



CONNECTED

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While taking a routine vandalism report at an elementary school, a police officer was interrupted by a little girl about 6 years old. Looking up and down at his uniform, she asked, "Are you a cop?" "Yes," he answered and continued writing his report.

"My mother said if I ever needed help, I should ask the police. Is that right?" "Yes, that's right," he told her.

"Well, then," she said as she extended her foot, "Would you please tie my shoe?"

Jesus Christ died, was buried and rose for you!

STAND UP

Silence and fear have long been a major part of Christian failure. Christians and sound-thinking people in general tend to forget that when freedom goes away, tyranny including cruel agonizing persecution of Christians and all who do not walk the *Party Line* take freedom's place. Look at what happened in early Rome and in the infamous *Dark Ages* with its Feudal System. Read Charles Dickens *Tale of Two Cities*. Hitler's *Holocaust* is barely behind us not to mention Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong and Fidel Castro.

Charlie Kirk was assassinated in cold-blooded hatred by an ideology that wants no part of God. His Christian message happened to step on evil, including evil in high places with political backing. Charlie was not assassinated because he was a Republican, a Democrat or a Libertarian; he was assassinated because he publicly spoke up for Jesus Christ and what Jesus taught: about forgiveness and eternity beyond the grave, about the sanctity of life, about morality and integrity and about trust in God and not government. Charlie believed in telling the truth, doing unto others as you would have them do to you, open dialogue even

with those who disagree and of freedom of religion, speech, assembly, the press and the redress of grievances. These are moral issues, matters of virtue. Doing right before God is an affront to doing wrong. True Christianity confronts hatred, intolerance, prejudice, injustice, corruption and waste at all levels, the distortion of truth both privately and in the media and especially the silencing of truth. Many in modern society have sought to make political issues of these basic, fundamental Christian beliefs. Although these beliefs affect politics and academia, these are far more fundamental. These are matters that directly impact the survival of free people regardless of their time in history or location on the planet. These are the teachings of the Bible; they were enunciated by Jesus Christ. For teaching these truths, they crucified Jesus Christ. For teaching these truths, they shot Charlie Kirk. The shooter who premeditated and executed the murder of Charlie was not alone in his thinking; he had the support of an amazing number of people. Across America, multitudes of like-minded people have been gleefully celebrating his assassination.

It's not very hard to tell what a large segment of people thinks about those of us who embrace

Jesus Christ as our Savior, and who believe and practice what He taught in the Bible. With many of them, it's not enough to hate and oppose the things for which we stand, and to fight us politically; they want us dead. If they prevail, the way for Christians will be persecution and death. I encourage you to read George Orwell's "1984."

A large number of excellent statements have already been written and posted about Charlie Kirk and about the sickening and uncivilized response of glee and rejoicing by those who hate God, Christianity and freedom. If ever there was a time for all who love God, Christianity and freedom to speak up and be heard, it's right now. I am not ashamed of God and of the great truths set forth in His Word; and I'm happy to unite my voice with those who are unashamedly speaking out for truth and righteousness. Only in Jesus Christ is there hope for any person beyond the grave. Furthermore, only by embracing the virtuous lifestyle which is taught in the Bible is there hope for the survival of the United States of America and freedom.

A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages.

"Mama, look what I found," the boy excitedly called out. "What have you got there, dear?"

With astonishment in his voice, he said, "I think it's Adam's underwear!"



EARNED

Most mortal things are earned: money, leadership and respect. Yes, some people fall into money, and some are given leadership roles as well as respect for the office or role in which they find themselves; however, apart from integrity and diligence, it's almost impossible to hold onto money or to maintain followers and respect. True lasting respect is earned. That's how it is gained and how it is maintained.

