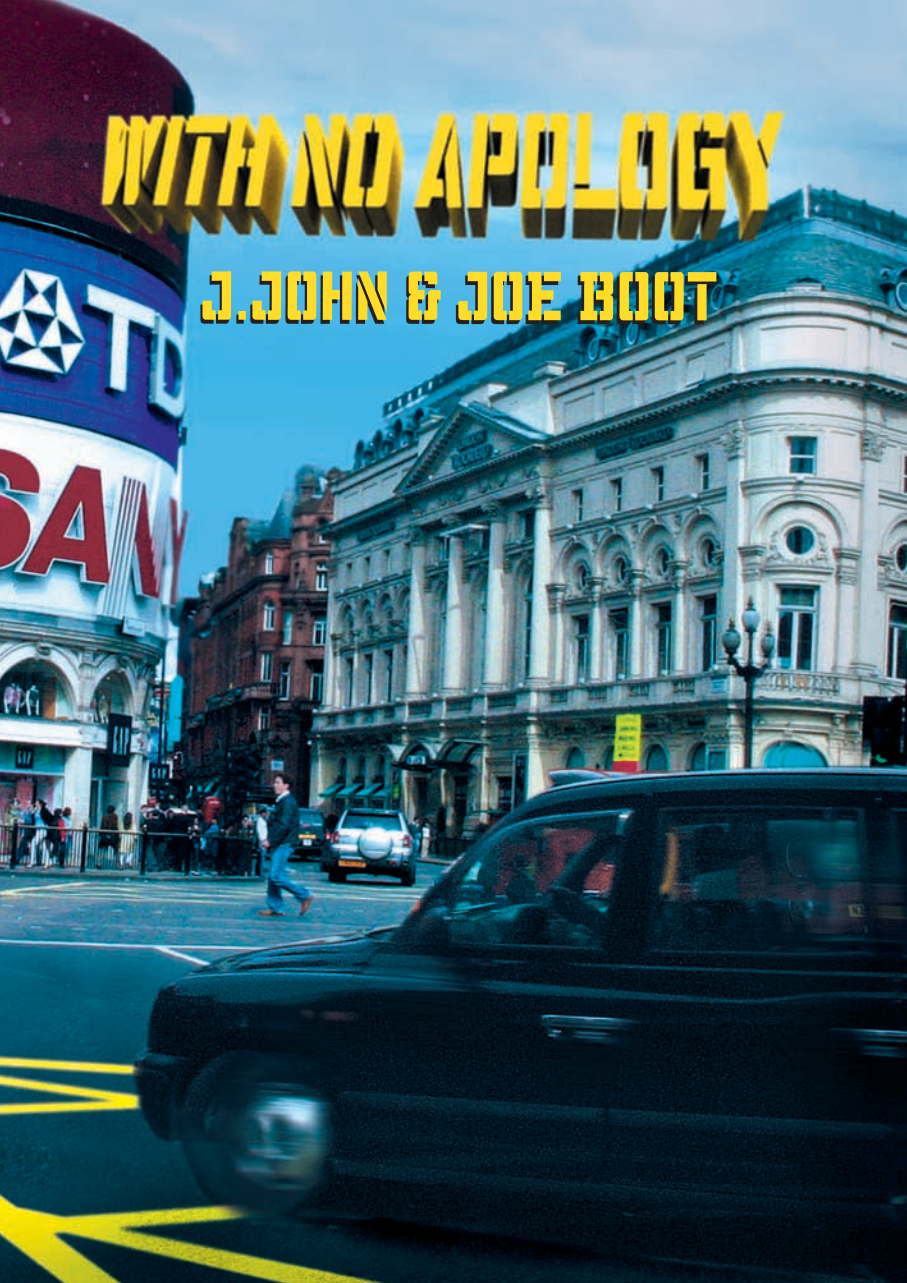


WITH NO APOLOGY

J. JOHN & JOE BOOT



Dear Friend,

Believe it or not, ministers like me don't always have a readymade answer for every question we are asked – or, indeed, that we ask for ourselves.

