

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

The Babylon Bee vs. Postmodernism with Kyle Mann

(June 24, 2022)

Ladies and gentlemen, there's an organization that will soon dominate the world. It's called the Babylon Bee. And you know, I've had Kyle Mann, the chief editor here in the Babylon Bee, on the program before. But he's back because he has a brand new book we're going to talk about and we're also going to talk a lot about the Babylon Bee. And we're right now in the brand new studios at the Babylon Bee in an undisclosed location somewhere on the West Coast. How do you like this new studio?

Kyle:

It's pretty fancy. These golden thrones that were sitting in, like an old TBN episode or something. It's nice.

Frank:

It is. No, it's very modest, ladies and gentlemen, but it's very well done. And for those of you that don't know about the Babylon Bee, where have you been? Because the Babylon Bee is, for those of you on YouTube, fake news you can trust. And I just love The Bee, Kyle. Just so our listeners can know, how did the Babylon Bee Christian satire site start and how did you get involved? What happened?

Kyle:

So, there was a mad genius named Adam Fore and he was putting out a reformed webcomic, which sounds like a bizarre series of words to mash together. But he did this kind of Christian webcomic where he addressed apologetics and kind of made arguments through a cartoon essay style thing. It was similar to The Oatmeal, if you ever saw The Oatmeal, it was like kind of a webcomic. That was popular 10 years ago. And he was doing that and announced on his Facebook page, I'm launching a Christian satire site. And it took off immediately. Overnight it became his full-time job. You know, he had to abandon the webcomics. He didn't have time to do it anymore. So, I think he only put up like two more comics after that. I saw it on my

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Facebook feed because I followed his comic and I started writing articles. The first article I ever wrote was, Holy Spirit Unable To Move Through Congregation As Fog Machine Breaks.

Frank:

That's one of my all-time favorites. I tell people that all the time, Kyle. That is one of my all-time favorites. In fact, I was over at Calvary Chapel Chino Hills yesterday - we're recording this on a Monday because we're here in California. I was there to preach, and I was telling Gia, who is the worship leader there, the Babylon Bee they skew everyone. They even skew the church. And I brought up that one, Holy Spirit Unable To Move Through Congregation As Fog Machine Breaks. That was your first one.

Adam:

That was my first one. It was like lightning just struck me and I just took over like the force or something. I closed my eyes and just banged out the article.

Frank:

But you were volunteer, right? Or did you get hired by the Babylon Bee?

Kyle:

It was just an outside submission, unsolicited, unpaid, you know, threw it out there. And then I did a few like that. And then pretty quickly, Adam hired me as the head writer of the site. And that was just part-time. I was still in construction sales.

Frank:

Yeah. What were you doing in construction sales?

Kyle:

Well, I sold fire hydrants.

Frank:

You did?

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

Yeah.

Frank:

Really?

Kyle:

Yeah. So, if you want to know about all the different... I have some interesting facts about fire. We can talk about that for the next 48 minutes if you want.

Frank:

And we will lose, everybody.

Kyle:

And we'll lose all the listeners, but it's exciting stuff. So no, I was doing that, and I would just write a few articles in the morning, fire it off, and then Adam would kind of edit and filter and put up the good ones and ignore the bad ones. And that was how the Babylon Bee ran for a couple years until I quit and made it my full-time job as Editor in Chief a couple of years later.

Frank:

And so, what year did you join and become the Editor in Chief here?

Kyle:

That was in 2018. It was four years ago I made that leap of faith to quit a nice paying sales job to be a writer [laughing]. But it worked out.

Frank:

It's worked. It's worked wonderfully. And one of the reasons I love the Babylon Bee is because you can make a point through humor that will penetrate and go a lot further around the culture than if somebody just gets up and says something like, for example, the one you just pointed out. Well, churches are just too secular and there are too many gimmicks in church. I mean, that's not going to go anywhere, but when you do...

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

Yeah, Seven Reasons You Should Not Use a Fog Machine. You know, your eyes glaze over and you die of boredom. So yeah, humor has a way of just punching the point home. There was a Chesterton quote - Seth probably said it on your show, or maybe I did - "Humor can get in under the door while seriousness is still fumbling at the handle.". And that's that's kind of our mantra here.

Frank:

It's wonderful. Every day I go to the Babylon Bee because I need comic relief. And here's one. Now, this one just cracked me up and I think you came up with this one. Literally it had to be a half-hour after I learned that President Biden had fallen off his bicycle last week that this was up here. Now, the President's okay. If he had truly been hurt, probably wouldn't have put this out.

Kyle:

Well, I don't know if he's okay, but he is the same as he was before.

Frank:

Yeah right. He wasn't hurt. But here's the headline you came up with. Aides Worried Biden May Have Concussion As He Starts Speaking Coherently.

Kyle:

[laughing] Just jogged it right.

Frank:

How did how did you come up with this?

Kyle:

So, we have an online chat where we're all kind of pitching headline ideas. So, there was a few good pitches, like people were pitching ideas that... The struggle with something like that that's such a current hot breaking news story is, on Twitter, everybody's already telling jokes. There's already a bunch of memes out there. So, as a comedian, you're trying to kind of find the weird off the wall angle, and hopefully nobody else has found that exact take on it. So, that's

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

something that's like, it's a funny image to see. You know, he knocked some screw loose in his head and now he's fine.

