

## 2084 with Dr. John Lennox

(July 17, 2020)

Summoning a demon. That is how Tesla CEO, Elon Musk, referred to artificial intelligence. Is he right about that? Well, artificial intelligence is here, and more is coming. In fact, a Tesla actually has artificial intelligence on it. But will artificial intelligence bring us utopia or dystopia? Should we be enthralled, or should we be afraid? What is artificial intelligence? How is it being used, and how will it be used, if it continues? Will these machines ever become conscious? We see it in the movies. Is that possible?

Well, our friend, the great Dr. John Lennox, from Oxford University, who's been on this program many times before, one of our favorite guests, has written a provocative new book on artificial intelligence. And check out the title. The title is, 2084. What does that make you think of? Yeah, 1984. Well, this book is called 2084. It's just off the presses. And John is my guest for the entire program today. Most of you know who John Lennox is. He's debated Richard Dawkins. He's written several wonderful books, including, Gunning for God, and, Seven Days Have Divided the World, among many others. And this new book is called 2084. A John is coming to us from Oxford, England. Still in lockdown. John, how are you today?

**John:**

I'm very well, thank you. But as you say, we're still in lockdown. How are you?

**Frank:**

I'm doing wonderful. And yesterday, I saw you on a live stream that we rebroadcast with Justin Brierley of Unbelievable. That was a wonderful program. We talked a little bit about AI. You took a number of questions. That broadcast is still on our Facebook page. And John, you've been doing a lot of interviews lately. How many have you done in the past few months?

**John:**

Oh, over 100.

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**Frank:**

You're amazing and it seems like you're coming out with a new book every couple of months. I mean, we did a Hope One live stream a couple of months ago on, Where's God in the Coronavirus World. And now you've got this book on AI. Why did you decide to write a book on AI and artificial intelligence?

**John:**

There was a number of reasons for doing that. The first is, I've always been, for many years interested in two big questions. The first is the status of the universe. And the second is the status of human life. And anyone who knows anything about artificial intelligence will realize that increasingly, people are talking about not simply narrow AI, which we can go into in a minute, but artificial general intelligence. That is the quest for super intelligence. And one of the factors in that is called transhumanism; seeking to actually modify human beings or create some kind of life on silicon and move towards a super intelligence.

And so, that raises a very big question of, what is a human being? Who are we? And because I'm a Christian, I'm very interested in what Genesis says about this. My ears go up when I hear various people, particularly Yuval Noah Harari, who's sold books in millions, Homo Deus, about this topic. But I got into it directly because I was asked to give a talk to some leaders about the subject and its relation to our concept of who we are. And when I started working on that, I realized that this deserved very close attention. And so, I got down to writing a book and this is the product.

**Frank:**

Well, it is a wonderful book. I just finished it this morning and you cover a great swath of information. I mean, you're talking about what other people are saying about AI. And then you're also talking about what it looks like from the biblical perspective and where we're heading in the future. I mean, you get into the book of Daniel, the book of Revelation, of First and Second Thessalonians, First Corinthians. You're using all these scriptures to point out where we're going. But let's start at square one if we can, Dr. Lennox, and that is, how would you define artificial intelligence? What is it?

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**John:**

Well, there are two kinds. There's what's called Narrow AI. And then AGI; artificial general intelligence. Narrow AI is easy to describe at one sense. It consists of a powerful computer, a very large database, and a program that is able to recognize certain chosen patterns. Let me give you an example. Let's suppose that we are interested in diseases of the lung and we take a million x-rays of people with different lung diseases. We get the top medics in the world to label the million x-rays with the correct diseases that they depict. And that's our database now. And then I have something wrong with my lungs. They take an x-ray of me and it's fed into the system. And the program is so set up that it will algorithmically compare my x-ray with the million in the database and it will choose the nearest one. And it will, within a few seconds, give a diagnosis saying that Lennox probably has such and such a disease.

Now, this is already up and running in many different areas, including x-rays, and it's running successfully. In other words, the diagnosis that the AI system gives is increasingly better than the best doctors could give you. And of course, this is going to be an enormously helpful tool, because not every hospital has got access to people of top quality in all these fields, but they can use an AI system to do that. So, that's a very good example of AI. So, let's step back from that about what that is actually. Well, it's a system that does one, and only one thing, that normally would take a human intelligence today. But the system is not a self-intelligent. That's why it's called artificial intelligence. It only looks as if it's intelligent.

