

24-1023wc Transcript

24-1023wc - *Christian Apologetics, Tom Freed*

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24-1023 Wed. Class - Christian Apologetics

Transcript (0:04 - 25:54)

Transcript

Teacher: Tom Freed

(0:05) Scott had a great sermon Sunday morning. (0:10) Brought up some interesting statistics why young people are leaving the church. (0:15) So I listened at work, I wasn't able to make it.

(0:18) And I looked at the notes to refresh my memory from the website. (0:26) We also had a good lesson on the website and all the information we have. (0:30) I know he's using some programs to summarize and have word for word all the sermons.

(0:37) So he's doing a great job with that. (0:41) There is a ton of information on the website. (0:45) So we got a lot of good tools.

(0:48) He brought up that from, I think he did, from the Apologetics Press. (0:57) They said that 68-80% of Christian students leave their faith when they enter college. (1:05) And two-thirds of young evangelists stop practicing religion during college years.

(1:10) So we can see that a ton of people are leaving the faith when they go to college. (1:16) Sure, everybody that has kids probably has seen it in one way or the other. (1:23) But when you dig deeper, most are leaving at college.

(1:27) But earlier, it was 40% leaving during elementary school and only 11% leaving during college. (1:36) So they actually probably started leaving the faith a lot earlier. (1:42) But their parents, I'm assuming, just make them go to church and worship.

(1:46) When they go to college, then they can do whatever they want. (1:49) So they probably completely drop out. (1:54) So the study went over and found that a significant correlation exists between beliefs (1:59) and the Genesis creation account and whether individuals remain faithful to Christianity.

(2:07) So the main reason we're losing a young people from the church, (2:11) if they don't believe in creation, why would they believe the rest of the Bible? (2:15) They believe the world does a better

job of pushing evolution than we do of pushing creation. (2:24) Evolution's everywhere. (2:26) Everything you look at, it's part of the vocabulary.

(2:30) If you look in any diet book I ever read, they brought up evolution. (2:33) Anything about relationships, diet, working out, it's all, they put evolution in everything. (2:43) And we know creation is the actual truth and how the world started.

(2:49) But the world's pushing a lie and we're losing that battle. (2:54) So one of the authors, Josh, had the same problem when his son went to college, (3:00) if you remember from earlier in the study. (3:04) He brought him back to Christianity by giving him books to read on apologetics, (3:08) which renewed his faith and answered questions he had about creation and Christianity.

(3:15) So hopefully this study has given us some groundwork so we can help convince the young (3:21) and also the old that the best explanation of reality is a Christian worldview. (3:28) So a Christian worldview best explains it. (3:30) But if we're not telling people our side of the story, telling people about creation, (3:36) they're only hearing one side of it.

(3:39) They're only hearing the big bang and evolution. (3:43) Most of the kids, we're not teaching them about creation. (3:47) We're not teaching them apologetics.

(3:53) So we've got to do a better job. (3:55) That was one of the things that, you know, that mentioned. (4:02) Well, we do have to do a better job with apologetics.

(4:07) So we've been going over signposts that point to God and Christianity. (4:13) So this sermon he did fits perfectly what we've been going over. (4:18) So we looked at fine-tuning of the universe a couple weeks ago.

(4:21) And last week we looked at what makes best sense, (4:26) the consensus that the universe had a beginning. (4:30) So the question of whether the universe had a beginning or if it existed eternally (4:34) has been debated throughout history. (4:38) Aristotle, for instance, believed in the eternality of the universe, (4:42) while Christians and Jews have long believed that the universe has been created.

(4:48) We can see, you know, the Old Testament's been around as long as could be. (4:54) There's always been a debate. (4:56) For a likely portion of time, the belief in the eternality of the universe (5:00) became the dominant scientific position in the West (5:04) until a study of such things as the red shift in light from faraway galaxies, (5:10) cosmic microwave background, and thermodynamics pushed the consensus the other way.

(5:15) But currently most scientists agree the universe had a beginning. (5:19) So pretty much everybody now believes it had a beginning. (5:24) We believe, you know, the Big Bang.

(5:26) But we believe God started the Big Bang, you know. (5:29) The universe had a beginning. How did it start? (5:33) The atheists believe nothing exploded, you know.

(5:37) That's science, I guess. (5:40) You know, they can't observe or repeat that. (5:44) Nobody's seen nothing explode, but that's what everybody's going to accept.

