

Reason to Believe

Answering Secularists

By Brother Jed Smock

Transcript of Bro. Jed's address of the Secular
Student Alliance meeting at Texas A&M University
on February 8, 2018

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Preface

In over four and a half decades of open-air ministry to college students, Brother Jed has been asked to speak at more secular student groups than Christian.

My husband has a unique apologetics approach. He presents a reasoned defense of the Christian faith and at the same time appeals to the listener's conscience.

As you will read, his presentation combines the knowledge of a Bible scholar with Holy Ghost conviction.

I expected to meet some in Heaven who listened to Brother Jed present the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to a standing room only group at the Secular Student Alliance of Texas A&M on February 8, 2018.

Cindy Smock

Brother Jed's wife of 35 years

Spectacular!!! Amy Hanson

This is the best class they have sat in their entire university career, Bro. Mitch Metzger, Missionary to Philippines.

Brother Jed is one of the "great minds" of our day...Preach it Brother Jed, David Alcocer.

He's got them right in the pressure cooker of conviction, Kyle Volkmer.

These kids are riveted, as am I, Gene Connors.

Tremendous presentation, Don Herndon



(The above comments are from those who viewed the lecture via Facebook live.)

Brother Jed Smock

Reason To Believe

Thank you very much for your invitation to speak of what it means to be a Christian. Well, to me, to be a Christian means to follow Jesus Christ and be conformed to the character of Christ.

I believe in the Apostles' Creed, maybe some of you, if you grew up in church, remember the Apostles' Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son,
our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the
Father,
and he will come to judge the living and
the dead.**

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**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic (universal) Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

That's basically, in a nutshell, what you have to believe in order to be a Christian. Now, acknowledging these things to be true, and actually living like a Christian, can be two different things. To believe in Jesus, is to live for Jesus, i.e. be live, believe, follow him.

Jesus said, *Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men* (Matt. 4:19).

So that's why I am at Texas A&M this week, to fish for men, find men that are willing to forsake all and follow Jesus Christ.

I've not always been a Christian, I was raised in the Church and I was baptized and confirmed in a Methodist Church when I was thirteen years old, but it was just a rite of passage. I did it to please my parents and go along with the church program.

When I went to college, I stopped going to church, I graduated with honors, got involved in the drug, radical, revolutionary movements of the sixties.

As the saying went, in those days, I turned on, tuned in and dropped out, turned on to drugs, tuned into the hippie scene and eventually dropped out. I was going to go to India, to study under a Hindu, a guru, and become a Hindu.

Along the way I stopped in Morocco, North Africa and here along the Atlantic seacoast I found a hippie camp, where a couple hundred American dropouts were living. And I thought, *Hey, man, this is it! This is where I can really do my own thing. Be natural.* I became so natural, that I would worship nature. I would go down to the beach and get in lotus position and I would chant: oooommm oooommmmm. People told me this would bring me peace of mind, and enlighten me, and make me more sensitive and aware.

In these eastern religions, when they meditate, what they're trying to do is to transcend the mind; to lose our sense of self-

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consciousness, your sense of self-awareness, in the universal consciousness.

It is quite the opposite in Christianity. Christianity teaches that you're to love God with your mind. You're to love God, with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind and all your strength. But to do that, it requires study. Faith is not believing the unbelievable, faith is believing the believable. Faith is giving your mind to the truth. Obeying the truth. Acting on the truth.

On Christmas day, of 1971, I was down on the beach, we were having a big party, with lots of wine, and dope, burning of incense, lewd dancing, lewd women, and, who's that coming down the beach? It appears to be an Arab and he's carrying a cross, an old rugged cross. And he marched into the midst of our hippie band and began to preach in the name of Jesus.

Now many of them, mocked and laughed and so on, but I got to thinking, despite all my education, I'd never read the Bible. I had a master's degree in History, and there's no greater history book than the Bible, I'd never read it. As an undergraduate, I'd minored in English, no book had had a

greater impact on English literature than the Bible, I'd never read it. I'd been to law school, what's a greater law book than the Torah?

The Torah is the first five books of the Bible. The Law of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. I thought, my education is really incomplete without reading this great book, the Bible. So, there on the beaches of Africa, I began to read the New Testament. I did not have to read very far to determine, if this book is true, I'm in trouble. If this book is true, I'm headed for hell! That put the fear of God in me.

Solomon, who's reputed to be the wisest man of the ancient world, wrote in the book of Proverbs, *The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom*' (Pro. 1:7) and *to depart from evil is knowledge, is understanding* (Job 28:28).