I have often thought long and hard about the many questions in life that seem impossible to answer. And I've had the joy and honour of discussing these over many meals with my good friend Joe Boot.

So Joe and I thought we'd record some of our discussions for this DVD. We hope it will help you to think more deeply about your belief, and to confront some of the harder questions that we all grapple with from time to time.

Above all, we hope this will provide much encouragement for you along your journey of life and faith. Our beliefs can make sense. We can trust in our God. And we have the most wonderful good news to share with others who travel with us.

In grace and peace,

J.John

Contents

Letter from J.John	2
Session 1 – What about Truth and the Bible?	3
Session 2 – What about Jesus?	5
Session 3 – What about other faiths?	7
Session 4 – What about Creation?	9
Session 5 – What about Suffering?	11
Glossary	13
Biographies	14
Recommended Reading	15

SESSION 1 – WHAT ABOUT TRUTH AND THE BIBLE?

Part 1 – Faith

What is faith? Who has it? Joe argues that everyone is religious, and that everyone has faith. That's because we all have to believe certain things for which we don't have proof, in order to make sense of the world around us. We need fixed reference points to help us map the reality of human life – things which don't move when we do, like the stars that helped to guide travellers in years gone by.

How do we know that the Christian God is the supreme 'fixed point of reference'? Well, we have to accept the authority of someone, whether they're Oprah, Jerry Springer or... God. The question is, who do we trust? And how do they help us to make sense of life, the universe and everything?

Everyone has a 'worldview' – a perspective on reality by which we interpret life. And worldviews ask four questions in particular:

- Where have I come from?
- What's the meaning of life?
- How should I live?
- What's my final destiny?

There are three main worldviews:

Pantheism – which claims that all reality is 'one'.

Naturalism – which suggests that the universe is random, chaotic and accidental.

Theism – the Christian version of which claims that God exists as a trinity, and that we are made in His image.

The Christian faith stands out, Joe argues, because it makes most sense of the things around us which we take for granted, like morality, science and language.

Part 2 – The Bible

Can we rely on the Bible? Joe argues that if there is a God, and if God has spoken through the Bible, then it must be reliable.

He offers different ways of backing this up. Jesus said the Bible is the 'word of God'. And even if he just meant the Old Testament, we have many reasons to believe in

the reliability of the New Testament, too. Scholars believe the text to have integrity thanks to thousands of manuscripts that still exist today, along with the testimony of secular writers of the time. The geography of the Bible is repeatedly proved accurate, and archaeology almost always backs up Biblical accounts.

Joe looks at apparent contradictions in the Bible, and argues that usually, these aren't contradictions but complementary statements. In particular, the four Gospels complement each other in their varying accounts.

Finally, he asks why the Bible seems hard to understand. Most of it, in fact, is quite easy, argues Joe. It's clear to see what the authors meant, though we tend to reinterpret their words through contemporary eyes. Harder to grapple with is the 'prophetic' and 'apocalyptic' literature – such as the book of Revelation, which was written in code at a time of persecution, and which requires us to know more about Biblical imagery, numerology and characters.

Thankfully, Joe argues, we don't have to make a 'leap of faith' to believe in God – because we can trust in the Bible, which helps us to make most sense of our amazing human existence.

Questions:

- How does the Bible help to make sense of your own life?
- What do you still find hard to believe about the Christian faith?
- Did you find Joe's arguments helpful and persuasive?



SESSION 2 – WHAT ABOUT JESUS?

Jesus is the founder of the Christian faith. But is He who He claimed to be? Our beliefs are inter-connected, says Joe. We can't separate Jesus from the Bible. If we believe the Bible to be reliable and God-given, and if Jesus claims to be the Son of God, then we can trust Him.

The Old Testament prophesied a saviour. And Joe believes the divinity of Jesus speaks for itself in the Bible, thanks especially to passages in the Old Testament which are fulfilled in the life – and death – of Christ.