(5:50) We believe that God started it. (5:52) The more we get to know about our universe, (5:55) the more of the hypothesis that there is a creator, God, (6:00) who designed the universe for a purpose,

(6:02) gains in credibility, is the best explanation of why we're here. (6:06) That's from John Lennox, from the book God's Undertaker.

(6:11) So the more science, the more information that comes out, (6:16) helps point toward Christianity. (6:20) You know, there's so many things now, even with DNA, I mean. (6:24) DNA's a huge one.

(6:26) Like we went over the fine-tuning. (6:29) All the different things it takes to have life on this earth. (6:32) It makes it almost impossible to happen by random chance.

(6:37) Experience in this world points us to the conclusion that everything (6:41) that begins to exist has a cause. (6:44) Since the universe began to exist, the universe has a cause. (6:48) God has always been eternally existing outside of space and time.

(6:55) You can see the person who made the computer is not inside the computer. (6:59) He is outside it, just like God is outside the universe (7:02) and has existed eternally. (7:05) So people say, oh, I can't see God.

(7:09) You know, prove it. (7:10) Well, God's outside the universe. (7:14) You know, just like the person who created the computer.

(7:17) He's not inside the computer. (7:20) You know, Steve Jobs wasn't in the computer making it work. (7:24) He was outside of it.

(7:28) Current scientific evidence does fit well with the claim Christians have long made. (7:33) The universe had a beginning and a cause because it was created by God. (7:39) We left off looking at morality last week, (7:43) which is another signpost pointing to God.

(7:46) Where do we get our morality and conscience from? (7:50) If we're all animals and only the strong survive, (7:53) then what Hitler and Stalin did is completely fine. (7:58) It's not the case, though. (8:00) We're made in God's image and His laws are written on our hearts.

(8:03) Romans 2.15. (8:05) They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, (8:09) their conscience also bearing witness, (8:12) and their thoughts sometimes accusing them (8:14) and at other times defending them. (8:18) So we can see we're made with a conscience. (8:21) The problem is some people steer their conscience with sin.

(8:29) Most people know right from wrong, (8:32) instinctively, and everyone is responsible for their actions, (8:35) whether they're good or bad. (8:38) Humans are moral beings and the atheists cannot get around this, (8:41) nor have they a good reason to explain it. (8:46) That's a great point.

(8:47) From all the debates and things I've watched, (8:52) one of the biggest things that atheists can't explain is morality. (8:58) Where do we get our morality? (9:00) If there's no God, if there's no laws, (9:03) who's to say that my morality is as good as anybody else's? (9:08) Who's to say what's right or wrong? (9:12) We all know deep in our hearts, (9:14) basically good from evil. (9:15) If you see a child, a baby murdered, (9:19) nobody in their right mind would think that's a good thing.

(9:23) If we're all just animals, (9:25) the animal kingdom is not a big deal. (9:29) The lion kills the lion cubs, (9:34) you wouldn't think anything of it. (9:35) That's just, you know, animal instinct.

(9:40) But for us humans, we're different. (9:42) We have morals, we have a conscience. (9:44) We have to answer to a higher power.

(9:47) So atheists steal Christianity's moral code (9:51) without even realizing it most of the time, (9:53) and then they want to try to judge us or God based off it. (9:58) We're picking up with drowning morality in God (10:03) while in search for answers to our deepest questions, (10:07) like those concerning morality and the meaning of life, (10:12) moving beyond science and culture is necessary. (10:16) The philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre has argued (10:19) that we must have an understanding of what something is designed for (10:23) in order for moral evaluation to be considered.

(10:27) Factual statements. (10:29) For example, what do we mean when we consider a watch to be good? (10:36) A positive evaluation relies on the understanding of the purpose of a watch. (10:42) If we think a watch is designed to serve as a weapon, (10:46) we will evaluate the watch differently (10:48) than if we understand it to be made for telling time.

(10:53) Understanding an object's purpose is essential (10:55) for knowing whether it is good or bad. (10:58) In making ethical evaluations, the same is true. (11:02) Understanding the purpose of which humans were created (11:04) is essential for realism.

(11:06) It's a great point. (11:08) Why are we created? (11:09) We're just a bunch of random particles (11:13) that came out of nothing? (11:17) We're created by God and his image, meant for good. (11:21) Looking to a transcendent, personal, and good agent (11:29) beyond this world is the one who has designed the world (11:32) and gives us ultimate meaning to our lives.

