

I don't have enough FAITH
to be an ATHEIST

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

CANCEL Megyn Kelly? Claiming Bible Verses? PLUS More Q&A

(January 27, 2026)

Ladies and gentlemen, I got a lot of questions about the Megyn Kelly podcast we just did. I'll get to that. But I want to mention that today we're going to deal with some of your questions. It's been a while since I've been able to get to some of the questions you've email. And if you want to email a question, it's hello@crossexamined.org.

I apologize, I can't get to all of them, but we've got-- It looks like four good ones today that I'll try and answer as succinctly as possible. The first question is, does Jeremiah 29:11 apply to us today? And, Frank, if you're going to say no, what about Jeremiah 29:12?

Because somebody writes in from South Africa about that. So we'll get into that. Next question is, my pastor has been divorced three times. Should I keep going to that church? We'll cover that. Question three is, is abuse or addiction biblical grounds for divorce, or is it just adultery and desertion?

We're going to get into that. That's a very controversial question among some Christians. And then finally, is saying God created the universe a cop out? Because some atheists will say that, you know, if just give science more time, we're going to figure out a natural cause. So we'll deal with that question as well.

But let me start out with my friend Megyn Kelly. Some of you said, well, Frank, I'm not going to watch the Megyn Kelly podcast because I disagree with her on X, Y or Z. Ladies and gentlemen, this is known as the genetic fallacy. What's the genetic fallacy? That's automatically discounting what someone says because of the source.

If you disagree with Megyn Kelly over X, Y or Z, whatever that is, that doesn't mean that when she speaks on immigration law, that somehow, she's automatically wrong. Look, do I agree with everything Megyn Kelly, agrees with?



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No. And she doesn't agree with everything I agree with. I agree with 90% of what she's doing. I don't even agree with 90% of what I'm doing. All right? Come on. If you can't admit that you can learn from other people, even people who don't believe exactly like you are, you're not going to be able to learn what other people believe, and you're not going to be able to interact with what other people say and do unless you hear what they have to say.

You know, Richard Dawkins often says things that are true. And for you to say, well, since he's an atheist, even a vociferous atheist, there's nothing I can learn from Richard Dawkins, is naive, and that's not the way we need to move forward. You should be reading people who disagree with you.

You should be talking to people who disagree with you rather than shouting them down or shooting them in the neck. So Megyn Kelly is absolutely brilliant on legal issues in particular, and many other things, by the way. And her and I became acquainted through the tragedy of what happened to our friend Charlie.

And as you know, she had me on her show, and she said that the books that I had written and the show that I did with her was helping her process what had happened to Charlie. Particularly, if there's a good God, why is there evil?

And so, I've always liked Megyn Kelly because I think she has such a sharp mind on so many things. And some of you said, well, you know, she's not siding with Erica on certain things. Ladies and gentlemen, she was invited to Amfest, as I was. Now, I didn't hear what Megyn said at Amfest.

I didn't hear her talk. Her and I weren't there at exactly the same time. And I haven't watched everything she's said or done, just like she hasn't watched everything I've said or done. But Megyn Kelly is a friend of Erica. She also happens to be a friend of Candace Owens. And let me just say for the record, that you guys don't know what's going on behind the scenes.

Megyn has tried to bring different parties together and make peace. Okay? Is that still going on? Has there been any success there? I can't say at this point. All right? But she's-- She's trying behind the scenes and has tried behind the scenes.



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There is no bigger fan of Erica Kirk than me. Okay? There's no bigger fan of Charlie Kirk than-- You guys already know this. All right? I think Candace Owens has completely lost any credibility when she's saying that certain dreams are where she's getting her information from.

Okay, yeah, there are dreams in the Bible, but there's always supernatural confirmation for those dreams. There's been no supernatural confirmation for Candace Owens's dreams. You can come up with any possibility you want. Possibilities are not evidence, ladies and gentlemen.

We're supposed to follow evidence. And notice, I'll say this again for-- In fact, I just had a pastor, I was just talking to a pastor friend of mine. He's like, what do I say when, you know, people are running down Erica Kirk? And I say the same thing that I say.

Have you noticed that Jesus and the apostles say that Satan is a murderer, a slanderer, an accuser, a liar, and somebody that brings confusion? Have you noticed that we've had a murder, and then, since then, we've had slander, accusations, lies, and confusion?

That's what spiritual warfare is, ladies and gentlemen. And for people who are slandering Erica and others, including me, and making accusations and lies and stirring up confusion without evidence, this is what Satan does.

That's what spiritual warfare is. And Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5, we're to demolish arguments and take every thought captive to Christ. Well, actually, these people don't have arguments. They have loosely connected facts that might not even be facts.

And they're implicating people in a murder when they have no evidence for it. It's tragic. It's very sad when it happens to somebody like Erica who's mourning the death of her own husband, the father of her two children, and people like Megyn Kelly are trying to run interference behind the scenes.

So I had Megyn on because, A, she's a friend, B, she's brilliant, and C, she's particularly brilliant on issues related to the law and current events. So if you can't learn from Megyn Kelly on those issues, I feel sad for you, okay?