It's puzzling, at first sight, to think that the religious leaders couldn't see he was the Messiah. After all, they knew their scriptures.

But they were more interested in position and power than truth, says Joe. And they expected a political leader to deliver them from the Romans. Furthermore, Jesus was blaspheming, according to their worldview, because they saw God as 'one' being – and no one else could claim to be divine.

If you don't believe Jesus was God, however, you can't just respect Him as a good, moral teacher, says Joe. If you judge Jesus by what He said about Himself, then he was a lunatic, a liar, or Lord – He didn't ever claim to be simply 'good'.

Reassuringly, Jesus fits right into the bigger picture – the 'metanarrative' – of the Bible. God created the world good, but it was corrupted. And from Genesis 3.15 onwards, we have expected a saviour who could take away this corruption. That's why we get the genealogies in the Gospels, which place Jesus in a direct line of descent from Adam.

And we shouldn't have too much trouble believing in the resurrection, says Joe, for if our worldview includes God, it should also include miracles. There are, though, rational arguments for the resurrection, too – and lawyers have set out to write books disproving it, only to become Christians in the process.

How do we know that Jesus is alive today? The universe is held together by Christ, as the Bible says. Joe also looks to the testimony of the apostles, and to the 1.4 billion people who today believe they have a relationship with Him.

And if it seems confusing that Jesus can also be God, but God is one, then think about this. $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$. But $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$. It's a bit like space, matter and time

– the three are part of the same whole, yet different, somehow. Or like the mind, body and spirit of a human.

We don't know when Jesus will return, says Joe – only the Father knows that. But we do know that He's coming back. The God who started history with the creation of a good world is coming back to earth one day, when our world, once more, will collide with eternity and we'll see Jesus as Lord. As J. John says, we live between miracle and mystery.

Questions:

- How do we tend to view Jesus within today's culture? Is He just another face on another t-shirt, or is He more?
- What do people you know think of Jesus? How many tend to see Him as just another good or moral leader?
- How might you answer them if they asked you to explain who He is?



SESSION 3 – WHAT ABOUT OTHER FAITHS?

In this session, Joe and J. John turn their thoughts to other faiths. Don't all religions lead to God? Joe explains how people think that different religions are superficially different, but fundamentally the same. In fact, the opposite is true! They seem to agree on the superficials, but fundamentally they're very different.

It comes back to the question of worldview – and the worldviews found within the major religions differ over big issues like morality, even. So, unless we say that truth is relative, we can't say that all roads lead to God.

It's a tough claim to say that Jesus is the only way to God. But those who say that all roads lead to God are taking a God's eye view – which is impossible. If we have examined the worldviews, and if we've decided that Christianity makes most sense of our world, then we can trust that Jesus' words are true: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.'

While many people grow up within very different religious cultures, it doesn't stop the truth from being The Truth – that Jesus is the Way.

But why are these religions so attractive? There must be something in them, surely? Our culture does affect our beliefs, of course, and in countries which aren't predominantly Christian, people may have a false view of reality, but it doesn't stop them reflecting the image of God. Buddhists, for example, believe that suffering is an illusion – but that doesn't stop them from helping those who are suffering.

So what of the people who never hear about Jesus? Are they condemned to hell, despite not hearing? Joe argues that God's revelation is everywhere – the heavens declare the glory of God, He reminds us, from Psalm 19. Romans 1.20 suggests that creation exhibits aspects and qualities of God's nature – so we have little excuse. It's our unrighteousness that suppresses the truth.

The Bible says that God will judge us according to what we know, not what we don't know. So if people haven't heard of Jesus, they won't necessarily be judged for it. They'll be judged on the revelation they've received.

But could that judgment – or any judgment – involve sending people to hell? A good God can't do that, can he? Hell, Joe suggests, is a place of separation from God, that people choose. It's not a nice place to end up. We can say that we don't like

the idea – but again, if the idea is true, it doesn't matter whether we like it or not.

