

BLIND FAITH?

REASON, DOUBT, AND THE SEARCH FOR INTELLECTUAL INTEGRITY

"I am not a Christian because I am afraid of the dark. I am a Christian because I have followed the light of reason, and it has led me to the feet of the Creator."

— Peter S. Williams, *The Case for God*

This session addresses the widespread cultural claim that Christian faith is a “blind leap in the dark”—an unthinking exercise where believers must leave their brains at the church door. By examining the story of Western philosophy alongside Peter S. Williams’ framework for Christian apologetics, this session demonstrates that Christian faith is not a flight from reason, but a reasonable conclusion based on the best available evidence.

PART 1: THE LANDSCAPE OF DOUBT

Tracing Scepticism through The Story of Philosophy by Bryan Magee

Why Christians Should Welcome Honest Doubt

- **Doubt is part of the search for truth:** Exploring history reveals that asking tough questions is an ancient, honourable practice; sincere questions do not frighten God.
- **Sceptics often clear away error:** Famous thinkers throughout history rarely attacked the true God of the Bible. More often, they exposed weak, superficial, or distorted ideas about God.
- **A doorway to deeper faith:** Hard questions help us discard false assumptions, remain humble about human wisdom, and see why we need God to reveal Himself to us.

1. René Descartes (17th Century): Radical Doubt and the Dream of Absolute Proof

- **Doubt everything to find truth:** Descartes tried to doubt every belief he held—his physical senses, his memory, and the world around him—until he found one truth he could not doubt: *“I think, therefore I am.”*
- **The demand for mathematical certainty:** He established a modern mindset where people demand 100% mathematical certainty before believing anything.
- **The Christian Response:**
 - **Absolute certainty is impossible in daily life:** We cannot prove with 100% mathematical certainty that our friends love us, or that the food we buy isn’t poisoned, yet we live rationally by trusting strong evidence.
 - **Faith rests on trustworthy evidence:** Christian faith does not mean having zero unanswered questions; it means placing our personal trust in a faithful God based on clear, reliable evidence.

2. David Hume (18th Century): Our Five Senses, Suffering, and the Need for Jesus

- **Trusting only sense perception:** Hume argued that human minds start as blank slates and that we can only know what we experience through our five physical senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell). Because we cannot see or touch God directly, he argued we cannot prove He exists.
- **Challenging cause and effect:** Hume noted that because our senses only observe events happening one after another, we cannot physically “see” cause and effect taking place—meaning we cannot mathematically prove a Creator caused the universe.
- **Highlighting a broken world:** Hume challenged the simple argument that an orderly nature proves a loving God. He pointed out that our senses show us earthquakes, disease, and animal cruelty alongside natural beauty.
- **The Christian Response:**
 - **Reality is bigger than physical senses:** Physical senses are gifts from God, but they are not the *only* way to discover truth. We cannot weigh or touch love, justice, or logical laws, yet they are entirely real.

- **Christianity is rooted in eye-witness testimony:** Unlike abstract philosophies, Christianity rests on historical sense perception—the first disciples physically saw, heard, and touched Jesus Christ after His resurrection (1 John 1:1).
- **Hume was right about a damaged world:** The Bible agrees that nature today is broken by human sin and rebellion. Christians do not look at earthquakes or parasitic wasps to discover God’s love; we look at **Jesus Christ**, who entered our suffering world on the cross to make all things right.

3. Immanuel Kant (18th Century): Why Science Cannot Measure Everything

- **How the mind filters reality:** Kant answered Hume by showing that our brains do not passively reflect the world. Instead, our minds act like active software, filtering and shaping everything our senses take in using built-in settings like space, time, and causality.
- **The two realms of knowledge:**
 - **The World We Can Measure (Phenomenal Realm):** The physical world of objects, chemicals, and physical forces that can be studied by science.
 - **The World Beyond Our Senses (Noumenal Realm):** Ultimate reality as it truly is, including the human soul, moral duty, and God.
- **The Christian Response:**
 - **Science has natural boundaries:** Kant proved that scientific tools are only built to study physical objects. Science can neither prove nor disprove God because God is spirit, not physical matter.
 - **Protection from scientific bullying:** Kant’s work protects believers from the false claim that *“only science can tell us what is real.”*
 - **The necessity of revelation:** Because human reason cannot climb up into heaven on its own, we need God to reach down to us—which He did through Scripture and the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

4. Ludwig Feuerbach (19th Century): Religion as Human Projection

- **God as a parental projection:** Feuerbach argued that human beings invent religion out of wishful thinking. He claimed that God is simply a human projection—an imaginary, magnified parental figure created to make us feel safe, loved, and comforted in an unpredictable world.
- **The Christian Response:**
 - **Desire points to a real object:** As C.S. Lewis pointed out, human desires correspond to real things (hunger points to food, thirst to water). Our deep built-in desire for a divine Parent suggests we were actually made for one!
 - **Designed for a Heavenly Father:** Christianity agrees that we deeply need a parental figure, but not as an imaginary crutch. We were intentionally designed by God to have a loving Heavenly Father who provides objective moral accountability, unconditional love, and the true cure for existential loneliness.