Frank:

[laughing] Well, sometimes you just look at the headline and that's all you need to see. But in this case, you actually need to read the story. Because you're slamming both Biden and Trump in in this story.

Kyle:

The best kind of stuff.

Frank:

Yeah, here's a paragraph in the story. "News of Biden's tumble quickly spread through media, with the cast of The View responding by all falling off their bikes on live TV to show how normal it is. Former President Trump, for his part, mocked Biden by entering a rally on a BMX bike and nailing a perfect 180 tail whip. 'No handlebars, not even hard!' said Mr. Trump, laughing as he biked around the stage. 'What a loser!'" You can just hear Trump saying that, right?

Kyle:

That's an actual quote.

Frank:

Yeah, that's right. Big braggadocious way of saying things. So, you guys are just brilliant. And you skew everybody. You skew the left, you skew the right, you skew the church. Say you've got this group of writers, are these just freelance people? They're not employees of Babylon Bee? How does this work?

Kyle:

So, we do have some full-time writers, we have some full-time headline pitchers. A lot of the ideas come from a group that's part-time, similar to what I was doing back when I was in construction sales. I had a day job. I got paid monthly to throw out some headlines and throw out some pitches. It's similar to that. So, that's probably the core group, or most of the headline ideas come from some of the local guys here in the studio. Also, you know, if we're sitting

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

around we'll bounce ideas, right. That kind of sitting around and bouncing ideas around, we tend to do that more for when we're writing our videos, like our video sketches, that kind of stuff. We're throwing lines out, jokes, and you know how it is when you're all joking around with friends and all coming up with: What about this? What if this happens, and it turns into something?

Frank:

So, out of every 100 headlines that people submit, how many do you actually take?

Kyle:

Oh, probably three or four.

Frank:

That's it?

Kyle:

Yeah. Well, out of ones that are submitted, it's even a smaller percentage. That's probably just out of the main writers group. Because we have a paid subscription service. People will support us and people that do that get to submit headlines also. So, there's like an inbox that, you know, they get exclusive access to pitch it. If they come up with a joke idea they want to see get published on The Bee, they can throw that at us. And you know, there's hundreds a day, so there's no way we can publish everything.

Frank:

Now, you guys have actually been censored by Twitter. Why?

Kyle:

We honored Rachel Levine with a Man of the Year award.

Frank:

Man of the Year award. That's right.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

And they didn't like that.

Frank:

And that was hateful, according to them.

Kyle:

Yeah. Hateful conduct. So, we're suspended. We can log into our account, but we're not allowed to tweet unless we click a button saying yes, we are hateful bigots, essentially, and we will delete the tweet.

Frank:

So, you're not doing that. So, you're no longer on Twitter. Friends, what you need to do if you have a Twitter account, is just continue to pump out the Babylon Bee headlines. I do it probably two or three times a week. I see a headline I put it out. It's amazing. The atheists will, in the Twitter feed Kyle, they'll say, Do you know that's a satire site? I'm like, of course. But get the word out on Twitter because the Babylon Bee folks here can't do it anymore because they're hateful for calling Rachel Levine an actual biological male, which he is. Alright, and we're going to talk about Kyle's book here. Kyle has a brand new book, along with a colleague of his, we'll talk about right after the break. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist on the American Family Radio Network with me, Frank Turek. My guest is Kyle Mann. He is the Chief Editor of the wonderful BabylonBee.com. Check it out. We're back in just two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

If you're low on the FM dial looking for National Public Radio, go no further. We're actually going to tell you the truth here. We've got the world's best fake news, fake news you can trust, with Kyle Mann of the Babylon Bee. I'm Frank Turek and this show is called, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. It's on the American Family Radio Network. Hey Kyle, before the break we were talking about how the Babylon Bee has been basically censored off Twitter for putting out some truth. And a lot of how people follow you, they follow you, of course, on your website, but you put out a lot of great YouTube videos as well. And YouTube has been known to shut people down. What's your backup plan if YouTube says, Sorry, can't put your stuff out here anymore?

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

Well, we're going to create a door to door delivery service where we just deliver videos on VHS [laughing]. That's kind of what it's come to, right. Like, we're gonna have to start doing a print edition, just delivering it to people's doors. Yeah, you know, that's a tough question because there really is nothing that compares to the reach that you can get on these big tech platforms right now. You know, there's people that will go to alternative platforms, and some people have had a lot of success there, but the reach just isn't there the same way that it is on Twitter, or Facebook, or YouTube. So, you really do lose a lot, you do sacrifice a lot, when you take a stand and end up getting knocked off one of these platforms.

We did kind of try to prepare and future proof ourselves a little bit by creating our subscription service on our website, because Facebook has really turned down the traffic throttle to our website, we've been completely kicked off of Twitter. If we were to lose YouTube, that's another, you know, close to a million subscribers that we would lose access to. So, we did start letting people pay to support us and they get a little bonus content and all that. But most people's support, not for bonus content or anything, but just because they like what we're doing, and they want to support comedy, and they want independent comedy to thrive, and that's a great thing. We've been really blown away and blessed by how many people have subscribed and helped us out in that way. So, that's become a really important way to support us and how we've been able to build out the studio and bring some of these people on board.

Frank:

So, if it turns out that they do kick you off their platform, subscribers can still access. You can still put that stuff up on a website, the videos, so they can see it. Right?