I am saddened at the current widespread rationale that respect, allegiance and loyalty automatically come with a title or position. Certain roles do carry a degree of honor and respect. God Himself told us to *"Honour thy father and thy mother," Exodus 20:12*. It doesn't get any loftier than that! God also said, *"Honour widows that are widows indeed," 1 Timothy 5:3*. In speaking specifically of civil or government officials, Paul said, *"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour," Romans 13:7*. A fundamental Bible concept is respect and honor. The Bible puts it this way, *"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another," Romans 12:10*. Respect is central in real biblical Christianity: one for another, older people, civil authorities, men of God and even the planet.

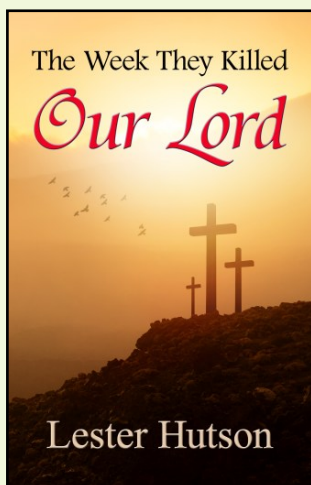
Deep inside, every one of us knows it's one thing to give respect because it's the right thing to do; but it's quite another thing to respect someone because your heart draws you to that person like a magnet. Integrity, true humility, courage, genuine compassion, a servant's heart, love and giving draw people to other people like bees to a honeycomb. There's a kind of respect that doesn't come with a title or power; from the heart, it flows like an artesian well. People follow because they choose to do so; not because they should or are compelled or out of fear. They still call an old man of God *"Pastor"* long after he no longer is the pastor of a church. They come to him for advice, counsel and comfort, and say things like, *"You'll always be my pastor."* They don't do this sort of thing because they disrespect their presiding pastor; they do it out of constraints in the heart which defy words of explanation. It seems that Paul had this in mind when he was moved by the Holy Spirit to say, *"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine," 1 Timothy 5:17*.

What makes a person (usually many persons) seek-out and tenderly gravitate to a particular mother, grandmother or old soldier-of-the-cross? Why are some people so magnetic even though they're making no effort to be that way? There's some sort of allure-ment, a captivation that draws those who know them. Why do people trust them, want to know their opinions and listen to their advice?

It doesn't happen overnight or suddenly. Before it happens, there are almost always years of watching. Is this person real? I wonder what he'll do under pressure? How does he treat his critics; those who misuse and misrepresent him? Who is he when nobody's looking? Is there hypocrisy, a double-standard, one set of weights and measures for him and his family and another for everybody else? Does he practice what he preaches? What have the years done to him; is this the same person I knew when he was young?

THE WEEK THEY KILLED OUR LORD

My latest book is now available in eBook format on Amazon!



This short book follows Jesus through His last week of earthly ministry. The book is not only scholarly and candid; it will touch your heart. Readers will feel very much like they were there watching it happen. The maps of Jerusalem capture Jesus' movements. Beginning at Bethany, the devotional study chronologically follows the Crucifixion week. You will see why Judas Iscariot and the Jewish leadership hated Jesus and wanted him dead. You will be impressed that Jesus knew exactly what He faced yet went forward. You will follow Him on His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem and watch Him keep the Passover. You will go with Him to Gethsemane where He prayed and was betrayed. You will watch Him endure two unjust trials, grieve as you watch Him in the Death Game and go with Him to the cross where He died on Wednesday. Yes, there is evidence to prove He died on Wednesday, not Friday. His burial is intriguing and you will feel the ecstasy of His resurrection. At the end, you will come to grips with the question of who killed Jesus. The 13 chapters in this book are ideal for teaching, preaching or simply causing you to more fully appreciate the great work of God on behalf of sinners.

This is the link for: [The Week They Killed Our Lord - eBook](#)

The paperback version will be available by the end of January.