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Because she knows her stuff there. All right? So enough said about that, and, let me deal with question number one. This comes actually from South Africa. A lady by the name of Saralene writes a very long, nice letter.

I'll just read some of it just to get the gist of it. An email, actually. She says, I have a question about Jeremiah 29:11 and that Christians use that verse for themselves or take it for themselves and have hope, etc. from reading that verse. And then she said, you said it was not written for us today but for the people of that time, and that we must not take the Bible out of context.

I'm going to read the whole passage here in a minute but let me just continue with what Saralene has said. I've only recently started reading the book, book for book in the Bible, so I'm honest. I haven't even read, gotten to Jeremiah yet. She said, I joined Bible in 365, but I'm also reading at my own pace as the Holy Spirit leads me.

I've been a Christian all my life, but only recently started valuing the word of God for what it really is. Something happened in my heart when Charlie was murdered. I hear that from a lot of people, ladies and gentlemen. She said, I've started with 1 Samuel all the way, and now I'm busy in 2 Kings.

I'm really enjoying it. God has taught me so much about these books or so much in these books. I've learned a lot about God's character and who he is from reading only this book. So I'm going to read them all as I study the Word every day. And here's what she says. When my husband and I started our business, I felt the Lord give us Jeremiah 29:12.

I'll read that in a minute. And the Lord said to me, people will come to you and ask you, do you have that verse wrong? Shouldn't it be Jeremiah 29:11? She said, that's happened to me twice. The first time the ladies who asked me did not know what Jeremiah 29:12 says.

When I told them, they went to their car and looked it up on their Bible and we're so encouraged by it. I guess my confusion and question is, how can God use the word like that and in such a way if we should not or cannot take it for ourselves, even if it was written to those people all these years ago in the Bible?



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I really enjoy listening to you and thank you for carrying on what Charlie did. I miss him and still cry about his death. Well, thank you, Saralene. That's a nice sentiment. I appreciate that and it's a great question. So why don't we read Jeremiah 29 in context down to the said verse and even a little bit beyond.

First of all, we've talked about this before. It's part of the course 'How to Interpret Your Bible' that we have at crossexamined.org. If you click on crossexamined.org, click on online courses, you'll see 'How to Interpret Your Bible.' It's a 12 week course or 12 one hour lessons, I should say, approximately one hour lessons.

And to give you kind of the skeleton of the course, we have an acronym, Stop - S, T, O, P. Whenever you come to a passage, you should stop and go through each of these letters. What is the S stand for? The S stands for situation.

What's the situation in this section of scripture that you're reading? Like for example, is this letter in Jeremiah 29:11 written to Christians? Is it written to all Israel? Is it written to the people who are just in exile in Babylon?

What's the situation? What's going on? Who is Jeremiah? What does he do? What kind of literature is this? These are the kind of things you need to answer. What is the situation? So you don't just read one verse in the Bible because there are no verses in the Bible, ladies and gentlemen. When Jeremiah wrote his book, he didn't say, here's chapter 29, verse 11.

No, no, those verse, chapter and verse divisions were added about 500 years ago to help us navigate the text. So there are no verses in the Bible. We've added these numbers to help us navigate the text because it's important to help you find your way around. The problem is, we tend to think if it's got a number in front of it, we can just take it out, out of its context, and make it say whatever we want.

We can't do that. We've got to figure out what the situation is, what's the context of the passage? So that's the S. The T is what type of literature is this? Is this, is this Old Testament prophecy? Happens to be.



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Or is this a parable? Or is this a New Testament letter? Or is this poetry? Or is this history? You've got to figure that out because you're going to interpret poetry different than you do history or prophecy, right? Okay, what type of literature is it? The O in stop is who is the object of the passage?

Is the object of the passage, as I mentioned earlier, all of Israel? Is it for Christians? Is it just for a particular group of Christians or a particular group of Jews? You've got to figure that out. As we said before, the Bible was not written to you, it was written for you.

Who is Jeremiah written to? Jeremiah is written to the people of Judah in the 500 B.C. as they were about to go into exile, and after they've gone into exile because the Babylonians came down in 586 B.C. and took them from Judah, and brought them up to Babylon, which is now modern day Iraq.

Actually, this started in about 605 B.C., but it finally happened completely in 586 B.C. So you've got to figure out who the object of the passage is. Jeremiah is writing to the southern kingdom of Judah about the time and after the time, they were doo slapped by Babylon and taken into exile.

So that's written to them. It's written for us because it tells us what God is like, what his history was to bring us ultimate salvation. But it was written to them. So when we interpret these passages, we have to put our minds back in this state or into the state of what a, of what a person in Judah would have thought in the 5000 B.C.

Okay? Because it can't mean today what it didn't mean then. More on that in a minute. And the P in stop stands for is this prescriptive or descriptive? That's a key point too, right? Because there's a lot of descriptions in the Bible that are not prescriptions.

Like, Solomon had many wives. Is that a prescription for us or a description of what Solomon did? That's a description. David committed adultery. Is that a prescription for us or just a description of what David did? It's a description, it's not a prescription. Right? You've got to figure this out. So if you put those four questions together, situation, type, object of the



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passage, and is this prescriptive or descriptive, S T O P, it'll help you discover what the true meaning of the passage is.