Sometimes, it seems like Jesus' followers put people off following Him, by being hypocrites – saying one thing, doing another. But Joe says that we must stand back and examine the claims of Christ without letting Christians colour our perspective of Him.

In fact, there is no one who is 'good', according to Romans 3.23 – we have all fallen short of the glory of God. We all make mistakes – and it is by grace that Christians receive the gift of eternal life.

Questions:

- Do you believe in hell? Did Joe's arguments convince you either way?
- How does this session affect how you feel about telling others about Jesus?
- Are there times when what you've done has put people off believing?
How might you help them deal with the dilemma that Christians don't always practice what they preach?



SESSION 4 – WHAT ABOUT CREATION?

Science and faith seem like they're in conflict: many Christians believe that God created the world in six days; many scientists, on the other hand, believe that the universe took millions of years to get us to where we are today. But contrary to popular opinion, Joe argues that science and faith are not mutually exclusive.

In session 1, we discussed the nature of faith. Now it's time to ask, what is the nature of science? Science, like faith, is based on certain assumptions – such as the 'uniformity of nature'. This assumes that nature behaves – and has always behaved – according to certain unchanging laws. So, it implies we can examine the world dispassionately – objectively – and discover facts about how it works.

Science, though, never happens in a vacuum. It can't ever be 'pure'; instead, we are better talking about 'metaphysics' – which admits that science forms part of a greater, overall worldview based on faith – even if it's the faith to say that God doesn't exist.

We sometimes forget that modern science arose out of the Christian worldview – which believes that God is rational, and establishes order, not chaos.

So why, then, are scientific theories spoken of – and taught in school – as 'fact'? It shouldn't be so, says Joe. Science is forever changing, mutating, developing – and is never 'absolute'.

Take evolution, which relies on the Big Bang theory. Plenty of good scientists are now challenging the idea of the Big Bang theory. At the very beginning, something mysterious happened that we can't fully explain. Science works in the realm of belief at this point – yet we teach the Big Bang theory in our schools, to disprove other faith-based worldviews such as the Christian one.

Then there's the example of fossils, which are used to disprove the Bible's account of creation. In fact, there are no fossils which support the theory of evolution at all. We have no evidence from fossils that species evolved into other species at all.

But surely the dinosaurs prove that certain animals have died out along the evolutionary chain? Again, no, says Joe. Some scientists force the dinosaur question into their worldview, certainly. But Christians can explain the extinction of the dinosaurs by the Flood.

We have to be able to rely on the Bible – the revelation of the God of order – to assemble data according to our worldview. And we can.

Is there, then, a conflict between science and faith? There doesn't have to be. Some of the biggest names in modern science were Christian theists – in other words, they believed in a Creator God. Newton, Pascal, Pasteur and Boyle were all Christians. They saw no contradiction between what they believed and what they discovered.

Both science and Christianity require faith. The contradiction only arises between the worldviews upon which the two are based. Science can either be built upon theistic or atheistic foundations. If it's the latter, there's conflict. But most of our modern science has emerged from within a Christian worldview.

Questions:

- How did your school present the debate about the theory of evolution versus creation?
- What could you say to your children, or anyone who asks you, when they say that they've been taught that evolution is 'true'?
- Have you thought that science and faith are mutually exclusive?
How does this session change the way you think?



SESSION 5 – WHAT ABOUT SUFFERING?

Perhaps the biggest question people ask when it comes to the Christian faith is: how can a good God allow so much suffering? In fact, Joe argues that every belief system and worldview has to answer this question, which comes down to the way we approach justice and morality.

So how do the competing worldviews face it? Pantheism (expressed, for example, in Buddhism) concludes that all suffering is an illusion. This means that there's no difference between good and bad.

Naturalism, the second major worldview, doesn't accept definitive moral categories such as right or wrong, because it believes everything is just 'matter in motion' – there's no order to the universe.

