

# PRAYING THE PSALMS

Bridging Intimacy With God

Study 7

Praying our Doubts Part 1  
Psalm 73



# **PRAYING OUR DOUBTS**

## **PART 1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR DOUBTS**

1. Admission of doubt
2. Reason for doubt
3. Wrestling with our doubt



# **PRAYING OUR DOUBTS**

## **PART 2 DEALING WITH OUR DOUBTS**

### **TIM KELLER**

1. We re-examine the motives behind our doubts
2. We deliberately engage in worship with others ands regain insight
3. We compare footholds
4. We feel for His hand
5. We make God our refuge

# PRAYING OUR DOUBTS

## PART 1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR DOUBTS

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# THE DOUBT

Reveal gaps in our faith

Psalms 73:1-2 (ESV) 1 Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.

2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled,  
my steps had nearly slipped.

A photograph of Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking at a podium. He is wearing glasses and a dark clerical shirt. He is holding a microphone in his right hand and gesturing with his left hand. To his left, another person is partially visible, also holding a microphone. The background is dark and out of focus.

Justin Welby Archbishop of Canterbury

“Is there a God?” and “Where is God?  
God ‘Look this is all very well but isn’t it about  
time you did something – if you’re there’ – which  
is probably not what the Archbishop of  
Canterbury should say.”



A portrait of C.S. Lewis, a middle-aged man with a mustache, wearing a dark suit and a patterned tie. The image is slightly faded and has a vintage feel.