(11:35) The simplest and most coherent explanation (11:37) of the full range of moral truth. (11:41) Once again, while this argument could be used (11:42) in support of other forms of atheism, (11:46) the human need for value, moral obligation, and purpose in life (11:50) fit seamlessly within the Christian story of reality. (11:56) Look at considering the possibilities of morality.

(12:01) Philosophers David Baggett and Jerry Wahl (12:03) describe the way one might humbly ask someone (12:07) to consider the possibilities for moral grounding. (12:11) Take a look at this world and see what you can, (12:15) can do by the way of explaining morality (12:18) and its distinctive features. (12:20) And don't be surprised if you find (12:22) that you can make some progress.

(12:25) But then remind yourself of the fuller range (12:27) of moral facts in need of explanation. (12:32) Values and duties, to be sure, (12:35) but also moral freedom, knowledge, responsibility, (12:38) moral regret, shame, forgiveness, (12:41) the perspective, power, and rational authority of morality, (12:45) the desire for congruence of happiness and holiness, (12:48) the need of resources for moral transformation, (12:54) human dignity and equality of worth. (12:58) And ask yourself this question, (13:01) what better explains this full range of moral facts, (13:05) this world alone, or the conjecture of this world (13:08) and its creator, who made us in his image, (13:12) created us for a purpose, invested us with a capacity (13:16) for empathy and rationality and moral apprehension? (13:20) That's a great point.

(13:22) There's a lot that goes into morality. (13:25) It's a huge list. (13:28) What makes the most sense of it? (13:31) Like I said, if you just, (13:34) if we're all just animals and only the strong survive, (13:37) then there wouldn't be any morality.

(13:41) But we know that since we're created by God, (13:43) we're made in his image, (13:46) and we're given certain things with like a conscience, (13:53) certain things are written on our hearts (13:55) so we know right from wrong. (13:57) We'll move on to the greatest story ever told. (14:03) And so far in this chapter, (14:05) we trace how observation and experiences (14:08) can point to a transcendent reality beyond our universe, (14:11) which is, of course, assumed within the Christian worldview.

(14:18) Each of the questions and explanations that follow (14:20) can assist in opening the door (14:22) to consider distinctive aspects of the Christian story. (14:27) As we explore in chapter eight, (14:29) stories provide a vital framework (14:32) for experiencing the world, (14:34) and they provide a means by which (14:36) views of the world may be challenged. (14:40) They have a way to get under our skin.

(14:42) The deep questions of life, such as, (14:45) who are we? (14:48) What is the problem with the world, (14:49) and what is the solution? (14:52) And also, where are we going? (14:55) Are not simply answered with isolated statements (14:57) or logical syllogisms, (15:00) but the stories that seep into our bones (15:02) and powerfully shape our daily lives. (15:06) That's a great point. (15:08) How do we answer these things? (15:09) Who we are, where are we going, (15:12) and why are we on Earth? (15:13) The atheists can't answer any of those.

(15:16) People, as atheists, spend their whole lives (15:18) wondering why they're on Earth. (15:22) We know as Christians we're here to obey God (15:24) and keep His commandments. (15:27) The Christian story told and embraced (15:29) in life-changing ways (15:30) in incredible numbers over the past thousand years (15:35) has provided powerful answers (15:37) to those universal questions, (15:40) which even non-believers have noted.

(15:44) For French philosopher Luc Ferry, (15:47) the Christian story is extraordinarily profound (15:50) and not easy to resist. (15:53) Yet he says its problem (15:56) is that it is too good to be true. (16:00) For the British writer Julian Barnes, (16:03) the potency of Christianity can be attributed (16:06) to the beauty of the gospel story, (16:08) even though it is a beautiful lie (16:11) and a supreme fiction.

(16:14) So even these atheists think (16:16) the Christian story is beautiful, (16:18) although they don't believe it. (16:22) The following sections survey (16:23) how we might tell this story, (16:25) not as a lie, (16:28) but as a true answer (16:29) to life's universal questions. (16:33) Who are we? (16:34) We are made by God (16:35) and His image in the world God created for us, (16:40) which means we have (16:41) inherent value, meaning, and purpose.

