

# SKEPTIC

**SERIES**

*summer 2019*

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*“Suppose a number of persons were to take it into their heads that they had to defend a lion, full-grown king of beasts! There he is in the cage, and here come all the soldiers of the army to fight for him. Well, I should suggest to them, if they would not object, and feel that it was humbling to them, that they should kindly*

***stand back, and open the door, and let the lion out!***

*I believe that would be the best way of defending him, for he would take care of himself; and*

***the best ‘apology’ for the Gospel is to let the Gospel out.”***

Charles Spurgeon, 1886

***apol·o·get·ics \ ə-ˌpā-lə-ˈje-tiks \ n:***

*a branch of theology devoted to the defense of the divine origin and authority of Christianity*

# WELCOME!

Welcome to Houston's First Baptist Church! Whether you've been a follower of Jesus for decades or you consider yourself to be an agnostic or atheist—or simply a skeptic—I'm glad you are here for the Skeptic message series.

Our vision for this emphasis on apologetics is twofold: (1) to equip Christians to answer questions people might ask them about their beliefs, and (2) to address doubts that non-believers (or even believers) might have about God, Jesus, the Bible, and the Christian faith. Yes, even followers of Jesus may struggle with questions or doubts at times. In His immeasurable grace, God allows for that and even deepens our faith as we wrestle with finding the answers and clarification that we seek.

As you know, Houston is blessed to be the home of Houston Baptist University. I attended seminary at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's extension center there in the '90s, and I've served on HBU's Board of Trustees since 2011. I'll have the privilege of becoming Chairman of the Board beginning this November.

In my years of involvement with HBU, I've come to know several of their gifted faculty and staff members. Each of our speakers in the Skeptic series has been associated with HBU, providing a tremendous opportunity for students to learn from godly teachers who are experts in their fields and passionate about God's Word. I am grateful that the Houston's First family and our guests will be able to learn from them, too, as they share their historical knowledge and scriptural insights to address questions so many people have about the Christian faith.

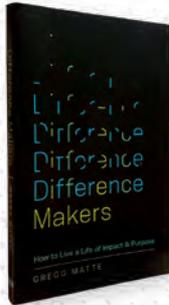
Join me in praying for this series of messages to draw people closer to Jesus—either for the very first time or to strengthen the relationship they already have with Him. For those of us who follow Jesus, may we always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope that we have—and may we do so with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

In Him,



Pastor Gregg Matte

## **Difference Makers** How to Live a Life of Impact & Purpose



The newest book from Pastor Gregg is available now from CornerBooks at Houston's First, Amazon, LifeWay, and other retailers.



### **OUR NEXT MESSAGE SERIES** **DIFFERENCE MAKERS** JULY 14–AUG 11

In this five-week message series by Pastor Gregg, we'll see how the Bible calls us to live out our faith and make a difference in Jesus' name in our home, our neighborhood, at work, and at church.



## **Jeremiah Johnston** BA, MA, MDiv, PhD President of Christian Thinkers Society

Jeremiah Johnston is known for his unique communication skills and his infectious love for people. Johnston is a New Testament scholar, author, nationally-syndicated radio host, apologist, a contributor for Fox News, and ministers internationally as President of Christian Thinkers Society. Jeremiah's passion is working with local churches and pastors in equipping Christians to give intellectually informed accounts of what they believe.

The Jeremiah Johnston Show is a nationally-syndicated weekly, one-hour, interactive talk show airing live from 11a to noon (Central) on Saturdays on Faith Radio Network stations, online, and through iTunes and other podcast platforms. Johnston answers listeners' most difficult questions, equipping them with solutions to both complicated and everyday challenges.

Johnston has distinguished himself speaking in churches of all denominations, and authored articles in both popular magazines, and scholarly books, journals and media programs. As a theologian, who has the unique ability to connect with people of all

ages, and as a culture expert, he has been interviewed numerous times and contributed articles across a spectrum of national shows, including: Fox News, CBS This Morning, *Vanity Fair*, *Premier Christianity* magazine and Premier Christian Radio, *RELEVANT* magazine, *DECISION* magazine, *The Christian Post*, Moody Radio Network, Salem Radio Network, numerous network affiliate television stations, and is repeatedly quoted in *USA Today* and their associated *Faith and Reason* blog.

As a New Testament scholar, Johnston has published with *Oxford University Press*, E. J. Brill, Bloomsbury T & T Clark, Macmillan, and Mohr Siebeck. He completed his doctoral residency in Oxford in collaboration with Oxford Centre for Missions Studies and received his PhD from Middlesex University (UK). He also earned advanced degrees in theology from Acadia University and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Johnston is married to Audrey, and they are parents to five children—including triplet boys!

