

Was Jesus
A Liar,
A Lunatic,
A Legend
or God?

A series of programs with Dr. John Warwick Montgomery

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WAS JESUS CHRIST A LIAR, A LUNATIC,
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Program 1

Introduction: RECENT SURVEYS AND POLLS SHOW THAT 98% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE IN GOD. BUT THESE SAME POLLS REVEAL MANY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE GOD THEY BELIEVE IN. TONIGHT, JOHN ANKERBERG WILL EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE AND THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY'S CENTRAL FIGURE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, "WAS JESUS CHRIST A LIAR, A LUNATIC, A LEGEND, OR GOD?" JOHN'S GUEST IS ATTORNEY JOHN WARWICK MONTGOMERY, DEAN OF THE SIMON GREENLEAF SCHOOL OF LAW IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND A PRACTICING TRIAL LAWYER BOTH IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA. DURING TONIGHT'S PROGRAM WE WILL ASK: IF A LAWYER WERE TO ARGUE THE CLAIMS OF JESUS CHRIST IN A COURT OF LAW, WHAT REAL EVIDENCE WOULD HE POINT TO? ARE THE BIOGRAPHIES CONCERNING JESUS' LIFE NOTHING MORE THAN LEGENDS THAT WERE WRITTEN SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS AFTER JESUS LIVED, OR REAL HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS WRITTEN BY EYEWITNESSES? HOW WOULD A LAWYER DETERMINE WHETHER THE WITNESSES CONCERNING JESUS' LIFE, NAMELY MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN, PAUL, JAMES AND PETER, ARE LYING OR TELLING THE TRUTH? HOW DO THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS COMPARE WITH OTHER WELL ATTESTED HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD? IS THERE ANY REASON TO BELIEVE WE HAVE A DISTORTED VIEW OF WHAT JESUS SAID AND DID BECAUSE IT HAPPENED SO LONG AGO? IF THERE IS ACCURATE HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT JESUS CHRIST, IS THERE ANY PROOF THAT JESUS ACTUALLY CLAIMED HE WAS GOD? IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE THAT JESUS EVER OFFERED PROOF TO THE PEOPLE OF HIS DAY TO VERIFY HIS CLAIM THAT HE WAS GOD? WHAT DOES A TRIAL LAWYER THINK ABOUT THE EVIDENCE CHRIST PRESENTED TO PROVE HIS CLAIM OF DEITY? ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS AND MORE WILL BE ANSWERED DURING OUR PROGRAM TONIGHT. WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.

John Ankerberg: Good evening. Welcome to our program. Tonight we have a very special program. If you are a non-believer or if you are a believer, this material, this information, is exactly just for you. Why? If you have watched this program in days gone by, you know that I believe that Christianity is absolutely true. It's not just one good belief among thousands of different beliefs, but the thing about Christianity: It's unique, it's true, and there is evidence that a thinking person can investigate that will bring you to the same conclusion -- that it's true, and you can invest your life in it. You can give your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, tonight, for those of you that are unbelievers, we are going to present the evidence. And if you are a Christian, this evidence will also help you in talking to your friends. It will tell you what you can share with them. I hope that you will stay with us. We are going to do a series of programs laying out the evidence for you. And tonight, our guest, as you've already heard in our introduction, has eight earned degrees, including two Ph.D.'s. He is also an attorney. And he is one of the best spokesmen for Christianity, and especially in the area of laying out information, difficult information, and making it clear. My guest, of course, is Dr. John Warwick Montgomery, Dean of the Simon Green leaf School of Law. Dr. Montgomery, we're glad that you're here tonight.

Dr. John Warwick Montgomery: My pleasure.

Ankerberg: I want to come right to the point, and that is, you have said that Christianity is different from all the other religions in the sense that you say it can be verified. A person can check out the evidence for its claims before they jump into it. Tell us what you mean.

Montgomery: There are innumerable religious claims in the world. Religions appear on the scene right and left. I come from California, "the land of the fruits and the nuts," and in California the number of religions probably exceeds the number of people. Now, it's one thing to make a religious claim. It's a totally different thing to demonstrate that claim. As in the field of law, anybody can file suit, but winning the case is a very different matter. And in the case of Christianity, we have claims that have to do with history, with historical fact; with certain events which, if they took place, the Christian faith is vindicated. If they didn't take place, it's false. And Christianity has been willing to put itself on the line in that respect across the centuries. At the very beginning, a rabbinic lawyer and convert to Christianity by the name of Paul said, "If Christ isn't risen from the dead, we are of all men most miserable." In other words, if the resurrection didn't take place, Christianity is false. If the resurrection did take place, Christianity turns out to be true. So, history is the field in which we can test the claims of Christianity.

Ankerberg: Most people right off the bat would say, "Listen, but you've got innumerable problems. You're talking history, you're talking the Bible as the evidence, you're talking about disciples that were a part of writing that were all buddy-buddy with Jesus, and then I've heard all of this modern textual criticism." Where would you start in laying out the evidence for a thinking person that says, "Listen, I've heard all that. What about that?"

Montgomery: Well, in the first place, since Christianity came on the scene in history, the first question will have to do with the documents by which we know about it. How good are these documents? If the New Testament documents were written by drunken monks in the tenth century, Christianity is in deep trouble. But they weren't. They were written by eyewitnesses of the events themselves, or by associates of eyewitnesses. So this material is what a historian would call "primary source material." What a lawyer would call "non-hearsay." Then, having looked at the documents, we want to see what they have to say about Jesus. Do they present Him as a simple prophet, as a kind of Jewish Boy Scout helping little old ladies across the Sea of Galilee? Or do they present Him as a bit more than that? As a matter of fact, we will discover that they present Jesus as God Almighty, as "very God of very God," as the Creeds put it. Then, we have to ask ourselves, "Was He really that kind of person?" Because He could claim such and yet not be that. So we turn to the central evidence presented to show that He was the person He claimed to be, namely, His resurrection from the dead. So it seems to me we want to proceed along three lines. First of all, the documents; second, what the documents have to say about Jesus; and then the evidence that what they say about Jesus is correct -- specifically, His resurrection.

Ankerberg: All right, now you're a trial attorney, and the fact is that when you sift evidence, you said there are eyewitnesses. Now, I think this comes as a surprise to many people. Eyewitnesses to Jesus Christ? Come on! Who were they?

Montgomery: Well, for example, the first Gospel was written by Matthew Levi, a tax collector, who became an apostle, a disciple of Jesus, and who wrote on the basis of his own observation of what Jesus said and did. The fourth Gospel was written by John who was the youngest of the disciples and lived the longest. We have independent evidence that he died in the city of Ephesus around the year 95. We have records of two of his students where they indicate to us that John was in fact the author of that book, and he passed on information to them about the authorship of the other major Gospels. The second Gospel was written by John Mark who was a companion of Peter, one of the apostles, and Luke's Gospel was written by the physician who accompanied the Apostle Paul on his missionary journeys. And Paul was accepted by the original eleven apostles as a legitimate apostle in his own right.

Ankerberg: And of course you've got James and Peter.

Montgomery: Those as well.

Ankerberg: That's right. So you have seven eyewitnesses that said they were either there or checked out other witnesses and gave us information, which is what we have in the New Testament. But then I can hear many of the folks that are listening in right now, they would be saying, "But Dr. Montgomery, you know those were all the disciples of Jesus. Those were His friends. Didn't they pad the case? I mean, didn't they really kind of make it up and lift Jesus up? And we really don't have any skeptics in the group there, we just have good friends of Jesus. How do we know that they actually are telling us the truth about what Jesus actually did?"

Montgomery: That's one of the central questions, and it seems to me we need to face that directly, and there are two things we need to see about it. First of all, these people did not start out as believers. In fact, after Jesus' crucifixion, they were back at the old fishing nets. They quite obviously had not arrived at the belief reflected in the writings that they produced later. What changed their minds was the resurrection itself. We see this in the case of Thomas, who wouldn't believe unless he could touch the nail prints in Jesus' hands and thrust his hand into His side after the resurrection. That's the first thing. Second thing is, it doesn't really make any difference whether a writer about Jesus or a writer about anything else is a friend of the person that he writes about, if he produces his writings in an environment where there are hostile witnesses. The fact is that the early apostles went out and presented what we have in the New Testament in a primarily Jewish audience, particularly in the synagogues. And the Jewish religious leaders had been the primary opponents of Jesus' message. Now, it is inconceivable that the disciples, friends of Jesus or not, could have gotten away with incorrect information about Jesus in the presence of hostile witnesses who had themselves had contact with Jesus' life and who had what we lawyers call "means, motive and opportunity" to destroy that picture.

Ankerberg: Now, we've had folks that would say, "Well, yeah, that sounds pretty good, but how do you know that what the disciples saw has come down to us accurately?" In other words, two things: some will say, "You know, all right, you've got seven eyewitnesses. You've got people that said they saw things and heard Jesus say things. They wrote it down. But don't we have a lot of errors in the text and weren't these things written down hundreds of years later?" I mean, I've had Jewish rabbis on the program that said, you know, two or three hundred years after the time that Jesus lived we have the documents. And the fact is it would be like talking to the man in the front row -- whispering something into his ear, and he whispers something into the next guy's ear and it goes all the way around, and by the time it gets to the back, the message has changed. And what they're saying is, "Listen, that's where Jesus and the disciples, they were talking up there, and then those guys passed it on word of mouth, word of mouth, word of mouth, and by the time it got down here we've got legend. We've got myth." What do you say to that?

Montgomery: Well, in the case of the New Testament documents we have writings of antiquity which were copied and recopied across the centuries up to the time of the invention of printing in the West in the fifteenth century. There is a science known as textual criticism which examines the documents to see whether they have been altered through the copying and recopying, and which corrects the documents on the basis of better texts. This is a highly technical field, and the results of it are what interest us, not the means by which those results were obtained. We couldn't go into that. But the results of textual criticism applied to the New Testament documents is very simple: The New Testament documents are the best attested documents of the Ancient World. That is to say, there has been the least difficulty in getting back to the original content of those documents as compared with any of the documents of classical antiquity. I'll give you a few examples here. I majored in classics as an undergraduate at Cornell University and I spent an entire semester on the

Roman poet Catullus. He wrote love poems. It was a delightful semester. And no one mentioned in the course of that series of sessions on Catullus that all of the poems of Catullus that we have come from one manuscript which was discovered during the Italian Renaissance and has since been lost. In other words, the earliest manuscript of the complete poems of Catullus was a thousand years after the writing of those poems themselves. This is in general the situation as to the documents of classical antiquity. In contrast with this we have the New Testament documents. We have complete texts of the Gospels going back within 300 years of the original writings -- 300 years. And, the 300 years is bridged by quotations, fragments, lectionary readings that take us right back on top of the original writings. We even have a fragment of the Gospel of John that is dated at 100. In other words, within five years of the writing of the Gospel itself. Classical textual critics would sell their grandmothers for that kind of evidence in regard to writers such as Catullus. Now, the conclusion that we have to arrive at in this is that if you want to throw out the New Testament documents on the basis of some textual argument, you must first dump your entire knowledge of Greco-Roman history because our knowledge of Greece and Rome depend upon documentary evidence less adequate than the documentary evidence for Jesus Christ.

Ankerberg: All right, we're going to take a break and we're going to come back. You had a debate with a Professor [Avrum] Stroll up in British Columbia, and it was right in that area where he said that there was no information that he would accept and evidence. I'd like you to tell our listeners when we come back off the break what the conclusion of that debate was in a moment. Stick with us. We'll come right back.

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Ankerberg: All right, we're back, and we're talking about the historical evidence for the Person of Jesus Christ. Christianity says that Jesus Christ is God. The question is, "Is He?" Is there any evidence to back that up? And what kind of evidence is there? Dr. Montgomery, you've been talking about evidence. Summarize again, what was the evidence that we're looking at?

Montgomery: Yes. What we've been emphasizing is that Christianity differs from other religions in offering specific historical proof of its claims, and the historical proof has to do with Jesus Christ. According to primary source records -- records that come from eyewitnesses -- Jesus claimed to be no less than God and He demonstrated His deity by His resurrection from the dead. And the documents in which these materials are contained turn out to be the best attested documents of the ancient world in the sense that there is the least textual alteration and damage to these documents across the centuries. We can get back virtually to the time of writing and we discover that these documents were in the condition in the first century in which we find them in the twentieth. It is simply not the case that as a result of translations or copyings we have lost our contact with what those documents originally said.

Ankerberg: Somebody said that we've got now 24,000 different manuscripts that have come down to us concerning the New Testament. How does that compare with other documents such as Homer or other Greek documents?

Montgomery: I can't resist reading a quotation from the foremost authority in New Testament textual criticism in our time, Sir Frederick Kenyon. He was principal librarian in the British Museum, roughly the equivalent of our Librarian of Congress, and he wrote numerous books in this field. Back in 1933 he wrote a book entitled Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible, and he says on pages 74 to 76, "So far from the New Testament text being in an abnormally unsatisfactory state, it is far better attested than that of any other work of ancient literature. Its problems and difficulties arise not from the deficiency of evidence, but from an excess of it. In the case of no work of Greek or Latin literature do we possess manuscripts so plentiful in number or so near the date of composition." And then he goes on to make comparisons

with other classical writers. For example, in general, the distance from the first complete texts that we have of a classical writer and the original writing ranges 900 to 1,000 years. 900 to 1,000 years! We don't know what happened during that period, and we simply assume that the document as we have it adequately represents the document as it was originally written. Whereas in the case of the New Testament, as we've already said, there are documents -- that is to say, fragments, lectionary readings, quotations, and the like -- that carry us from the complete texts that are immensely earlier than in the case of classical writings, right back on top of the original writings.

Ankerberg: All right. Talk to us again about when these things were written. Some people say, "Well, how do you know it's not legend or myth, or it's not the product of the church instead of the disciples?" In other words, talk to the point where they say it didn't really come into existence until about two or three hundred years after Jesus was on the scene. What would you say to that?

Montgomery: Well, it's impossible to argue that way because we have the manuscript materials earlier than this. There was a liberal theologian by the name of Rudolph Bultmann who said that the writings of the New Testament are actually the product of second century gnosticism, particularly the Gospel of John is such a product. A little difficulty arose, namely finding a fragment of the Gospel of John at the year 100. It is very difficult to be influenced by second century gnosticism when the book's already written.

Ankerberg: What are the dates for the books?

Montgomery: Yes. The Gospels -- the Synoptic Gospels, that is Matthew, Mark, and Luke -- plus almost all of the rest of the New Testament appeared before the fall of Jerusalem in the year 70. It's fascinating to notice how even liberal scholars in our time have been forced to earlier dating like this on the basis of manuscript evidence. Thus, J. A. T. Robinson, "Honest to God Robinson" of the 1960's before his death produced a work entitled Re-dating the New Testament, and in this he said, "Every book of the New Testament was written before 70 by a baptized Jew." He even included the Gospel of John. And in his posthumous book published just last year, he argues that the Gospel of John was the earliest of the Gospels. Now, it certainly wasn't, but this is an indication of how early the dating has to be placed now. And the same position was taken by William Foxwell Albright of Johns Hopkins University, the author of the most important general work on biblical archaeology in our country. He said that, "Every single book of the New Testament was a product of people in direct contact with Jesus and before the fall of Jerusalem in 70."

Ankerberg: Give us what scholarship is substantiating concerning the dates. Start with Luke and work your way back, on dates.