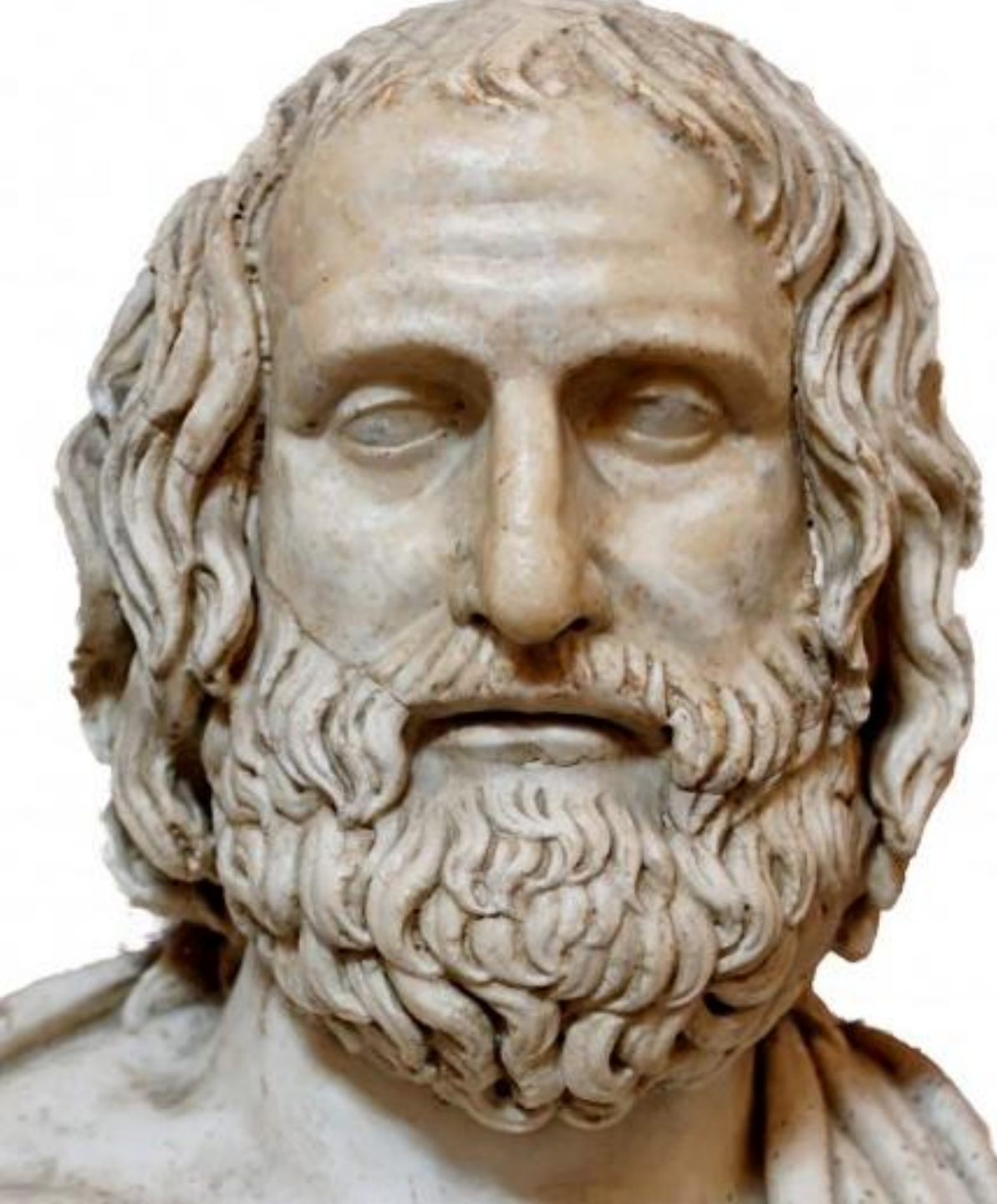
**CS LEWIS**

**Now that I am a Christian I do  
have moods in which the whole  
thing looks very improbable; but  
when I was an atheist I had  
moods in which Christianity  
looked terribly probable.**

# CLASH OF MINDSETS

1 Corinthians 1:21-23 (ESV) . 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,





# EURIPIDES

*“Doth some one say that there  
be gods above? There are  
not; no, there are not. Let no  
fool, led by the old false fable,  
thus deceive you.”*

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# Losing Your Religion: Analytic Thinking Can Undermine Belief

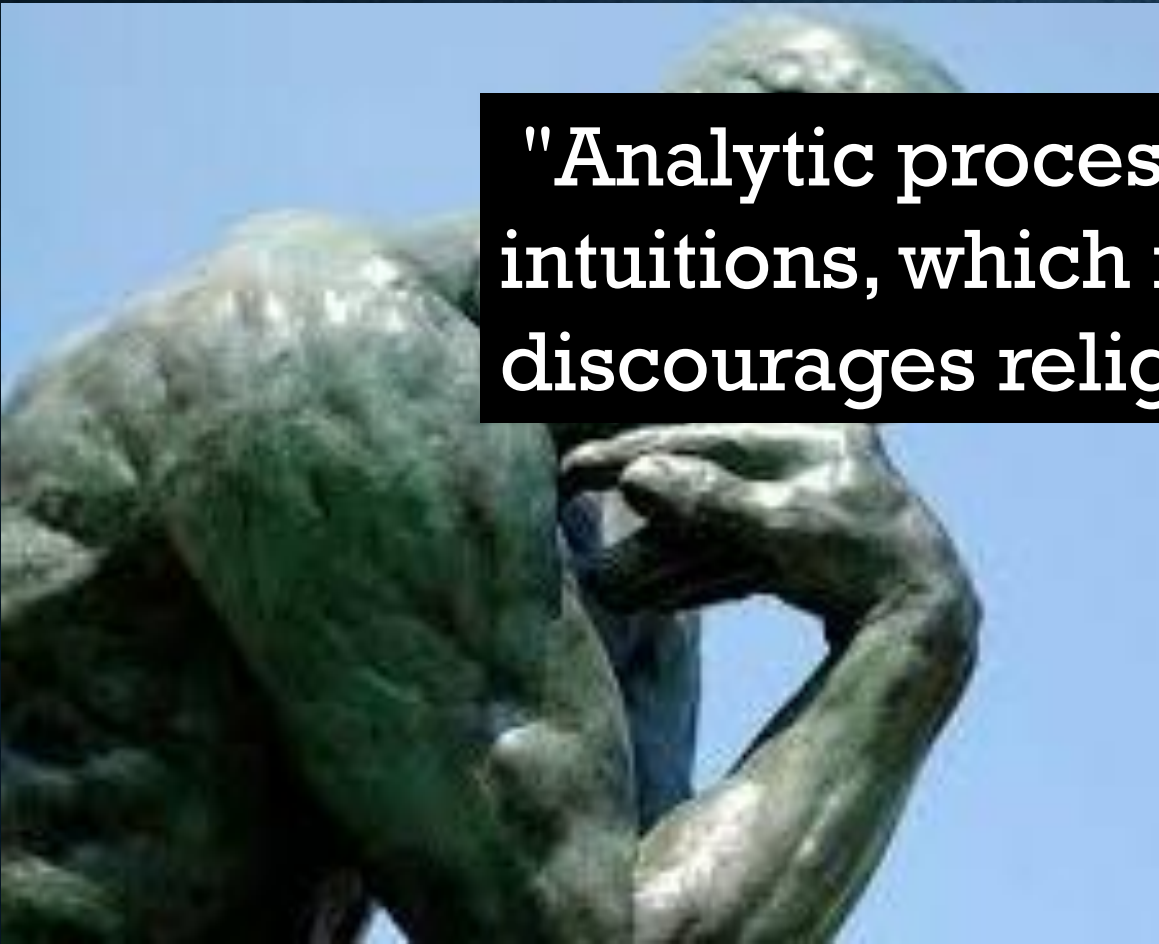
A series of new experiments shows that analytic thinking can override intuitive assumptions, including those that underlie religious belief