It is interesting to note that Solomon did not say, *The love of God is the beginning of wisdom*, but the fear of God.

Even Jesus preached the fear of God.

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Jesus said in Luke chapter twelve, *Fear not Him who kills the body and after that has nothing more that he can do, but I will warn you whom you shall fear, Fear him who, after he kills the body, has power to cast into hell, yea, I say unto you, Fear God.* I began to consider, well, maybe there is a hell.

I was still going down to the beach every evening at sunset and meditating, but I was no longer meditating on a nonsense syllable like, oommm, I was meditating on what I'd read in the Bible. *In the beginning, God created the heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1a). In the beginning was the word and the word was God, the same was in the beginning with God and all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made (John 1: 1-2).*

One evening, as the sun was setting in the Atlantic Ocean, I looked beyond the sun and I saw the hand of God. Now, I'm speaking figuratively, I did not see a gigantic hand in the sky, but I saw God's handiwork. I saw how the sun rises and the sun sets at predicable times, showing order in the universe.

Where there's order and design, there must be an Orderer, there must be a Designer. I saw the tides coming in, the tides going out at predicable times, again, revealing design and design requires a designer.

The other day when I was out in front of the Academic Building, a student said to me, *Well, I'm an agnostic. An agnostic says, You can't really know whether God exists or not.*

I pointed to this statue of President Ross (*Lawrence Sullivan "Sul" Ross, September 27, 1838 – January 3, 1898, past president of Texas A&M University, who is credited with saving the school from closure, and whose tenure saw a large expansion in college facilities and the birth of many school traditions*).

I said, *That's a good likeness of President Ross, I understand. Now, did that statue, have a sculptor?*

Yes, of course, she answered, it's obvious, a statue must have a sculptor. It just didn't get there as a result of a combination of time, chance and matter.

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I pointed to the statue, and I said, *Now Mr. Ross' eyes do not see, his ears do not hear, his mouth does not speak, his legs do not move, his hand has been outstretched, I don't know how many decades, that that statue has been there.*

I said, *'I look at you. Your eyes see, your mouth speaks, your ears hear, your legs move. If that statue needed a creator, a designer, how much more do you?'*

So, there in Morocco, I became convinced, there is a god, but, who is this God? Is it the Jehovah of the Hebrew scriptures? Is it Jesus of the New Testament? Is it Allah, of the Koran? Or could there possibly be many gods or what?

I was planning on going on to India, to study under the guru, but I changed my mind. I decided, *I'll go back to my home in Indiana, and seriously investigate Christianity.* I started going to church everywhere. Wherever there was a church service I would go, and really listen, for a change. I discovered that most of these ministers could give a reason for what they believed. That impressed me. They answered; they had an answer for the great questions of life.

What are the great questions of life? ***What is the origin of life?*** How did it all start? The Bible says, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

You say, *Well, where did God come from?* In order to answer that question, we need to consider what we mean by God, from a Christian perspective.

God is the creator, ruler and sustainer of the universe. He is the first cause. He is the causeless cause. Only effects need causes. The law of cause and effect states that the effect cannot be greater than the cause. God is not an effect. Events need causes, God is not an event, he is the Causeless Cause. He has always been, He always will be.

What comes before God, well, that's like asking what whole number comes before one. Well, nothing comes before one, we have zero, representing nothing. God's number one, *In the beginning God.*

The second great question we're all faced with is, ***What is the meaning of life?*** Any philosophy, any religion, has to give an intelligent, believable answer to that

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question. Now, we all know, life has meaning.

There was a girl out there on campus today who said, *life has no meaning*, and I said, *Well, have you ever asked anybody, what do you mean? Have you ever asked anybody, what is your purpose?*

We all ask that. That's affirming, that we know intuitively, that life has meaning. Amongst the first words children will usually ask is, *why*.

You'll have little nephews or nieces, maybe two or three years old, who will ask, *Why Daddy, Why? Why, Auntie? Why, Uncle?* We're older; they expect us to have some answers.

If you've been around children, you know they can ask some pretty difficult questions at two or three years old. My granddaughter asked me, *why not*. Well, I thought, *That's pretty profound asking that*. I was really proud of her for asking that question. *Why?*

I asked this girl, *Have you ever had a relative that has died?* I think she said, yes, her grandmother, and she was sad.

Well, if life has no meaning, why be sad when grandpa dies, when grandma dies? You know, their life had meaning, their life had purpose. What's it all about?