And then only then, after you interpret it properly, can you apply it properly. So now, Jeremiah, situation, exiles have been taken to Babylon. Type of literature, prophecy. Object of the passage, he's going to tell us as we read this, the exiles that were taken to Babylon. Is this prescriptive for us or a description? It's a description, although there may be some principles in here that are prescriptions for us.

I'll explain that as we go. Because some of these principles here are universal. They're not just for the people in Babylon, because these principles are echoed elsewhere in the Scripture and those places they are echoed apply to us today.

Okay? In fact, let me point out that when we say, does this apply to us today, what we mean is, are the promises in these passages applicable to us today? The answer is no. But does it apply to us today in other ways? Yes, it applies to us in other ways to know what God's character is like, to know what God did in history, to know what he did to ultimately bring the Messiah to the promised land, and to get the Messiah to a point where he could save the entire world.

So, yes, it's applicable to help us understand God's character, and history, and how God worked, even if the promises, *per se*, specifically are not applicable to us today. So all scripture is applicable, but in different ways. The promises in 29:11 are not promises to us today, but the principles that we might learn about God, and the attributes of God, are applicable to us today.

Anyway, let me read the passage. Let's just start at the top of Jeremiah 29. This is the text of the letter the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets, and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

This was after King Jehoiachin, and the queen mother, and the court officials, and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the skilled workers, and the artisans had gone into exile from Jerusalem. He entrusted the letter to Elasah, son of Shaphan, and Gemariah, son of Hilkiah.

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By the way, I think we've discovered a-- No extra charge for this. If I'm remembering this right, I think we discovered a seal for one of these guys in the city of David. I think it may have been Gemariah, but don't quote me on that.

It's a Gemariah. I'd have to look it up from our archaeology course, but that name is ringing a bell. This obscure guy in Jeremiah, I know there's somebody in Jeremiah, an obscure guy that we've discovered a seal for him, so we know he actually existed. Anyway, to whom, Zedekiah, king of Judah, sent to Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon.

Okay, here is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to these people in exile. Here it is. You ready? Verse 4. This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says. To whom? To all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

He doesn't say to all believers of all time. He says, to those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. Verse 5, build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage so that they too may have sons and daughters.

Increase in number there. Do not decrease. Also seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it. Because if it prospers, you too will prosper. Yes.

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says. Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. They are prophesying lies to you in my name.

I have not sent them, declares the Lord. Well, here's a situation back then where God said, don't listen to the dreams of these unbelievers. Geeze, does that ring a bell? Anyway, verse 10. This is what the Lord says. When 70 years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to you to bring you back to this place.

What place? Judah. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future. That's verse 11. Everybody quotes



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that, and they quote it as if it's a promise to people today living in America or wherever you live across the world.

Here's verse 12. Then you will call on me, and come, and pray to me, and I will listen to you. And this is the passage that the lady was asking about. I felt like God gave me that passage for my business. Not 29:11, but 29:12.

Then you will call on me, and come, and pray to me, and I will listen to you. And then it goes on to say verse 13. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you, declares the Lord, and bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.

And then the passage goes on. Obviously, if we're going to say that all these promises apply to us today, we're pulling the passage right out of context. It was not written to us. It was written for us, but not to us. It was written to the people back then. And by the way, if you're going to say all these promises are for you, you've got to wait 70 years for them.

Why? Because it says when 70 years are completed for Babylon, not for you here in America. You just can't pull this stuff out of context and apply it to yourself. However, I will say there are principles in here that are true universally, because they're even taught elsewhere in Scripture.

Like, for example, let's go back to verse seven. In fact, Charlie used to quote this passage all the time, Charlie Kirk. He said, seek the prosperity, the peace, and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.

Okay? That is a valid principle that you should apply everywhere. Because elsewhere the scriptures say, pray for your leaders. Pray that things would go well. I mean, it's taught elsewhere. It's taught in the New Testament.

Jesus says, occupy till I come. Love your neighbor. How do you love your neighbor? Well, one way you can love your neighbor is to seek the prosperity of the country in which you are, to put laws in place to protect innocent people from evil, to put laws in place that punish wrongdoers.



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Isn't it interesting that when you look up at Minnesota and other places, you have people fighting against valid law enforcement. Governments are supposed to enforce their own laws, and yet you have people fighting against law enforcement.

That's the opposite of what we're supposed to be doing. Valid law enforcement. These are democratically elected laws that we've put into place. Now, does that mean that always law enforcement does everything right? Of course not. And in those cases, they ought to be investigated.

However, when you have people who are actively trying to obstruct or stop laws from being enforced, that is not biblical, particularly laws that we know are valid, like if somebody comes here illegally or worse yet, also commits another crime illegally, that that person ought to be arrested, that that person ought to be deported.

And yet, you have local governments in Minnesota who are releasing these people from jail. We covered this on the Megyn Kelly podcast. And now ICE has to go in. Instead of going to the jail and saying, hey, hand me over these guys, and there's no problem, ICE has to go out into the community and try and find these people.

And yet, you have these agitators who are trying to prevent ICE from, arresting people that ought to be arrested. These are rapists, some of them. Some of them are murderers. They're drug dealers. And we're, we're to say, oh, no, no, no, no, no, that's illegal to arrest. No, it's not!