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By Marina Krakovsky on April 26, 2012



"Analytic processing inhibits these intuitions, which in turn discourages religious belief,"



Score for belief in  
God was 41.42

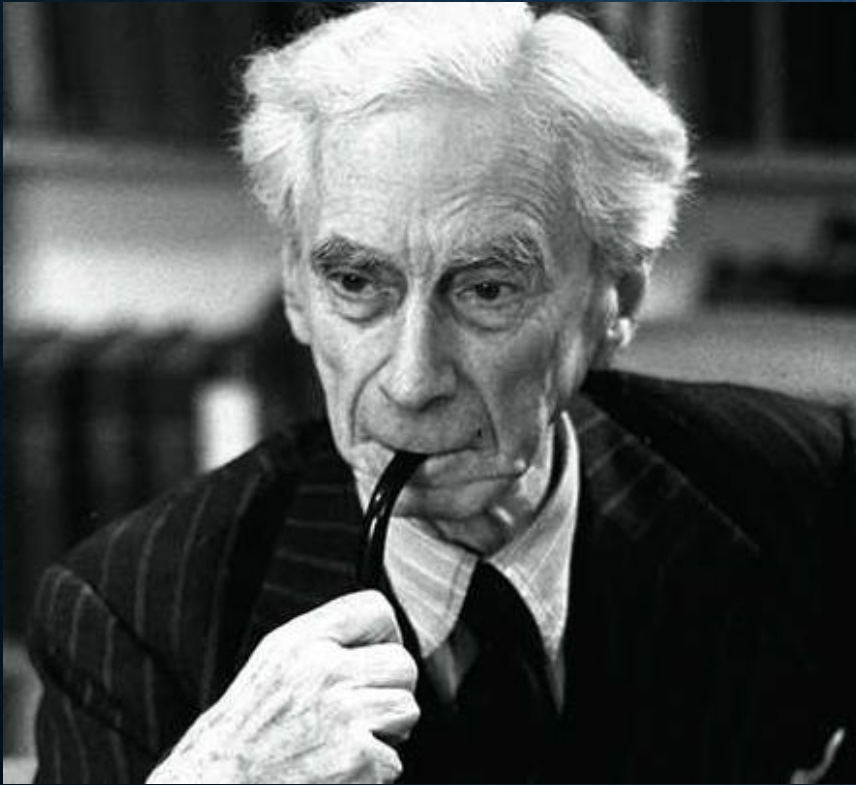


Score for belief in  
God was 61.55

University of British Columbia psychologists Will Gervais and Ara Norenzayan

# BERTRAND RUSSELL

## 1927 LECTURE WHY I AM NOT A CHRISTIAN



- *"Religion is based primarily and mainly upon fear. It is partly the terror of the unknown and partly the wish to feel that you have a kind of elder brother who will stand by you in all your troubles and disputes. Fear is the basis of the whole thing – fear of the mysterious, fear of defeat, fear of death. Fear is the parent of cruelty, and therefore it is no wonder if cruelty and religion have gone hand in hand. It is because fear is at the basis of those two things."*



**IN KEDAH, VIGILANTES TERRORIZE MUSLIM SINNERS**  
**M Chronicle Nov 12 2018**



"It is not primarily a Christian problem,  
but a human problem . . . . The root of  
doubt is not in our faith but in our  
humanness

Os Guinness





## MARTIN LUTHER

*Unless I am convinced  
by Scripture and plain  
reason, my  
conscience is captive  
to the Word of God*

# DOUBT IS NOT UNBELIEF

Rejecting the  
proposition



Accepting the  
proposition



Two minds  
Foot in each boat



# THE PROBLEM WITH SUPPRESSING DOUBT



Lisa Gungor

“God was the center of everything,” she says. “Doubt was the opposition of faith. And so [if you doubt], marriage. God is the reason we got married. So I felt like I was a bad person for questioning. That made this perspective shift and that’s how we fell for each other—songs about God. It was all really difficult and painful. We ended up getting kicked out of the church’ for some of the beliefs that we had.”