There was a popular song in the seventies, it went sort of like this (Jed singing), *What's it all about, Alfie? Is it just for the moment we live?*

Whenever there's a crisis, a death, we lose a job, a relationship is broken up, you get sick, or hear you've got cancer, or whatever, people wonder, *What's it all about? What's the meaning of it?*

We intuitively know that life must have meaning. According to the Bible the meaning of life is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. That's what we were designed for, to have a loving relationship with God, forever.

Now the third question any religion or philosophy must answer is, ***What's the foundation of morality?*** We all have a sense of morals, do we not? Now we might disagree on what's right and what's wrong, but we all agree that some things are right and some things are wrong. There's not a

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person in this room that hasn't said some time, that's wrong, in the moral sense, or that's good behavior, or said, that's a good person, or you've said someone else is a bad person.

What is the standard you appeal to, to affirm whether or not a person is good or evil? I believe the Bible has a reasonable standard for determining that, and it's expressed in the Ten Commandments, the golden rule, the Sermon on the Mount, *Do unto others as you'd have them do unto you*. That is the law and the prophets, Jesus said. That's basically what the Bible is all about.

So you don't want to have someone cheating you, so you don't cheat, that's fair enough, you don't want anybody lying to you, so don't you lie, you don't want anybody stealing from you, so don't you steal.

We all know our moral obligation. You don't have to read the Bible to know your moral obligation. It's intuitive, it's written on your conscience. Let's face it, most people will, and most people have, I think we all have, lied at times, cheated at times, maybe stolen things at times, and we condemn others, but don't we have this

tendency, we are very acute at seeing sin, wrong-doing and selfishness in others, but we have a tendency to overlook our own selfishness.

We've all said, that's selfish, that's wrong, probably when you were little, your brother or sister wouldn't let you play with their toy, and that's selfish. So we don't want others to be selfish, we know that intuitively. So if you don't want others to be selfish towards you, don't *you* be selfish. It just makes sense.

So we all have a sense of right and wrong. How do we account for that? Where does that *sense* come from?

And I ask you this question just to ponder, this is a rhetorical question, *Which makes more sense, a universe in which the ultimate reality is a moral person or a universe in which moral persons are late and insignificant by-products of impersonal forces?* I say, it makes more sense, the sense of morals requires a supreme moral being, Almighty God and His morality is expressed in the most significant way, through God giving his Son, *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that*

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whosoever believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:18).

The fourth question any religion or just philosophy of life, has to give an intelligent answer to...what do you think it might be? The first was origin, what do you think would be the last question? ***What happens in the end?***

We all know we're going to die, that's for sure. We all agree about that! What happens after death, if anything? What happens after death?

Well, Christianity answers that and says, we have eternal life; we have an eternal relationship with God. Christianity has a believable, coherent answer to that great question.

They say, in your eastern religions, you lose your sense of self-consciousness, your sense of self-awareness in the universal consciousness, up to the point you're re-incarnated, you keep coming back as something, until your enlightened, when you lose your sense of *ego*, your self-consciousness, your sense of self-awareness,

which is the essence of all humanity; when you lose that, you've reached enlightenment.

What kind of religion is that? I have to admit, I like myself. Is there anybody here that doesn't like yourself? You have value. You are a creature made in the image of God. Sir, there is no one like you (*speaking to a student*) who has ever walked the face of this earth, and no one like you, after you're gone, will be exactly like you. You're unique, you have value as a creature made in the image of God.

You have much more value than an animal, because animals are not rational beings, animals are not moral beings, but we are. So many people are living at the animalistic level. Animals are governed by instinct. Now, we have instincts, but we weren't designed to be governed by our instincts.

So we can have this eternal, loving relationship with Christ, and it all starts by Christ building His character, through us. That's what Christianity is; it's being Christ-like, in our character. We're conformed to His character.

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I think that, if you'll study the major world religions, they can't answer these questions, as a Christian has, in a reliable, believable way.

You know, it's the church that has established the most prestigious universities in the world: Oxford, Cambridge, Yale, Harvard, Princeton, to name a few, because we Christians value study, we value being enlightened.

We're here to reason with you, the Bible says in Isaiah, *Come let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they can be as white as snow.*

So I surrendered my life to Jesus in 1972 and God sent me back to the campuses to tell my story. I've been on hundreds of campuses in every state as well as campuses abroad. I've been coming to Texas A&M, virtually annually, since the mid-eighties. Amen!