Montgomery: Well, in all probability, Mark's Gospel is the earliest. And it was used by Matthew as one of Matthew's sources, and also used by Luke as one of Luke's sources. We have external evidence that shows us this early dating along the following lines. We know that Paul died in the Neronian persecution 64-65. Now, the book of Acts sets forth the biography of Paul, his missionary activities. But at the end of the book of Acts Paul has not yet died. So, it's clear that the book was written before his death. Had he died, obviously the author would have mentioned it. Death is important in a biography. It ends it! So, 64-65. Luke is "part one" of Acts and is stated to be such. In the book of Acts the writer says, "The former treatise I presented to you Theophilus." That's Luke. So Luke was written prior to Acts. But Luke used Mark. Now, you're moving back from 64-65, and Jesus died around the year 30. That places all of this stuff within a generation of the events themselves. Thirty-five years maximum.

Ankerberg: Why is that important?

Montgomery: Well, I hate to admit this, but I graduated from high school around 35 years ago and I remember very clearly my high school graduation. Some of it I'd like to forget. And the fact that we have little difficulty in remembering events that are important to us 35 years ago means simply that the stuff that you get in the New Testament is an accurate memory of what Jesus said and did. And these writers claim that. They insist that they are presenting what we today would call the "straight scoop" about that man.

Ankerberg: So we have accurate information, historical records, about a person called Jesus, substantiated by a multitude of documents that far outweighs any kind of support that you have in the classics itself. The time date for these books, the interval of transmission, is much shorter than what you have for the classics, and so what's the conclusion on all of this?

Montgomery: Conclusion is this: that you can know when you read the New Testament that what it says about Jesus is accurate. Now, if it should turn out that what these documents say is that Jesus was the God of the universe come down here to earth to deal with your personal spiritual problems, you'd better come to terms with Him. You have no choice. You're facing reality and you're going to have to deal with it. Nobody can come to you that way and remain in neutrality. You're going to have to make some sort of decision about a person like that.

Ankerberg: Okay, so this sets us up now. We've got accurate information, in history, about a real person. Now the question is, what does that information tell us about that person? And, of course, with all the different interpretations that people have given us of who they think Jesus is, we're going to check out next week who Jesus Himself claimed to be, and then the mess that gets us in concerning miracles and the things that He did and we want to investigate that. So please stick with us. We'll do it next week.

Program 2

Introduction: RECENT SURVEYS AND POLLS SHOW THAT 98% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE IN GOD. BUT THESE SAME POLLS REVEAL MANY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE GOD THEY BELIEVE IN. TONIGHT, JOHN ANKERBERG WILL EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE AND THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY'S CENTRAL FIGURE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, "WAS JESUS CHRIST A LIAR, A LUNATIC, A LEGEND, OR GOD?" JOHN'S GUEST IS ATTORNEY JOHN WARWICK MONTGOMERY, DEAN OF THE SIMON GREENLEAF SCHOOL OF LAW IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND A PRACTICING TRIAL LAWYER BOTH IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA. DURING TONIGHT'S PROGRAM WE WILL ASK: IF A LAWYER WERE TO ARGUE THE CLAIMS OF JESUS CHRIST IN A COURT OF LAW, WHAT REAL EVIDENCE WOULD HE POINT TO? ARE THE BIOGRAPHIES CONCERNING JESUS' LIFE NOTHING MORE THAN LEGENDS THAT WERE WRITTEN OVER SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS AFTER JESUS LIVED, OR REAL HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS WRITTEN BY EYEWITNESSES? HOW WOULD A LAWYER DETERMINE WHETHER THE WITNESSES CONCERNING JESUS' LIFE, NAMELY, MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN, PAUL, JAMES AND PETER, ARE LYING OR TELLING THE TRUTH? IF THERE IS ACCURATE HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT JESUS, DID HE EVER CLAIM HE WAS GOD? DID JESUS EVER OFFER ANY PROOF TO THE PEOPLE OF HIS DAY VERIFYING HIS CLAIM THAT HE WAS GOD? WHY SHOULD A THINKING PERSON IN THE 20TH CENTURY ACCEPT THE ACCOUNT OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD AS PROOF JESUS IS GOD? HOW WOULD A TRIAL LAWYER ARGUE AGAINST PHILOSOPHER DAVID HUME'S ARGUMENT CONCERNING MIRACLES? DIDN'T HUME SHOW THAT HISTORICAL EVIDENCE COULD NEVER SUBSTANTIATE THE FACT OF A MIRACLE HAPPENING, AND THEREFORE THE RESURRECTION OF

CHRIST CANNOT BE USED AS PROOF OF HIS DEITY? ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS AND MORE WILL BE ANSWERED DURING OUR PROGRAM TONIGHT. WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.

Ankerberg: Good evening. Tonight, we're talking to those of you who are not believers. And we are taking the time to lay out the evidence for belief in the Person of Jesus Christ. If you're a thinking person, Christianity has always said you do not have to throw your mind away to become a Christian. In fact, if you'll use that mind of yours, it will bring you to Jesus Christ. This is different than any other religion in the world. You don't have to come into it, jump in with both feet, before you experience that it's true or whatever you experience. You can investigate it from the outside and come to a conclusion with your head: "This is the truth." Now, that's a powerful statement, and we want to back it up with evidence so I hope that you'll stay tuned. This is week 2 in terms of what we're talking about, and my guest is Attorney Dr. John Warwick Montgomery, Dean of Simon Greenleaf School of Law in Anaheim, California. He holds eight earned degrees, among them, two Ph.D.'s from some of our leading universities in the world. Tonight, we're asking him to lay out the evidence for us. Dr. Montgomery, we're glad that you're here with us and we want to continue with the evidence for the claims of Jesus Christ. And last week we were simply asking the question, "Do we have accurate information about this person?" You claim it's historical. Give us a little summary for all the people that missed last week.

Montgomery: Yes, last week we mentioned a debate that I had some years ago with Professor Stroll at the University of British Columbia. Professor Stroll said that the documents of the New Testament were simply not adequate to get a picture of Jesus. And I offered evidence to show that these documents are the best attested documents of the classical world. I said, "If you want to give up Jesus Christ, you first of all have got to dump your knowledge of the classical world." Professor Stroll said, "Fine. I will throw out the classical world." At which point the head of the classics department got up and said, "Good Lord, Avrum, not that!" You can't just toss out Greco-Roman antiquity because you don't want to face the documents that present Jesus Christ. Last week we went over these documents and we showed that these documents are sound historical materials for understanding who Jesus actually was.

Ankerberg: And as William F. Albright said, They can't be myth; they can't be legend, because in his opinion every one of the books of the New Testament documents they've got on their shelf at home or in the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the time of 45 to 75 A.D., probably 50 to 80 in his opinion. But you went back and showed us it's probably more likely under 65, right back to the time of Jesus.

Montgomery: Yes. In any case, there's no doubt but what these documents were in circulation while hostile witnesses to the life of Jesus were still alive. And the existence of those hostile witnesses means that the writers could not have fabricated or altered or changed the material about Jesus and gotten away with it.

Ankerberg: Yeah, let's give them an illustration. If I were to ask all the people that are above 30, "Where were you, and do you remember, and how did you feel when you heard the President of the United States has been shot?" referring to Kennedy. Most people can remember where they were, and bring back the very emotion that they had. Do you remember how you felt when you saw Jackie Kennedy coming off the airplane with that blood-splattered dress? Or watching the casket go down the streets in Washington, or John-John saluting at the casket? I mean, people can remember that vividly, but the fact is it happened in 1963, which is 24 or 25 years ago. If somebody were to come out and say, "You know, this is how Kennedy really died. There was an Indian standing on the street in Dallas, and he had a bow and arrow. And he took the bow, shot the arrow and got Kennedy right in the head. That's how he died." All the people that were eyewitnesses on the streets in Dallas and all the people that have watched it on television, even

though it was 25 years ago, we would say, "No!" Because we're still living. It happened that many years ago. Same thing with the Gospel records. Isn't that what you're saying?

Montgomery: Certainly!

Ankerberg: So that we have accurate information -- it couldn't be myth, couldn't be legend. One other thing we didn't cover last week. Some people say, "But listen, in these texts that have come down, don't we have errors in the texts?"

Montgomery: Well, of course, copyists, as they work with materials will introduce what the textual critics call "errors of the pen" or "errors of the eye." As a manuscript is dictated, they may mis-hear. As they have a copy next to them, they may mis-copy it. But it's possible to discover these errors as the textual critic compares the texts that come from different copyist traditions. And that's exactly what goes on in the case of the New Testament documents. And on the basis of that kind of analysis, the conclusion is that we can be surer of the texts of the New Testament than we can of any of the other books of antiquity. We certainly can be sure of the portrait set forth of Jesus. We can tell whether or not He was an Eastern guru, a seller of pastrami sandwiches, or God Almighty on the basis of this primary source evidence.

Ankerberg: It's the same thing you have with every other historical document.

Montgomery: Surely. There's no difference at all. And the method of analyzing that we have engaged in is exactly the method that we would use for any other document, and that's very important. Because it means that if a person is listening to this broadcast who has not committed himself to Jesus Christ, we're not asking that person to engage in some kind of special spiritual reasoning. We're asking him simply to use the same kind of reasoning that he employs in every other area of life to determine the reliability of documents and the reliability of testimony, and if he applies those methods to the case for Jesus Christ, he'll move right along the lines that we're moving.

Ankerberg: Yeah, let me just give one example. If we take -- I think we mentioned -- 24,000 manuscripts have come down to us, documents of the New Testament, different shapes and sizes and so on. But let's say you've got 24,000 different versions of John 3:16, and you've got 23,900 of them that say, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." And you have 100 that say, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life," and the textual critic says, "Well, you see, you've got an error there?" What was the word that was missing? Did you catch it? The word "for." I left out "for" at the front. So now, textual criticism, for those of you who aren't involved in it, but they would say, take a wild guess: if you've got 23,900 say, take with the word "for" in there, and you've got 100 that don't have it in there, what conclusion would you come to? Should it be in there or shouldn't it be in there? That would be number one. But number two, even if you couldn't decide that, if you would have to say, "Well, we just don't know?" Would it change the meaning of the rest of the verse? And it wouldn't. And that's basically what we're covering in the New Testament. None of these scribal errors that have come down to us, even if you say, "Well, listen, we have "X" amount of documents over here that disagree with these documents," when you put those disagreements on the board, none of them change the information, even if you can't figure that out. Isn't that correct?

Montgomery: Almost all of the errors -- or "errors" so-called -- are of the nature that you were just describing. They have to do with non-substantive matters. A very common example is to have a passage where one text will say, "Jesus and His disciples walked along the shores of Galilee." And another text will say, "They walked along the shores of the Sea of Galilee" where Jesus and His disciples had been mentioned in the preceding sentence. That sort of thing can easily be explained

by copyists not following a text as closely as they might. But the point is, even in those instances, as we move back through time, getting closer and closer to the original writing, it's possible to refine this and determine to a high degree of certainty what the original text said. It's as if you are moving like this, and it's true at the very tip of the triangle, you don't have direct evidence, but you simply extrapolate. You would hardly assume that when you got back to that point, suddenly there would be gigantic problems appearing. It's more reasonable to assume that those problems would totally disappear if you were arriving right at the original manuscript of the author.

Ankerberg: We've got one minute before we take a break, but this brings up the question, many non-Christians are starting to listen to you and say, "Well, listen, you really are taking this as historical documents by eyewitness writers. Doesn't sound like you're talking about the fact that they're inerrant." We're going to spend a whole session on the Bible, but to start with, define your terms. We are not taking these documents to start with for the non-Christian and saying, "Listen, we're going to start pushing the inerrancy of the Word of God down your throat to start with." Explain what we're doing.

Montgomery: As we move along, we're going to discover that these reliable historical documents with which we began turn out to be far more than that. They turn out to be the very Word of God. But, we are beginning with them as ordinary historical documents, the same kind of documents that we have dealing with other historical events. And it's important that we move in this fashion, because we cannot expect a person who isn't already committed to Jesus Christ suddenly to look at a Bible and say, "My Gosh, every single word is true!" The fact that the Bible is written on India paper isn't going to impress a person who has not seen what the evidence is. So we're building up to the total truth of this material through a series of steps. Hang on. We'll get to that.

Ankerberg: Right. Now we've got the fact on the board that we've got accurate historical information, and we want to come to the next point: what does that information tell us about Jesus? What do the eyewitnesses say? What did Jesus Himself say? He ought to have known. And we're going to examine that because there's a lot of people, and I'm sure that you've heard them, that have said, "Jesus never, ever claimed to be God." We're going to see if that's true, so please stick with us. We'll back right back.

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Ankerberg: All right, we're back, and if you just joined us we're talking about the Person of Jesus Christ. Do we have accurate information about this person? Was He a real historical figure? If so, and we've come to the conclusion in looking at the evidence that we do have solid information, now the question is, who is Jesus Christ? Who did He say that He was? And, Dr. Montgomery, you have debated all kinds of professors that have said right to your face they did not believe that Jesus ever claimed to be God. What did you say back to them?

Montgomery: If a Martian suddenly landed here -- buzzzzzz, plunk! -- and it had absolutely no contact with the New Testament, there would be no question whatever that in properly reading it, he would come to the conclusion that Jesus claimed to be God. Why? Because of the way in which Jesus speaks of Himself; because of the things that Jesus did; and because of the clear evidence that those particular approaches made on the people around Him. Now, specifically. [In] John Chapter 14, Philip says, "Show us the Father." He says to Jesus, "Show us the Father." Jesus says, "Have I been so long with you, Philip, and you have not known me? He who has seen me has seen the Father." Now, Philip is an orthodox Jew. He does not believe in a pantheon of Greek deities. There's only one God for him. Jesus is an orthodox Jew. And so, if Philip asks to see the Father, and Jesus says, "You're looking at Him," there is only one inescapable conclusion: that Jesus regards Himself as God. Now, that's in John. And some critics pooh-pooh the Gospel of John. They say, "Ah, the Gospel of John, that's a late theological interpretation of Jesus." But,

we've already seen, in our previous program, that the Gospel of John was written by an eyewitness, by one of the apostles. So, it reflects direct evidence from a person who had been in contact with Jesus through His entire ministry. However, let's go to the earliest of the Gospels. Let's go to Mark. In Mark's Gospel you hardly open it -- you get to Chapter 2 -- and it presents a day in the life of Jesus. The paralytic passage. The paralytic is being let down through the roof, and the scribes and Pharisees are mumbling to themselves and they are saying, "What is He going to do?" and all this. And Jesus says to the fellow, "Your sins be forgiven." And the scribes and Pharisees say, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Does Jesus say, "Oops! Oops! You're perfectly right. Slip of the tongue. Didn't mean to give that impression." Not at all! Jesus says, "That you may know that I have the power to forgive sins, I say to the paralytic, 'Take up bed and walk.'" The paralytic takes up his bed and walks and the people glorify God. The point being that if Jesus could do the thing that they could see, namely heal the paralysis, then they could trust Him for the thing they couldn't see, namely forgiving sin. And only God forgives sin. This is a direct affirmation of deity by what He was doing. And you go to the end of these Gospels and you find Jesus on trial. And what is He on trial for? Not for shoplifting. He's on trial for blasphemy. The high priest says, "Are you the one?" And Jesus says, "You will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with all the heavenly hosts." And that's a reference to Daniel 7:[13-]14 and the book of Ezekiel where the Son of Man is the divine, apocalyptic Messiah coming to clean up history. And the high priest says, "What need do we have for further witnesses? He blasphemeth! Let Him be crucified!" Now, nobody had any question about this in Jesus' own time. They all thought He was claiming to be God. That's why they crucified Him. It therefore is "small potatoes" in my view that some liberal theologians twenty centuries later tell us that Jesus wasn't claiming this at all. The eyewitnesses say He was.