## **THE NATURE OF DOUBT**

**But doubt is not the opposite of faith . . . . doubt suggests that there is a lack of faith somewhere, but a person can doubt and still have a perfectly sound trust in God. Doubt is rather a state of uncertainty, a spiritual fork in our road**

**Littleton**



# CONFESSIONS OF AN ATHEIST: WHY I LEFT THE FAITH

MALAYSIAN CHRONICLE

FRIDAY, 07 NOVEMBER 2014 15:08

- For a while, I revelled in my newfound faith. The pastors told me that my father's death was in accordance with God's will and that His ways are higher than ours. It didn't make much sense to me, but death never does, even till this day.
- •At that time, I just pushed aside the illogicality of the church's explanations. The close ties, the sense of belonging, the way everyone seemed so together in their worship gave me a sense of purpose at a time when my world had plunged into chaos. Throughout the years, however, cracks began to appear in my tightly constructed faith.

## **GARY HABERMAS (DEALING WITH DOUBT)**

"Use the time of doubts to explore your faith. [Use it] as a time for growing stronger in your faith and knowing what you believe, and why."



# PRAYING OUR DOUBTS

## PART 1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF WRESTLING

1. Admission of doubt

2. Reason for doubt

3. Wrestling with our doubt

# OUR JOURNEY OF FAITH

Triggering factor



Doubt



Praying -Wrestling



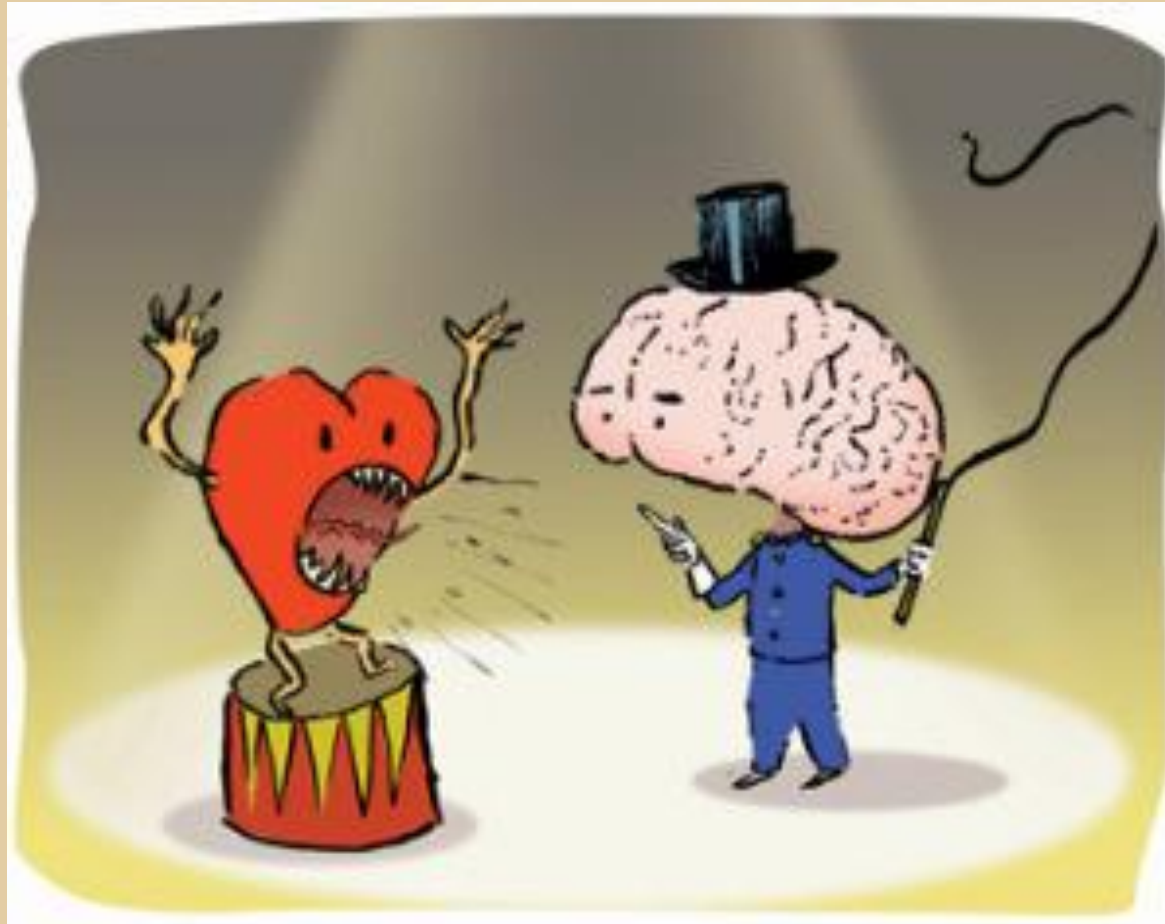
Resolution



What we see does not  
correlate with what we  
know



**Doubt is based on new  
experience not new  
information**





Psalms 73:3-5 (ESV) For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

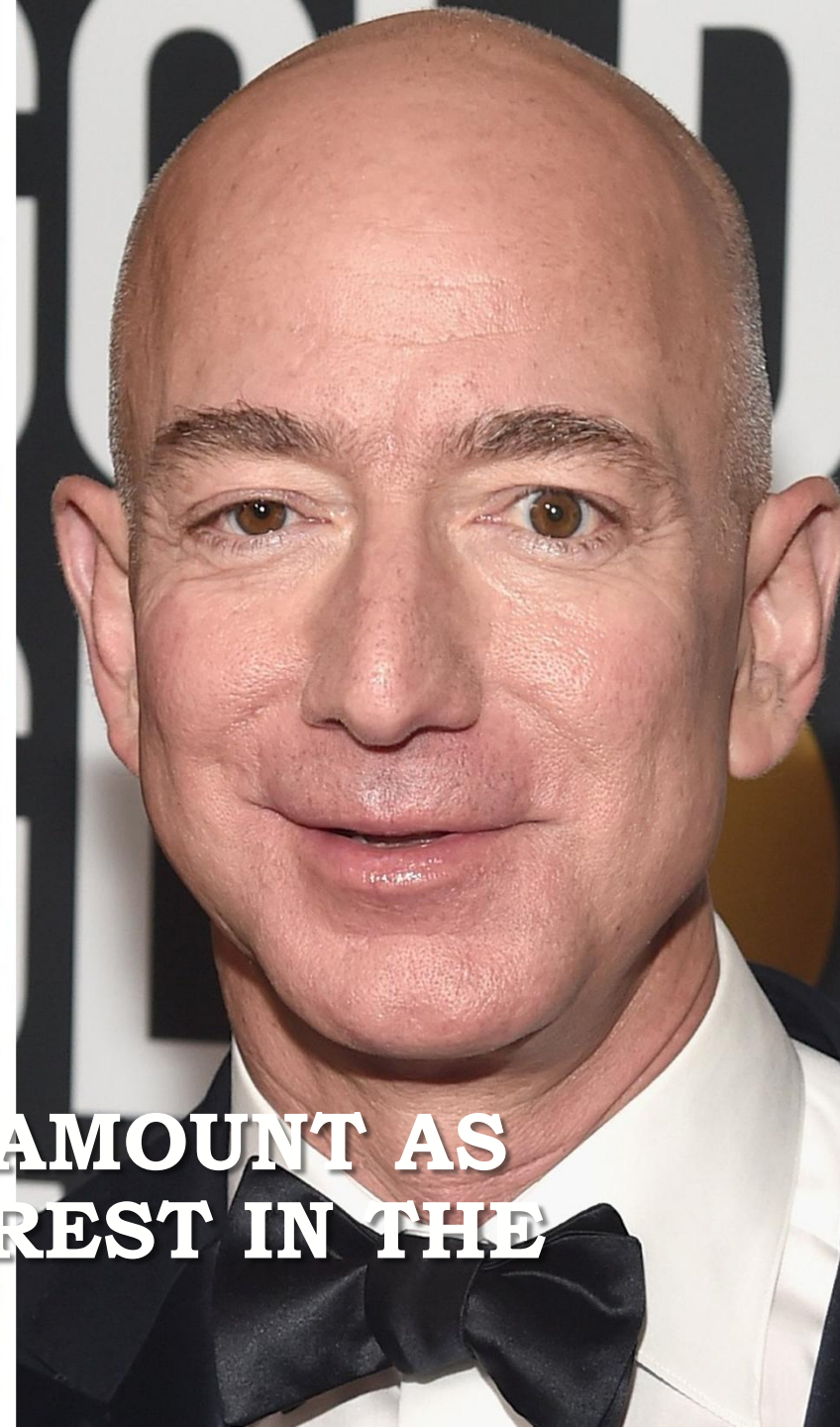
4 For they have no pangs until death;  
their bodies are fat and sleek.