You're supposed to punish wrongdoers. You're supposed to create law and order. When you don't punish wrongdoers, you actually punish innocent people because of what the wrongdoers do to innocent people.

So let me go back to the passage here. And by the way, we had two complete podcasts on borders and immigration law prior to Megyn Kelly, that you can go back. It's like, I don't know, three, four weeks ago we did this.

So if you want to get the details there, go into that. But some of these passages are repeated elsewhere in the New Testament. By the way, if you want a New Testament passage that isn't



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exactly like Jeremiah 29:11 but shows you that God works all things together for good, that would be, of course, Romans 8:28.

But good doesn't always mean temporal good. It could mean into eternity, where it says, we know that God brings all things together for good to those that love God and are called according to his purpose.

And then it goes on to say, to be conformed to the image of His Son. Doesn't mean you're going to be prosperous, but it means that all things will work together for good, certainly into eternity. After you become conformed to the image of a Son, you've enhanced your capacity to enjoy God forever.

You've become a true disciple. You're someone that is going to excuse me, be rewarded in heaven for the good works you've done. Remember, you get into heaven by grace, but your rewards in heaven are based on the good works that you do here.

There will be levels of reward in heaven, just like there will be levels of punishment in hell, because God is just. But your ticket into heaven is completely paid for by Jesus. Where you're going to be in terms of your rewards, that's depending on the good works you have done. This is pointed out in 1 Corinthians 3, by the way, among other places.

So the point here is, is that you have to interpret the passages in context. Romans 8:28 isn't exactly like Jeremiah 29:11, because Romans 8:28 isn't just talking temporally, but also eternally.

But the same kind of principle applies that God ultimately will take believers and reward them. All of what's got happens to them is going to work together for good, even though that could, and often does require a lot of pain and suffering.

But to just take Jeremiah 29:11 out of context and try and apply that to your own life now, as if God is going to prosper you in this life, is completely illegitimate. And again, you'd have to wait 70 years anyway if you're going to read this properly. And what about verse 12?



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Then you will call on me, and come and pray with me, and I will listen to you. Well, that's true elsewhere in Scripture. I mean, it was true that when you pray to God, he'll listen to you by this passage, and he's talking just to the exiles. But there are several other passages in the scripture that say the same thing.

I mean, Jesus talks a lot about prayer. So do the apostles. They talk a lot about prayer. And so, the writer of Hebrews says, he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Prayer and seeking God is taught elsewhere.

So instead of wrenching this passage out of context and applying it to yourself, look at those other passages which essentially say the same thing and say, I'm basing what this idea that God hears me in my prayers on these passages.

Yes. It's also taught here to the exiles because God is consistent. But this wouldn't be the passage I would use, in other words, to say that God listens to me. I would say, well, God certainly listened to the exiles in Babylon.

True. And since God is consistent, he's going to listen to me as well. And he's going to listen to me because these other passages say so as well. Doesn't mean he's going to always answer yes. Thank God he doesn't always answer yes. Who is it Garth Brooks that has that song? He's right about that song. Thank God for unanswered prayer.

Yeah. Think about many of the things you prayed for, ladies and gentlemen, in your past. And now you go, glad I didn't get that. Okay? You may have prayed to have a different spouse, for example, glad that didn't happen. Or a different job. Glad that didn't happen. God knows way better than we do.

It's either yes, no, or wait. So remember, the overall summary of the scripture is this, here in three short sentences. God created it, we broke it. Jesus fixed it.

God created it, we broke it. Jesus fixed it. This story in Jeremiah 29 has already been through, we've already seen that God created the universe and created us. We broke it through sin in Genesis 3.



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The rest of the passages are really talking about how ultimately Jesus fixed it all. One of the ways he fixed it was he actually protected his people, and the tribe of Judah while in exile, and then he brought them back to the land.

And ultimately Jesus came from that line, the line of Judah. So this story in Jeremiah is telling us the history of how God protected his people even when they went into exile, even after they were punished for their apostasy.

Now, when people say, God gave me this verse, I need to stop and say, well, first of all, what do you mean by that? And have you read the whole passage? Do you know whether or not it applies to you directly? Is this a verse for Christians to be applied to their lives right now? Or is just in a verse that informs Christians about how God dealt with people in the past, like Jeremiah 29:11?

And how do we know if it's God if we're taken out of its original context? To give you an extreme example of this, I remember I was at an event one day and almost everyone had left. I was just talking to people afterwards, and this lady came to me and she said, you know, my-- I wish my daughter had known about this apologetics before she left the faith.

And I said, I know. I hear that a lot. I hear so many parents come to me after their kids leave the house, and they go, man, I never really taught them the evidence for this. And, you know, do you have a book that I can give them? And usually I say no, because it's not going to matter now. I mean, I'm just being honest, right?

It can be too late. You never give up, but it can be too late. It would have been better to have inoculated them with the truth. They still could have left anyway. But it's hard to leave something you know beyond a reasonable doubt is true. It's easy to jettison something you've doubted your whole life, especially when you have this moral hazard, this idea that, well, you don't want God to exist because you want to go your own way.