Ankerberg: Okay, in terms of the claims, obviously He's claiming to be God. Father Divine in Philadelphia, I think, he claimed to be God. A lot of people are claiming to be a god or in touch with God or the mouthpiece for God. So what?

Montgomery: Oh yes! There is the story of the young fellow who went to the insane asylum and there he found a fellow with his hand in his shirt like this and the fellow said, "And who are you?" The fellow said, "Napoleon, bien sur!" -- "Napoleon, of course." And the fellow said, "What makes you think that?" The fellow said, "God told me." And a voice came from the other side of the room, "I did not." So, claiming to be God is not the equivalent of being God. That is perfectly correct.

Ankerberg: Okay, so now what is the thing that Jesus gave to us? Did Jesus give us anything to look at that would verify His claim that would differentiate Him, make Him absolutely unique compared to all the other religious leaders of the world?

Montgomery: Well, He said, "One sign is going to be given to you, and it's the sign of Jonah. As Jonah was in the fish, so I will be in the earth, and I will rise again." And it also says in the documents that He said on one occasion, "Tear down this temple and in three days I will raise it again, and He spoke of His own body." And after He rose again from the dead, they remembered what He had said. In other words, Jesus made His resurrection from the dead the final proof that He was indeed the person He claimed to be.

Ankerberg: All right, in terms of that, what about the resurrection? A lot of people would say, "Wait a minute. Now you're getting into the miraculous side of things. And intellectually, Dr. Montgomery, I mean, we're people of the twentieth century. We don't believe in fairy tales. We don't believe in miracles. Okay? And, I mean, didn't David Hume, didn't he knock that idea right out the window. I mean, when I was sitting in philosophy class, my professor went through that with me, and miracles can't happen. And here all of a sudden you're basing the whole story, when we get right down to it, on Jesus' claim to come forth from the dead. Now, what about Hume, and

what about the philosophical arguments against miracles taking place in the twentieth century?"

Montgomery: Hume's argument against the miraculous is a classic argument, and it ought to be presented to all first-year philosophy students. But it shouldn't be presented in the religious philosophy section of the text, it should be presented in the logic section of the text because it's a perfect example of circular reasoning.

Ankerberg: What is circular reasoning?

Montgomery: It's completely circular. The argument goes like this. Says Hume, "There is uniform experience against the miraculous." And he concludes from this, "Miracles do not happen." Well, if there is uniform experience against the miraculous, meaning if no one has ever seen a miracle, then, of course, we cannot say that miracles occur, because the only ground for saying a miracle occurs is observational evidence that it has. So, if there is no experience in favor of miracles, miracles haven't occurred. That, however, is the question. Because the writers of the New Testament claim, for example, that Jesus did rise again from the dead. That He walked on water. That He healed people and so on. These claims are there. The trouble with Hume, and with many philosophers, is that they think that they can sit in an armchair and pronounce upon what cannot happen in the universe. They must get off their derriere and get out and investigate to find out what is going on in the universe. Maybe they won't find anything, but they're never going to get their ultimate questions answered unless they're willing to investigate. You cannot deductively determine an issue like this.

Ankerberg: So people actually have to look at the evidence, and if the evidence is there, then you have an example that goes against the norm, and if it stands it stands. And what you're saying is...

Montgomery: Sure!

Ankerberg: ...people will not accept this because it's going against their presuppositions or it might mess up their world view. What would you say to people like that?

Montgomery: They're like the old farmer who went to the zoo, and previously he had seen only cows and chickens and horses and so forth, and there was a giraffe. And he looked at this thing, and he looked again, and he said, "There ain't no such animal!" The point is, that when you come across something unique and out of your experience, you have a choice. And the choice is either to stick your head in the sand and refuse to admit that it's there because it's more comfortable not to alter your world view, or you enlarge your world view to pick up the event.

Ankerberg: All right. Next week we're going to take a look at the objections that scholars and philosophers have raised concerning the resurrection. But tonight, summarize where we have come from and where we are right now. For those who are not believers, what is the importance of the conclusion that we've arrived at tonight?

Montgomery: All right. If you're an unbeliever, you've come across lots of religious claims. What we said last week was that in the case of Christian faith you can test its claims. That Jesus was indeed God. And we started that testing with the New Testament documents. We discovered that those are solid documents, written by eyewitnesses. You've got to pay attention to these if you want to pay attention to any historical documents. And this week we went ahead and we looked at the content of these documents. What do they say about Jesus? We found Jesus claiming to be no less than God Almighty. Not simply a prophet, not a religious teacher in some general sense, but God Almighty. And we've seen that that claim doesn't hold in its own right. There's going to have to be evidence for it. But the evidence is given also in those historical documents, namely that Jesus rose again from the dead. We've discovered that we cannot rule out miracles

philosophically, we've got to check this case for the resurrection out, and that's exactly what we're going to do next week.

Ankerberg: All right, so please join us next week. We're going to look carefully at the resurrection of Jesus Christ and some of the objections that you have probably heard at the university or at the office with your friends, and we're going to see if we can answer those for you. And remember this, that this is not just an exercise for the intellect, this has eternal consequences. Again, if this is true, then what will you do about it? Will you commit your life to Jesus Christ? That's what we want you to consider and keep thinking about. So, again, please join us next week.

Program 3

Introduction: RECENT SURVEYS AND POLLS SHOW THAT 98% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE IN GOD. BUT THESE SAME POLLS REVEAL MANY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE GOD THEY BELIEVE IN. TONIGHT, JOHN ANKERBERG WILL EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE AND THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY'S CENTRAL FIGURE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, "WAS JESUS CHRIST A LIAR, A LUNATIC, A LEGEND, OR GOD?" JOHN'S GUEST IS ATTORNEY JOHN WARWICK MONTGOMERY, DEAN OF THE SIMON GREENLEAF SCHOOL OF LAW IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND A PRACTICING TRIAL LAWYER BOTH IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA. DURING TONIGHT'S PROGRAM WE WILL ASK: DOES IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH WHETHER JESUS CHRIST'S RESURRECTION IS A FACT OF HISTORY OR A FAIRYTALE? SHOULD CHRISTIAN CLERGYMEN BE REMOVED FROM THEIR POSITIONS IF THEY DENY THAT JESUS CHRIST ACTUALLY ROSE FROM THE DEAD? WHAT ABOUT THE OBJECTIONS OF SUCH ANALYTICAL PHILOSOPHERS TODAY AS ANTHONY FLEW WHO OBJECT TO THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST ON THE BASIS THAT ONLY A PSYCHOLOGICAL MIRACLE OCCURRED RATHER THAN A BIOLOGICAL MIRACLE? FINALLY, IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A PERSON TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT HIS RELIGION, AND AT THE SAME TIME, BE PERFECTLY WRONG ABOUT THAT WHICH HE BELIEVES? WHY DO BOTH RELIGIOUS FEELINGS AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS HAVE TO BE BASED IN TRUTH? WHAT WOULD A TRIAL LAWYER SAY TO A PERSON WHO WILL NOT MAKE AN ULTIMATE COMMITMENT OF HIS LIFE TO JESUS CHRIST BECAUSE THE EVIDENCE IS BASED IN HISTORICAL FACTS WHICH ARE ONLY PROBABLE FACTS? WHAT WOULD A LAWYER SAY TO A PERSON WHO WILL NOT MAKE A DECISION FOR JESUS CHRIST BECAUSE HE SAYS THE EVIDENCE DOES NOT REACH 100% ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY? ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS AND MORE WILL BE ANSWERED DURING OUR PROGRAM TONIGHT. WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.

Ankerberg: Welcome! This is our third week where we're examining the evidence -- historical evidence, scientific evidence, evidence from just everyday reason -- that will bring you -- if you will examine the evidence concerning Jesus Christ -- will bring you to a conclusion that, namely, that He is God; He actually lived; He did things that verified His claim to being God. And tonight, we're right on that topic of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You've heard this. You've seen it in the movies where they come right to the end, some will put it in there, some will fudge on that because they don't really know what to do with it. And, Dr. Montgomery, we talked last week about David Hume and the fact that many of our professors that watch, many of our lawyers and students at the university, they have been thrown off base by Hume's argument concerning the miraculous. That it can't happen. That we can't verify the miraculous in history. And I think we ought to summarize what Hume said again, and start there, and then move on to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And especially as you are an attorney, from a lawyer's point of view and maybe compare the lawyer's point of view versus the theologian's high point of view -- why they might look at this a little

differently, and who would we most want to have take a look at this evidence? Start us off with the fact of a summary from last week concerning Hume and why is the resurrection important to talk about anyway?

Montgomery: Most philosophical arguments against the miraculous derive from the eighteenth century philosopher David Hume, and Hume engaged in a perfectly circular piece of reasoning. He said that "there is uniform experience against the miraculous" and he therefore concluded that miracles don't occur. But that's, as C. S. Lewis has pointed out, just two ways of saying the same thing. It's like saying if miracles don't occur, why then miracles don't occur. Unfortunately, there's been a tendency in the history of philosophy for philosophers to assume that you can solve problems as to the nature of things by some kind of deductive reasoning from first principles. But this is a very mysterious universe. It is a relativistic universe. We are living in an age of Einsteinian relativity, and we know perfectly well that the universe is too large to be embraced in that kind of deductive formulation. The only way we can find out that anything exists is to check the evidence for it. And that shows a difference in perspective on the part of philosophers in many instances from that of lawyers. Lawyers deal with the particulars of evidence. Fascinatingly enough, there are some philosophers who have begun to recognize that the lawyers' approach would be more helpful even in the field of philosophy. Steven Toulmin in his book The Uses of Argument has said, "Let's use the model of jurisprudence because lawyers are concerned with investigating evidence and drawing conclusions on the basis of the evidence." And so it seems to me that if we want to deal with the question as vital to religious truth as the question of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we've got to turn from philosophical speculation to the facts, to the evidence.

Ankerberg: Okay, why are we getting all excited about the resurrection in the first place? Why is it important to those that are listening?

Montgomery: Because if a person honestly looks within himself, he knows that the problem of death is at the very heart of his own experience. Existentialists have pointed out that only in death does life become truly meaningful. Great litterateur have used this as a central theme for what they have done. And psychologists tell us that we think about our own death perhaps once a week, maybe even more frequently. We know that this is the over-arching problem that we face. So, if someone comes along and says, "I can solve that problem. He who believes in me shall never see death." And He goes ahead and He demonstrates that He can conquer death, well, you'll never have a better reason for worship as long as you live.

Ankerberg: Why is it that many of the greatest defenders of the Christian faith have been lawyers, and what do you think most of those lawyers would say about Paul Tillich's statement that even if the historical facts referred to in the New Testament were doubtful,...or what he was saying was that if the resurrection didn't take place, it wouldn't hurt the Christian faith. You could still have the Christian faith without the historical event of the resurrection. What do you think most of the lawyers would say about that?

Montgomery: Well, it's fascinating to see what a legal scholar recently had to say about that kind of liberal reasoning. He wasn't referring specifically to Tillich, he was referring to those higher critics of the Bible that say, "It doesn't make any difference whether this material is sound historically. We can still have a 'faith experience' in Jesus." This kind of business. The man is Professor Sherwin White. He is an English scholar, and delivered a series of lectures at the University of Oxford -- a lecture series entitled "Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament." And he uses the New Testament as a basis for his conclusions about the nature of the Roman legal system. So he finally had to come down to the question of how sound those documents were. And he said, "I listen to liberal theologians, and the liberal theologians give me the impression that you can't get any kind of solid historical picture of Jesus, and that it doesn't

make any difference." Says Sherwin White, "This is very curious." "Curious" is the English equivalent of "Nutty" in American English. "This is very curious, when we look at these documents, because we look at them and they purport to be setting forth historical fact." The people say, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the facts concerning Jesus. We were eyewitnesses of Him." And Sherwin White says, "We compared this with the other documents of antiquity, and both are trying to do the same thing." He says, "Take the best known contemporary of Jesus Christ, Tiberius Caesar. What we know of Tiberius comes from four documents. Four documents. And none of them is as good as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And yet, we all consider that the evidence is sufficient for a decent historical picture of Tiberius Caesar." So, Sherwin White is saying from a lawyer's perspective, "These theologians are a strange breed of cat. What we ought to do is to get down to the evidence and stop a great deal of the speculation that they are engaged in."

Ankerberg: As both a theologian and an attorney, what do you think about Tillich's statement?

Montgomery: I think it's nonsense. If Jesus Christ didn't rise from the dead, I would instantly seek another profession or kill myself. Probably the latter, because life would not have any meaning. The fact is that the truth of Christianity is directly dependent upon whether Jesus rose again from the dead.

Ankerberg: Yeah, let's stay in that area just for a flash, because we have a lot of people in churches that do not preach the literal resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and furthermore their pastors would tell them it doesn't make any difference. Let's talk about that one more time. Why does it make a difference, and what would you say to their pastors and to the philosophers and professors that taught those pastors?

Montgomery: Well, if Jesus didn't rise again from the dead, there is no evidence that He was the person He claimed to be. How does He differ then from Jim Jones who gets a crowd of people around him and persuades them that he is some special kind of person? Or Father Divine, whom you mentioned. The situation then turns out to be one where people are worshiping simply because it makes them feel good. Moreover, there isn't any Gospel left if Jesus didn't rise again from the dead because the Gospel consists of His death for our sins, and His resurrection for our justification. If He never rose again from the dead, then He never conquered death, and if He never conquered death, there's no reason to think that the problem of sin and evil in the human heart is dealt with either. The whole Christian faith collapses. I think it's too bad that it isn't possible to remove clergy from their position who would try to eliminate the resurrection. My goodness! If you can get thrown out of the medical profession or the legal profession for malpractice as easily as you can, it's too bad that there are so many clergy around who are literally cutting off the limb on which they're sitting.

Ankerberg: All right, we're going to take a break and when we come on back we're going to take a look at a lawyer's point of view of looking at the resurrection. Does the evidence add up to the fact that Jesus really did come forth from the dead? I'm going to let you try that case in just a little bit. Come on back.

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Ankerberg: All right, we're back, and we're talking with Dr. John Warwick Montgomery. We're talking about the actual historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Is there solid evidence that a thinking person in the twentieth century can look at that will bring him to the conclusion, "My goodness, a man actually came forth from the dead!" Dr. Montgomery, your school is named after one of the most famous lawyers that Harvard Law School ever had -- Simon Greenleaf. Tell us a little bit about his story and what happened to him when he was challenged as

a lawyer to look at this evidence. Being a lawyer, try the case for us as well.

Montgomery: Simon Greenleaf taught at Harvard in the middle of the nineteenth century, and he was the greatest common law authority on evidence. His three-volume work modestly entitled Greenleaf on Evidence was used in England as well as in the United States. And Greenleaf was a believing Christian. He was, incidentally, the author or chief author of the Constitution of the Colony of Liberia because of his concern with foreign missions. So he's a founding father of Liberia, and he was a president of the Massachusetts Bible Society. But we're interested in him particularly because of a book that he wrote entitled The Testimony of the Evangelists. In this book, as it were, Greenleaf put Matthew, Mark, Luke and John on the witness stand to see if their testimony to Jesus Christ and His resurrection would hold up in a common law court. And the conclusion was, "Absolutely." There is no question about it. The verdict would go in that direction. This is why he is the namesake of the Christian law school of which I am dean that integrates law and theology in a regular legal curriculum and also offers a master of arts degree in the defense of the Christian faith -- "Evidence that Demands a Verdict," to use our Professor Josh McDowell's favorite book title.

Ankerberg: How can legal reasoning assist in coming to a conclusion whether or not the resurrection occurred? Why is it that so many lawyers that have looked into this have become Christians?