There is intelligence behind it. That is the intelligence of the engineers who designed the system, and the programmers who wrote the program, and the doctors who made the diagnosis. So, artificial intelligence is not real intelligence. And that's a problem, of course, because once you use the word intelligent of a system or a robot, then people begin to think, well, it actually is intelligent. But it isn't.

**Frank:**

Well, you talk quite a bit about consciousness in the book, 2084. What is consciousness and are there people out there who actually think machine can become conscious?

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**John:**

Well, this is now moving on to artificial general intelligence. And here, the transhumanist agenda is to try to create a super intelligence, either by enhancing existing human beings through bio-engineering drugs and all the rest of it, or by creating some kind of artificial life, not based on organic material, but based possibly on silicon. And hence, we hear talk of uploading human brains onto silicon and, therefore, conquering the big problem of death. Now, there, the question that you've asked is, well, is such a thing likely to be conscious? My response to that is to face your other question, which is, what is consciousness?

**Frank:**

Hmmm.

**John:**

And the answer to that is that nobody has the faintest idea what consciousness is.

**Frank:**

We just have to be conscious to think about it, though.

**John:**

Yeah, well, indeed you do. But the point is, this is the biggest barrier in the face of all this hyped up technology, that we're going to make conscious robots and all the rest of it. Until someone tells me exactly what consciousness is, and how you reproduce it, I'm going to be extremely skeptical of that agenda. We just don't know. But then of course, people will say, well, perhaps we can simulate consciousness. In other words, we can get a system to behave as if it were conscious when it isn't really.

**Frank:**

We're talking to the wonderful John Lennox, the professor, from Oxford University, of mathematics. Also has a degree in philosophy. We're talking about his new book, 2084, about artificial intelligence. And we have a lot more intelligence we'd like to share right after the break, so don't go away. I'm Frank Turek. We're back in just two minutes with Dr. Lennox.

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**Frank:**

Welcome back to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. My guest is Dr. John Lennox, from Oxford University, author of many wonderful books. And by the way, on a lot of video on his YouTube channel, or his website, johnlennox.org. He's also been on video recently, with Justin Brierley of Unbelievable. Some of that video you can see on our website, our Facebook page, crossexamined.org. And if you do a search on YouTube for Dr. John Lennox, you'll find many wonderful presentations that he's done, debates he's had with people like Christopher Hitchens, and Richard Dawkins, and Lawrence Krauss, and many others.

Today we're talking about AI; artificial intelligence, and his new book, 2084. And by the way, John, I thought I heard you say that it was actually a debate opponent, Peter Atkins, that gave you that title. Is that true?

**John:**

It is absolutely true that we were going to debate on opposite sides of the God question. And we discussed what we were writing, and when I told him what I was writing, he said, I've got a great title for you. And I have used it and acknowledged him in the book.

**Frank:**

Yes. It's a great title; 2084. For those of you that have known about 1984, which is about where we are in America, anyway here...maybe the UK, as well. Where big government is everywhere. In fact, John, a part of AI is government, or just their surveillance state, which you write in the book, 2084. That's already happening in China, isn't it?

**John:**

Oh, it's happening everywhere. The whole question here is, the AI systems, our facial recognition technologies. And you can see a plus side to those; police can recognize terrorists,

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or criminals in a crowd, and so on. But the problem is that these surveillance technologies, which are now becoming very advanced, can be used to control an entire population. And it would appear that that's happening in Xinjiang in China, among the Uyghurs. And they are being monitored to such an extent it's practically unbelievable. And as a result, if you step out of line, and deviate from the norms that are set by the state, you find yourself in a re-education camp and losing your culture, maybe even your language, as well.

And there was a chilling article in Time magazine about this that I referred to in the book. And the Chinese writer said at the end that, the West needs to look out, because all the technologies that are being used in China are available in the West. The only difference is they haven't yet all been brought under the control of a totalitarian central government, but they're all there. And it was very interesting to me that the very next day after reading about this, I heard a senior police officer in our country saying that's exactly what we need.