Questions? Please make sure it's a question, not a lecture.

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Questions

Question #1 - It's clear to me, after listening to you speak; you have quite the way with words. My question is, why, on the plaza (free speech area), do you seem to always focus only on the furious side of Christianity, as opposed to what you told us now?

Answer: Usually, how I'll start, because I quoted the proverb, *the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom*, I start by appealing to people's conscience.

My typical text is taken from first Corinthians 6 verse 9 and 10, *Be not deceived; the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God! Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

That captures the student's attention, because most students are doing one or more of those things, some of them are doing all those things, so they often want to justify themselves, so it opens up the conversation.

Now, if I take a more intellectual approach, I'll reach the type of people that would come to a meeting like this, where there are

thinkers, and it requires some thinking, but most people don't really spend that much time thinking, they're more feelers, and so it's basically the bait, it's the hook.

You'll find, often at the end of the day, when things have settled down, that we are speaking more in this manner, reasoning with people.

The ones who are really interested, and not the ones who are just there to cause trouble, and the ones who have the honest questions, tend to hang around. It's much quieter, usually at the end of the day.

Question #2 – Do you believe the theory of evolution is compatible with Christianity?

Answer: Well, briefly, evolution, of course, teaches that all species have a common ancestor, right? Well, the Bible clearly teaches that all species have a common Creator and only man is created in the image of God. Man is created in the image of God, which means that man, like God, is rational. Man like God has an imagination. Man like God has a conscience.

Man has instincts, but he's not to be governed by his instincts. So, no, I don't see the two as compatible. I believe it's possible that someone could be a Christian and you hold the evolutionary views, but I don't believe that it's really compatible with the full teachings of the Bible or Christ. Remember, Jesus' lineage is traced in the Book of Matthew and Luke, all the way back to Adam, the first man.

Question #3 – The question I have, on the surface it seems simple. What did Jesus' death actually do for me and for you? I know the standard answer is Jesus died for you, but could you go into more detail, you were talking about cause and effect, if Jesus' death is the cause, what is the effect on me spiritually?

Answer: Well, that's a very profound question. I think possibly what you're getting at is, *Why was it necessary for Jesus to die?* Why could not an Almighty God, just on the condition of our admitting that we've been wrong, that we've not lived the way we ought to live, forgive us? We know we've failed to serve God, why can't we just say, *God please forgive me, from now on*

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I'm going to live according to my conscience, live according to the Bible, why can't God just say, you're forgiven?

In order to answer that question, it takes a few minutes to develop. In one of the ancient Greek city states, there was a king by the name of Zaleucus (king of the Locrians). He had the reputation of being a good and wise king. He was concerned about the wave of adultery that had swept across his realm, which was threatening the family. He knew the family was the foundation of a strong society and strong government. He decided that he would have to take extreme measures, so he passed a decree saying, the next person caught in adultery, would be blinded in both eyes.

The severity of that decree stopped the wave of adultery. Alas, a few weeks pass and a couple was found in the very act of adultery. Well, the adulterer turned out to be the King's son, the heir to the throne. Naturally, the king is inclined to forgive him, the son, not enforcing the law. What will happen, if he does not enforce the law? People will lose respect for the law, lose respect for the King. He's passed a law too severe for him

to even enforce. So, the king's inaction in not enforcing the law will promote lawlessness.

How does the king forgive his son and still uphold respect for the law? Whenever the law is enforced, mercy suffers. On the other hand, whenever mercy or pardon is extended to a convicted criminal, then justice suffers. God has to keep justice and mercy in balance. Everyone wonders what the king will do.

A few days pass, he ponders the situation. He calls all the court before him, the nobleman and noblewomen are there, the queen and of course the prince, the son, the one who was caught in adultery. The king asks his son to stand before him. The king takes a pair of tongs and reaches into a hot, burning fire and takes out a hot coal and presses this hot coal in his son's eye and sears out one of his eyes. Then Zaleucus takes that same hot coal, presses it against one of his eyes and he sears out one of his own eyes.

What has he done? He's made an atonement. He's come up with a substitute for the punishment of sin, which can just as

effectively, even more effectively uphold the law, than if he'd blinded his son.... because, now every time they see their one eyed king, they're reminded,... you can't break the law under King Zaleucus, with impunity. There'll be punishment; he takes this law very seriously.

We also learned something new about the character of the king. What a loving king we have, who would make such a sacrifice, not just for his son, but for the good of the people, encouraging them to uphold the law. What a wise king we have, who could come with such a great solution to his dilemma.