Montgomery: If the evidence is evaluated by the same standards that apply in any legal case, the result is the conclusion that Jesus rose again from the dead. And since lawyers are experts in evidence and testimony, that means a great deal to them, concretely. There was a book done some years ago, not by a lawyer but by a man who was very much influenced by legal reasoning, Frank Morison. The book is entitled Who Moved the Stone? It's a classic of Christian apologetics. In this book, Morison reasons as a lawyer. He says, "If Jesus didn't rise again from the dead, you're going to have to explain the missing body on Easter morning." The missing body. Now, bodies do not walk out of tombs unless there is a resurrection. So, if Jesus didn't rise again from the dead, someone must have taken it. There are only three interest groups in the situation: the Romans, the Jewish religious leaders, and the disciples. Would the Romans have stolen the body? Are you kidding? They are not in the provinces engaging in body snatching. They had no interest in doing so. To the contrary, they would have wanted, as Pilate did, to keep things quiet at all costs and certainly, leaving the body where it was would achieve that. The Jewish religious leaders were the very last people on the face of the globe to want to steal the body because they were at a disadvantage if even a rumor got started that Jesus had risen again from the dead. Indeed, they went to the Romans, asked for a guard for the tomb so that no rumors would start about the resurrection. What about the disciples? Well, listen to this closely. If the disciples had stolen the body, they then would have gone out and died for something they knew to be untrue. Now, people die for things that are untrue -- I mean, all the way through history people have died for lamebrained religious ideas. But it's one thing to die for something you think is true and it isn't, and a very different thing to die for something you know very well is untrue. Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History in the fourth century has one of his very few humorous paragraphs on the subject in which he suggests that the disciples are sitting around after Easter and they say, "Well, of course, He didn't rise again from the dead and we took the body and all that, but let's go out and tell people that He rose again from the dead. Won't it be fun! Of course, we'll lose all our property. We'll lose our friends. And let's see, they crucified Him, there's no telling what they're going to do to us, but it'll be fun. Let's go ahead and do it anyway!" I mean, this is just psychologically out of the question.

Ankerberg: What about Anthony Flew's objection that the disciples wouldn't have taken the body of Jesus.

Montgomery: Well, Anthony Flew attempts to deal with the last element of the argument I've just presented by saying, "Yes, it would be a psychological miracle for the disciples to go out and preach the resurrection after they themselves had stolen the body. But, says Flew, as a skeptic, "I prefer that psychological miracle to a biological miracle, namely, the resurrection." Sounds pretty good, but, of course, Christians are not people who prefer biology to psychology. The reason that Christians go along with the resurrection is because of the eyewitness evidence to it. Had there been eyewitness evidence to the disciples having a screw loose somewhere, then Christians would probably go along with that. You know, if earlier writers said, "Ah, those disciples! They're always doing things against their interests. They really are crazier than March hares!" That would be one thing. But the testimony that we have, the firsthand testimony is that they were sane, sober people. And so you cannot suddenly opt for a psychological miracle over against all the evidence. The difference between Flew and Christians -- especially Christian lawyers who dealt with this -- is not that Christians prefer one style of miracle over another. The difference is this, and it's extremely important: Skeptics really are bothered by facts. They don't want to face facts. Whereas Christians place their beliefs directly on historical fact.

Ankerberg: Not only that, but the fact is that if you're saying they went out because it psychologically made them feel good, then you are really passing up the truth question of whether they should have felt good or not. And that's exactly what Christianity does when we talk about all these other religions, that they also have a feeling. We are saying many times, and maybe to people that are looking in that have a religious belief that is different than Christianity and it feels good. They're comfortable. They're psychologically in tune with that belief. The problem is, there's no foundation. There's no factual basis for it. Wouldn't that be the same thing?

Montgomery: Yes, that's quite right. And I think it's extremely important to distinguish between truth and feelings. Now, we all have feelings, and the feelings are terribly important; but we've got to be so careful that we don't allow feelings to mislead us. And in the area of religion it's so easy for that to happen. You know, we mentioned Jonestown. The people who drank the spiced lemonade down there in British Guyana certainly had the greatest religious feelings toward Jim Jones, but the result was a perfect tragedy. Some of you may have seen the film version of "Cabaret." At one point the camera pans a little German town and there is a young, handsome blonde member of the Hitler youth movement and he's singing folk songs and you can see the expressions on the faces of these German citizens. Hope is coming back into their lives. They have something now that they didn't have before. Sure! And what they actually ended up with was a demonic kind of belief that resulted in the death of 6 million Jews, political prisoners, Christians and everybody else. We've got to be sure that our religious beliefs and feelings are based in the truth. And the truth is, that Jesus Christ rose again from the dead. All of the alternative explanations are out. They simply do not wash. And we are left with the eyewitness testimony over a 40-day period that Jesus rose again from the dead and that He had conquered the powers of death.

Ankerberg: I want to come back to this thing that we were talking about -- the fact of how can legal reasoning assist us in evaluating the resurrection? I'm thinking of people that are saying, "You know, it sounds pretty good what you're talking about. It sounds pretty good, this thing about the resurrection. But hey, fellow, you're asking me to commit my entire life to this?" And I'm reminded of Lessing's ugly ditch. Hey, you've got a historical event going here, but it's not a hundred percent certainty. You're talking probability, but you're asking me to commit my entire life to that thing. Now, as a lawyer, help us out. I think you're coming down the right line there.

Montgomery: Yeah, that's where lawyers can help also because in the proof of facts in legal cases, the test is probability. The test is not absolute certainty or mere possibility. The fact of the matter is that where any facts are concerned, you never can get evidence that reaches 100% certainty. You can't do it. The only place you can get a 100% certainty in any form of reasoning is a purely

formal reasoning in which you define the certainty in to begin with. For example, in this statement: "All husbands are married." That statement is absolutely certain. It's certain because you've defined the certainty in by defining the terms. The minute you move off of that sort of statement to questions of fact, like "Is there a book on this table?" You've got to rely on probability. Now, does that mean that we can't make any ultimate commitments? Hardly! We make ultimate commitments on the basis of probability every day of our life. When a jury comes in with a verdict, that's based on probability, but the verdict is 100% certain and will be acted upon by the court. Every time you cross the street you act on probability. And as the number of Porsches increase in the United States, the probabilities get less of successfully crossing the street. But, as you cross, you do not take 80% of yourself or 60% of yourself. Most of us take 100% of ourselves across the street. And we are committing ourselves totally then on the basis of probability. Everytime we go up in an airplane; everytime we sit in a building. There are only empirical stress formulae that determine that the building will hold up until the session finishes. All of our lives consist of making 100% decisions on the basis of probability.

Ankerberg: Okay, we've got one minute left. Summarize where we're at and what you would have people do then with the information that we've given them tonight.

Montgomery: Right. What we've tried to show tonight is that there is powerful probabilistic evidence in favor of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is better evidence than most people use to get married. And what we are asking you to do is to exercise faith, which is simply jumping the gap from probability to certainty in relation to Jesus Christ.

Ankerberg: All right, we're going to take a look at some more objections that people have brought up concerning the resurrection next week and continue to look at this concerning the way a lawyer might look at this information if he were trying a case. What does the judge tell the jury? How are they to decide when they're working with facts that are just probable facts? All right? Please join us. I think you'll find it very interesting.

Program 4

Introduction: RECENT SURVEYS AND POLLS SHOW THAT 98% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE IN GOD. BUT THESE SAME POLLS REVEAL MANY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE GOD THEY BELIEVE IN. TONIGHT, JOHN ANKERBERG WILL EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE AND THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY'S CENTRAL FIGURE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, "WAS JESUS CHRIST A LIAR, A LUNATIC, A LEGEND, OR GOD?" JOHN'S GUEST IS ATTORNEY JOHN WARWICK MONTGOMERY, DEAN OF THE SIMON GREENLEAF SCHOOL OF LAW IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND A PRACTICING TRIAL LAWYER BOTH IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA. DURING TONIGHT'S PROGRAM WE WILL ASK: IF A LAWYER WERE TO ARGUE THE CLAIMS OF JESUS CHRIST IN A COURT OF LAW, WHAT REAL EVIDENCE WOULD HE POINT TO? HOW WOULD A TRIAL LAWYER ANALYZE THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED BY SCHONFIELD IN HIS BOOK THE PASSEVER PLOT WHICH CLAIMS JESUS DIDN'T REALLY DIE ON THE CROSS; RATHER, HE PLANNED IN ADVANCE TO TAKE A DRUG WHILE ON THE CROSS TO FAKE DEATH IN ORDER TO DECEIVE THE DISCIPLES AND EVERYBODY ELSE INTO THINKING HE HAD ACTUALLY DIED AND BEEN RESURRECTED FROM THE DEAD. WHAT EVIDENCE HAS THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION PRESENTED ABOUT JESUS' PHYSICAL CONDITION AND DEATH ON THE CROSS? ARE UNBELIEVERS EXPECTED TO COME TO A CONCLUSION ABOUT THE TRUTHFULNESS OF CHRIST'S CLAIMS ON THE SAME BASIS AS A JURY IS EXPECTED TO COME TO A VERDICT ABOUT SOMEONE ON TRIAL? IN A COURTROOM TRIAL, WHY DOES A JUDGE INSTRUCT A JURY TO

MAKE THEIR DECISIONS ONLY ON THE FACTS AND THE EVIDENCE THAT IS PRESENTED TO THEM? WHAT ABOUT THE HIGHER CRITICS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WHO ATTACK ITS TRUTHFULNESS BY USING LITERARY STYLE AS THEIR CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING AUTHORSHIP? HAVE THEY SUCCEEDED IN PROVING THAT SUCH NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS AS THE APOSTLE PAUL DIDN'T AUTHOR THE BOOKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM? WHAT ABOUT ORTHODOX JEWISH THEOLOGIAN PINCHAS LAPIDE'S CONCLUSION THAT EVEN THOUGH THE EVIDENCE PROVES JESUS DID RESURRECT FROM THE DEAD, HE STILL WAS NOT GOD? WHAT HAS CURRENT DAY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH REVEALED ABOUT THE HIGHER CRITICS' CLAIM THAT PONTIUS PILATE NEVER EXISTED? ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS AND MORE WILL BE ANSWERED DURING OUR PROGRAM TONIGHT. WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.

Ankerberg: Welcome! Again tonight we're continuing in talking about the evidence for belief in Jesus Christ. Is there solid, historical information that a thinking person must face? Now, we're taking the objections that non-Christians have marshalled against the New Testament documents, the eyewitnesses that reported Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and we are scrutinizing those to see if those objections are valid. And, tonight, Dr. Montgomery, concerning the resurrection, let's go right to the area of, many people have heard of [Hugh] Schonfield's book called The Passover Plot. He advocated certain things in his book that many people believe settles the case. Comment on his theory and why historically it doesn't measure, doesn't square with the facts.

Montgomery: Yes, Schonfield's Passover Plot says that Jesus didn't really die on the cross. He set the thing up Himself and through the use of a drug, probably similar to a hallucinogenic drug, He survived the crucifixion long enough in the tomb to give the poor, muddled-headed disciples the idea that He had risen again from the dead. Now, a short answer to this is that if you can believe that, you shouldn't have any trouble with the resurrection. But we probably ought to analyze a little bit more closely. Here we have a claim, first of all, that Jesus didn't die on the cross. That is absolutely out; it is absolutely out! "Journal of the American Medical Association," March 21, 1986, Volume 255, No. 11, "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ," William D. Edwards, M.D. Conclusion: Jesus certainly died on the cross. Moreover, would Jesus have employed a deceptive technique like this [that] goes entirely against His character, and would the disciples have been that deceived. My goodness, Thomas wouldn't believe until he had contact with the physical resurrected Jesus. It's inconceivable that the disciples would have gone along with a thing like this. And do you mean to say that the opposition, the Jewish religious leaders, would not have offered any objections to this kind of thing. And it doesn't solve the problem of the missing body, of course, because you then have a body you're going to have to get rid of and we're right back to the same point we were last week. But this shows that many non-Christians will rely on the flimsiest possibilities to explain away the resurrection.

Ankerberg: Right in that area, when we talk about possibilities. People, when they're faced with these facts, they start saying, "Well, isn't it possible that we would have this?" or "Isn't it possible that we would have that" in a universe that has all kinds of possibilities. And Von Daniken is one example that I think really goes out there and stretches the point of what people think might be possible, would you tell us about that.

Montgomery: Ah, yes, Von Daniken's Chariots of the Gods, this is the theory that essentially Jesus was a space man, so cleverly dressed in a Jesus suit that no one noticed the difference. And because He had special abilities that human beings don't have, He was able to do such little things as resurrections. Now, isn't that possible? Sure it's possible! In a contingent universe, anything is possible -- as one philosopher has said, "Except squeezing toothpaste back into a tube." It is theoretically possible that that could occur. But the issue is not possibility, the issue is probability in the sense of the solid, historical probability or solid legal probability on the basis of which life or

death decisions are made. Let me give you an analogy for this. The sheriff's deputies get a tip that something hideous has occurred at the old mansion at Gopher Gulch. They break in, and there's an Agatha Christie-style closed, locked room. And in this room they find the victim, divided into 18 equal-sized pieces, and the accused holding a bloody axe. He is brought to trial. It's a short trial because the evidence is so "clean cut." And when the jury returns, the clerk of the court asks the foreman for the verdict and they say, "We find the defendant innocent, your honor." "Your honor" wakes up for the first time in an hour, and insists upon an explanation. The foreman of the jury says, "Your honor, we realize the evidence is overwhelming against the accused, but this is a mysterious universe, and it's possible, isn't it, that invisible Martians entered that locked room and with their laser guns they cut the victim into 18 equal-sized pieces, and because of their nasty temperaments they made it look as if the poor accused did it!" Now, the judge would have apoplexy! He told these nincompoops when they went into the jury room that they were to pay attention only to the facts and evidence, and that they were not to bring in an innocent verdict unless they were convinced of guilt to a moral certainty beyond reasonable doubt. That's what we mean by legal probability or what we mean by historical probability, and that kind of evidence exists in behalf of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as we've already seen.

Ankerberg: So that's what you would say to a person that says, "I don't want to become a Christian because you cannot absolutely, one hundred percent prove that Jesus rose from the dead." That would be your illustration.

Montgomery: Exactly.

Ankerberg: Give me another illustration right along that line in terms of probability that should bring an intellectual to bowing before these facts and accepting Christ as Lord and Savior.

Montgomery: Well, it seems to me that all we really need to do is to analyze our own experience and see what kind of ultimate decisions we make all the time. When you meet the sweet young thing, the perfect mate, what you do is try your best to induce the attitude of that person toward you, the degree of love that exists, and you do this on the basis of the acts and the words of that individual. But you never get inside of that person to see really what's going on there. You are inferring from the acts and words of that person that there is the kind of love that will lead to a lifetime relationship. When you go down the aisle, that is a 100% commitment to that person. If we examine our lives, we discover that our career decisions, our marital decisions, our decisions in every respect are of that nature. Now, what we're asking of you, if you're not a believer in Jesus Christ, is nothing different from what is asked of you in all of the ordinary experiences of your existence. We're asking you to look at this evidence. The evidence is so powerful, it is so much greater than the evidence on the basis of which you make your ordinary decisions of an ultimate nature in life, that you should not hesitate to make a decision for Jesus Christ. Indeed, in the Bible, that's talked about as a marriage -- the marriage between Christ and the Church. The idea is that He wants to enter into an eternal relationship with you, and there is more than sufficient evidence to manage that.

Ankerberg: All right, we're going to take a break and we'll talk more about this when we come right back. Stick with us.