Anyway, this lady said, but I know my daughter's going to come back. And I said, why? And she said, because God gave me this verse. And it was some verse in Isaiah that said something like, I will bring her back.



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I looked up the verse, and in Isaiah, he was referring to Israel, like, I will bring Israel back into the land. And she was applying that to her wayward daughter. God gave me this verse.

Now, it can seem heartless to say to somebody, I'm sorry, ma', am, that's not the way the passage works. You know? But at some point, someone needs to point out that there's no guarantee your daughter's coming back. And if your daughter doesn't come back, and you think that God has somehow lied to you, and maybe therefore God doesn't exist, that's a bigger problem.

A lot of people, especially, how about they apply Jeremiah 29:11 to themselves, and after they go many years and God doesn't prosper them, they go, Bible's false. God doesn't exist because this says I should prosper and I haven't. So the whole thing's bunk.

You see what bad theology can do? You're expecting something from God that God never promised. And then you blame God for not coming through on a promise he never made. It's important to interpret the text rightly. So, when you say God gave me this verse, I think he gives you verses, if you will.

If these verses come to your mind, maybe the Holy Spirit put that on your mind. But he would probably only do so if it was in context. Because why is he going to deceive you by using a verse that doesn't say what it says in the Bible to you?

Why would he use a different passage if he wanted to give you, If you seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart-- He could have given you, say Hebrews, I want to say that's in chapter six. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

Or another passage about prayer somewhere. Why would he give you a passage out of context? So I want to thank you for the question. Saralene. I hope I answered it there. I know this can be upsetting to people who think that God provides them certain verses. And when the verses are out of context, I would venture to say it's probably not God doing that.



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Of course it could be. I can't be sure for certain. But why not give you a verse that was in context rather than out of context? All right, let me move on now to, well, let me point out that interpreting the Bible is very important.

And I get these questions all the time on college campuses. And we're going to go to college campuses again this semester, the 'Change My Mind' tour. In fact, let me point out that the first event is going to be next week in Elon University here in North Carolina.

North Carolina, and the first day is February 10th. We'll be at Elon. The next night, Lord willing, we'll be at NC State in Raleigh. That's the 11th of February. Then on the 12th we're going to drive down to the University of Northern Florida.

Hope to see you there. I think we're going to kind of do different themes every night. I'll cover some of the evidence for Christianity, but not all of it. It's kind of hard to create it to do it all and have long Q & A periods. So we'll cover some of the evidence for Christianity in each one of these.

And then we're going to be in Michigan two weeks after that. We're going to be at Michigan Technical University in Houghton, Michigan on the 23rd, Lord willing. That's the 23rd of February. The day before, by the way, I'll be at, Evangel Community Church in Houghton, Michigan, and then Virginia Technological University in Houghton, Michigan, the next night.

That's the 23rd. The 24th, Lord willing, will be at Northern Michigan University up in Marquette, Michigan. Man, I hope I bring my down jacket. It's gonna be cold up there. [Laughter] And there are so many more events coming up later in the semester.

We're going to be at Colorado Mesa University on the 24th of March, and then the next day, we're going to be at Utah Valley University. Yeah, the university where Charlie was murdered. I don't know how I'm going to react to being there again, but that campus needs the gospel.

So we're going there. And then there are several more. They're all on our website. It is the Change My Mind tour. Go to Crossexamined.org.org, click on events. You'll see it there. So let me now go to the next question. And by the way, they'll all be live streamed, Lord willing.



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Always say Lord willing. You know why? Because James says, you say you're going to do this, you say you're going to do that. Don't be so presumptuous. You could die today. Yeah, that's true. If the Lord's in it, we won't. Even if I die, the Lord's still in that because he knows the end from the beginning.

He can bring good from evil. And the worst evil was-- The worst evil I've ever seen is seeing Charlie murdered. And yet good can still come from it. All right, let me go to the next question. The 'Change My Mind' tour, as I say, is on our website.

Next question comes from Barry. I have a question that I can't get an answer to. Our church lost its pastor and we moved on. One of the members has taken the pulpit and he's been married and divorced three times. And I just can't go sit under him.

Am I being too legalistic? I need an answer, please. Well, first of all, if your conscience is bugging you over that, Barry, yeah. No, you can't live under that. You should go to another church. But I would say you're not being too legalistic. Paul talks about elders, and of course the pastor is a senior elder, being the husband of one wife.

In fact, he has many qualifications. There are two sections of scripture you can go to for this. One is 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and then Titus 1:6-8. These are qualifications for elders, including the pastor. And I'm just going to list them here without reading the passages in depth.

I'm just going to in the interest of time, I'm just going to read kind of what they say, that elders and pastors must be above reproach. So blameless in observable life. The husband of one wife shouldn't be on his third marriage, sober minded, self-controlled, respectable, not a drunkard, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not greedy or greedy for gain.

Not a lover of money, a lover of good, upright and holy, one who manages his own household well, with believing or faithful children who are not wild or insubordinate, well thought of by outsiders, so he does not bring reproach on the church. Also in, 1 Timothy 3 he talks about being able to teach, holding faithful to the word, says Titus 1:9.