The king makes an atonement, by putting out his eye and thus, upholding justice and still extending mercy. I hope you can see the parallel. We've all sinned, the wages of sin is death. We all deserve hell. How does God forgive us, how does God offer us eternal life and forgiveness, and still uphold respect for His law?

The Second person of the Trinity, who never sinned, becomes a man, He never sins and He willingly goes to the cross to atone for our sins; and when we really see what Christ has done for our sins on the cross, it should

have such an impact on us, that we're determined not to sin again. Because of Jesus, and His atoning work, now God (the Father) can justly and righteously offer forgiveness, offer eternal life to anyone who will believe.

***Follow-up question:** Then Jesus' resurrection after the death, what did that mean?

Answer: Well, without the resurrection, it (the atonement) would all be meaningless. We're all going to die, sooner or later, so through his resurrection, he conquered death, he conquered sin, he conquered the Devil, he conquered the grave, and so we have reason to have hope.

A lot of people have false hope. You need some hope to get you through this life. What happens when people lose hope? Well, they get depressed, often they get so depressed that they commit suicide. We have hope, we Christians, no matter how bad things get in this life. We lose our health, we can no longer enjoy what we once enjoyed. We go through a lot of pain, a lot of suffering, but because Jesus rose from the dead, that showed that these things can be conquered.

We have reason for hope. That keeps us going.

Question #4 - You said that human intuition points to a sense of purpose. Given that human intuition is correct, not that it necessarily is, we'll assume that it is (for the sake of the question), why does it necessarily invoke the God of Moses? Why can't our intuition invoke one of the many of thousands of gods of other religions?

Answer: Good question. As I said, we all have a conscience that affirms right from wrong. What's the first wrong any of us have ever done? Lying to Mom. We got our hand in the cookie jar, but we deny it and Mom can see the guilt all over our faces, because we know we ought not to lie. So we have this sense of guilt. It's not natural to sin, sin is unnatural, we've all sinned and so the way I became convinced that it (*what intuition was proving or showing was, that*) the God of the Bible and that the Bible were true....the Bible affirmed what I intuitively knew was wrong. I intuitively knew it was wrong to be selfish, which is the foundation of all sin.

Jesus affirmed that, He said, *“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself daily, and take up his cross and follow me.”*

God’s law is reasonable, we’ve all heard the voice of God. We all have two inner voices of God. One, the voice of conscience and the other, the voice of reason. We often don’t listen to the voice of reason....we don’t listen to conscience.

I was talking, counseling, not long ago, a young girl who was involved in an abusive relationship, she had a black eye!

I said, *Well, you need to leave him!* I was trying to reason with her.

She said, *But, Brother Jed, he loves me!*

I said, *Are you kidding, that’s pure emotion! He doesn’t love you. If he loved you, he wouldn’t be beating up on you!*

That’s reasonable, isn’t it? But, she didn’t listen to the voice of reason. She stayed in the relationship and I suspect we all know people that are involved in an abusive relationship, we tried to reason with them and they wouldn’t listen.

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The Bible affirms what my conscience tells me, what I intuitively know. An intuitive truth is, of course, self-evident truth. It's so evident, that you don't really need a logical argument to back it up.

Our founding fathers in the Declaration of Independence wrote, *we hold these truths to be self-evident...* Now, they were self-evident to the colonists, it wasn't self-evident to the King, King George the third. Even King George the third's subjects thought he was insane...but to sane people, there are self-evident truths.

There are certain things we know intuitively, there are things we know through reason. Most of what any of us know, we know by citing authority. Things like history, you cite the historical texts and so on. We know certain things through experience.

I find the problem most people have with Christianity is that they really haven't studied it. They don't really know the basic fundamental teachings of Christianity, let alone whether they're true or not. It takes a lot of thought to be a Christian! Faith isn't just something you're zapped with! Faith is something you have to learn.

Jesus said, *Know the truth and the truth shall set you free.* You've got to know something; know what Christianity teaches, then you can put it to the test with what you intuitively know, what you through reason know and what you experience in life. How does the Bible compare to, say, the Vedas or the Koran, or other major spiritual books and draw your own conclusions?

Question #5 - *You* keep using the word, sin. I know that is a very Christian term. Can you give more explanation concerning that word?

Answer: Well, yes. Someone said, *I don't believe in sin.*

Well, *Do you believe in wrong doing...that some people do wrong, some people do right?*

With sin, you're doing what is wrong or what is selfish. What does God require?