"Growing old is mandatory, but growing up is optional." – Walt Disney

THIS IS A VERY GOOD BOOK

Darwin's Black Box: The Biological Challenge to Evolution

By Michael J. Behe

Audible

Tantor Audio

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From start to finish, this book is potent! Dr. Behe is a scholar's scholar, an internationally recognized scientist whose expertise is in biochemistry with specialization in molecular biology. He is a professor of biological sciences at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Dr. Behe presents highly sophisticated and technical information in a language that any thinking person can grasp. *Darwin's Black Box* will not make you an authority in microbiology; it will open your eyes to the overwhelming complexity of the world of cells which are the building-blocks of all life.

Science prides itself in honesty and claims to be built on the objective presentation and understanding of evidence. The face is, much "science" is not objective and based on evidence, facts, testing and objective interpretations. In *Darwin's Black Box* Dr. Behe makes the dishonesty of too much of the scientific world painfully clear. He asks the hard questions, exposes the many "black boxes" that are everywhere along the trail in the search for truth and he exposes the propensity of a large number of leading and famous scientists to sidestep or ignore the evidence and hard questions, particularly those that do not align with their preconceived positions. This is especially true of Darwinian Evolutionists. When their stance on origins and their position of uniformitarianism (gradual evolution over long periods of time) is brought into question by research and evidence, their approach has been commonly to ignore the evidence, side-step the key issues and questions and then attack and denigrate the person(s) who calls them into question or presents conflicting evidence. Since *Darwin's Black Box* was published, the attacks on Dr. Behe and the book have been vicious and relentless. Scientists do not like to be called into question, and the dismantling of long-standing positions which have been presented and taught in classrooms as absolute facts give the scientific world a black eye, and makes science appear to be fallible. That threatens prestige. Many scientists fight back by attacking those who raise the questions. They cloud issues, divert attention away from the real issues and appeal to philosophy and to *how things ought to be*, not to *how things are*. They rarely go into their laboratories, do the research and testing and answer the hard questions in life's "black boxes."

That has been the approach in the case of *Intelligent Design* and *Irreducible Complexity*. Dr. Michael Behe is an undisputed international authority in the field of microbiology. In *Darwin's Black Box*, he goes into great detail about the composition and makeup of cells and how they work. The complexity is phenomenal. Every cell is composed of multitudes of complex parts, all of which must work in absolute precision for life to exist. Dr. Behe describes the cell and some of its components, all of which are intricately complex within themselves: molecules, membranes, amino acids, electrons, nucleotides, RNA, DNA and alpha helix just to mention a few.

In all living things, irreducible complexity is everywhere. Dr. Behe cites blood clotting as one example. He also deals with sight and the eye. The cell is Darwin's *black box*. The Darwinian hypothesis cannot account for the molecular structure of life. Darwinism can explain the cell and produce facts and figures about how things including cells work; they have no answers about how cells (and other thing) originated and came to instantly function as they do. The Darwinian scientific world which has long ruled the classroom and media has no scientifically tested and proven evidence to explain and verify its position that cells gradually, step-by-step came into being. To function at all, cells had to function all together from the start. Irreducible complexity eliminates the possibility of gradual formation.

Darwinian evolution sees intelligent design and irreducible complexity, but it cannot explain it. It rarely attempts an explanation other than it supposedly gradually happened over millions of years. It mostly ignores or attempts to confuse the obvious.

Dr. Behe exposes the dilemma in which the scientific and academia worlds find themselves. To admit intelligent design is to admit that there is a designer. Yes, it's to admit God; and to many in the scientific world, that's unthinkable. To admit that there is anything outside "the natural world" is to open Pandora's Box. It says those who believe the Bible and in the supernatural could have been right all along the way.

Darwin's Black Box is a heavy, but most fortifying and satisfying book. Dr. Michael J. Behe helped restore my confidence that there are still a few people in academia who are honest, open-minded and who think for themselves. If you like scholarship coupled with honesty, you will appreciate this book. I highly recommend it.

Oh, Those Lovely Kids!

While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, 'The tooth fairy will never believe this!'