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Ankerberg: All right, we're back, and we're talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. If you're listening, maybe there are questions that are coming up in your mind. Dr. Montgomery, you're so smart -- everybody knows you've got eight earned degrees; you can make stuff sound good. But all of these students that are listening, they've gone to school and they've had smart professors that have also had degrees and they've heard this thing about the "higher

criticism" of the New Testament, and they've heard about Bultmann and Tillich, and they've heard about the demythologizing of these documents. And they are simply saying, "Look, you're talking about stuff that our professors never talked about." Deal a little bit with this higher criticism of the New Testament. Let me give you a couple of examples here, okay? With our computers today, we have two higher critics -- one, G. H. C. MacGregor and A. Q. Morton who took the literary style of the books of Romans and Galatians and used these as standards to test the literary style of the other Pauline epistles. Now, when they threw all this information into the computer and then gauged it against these other books that Paul was supposed to write, they came out and said, "Look, the facts show that Paul did not write this stuff." Okay? Now, the students listening to that kind of stuff say, "Look, you're just really slick, you're smart and you've made this sound really good, but what about this other information?"

Montgomery: Yes. This area of higher criticism is very important. Let's begin with MacGregor and Morton to get them off of our field of attention right at the beginning. You heard, I suppose, of the statistician who drowned wading across a river with an average depth of three feet. Yes! The statistical analysis of MacGregor and Morton is flawed. As you say, they took the literary style of two of the books of the New Testament that everyone holds were written by the Apostle Paul, and then they compared the literary style to the literary style of the other so-called Pauline writings and came to the conclusion that these writings were not written by Paul. Well, later on, a couple of wags took the book that MacGregor and Morton produced on the subject, fed the literary style of the preface and first chapter into the computer and demonstrated that seven different people had written their book. Now, what does this show? It shows that literary style is no adequate demonstration of authorship. And we all recognize this. Our term papers and our love letters are very different in style. Or, we have a very bad love-life or get very bad grades in school. C. S. Lewis, who was a literary scholar his entire life, wrote an essay entitled "Biblical Criticism" in which he says that the higher critical assumption that literary style is a proper basis for determining authorship is simply wrong from a scholarly standpoint. This is not the way to determine authorship. He says, "People have tried to find the sources of his own writings, such as "The Narnian Chronicles," by internal examination of style. He says, "They have not been right once." And he says they were writing in his own time, in his own language. What gives the higher critics the idea that they can look at documents in a language that is no longer a living language 2,000 years ago, and that on the basis of literary style absolutely establish questions of authorship? And, of course, if the [higher] critics were right, that these documents had not actually been written by the people that they are claimed to have been written by, how is it possible that that got by the hostile critics of that same period? The hostile witnesses stand there ready to find any flaw in this stuff, including false authorship. F. F. Bruce of the University of Manchester had an interesting thing to say on this subject. He said, "It was not only friendly eyewitnesses that the early preachers had to reckon with. There were others less well disposed who were also conversant with the main facts of the ministry and death of Jesus. The disciples could not afford to risk inaccuracies, not to speak of willful manipulation of the facts, which would at once be exposed by those who would be only too glad to do so." And certainly they would have exposed instances of people writing under false names.

Ankerberg: All right, Jesus gave us the one important sign that would prove His claim, namely that he would come forth from the dead. You have shown historically that the evidence states that He did that. Now, people say, "All right, we know that Jesus Christ claimed to be God, said that He would come forth from the dead proving His claim," and He did, according to the information. Now, what is the importance and what should people do with that information right now that are listening?

Montgomery: Well, if Jesus rose again from the dead, the only reasonable conclusion is that He was the person He claimed to be. There are some people around, for example, a very fine and delightful Jewish Rabbi by the name of Lapide who says, "Yes, Jesus rose from the dead, but He

was not God. He was a special prophet that God sent to the Gentiles." But surely if we want to know who Jesus was, we're going to have to listen to Him. If He rose again from the dead, He's in the best position to explain this. We can't take an explanation of someone who hasn't gone through this experience. And Jesus says, "I rose again from the dead because I am God" and therefore we are -- it seems to me -- compelled to move in that direction.

Ankerberg: I remember I attended a debate that you had at Roosevelt University in Chicago with a professor that, after you had presented all of this evidence and the students were sitting there and they all came to the conclusion, "Yes, Jesus Christ actually was a historical figure that lived; He died on a cross, was put into a grave, rose the third day and is alive." Tell the people what that professor said about how he felt about that, because there are other people that can say, "Okay, intellectually I believe Jesus rose from the dead. So what?"

Montgomery: Yeah, he said, "After all, that's a miracle, very much like the miraculous healing of pattern baldness." Said he, "If someone came along and miraculously took care of the problem of pattern baldness, that doesn't mean that I would become a Christian." And I said, "Professor, let's say that during this discussion the door suddenly opens and the faculty secretary is there and she is shaking, she is gray with fear, and she says, 'Professor, I don't know how I can tell you this, but your wife and your children have just been killed in an auto accident on the Chicago Loop.' You would say, of course, 'How many times have I told you not to interrupt my class! What's death? It's just like pattern baldness.'" Hardly! We all know that conquering the power of death is something qualitatively different from other things. And if that really occurred, if Jesus actually did rise again from the dead, then that compels us to move in the direction that He's talking about. We're not saying that simply because a miracle occurred one is to believe in Jesus' deity. This has to do with the nature of that particular miracle because it cuts to the existential heart of human experience. And if you're honest with yourself, you know it cuts to the heart of your experience, personally.

Ankerberg: All right, summarize where we've come from in terms of this information. Where did we start and where have we come to and where are we moving with this?

Montgomery: All right, we began checking out the New Testament documents to see if they sustain the value historically necessary to get a clear picture of Jesus Christ. We found that they did. And we discover that the Jesus of these documents presents Himself as no less than God. He rises again from the dead to prove that that's exactly the person He is, and that comes from the most solid eyewitness testimony. There are no philosophical ways to rule out the miraculous. And if we take the same kind of solid, legal evidence that we have to use in courts of law, we will find that this moves us directly toward the cross of Christ. We find ourselves compelled by Jesus' successful conquest of the power of death to make an absolute decision about this. This is a decision, one with the absolute decisions that we make every day of our lives and based on better evidence than most of the decisions that we make.

Ankerberg: Dr. Paul Kurtz was a guest on our program a couple of months ago and he's the man that wrote the Humanist Manifesto II. And when we got to this area he said, "But wait a minute, the only people that testified to the truth of the resurrection were all believers. Why didn't Jesus appear to any unbelievers?" What would you say to that?

Montgomery: Well, as we indicated at one point earlier in this series, those disciples were not believers until the resurrection convinced them, thus Thomas was certainly an unbeliever. So there we are. But, you know, in a court of law the question is not how a person came to a particular conclusion. The concern in the court of law is whether or not his conclusion is based upon the evidence. If Jesus rose again from the dead, it doesn't really make any difference who testifies to it. The important thing is simply that the person be in a position to have had direct contact with

this man after He had come back from the dead. And fascinatingly enough, you know, the way of demonstrating this doesn't require any great philosophical sophistication. All you've got to do is show that a person is dead at point A and alive again at point B. One good way to do this is to offer them a fish. Very few people will eat fish if they're dead. Try it at the local funeral parlor. If that gray gentleman inside the door eats the fish, it's the undertaker, it's not the corpse! Jesus ate fish with His disciples under controlled conditions after the resurrection. This is just one of the innumerable evidences over a 40-day period to the effect that this man was alive again. Professor Kurtz ought to pay attention to evidence like that.

Ankerberg: Yeah, another way of saying it is...we expressed to him that that was like saying, "Listen, apart from the ten witnesses who saw the murder on your side, all these hundred people over here, they didn't see it." Well, you only need one witness to convict a guy of murder in a trial.

Montgomery: Precisely.

Ankerberg: Was there anybody that did see it, and are they credible? And we're saying that the evidence is in and they are credible. One other thing here. What have we found in archaeology that substantiates the fact that these men knew what they were writing about. You've got Ramsey and you've got other people that started off as skeptics, and a lot of people don't know there's been a lot of archaeological study that's been done here. Maybe give us one example before we go off the air here.

Montgomery: Well, it was said up until a generation ago that perhaps the New Testament writers had actually created Pontius Pilate, that such a person never existed at all because the only references to him in classical literature always relate him to the trial of Jesus. So perhaps he was a "fig newton" of the apostles' imagination. But then, lo and behold, the archaeologists turn up the famed Pilate inscription and there it states the name of Pilate and the fact that he was procurator there. This just goes to show that it's a very poor idea to be a liberal biblical critic because you've got to change grounds every time someone sticks a spade in the ground.

Ankerberg: All right, we're going to take next week: "If Jesus is who He said, what implications does that have in other matters?" If He's God, obviously we ought to do what He says because He is God. He wouldn't lie to us. What does He say concerning the Bible? All right, we're going to take a look at that. And then the week after that I think we'll come back to the area of those who say, "Dr. Montgomery, I am not a believer in God at all, and you have started with Jesus and I would like to start with the fact, is there any evidence for God in the first place?" And we want to tackle that question as we go along. So please join us.

Program 5

Introduction: RECENT SURVEYS AND POLLS SHOW THAT 98% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE IN GOD. BUT THESE SAME POLLS REVEAL MANY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE GOD THEY BELIEVE IN. TONIGHT, JOHN ANKERBERG WILL EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE AND THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY'S CENTRAL FIGURE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, "WAS JESUS CHRIST A LIAR, A LUNATIC, A LEGEND, OR GOD?" JOHN'S GUEST IS ATTORNEY JOHN WARWICK MONTGOMERY, DEAN OF THE SIMON GREENLEAF SCHOOL OF LAW IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND A PRACTICING TRIAL LAWYER BOTH IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA. DURING TONIGHT'S PROGRAM WE WILL ASK: IF A LAWYER WERE TO ARGUE THE CLAIMS OF JESUS CHRIST IN A COURT OF LAW, WHAT REAL EVIDENCE WOULD HE POINT TO? ARE THE BIOGRAPHIES CONCERNING JESUS' LIFE NOTHING MORE THAN

LEGENDS THAT WERE WRITTEN SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS AFTER JESUS LIVED OR REAL HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS WRITTEN BY EYEWITNESSES? WOULD A TRIAL LAWYER BELIEVE THAT THE EVIDENCE FOR JESUS CHRIST'S CLAIMS TO BEING GOD WOULD BRING A JURY TO THE CONCLUSION CHRIST WAS TELLING THE TRUTH? SHOULD THOSE WHO EMBRACE JESUS CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOR HOLD THE SAME VIEW OF THE BIBLE AS JESUS DID? WHAT WAS JESUS' POSITION CONCERNING THE BIBLE? DID JESUS ACCOMMODATE HIMSELF TO WHAT THE JEWISH PEOPLE OF HIS DAY BELIEVED ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES SO HE WOULD NOT OFFEND THEM? DID JESUS HAVE SUCH LIMITATIONS PLACED UPON HIM WHEN HE BECAME MAN THAT HE WAS LIMITED ONLY TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS TIME? DID JESUS THINK THAT SUCH OLD TESTAMENT FIGURES AS ADAM AND EVE, NOAH, AND JONAH WERE ACTUAL HISTORICAL FIGURES? SINCE THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS NOT WRITTEN WHEN JESUS LIVED, HOW DO CHRISTIANS KNOW WHAT JESUS THOUGHT ABOUT ITS TRUTHFULNESS AND ACCURACY? DID JESUS THINK WE SHOULD TRUST THE BIBLE IN ALL AREAS SUCH AS HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND SCIENCE, OR ONLY IN MATTERS OF SALVATION? ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS AND MORE WILL BE ANSWERED DURING OUR PROGRAM TONIGHT. WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.

Ankerberg: Welcome! For many years I've been telling you that I believe Christianity is not just one of many religious beliefs but that Christianity is actually true. And if it is actually true, if there is evidence that we can show to you that will bring you to that conclusion, then you have a basis for placing your faith in Jesus Christ and your life will be solid. You not only can believe with your head, then you can entrust your heart to those facts. It's dangerous to give yourself to a belief where you only put your heart into it and your head can't be a part of that transaction. We have talked about the evidence for the person of Jesus Christ, because Christianity rests not on a philosophy, and not on a system of ethics but Christianity rests on a person -- Jesus Christ. If He actually lived, if He actually said certain things, claimed certain things, and if He actually rose from the dead, then that is the basis, the foundation of Christianity. And that's what we've been talking about. Is there a credible foundation there? And our guest has been Dr. John Warwick Montgomery. Dr. Montgomery, in this area give us a synopsis here, a conclusion concerning where we have come from before we start our discussion tonight.

Montgomery: We've used ordinary historical evidence and the kind of reasoning that is employed in the courts to look at the case for Jesus Christ. And our conclusion is that a decision ought to be made for Jesus as God and Savior. Simon Greenleaf, the great Christian lawyer of the nineteenth century, in his book The Testimony of the Evangelists said this, in summing up the kind of argument that we have presented and modernized in these programs, "All that Christianity asks of men on this subject is that they would be consistent with themselves; that they would treat its evidences as they treat the evidence of other things, and that they would try and judge its actors and witnesses as they deal with their fellow men when testifying to human affairs and actions in human tribunals. Let the witnesses be compared with themselves, with each other, and with surrounding facts and circumstances, and let their testimony be sifted as if it were given in a court of justice on the side of the adverse party, the witness being subjected to a rigorous cross examination. The result, it is confidently believed, will be an undoubting conviction of their integrity, ability and truth." That's what we've found -- the integrity, ability and truth of the witnesses to Jesus Christ. And so now the ball passes to your court. What are you going to do about it?

Ankerberg: I love the quote that you have in your book, Faith Founded on Fact concerning historical research. You say, "Historical research is perfectly able to determine, for example, whether Lincoln was shot in Ford's Theater or fatally slipped on a banana peel in Peoria. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is in principle no less historically knowable. We can examine the

evidence and arrive at an answer to this question. The people who reject the resurrection do so because of their philosophical presuppositions, not because of the evidence." So we have come full tilt here to a conclusion that Jesus is God because of the evidence. Whether people want to believe it or not, the evidence is still there, which is a very scary thought. Jesus is there regardless if you look at Him or if you ignore Him; He is still the Truth. Now, if Jesus Christ did come forth from the grave, and verified His claim to being God, there is one particular area that drives intellectuals crazy and that is when they hear Christians talk about the Word of God, the Bible. And I would like you to start us off in this area as to what should a person who embraces Jesus Christ and acknowledges Him to be very God and invites Him to be the Savior of their life, to forgive them of their sins, when they embrace Christ as Lord and Savior, what view should they also embrace concerning the Bible? Start us off.

Montgomery: Well, the simple answer to this question is that the Christian needs to take the same view of the Bible that Jesus took of it. There is that old line, "If Jesus is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all." And it's essential that Jesus' approach to the Bible become the position of those who believe in Him. And Jesus' position on the Bible is perfectly plain. This may come as a shock, but Jesus was a Fundamentalist when it came to the Old Testament. He believed the whole thing, He quoted from all portions of it, He slapped a quotation from one book right next to a quotation from another, and He sometimes blended them. He had absolutely no interest in the sociological or historical circumstances of the writings. He considered the whole business to have one single author -- namely God Himself. When Jesus quotes the Old Testament, He uses the formula, "It is written." "gegraptai" -- that's a passive in the Greek with an implied personal agent, and the personal agent is God. It is written, by God, and therefore it is true.

Ankerberg: But some people will say, Dr. Montgomery, that, you know, Jesus was a Jew and was actually talking to other Jews that believed it was the Word of God and so therefore He was just accommodating Himself to what other Jews believed. He wouldn't go against the grain.

