moreover, I have already presented the evidence which shows that God indeed exists, right? I mean, we need to ask the question, where did the natural laws come from in the first place, right?

And I already explained that the natural laws must have come from a lawgiver, right?

God the creator. And so, we have good reasons to believe that God exists and that he can intervene, right? In the natural order, right? To bring about miracles.

So, if God can create the natural laws, and he did, right? Why can't he resurrect the dead, right?

Now, which is more difficult? Is it more difficult to create the universe, or is it more difficult to resurrect someone, right?

Now, obviously, right, if you think logically, it is more difficult to create the universe, right? The entire universe with all the laws of nature. And since God can do that, surely he will be able to resurrect the dead.

[23 : 24] Now, that will be child's play for him. And therefore, we have good reasons for believing that miracles are possible, right? But did it really happen, right? Well, we need to consider the evidence.

And if you are really scientifically minded, a scientifically minded person should be open-minded, right? To consider the evidence, rather than just dismissing this, right? Say, I don't believe this. Well, no. If you are truly a scientist, or at least a scientifically minded person, you should be willing to consider the evidence, right? And when scientists and historians look at the evidence, they do realize that, in fact, there is very good evidence to show that Jesus truly resurrected from the dead. In fact, historians are widely agreed on the following facts about Jesus, that he actually existed, right? That Jesus was not a legendary figure, unlike Hercules.

Jesus was a truly historical person, and he was crucified by the Romans in around the year AD 30, right? This is a historical fact that is testified by multiple independent historical sources.

[24 : 27] And moreover, very soon after he was crucified, a number of people had experiences that they believed were the appearances of the risen Jesus, right?

So, you know, a number of people saw him alive after he was crucified. And the body of Jesus was missing, right? The body was no longer there, right?

So, these three historical facts are widely agreed upon by historians, because without these historical facts, you cannot explain how did Christianity began, right?

Now, I have written an article about the historical evidence for Jesus' resurrection, which is published by Oxford University Press. And in this article, I demonstrated that the historical evidence indicates that there were people in the first century who claimed that they had seen Jesus alive after his crucifixion.

And these people truly saw something, right? And what they saw was not caused by something inside their mind, right? It was not a hallucination. Why? Because there were large groups of people who actually saw this together, right?

[25 : 35] And so, it was caused by something outside their mind. There's a real person whom they saw. And this real person, this person was not anyone else. It was Jesus himself. And it was the same Jesus who was crucified, died on the cross, and was seen alive again.

And therefore, this proves that Jesus truly resurrected. Now, if you want to find out more, you can check out my book, right? Which, as I said earlier on, I don't have time to explain all this in detail, but you can check out a book of mine, which is recently published, just published this year, in fact, right?

By Routledge, another world-leading academic publisher. And this book is actually open access, so you can actually read this for free, right? You can download it for free at academia.edu and also on Amazon Kindle, right?

And so, in this book, I explain in detail the historical evidence which shows that Jesus truly resurrected from the dead. And because Jesus resurrected, we have good reasons for believing that the God who created the universe is the God of Christianity.

He is the one who has revealed himself in history by raising Jesus from the dead and thus accomplishing salvation for all of us. So, in conclusion, science and Christianity are compatible.

[26 : 52] There's no real conflict between them, right? If you truly understand science, if you truly understand the Bible to Christianity, you will see that they are, in fact, compatible. In fact, when you look at history, you realize that many intelligent scientists throughout history are believers.

And the reason is because the cosmic intelligibility of the laws of nature is evidence that such a creator exists.

And the historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus is the proof that this creator has intervened in history to provide redemption for humankind.

Now, God has provided redemption for us because the fundamental problem of humankind is that we have become selfish and self-centered.

And this is what the Bible calls sin. And sin is like a disease. In fact, it is more deadly than COVID-19. Right? Sin can destroy our lives.

[27 : 52] Sin can destroy our family and the whole human civilization. Sin can destroy our human civilization.

Sin can destroy our sins. He was beaten. He was bruised. He was crushed for all iniquities. The punishment that we deserve was borne by Him.

He borne the punishment we deserve so that we don't have to be punished by God. He borne the punishment that we deserve so that our sins can be freely forgiven. He died so that we can be forgiven.

And His blood washes away our sin. So because of the salvation which is accomplished by Jesus, we can be reconciled with God. And we can know this God and experience Him in our lives. Right? And this is the ultimate application. Right? And the ultimate experiment which we can do. Right? So today we have been talking about science.