Kyle:

Yeah, well all of our content is already on BabylonBee.com. It's just the way that people consume content now, is by going to Facebook and Twitter. And, you know, you hope the algorithm shows you what you want. It's always better to go directly to the source. So, somebody follows you, CrossExamined, don't go on Facebook and wait for a CrossExamined video to pop up, go directly to CrossExamined.org. and check it out.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Frank:

I'm a subscriber to BabylonBee.com, I think you should be too. So, I can't say this enough. You say, well, it's comedy. It's very important ladies and gentlemen. It's very important to be able to have the freedom to put out material like this. And if the Babylon Bee folks here lose that freedom, they still have to have a place to put this material out. Because as I say, you can make a point so much more powerfully through comedy than you can actually do in a serious way. People who would never read a book, or even watch a video that's serious, will look at an article or will look at a video that actually is fun. And even if they don't agree with it, they'll watch it.

Kyle:

But we all experienced that already. Like, I'll watch something from The Onion or Saturday Night Live, and if it's just funny, even if I disagree with it, you'll laugh at it.

Frank:

Yeah.

Kyle:

And maybe if it's about me, if I'm the target, you know, Christians or whatever, maybe it inspires change in you, or maybe it makes you examine things that are going on in your life.

Frank:

Now you and Joel Berry, who is also here at the Babylon Bee, have come out with a new book called The Post Modern Pilgrims Progress. Those on YouTube can see the lovely addition of the book right here. I endorsed the book. It's a fun book, it's a different book. Tell people what the book is really about.

Kyle:

So, it is a kind of sci-fi fantasy allegory. And those three words have never been mashed together in the English language. We took the framework of John Bunyan's original Pilgrims Progress where you have a character named Christian who is walking down this narrow road, he's trying to get to the celestial city. And Bunyan, his stroke of genius in what is probably the first ever novel in the English language in 1678, he has this character encounter different

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

people who represent things that we encounter in the Christian life. You know, so he encounters someone who doesn't believe in God. You know, Mr. Atheist. I forget what he's called in the in the original. You know, he encounters the worldly wise man who's telling him no, no, you don't need to go down the narrow road, there's a much better way over here. So, it's all very obvious and on the nose, you know, and you're like, oh, okay, I get what's going on here.

But it has always struck me how much humor there was in that original book. Because you know, he's like walking and there's a guy who's like, I'm Mr. Idiot, follow me. And Christian follows because he's a moron and he just keeps wandering off the path. Like, what are you doing? So, Joel and I tried to draw that humor element in this book. So, we kind of updated it with modern characters, there's - well, I'm sure we'll talk about some of the characters and stuff - things that we encounter in modern Christianity.

Frank:

Yeah, let's talk about some of the characters in this book. First of all, Ryan. Ryan's kind of the central character.

Kyle:

Yeah, protagonist [unintelligible].

Frank:

He's an agnostic.

Kyle:

Yeah.

Frank:

And what's his main role in the book? What does he do?

Kyle:

Well, there was a struggle in writing the book because, you know, it's the postmodern Pilgrim's Progress. I wanted the main guy to be this postmodernist, you know, who was like, avidly

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

against Christianity in a lot of ways. But as we wrote it, it became clear that we needed the main character to be more of a foil. He's a commonsense guy but he does have this nihilistic streak within him where he's suffered a death in his family, so he has this kind of tragic backstory, where he's angry at God, and bitter at God, and doesn't think that a good God can possibly exist. Maybe God's out there somewhere, but if he is, he's evil. And so, as he goes through the story, we kind of see the goofy characters through his eyes, and he sees what it means to understand what suffering is actually like in the world.

Frank:

So, this is an allegory, so sometimes you can make the connection to a real world character, and sometimes you got to think about a little bit. So, you've got characters like Faith and Christian. How about the devil? Who does that represent?

Kyle:

That's a good question, Frank. [both laughing]

Frank:

These are all characters in the brand new book, *The Postmodern Pilgrims Progress*.

Kyle:

Yeah, we like the devil character. We like the Satan that we wrote. He's very chill. He's just a normal guy. And he's just like, Hey, what's up, man? You know, you do you. You're doing great.

Frank:

You do you. I love it. Hey, you know what we out to do? Because a lot of times people don't even define: What is post modernism. Like, if you had to define it, what would you say it is?

Kyle:

Well yeah, there's a progression, right? So, there was the pre-moderns, and they kind of - it's a bit of a moving target - but the pre-moderns kind of felt that it was good to pass down values through tradition and we should preserve and protect the traditions passed down to us. And then the moderns came along and said, epistemologically, truth comes through reason and science and thought and rationality. And that's kind of where the church is. Like, I think the

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

church could do with returning to the pre-moderns, in a lot of ways, because a lot of times we agree with the modern age of enlightenment and we find existentialism kind of creeping into our theology because of, you know, obviously, modernism has brought some good things.

Frank:

Sure, yeah.

Kyle:

But then you have post-modernism. So, you had the pre-moderns; truth comes through tradition. You have the moderns, who said, Truth comes through reason. And the post-modern says, There is no truth, we can discover truth. And that's kind of what the bent of this book is. It's kind of this multiverse story, where there's like this different realities, and when you dream, you go to this other place. And a lot of that kind of fiction nowadays, like Doctor Strange 2, and Everything Everywhere All at Once, and all these movies that are coming out, Rick and Morty, like they're all this multiverse, traveling, sci-fi, Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy humor type stuff. But the point of all of it is like, so there's multiverses, everything out there, and therefore nothing matters.