So, this creates vast ethical problems. And there are similar surveillance problems, which may not always be video, although they may be, who knows, arising from our smartphones, because they are trackers. And here we are, millions of us, if not billions, wearing these things voluntarily and giving a vast amount of information, which becomes the AI database. And you will know this, if you buy a book on Amazon, a few days later you may get a pop-up saying, people that bought that book will buy this book.

But what we don't realize is that there's what Shoshana Zuboff, who's an expert from MIT, called surveillance capitalism. All the extra information that these things are harvesting, they may be listening to what you say, they may even be watching you, all your purchases, your habits, the people you meet, and so on. This information is being sold on without your permission. And this is a very serious infringement of individual rights and privacy. And so, AI, even the narrow AI systems, about which I'm talking at the moment, that actually work now, they're not futuristic. They're working, even though it was the book, 1984, that predicted them. Big brother is watching you. And we need to think about the ethics. And Frank, the problem is that technology expands and develops far more rapidly than ethical considerations do. And that's why a number of people, serious people, are worried by the direction all this is taking.

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**Frank:**

Even some atheists are worried about it as...

**John:**

Oh, certainly, a lot of the ethical considerations are not confined to any group.

**Frank:**

Although you do write in the book that there are many atheists behind AI. What are their goals, John? I read you talking about, some of them think they can abolish death. That death is just a technical problem. That's one of the things. What are some other goals that they want to accomplish?

**John:**

Ah, yes. Well, now we're turning to the artificial general intelligence, what's called the transhumanist program. And the big name and writing about this is not a technology person at all. He's a historian, Yuval Noah Harari, from Israel. And he's written two best-selling books, Sapiens, and, Homo Deus. And Sapiens is essentially about the past, and Homo Deus, its name means the god man, or the man who is God, is talking about the trans-humanist project. What is that project? Well, as you say, firstly, Harari believes death is now simply a technical problem. And we'll get very soon a technical solution, which will mean that, although you can die, you won't have to die. So, that's the first thing.

The second, what he calls, agenda item for the 21st century, is to enhance human happiness by biogenetic engineering, by drugs, by implants, and moving up towards making gods out of humans, spelled with a small g. He says we passed the animal stage. Now we got minds and we can take the future into our hands. And that could involve, of course, germline engineering, where a group of scientists would alter the basic genetic program of all generations to come. And that concerns me greatly.

CS Lewis sought, in the 1940s, the danger of that, and he made the point that if ever that happens, the beings that will exist will not be human. They will be artifacts created by a bunch of scientists. And, therefore, he says that the final triumph of science will be the abolition of

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man. That's where I think it's very important that the Christian voice is heard, as to what humans really are, made in the image of God.

**Frank:**

John, they, as atheists, and many of them are atheists, as you mentioned, although not all of them. They're advocating AI, or even AGI. They want to build a utopia, but they have no moral standard by which to get there. They claim that, say, evolution provides us with our Moral Sentiments. Why does that assertion not provide a basis for objective morality, that evolution gives us our Moral Sentiments?

**John:**

Well, utopia will never be built, if you try to bypass the fallenness and the sin that's in human nature. There have been many quests in the past, very crude quests; Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia, and so on, to re-engineer human beings and develop a super race. And the net result has been a bloodbath for millions of people. And of course, the atheist agenda, taken to its logical conclusion, has no basis for morality. That's the thing I argue in several of my books because it's very important.

And Richard Dawkins puts the bleak atheist position very clearly when he says, the universe is just as you'd expect it to be, if at bottom there's no good, no evil, no justice; DNA justice, and we dance to its music. So, there's a bleak, better determinism. And of course, if you say there's no good or no evil, that's the end of morality. And the difficulty is that, if you try to deduce morality from genetics or anything else, it simply becomes a matter of personal opinion. And, in the end, it's highly subjective and highly subjective moralities are not durable. Because in the end, the person with the most power will determine what's to be done, not the person with the clearest convictions about moral values.