[29 : 14] Now, what do scientists do? Scientists do experiments. Right? So you can do an experiment as well in the form of a prayer. Right? So prayer is talking to God.

Right? And God is there. And He knows your heart. And He's not concerned about the exact words you say as with the attitude of your heart. Right? So the following is a suggested prayer.

Now, I choose this prayer because this is the prayer that I prayed when I was 16 years old. Right? At the time, I was looking for the meaning of life. Right? I was feeling very empty. And I was seeking for the meaning of life.

And somebody shared the four spiritual laws with me. And the four spiritual laws contained this prayer. Right? So I decided to open my heart to Jesus and invite Him into my life. Right? So after I prayed this prayer, I experienced God in my life.

Right? I experienced His presence in my life. His guidance for my life. And His plan and purposes for my life. And you can experience this too. Right? Because this God is real.

[30 : 14] Right? So you can experience Him in your life as well. Right? So if you would like to experience God in your life. Right? You can open your heart. Right? To Jesus. Right? You can pray to Him. Lord Jesus, I need You.

Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Please, thank You for giving me my sins and giving me eternal life.

Take control of the truth of my life and meet me the kind of person You want me to be. Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If it does, you can pray this prayer right now. And Christ will come into your life as He promised.

He says that seek, ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened to you. So if you are willing to open your heart to Jesus and to experience Him in your life, you can pray this prayer with me right now.

I'm going to read this prayer and please pray after me. Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins.

[31 : 21] I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life.

Take control of the throne of my life and make me the kind of person You want me to be. Amen. Well, if you prayed this prayer just now, congratulations.

Welcome into the family of God. And please do tell someone about this. And I hope that you will continue to read the Bible, pray, find out more about Jesus, draw closer to Him each day, and also join a church where you can know more about Him and experience Him in your life.

So may God bless you in your life journey. Okay, thank you so much, Andrew, for sharing that message with us.

I want to lead us now in just a short time of response to this. I listened to a famous agnostic who previously professed to be religious before.

[32 : 29] And one of the things he said was this. He said, the thing I miss most about religion is that I have no one to give thanks to. When I look at the beauty of the world, there's no one to give thanks to.

But as Christians, one of the things we do have is because we believe God and science work together that actually creation shows us, Romans says, the invisible qualities, the eternal power, the divine nature of God.

So therefore, there is an appropriate response of thanksgiving and praise. In fact, Psalm 150 says, let everything that has breath praise the Lord. And so even though this world has much brokenness in it, it reflects the awesome wonder and beauty of God Himself.

And so what I want to do is for us to take just a minute to respond in thanksgiving and praise.

Firstly, I want us to respond by thanking and praising God for the creation around us.

It might be a sunset. It might be the human body. It might be some aspect of creation that reveals the incredible nature and divine power of God in His creation.

[33 : 46] So let's just take a minute to thank God for the beauty that there is in this world. Thank you.

Father, thank you that from every molecule and atom to the incredible sunsets and the skies that we see to the beauty of just even the way that you have created us.

Lord, thank you that everything displays that you are so much more powerful, so much greater, so much more amazing than anything that we could ever do.

Lord, we are tiny in this vast universe, but thank you that shows, Lord, that you are so sovereignly majestic in all that you make.

And Lord, we just thank you for who you are and for what you have done. In Jesus' name. Amen.

So what I want us to do is just have one more minute to thank and praise God that in this vast universe where we are just a speck of dust, yet the God of all creation came down to die for us, that because of him we are not just insignificant blobs of random chance.

[35 : 53] We have intrinsic dignity. We're made in his image, and he has loved us with an incredible love. So let us spend a minute just marveling and praising him for his love on the cross, for all that he has done for us.

that the love of him might be flying over the rocks.

Thank you so much for that. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Father, you sent your Son to die for us.

Father, you not only have created everything, but you came to restore us to who we should be.

Thank you for the fact that we are not just blobs of chemicals or molecules, but that you have bestowed on us the honor of being image bearers.

We want to praise you for that, Lord. We don't deserve it. We have nothing in of ourselves, but it's only because of your graciousness towards us. Thank you, Lord, for the cross. Thank you, Lord, that we are not those who need to worry about whether we are just adrift in this world, whether we have to create our own meaning because you have come to rescue us.

[37 : 45] We belong to you and you have bought us and made us your own. Thank you so much for your love for us. We praise you. We love you. We thank you in Jesus' mighty name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.