Frank:

Right.

Kyle:

And so, you have to make your own meaning. So, we wanted to take that framework and say, No, there is absolute truth, and there is meaning, there is an external objective meaning to your life, and your job is to find out what that is not to create that. So, yeah, it's a response to that.

Frank:

So, post-modernism has crept in everywhere. That's why you're having people saying that whatever sex they say they are, they are. Whatever identity they are, they are. And they claim that there's no overarching truth, there's no meta story. Do you think they claim that is true, that there's no truth, or what? What's the deal with that?

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

[laughing] There are no absolutes since the Sith. You know what I mean?

Frank:

That's right.

Kyle:

Which is an absolute, of course.

Frank:

So, the whole thing is self-defeating, but I love the some of the names of the characters in the book. Gee, I wonder who the smiling preacher is in the book?

Kyle:

Any relation to the characters, real or imagined, is entirely fictional?

Frank:

Okay, the smiling preacher. How about Health and Wealth?

Kyle:

Yeah. So, Health and Wealth were pretty close to a specific person. And we actually made some changes to make it a little broader.

Frank:

Oh, you did?

Kyle:

Yeah, we made it a little broader, because we didn't want it to come off as personal vendetta against somebody. Rather, instead, we wanted it to be, this represents the entire movement of, you can speak your health and wealth into existence, you know, rather than God will allow some suffering in your life for your sanctification.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Frank:

How about Mr. Legalist? Who could that be?

Kyle:

Yeah, it's a tough one.

Frank:

It's a tough one?

Kyle:

It's a legalist. Yeah.

Frank:

It's a total legalist. Can you remember some of the things that Mr. Legalist says to the protagonist, Ryan, who is the agnostic who is going through this journey? What would be some of the things Mr. Legalist might say to him?

Kyle:

Which one was legalist? Was he in the city? I don't remember specifically.

Frank:

I don't know, man. Read her book. Come on.

Kyle:

I'm failing the quiz on my own book. You know, these things, you write them, and you send them off, and then you're like: Wait, what? What did I say?

Frank:

Well, you guys just did a thing on the Babylon Bee podcast, which you ought to listen to, that I think somebody was reading page numbers. What page number is this on?

Kyle:

Yeah and you're like, I don't know. I don't remember.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Frank:

How do I even know?

Kyle:

We had a couple of legalists - there's like a legal list group and then there was a last character - and they were telling Ryan like, no to walk on the path, you have to hop on one foot.

Frank:

Oh, all right.

Kyle:

That's a...

Frank:

Well, you can comment on any of these. Mr. Political Engagement is a character in The Postmodern Pilgrim's Progress.

Kyle:

Yeah, which is an interesting question, because it's still kind of a question among Christians like: What does it mean to be political? But we have this bubble city called Evangelion that's kind of represents the Christian bubble. And they're trying to figure how to engage with the outside world, but none of them are actually going out and walking on the road to get to the Golden City. Like, they're all just sitting there debating and arguing about theology and training. We're going to train up for the quest and then they never leave, and they all die there because they never actually go out and engage the world. So, we have these political engagement characters that say, No, we have to petition for better laws in this land, not go and seek the better city.

Frank:

It covers so much. You've got so many fun characters in here. In fact, I put this in my endorsement of the book. One of my favorite lines is actually a proverb that you have in the book. Let me see if I can find it here because I just cracked up when I... Oh, here's one of the proverbs from the book written by Kyle Mann and Joe Berry. It's The Postmodern Pilgrims

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

Progress. A proverb from the book says this, "Do not argue with those who think they are tolerant, they will probably beat your brains out with a shovel."

Kyle:

It's kind of poetic, really, when you read it like that. Yeah, that comes from the book within the book. They discover a book, you know, which represents the Bible or whatever. And they discover that early on and it's kind of like Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. It has these pithy sayings right when they need it. And you open it up, Oh, I'm supposed to do this, you know. And then they're constantly losing it or forgetting to go back and actually read the book, you know.

Frank:

Well, check it out. The Postmodern Pilgrims Progress by Kyle Mann and Joe Berry. We'll talk a lot more with Kyle right after the break. Also want to mention, we're going back to Israel this September. We've been shut out for three years, but we're going back. If you want to be a part of this fun, intimate trip with Eli Shukron, a real archaeologist who discovered the Pool of Siloam, you want to check our website out at CrossExamined.org Click on events, you'll see it there. We're back in two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio Network. My guest is Kyle Mann of the wonderful BabylonBee.com. If you don't know about the Babylon Bee, where have you been? You need to check out the BabylonBee.com. And if you can be a subscriber, it'll help them get the word out. And it's very important, I think, to put out such great satire material. In fact, I think you probably struggle, Kyle, to come up with some of these satirical headlines because the world is so absurd. A lot of people look at these headlines and some of them even think they're true, don't they?

Kyle:

Constantly. Yeah, all the grandmas on Facebook.

Frank:

All the grandmas on Facebook. And I remember you had one headline that had something to do with, I think it was the CEO of Planned Parenthood praying to Molech.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

Well, that's just true.

Frank:

It probably is. But everyone's like, This is real. She's really doing it.

Kyle:

Yeah, I had a guy come up to me at a convention we were at this weekend and shook my hand and said, I was reading the Babylon Bee for like six months before I realized it was satire. Which is a little concerning but...