5 They are not in trouble as others are;  
they are not stricken like the rest of  
mankind.





**THEY OWN SAME AMOUNT AS  
HALF OF THE POOREST IN THE  
USA**



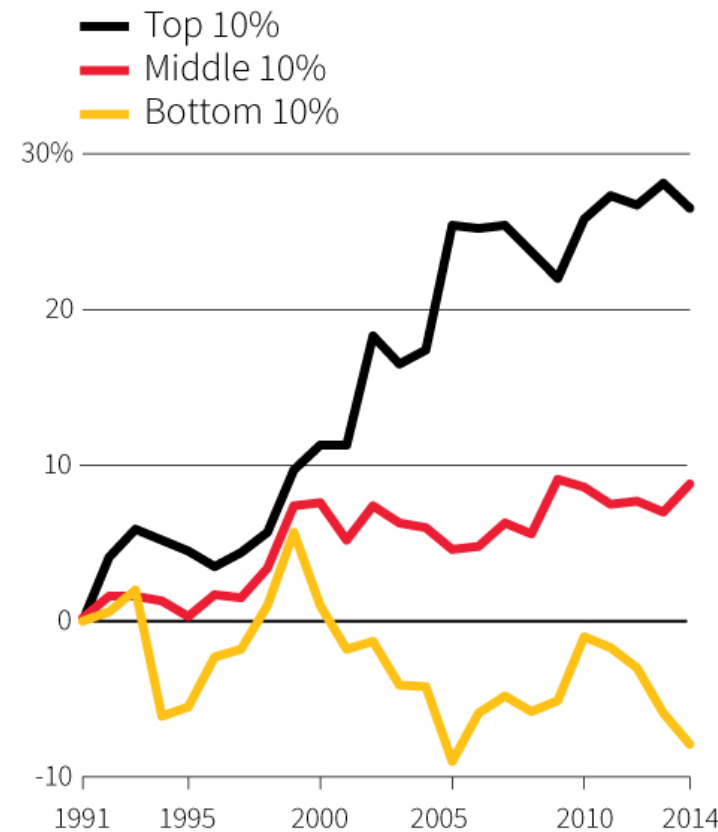


# German income inequality

Keen to seize power from Chancellor Angela Merkel in a Sept. 24 federal election, Merkel's centre-left Social Democrat (SPD) rivals are trying to mobilize an underclass as income inequality and poverty have risen during her 11 years in office.

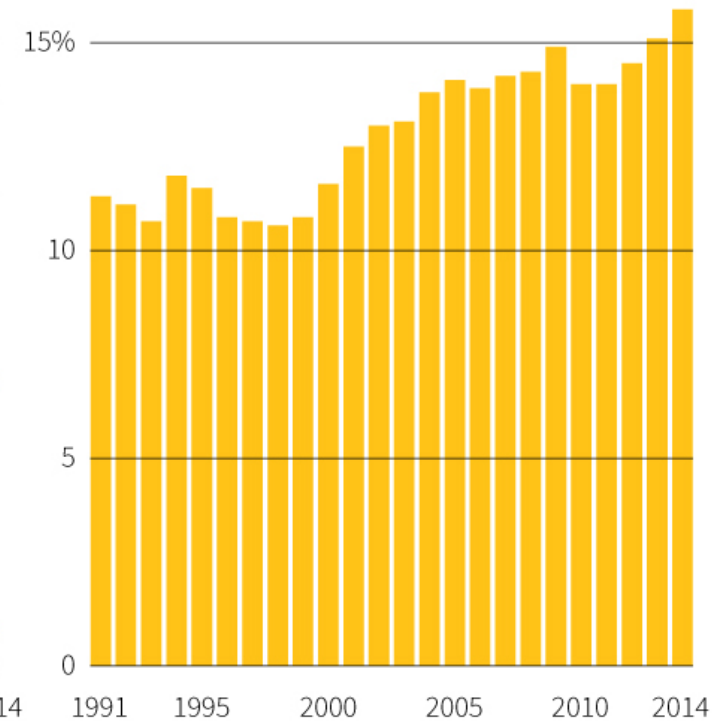
## PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Highest and lowest earners, change since 1991



## RISK OF POVERTY

Percentage of Germans who earn less than 60% of median national income



Sources: German Institute for Economic Research; Federal Statistics Office and Eurostat