Montgomery: Yeah, that's one version of the infamous "kenotic" theory or "kenosis" theory, that there is a limitation in Jesus. Interestingly enough, the people who maintain this take the things Jesus says as absolute when the things agree with them, but the minute Jesus says something that they don't like, suddenly Jesus is suffering from a limitation. That makes one wonder about the theory in itself. But let's look at the theory closely. There are two versions of it. One is that Jesus intentionally accommodated Himself. The other is that in becoming man, He had to become accommodated -- that this occurred apart from any decision on His own part. Well, if you say that Jesus accommodated Himself, then that means that He committed the worst of all moral faults, that "the end justifies the means." He actually gave false information to people, knowing that it was false, but did so just not to disturb them. See? They weren't up to higher criticism at that point, so He goes along with this idea that the Bible is reliable. But this is ridiculous. For one thing, Jesus criticizes His contemporaries right, left and center on all sorts of things that are basic to them. For example, He goes after the Jewish religious leaders on their view of God. Do you think He would do that and accommodate Himself on their view of the Bible if that view of the Bible actually had been false? The other version of this is that in becoming man, He couldn't help Himself. In becoming man He ended up limited to the knowledge of His time. This suffers from an extreme fallacy logically. If God becomes man, but in doing so He is limited to the human sphere of knowledge, the end result is that you get no revelation at all. You would only get revelation if God remained God in His knowledge when He comes to you. For example, let's say that I come to Chattanooga and I have my white beard and my long prophet's robe and I say, "Greetings, you thought it was mere Montgomery. Not in the slightest. It happens to be God." And then I give a speech containing historical errors, scientifically erroneous information, and after finishing it I kick a little dog who has been bothering me. And you say to me, "Just a minute, didn't you say you were God?" I say, "Certainly, but you don't seem to understand. When God comes to earth, He ends up exactly like anybody else." Of course, your reaction to this is, "That kind of a God I can do

without!" because I haven't given you anything that you didn't have to begin with. So, if there is the genuine appearance of God on earth in Jesus Christ, you can rely on what He says.

Ankerberg: Not only that, but we have Hebrews...in the book of Hebrews we find out where God says He does not lie, and then you find in John 8 where Jesus said that He got every word from the Father.

Montgomery: Yes. Incidentally, in the 17th century the philosopher Descartes asked the question, "Well, maybe God could be a liar..a cosmic liar?" And so he did a little treatise on the subject, but the end result of this was that Descartes realized that if God were a liar, He would be cleverer at it than any human being would ever be at detection, so it would be a totally meaningless kind of question anyway. Right? You could never catch Him at it. So, if you do come across God, there is no question as to His truth-telling ability. That's the time for you to shut up and listen.

Ankerberg: All right, we're going to come back and we're going to talk about the fact of what's going on in some of our denominations and do it via "What is Jesus' view of the Old Testament? What is Jesus' view of the New Testament? What information does He tell us? Define the word "inerrant," and of course that has a bearing on what's going on in the Southern Baptist Convention and some of the seminaries -- I can't wait to hear what you're going to tell me about that -- and also in some of the other denominations. So you won't want to go away. Hang in there, we'll be right back.

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Ankerberg: All right we're back. We're talking about, "What was Jesus' view of the Scripture?" Since we have found from the historical evidence that Jesus rose from the dead proving His claim that He was God, now that He is God, what does He have to say concerning the Scripture? Dr. Montgomery, what is Jesus' view of the Old Testament, including Genesis, including Adam and Eve, including Noah and including Jonah -- these figures that have caused such a problem to many scholars? What do you think Jesus would say to that?

Montgomery: Well, it's not what I think He might have said, He actually did make judgments on each of those Old Testament passages which modern man considers so silly and childish. Jesus considered all three of those passages to represent historical fact. He believed that there had been two first parents, Adam and Eve; He held that there was a flood and a Noah who escaped from it; and that Jonah was actually swallowed by the seabeast. He says, for example, about the bill of divorcement...Moses' bill of divorcement, "From the beginning it wasn't so." And then He quotes the passage in Genesis, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife and the two shall be one flesh." So Jesus considered the Adam and Eve story to be at the beginning -- at the beginning of human history and the basis of the covenant of marriage. And He says of the flood and Noah, "As it was in the days of Noah so it will be when the Son of Man comes again." He parallels the flood with His own second coming, which He clearly believed was a historical event in the future. And He says, as we've already noted in the series, that only one sign will be given unto this generation to prove the truth of His claims, the sign of Jonah. "As Jonah was in the beast, so I will be in the earth." The Greek word there that He uses is the strongest comparative in the language -- "kathos" -- "Even as Jonah was in the beast, so I will be in the earth and rise again." So, He parallels Jonah with the central event of the Gospel -- the resurrection.

Ankerberg: Yeah, it wouldn't have made sense to compare a historical event with mythology.

Montgomery: Hardly.

Ankerberg: About Jesus' view concerning the New Testament? Obviously it wasn't written at that

time, so how do we know that Jesus even talked about the New Testament?

Montgomery: Well, what He did was to promise His apostles a special gift, a special gift from the Holy Spirit, and that gift is the basis of the church's collection of the writings of apostles, and the writings of close associates of apostles, to comprise the New Testament. The gift is described in John. He says, "It's expedient that I go away, [the] Holy Spirit will come and He will bring to your remembrance all things whatsoever I have told you." That's in the same passage where He says, "He will lead you into all truth." Those are specific gifts given to the apostles -- they are not general gifts for the whole church. Now, obviously, you and I can't have the things Jesus told us brought to our remembrance. That has to do only with those people. We call that today, probably in psychological terms, the gift of total recall. The Holy Spirit provided total recall to that apostolic group; so of course the church collected their writings. Their writings consist of the teachings of Jesus which will be accurately set forth for future history. And we see that that situation applied even in the case of Paul. Now, Paul wasn't among those original apostles, but Paul is accepted by the original apostolic group as a genuine apostle when he comes to them. And so it's like this: Jesus puts His stamp of approval -- His "Good Housekeeping stamp of approval" on the foreheads of the eleven apostles to set forth accurately what Jesus said, and then the eleven apostles stick their "Good Housekeeping stamp of approval" on Paul as a legitimate member of their company. And we see as early as Peter's writings that this kind of thing is going on, that the New Testament writings are on the same level as the Old Testament. Peter says that some people are wresting or turning Paul's writings out of context -- they're twisting them out of context "as they do the other Scriptures." And he uses the expression "ta graphe" ["the writings"], which is the expression for the Old Testament. So as early as that, Paul's writings are being treated as Scripture.

Ankerberg: Yes. All right, now, we've got Jesus putting His stamp of authority on the Old Testament and the New Testament. To what extent does that authority go? In other words, obviously in the Southern Baptist Convention you've got the Conservatives and you've got the Moderates. And you've got the Conservatives and the Liberals in other denominations, and the question is, "Can we trust the Bible completely or just in certain areas?" Is the Bible totally true in what it conveys, or is it true in just salvation matters?

Montgomery: The first thing to know is that Jesus made no distinctions as to truth and error in Scripture. Everything that Jesus says about Scripture speaks of its truth. So, if we introduce the distinction between, say, the spiritual stuff that's okay and the secular stuff that isn't, it's our distinction, it isn't Jesus' distinction. Secondly, what kind of distinction is this? It is a very poor distinction, because you can't divide up the totality of knowledge except arbitrarily. To keep us from going crazy we divide up the sciences from the humanities and then among the sciences we divide physics and chemistry and biology and we divide art and literature and history and so forth. But we know that all of these blend. There are no sharp lines in reality at all. And the deeper you go into any field, the more it takes you into other fields. So, since all knowledge is one and interconnected, if we say the Bible is okay in spiritual matters but it isn't okay in secular matters -- geography, history, science -- the fact of the matter is that we [then] will find that it's not okay in the spiritual matters either because these blend totally the deeper you go. And in Scripture that's especially the case, because Scripture deals with God becoming man, eternity entering time. And thus you can't make ultimately a secular/spiritual distinction in Scripture that will hold. Example: The death of Christ on the cross. Is the death of Christ on the cross a historical event or is it a theological event? That's like the question, "Have you stopped beating your wife?" Any answer you give to that will foul you up. The fact is that the death of Christ on the cross is a theological event because it is a historical event. If it didn't actually happen in history, if it isn't sound as a secular fact, it's worthless as a theological fact. Therefore, the liberals who tell you that you don't have to go along with the secular stuff in Scripture are actually undercutting the foundations of the entire theology of the Bible.

Ankerberg: Share with these people when you went to hear Karl Barth. Karl Barth was probably one of the most conservative of the liberals but what did he do when he got to the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Montgomery: Karl Barth said, "You can't investigate it because it occurred in a special realm of history" -- outside of ordinary history. He called it "super-history" or "hyper-history" -- "geschichte" in German as opposed to history. And he said, "It really occurred but you can't check it out." Well, what does this do? It leaves you with a faith that floats up here, having no foundation in reality, and it may work all right among those who are already believers, but that's the quickest way of making the Christian faith of no use or interest to a non-Christian at all. No non-Christian is going to go along with a thing like that anymore than a non-Christian goes along with some notion of God hundreds and millions of miles beyond any possible telescopic investigation on earth. You put God in a position where He can't be checked out, and obviously it leaves the non-Christian with no opportunity to check it out.

Ankerberg: What does the word "inerrancy" mean and how would we come to the conclusion that Jesus took a view on inerrancy one way or the other?

Montgomery: Okay. Inerrancy simply means that the Bible does not err -- it does not have errors in it. Now, it may be an unfortunate term in the sense that it's a negative term. Maybe it would be better to speak positively, to say the Bible is totally true. To speak of it positively. But as Humpty Dumpty says in Alice in Wonderland, "I can use a word any way I want as long as I pay it extra." So it's not a question of the particular word it's a question of the concept, and the issue is: Does the Bible always present the truth exactly as God wants? Jesus thought it did. Contemporary liberal biblical scholars and moderates think it doesn't. Now, there is a tremendous difference between the two. Jesus rose from the dead and is God. The last news bulletin that I have received does not indicate that the liberal biblical scholars or the moderates have risen again from the dead nor that they are God and therefore if you are presented with a choice between Jesus' approach to the Bible and their approach to the Bible, the only rational and sound way to go is the direction in which Jesus went.

Ankerberg: We've only got one minute left. Take us back; give us a summation of what you've said tonight concerning the character of the Bible, the truthfulness of the Bible and how we got there for the intellectual that is listening.

Montgomery: It may be having heard this program you think that there is some kind of subtle, circular reason going on in arriving at our conclusion that the Bible is totally true. Aren't we actually beginning with Jesus' own statements on it, and don't they come from the Bible? Well, this isn't circular reasoning. What we've done is this: we've begun with the New Testament documents as ordinary historical documents and checked them out as we would any other documents. They have lead us to the conclusion that Jesus is God. Then we look at what He has to say in these good historical documents and we discover that the whole Bible, including those very documents, turn out to be far more than anything we had expected to begin with -- they turn out to be the inerrant Word of God. It's sort of like buying a field and thinking that you're going to use it for agriculture and you strike oil. What we've done is, by this process, to find that the Bible is totally reliable.

Ankerberg: I hope that you've enjoyed this tonight. Next week we're going to continue. We're going to go back to the beginning, because even though the Gallup Poll has shown that the majority -- some 90% of Americans -- believe in God, there's a small percentage that do not even start with the concept of God. And we're going to talk about what is the evidence that you would give, that you could present to a person who is an atheist, who says, "I do not believe that God

exists at all." How do we start? We're going to hear that next week so I hope that you'll join us.

Program 6

Introduction: RECENT SURVEYS AND POLLS SHOW THAT 98% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE IN GOD. BUT THESE SAME POLLS REVEAL MANY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE GOD THEY BELIEVE IN. TONIGHT, JOHN ANKERBERG WILL EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE AND THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY'S CENTRAL FIGURE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, "WAS JESUS CHRIST A LIAR, A LUNATIC, A LEGEND, OR GOD?" JOHN'S GUEST IS ATTORNEY JOHN WARWICK MONTGOMERY, DEAN OF THE SIMON GREENLEAF SCHOOL OF LAW IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND A PRACTICING TRIAL LAWYER BOTH IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA. DURING TONIGHT'S PROGRAM WE WILL ASK: IF A TRIAL LAWYER WERE TO ARGUE THE CLAIMS OF JESUS CHRIST IN A COURT OF LAW, WHAT REAL EVIDENCE WOULD HE POINT TO? WHAT SOLID EVIDENCE CAN BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO SINCERELY BELIEVE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE WHICH WOULD LEAD THEM TO BELIEVE GOD EXISTS? IF ANY INDIVIDUAL ELEMENT OF THE UNIVERSE CANNOT EXPLAIN ITSELF, THAT MEANS IT IS DEPENDENT, OR CONTINGENT, UPON SOMETHING ELSE TO EXPLAIN ITS EXISTENCE. SINCE THE UNIVERSE DOES NOT EXPLAIN ITSELF, A PERSON IS OBLIGATED TO GO BEYOND IT FOR AN EXPLANATION; THAT IS, ONE MUST GO FROM THE CONTINGENT TO THE ABSOLUTE TO FIND AN ANSWER THAT DOES NOT REQUIRE FURTHER EXPLANATION -- AND THAT IS GOD. BUT WHERE DOES GOD COME FROM, AND WHO CAUSED GOD? WHAT EVIDENCE FROM SCIENCE INDICATES THE UNIVERSE WAS CREATED A FINITE AMOUNT OF TIME AGO AND HASN'T BEEN AROUND FOREVER? WHY IS IT REASONABLE TO BELIEVE GOD IS PERSONAL RATHER THAN A FORCE OR AN IMPERSONAL BEING? WHAT WOULD A TRIAL LAWYER SAY TO THOSE WHO CLAIM THAT GOD IS BY DEFINITION SO UNIQUE YOU CANNOT SPEAK MEANINGFULLY ABOUT HIM? WHY WOULD A LAWYER CONCLUDE THAT CHRISTIANITY'S DEFINITION OF GOD STANDS ABOVE THE DEFINITION OF GOD GIVEN BY THE EASTERN RELIGIONS OR LIBERAL THEOLOGIANS TODAY? ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS AND MORE WILL BE ANSWERED DURING OUR PROGRAM TONIGHT. WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.

Ankerberg: Thank you for joining us tonight. We're talking about the evidence for God. We have had a series of programs where we have talked about the historical reliability of the information concerning Jesus Christ, and then what Jesus Christ Himself said, and then capping it off by His own resurrection. We've examined Hume's argument concerning the miraculous -- that the resurrection; "Even if it did take place, we know that it couldn't take place because we don't accept miracles." We've defused that, and we have come to the conclusion that intellectually the evidence pushes you to the wall that you should invite Jesus Christ to forgive you of your sins and dedicate your life to Him. But we want to go back to an area that we haven't covered and that is, for those of you who say, "I don't believe there is any evidence for God to start with. I am one of the few percentage of people in America, according to the Gallup Poll, that don't even believe in God. I do not believe it." Dr. Montgomery, we want to come to you and let me start off by this: first of all, we want to get into people's minds that basically still the best demonstration of God is still to be seen in Jesus. For most of the people across the board we ought to start there and then let's go to the people that don't even start with the concept of God in their vocabulary.

Montgomery: Yes, as far as I'm concerned the best introduction to God comes in Jesus Christ. If a person says to me, "Define God." I say, "I'll do better than that. I'll introduce you to Him." And I take the person to Jesus Christ because we're going to understand God the best by God's

appearance right here in our own midst. We are humans and therefore we're going to meet God the most effectively right here in the human situation. So everything we've done so far in this series relates directly to our topic tonight. The evidence for Jesus Christ, His resurrection from the dead, points us directly to God. One could not go with us as far as we've gone so far and deny God's existence. You've already met Him. You've come across Him in Jesus risen again from the dead.