Frank:

Yeah, well the world is so crazy you think it's really true. In fact, I saw a headline, it wasn't on the Babylon Bee, I saw it the other day that a convicted terrorist is getting gender reassignment surgery on taxpayer expense. Now, you would think that would be like a Babylon Bee headline but that's really going on. Right?

Kyle:

Well, that'd be like a headline that someone would pitch to me and say, Oh, we should do a joke about, and I would say, No, that's too far-fetched. That's too absurd. Nobody will laugh at that.

Frank:

Here is it. It's happening. Alright, back to The Postmodern Pilgrims Progress, the new book by Kyle Mann and Joel Berry, of the BabylonBee.com. What was the inspiration to write this book?

Kyle:

So, I'm a huge fan of the original Pilgrim's Progress. It's my second favorite book behind Lord of the Rings. Well, and the Bible, of course.

Frank:

Of course, the Bible. You need to say that.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

That's the default. But I'm a huge fan of the original Pilgrim's Progress. There's a large element of humor in there, you know. I've always loved humorous books, humorous fiction, and it's really hard to do well, because if you do it wrong - I don't know, you can write nonfiction, or you can write drama, and if it's bad, it's just mediocre and ho-hum. But if you write comedy bad, it's very bad.

Frank:

Yeah. Right.

Kyle:

And so, but I've always enjoyed Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. I don't know if you've ever read that one, but it was the 1960s when Douglas Adams wrote that. And there's like this satirical angle to everything where they have this Narrator character who's constantly commenting on things, and interjecting himself, and making little quips, and it just makes it makes it fly by. It's such a great book. Terry Pratchett wrote the Discworld series. Always had all this humorous elements. Have you ever read the original Princess Bride book?

Frank:

Oh, yeah. I love Princess Bride.

Kyle:

It's like a book within a book. There's a whole meta thing and the whole joke is the story of The Princess Bride that he's retelling is a terrible book. And then they don't really capture that that much in the movie but in the book, it's like he's trying to retell this book from his childhood, and it becomes clear it's a really badly written book. There's a great, great humor in there. So, I kind of wanted to mash all that together, the Babylon Bee's sense of humor does John Bunyan. So, we call it Hitchhiker's Guide meets John Bunyan.

Frank:

And how did you and Joel put it together? How did you go through the process of writing this?

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

Yeah, so I had a manuscript I wrote, like in 2017, so years ago. And I wrote, I don't know, half the book, a quarter of the book, and then I stuck it in a drawer. I'm sure you've had this experience. You know, you hit the point, you're like, I don't have time or it's not working out.

Frank:

Right.

Kyle:

But it was very serious. It was like, you know, I wrote a lot of the original encounter, city of destruction, the smiling preacher, and all, and it kind of ended up out there. And it was just dry. It was kind of boring. So, Joel came along, and I and I said, Hey, you want to take a look at this old manuscript with me? So, he suggested doing the humorous angle to everything. And I was like, Well, that makes sense. Why didn't I think of that you idiot? And so, we came up with the narrator character, so that the whole book is told through the lens of this angel, who's like, this angelic being whose job it is to collect stories from across all realities that God has created to bring glory to God. And he's this funny guy who doesn't quite understand humans, so he's always saying, like, The humans are eating cheese. Why do you guys love cheese so much? You know, and he goes on a paragraph long rant about cheese, and then he goes back to the story. So, people are loving it. There are these footnotes in there, where he's trying to do pop culture references, but he doesn't understand pop culture references very well. So, we added in all those humorous elements and now there's kind of a distinct Babylon Bee style voice to this thing.

Frank:

Well, you got so many interesting side characters in The Postmodern Pilgrims Progress. We mentioned a few of them already. Who are your favorites in the book?

Kyle:

Well, so one of my favorite encounters to write was the Chesterton's Fence chapter which is, I think, chapter seven or eight.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Frank:

Before you go there, I actually have that highlighted. Just the intro. I'm just gonna read the intro, which is Chesterton saying this, and then you can take off from there. This is what Chesterton said, There exists, in such a case, a certain institution or law. Let us say for the sake of simplicity, a fence or a gate erected across the road. The more modern type of reformer goes gaily up to it and says, I don't see any use for this. Let us clear it away. To which the more intelligent type of reformer will do well to answer, If you don't see the use of it, I certainly won't let you clear it away. Go away and think, then when you can come back and tell me that you do not see use of it, I may allow you to destroy it.

Kyle:

Yes. Yeah. So, that sets the stage for our Chesterton's Fence chapter. We actually wrote this in a Babylon Bee article. We said something like, Progressive Protesters Tear Down Dumb, Useless Fence in the Middle of A Field. This is like a Babylon Bee article I wrote. And we had these guys protesting, and then you can see behind the fence, there's like a bull that's getting ready to charge them. You know, stupid, pointless fence. Down with the bigoted fence.

Frank:

Right, right.