C. Hughes, 26/04/2017

# THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN INCOME AND LIFE EXPECTANCY IN THE UNITED STATES, 2001-2014.

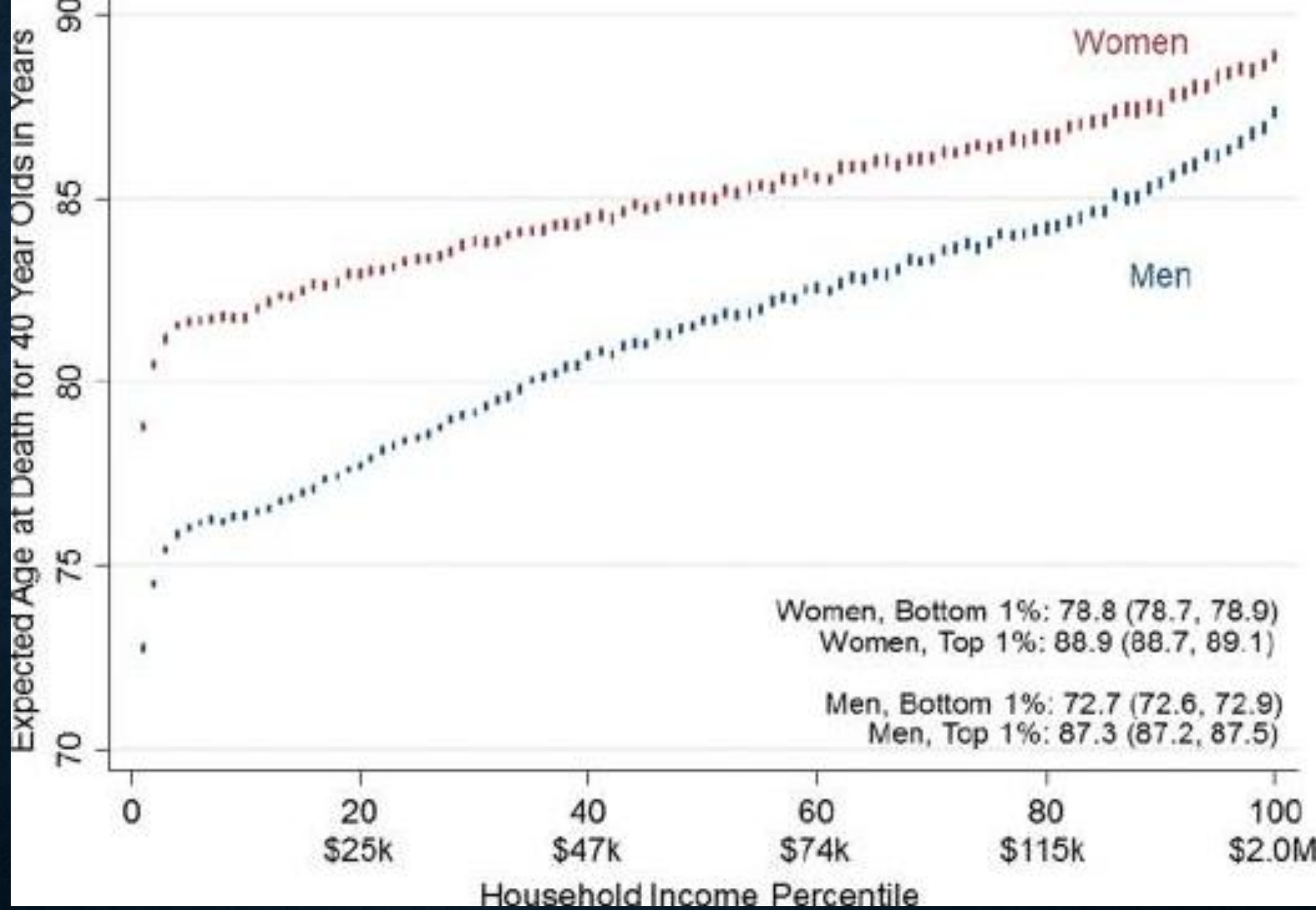
Chetty R<sup>1</sup>, Stepner M<sup>2</sup>, Abraham S<sup>2</sup>, Lin S<sup>3</sup>, Scuderi B<sup>4</sup>, Turner N<sup>5</sup>, Bergeron A<sup>4</sup>, Cutler D<sup>4</sup>.

JAMA 2016 Apr 26;315(16):1750-66. doi: 10.1001/jama.2016.4226.