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## **Books by Jeremiah Johnston**

*Unanswered: Lasting Truth for Trending Questions*

*Unimaginable: What Our World Would Be Like Without Christianity*

*Jesus and the Jihadis: Confronting the Rage of ISIS: The Theology Driving the Ideology*  
by Craig A. Evans and Jeremiah Johnston

Learn more at [christianthinkers.com](http://christianthinkers.com)





## Lee Strobel

Author of *The Case for Christ*

Atheist-turned-Christian Lee Strobel is the former award-winning legal editor of *The Chicago Tribune* and best-selling author of more than 20 books. His classic, *The Case for Christ*, is a perennial favorite which details his conversion to Christianity. His *The Case for Grace* won the 2016 Non-Fiction Book of the Year from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association.

For the last 25 years, Strobel's life's work has been to share the evidence that supports the truth and claims of Christianity and to equip believers to share their faith with the people they know and love. He earned his Bachelor of Journalism from the University of Missouri and his Master of Studies in Law at Yale Law School. He was a journalist for fourteen years at *The Chicago Tribune* and other newspapers, winning Illinois' highest honor for public service journalism from *United Press International*. He also led a team that won UPI's

top award for investigative reporting in Illinois. Strobel has been a featured guest on national networks including ABC, Fox, Discovery, PBS, and CNN. He was the host of *Faith Under Fire*, a provocative program that brought together some of the brightest Christians and skeptics to debate issues central to the Christian faith. He also appeared in the feature film, *God's Not Dead 2*, as an expert witness for the defense. In 2017 Pure Flix Entertainment released *The Case for Christ*—a major motion picture depicting his journey from atheism to faith. As part of his speaking ministry, Strobel travels across the country (and sometimes the world) sharing his testimony, encouraging believers, and challenging skeptics. He regularly speaks at conferences, commencements, fundraisers, and other major events.

Strobel is married to Leslie and they reside in Texas. They have been married over 40 years and have two children, Alison and Kyle.

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## Books by Lee Strobel

*The Case for Christ*

*The Case for a Creator*

*The Case for the Real Jesus*

*The Case for Faith*

*The Case for Grace*

*The Case for Hope*

*The Case for Miracles*

*The Case for Christianity Answer Book*

Learn more at [leestrobel.com](http://leestrobel.com)





## **Craig A. Evans**

**BA, MA, MDiv, PhD, DHabil**  
**Houston Baptist University**  
**John Bisagno Distinguished Professor**  
**of Christian Origins**

A graduate of Claremont McKenna College, Craig A. Evans received his MDiv from Western Baptist Seminary in Portland, Oregon, and his MA and PhD in Biblical Studies from Claremont Graduate University in southern California. He has also been awarded the decretum habilitationis (DHabil) by the Karoli Gaspar Reformed University in Budapest. A well-known evangelical scholar, Evans is an elected member of the prestigious Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas (SNTS), an international society dedicated to New Testament studies. He also serves as the Director of the Christian Thinkers Society Fellows Program and Strategic Studies.

After teaching one year at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, Evans taught at Trinity Western University in British Columbia for twenty-one years, where he directed the graduate program in Biblical Studies and founded the Dead Sea Scrolls Institute. Evans then taught for 13 years at the Divinity College at Acadia University in Nova Scotia. He was also a Visiting Fellow at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey.

Author and editor of more than 70 books and hundreds of articles and reviews, Evans has given lectures at Cambridge, Oxford, Durham, Yale, and other universities, colleges, seminaries, and museums, such as the Field Museum in Chicago, the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. He is a Fox News Opinion contributor and also regularly lectures and gives talks at popular conferences and retreats on the historical Jesus, Archaeology, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Bible.

Along with countless interviews on radio networks across Canada and the US, Evans has been seen on Dateline NBC, CBC, CTV, Day of Discovery, and many documentaries aired on BBC, The Discovery Channel, History Channel, History Television, and others. He has also served as a consultant for the National Geographic Society and for *The Bible* miniseries, produced by Mark Burnett and Roma Downey.

Evans and his wife Ginny live in Richmond, Texas, and have two grown daughters and a grandson.

## **Books by Craig A. Evans**

*Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies*  
*Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars*  
*Distort the Gospels*

*From Jesus to the Church:*

*The First Christian Generation*

*God Speaks: What He Says. What He Means.*

*Getting Jesus Right: How Muslims get*

*Jesus and Islam Wrong*

by Craig A. Evans and James A. Beverley

*Jesus and His Contemporaries: Comparative Studies*

*Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence*

*Jesus and the Jihadis: Confronting the Rage of ISIS:*

*The Theology Driving the Ideology*

by Craig A. Evans and Jeremiah Johnston

*Jesus and the Remains of His Day: Studies in Jesus*

*and the Evidence of Material Culture*

*Jesus, the Final Days: What Really Happened*

by Craig A. Evans and N.T. Wright





## Philip Nation

BA, MDiv, DMin  
Houston Baptist University  
Assistant Professor of Leadership  
and Biblical Studies

Nation earned a Master of Divinity from Beeson Divinity School and a Doctor of Ministry from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition to his position at Houston Baptist University, he serves as the Director of Global Impact Churches for the Baptist World Alliance.