(16:44) So we think life is valuable. (16:46) We do have meaning. (16:47) We've been created by God.

(16:49) You know, people like Stalin, Hitler, (16:52) those non-religious people, (16:55) you know, in China, (16:56) you can see that they don't value life. (16:59) You know, they killing 100 million people (17:00) is nothing to them. (17:02) But we as Christians, we do (17:04) because we were created by God.

(17:06) We were created in His image. (17:09) We were designed to live (17:10) in a right relationship with God, (17:12) devoted to Him, (17:14) enjoying and stewarding (17:16) His good gifts of creation. (17:20) Despite the fairly obvious observation (17:24) that natural abilities differ among humans, (17:27) the Christian story affirms (17:29) that we all have equal dignity (17:30) as God's image bears.

(17:33) We are not ultimately determined (17:35) by biology or culture. (17:36) The choices and purposes (17:39) that we instinctively assume (17:41) are not illusions. (17:44) Our Creator is not an impersonal force (17:47) residing within the structure (17:48) of the universe.

(17:50) Like the logos of Greek philosophy, (17:54) what is said is a God (17:56) who is both personal (17:57) and separate from His creation. (18:00) The climax of history (18:01) is God entering into creation as man, (18:04) the God-man, (18:06) both affirming the goodness of creation (18:07) and displaying His personal love (18:10) for creation. (18:12) That's what the whole Bible led up to, (18:14) Jesus coming to earth, (18:17) dying for our sins, (18:18) living the perfect life.

(18:21) Jesus Himself is also (18:22) the picture of the human ideal. (18:25) As a faithful one, (18:26) He loves the creation (18:27) and the Father perfectly. (18:30) He combines authority with compassion (18:32) and justice with mercy.

(18:34) He displays the freedom (18:35) found in obedience. (18:38) In short, He is an example (18:41) of what humans were meant to be. (18:44) He did what we fail to do, (18:47) which leads us to the problem.

(18:50) What is the problem with the world (18:51) and what is its solution? (18:54) An almost universal intuition (18:59) exists among people (19:00) that something has gone wrong. (19:02) Things are not as they should be. (19:04) Some have suggested (19:05) that religion itself is a problem.

(19:08) Have you ever heard that? (19:10) A lot of people blame religion. (19:11) They blame Christians. (19:12) Oh, you guys started all these wars (19:14) and all these people died (19:17) because of Christianity.

(19:20) Constant fighting. (19:23) For example, (19:24) John Lennon's song, Imagine, (19:26) famously asks us to imagine (19:27) a world without religion (19:29) with the result people being (19:32) people living in peace. (19:35) On several accounts, (19:36) however, this fails to correspond (19:37) with what we can observe (19:39) about the world.

(19:41) First, sociologists have increasingly (19:43) emphasized that religion (19:44) is not going away. (19:49) The simplified secularization theory (19:53) suggests that with the increase (19:55) of modernization, (19:57) religion would cease to exist (19:59) and have been shown to be (20:01) basically wrong. (20:04) Moreover, (20:05) fascinating demographic work (20:06) has been done by secular scholars (20:09) that predicted that the current (20:10) trajectory will continue forward (20:12) with the worldwide growth (20:13) of conservative religions.

(20:16) You remember earlier in the study, (20:19) we saw that China (20:21) and Africa (20:23) had huge numbers of Christians (20:25) and they're growing (20:27) way more than we are here. (20:31) The second, (20:32) attempts to banish religion (20:33) have often turned bloody. (20:36) The violence against religion (20:37) in recent history has been (20:39) featured in the French Revolution, (20:41) in the Spanish Civil War, (20:43) in the Soviet Union, (20:45) and in China.

(20:48) These projects not only (20:50) were ultimately unsuccessful (20:52) in eradicating religion, (20:53) but peace does not appear (20:55) to be an apt description (20:56) of the attempts to eliminate religion (20:59) or the term normally associated (21:01) with such names and figures (21:03) as Stalin and Pol Pot. (21:05) So that's a great point. (21:07) These people who blame Christianity, (21:10) when they got rid of Christianity, (21:13) things were a lot worse.

(21:15) Would you want to live (21:15) in the Soviet Union under Stalin? (21:19) Would you want to live (21:19) in China right now? (21:22) The French Revolution, (21:24) they killed, murdered (21:25) a ton of people in the Soviet Union. (21:29) They slaughtered (21:30) the family that was in charge, (21:33) the king and all his children. (21:35) They took over (21:36) and had a brutal reign, (21:37) 100 years of 100 million dead.