A lawyer came to Jesus and asked, *What is the greatest commandment of the law?*

Does anybody know how Jesus answered? *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all*

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thy mind and with all thy strength. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Righteousness is loving God supremely and your neighbor equally. Sin would be just the opposite of that.

First John chapter three says, *Sin is a transgression of the law.* The law requires that we love God supremely and our neighbor equally; sin would be loving self supremely. In other words, sin is selfishness. As I demonstrated earlier, we all intuitively know we ought not to be selfish. Start living the way you know you ought to live, start living the way you expect others to live.

Does that help? Sin is a choice; it's not something you inherit. I don't go along with that, it's something you choose.

Question #6 - Is there a level of sin? Is there small wrong-doing and big wrong-doing? Everybody goes to hell.

Answer –Some people say, *All sin is the same.* I don't agree with that. I think we all

know that. I mean, would you rather be lied to or murdered? Well, I believe murder is worse than being lied to.

Now, all sin is the same in one sense; in that any sin will separate you from God. It just took one sin to cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden. Now, technically, of course, there's no such thing as one sin.

For instance, the seventh commandment, *thou shalt not commit adultery*. When you commit adultery, you're coveting another man's wife, you're stealing another man's wife. When you commit adultery, you're bearing false witness.

What was your vow? *I'll forsake all others*. I'll forsake all other women and cleave to this woman; well, you haven't forsaken all others, maybe you did for a while, but you go back, you've broken your vows. These sins are interconnected and they're all rooted in selfishness; and we need to get at the root of the sin.

Some people say, *Well I know I ought not to fornicate, I'm going to give that up*, but they're still abusing themselves or looking at pornography. They may gradually give it up,

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but they need to pull the sin up by its roots and say, *I'm not going to live selfishly anymore! I'm going to live for God, I'm going to live for others.*

With the help of God, we can overcome these temptations.

The Bible says, *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

If we can take that way to escape, some of the time, we can take the way to escape all the time. You don't have to sin.

Question #7 - I'm sure over the years you've had countless conversations with other people that call themselves Christians or evangelicals, but nevertheless, they disagree with you, they don't consider you guys equals in beliefs, where do you find that most Christians stop agreeing with you or don't agree with you on certain things?

Answer –Two things, they don't like my approach (*the confrontational approach to*

evangelism), too aggressive and too militant. My opinion is that the unbelievers on most campuses have put Christians on the defensive. I come and take the offensive and people resent it.

I lived through the civil rights movement. I remember when Rosa Parks sat down at the front of the bus. That wasn't even in the black community, that wasn't acceptable.

The attitude was, *Rosa, things are actually changing, you're bringing Bull Conner's dogs on us; the fire department is turning on, hosing us down! Let's be patient.*

But she thought, I have as much right to be at the front of the bus, and she got aggressive. At one time in this country, Christians drove the bus. But we're kind of in the background today, we've gotten too defensive.

If you like sports, you've got to have-- football, basketball, and all these games-- you have to have a good defense, that's important. But if you never score, you're not going to win anything.

Brother Jed Smock

I believe in taking the offensive, against sin, against unbelief. A lot of Christians have difficulty dealing with that, because they're used to being in the back of the bus. Oh, you can have your religion; just keep it in your little group. Keep it in your church; don't bring it out here in the public square, we don't want to hear it. That's the main thing.

The other thing they disagree with would be: I believe that Christians *can*, and true Christians *are* living a life of victory over sin. I don't believe we have to sin daily, in thought, word and deed. If I were to compromise on those two issues, I could have a very popular following on campuses all over this country. Those would be the two main differences.

Question #8 - You said that you didn't believe that sin was inherited. Does that mean that you don't believe in the idea of original sin? Do you think it is possible for someone to live without ever sinning from birth?

Answer – Of course, Jesus did. (*Questioner interrupts – besides Jesus.*) Remember the Christian doctrine is that Jesus was fully

God and fully man, and He was tempted in all ways like we are, yet He was without sin.

Yes, I believe it's possible, I don't know of anybody, other than Jesus, that has. There is no sin 'gene' that you inherit. Adam was the occasion for us all to sin, his bad example, he was first tempted and he immediately succumbed to sin. He ate of the forbidden fruit. That wasn't some literal apple of course, the forbidden fruit is sin, we're not to sin, and we've all chosen sin, over what we know is our moral obligation.

We've all either failed to do what we know we ought to do, or done what we know we ought not to do.