5. Friedrich Nietzsche (19th Century): Losing God Means Losing Morals

- **The death of God:** Nietzsche observed that Western culture was throwing away God while foolishly assuming it could keep Christian morality (like human dignity, equality, and compassion).
- **The collapse of moral values:** Nietzsche warned that removing God is like removing the foundation of a house. Without God, objective right and wrong vanish, leaving only power—the strong dominating the weak.
- **Was Nietzsche anti-Semitic or a Nazi?**
 - **No.** Nietzsche detested anti-Semitism and German nationalist pride, famously severing relationships over racial bigotry.
 - **Nazi distortion:** After Nietzsche died, his anti-Semitic sister, Elisabeth, edited and altered his unpublished notebooks. Hitler and the Nazi regime later used these altered texts as false propaganda to justify horrific tyranny.
- **The Christian Response:**
 - **A sobering warning:** The Nazi abuse of philosophy illustrates what happens when a culture discards absolute divine truth: power replaces love, and evil is justified.

- **An argument for the Gospel:** Nietzsche accurately exposed the dark end-point of atheism. Because we know in our hearts that human rights and love are genuinely real, there *must* be a loving moral Lawgiver who grants human beings inherent worth.

6. Jean-Paul Sartre (20th Century): The Exhaustion of Self-Invention

- **Existence precedes essence:** Sartre argued that if God does not exist, humans were not designed for any purpose. We simply exist first, and then must construct our own identity and meaning from scratch.
- **The burden of total freedom:** Without a Creator to guide us, Sartre claimed we are “condemned to be free”—forced to bear the anxious, exhausting burden of inventing our own purpose in an empty universe.
- **The Christian Response:**
 - **Honesty about secular anxiety:** Sartre accurately described the loneliness and exhaustion that comes from trying to be our own god.
 - **Resting in created purpose:** Christianity rescues us from self-invention. We are intentional creations, designed by a loving God who gives us an enduring identity, deep purpose, and rest in Christ.

PART 2: THE SCAFFOLD OF REASON

Investigating Evidence through The Case for God by Peter S. Williams

Just because reason cannot give us 100% mathematical proof, that does not mean faith is blind, irrational guesswork. Philosopher Peter S. Williams steps up to the edge of Kant’s boundary and argues that faith is an **inference to the best explanation**.

Think of a detective arriving at a crime scene. The detective cannot travel back in time to watch the event happen. Instead, they look at the evidence left behind: fingerprints, footprints, DNA, and a broken window. The detective asks: *What single theory best explains all these disparate pieces of evidence?* Williams presents three massive pieces of philosophical evidence that point directly to the reality of God.

Evidence 1: The Cosmological Argument (The Universe Had a Beginning)

For centuries, secular thinkers argued that the universe was eternal—that it had always been here, so it required no explanation for its arrival. However, 20th-century science shattered that view with the discovery of cosmic expansion and the laws of thermodynamics. The consensus of modern physics is that everything—all matter, energy, space, and even time itself—had an absolute beginning roughly 13.8 billion years ago. Williams lays this out in a simple, logically airtight syllogism known as the Kalam Cosmological Argument:

Premise 1:	Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
Premise 2:	The universe began to exist.
Conclusion:	Therefore, the universe has a cause.

If something cannot pop into existence out of absolute nothingness, the conclusion is logically inescapable. Now consider the nature of this cause: since it created space, it must be spaceless; since it created time, it must be timeless; since it created all matter, it must be immaterial; and it must be unimaginably powerful to bring an entire cosmos into being out of nothing. A timeless, spaceless, immaterial, incredibly powerful cause matches exactly what believers mean by the word “God.”

Evidence 2: The Teleological Argument (The Fine-Tuning of the Cosmos)

The universe didn’t just explode into existence randomly; it exploded with breathtaking, mind-boggling precision. Modern physics has discovered that the fundamental constants of our universe—such as the force of gravity, the strong nuclear force, the mass of an electron, and the expansion rate of the cosmos—are balanced on a razor’s edge. If you altered any one of these values by even a hair’s breadth, life would be completely impossible.

For example, if the expansion rate of the early universe (governed by the Cosmological Constant) had been different by just one part in 10^{120} (a number 1 with 120 zeroes after it), the universe would have either collapsed back in on itself into a cosmic crunch or expanded so fast that matter could never clump together to

form stars and planets. To attribute this staggering, multi-layered precision to mere coincidence or random luck is a desperate act of secular blind faith; design is the most rational inference.