So that's why, again, we need to ask in our 21st century, what is the basis of moral values? Where do we get them from? And I was watching Jordan Peterson the other night, one of his brilliant lectures on Genesis. And it's very interesting to hear his take on that central statement, that God has made humans in His own image. And Peterson said, look, this is the cornerstone of civilization, and we neglected to our peril. This is where our values have come from for centuries. And we live in these second or third generation now, of people that don't have that

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cornerstone, and so on. I'm afraid, we will simply have to bow down to power. And it won't be moral power based on character or faith in a God who transcends everything. It will simply be the survival of the fittest by fair

**Frank:**

Well that's what we're seeing right now, John, in our culture here in America anyway. It's all power and no principle. That if people don't like what you say, or what you believe, they will try and cancel you. They will try and run you out of business or shut down your career. It has nothing to do with morality. They don't really believe in any morality; they just believe in asserting their power over you. So, I think that insight is profound, but also quite scary for us.

**John:**

It is very scary. And that's why I wrote my book, partially, because all these scenarios that are being developed, as you say, not all by atheists, but many of them. I just feel that we should put in a serious opposition to that kind of subjectivism that leads to the cessation of all decent public discourse, and say, look, Christianity has something to say, because we can get free of all of this by trusting God, which seems a contradiction to many people, but that's exactly what Jesus said. He came to set people free. And we're getting totally enslaved by political correctness and all the things related to it.

**Frank:**

And in fact, at the end of the book, 2084, John, you lay out the hope that we all have, because Christianity is indeed true. And when we come back from the break, we'll talk about that. But we're also going to talk more about AI and AGI and to deal with some of the questions related to that. It's all laid out in John Lennox's new book, 2084. There's a website too. If you Google 2084, you will find it. There's some video up there, as well. And we're back in just two minutes. I'm Frank Turek. Don't go anywhere.

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**Frank:**

2084, the new book by Dr. John Lennox. It deals with the subject of artificial intelligence. It's already here. How far will it go? What are the ethical implications about it? And what should Christians be for and what should Christians be against with regard to this?

John, you had mentioned before that there are some good applications of AI. You mentioned it's used in medicine. It's also used in automobiles. Tesla has a car that will prevent you from smacking into other cars. That's an artificial intelligence system of some kind. However, this idea of consciousness is something that some people watching movies think we're ultimately going to get there. We've talked a little bit about it but let me ask you this. Is the belief that some of these atheists behind AGI, that they believe that consciousness for machines could be achieved, do you think that's grounded in their belief that intelligence and consciousness arose through natural processes? I mean, that's how they thought we got consciousness to begin with and it's gonna eventually get there. Is that what they're thinking?

**John:**

Of course, it is. If you take the typical atheist naturalistic view of consciousness developed over billions of years by unguided natural processes, then it's very likely that you'll think, now that we have got minds and we're conscious, that we can build machines that share this. If you've got no idea of transcendence, then that belief comes very easily indeed. But it's not true, I think. I mean, the assumption is not true. I'm busy revising one of my books discussing this whole question of the origin of life, unconsciousness, and so on. And there's still, after many years research, almost impenetrable issues that we've no idea what consciousness is or how it came about.

**Frank:**

Well, there's only two possibilities. Either we're run completely by the laws of physics or we're not. And you have pointed this out. In fact, you and CS Lewis have made the argument that naturalism, which is the assertion that only physical things exist, that naturalism undercuts

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reason, it undercuts intelligence, and it undercuts science itself. So, contrary to popular opinion, atheism is actually at odds with reason science. It's not Christianity. Can you unpack that, or why that is, John?

**John:**

Well, talking about the consciousness thing, it's quite interesting, because Harari talks about this. And he points out, and we need to put the balance against what you said, [unintelligible] that many people who research into AI, they don't bother with consciousness. Why? Because their AI systems are allowing them to create simulated intelligence that isn't conscious. And that appears to be sufficient for their purposes. Now how far that's going to go, I just don't know. But it's an interesting idea. And what I say in the book is that, when God created human beings in his image, he linked intelligence and consciousness together in one being. And this AI attempt may be to separate consciousness from simulated intelligence. And of course, that's exactly what a narrow AI machine, like my x-rays, is. It's not actually intelligent. It simulates intelligence. And it not conscious. The doctors are conscious, but the machine is not.

Consciousness and intelligence lead me, certainly, to think that there's a non-material aspect to human beings. Now, if that is true, if mind is not matter and transcends it, then of course, neither consciousness nor intelligence can be created in a real sense, based on material. And yet, the assumption of materialism is that they can be. But that is just forgetting that any AI system involves digital technology, information technology. And information is not material. It rides often on a material substrate but it itself is not material. So, that for me, really sounds the death nail on any idea that you're going to simply create something immaterial, that is consciousness, and thinking based on a material substrate. We are a huge mystery.