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Not a recent convert either. That's 1 Timothy 3:6, lest he become conceited and fall into condemnation. So a guy that's been married three times? Well, to be fair, the first thing I'd want to do is, you know, how did he become a pastor?

Or is this guy's just filling in? He's an interim pastor? And when did these divorces occur? Was it before he became a Christian? And how long has he been a Christian? And if it was after he became a Christian, what were the circumstances of all this?

I mean, did all of his wives commit adultery or walk out on him? And even if they did, I would still be suspect of his character. I mean, something isn't quite right here. So I would say that you can ask these questions, but at this point, when you see this kind of thing going on, there are so many questions it raises.

If you ask these questions and get answers, great. If you ask these questions and people stonewall you, okay, time to move on. And by the way, remember that when you bring up questions like this, some people are going to claim you're being divisive.

But as Paul says in Romans 16, a passage that many people just gloss over because you think most of Romans 16 is all Paul saying, greet this person, greet Rufus, greet this other person, say hello to so and so. They're in Rome for me, right?

And they don't recognize that right in the middle of that whole passage is a little section of scripture that points out that the truly divisive ones are not the people adhering to scripture, but the people who are bringing false teaching into Scripture or are living out false moral lifestyles and saying it's okay.

So you're not the divisive one by saying, does this guy meet the scriptural standards for being a pastor? If they stonewall you or say, stop being divisive, you need to say no. According to Romans 16 and other passages, by the way, that talk about false teaching, and according to the passages in 1 Timothy and Titus, our pastor ought to have certain qualifications.



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And if you're saying that's not important, then I think you're in error. And we're not going to have unity in error. We're going to have unity in truth. We need to fight against false teaching. Paul calls out false teachers on six occasions by name in his letters.

So it's not the people that are adhering to the scriptures that are divisive. It's the people that are bringing the false teaching or false practices into the church. In fact, Paul himself had to correct Peter, of all people, supposedly the first pope.

If you read in Galatians, Chapter two, Paul says, I told Peter to his face that he was wrong for trying to get the New Testament believers to obey the Old Testament law. Here's Peter actually correcting the practice of another apostle, in the Bible. Okay?

It's appropriate to do so when you see it. Now, there's a method for doing this. Go to Matthew 18 to do it properly, but you need to do it. And again, if you get stonewalled or people start calling you names, or saying you're divisive, okay, move on to somewhere else. You might want to move on anywhere, given the situation.

All right, now here's a related question from Vivian. What is the scripture's stance on remarriage when the divorce was because of abuse or abandonment? Wonderful question, Vivian.

This is going to be controversial among some Christians, but, and I have not studied this in depth, but I'm relying on other people that have at this point. Sometimes you can't do all the study yourself. In fact, you know, when you read commentaries or you read, or even listen to your pastor, you know, man, I haven't done all that study myself.

I know, I know you can't do it. All right? But I'm going to refer you to people that have. Okay? Back in 2019, I was at the Evangelical Theological Society meeting out in San Diego, and Dr. Wayne Grudem, the Wayne Grudem who has the Systematic Theology and many other books.

In fact, I've had Wayne on the show. He has a book called, 'The Bible and Politics' that we talked about. This is six, seven years ago we had him on. But Wayne is still out there at Phoenix Seminary. Don't know if he's retired yet or not. But Wayne in 2019 at this ETS meeting, put out



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a paper that basically said there are more, legitimate grounds for divorce from the Bible than just adultery or abandonment.

And he mentioned abuse. And this is controversial because some Christians, even scholarly Christians, will say, I don't think Grudem has it right here, but what I'm going to do is give you some references. Okay? First of all, Wayne put out a paper that day in 2019, and that he turned into a book.

It's only 100 pages long. The book is called, and we'll put a link in the show notes, 'What the Bible says About Divorce and Remarriage.' It's published by Crossway in 2021. Crossway happens to be the same publisher as 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.' And you might be able to find an article online, from Wayne Grudem, on that same topic.

I tried to find it, and I found a link, but for some reason I couldn't get it to download. Maybe it's just my browser, I don't know. But he did have an article on it, and Mike Winger, who I also trust on many of these issues, did a three hour video on it approximately, but also a shorter video on it.

And we'll put that shorter video in the show notes as well, from YouTube. What both of these scholars will agree on is that there is no such exception for I just fell out of love.

I just don't want to be with him anymore or her anymore. Those are not grounds for divorce. Most divorces that occur in the United States and even, tragically among church members, really have to do more with a falling away of feelings than a biblical exception for divorce, like adultery, or abandonment, or as both Grudem and Mike Winger would say, cases of abuse.

Most of them are just, you know, we fell out of love. We just don't connect anymore. We've gone our separate ways. Well, let me just say a couple things about that, ladies and gentlemen. And that is that love is not a feeling. You don't go to the marriage altar and vow to feel a certain way for the next 50 years.

That's not what a vow is about. You can't vow feelings. You might as well go and vow, I'll never be hungry again. I'll never be angry again. I'll never be emotional again. I'll never be happy or



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sad or whatever. You can't vow feelings. You can only vow actions. And by the way, when you're all lovey dovey at the marriage altar, you don't need a vow.