The Christian worldview, on the other hand, faces suffering head on. It accepts that there's good and evil, and believes that God is all-powerful and all-good. Christians trust that God must have wise reasons to allow suffering – reasons that we don't always know about and can't fully explain.

We know, however, that suffering results from the Fall. Sin entered the cosmos – and as a consequence, we suffer natural disasters and disease. Sometimes, we can't understand why bad things happen to good people, but if God intervened, where would He draw the line? It would be hard to remove suffering without removing our freedom.

C S Lewis described pain as 'God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world'. If we couldn't see that creation had been cursed, we wouldn't realise that we need to seek a Saviour. Even within the mystery of pain and suffering, God is calling us to change.

The Good News is that God didn't stand on the sidelines watching us suffer alone. God became flesh and blood, and was born to suffer the cruellest death. God took the moral evil of the world upon Himself, to bring about the Salvation of all who believe in Jesus Christ.

It may sometimes seem as if our prayers are useless in the face of suffering; but the Bible is clear that God answers our prayers, if even they're not always in the ways we'd like. Jesus asked God, in the Garden of Gethsemane, to take His

suffering away 'if it be your will'. We believe that God answered His prayer, even though He still suffered.

We can have trust and confidence in God, not just for sound intellectual reasons – that we know about God – but for moral reasons – that we know God. Everything in life has a meaning in the context of the Christian worldview – science, reason, emotion, our relationships... We have an origin, and a destiny, which brings meaning to the present.

So why don't people become Christians when they hear such good news? Joe suggests that in his experience, it's not always the rational side that we reject, but the moral side, too: we're not prepared to change our ways, to come nearer to God.

However, those who truly search for freedom will find it in Christ – if we come with the heart and attitude of a child to the King of Kings.

Questions:

- How has the issue of suffering affected the way you believe?
- What would you say to someone who suffered a personal tragedy, if they said, 'How could God let this happen to me?'
- Do Joe's answers satisfy you? Are you prepared, like him, to admit that sometimes, we just don't know? How does this affect our 'faith', and is there ever room for doubt?



GLOSSARY

Session 1 – The Bible

Apologist: A person who argues in defence of the Christian faith.

Authenticity: The quality of being credible, trustworthy, or genuine.

Authority: A person or organisation with recognised knowledge or expertise.

Autonomy: The condition of being independent; being a self-law.

Finite: Having bounds, limited, impermanent.

Naturalism: A worldview which suggests that the universe is random, chaotic and accidental.

New Testament: The books of the Bible describing the events of the life of Christ and later.

Old Testament: The books of the Bible describing events that occurred before the birth of Christ; corresponding to the Hebrew Scriptures.

Pantheism: A worldview which claims that all reality is 'one.'

Particular: Specific, individual aspect of reality.

Preconditions of Intelligability: The essential assumptions required to make sense of human experience.

Presupposition: A foundational belief about reality, which governs one's understanding of human experience.

Reason: The use of logical, rational, and analytical thought.

Science: The experimental investigation, and theoretical explanation of phenomena.

Theism: The Christian version of which claims that God exists as a trinity, and that we are made in his image.

Transcendent: Being distinct from, above and independent.

Universal: General, encompassing all reality.

Worldview: The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world.

Session 2 – Jesus

Metanarrative: A consistent and overarching story within which all other stories fit.

Monadic Worldview: The world at its heart has just one inseparable entity.

Ontological Contradiction: A contradiction of the intrinsic nature of an object/person's being.

Pharisee: A member of an ancient Jewish sect noted for strict obedience to Jewish traditions.

Sadducee: A member of a priestly Jewish sect, accepting only Mosaic Law.

Session 3 – Other Faiths

Unequivocal: That which is clear and unambiguous; in no doubt or misunderstanding.

Session 4 – Science

Biota: Plant and animal life of a particular region.

Cosmologist: A person who studies the history, structure, and constituent dynamics of the universe.