**Frank:**

Yes. And in fact, you give a thought experiment, which I thought was quite profound, in the book, 2084. We're talking to Dr. John Lennox. His new book, 2084, it's about artificial intelligence. John, you give this thought experiment, where you say, imagine you have someone alive and they die, and a second later, what can you do to make them conscious again. Can you kind of unpack what that thought experiment was?

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**John:**

Well, it's just that we just don't know. If I die now in this minute, and I'm lying on the floor, what is the difference? What is gone?

**Frank:** Right.

**John:**

What would you have to add to me? Do I weigh less and all this [unintelligible]?

**Frank:**

Right, right.

**John:**

The fact is, we have no idea. So, what that leads to is the notion that, suppose we can build all the molecules we have, we've a whole set of molecules, and all the compounds, and all the amino acids, and so on, and we try to build the cell. And we program all the information into it, and so on. And we build an organism from bottom up. Will it be alive? Nobody knows.

**Frank:**

The answer is, it seems, no. Because as you just said...

**John:**

Well, that's my suspicion.

**Frank:**

Yeah, I mean, you could have a body that was alive a minute ago. You've got everything materially there for life, but there's something missing. What's missing? And for atheists to believe it all this could just evolve through natural processes, that somehow consciousness and life can emerge from non-life, look, even your debating opponent, Richard Dawkins admits, nobody has any idea how life could arise naturally. Now, if we have revelation, and you spent a lot of time in the revelation in the book, 2084, we do have an answer.

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**John:**

Yes, I think that's absolutely right. I watched the attempts of scientists to work out how life could have started by natural processes and they've got nowhere. And what we've discovered, though, about life, that there's a genetic information base, and DNA, and there are many levels of information above that, at the epigenetic level. The whole thing is absolutely full of the most impressive constructs, many machines, tiny little nano-machines, in thousands in everybody's body. And if you saw a machine like that in a large scale, you would see immediately that there's a mind that designed it.

But somehow, we have been so brainwashed into thinking that we cannot do that in the natural world. And yet, it's crying out for an answer that is the answer that the scripture gives. In the beginning was the Word. All things came to be through him. That is, this is a word based universe. It's not matter that's primary, it is mind and word. Matter and energy and everything we see around us is derivative. And that's an idea that I want to push very hard in this book, because the more we unpack the actual nature of living things, the less we seem to understand what life is, but the more complex and information rich we see that it is, so that the pointing towards an intelligent origin increases by the hour.

**Frank:**

You know what's interesting to me too, John? The very people that say that all this could happen through natural processes, that we could arise from mud, you say sophisticated mud, we've become sophisticated mud, that life could arise from natural processes. These are the same people who don't believe in intelligent design, yet they are using their own intelligence to try and create artificial life. I mean, why try and create AI? Why not just wait for it to occur naturally? Don't they see the contradiction here?

**John:**

Well, I don't think they see the contradiction, but it is rather ironic. And, of course, their idea is that, well, we got there by natural processes, so if we take our own genetic structure in hand, we're going to do much better. We're going to enhance humanity very rapidly. And that's a very worrying thing. The quest to be gods is not an innocent thing. It is the original problem of humanity. And Genesis describes that brilliantly, where the temptation came, that if you take the forbidden fruit and disobey God, you will be as gods. And the quest against the lie, so to

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speak, the lie is that God wants to suppress humanity, he doesn't want them to flourish. So, the only way you can flourish is to become an atheist and deny God. That's absolutely false. But that lie is so deeply implanted in human beings today, it's still there, that they feel we must emancipate ourselves from any god concept and we will create gods out of ourselves. That's Harari's view, very clearly. And I'm afraid it will lead to disaster.

**Frank:**

Well, John, actually, he seems to acknowledge this, because you write on page 194 of the book, 2084...this is a quote from the end of Harari's book. He says, "despite the astonishing things that humans are capable of doing, we remain unsure of our goals and we seem as disconnected as ever. We have advanced from canoes to galleys to steam ships to space shuttles, but nobody knows where we're going. We are more powerful than ever before but have very little idea what to do with that power. Worse still, humans seem to be more irresponsible than ever. Self-made gods with only the laws of physics to keep us company. We are accountable to no one. We are, consequently, wreaking havoc on our fellow animals and on the surrounding ecosystem, seeking little more than our own comfort and amusement, yet never finding satisfaction. Is there anything more dangerous than dissatisfied and irresponsible gods who don't know what they want?"