Evidence 3: The Moral Argument (The Reality of Right and Wrong)

The third piece of evidence is found by looking inside our own hearts: the reality of objective right and wrong. If there is no God—if the universe is just a cold, accidental byproduct of matter and motion, as Nietzsche predicted—then there is no such thing as objective morality. Morality becomes nothing more than a matter of personal taste, cultural fashion, or evolutionary wiring designed for survival.

But our deep human instincts scream against this. We know with absolute certainty that **torture of any kind** is not just “culturally unhelpful”—it is objectively, factually, and eternally evil. Because an objective moral law cannot come from nature (where predators eat prey without moral reflection), it requires a source outside the physical world—a moral Lawgiver who is Himself the standard of ultimate Goodness.

The Crisis of Secular Absurdity

Williams exposes what he calls **The Disaster of Absurdity**. If atheism is true, your human brain is simply the accidental byproduct of millions of years of random genetic mutations aimed purely at physical survival, not at discovering truth. If your thoughts are just chemical fizzing in your skull, then you have no reason to trust your own rational arguments—including the argument that there is no God! Secularism cuts off the branch it sits on, undermining the reliability of human reason itself.

PART 3: CONCEPTUAL ARCHITECTURE MATRIX

Philosophical Dimension	Secular Scepticism (Magee / Hume / Kant / Feuerbach / Nietzsche / Sartre)	Christian Apologetics (Williams / Lewis)
Certainty Status	Mathematical and empirical proof of God is impossible; human reason is limited.	Proof is replaced by circumstantial evidence; faith is an inference to the best explanation.
Origin of Cosmos	The universe is either eternal or popped into existence from nothing without a cause.	The universe was called into being out of nothing by a timeless, powerful Creator.
Cosmic Fine-Tuning	A massive, incredibly lucky accident or an anomaly of random chance.	A clear mathematical pointer toward an intentional, intelligent Mind.
Moral Grounding	Subjective, social contracts, or evolutionary survival mechanisms.	Objective, binding reality originating from an absolute moral Lawgiver.
Human Purpose & God	God is a human projection (Feuerbach); humans must invent temporary purpose (Sartre).	Designed for a Heavenly Father who offers moral accountability, love, and cures loneliness.

PART 4: GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Hume & Brokenness:** David Hume highlights natural disasters and suffering as objections to a good God. How does placing Jesus at the centre of suffering change how Christians answer this challenge compared to standard secular views?
- Kant & Limits:** Immanuel Kant proved that human science cannot measure the spiritual realm. Do you find this boundary frustrating, or is it liberating to know that science cannot “disprove” God?
- Feuerbach & Projection:** Feuerbach claimed God is just an invented father figure to make us feel safe. How does the Christian view that we are intentionally *designed* for a Heavenly Father reframe this argument?
- Nietzsche, Sartre, & Morality:** Nietzsche and Sartre argued that without God, objective right and wrong do not exist. Do you agree that society struggles to defend human rights without a divine anchor?
- Williams & Evidence:** Looking at Peter Williams’ detective analogy (Cosmological, Fine-Tuning, Moral), which piece of evidence provides the most persuasive backing for your own mind?

PART 5: INTELLECTUAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The Detective Paradigm

Consider Williams' detective analogy. When you look at your life and the structure of the cosmos, what piece of evidence feels like the strongest indicator of a Creator? What piece of evidence feels the most challenging?

Evaluating the Dials

Reflect on the calibration of the Cosmological Constant to one part in 10^{120} . Is it intellectually easier to attribute this accuracy to an intelligent Designer or to an infinite series of accidental multiverses?

The Ground of Dignity

If human beings are purely the result of random evolutionary forces, can human rights be factually defended, or did Nietzsche correctly deduce that secular humanism relies on Christian values it has discarded?

PART 6: THE WEEKLY INTELLECTUAL PRACTICE

The "Under the Stars" Rational Reflection

This week, you are invited to practise Intellectual Honesty through a focused, objective reading and reflection exercise:

- 1. Engage Alternative Thought:** If you are a committed believer, spend 15 minutes reading an article or watching a video by an articulate, honest sceptic. Try to understand their core objections deeply without jumping into immediate internal defence. If you are a sceptic, read a chapter of a Christian philosopher (like C.S. Lewis or Peter Williams) with an open mind.
- 2. The Nocturnal Examen:** On a clear night this week, step completely outside and look up at the stars. Contemplate the scale of the cosmos and the precision required for your lungs to draw breath at this exact millisecond.
- 3. Offer a Rational Prayer:** Offer this honest, rational prayer:

"God of truth, I do not ask for a blind emotional high, and I do not expect all my intellectual questions to vanish overnight. But if you are the rational Mind behind this universe, show yourself to my intellect and my heart. Help me to follow the evidence wherever it leads. Amen."