Now, then the second Adam comes, that's Jesus. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, notice, the Bible says, in Matthew chapter four, that he (*Jesus*) is driven by the Spirit of God into the wilderness, to be tempted by the Devil. There were three main temptations there and he passed every test, he never sinned. Demonstrating that we can all overcome sin, with the help of God, and where the first Adam failed and sinned, the second Adam succeeded. So, we're to follow the example of the second Adam.

Question #9 - I know that every religion has a set of beliefs, what makes one set of beliefs, in this case Christianity, more valuable than any other set of beliefs?

Answer –Well, that’s what I was addressing in my lecture, really, that I believe that Christianity is a more intelligent, reasonable, believable, coherent answer to the great questions of life, than these other religions are. So that’s my answer, but a lot of people don’t know the difference between the various religions.

A lot of people say, *Well, we’re all trying to get to the same place. We’re all worshipping the same god!* Well, in your Eastern religions, Hindu, Buddhism, they don’t have a concept of heaven. The Jews, the Moslems and Christians, do have a similar, at least concept of heaven. Jews, Christians and Moslems are monotheistic, they believe in one God.

Who is this God? We Christians say, *God is a trinity. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.* Now, what does Islam teach about Jesus? Well, they say He was a prophet, but merely a prophet. We believe He was a prophet, but more than a prophet,

we believe He's the son of God, we believe he's the Savior of mankind. Whereas the Koran specifically says, *Allah has no sons*. The Koran specifically says, *Say not trinity*.

The Koran says in Sera four that Jesus did not die at all. According to the Hadiths, Allah substituted someone who looked like Jesus; Hadiths suggest that it was Judas. It was Judas that was being crucified, in fact, and not Jesus.

Well, I'm willing to admit that if the Moslems are right, I'm wrong, if the Koran is true, the Bible is wrong. On the other hand, if the Bible's true, the Koran is wrong. Jesus claimed to be the only way to God, if that's true, all other religions are wrong. That's one of the main points, that you're going to have to decide of course, but that's one of the main points I want to get across when I am on campus, because there's so much of, *we're worshipping the same God*. It's not so!

Question #10 - Did you say that you believe it's possible to live a life free of sin, but you don't know anybody who's done it, other than Jesus?

Brother Jed Smock

Answer – As far as I know, no. The Catholics say Mary has, Protestants say she also sinned, I don't know, but she lived a pretty pure life, we know that. Sin is a choice, we don't have to do it.

Follow-up – So you do believe that someone could just make the choice not to sin for their whole life?

Answer – Yes.

Follow-up – What about, I mean, in Romans 3:23, it says, *for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*, what does that mean to you as a Christian then?

Answer – Well, I think all have sinned, nothing caused them to sin. They chose to. So sin is a choice--a selfish choice. All except Jesus, as far as I know, have chosen to sin.

You ask why? Is it inevitable? Well, people ask me, why do people sin? You're asking me to give a reasonable explanation, for what is an unreasonable act. I postulate that all sin is unreasonable. We ought to obey God.

God gives us His law to promote the highest good of all. God's law is like that solid yellow line you see on a highway. The transportation department puts it there, where you can see that on a hill or a curve, because you can't see around the curve or over the hill, that they put it there for everyone's safety, to make it helpful to get to our destination.

If you make it a practice to pass on a hill or a curve, you might get away with it a few times, but sooner or later you're going to have a head-on collision with death.

So God's law is that solid yellow line, don't cross over, it's for your good, it's for the good of all. Sin is, not only is selfishness, it is self-destructive behavior, it's socially destructive and worst of all, the worst thing about sin is, it grieves God. It was our sin that brought all of Jesus' sufferings on the cross. He suffered for us. As I said, when we see and understand that, we'll be determined to give up our sin, to surrender, I was wrong.

See, repentance is when we say, *God, you were right all along, I was wrong all along!* That takes some humility, doesn't it? No one likes to admit, I still don't like to admit I'm

wrong, but sometimes, I am. You've got to admit it and people are often too prideful to do that.

Question #11 - I have a two part question: you say we are supposed to get the basis of our morality from the Bible. Where do the multiple authors of the Bible get their morality from and what would be the difference between that and that I wrote my own version of the Bible and every other version of the Bible that's existed was ruined and a thousand years from now people read my version, based on the morality I had at that time?

Answer – I really did not say that we get our sense of right and wrong or morality from the Bible. Right and wrong has always been. God did not determine right and wrong.