He actually understands this, John.

**John:**

He does seem to have this kind of a double think.

**Frank:**

Yeah.

**John:**

Part of the book, now that was his first book, Sapiens.

**Frank:**

Okay.

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**John:**

In his second book, he seems to be much more positive, in a way, although still without caveat that self-made gods is the way that we have to go.

**Frank:**

Well, we're going to get away from self-made gods in the final segment and talk about the real God and what God says about all this and where are we heading. What does this have to do with, say, the book of Daniel, and even the book of Revelation? Is there a connection between AGI and the book of Revelation? Possibly. You're not going to want to miss this from Dr. John Lennox. So, don't go away. I'm Frank Turek. We're back in two minutes.

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**Frank:**

We're back with the wise and wonderful Dr. John Lennox from Oxford University. His new book, 2084, must reading as we progress into the future. We may actually be regressing into the future. But that book will help you decipher truth from error, and help you decipher what is ethical and what isn't, with regard to AI. Before we get into some of the Scriptures on this, John, in our last segment here, I just want to ask you one key question here. Why have all the attempts to build a godless utopia failed? And why have they actually created dystopias?>

**John:**

Well, because they tried to bypass morality and they have no solution to the sin question. And therefore, they end up by creating the worst criminals the world has ever seen. And until we take that on board, we're always going to go the same way. And as we look through history, the idea of humans becoming gods, it's not new. It happened in the time of ancient Babylon. It happened in the Roman Empire, where Caesars behaved like gods. And it has happened at relatively modern times. Ceaușescu had himself worshipped as a god and some of the world leaders have had hymns sung to them. All this kind of thing. It's still endemic that human pride,

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that reaching for the heavens like the Tower of Babel. And if you simply base life on technology and what we can do, but try to bypass any moral issues, then of course, you're building on sand and the whole edifice comes crumbling down. But it usually crushes millions of people as it topples.

**Frank:**

Let's talk about that the last segment of your book here, Dr. Lennox. Last few chapters, you're really bringing a lot of scripture to bear on this AI, or AGI question. And one thing you mentioned is, you write that, in his prophecy, Daniel shows us that the attempt to eliminate God will eventually lead, not to freedom, but to intense oppression. What prophecy are you referring to? And this comes from page 219 of your book.

**John:**

Well, what I'm thinking about here is the fact that scripture, very interestingly, does come up with scenarios of the future. And Daniel, and the book of Revelation, and the book of Thessalonians are related to one another. Now it would take a very long time to go into details. But if we focus on the title of Harari's book, Homo Deus, then we see that, in the plain straightforward text of Paul's Thessalonians, he talks about the future. And he says, there will arise a man of lawlessness who is worshipped as God.

Now, that's very much a scenario that one can recognize. And what I tried to do in the book, if I explain that, I think your listeners will understand what we're doing. Max Tegmark is a very well-known physicist, and he has written a book in which he sets up the possible scenarios of developing a super intelligence. Some of them are benevolent; a super intelligent, that loves human beings and is controlled by them and gives them a wonderful future. Other hamo deuses, super intelligences, are the exact opposite. They're tyrannical. Some of them keep a few humans around as pets and destroy the rest. Others of them simply destroy human beings as absolutely useless.

And my main argument is this. It's to say look, if serious thinkers are today taking Tegmarks', for example, scenarios seriously, I would like to suggest that we have another look at a scenario that we rarely discuss, which is introduced step by step in the Bible. Because the Bible warns us in the book of Daniel, and it's got very interesting imagery. We're talking here about homo

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deus, the man who is god, but Daniel pictures empires and world leaders under the imagery of wild beasts. Some of them less wild than others, but wild beasts, and talks about various of these beasts that are raised in the future.

And the book of Revelation picks up that kind of imagery. And the particular references [are] Revelation 12 and 13. And it talks about a horrific beast, with seven heads and 10 horns, that's given immense power and universal authority by the devil. And that beast becomes a blasphemous object of worship for the entire world.