Ankerberg: But there are some people that are philosophers that are saying, "We can't even meaningfully discuss the word "God" because by definition God is unique, so unique that anything that we're going to say about Him doesn't really jibe, it's not true."

Montgomery: That particular position has been presented by certain linguistic philosophers in our time stemming from the work of the later Wittgenstein in his Philosophical Investigations. And the view is in essence that you cannot speak meaningfully about anything unique. That uniqueness eliminates any kind of rational discussion. This is expressed by the quip that used to be going around on college campuses -- How will you recognize God when you get to heaven?" And the answer is, "By the big 'G' on His sweatshirt." See? But you see, since God is unique, you wouldn't be able to recognize Him and who would put the "G" there? How could you be sure it was put on the right person? This argument is illogical; it is irrational. Why? Because it goes against our human experience. We talk about the unique all the time without any difficulty at all. Seems to me that when I was a whippersnapper my preacher discoursed on snowflakes. "Ah," he said, "each little snowflake is different from each other little snowflake." I don't know how he knew this; I don't know how preachers know that each snowflake is different, but assuming that they are right, one can still talk about snowflakes. More important, think of the person sitting next to you, or think of yourself. Each human being is unique. The genetic chromosomal pattern that produced the person next to you or produced you never existed before and apparently will never exist again. So, you are different in some fundamental sense from any other person who's ever lived and from any other thing. And yet it's perfectly possible to talk about the person next to you or you. So the philosophers...the analytical philosophers are simply wrong that the uniqueness of God limits the possibility of talking about Him. And let's say for the sake of argument -- and it isn't just for the sake of argument because this is what we've been talking about in this series -- let's say that that unique Being came to earth and made it even easier for you, and that's exactly what happened in Jesus Christ.

Ankerberg: Let's talk about the philosophers a little bit more. Give us the parable of Anthony Flew and John Wisdom that the philosophers -- it's really a good illustration about the liberals who are talking about God and they've got nothing to talk about. I mean, it exposes them, but it's terrific for historic Christianity. Would you explain that parable and why that's so?

Montgomery: The analytical philosophers John Wisdom and Anthony Flew developed a parable which they employ to show how nonsensical it is to talk about God. I think it's wonderful that one of these men is named John Wisdom -- makes you feel that the universe is not entirely in difficulty. And in this parable we have two explorers coming across a clearing in the jungle. The clearing in the jungle represents some degree of order in this world. And one explorer says, "There's a gardener who comes and takes care of this garden." the other says, "There is no gardener." One of them represents a believer in God; the other represents an atheist. So, they sit down and they watch. No gardener is seen. They remember H. G. Wells' "Invisible Man," so they put a barbed wire around the clearing and they electrify it to catch any invisible climber, but there is never any indication of anyone being there. They patrol it with bloodhounds but the bloodhounds never give a cry. Finally at the end, the believer says, "But there is a gardener, invisible, intangible, insensible to electric shocks, and he comes and takes care of the garden which he loves." And the skeptic replies, but how does that kind of a gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or from no gardener at all?" This parable is to show, presumably, that people who believe in God believe in something that suffers the death by a thousand qualifications. "God is not this, not that, not the

other thing, there is never any evidence and therefore believers in God might as well be believing in an imaginary God." Well, as you pointed out, John, that's exactly the mess that religious liberals get in.

Ankerberg: Give them a few examples like of Tillich's, etc., etc., down the line.

Montgomery: Oh, yes, well, Karl Barth, whom you mentioned previously, Karl Barth said the resurrection occurred but it didn't occur in ordinary history so it can't be investigated. Paul Tillich says that God is the "ground of all being" and also being itself, and so you're not sure whether you're looking at God when you shave in the morning and look in the mirror. You don't know what the "ground of all being" is. It can't be hamburger but there's some sort of "ground" there....and the whole thing is so indefinable and so vague, so untestable, that you actually don't end up with any sort of definable belief at all. The Eastern religions in talking about Brahman -- "Brahman is all" -- get into that same sort of difficulty. But historic Christianity -- and this is the important point -- historic Christianity is not in those categories. Not in the slightest. Why? Because in historic Christianity you don't need to set up a barbed wire fence. You don't need any bloodhounds. The Gardener literally enters the garden. I think it's fascinating on Easter morning, the women thought they were seeing a gardener...that's the "Gardener" of the Flew/Wisdom parable, everybody. The Gardener came into this world and He displayed Himself "by many infallible proofs."

Ankerberg: We've got one minute before we take our break. What is a denotative definition versus a descriptive definition of God and why is it so neat that Christianity is one of the only religions in the world that can define God denotatively?

Montgomery: Well, when people ask for a definition of God they're usually thinking of a dictionary definition. That's a descriptive definition. The trouble with such definitions is that you can always ask for the definition of the terms you use in the definition. All dictionaries are circular, in other words. And therefore there are many skeptics who try to get Christians into these discussions -- "Define God!" And the minute the definition is given, then the skeptic asks for a definition of the definition. A far more effective form of definition not only in theology but in life is denotative definition, which involves denoting, pointing. What's a Ford? You take the person out and you say, "That's a Ford!" Well, only Christianity can provide a denotative definition of God. I don't have to define God! I take you to Jesus Christ and I point, like John the Baptist did, and I say, "I must decrease; He must increase. There's God. Now, do something about Him."

Ankerberg: Terrific. We're going to come back and we're going to ask Dr. Montgomery to outline the evidence for the person that says, "Give me the evidence for the existence of God. I'm an atheist." We'll do that when we come right back. Stick with us.

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Ankerberg: All right, we're back, and we're talking with Dr. John Warwick Montgomery and we're talking about the evidence for the existence of God. If you say, "Listen, I don't believe that there is any evidence that even suggests that God exists. But I'm not an 'ornery' atheist, I'm an 'ordinary' atheist who is open to hearing the evidence. And if you've got something, I'm willing to listen." So, Dr. Montgomery, what would you say to a person who says, "Listen, I don't know if God exists or not." What would you tell him?

Montgomery: Well, I first want to make sure that the person is open-minded on the subject -- not vacant-minded but open-minded. I want to be sure that the person is not an atheist, as a matter of fact, but an agnostic and willing therefore to consider evidence. There's no sense in wasting time with people who are atheists; that is, who are closed off to the existence of God. The Bible says, "The fool has said in his heart 'There is no God.'" It is foolishness to take that kind of

closed-minded position. But it certainly isn't foolishness, especially in a secular age, if one looks out at this very, very complex and mysterious universe and wonders if there is a God. So, we pick up then from the point of "wonder." Can this universe adequately be explained on its own ground? Answer: "No." The universe is not self-explanatory; it is mysterious in the best sense of the word. Let's begin with anything, any single object or any person...begin with this book. Being one of my books it's a particularly valuable place to start. Does this book explain itself? Certainly not. You're going to have to go beyond the book to something else. In fact, you're going to have to go to a lot of "something elses." You're going to have to go to an author. Books don't appear without an author. They also don't get into the trade without a publisher, a printer, a distributor, paper manufacturers and on and on and on. This object doesn't explain itself, it forces you to go beyond it to other things. Or, take the person sitting next to you. That person does not explain himself or herself. You must at least go beyond that person to parents in order to explain that person, but then of course you're going to have to go to grandparents and you're going to have to go to the chemistry and physics of the person and so on. The whole universe is made up of objects like the ones we've just been discussing; and persons. And the universe is the sum total of everything in it. So, if any individual element of the universe cannot explain itself, if you take them all together, you take them as a whole -- spelled w-h-o-l-e, you do not have something that is self-explanatory. You have a gigantic amount of non-self-explanatory stuff. Philosophers call this "contingency." What you get is a whale of a lot of contingency. And since the universe does not explain itself, you are obliged to go beyond it for an explanation. You must go from the contingent to something absolute that does not require further explanation and that's God. So you must move from the universe, beyond it to God.

Ankerberg: Then you have people like Bertrand Russell who said, "But, you know, where does God come from and who caused God?"

Montgomery: Yes, that's the next question asked. And a couple of things need to be seen about that. First of all, the nonsensical character of the question. It sounds like it's sensible -- "Where did God come from?" -- but it's only grammatically sensible. It's like the question, "How many corners does a circle have?" It's sensible grammatically but if you know what a circle is, you know you can't ask about the corners of it. And if you know what you mean by "God" and you mean by "God," "that which is self-explanatory," you can't ask the question, "Where does He come from?" or "Where does it come from?" because that in itself implies that God isn't self-explanatory. The second thing about it is this: Let's say for the sake of argument that you're moving from the universe to God -- Universe to God -- in order to explain it. But, then you say, "How do I explain God?" and you say, "Well, I'm going to have to explain Him." Then you're going to have to go to a God to the second power to explain the God to the first power. That will require a God to the third, fourth, fifth...it becomes an infinite series, ending up with, "God to the nth power." That simply means it's an infinite series. But if it's infinite, you've never explained "God to the n minus one." Because if the series has no end there isn't any next to last. If you haven't explained "God to the n minus one," you haven't explained God to the n minus two, minus three,...finally, you're back to the universe you were trying to explain to begin with. You would have done better listening to old Gomer Pyle re-runs on television. This has accomplished absolutely nothing. You're going to have to stop this business at one of two points -- either with the universe in which we find ourselves, or with God as the self-explanatory end of the series. Now, the only meaningful question in all of this is, which is the better place to stop? The atheist stops with the universe; the believer in God stops with the self-explanatory absolute. Which is better? Well, no question about this. You've got to stop here, because you admitted to begin with that everything in the universe that you come across can't explain itself. You can't then suddenly turn this universe into something self-explanatory. That's myth-making. It's turning the universe into God. It's making that which can't explain itself suddenly and magically explanatory. The Christian is not the myth-maker, the atheist is the myth-maker. The Christian takes the universe seriously, that it can't explain itself and insists on going to a source of explanation which can.

Ankerberg: Besides that logical airtight argument that you just gave, support that with explaining the Second Law of Thermodynamics and how it proves the existence of God.

Montgomery: Well, this is not an argument developed by Bible school teachers. This follows from one of the most fundamental laws of contemporary physics and engineering. The Second Law of Thermodynamics says that in a closed system the available energy will become less and less until finally you have no available energy at all. This is called a growth in entropy that finally results in heat death. All right? It is a generalized law of the universe. Now, for the atheist the universe has got to be such a system because there is no God outside. The universe is all there is. It is such a closed system. But according to the Second Law of Thermodynamics it only takes a finite amount of time to reach heat death. Think about it. For the atheist the universe is all there is so it has always been around. It's been around for an infinite period of time. But an infinite period of time will embrace any finite period, so the universe would already have reached heat death if the atheists were right. Now, it evidently hasn't because there's enough energy left to discuss the question. So, we conclude that the atheist is wrong in his assumptions. One of two things must be the case, maybe both: the universe was created a finite amount of time ago and hasn't yet had enough time to reach heat death: God created it. And/or there is a cosmic gas station attendant out there somewhere feeding in energy: That's known as continuous creation by the theologians. But you've got to have creation. That's the point. You've got to have creation. The Second Law of Thermodynamics insists on it. Go to Gordon Van Wylen's textbook on Thermodynamics published by Wylie and Son in Philadelphia, the scientific and technical publisher, Gordon Van Wylen was head of engineering at the University of Michigan. This is the most widely-used text in Thermodynamics. Van Wylen says, "My authors and myself must believe in God. We have no choice. The Second Law of Thermodynamics insists upon this."

Ankerberg: Okay. But if you have an infinite force, if you call this absolute, "God," how do we know this absolute is personal?

Montgomery: Well, is it more reasonable to think that the absolute is personal or impersonal? For one thing, notice that we have used our minds in reasoning to the absolute. Wouldn't it be strange if it required rational minds and personalities to engage in this argumentation, and when you finally arrived at God, He is non-rational. It would be more reasonable to assume that the reason we are able to get there rationally is that He is a rational and personal Being Himself. For another thing, in our experience, the impersonal does not give rise to the personal. You do not have bird houses giving rise to birds. The personal gives rise to the impersonal. Human beings build bridges, bridges do not turn into people, and so it is more reasonable to assume that the Source of the universe is personal and rational than that the Source of the universe is impersonal, that is to say, irrational.

Ankerberg: In thirty seconds, why is it then -- go back to the first thing that we said, -- Why is the demonstration of God then best seen in relationship to who Jesus is?

Montgomery: The reason is that when we've used the contingency argument and we've used the Second Law of Thermodynamics and we've talked in the terms that we have during this program, the best that we have arrived at is a "Source" of the universe, a "first cause" if you will, for everything. First causes are not sufficient for salvation. It says in the Bible that the devils also believe in God and tremble. In order to be saved you've got to meet the God of the universe as Savior, as the One who has died on the cross to deal with your own personal problems and risen again to take care of the problem of death in your own experience. So, the best place to meet God is just where we said at the beginning of this program...the best place to meet God is God in Christ. God was in Christ, the witnesses say, "reconciling the world unto Himself." And He is capable of reconciling you personally to Himself. But, of course, it's up to you as to whether you let Him.

Ankerberg: Now, you've heard the evidence, you've heard the information, and what will you do with Jesus Christ? The Bible doesn't say it's an intellectual problem all the time. Many times it's a moral problem -- you just won't. You won't turn from your way of doing things and turn to Christ. But we ask you to examine your conclusions in light of the evidence and realize the invitation from Christ is open to you to commit your life to Him. Join us for more next week.

Program 7

Introduction: RECENT SURVEYS AND POLLS SHOW THAT 98% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE IN GOD. BUT THESE SAME POLLS REVEAL MANY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE GOD THEY BELIEVE IN. TONIGHT, JOHN ANKERBERG WILL EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE AND THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY'S CENTRAL FIGURE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, "WAS JESUS CHRIST A LIAR, A LUNATIC, A LEGEND, OR GOD?" JOHN'S GUEST IS ATTORNEY JOHN WARWICK MONTGOMERY, DEAN OF THE SIMON GREENLEAF SCHOOL OF LAW IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND A PRACTICING TRIAL LAWYER BOTH IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA. DURING TONIGHT'S PROGRAM WE WILL ASK: IF A LAWYER WERE TO ARGUE THE CLAIMS OF JESUS CHRIST IN A COURT OF LAW, WHAT REAL EVIDENCE WOULD HE POINT TO? WOULD A TRIAL LAWYER BELIEVE THAT THE EVIDENCE FOR JESUS CHRIST'S CLAIMS TO BEING GOD WOULD BRING A JURY TO THE CONCLUSION CHRIST WAS TELLING THE TRUTH? WHAT KIND OF EVIDENCE WOULD A TRIAL LAWYER USE TO ANSWER SUCH QUESTIONS AS, WHY DO GOOD PEOPLE SUFFER? DOESN'T SUFFERING PROVE THAT GOD DOESN'T EXIST, BECAUSE IF GOD IS ALL-POWERFUL, HE COULD DESTROY EVIL? IF GOD IS ALL-LOVING, HE WOULD WANT TO DESTROY EVIL. BUT EVIL ISN'T DESTROYED, SO GOD MUST NOT BE ALL-POWERFUL, OR HE MUST NOT BE ALL-LOVING, OR HE JUST DOESN'T EXIST." WHY DID GOD ORDAIN THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF EVIL MUST HURT SO MUCH AND BE SO DRASTIC? WHY IS IT FAIR THAT ALL OF MANKIND HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY ADAM'S SIN? IS IT FAIR THAT GOD PERMITS TORNADOES AND HURRICANES TO KILL INNOCENT CHILDREN AND BRING DEATH TO HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE? AREN'T SUCH EVENTS PROOF THAT GOD IS NOT ALL-POWERFUL OR ALL-LOVING? WAS CAMUS RIGHT OR WRONG IN ASSERTING IT WOULD BE WRONG FOR A PERSON TO TRY AND CORRECT EVIL SINCE THAT PERSON WOULD BE WORKING AGAINST GOD WHO PERMITTED THE EVIL IN THE FIRST PLACE? WHAT PROMISES HAS GOD MADE CONCERNING THE EXPERIENCES OF EVIL TO THOSE WHO TRUST IN CHRIST? ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS AND MORE WILL BE ANSWERED DURING OUR PROGRAM TONIGHT. WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.