As a frequent speaker in churches and conferences, Nation has trained pastors across the USA and in places such as Romania, Ukraine, Brazil, Jordan, and Myanmar. Over the years, he has served as a pastor, minister of education, and church planter. In 2010–2012, he was the national spokesperson for the Back to Church Sunday campaign from Outreach.

Nation has written and edited numerous books and articles. His latest published work is the video-based Bible study *Pursuing Holiness: Applications from James*. In 2016, he published *Habits for Our Holiness: How the Spiritual Disciplines Grow Us Up, Draw Us Together,*

and *Send Us Out* with Moody Publishers. He co-authored two other books: *Compelled: Living the Mission of God* and *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow*. Nation was also the general editor of *The Mission of God Study Bible*. He also wrote the small-group studies *Storm Shelter: God's Embrace in The Psalms*, *Compelled: Living the Mission of God and Live in the Word*, plus contributed to *The Great Commission Resurgence: Fulfilling God's Mandate in Our Lifetime*.

Nation works with multiple non-profit ministries to further gospel work in the world. He is on the the Board of Directors for the Florida Baptist Children's Homes and One More Child. He also serve as the chairman for the Board of Directors for More USA, in association with More International.

Nation is married to Angie and they have two adult sons, Andrew and Chris.

## Books by Philip Nation

*Compelled: Living the Mission of God*

by Ed Stetzer and Philip Nation

*Habits for Our Holiness: How the Spiritual Disciplines*

*Grow Us Up, Draw Us Together, and Send Us Out*

*Live In The Word*

*Pursuing Holiness: Applications from James*

*Storm Shelter: God's Embrace in The Psalms*

*The Mission of God Study Bible (editor)*

*Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow*

by Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation

Learn more at [philipnation.net](http://philipnation.net)





# APOLOGETICS RESOURCES

Countless resources are available for you to explore the Christian faith further. In addition to those listed on our Skeptic series speakers' pages, here are some resources recommended by members of the Houston's First staff.

## BOOKS

*On Guard* by William Lane Craig

*The Apologetics of Jesus: A Caring Approach to Dealing with Doubters* by Norman L. Geisler

*I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* by Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek

*Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Skeptical* by Timothy Keller

*The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* by Timothy Keller

*Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions* by Gregory Koukl

*77 FAQs About God and the Bible: Your Toughest Questions Answered* by Josh McDowell

*Evidence That Demands a Verdict: Life-Changing Truth for a Skeptical World* by Josh McDowell

*More Than a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell

*A New Kind of Apologist* by Sean McDowell

*Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion*  
by Rebecca McLaughlin

*Is Christianity for You?: Making Sense of the Christian Faith* by Patrick Morley

*Defending Your Faith: An Introduction to Apologetics* by R.C. Sproul

*Is There a God?* by Richard Swinburne

*The Resurrection of the Son of God (Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. 3)*  
by N.T. Wright

## BIBLES

*CSB Apologetics Study Bible* by Holman

*CSB Apologetics Study Bible for Students* by Holman and Sean McDowell

## VIDEOS

*The Truth Project* by Focus on the Family (available from CornerBooks Library)

*Reasonable Answers for Honest Skeptics* by Evangelism Explosion (available on YouTube)

*Foundations of Apologetics* by Ravi Zacharias (available on RightNow Media)

## PODCASTS

*Reasonable Faith* by William Lane Craig

*Cold-Case Christianity* hosted by J. Warner Wallace

*Let My People Think* by Ravi Zacharias

## POCKET GUIDE

*Reasonable Answers for Honest Skeptics* by Evangelism Explosion  
(available at [EvangelismExplosion.org](http://EvangelismExplosion.org))

# rightnow MEDIA

Houston's First provides FREE access to RightNow Media — the “Netflix of Video Bible Studies” with on-demand content including over 20,000 discipleship videos for kids, youth, and adults. Search “apologetics” to find a variety of resources by contributors such as Ravi Zacharias, Matt Chandler, R.C. Sproul, Sean McDowell, William Lane Craig, and more. The content can be accessed whenever and wherever you want—on your phone, tablet, computer, or at home on your TV.

**There are two ways to set up your free account:**

## ON MOBILE

Text **RIGHTNOWMEDIA** to **41411** for a link

## ONLINE

- Go to **HoustonsFirst.org** and either:
- Search for “**RightNow Media**” or
- Go to **Media > Other Resources** and click on **RightNow Media**

# CornerBooks

CornerBooks not only has books to buy, but books to borrow, too! Located at The Loop Campus, the library is open to our church family from every campus, as well as to the public—all for free. The library's collection is made up of 14,000 titles including books, commentaries, concordances, atlases, dictionaries, Bible study kits, DVDs, and CDs.

**On the library's page on the church's website, you can:**

- Request a library membership
- Search the collection
- Renew items you've already checked out
- Access the STEP Bible for free (Bible study tool)
- Recommend books to add to the collection
- Review the library's Amazon Wish List of titles

To visit their page, go to **HoustonsFirst.org** then search for “**Library**” or go to **Media > Bookstore & Library**.



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