Kyle:

But Chesterton's Fence is such a great point for today. It feels like it was written yesterday, you know, the way that people are trying to tear down institutions that have protected our society for centuries. And, you know, they say, Oh, this is useless. Why do we have police? Why do we have...? And you're and you're like, Well, hang on a second. Go back and study why we have these things. And if you can do that, and come back and tell me why they're there, then we can talk about, you know, dismantling them. But before you know why they're actually there, don't try to dismantle them. So, we have an encounter where the characters are going along the road, and they see these protesters that are shouting at this fence. You know, this is an evil fence that is blocking us from true freedom out there and you know, they tear it down. And, of course, they get murdered by the bull.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Frank:

Murdered by a bull. Yeah, that fence is important. In fact, somebody put it this way, and it was probably from Chesterton. Before you tear down a fence pause long enough to try and discover why the fence was there to begin with. Maybe we could say the same thing about marriage. The reason that marriage has always been between a man and a woman is not some bigotry against same-sex couples. The reason it has always been between a man and a woman is because a man and a woman coming together in a legal relationship recognized by the government is the best way to perpetuate and stabilize society. That's the reason why the government's involved in marriage. Not to recognize that John loves Mary or Bill loves Steve. The reason is, is because it's literally the foundation of civilization, the biological two parent family.

Kyle:

Jordan Peterson was talking about; I think this was in 12 Rules for Life. But he talks about how we tear down the walls that our ancestors put up and the horrors that are outside. You know, we do that are at our own peril, because the horrors outside of them, we don't know why they built these things, but they're there. And that, again, goes to the modernism versus the pre-moderns and post-moderns. You have to respect; Chesterton calls it the democracy of the dead. That's what tradition is. It's like there's people that have created these things in the past for a reason.

Frank:

Right.

Kyle:

And we [unintelligible] wonder what that reason was.

Frank:

Yeah, it isn't interesting that the woke mob wants to tear everything down. They don't want to keep anything standing. They think everything needs to go.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

Yeah, it's dismantling for the sake of dismantling. And Chesterton wrote about that, too. He talks about how, when you rebel against something, you're actually standing for something. And they don't think about that. They tear it down for whatever reason. You know, just dismantle for the sake of dismantling. I don't know how much time we have in this segment. He has a thing about a lamppost. And I think we do a little cameo appearance of the lamppost in the book. But he talks about how people stand around this lamppost chanting, Tear down the lamppost. And he's talked about how all the people that are dismantling it have different reasons for doing so. Like one guy wants to tear it down, because he hates the light, one guy wants to tear it down, because he wants to put something better up. And one guy wants to tear it down for this reason or that reason. And then one guy wants to destroy it, because he likes destroying things.

And I'm like, Well, that sounds like 2020, or 2022, or whatever. And then he says that at the end of it, they've torn down the lamp and now they realize they're in the dark. And they go back to the wisdom of the old priest who said, We need light, because light is good.

Frank:

You know, that reminds me of a line from Phillip Johnson, who was the Berkeley attorney who really took on Darwinism. And he said this in his book, Reason in the Balance, "He who is a skeptic in one set of beliefs is a true believer in another set of beliefs". Right? If you're going to say that X is bad, then you're implying that something else is good. Well, what are you putting up there that's good? If you're gonna tear down a fence, you got to figure out why that fence is there to begin with, and then you got to figure out: What are you trying to build as a result of it? It's kind of like deconstructionism, you know. You got all these young people who are saying they're deconstructing their faith. Well, they don't realize it, but they're reconstructing another faith.

Kyle:

Yeah. They're just moving their faith to something else.

Frank:

Yeah.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

That reminds me of Lewis in *Abolition of Man*, where he talks about how you can't just go on seeing through things forever. The point of seeing through something is to see something through it. Like, you can't just keep deconstructing everything because you're gonna end up being blind.

Frank:

And *The Postmodern Pilgrims Progress* has ways of communicating these kinds of insights, ladies and gentlemen, in a fun way. It is really a novel, wouldn't you say?

Kyle:

Yeah, it's a novel. It's a classic Hero's Journey story. It takes a lot of inspiration from CS Lewis and those kinds of short books. You can sit down and read in a few hours and get a good story out of it and also, you know, teach a lesson; influenced from *Narnia*, influenced from *Screwtape Letters*, and the way that it comments on the Christian life. It's just a classic story.

Frank:

I know you're gonna get a lot of questions on this whenever you do an interview. Do you have to know the original story from *The Pilgrims Progress* to understand the new version, your version?

Kyle:

No. And it's not a direct parody or a direct retelling. It definitely goes in its own direction. But if you've read the original, you'll be able to recognize the references and the callbacks. It starts kind of similar when Ryan goes on his journey, the city of destruction, going out the narrow gate and going on the road, but from there, it kind of takes a hard left turn into our version. CS Lewis did the same thing in *The Pilgrim's Regress* which he wrote back in the 30s.

Frank:

How about the funniest part of the whole book? What do you think it is?

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

I really liked the you mentioned earlier, but the Smiling Preacher segment, because the book does get more serious as it goes on. There's some actual drama and, you know, moments of death and loss and despair. But the Smiling Preacher, we have Ryan drowning in the swamp of despair and depression. And the Smiling Preacher comes up and Ryan says, Save Me. You're right here, save me. And the Smiling Preacher tells him, No, you need to believe in yourself, and save yourself, and pull yourself...think positive thoughts. And Ryan says something like, No, I'm dying. I'm drowning. So, he's no, don't say those negative things. You're speaking them into reality. Be positive. And then he goes off and leaves Ryan to drown. And then you'll have to see what happens next.

Frank:

Check it out ladies and gentlemen. The Postmodern Pilgrim's Progress by Kyle Mann and Joel Barrett. You know, it's really doing pretty well on Amazon right now.

Kyle:

Yeah, yeah. We've been really impressed.