(21:41) And they say that Christianity (21:42) is the problem. (21:45) Yet in the cultural idea (21:47) that Lenin gives expression to, (21:50) there's something we can affirm. (21:52) Religion, (21:53) and we should also add (21:54) a type of ideology, (21:55) are prone to produce (21:57) enmity and, (21:59) given certain conditions, (22:01) even violence.

(22:02) If one group believes themselves (22:04) to be morally superior (22:05) or advanced, (22:06) it seems nearly impossible (22:08) for them to look down on others (22:10) and resent them (22:12) for perceived defects. (22:16) We have noted in the previous (22:17) chapter that Christians themselves (22:19) have not been immune (22:21) to such failures. (22:22) But even in an era (22:24) that lost tolerance and diversity, (22:26) we hear much about being (22:27) on the wrong side of history (22:29) or the evils of intolerance.

(22:32) As becomes clear (22:34) upon reflection, (22:36) these are judgmental expressions (22:38) that exclude those (22:39) who don't believe in secular progress. (22:43) Exclusion, (22:44) enmity, (22:44) and a feeling of superiority (22:45) seems almost unavoidable. (22:48) But we do have a problem.

(22:49) The deep-seated animosity (22:51) towards others, (22:53) which in too many cases (22:54) produce wars, (22:55) genocides, (22:56) and destruction on Earth, (22:58) signals that something (22:59) has terribly gone wrong. (23:04) What is the solution? (23:06) The Christian claims (23:08) that the heart of the solution (23:10) is not a series of abstract (23:11) beliefs or ideology, (23:14) but rather a person. (23:17) That person is Jesus.

(23:20) He told his disciples (23:22) to put away their swords. (23:26) He taught, (23:27) blessed are the peacemakers, (23:29) Matthew 5, 9. (23:31) He charged his listeners (23:33) to turn the other cheek. (23:35) He called on his followers (23:36) not to simply love those (23:38) who love them, (23:39) but to love their enemies as well.

(23:42) Jesus willingly went to the cross (23:43) to save the world (23:44) and then prayed that those (23:45) who were killing him (23:47) would be forgiven. (23:48) In other words, (23:49) at the very heart (23:50) of the Christian message (23:51) is sacrifice and love (23:53) for the stranger, (23:54) for those who are different, (23:57) and even for enemies. (23:59) The core of the Christian story (24:01) is not a message, (24:02) but a person who undermines (24:04) the human inclination (24:07) towards coercion (24:08) and condescension.

(24:12) However, the problem (24:16) is not simply (24:17) how we treat others. (24:19) The issue is actually (24:20) much deeper. (24:22) We have rebelled (24:23) against our Creator.

(24:25) The result is (24:26) disordered creation. (24:28) Our fundamental problem (24:29) is vertical, (24:30) which results in (24:31) the horizontal issues (24:32) we see all around us. (24:36) So we can see that (24:38) this is completely right.

(24:40) Jesus is the answer. (24:42) The world has gone wrong (24:43) and (24:45) Jesus is the solution. (24:49) We can stop here.

(24:52) Like I said, (24:53) Mike's doing the next (24:54) couple of classes. (24:56) And I might have (24:57) two or three more (24:58) and I'll be done. (25:01) So Scott, (25:03) get prepared (25:04) if you're listening.

(25:05) But we'll end in a prayer. (25:07) Thank you, Lord, (25:08) for this night (25:09) that we could get together (25:11) and look at apologetics, (25:13) look at your Word, (25:14) figure out how to (25:17) talk to people (25:17) and convince them (25:19) that Christianity (25:21) is reality. (25:23) It is the best explanation (25:26) and the best worldview (25:27) that explains (25:28) how this world is (25:30) because it is the truth.

(25:34) We know your Word (25:35) is truth, God. (25:36) Help us to (25:37) share that with others. (25:40) Help us to (25:41) share the name of Jesus (25:43) with others.

(25:44) Help others be saved. (25:46) Watch over us. (25:47) Watch over those (25:48) on the prayer list.

(25:50) Help us through the week (25:51) and help us get back here (25:52) on Sunday. (25:53) In Jesus' name, (25:54) Amen.