You only need a vow when you wake up after 20 years of marriage and you look over at your spouse and you go, you again? Why did it have to be you again? That's when you need a vow, not when you have all these lovey dovey feelings.

Vows are something that keeps you in the marriage to work on it when things are not going well. And C.S. Lewis, by the way, brilliantly points this out in the chapter in 'Mere Christianity' on Marriage.

Whenever I'm asked to officiate a marriage, I always tell them, you got to read that chapter. And you've got to read some other books too. But you definitely have to read the chapter in 'Mere Christianity' on Marriage, because feelings are not the basis of a vow.

They're not the basis of a marriage. You hope you have feelings, but sometimes feelings come, and sometimes feelings go. And if you want to, by the way, generate more affection for your spouse, then treat your spouse in a loving way. So when Wayne Grudem, and Mike Winger, and others say, I think the scripture allows for these other possibilities, whether it be abuse, or extreme addiction, they're basing it on several reasons.

One of the reasons that Grudem says, is he interprets-- I don't have time to exegete the whole passage here, but the passage, the key passage that he points to is 1 Corinthians 7, verses 15.

And he explains all this in the book. And there are no verses in the Bible, so you really have to read the whole passage here. But in this case, I'm just going to read the passage, 15, where he says, but if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. That's the abandonment thing.

So your unbelieving partner says, I'm out of here. Then you can get remarried. Verse 16. Oh, I'm sorry. Let me read the whole passage. I didn't read all of 15. But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases-- And Grudem looks at this, cases. Not a single case, cases. The brother or sister is not enslaved.



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God has called you to peace. And he goes on, but the word cases is plural. And according to Grudem, that means there could be another exception other than just abandonment. Now, other scholars have pushed back on this and said, no, that doesn't mean what Wayne Grudem thinks it means. What you're going to need to do is get Wayne's book or look up his article online, and watch that video from Mike Winger, and may go deeper in Mike Winger's other video.

But I think that Grudem is probably right on this. I think in extreme situations where there's certainly physical abuse, or other kinds of abuse, and there's no hope of reconciliation, or there's extreme addiction, that could be maybe put under other cases in such cases.

That's what the passage says, 1 Corinthians 7:15. But as I say, I'm not completely there myself because I need to study it more. But those are the resources you can go to Vivian, if you want more on this. And by the way, thank you for looking to the scriptures for how you should conduct your life, because that's what we all ought to be doing, going to the scriptures.

If we don't have a standard outside of ourselves, we're just basing everything on our own opinions. And there are no rights and there are no wrongs. Everybody just has their own opinion. Now, by the way, Grudem also pointed out. Oh, there's a problem here though.

I know what you're thinking. If you say there are other cases, then people are going to come up with all sorts of excuses for saying I want a divorce. And Grudem addresses that in his book. So, if you really want an in depth answer, check that out, and also check out Mike Winger, and you can also Google, and find people that disagree with Grudem on that.

All right, let me go to Patrick, who writes in and says, Frank, I had a discussion with two of my colleagues about the evolution of our scientific findings where whenever we didn't know how to explain a physical reality, we said it was God or the gods. Like he's talking about "God of the Gaps." Well, we can't figure out a natural cause for all this.

Must be God that did it. And then we learn later it's got to be a natural cause. And Patrick goes on to say, the skeptic is contending that the Big Bang is just another example of that. I said,

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fine, say the universe is an accordion. At some point, there was a beginning. In other words, I guess this atheist was saying, maybe it's not the Big Bang theory.

It's a Big Bang bang, bang, bang, bang bang bang theory. There's so many bangs, it goes on ad infinitum, and there never was a beginning. Well, actually the second law of thermodynamics would prevent that. And the evidence seems to suggest there wouldn't even be enough gravity to pull everything back, to create another bang.

So the second law of thermodynamics seems to put a big damper in the accordion, or recurring bang theory. They can go on forever. But let me continue with what Patrick writes in and says. He says, there must be a first uncaused cause.

But he said that's a cop out. And I pointed out, what's a bigger cop out is the opposite assumed belief that he believes an infinite chain of matter coming from nothing, but he can't believe an infinite being. His response was basically, I don't know.

And I said, that's a bigger cop out. Love to hear your thoughts. Semper fi. So Patrick must be a marine. Well, thank you, Patrick. Yeah, it is a cop out on his part because first of all, you don't even need the big bang or science to show there had to be a beginning.

And you can't go on an infinite regress of causes. There has to be an uncaused first cause. Even the argument called the kalam cosmological argument that there had to be a beginning, you can't go on an infinite regress of causes.

And there can't be an infinite number of days before today. There can only be a finite number of days before today. Why? Because if there were infinite number of days before today. The day we're in right now never would have gotten here. Never would have gotten here. Because you'd always have to live another day before you got to today, because there's an infinite number of days before today.

But today is here, which means there can only be a finite number of days before today. I know this can give you intellectual constipation if you haven't thought about this before but stick with me. There can only be a finite number of days before today because today has arrived, which



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means time had a beginning. And if time had a beginning, whatever created time must be timeless.

