

## **Closing - Session 2 - How Jesus Became God - Ken Kittridge.**

This closing is focused upon a faith journey and ideas from last weeks discussions and videos.

Let us first define some key terms.

Religion - a particular system of belief and worship. a belief in god or gods.

Faith - belief without proof. a system of religion.

I have depicted the faith journey as a domain from belief to agnostic to atheist. This was exemplified last week by 3 speakers: Chris Hedges, Bart Ehrman and Arthur Cockfield.

1. Hedges is a leftist journalist who attended seminary. He wrote a book *Why I Don't Believe in Atheists*. He explained how religion deals with the non-rational and not the irrational. He feels religious systems include metaphor and myth, and is a path to wisdom (beyond mere data). Religion helps us to live.

2. Ehrman, the author of our present study, proclaims himself an agnostic, and emphasizes knowledge over belief. His interest is in the Historical Jesus.

3. Cockfield is a Law professor at Queens. He rejects the extreme atheism the like of Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and the late Chris Hitchens, that consider Christmas heresy. Cockfield considers that CS Lewis, in his "Mere Christianity" makes clear the message of loving the neighbour as oneself, and the importance of charity and self-sacrifice. Cockfield is also impressed by the poet John Locke, who in "Moral Duty" tells us that God created us equal, with the right to rebel against any ruler who would deny such God-given rights.

In closing,

1. I consider that being an atheist doesn't make you good or bad.

2. Faith offers answers to both rational and non-rational issues.

3. If we have a visitor from a distant galaxy, let's hope he doesn't radio back "beam me up Scotty, there are no signs of life here."

Reference. From the Globe and Mail, 23 Dec 2016, "How an atheist celebrates Christmas" - Arthur Cockfield <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/an-atheistcelebrateschristmas/article33413032/>.

"This holiday season I will rejoice in the birth of an iconic figure – not just because of the beauty and joy he brings to my Christian neighbours, but because of the sense of fairness and decency he brings to our world. True believers owe Jesus a profound spiritual debt; we all owe him an intellectual debt. I suspect that's a sentiment Jesus and I could agree on – whether the mythic stories surrounding His birth are true or not."