Now, if you look at that, it sounds almost incredible. But the world is being prepared for it, because we've had similar things in the past, as I've said, with the Babylonian emperors, with the Caesars, and with some leaders in modern times. And the fascinating thing to me is that, in the second letter to the Thessalonians, now Paul it only been in the city of Thessalonica for three weeks, and he told people there about the fact that the central Christian hope is that Jesus Christ would return. This world cannot think it can crucify the Son of God and have heard the last of him. He's going to come back.

But that will be accompanied by certain things on earth, and in particular, the rise of an immensely powerful leader. A man of lawlessness, in the sense of spiritual lawlessness, rigorous civil law, of course. But blaspheming God, and the whole world worshipping it, sitting in the temple, so to speak, and allowing himself to be worshipped. And so, what you have in imagery in the book of Revelation, you have an actual reality in Paul's letters. And it's very important to say this, that many Christians, when they read these kinds of things in Revelation say, ah but this is just metaphor. But just a moment. It's not a question of just metaphor, because metaphor, as CS Lewis points out, is always used to stand for something real.

**Frank:**

Absolutely.

**John:**

And the beasts in the book of Revelation stand for something real. And in fact, we're told explicitly what the reality is. It's a human being. So, what we get is this pretty grim scenario,

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where a human being claims to be God and allows itself to be worshipped. This is man becoming God.

And of course, the answer that I want to explain is that Christianity says the exact opposite. It says that God has become man in Jesus Christ, to give us the hope, through trusting him, of becoming his children and entering his family and receiving eternal life. And therefore, the conquest of death that Harari talks about has already been achieved. Let me put it this way. There is a super intelligent human in existence. His name is Jesus Christ and he has overcome death. And so, death has already been overcome. These transhumanist people are just too late, and they've got the wrong solution.

**Frank:**

Isn't it amazing, John? I love that insight that you just gave that men want to become God, but God actually condescends to become a man, to save us. And that is a wonderful insight, and it's in the book, 2084, ladies and gentlemen. That's why you need to get the book. John, we just have a few minutes to go, but I do want to ask you this. How much do you think AGI could possibly have something to do with the beast, the image of the beast? Is that possible, because you seem to mention that a little bit in the book?

**John:**

Well, I mention it so that people can think about it, because it appears, and what Revelation says, I'm not claiming I understand it all. But you get an image that is made of the beast, so that the image of the beast, and I'm quoting now, might even speak, and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. And also, it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand of the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark that is the name of the beast, or the number of its name.

Now the chilling thing about that is we're already seeing this the control that will be held over people, whether they have recognition of our eyes, or something else that will be connected with our credit cards. And so, there be complete financial control. Now that's already happening, in a way, in China at the moment, with a social credit system, where you're given so many points, and you can gain more by good behavior, and you lose points by bad behavior.

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And suddenly you get your credit card blocked and you can't travel. This kind of economic control, that the Bible predicts here, is something we need to take seriously, because we can see the seeds of it all around us. And whatever this is, causing the image of the beast made speak, it causes the entire world to worship it. Now, that is not some trivial thing. There appears to be a very sinister, supernatural dimension to it, as well. And I'm simply trying to encourage people to see that, actually, scripture has something to say about it. And it's something that is credible because of what we already know and see in the world today.

**Frank:**

Well, the book is called 2084. The author is my guest today, Dr. John Lennox of Oxford University. And there's so much that we couldn't cover in this interview, that you really need to get the book. And, John, I know there are some applications of AI that Christians ought to be for, but there are also some that we ought to be against. And you unpack a little bit of that more in the book. Certainly, we have to be aware, we have to have our eyes open, we have to be prayerful, and we have to alert our friends and neighbors, believers and unbelievers, that the Bible has a lot to say about what's going on. So, John, thank you so much for being on the program today and writing this new book, 2084.

**John:**

Well, it's my pleasure. And I encourage young Christians that are scientific minded to get into this stuff, because we need people that are working on the good side of it, who will help explain it to others who may be fearful of it. But thank you for inviting me on.

**Frank:**

Oh, the wonderful John Lennox. Always great having you on, sir. Johnlennox.org. And the book is, 2084. You need to get it; please do. I'm Frank Turek. I'll see you here next week, Lord willing. God bless. See you.

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