Frank:

It's a good book. A lot of people have endorsed it, including myself and others. So, check it out friends. Wherever you get books check out The Postmodern Pilgrims Progress. We've got a lot more with Kyle Mann right after the break so don't go anywhere. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio Network. Also check out BabylonBee.com. See you in two minutes.

You're back listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek. My guest is Kyle Mann, the Chief Editor at the wonderfully funny and effective BabylonBee.com. Check him out there. We're talking about his brand new book, The Post Modern Pilgrim's Progress. And Kyle, in the book, you've got all these fictional obstacles that the main characters have to get through. What do you think are the biggest non-fictional obstacles that believers have to face today?

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

Yeah, so our characters encounter everybody from like an atheist guy who's in a cave writing there is no sun on the walls, which, obviously, we stole that. And, you know, all kinds of people that are trying to pull them this way and that way, whether that's political figures, or religious figures that want them to do different things. We talked about the legalism. But honestly, the main challenge that we put our characters through was this need to constantly have what Nietzsche called the long obedience in the same direction. And he was obviously writing from this kind of nihilist or existentialist, go find meaning and then walk towards it.

But for us, we know we redeem that to mean the long obedience in the same direction of what your external purposes that God has called you to. You know, there is a purpose for your life. We in the church, I think, have made too much of the big celebrity pastors, the people who do these big acts for Jesus. We have a character early on in the book called Radical and he's like, you know, Let's go off, and we're going to be missionaries, and we're going to change the world. And as soon as he hits the swamp of depression, he's like, Ah, forget this. I didn't sign up for this. And he takes off. Now, he was inspired by Pliable in the original Pilgrim's Progress. But for us, when we kind of updated it, like my generation had this bent of like, we're all going to go out and be missionaries. And like, 99% of us didn't.

Frank:

That's right. Yeah, yeah. We sang Kumbaya in youth camp and we were gonna go save the world. And then we got back to reality.

Kyle:

So, maybe that's the same in every generation. You're obviously much older than I am.

Frank:

How much?

Kyle:

Much, much. But so, for my generation, we had to cope and grapple with this idea that maybe sometimes God wants us to be this ordinarily faithful Christian, you know. On a personal note, like I used to be a co-pastor of a church in San Diego and I'm not a minister anymore. Like, I'm

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

just a regular guy in the pews at church. And that can be a hard transition to go, I was preaching the word, I was converting people, I was baptizing people. And now, is God pleased with me when I get my family up for church in on Sunday and I managed to drag the kids and get them dressed and get them to church? Is that my discipleship in my obedience? And is God pleased with that, you know?

And so, I think that slow plodding one step after another, one foot in front of the other, is kind of the message of this book. And I think that IS the struggle that we face as Christians. It's long faithfulness over 70 years. And I have so much respect for the pastors who are pastoring a church of 50 people in the middle of nowhere and they're just faithful. I have a lot more respect for those guys than the celebrity pastors who have the church of 1000s and then they fizzle out in a scandal, or something, and they're gone. Here today, gone tomorrow, whatever. So, I don't know, maybe that's just my personal experience.

But what I see is like, we are faced with so many heresies, and so many different influences that want to pull us off the path this way and that way, and the people that can remain faithful to the end, that's the constant call of Paul, that he calls us to in the epistles. You know, it's like, just be faithful, be, have endurance, endure to the end. And that's the call that we kind of put to people in the book.

Frank:

Years ago, at Summit Ministries, where I teach every summer - a lot of apologists do - David Noble, who was heading the place up, did a survey. And the survey was of these high school kids, early college kids. He listed a whole bunch of vocations and he said, I want you to tell me whether you think this vocation is secular or sacred. And only two out of 400 kids got 100% of the questions right, because every single vocation he put on that survey was sacred. We think that only people who are in full-time ministry are dealing in a sacred ministry, whereas everybody, no matter where you are, no matter what you're doing, as long as it's a moral profession, you're involved in doing the Lord's work wherever you are. And we have to keep that in mind. It's not just the people up on the stage at church, or the missionaries out on the mission field, who are doing the Lord's work. It's everybody, every one of us, and it takes a complete body.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Frank:

What are some of the temptations, Kyle, that Ryan, the protagonist here in *The Postmodern Pilgrim's Progress* faces as he goes through this journey?

Kyle:

It's the great conflict that he's presented with in the first act. And that kind of becomes the great struggle throughout, is that Satan is tempting him to leave this world to die, and go back, you know, he finds a way to leave the world. You can go back to your own world, you don't have to fight, you don't have to walk this hard road, you can just go back. And his whole life, he's kind of had this despair that's come upon him because of the death of his brother early on in the book, and he wants to give up, he wants to despair, he wants to not care about life and just succumb to nihilism. He actually wants to kill himself at the beginning of the book. And so, we visualize that, and we make that real. And through the allegory that he's actually walking, he just wants to stop walking. I don't want to go any further. So, that's kind of the constant challenge that he has to overcome internally is the desire to just give up.

Frank:

What's the point?

Kyle:

Yeah. And that's kind of resonates, I think, with my generation a lot. There's so much of the nihilism you see out there these days in Gen Z, and nothing matters, everything is pointless. And so, that's kind of the challenge that he has.