Empiricism: The view that experience, especially of the senses, is the only source of knowledge.

Induction: The process of deriving general principles from particular facts or instances.

Irreducibly Complex: The nature of a biological system whose constituent parts could not function separately, and thus which could not have evolved.



J. John

J. John is a motivational speaker. His appeal transcends gender, age, culture and occupation. He helps people to see the spiritual dimension of life and he enables people to find a purpose to their everyday life.

www.philotrust.com



Joe Boot

Joe Boot is the executive director of Ravi Zacharias International Ministry, in Toronto, Canada. He is an apologist who specialises in communicating to seekers, sceptics and those who shape ideas within our culture.

www.rzim.org

The Uniformity of Nature: A condition in which nature is regular and unvarying; the future will be like the past.

Session 5 – Suffering

Cosmos: The entire universe, seen as an ordered whole.

Incarnation: The union of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ.

Maya: (Hinduism) – The concept that all we perceive is an illusion, including suffering.

Nirvana: (Hinduism and Buddhism) – A state of supreme liberation and bliss, transcending the reincarnation cycle.

RECOMMENDED READING

Greg Bahnsen, *Always Ready: Directions for defending the faith* (Covenant Media Press, 2002)

Joe Boot, *A Time to Search/Searching For Truth* (Kingsway and Crossway Books, 2002)

Joe Boot, *Why I Still Believe* (Sovereign World International Books and Baker Books, 2005)

F F Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are they reliable?* (Eerdmans and IVP, 1998)

J. John, *The Life – A Portrait of Jesus* (Authentic Media)

J. John, *Walking with God* (Authentic Media)

J. John, *Ten – Living the Ten Commandments in the 21st Century* (Kingsway)

C.S Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (Harper Collins)

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Harper Collins)

Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Thomas Nelson, 1999)

Thomas V Morris, *Making Sense of it all* (Eerdmans, 2002)

Rousas J Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science* (Ross House Books, 2001)

Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ* (Zondervan, 1998)

Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics* (P&R Publishing, 2003)

Kurt P Wise, Faith, *Form and Time* (Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2002)

Ravi Zacharias, *Can Man Live Without God?* (Word Publishing, 1994)

Ravi Zacharias, *Jesus Among other Gods* (Word, 2000)

DOES CHRISTIANITY REALLY ADD UP?

Does Christianity add up? What is truth? Can we trust the Bible? Who is Jesus, anyway? Doesn't science disprove Christianity? And how can a good God allow so much suffering?

We all have questions. We wouldn't be human without them. But how do we set about answering them – instead of sweeping them under the carpet? And how can we help others to explore the Christian faith in a way that makes sense?

In a series of five intriguing and compelling taxi rides around London, the internationally acclaimed evangelist J. John talks to his friend and colleague Joe Boot, a Christian 'apologist' who has spent over a decade answering life's toughest questions

***With No Apology* is ideal to watch in groups or on your own. It will raise tough issues, confront nagging questions, and provide the tools with which you can set about developing your own responses.**

Our easy-to-use booklet offers a helpful summary of each of the 5 sessions – plus questions for further discussion, a comprehensive glossary of definitions and suggestions for further reading.

Joe and J. John find that the Christian faith has the potency, relevance, wisdom and power to face life head on – and transform it in the process. This is one cab ride we're sure you won't forget in a hurry. Fasten your seatbelts!

**JOE BOOT is the executive director of Ravi Zacharias International Ministry, in Toronto, Canada which seeks to reach and challenge those who shape the ideas of a culture with the credibility and the beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
www.rzim.org**

J. JOHN is a motivational speaker. His appeal transcends gender, age, culture and occupation. He helps people to see the spiritual dimension of life and he enables people to find a purpose to their everyday life.

Copyright 2005 Philo Trust

The Philo Trust, 141 High Street, Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 1AR, UK
Tel: 01923 772288 Web: www.philotrust.com

The right of J. John and Joe Boot to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. First published in 2005.