Ankerberg: Welcome! We're glad that you've joined us. We've been talking about the evidence for the Person of Jesus Christ and the existence of God. And we are coming to a topic tonight that is probably one of the major stumblingblocks for the unbeliever to embrace the God of the Bible, and it has to do with the problem of Evil. The problem of evil is a big one for many people, and it's not just an intellectual problem. We've had Rabbi Harold Kushner on the program who sat here and told us of how he lost his son at a very young age. As a result he wrote the book When Bad Things Happen to Good People. What I realized was that he left his Orthodox Judaistic belief and completely changed his view of God, and it was because of the experience of suffering that he went through, and how that relates to God. And I guess that's where we're at tonight. We have to ask some hard questions that relate not only to the intellectual side of the existence of God but also to the experiential side, what people actually face in relationship to that information. Let's start it

off here with the kind of common question that people ask: Why do the good suffer? Doesn't suffering prove God does not exist? The classic way that people have stated this is: If there is an all-powerful God, He could destroy evil -- because He's got all power. And if He is an all-loving God" -- as the God of the Bible says that He is -- He would want to destroy evil. But evil is not destroyed. So the unbeliever comes to the conclusion there is not an all-powerful, all-loving God because of this evil. What would you say?

Montgomery: This is an argument which has had tremendous effect in keeping people from a serious belief in God, but the argument is irrational and it's unrealistic. Let me try an analogy. We'll say that my child is fourteen years of age and the question is, what about going dancing. Now, as a parent, I am all-powerful in this area. The law will uphold any decision that I make in regard to whether or not my child goes dancing. Also, I love my child and I want the very best thing for the child and I know that there are some pretty sleazy joints where dancing goes on in my community and that my child may very well end up badly influenced in those situations. Now, will it follow from the fact that I am omnipotent in reference to the dancing problem and all-loving -- will it follow that I will necessarily keep my child from dancing? Certainly not. Because there will be another factor in this, and the other factor is that I want to be sure that I have the right kind of relationship with my child, a relationship of genuine love working in two directions, and I will therefore have to allow the child to make the child's own decisions after having given the very best advice. Because only where free will operates in a situation like that is it going to be possible for the child to operate in a mature fashion. I'll give you an analogy. The sheriff's deputies get another tip that something awful has happened at the old mansion at Gopher Gulch. Those of you who heard a prior program will connect this up. They arrive at the old mansion and their worst suspicions are again realized. Mrs. Schlonk has kept her son Lemuel in the attic until he is 35 years of age. And she is, of course, hauled off, indicted and released on bail and she appears on the local TV program. It is not the John Ankerberg Show, I might emphasize. And the camera swings to her and the narrator says, "Mrs. Schlonk, I know I speak for every member of our audience when I ask you the question, "Why did you keep Lemuel in the attic until he was 35 years of age." She says, "I'm glad you asked me this. I've wanted to answer this question but of course I couldn't. The reason is that I love Lemuel. I love Lemuel as other mothers do not love their children. I did not let Lemuel go out and play baseball and get hit in the head with a baseball bat. I did not let Lemuel cross the street and get hit by a truck. I didn't let him get into drugs or have bad companions. I kept him in the attic until he was 35 because I loved him." Camera swings to Lemuel. "Bd!p! Bd!p! Bd!p!" Lemuel is crazier than a March hare because he has been in the attic until he is 35. It does not follow that simply because one has power and goodness that he will not restrict his power so as to allow those people over whom he has the power to operate on the basis of free will. The reason for "Evil" is ultimately the misuse of free will by God's creatures. And ironically, we misuse our free will and then we turn around and we say, "What's the matter with you, God! Why have you created this mess?!"

Ankerberg: What does the Bible say concerning His creatures...I mean the classical statement goes like this, then let me give you the biblical question. "God is the author of everything in the world. He's the Creator of everything in the world. Evil is something in the world" -- we're not Christian Scientists here. We believe it's something that's real. -- "therefore, God, if He is the author of everything and evil is here, God must be the author of evil. Right?"

Montgomery: Wrong!

Ankerberg: Why?

Montgomery: Because evil, though real, is not a "Thing." Evil is the product of a misuse of a relationship. Take the biblical approach to the origin of evil. According to the Bible, one of God's creatures, who had free will as all God's creatures do; one of God's creatures very close to Him

decided that he would become equal with God, going against his own nature and against the proper order of things. As a result of this, he fell and the consequences for the universe were similar to throwing a monkey wrench into a machine. Then everything "went off" to a certain extent. Now, at the beginning you didn't have anything other than God and the creature. Evil came about as a result of the misuse of that relationship. Evil is not a bucket of stuff which "God must have created" because He created all buckets of stuff. Evil is the name we give to the perversion of the stuff that God created by creatures who have ruined their relationship with God.

Ankerberg: Right. Evil is the lack of a thing. So if God created a good something -- let's say you have a shirt hanging on a hanger, and moths get at it and you have holes in the shirt, evil is the lack in the good thing that God created. And what we find is that man by his actions has created something by those actions that is the evil. It wasn't God. It was as a result of man's free choice, which he exercised, that we find evil. But that brings us to the further question of why is it that God allowed that in the first place. Why didn't He put a stop to it or come up with a different plan? Because, man, we're dealing with tough things here. The effects are terrible.

Montgomery: Well, according to the Scriptures God is love and therefore He wants to have the best kind of relationship possible with His creatures. God is not a puppetmaster. The reason why evil came about is because there was genuine free will and the creature genuinely misused it. God gave His creatures free will from the beginning because only in that way could the creature relate to Him and God relate to the creature. Otherwise it would have been a situation where you could imagine it, God on the parapets of heaven and His creature down there, and God says, "Do you love me?" And then you notice a slight twitching of the hands and very thin cords going down and the creature looks up and says, "Yes, God, I love you." That's not love. It's only love if it is personally the product of volition, and free will or volition means uncaused action. You can't ask, "What caused free will?" That's a contradiction in terms. There was a cartoon in the New Yorker a few years ago showing these two criminals in the state pen and one says to the other, "I wonder what it was about my genetic pattern that made me a safecracker and made you a forger?" See? Well, of course, the answer is that people don't become forgers or safecrackers as a result of that. They become forgers or safecrackers because of some volitional act on their part for which they are in fact responsible.

Ankerberg: Okay, we're going to take a break and we're going come back, and we're going to talk about Adam's sin. Because the Bible says Adam sinned and all of us were affected in some way by that sin, and the question is, "Is that fair?" That's number one. And number two, I think a lot of people want to know, "Listen, evil has consequences, and I can see when I do some things that are wrong I get the penalty for that, but what about these tornadoes and hurricanes and all these innocent children? I mean, how do you work that into a God who is loving and in control of the universe?" We're going to talk about that when we come right back.

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Ankerberg: All right, we're back, and we're talking about the problem of Evil. You know, I'm very conscious of many of you who are watching tonight. It wasn't too long ago that my secretary gave me a letter of a man that was watching the program, and he had just 60 days in which to live, and he wanted to find out about spiritual things. And I'll bet there are others of you who are watching tonight, and maybe you've been informed that you've got cancer. Maybe you've lost somebody in the family -- a loved one, a child -- or a financial setback -- the stock market has crashed, there's been bankruptcies around the country, and you're faced with the personal suffering that goes along with Evil and you want some questions, "What does God have to say about this? Can I believe in the God of the Bible? How does He relate to the real world where I'm at?" And, Dr. Montgomery, I can feel these people...they're tuned in right now. They want to know, number one, let's start with the theological side and then let's go to the personal side. Theologically, doesn't the Bible say that

Adam sinned and somehow we were all affected by his sin? Is that fair?

Montgomery: It's fair because Adam was a perfect representative of the entire race. He wasn't just the first man in a chronological sequence, he was the perfect representative man. The word in Hebrew, "adam," means "mankind." And so, according to the Bible, the act that he engaged in is the same act you or I would have engaged in had we been there. You might think of it this way in modern parlance: Adam was the perfect statistical sampling of the entire human race, and that's the basis of that line in the old McGuffey Reader, "In Adam's fall, we fell all." We were actually participants in that event. You say, "Well, I don't feel like I was." No, that's right. But it's not a question of feeling, it's a question of what God in Jesus Christ says was the situation. And He stamped with approval the Old Testament in which that exact picture is presented.

Ankerberg: Go to the next part. If a person says, "You know, I can see that, but much of the evil in the world I don't understand. I don't understand this thing of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, volcanoes. Innocent people seem to be caught up in these events. What is the relationship, and where is a God who is supposed to be all-loving and just and fair? I mean, were these people so bad that this happened to them?" What about this thing of the tremendous amount of evil that comes over people? Why certain people and not others?

Montgomery: Yeah, that expresses a profound truth about evil, namely that it's irrational. According to the Bible, evil arises, as we've already said, as a result of the creature messing up his relationship with God. Getting a perverse disorder out of what was a perfect relationship. Now, when that kind of hideous wrong decision is made, you're going to expect hideous consequences. You've brought irrationality in instead of rationality. You've brought disorder instead of order. And evil operates in an irrational fashion. It operates very much as a grenade thrown by a terrorist into a crowd. The terrorist may very well want to get a particular political leader, but when the grenade goes off, the fragments fly all over the place and people are hit without any regard to whether they are connected in with that particular political ideology. And when the first creature violated his relationship with God, that was the effect of the throwing of the monkey wrench into the works. And when our first parents, perfectly representative of us, did this, that was the result. This is why the godfather can die in bed with his family around him and an innocent school teacher can be run down by a truck. The fact is that there is an irrational element that has entered into the otherwise rational universe. And this is due to us. It is not due to God.

Ankerberg: Okay, I'm going to take a wild stab in the dark here. Was it Camus that depicted in one of his stories the fact of the plague and the person coming to work against it. But if God, like the Bible says, is in charge of everything, then apparently Camus' deduction was, I believe -- correct me if I'm wrong -- was that God ordained that plague to come, therefore if any Christian, if any minister, started to work against that, he would actually be working against God by correcting the evil. And so you had the problem there. Can you straighten us out on that?

Montgomery: For Christians to work against the effects of evil is not to work against God, it's to work against the effects of the mess that we as creatures have created in the first place. What God does is to act in a manner far beyond anything that we can imagine. He loved us, in giving us the free will in the first place. Then, when we misused our free will, of course, He was under no obligation to do anything about it. He could have allowed the whole universal situation to collapse and not run into the slightest moral difficulty. It was the creature that had done this in the first place. But what does He do? He reveals Himself in prophets, and in apostles. And more important infinitely than that, He comes to earth in the person of His Son in order to deal with that very mess that we had created. He dies on the cross, taking a punishment that He did not deserve, so that we would be released from the effects of this kind of thing in eternity. He goes infinitely beyond anything that His critics have ever thought of doing in regard to evil.

Ankerberg: All right, be the pastor here at this point for those people that are suffering right now as they're listening, okay? What do you tell a person that has just lost a loved one? lost a child? gone bankrupt in their finances? And before they believed that God was loving but now they feel like God has left them. They're all alone. Or they haven't been Christians and now they're thinking about this but they cannot reconcile all of these tragic events that have taken place in their life with a belief in the God of the Bible. Is it inconsistent to have a belief in the Bible with all of these things, or is it consistent with what the Bible does tell us as well as evil and what is the answer to it?

Montgomery: Two things I want to say, and I hope people will listen very closely to me. If you aren't a Christian, and things of a hideous nature have happened to you or to those near you, and you wonder if there is any point in anything, my strongest suggestion to you, my plea to you is, go to the Jesus of the New Testament. Read His life and read about His death on the cross, and ask yourself if He is at the source of this problem; or, rather, if He is not the best answer to this problem. You will find Him your best ally in this situation. You will find that if you come to terms with Him, He can give meaning to you in this mess in a way in which nobody else can. The second thing is, for Christians, for the person who says, "Well, I'm a believer but I just don't know if I can hang on to this in light of what's happened to me." There's a promise in the Bible connected with Christian belief that I am amazed that more preachers and evangelists don't spend some time with. It's the statement in Romans, Chapter 8, verse 28. This verse says that "All things work together for good to those who love God," that is those who are in a loving relationship with Him in Jesus Christ. This says that for a Christian, for a Christian, every single thing that occurs in the Christian's life is under the providence of God in such a way that he can know that it is the very best thing for him. The very best thing for him. No matter how ghastly it is. Cancer, whatever. It is exactly the right thing. Now, he doesn't understand the causal linkages, he can't explain why it's the best thing, but that is a clear promise of Scripture. There is an absolute difference between the life of the non-Christian and the life of the Christian. The non-Christian is unable to look into his life and ever believe that this isn't other than "A tale told by an idiot signifying nothing." It has no sense. But the life of the Christian does have sense. It has sense by its very nature in terms of God's clear promise.

Ankerberg: All right, we've come to the end tonight in terms of these weeks when we've been talking to people who are not believers as well as to believers. Summarize the case in one minute.

Montgomery: What we've been saying is that to believe in God is not a naive and superstitious sort of response to the universe, it is the only reasonable response to a universe that cannot explain itself. I give you a very interesting reference. A book was produced just a couple of years ago, co-authored by two of the most distinguished scholars of our time. One of them is John C. Eccles and he is a specialist on the human brain. The other is Karl Popper, the great political philosopher. The book is entitled The Self and Its Brain, and the two gentlemen, though they do not agree entirely in viewpoint, arrived at the conclusion that you have not explained the "Self" when you have explained the brain. There is a dualism here, and the Self transcends the brain. Eccles says this, and Popper doesn't entirely agree, but you see the point of it. I would like to add a quotation: "The physical basis of the mind is the brain action in each individual. It accompanies the activity of the spirit but the spirit is free. It is capable of initiative." The point of this quotation is that for Eccles and for people who see the functioning of the brain, the human being cannot be explained by his brain activity, he transcends it. There is therefore an inherent probability of life after death. We believe in a God who is the only One capable of explaining and making sense out of phenomena such as the human Self. We've tried to make this point strongly. And if you are troubled by this because of the evil in the world, we've tried to emphasize that evil is not the product of the God of the universe. Evil is the product of our own misuse of what He has given us. And if you want a solution to that, you don't get it by criticizing the God who has put you on this planet and come to earth in Jesus Christ to die for you, you get the answer by going to Him and

listening to Him and responding to Him in His terms. And what does He say? He says in Jesus Christ, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me." There is only one route, the route to God is a route that goes by way of a cross. And it is essential that we go that route in order to find the answer to life and to eternity.

Ankerberg: Now, you have to decide, and, again, the Jesus that we know and we've talked about, the Jesus of the New Testament that invaded history and demonstrated that He was God, He waits to have a personal relationship with you. But you must ask Him to come into your life. We would urge you to do that. Dr. Montgomery, on behalf of all of us here as well as our television audience, thank you for being with us and sharing all of these fantastic pieces of information, the evidences concerning Jesus Christ. Good night. See you next week.