And if you're timeless, do you have a beginning? No. And if you're timeless and you don't have a beginning, do you have a cause? No. You're the uncaused first cause. You don't need the Bible to know this. Aristotle knew there had to be an uncaused first cause. In fact, Aristotle mistakenly thought the universe was eternal.

And he still said, you need an uncaused first cause. You need a cause right now to keep the natural laws going the way they go. You need a present cause, not just an historical cause. So not only can't you go on an infinite regress of historical causes, you can't even go on an infinite regress of vertical causes.

That there's got to be something holding up the universe right now, someone, some mind that's keeping these laws going in the direction they go. I mean, why does an acorn, if it's properly nourished, always become an oak tree? Why doesn't it become an elm tree, or a birch tree, or a seahorse?

Because it's programmed to become an oak tree. Yeah, well, who programmed it? And by the way, is an acorn conscious? Is an acorn in the ground thinking, what do I have to do to become an oak tree? No, but if it's nourished, it always goes in the direction of becoming an oak tree.

If it doesn't have a mind of its own, yet it reliably goes in a direction, there must be an external mind directing it toward an end. That's what Aristotle called the unmoved mover. Thomas Aquinas came along in the 1200s A.D.

and he said, this is going to be my fifth way to argue for God, that all of nature is going in a direction. If it's going in a direction, somebody must be directing it right now. Again, not an historical cause, a right now cause. And by the way, this is why we can do science, ladies and gentlemen. Why can we do science?

Because all of nature is orderly and it goes in a consistent direction. If that's the case, there must be a mind directing it. Where do laws come from? They come from lawgivers. Why do



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these laws exist and persist? Because there's a mind directing them, every single second we exist.

The natural laws themselves that scientists say, well, it caused everything. The natural laws themselves need a cause and a sustainer. And by the way, laws don't cause anything. Laws just describe what happens to things once they already exist.

You know, you can, you can take the laws of mathematics. I think Lewis may have had this example and John Lennox has talked about it before. The laws of arithmetic say two plus two equals four. But the laws of arithmetic won't create \$2 and another \$2 so you have \$4.

The laws of arithmetic just tell you what happens when you have \$2 and you add them to two more dollars. You get four. The law of gravity won't create a boulder that'll roll down a hill. But once there is a boulder, the law of gravity can pull it down a hill or whatever gravity does with general relativity. You know what I mean.

So it's not a cop out to say there's got to be a natural-- Or let me put it another way. It's not a cop out to say there's got to be something beyond nature that created nature. Because, you know, this happened at a college in Michigan once.

This former Christian got up and said, oh, this is the God of the Gaps argument, this cosmological argument. You know, you give science more time, we're going to figure out a natural cause. I said to the guy, John, you'll never find a natural cause for all of nature. He said, no, give science more time and we'll figure one out.

I said, John, first of all, that sounds a lot like faith. You know, we haven't found it yet, but we will. But I said, in principle, you'll never find a natural cause for all of nature because nature didn't exist. So there's got to be something outside of nature that brought it into existence. In other words, it's got to be something supernatural, something beyond the natural.

That's what we mean by God. No, the cosmological argument doesn't show that God of the Bible exists. It could be the God of the Bible. But from the evidence from both science and from philosophy, I already mentioned, you can't go on an infinite number of days before today.



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So there's got to be a beginning. From the evidence, if space, time, and matter had a beginning, as even atheists are admitting-- Stephen Hawking famously said, almost everyone now believes that the universe and time itself had a beginning out of nothing. The evidence shows that whatever created space, time, and matter must transcend space, time, and matter.

This is just a logical deduction. It's not I don't know. It's, well, it's got to be a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, intelligent cause. Because to create something out of nothing, you've got to have power.

You've got to have intelligence. You've got to be able to make a choice. You've got to be personal to make a choice. And you've got to be outside of space, time, and matter, because space, time, and matter don't exist until you create. Now, it could be the God of the Bible, could also be Allah, or some other theistic or deistic God. You've got to see if Jesus rose from the dead to see if the cause of the universe truly is the God of the Bible or somebody else.

And when you see that Jesus actually did rise from the dead, then you can say that the same being that walked out of the tomb 1,993 years ago is the same being in whose divine nature created the universe out of nothing. Yahweh, the God of the Bible.

Well, actually, Jesus created all things. As you know, he's the second person of the eternal Trinity. This is what Colossians 1 says. Jesus created all things. In his divine nature, he created all things. So, no, it's a cop out to say you don't know, because the best evidence is you do know. A spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, intelligent creator.

So there's much more in the book 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist', if you want to go there to check into that. But all laws need lawgivers. The current laws that exist still need a creator and a sustainer. So you don't get away from this.

I mean, even if you were to say that natural laws did something or do certain things, they still need a cause themselves later, ladies and gentlemen. You're getting back to a being like God. All right, ladies and gentlemen, a lot in this program.



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I hope it was helpful and we'll get to more. Don't forget that we are going to have the 'Change My Mind' tour coming up February 10th. February, yeah. February 10th, 11th, and 12th. Elon NC State, and then Northern Florida.

And Northern Florida is in Jacksonville, Florida, by the way. And then a couple weeks later, we're going to be in Northern Michigan. Check our website for more, Crossexamined.org Great being with you. We'll see you here next time. God bless.

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