God did not one day say, it's right to be truthful and wrong to lie. It's right to be unselfish and wrong to be selfish. It's always been that way. We know our moral obligation and we refuse to do it. I'm convinced man's problem with God is not really an intellectual problem. It's a moral problem. They refuse to believe, because believing requires you to forsake your sins

and live a life of self-denial, instead of a life of self-indulgence.

What is the main symbol of Christianity? A dying man on a Cross. The cross symbolizes, death, suffering, rejection, shame, and that's not attractive to most people. If you're going to be a Christian, you've got to be willing to embrace the cross, a life of death to your selfish ambitions, suffering, rejection and shame. Does that answer your question?

Follow-up – So are you saying if we don't get our morality from the Bible and it's sort of just intuitive in our nature, then isn't that open to arbitrary interpretation for each person?

Answer – Well, the Bible of course affirms what is right and wrong, but I think we know that. We have a standard.

Every day I ask this on campus, *If you're going to reject the Biblical standard of morality, what are you going to replace it with?* What do you have that is more just, more ethical, than the Ten Commandments, the golden rule?

Jesus taught, *love your enemy*. Now, if men would universally love their enemy, there'd be no more war. I think we, most of us would prefer peace over war. We prefer prosperity, good health and life, over poverty and death. This is what the Bible, Biblical morality promises us. I think it's the highest standard of morality, love your enemy, it's not easy, it's easy to love those that love you, even the Pharisees, Jesus said, do that. It's easy to be kind to those who are kind to you, to be generous to those, you figure, they'll help you out when you have a need, but the real test of a Christian, can you be kind to that person who's mean to you? Can you be unselfish and generous to the person that is selfish in regards to yourself?

Question #12 – What is your take on purgatory?

Answer – Purgatory, well that's more of a Catholic concept, I don't really hold that as a Protestant. What does the word purgatory come from? Purging. What is the idea? A purging of your sins. I believe in a sense; this life is a purgatory. This life is a test and God wants to, through faith in Christ, purge

us of all of our sin, so that we'll be prepared for heaven, as a tried and proven people.

I don't see purgatory in the sixty-six books of the Bible. Of course, the Catholics use the Apocrypha some and see some evidence for it there.

Question #13 – You mentioned earlier that your aggressive, your militant style of preaching was to deal with fear of God as the beginning of wisdom, and while I understand that, you also mentioned that our duty as Christians is to emulate Jesus Christ, and there seems to be a stark contrast between what you preach, and the way Jesus preached. And while I would say that everyone in the room would agree that the pressure that Jesus was facing was immensely greater than yours, so how do you justify that difference then?

Answer – I don't think there is a difference. What was Jesus' first public message? Not, smile, I love you and I have a wonderful plan for your life.

Mark chapter one, *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

Brother Jed Smock

People object to my name calling. Well, Jesus called people vipers, hypocrites, white-walled tombs. He drove the money-changers out of the temple with a whip.

I suppose someone would come up and say, *Oh, that's not too loving, Jesus, be more gentle.* Now, there is a time for gentleness, at times Jesus was, at times I'm very gentle. It's the situation.

I've raised five children, I prefer when they're misbehaving to talk quietly to them, softly to them. I discovered with my daughters, when I talked quietly and softly, they really didn't take me seriously until I raised my voice. *Hey, we'd better shape up, Dad's getting mad.* That would usually work. If that didn't work... (slaps hands together), that would be the next step, a spanking, or the loss of some sort of privilege and that would work.

I don't believe my approach is different from his, if we really look and understand his ministry. If anybody wants to talk about love, have you read the book of Acts? Do you know how many times the word love is mentioned in it? Not once! Not one time. Many Apostolic messages in the book of

Acts, not once do they talk about the love of God. They mention the fear of God on numerous occasions, because they understood what Solomon taught, *The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.*

Now, don't get me wrong, these were men motivated by love, we have to be motivated by love. I believe there isn't anybody that has shown more love to college students than I have. Five hours a day, five days a week, on some campus, somewhere, putting up with all that I have to put up with out there, and I keep coming back.

Other Titles by Bro. Jed Smock

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"Brother Jed has become an American legend."--The Mustang Daily, California State Polytechnic University



Bro. Jed has preached the gospel of Jesus Christ on college campuses for over four and a half decades. He has preached on hundreds of universities in a 50 states and abroad.

He may be the only preacher that is better known among sinners than saints. Five days a week, five hours a day, he can be found at an open-air rostrum confronting college students with the truths of God and calling them to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

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