“JUST WORSHIP BROKEN”

It's been many years ago now since I read a book by Charles Swindoll that helped me in my ministry more times than I can count. He wrote of a time his daughter was badly injured and it sent a shockwave of worry through the whole family. There were just too many questions. At the time no one knew how bad the injuries were and how it would affect his daughter's life. But here was another looming problem.... The accident happened late in the weekend, and for a preacher, that can spell disaster.

Swindoll recounts that he simply didn't have enough time to ask someone fill in for him, but also was honest enough to explain that he just didn't feel like preaching. He said he just wanted to be near his daughter. He also said he spoke to his wife about the struggle inside his own heart. Swindoll said he told his wife that he didn't want to preach because in his words, he felt, *"...too broken to preach."* At which point his wife tenderly answered, *"Then preach broken."*

I've read countless books at this point in my life, and to my shame, I'm embarrassed to admit how little of it has stuck with me. But I'll tell you... that line stuck.

I don't want you to feel sorry for me (or any other preacher for that matter— we don't preach for sympathy), but in ministry, I've found that it's a vocation filled with heartbreak and heartache. You're always surrounded by the hurting, and as a result, you enter into that grief with people.

Now, it's a wonderful privilege to have people trust you with their hardest moments. But sometimes, it brings some brokenness along with it. And brokenness, sometimes, means I don't always feel like preaching. But in those times, I remember the words of a loving wife to her struggling husband, *"...Then preach broken."*

I tell you this, because the answer for preachers in their brokenness, is the same answer for all of us. Sometimes you don't feel like coming to Church. Sometimes you don't feel like seeing anyone. Sometimes you don't feel like singing a song, or even offering a prayer. Sometimes you don't feel like worshipping because of all that is going on in your heart and life. But in those moments, when you feel broken, do your heart a favor... come to Church anyway, and just worship broken. You don't have to pretend like your life is put together. You don't have to put on a happy face. You don't have to 'feel' better before you can step into a Church service.

Just worship broken. God will understand. The Bible says He is near to the brokenhearted and He will meet you where you are.

Pastor Zach Hatton—Lake Worth Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas

CREMATION

Recently, this inquiry reached me from a friend of many years ago. A big part of my current life is helping people with answers. The question was about cremation. Here is my response.

I am quite familiar with the cremation issue. More and more people, including Christians, are cremating their loved ones. I am aware that in the overall scope of things, for believers the disposition of the body will not matter. The big problem with cremation is the message and testimony that it sends. There is no question that in the Bible, the bodies of dead people were placed into a grave. That's the Christian way to do it. That's the way Abraham, Joseph, King David, Jesus, Lazarus and so many others were buried.

Cremation is a pagan way to bury. In Bible days, the Canaanites burned their dead to release their spirits to the gods. The American Indians did it that way, and so do the Hindus. Most of them believed in ancestor or animal worship. Getting rid of the body was a way to get the spirit of the loved one into the spirit world of ancestors and animals. For anyone who is a believer in Jesus Christ, to be buried like a heathen and pagan is a mighty poor testimony; however, it will not change a person's eternal destiny. If a person trusted Christ as personal Savior, he/she will still go to heaven, in spite of how the body was treated; and in spite of the testimony given in the disposition of the body. No where does the Bible specifically call cremation a sin; it does have a lot to say about our testimony.

I trusted Christ and became a Christian. I have lived like a Christian. I intend to die like a Christian, and I intend to be buried like a Christian. I want my life to be one constant testimony of the truth that is set forth in the Bible. I identify with the children of God, not pagans.

I'm aware that in these days price seems to be the big driver. I'm not going to war with those who cremate their loved ones; however, I encourage Christians to choose a Christian burial.

IN THE LAST MONTH

- ♦ How much of the Bible have you read?
- ♦ Who have you prayed for specifically?
- ♦ Who have you forgiven?
- ♦ To whom have you returned good for evil?
- ♦ In what specific way have you served another person?
- ♦ What have you done to help someone who could never repay you?
- ♦ Who have you won to Christ?
- ♦ Who have you attempted to win to Christ?
- ♦ Named at least 50 blessings in the last year?

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