Frank:

It totally resonates with at least the first half of Ecclesiastes. Life's meaningless, utterly meaningless. Why am I doing this fact? Some of the scriptures I used yesterday at Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, life's meaningless. Why are we even doing this if there is no God, right? Nothing matters unless there is a God. In fact, you have a character - I'm reading a quote from it. This guy appears to be a very adamant atheist in *The Postmodern Pilgrim's Progress*. I'm trying to see what name you give this guy. But here's what this atheist is saying. "I can see that in the end nothing really matters. Nothing matters. Nothing matters." And then the character Faith says, "You're pretty passionate about this belief of yours that nothing matters". [laughing]

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

Yeah, I think we even gave him the line, The king doesn't exist, and I hate him.

Frank:

You got it. You got it. It's in here. Yeah, yeah. You say this. "So, you're a follower of the king then?", asked Ryan. Ha! The man stood up knocking over his ink pot. "How dare you. I wouldn't follow the king if he appeared right in front of me this very instant. He doesn't even exist." Faith and Ryan exchanged a glance. "Ah, then why do you spend so much time thinking about him?", she asked. "Because I hate him", the man cried turning red in his face. He's a deceiver and a liar.

Kyle:

Yeah, and that is what we're up against, you know, that atheists do have that. But, you know, we tried to make him a sympathetic character too, though, as you read that story. By the end, he's clawing his eyes out to not see the golden city that's right there that he can behold. You know, he's kind of clawing his eyes out and hiding in his cave from the light. And then Faith and Ryan end up in this valley of doubt, where they're kind of caged by their own doubts. And they kind of think back and say, maybe he was right, you know. They think back and they're starting to succumb to doubt.

Frank:

Even though they're seeing it in front of their eyes as well.

Kyle:

Yeah, yeah. So, we tried to kind of make him give fair arguments even though we obviously made him goofy.

Frank:

Yeah, I mean, there's so much in this book, The Postmodern Pilgrim's Progress, that these characters just, they're the characters in our society today friends. That's what makes it so relevant. Let me just ask you a couple more. We just got a few minutes left. Pick any one of these you want to talk about. Here's some other people in the book; Mr. Neck Beard, Red Beard, Mr. Loved by the World, The Hollow Ones, Good Times. Pick any of those you want to talk about.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Kyle:

Sure. Absolutely. Yeah. So, Mr. Loved by the World comes up to the characters as they're kind of going up this mountain. And it's the toughest part of their journey and have to get up to this peak. And The Hollow Ones are kind of this zombie plague people that are going around and they're just going about their lives and have no meaning or purpose in their life. And so, they're kind of standing by the road shouting at them to go back. Go back. This is the wrong way or whatever. And Mr. Loved by the World comes up and he tries to reason with the Hollow Ones, and he wants he wants the Hollow Ones to love him so much he's going to them.

And so, it kind of represents these people that maybe too much want to show the world that we as Christians are cool, or we're reasonable, and like they want to appear good in front of the world, obviously. They want to be loved by the world. So, we made it very on the nose with the name, Mr. Loved by the World. But he tries to reason with them, and eventually, he succumbs to their argument. He succumbs to the argument of the Hollow Ones, and ends up turning around and saying, I want to be loved by them so much that I'm going to do the same thing they're doing. So obviously, there's a line there where we can tilt too far when we're trying to evangelize or contextualize the gospel.

Frank:

Exactly. What's your hope for the book, Kyle? What do you hope comes from it?

Kyle:

Well, we dedicated the book - I don't remember the exact phrasing - but on the dedication page, we dedicated to the people who are just struggling along one step at a time. And that is our hope that Christians who pick this up will be inspired to continue to endure ordinary faith, ordinary faithfulness, day in and day out, rather than the giant, radical acts of service that we feel like sometimes we needed to do with all that pressure. So yeah, we're really hoping that there's small town, small church pastors out there who are struggling, ordinary Christians not in the ministry who are struggling and don't feel like they're little faithfulness at these secular jobs are all sacred. They're all sacred. And we want the Christian writers and the Christian gas station pump attendants to be equally inspired by that.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Frank:

Where do you want them to get the book? And where can they learn more about your work?

Kyle:

Well, it's available at on Amazon and any online bookstore. In person, Barnes and Noble and all of those places. And you can follow us at BabylonBee.com. And we got some more exciting stuff coming soon.

Frank:

Yeah, absolutely. In fact, they've got a book coming in September on democracy. What's it called?

Kyle:

Yeah, The Babylon Bee Guide to Democracy. So, The Guide to Wokeness is behind you there [on bookshelf behind Frank in the video] and we finally have a sequel coming out.

Frank:

It's gonna be great. Kyle, great having you on the show, man. Thanks for coming on.

Kyle:

Thanks so much. Thanks for having me.

Frank:

Yeah, this is The Postmodern Pilgrim's Progress by Kyle Mann, who's the Chief Editor here at the Babylon Bee, and his colleague, Joel Berry. You've got to pick it up. It's a lot of fun. And it's a good way to deal with some of the issues in a fun and in a fantasy way, actually. Some of the issues that we're all dealing with today. So, check it out, friends. Great book.

Frank:

And I also want to mention, I'm gonna be at Bethany Church in Wycoff, New Jersey, this Sunday, that's June 26th. Also, will be with Charlie Kirk out in Phoenix on July 5. All that will be on our website, CrossExamined.org. Just click on Events there. And don't forget to go to the BabylonBee.com You won't be disappointed friends. See you here next week. God bless.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**