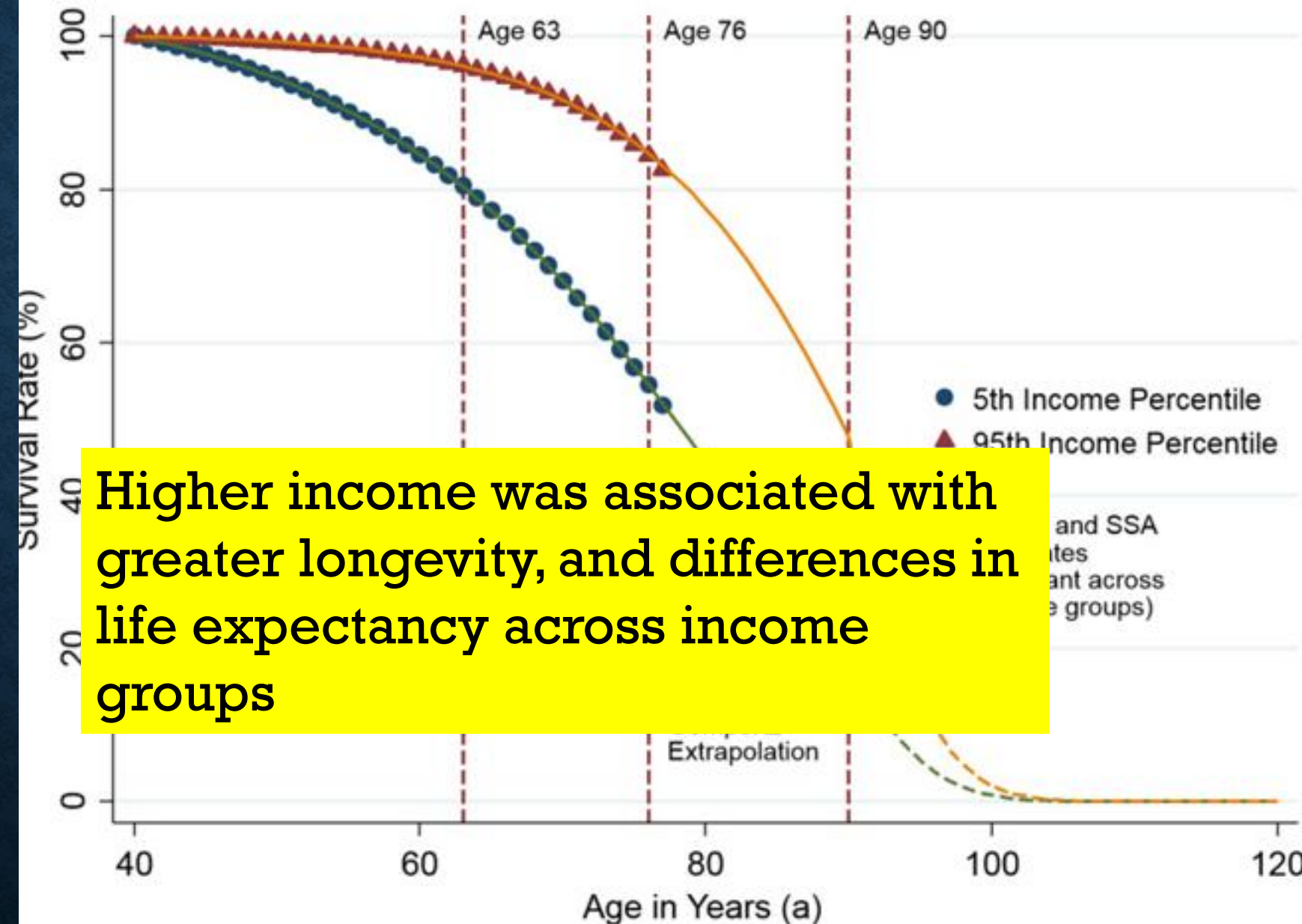


Tax records between 1999 and 2014. Mortality data were obtained from Social Security Administration death records.





## B. Survival Curves



Higher income was associated with greater longevity, and differences in life expectancy across income groups





Psalms 73:6-8 (ESV)

Therefore pride is their necklace; violence covers them as a garment. 7 Their eyes swell out through fatness; their hearts overflow with follies. 8 They scoff and speak with malice; loftily they threaten oppression.

# PRAYING OUR DOUBTS

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# THE MISMATCH OF SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL REALITIES

Psalms 73:1-2 (ESV) 1 Truly God is  
good to Israel,

to those who are pure in heart.

2 But as for me, my feet had almost  
stumbled,

my steps had nearly slipped.

# PEOPLE IGNORE BLASPHEME AGAINST GOD WITH NO CONSEQUENCE

Psalms 73:9-11 (ESV) They set their mouths  
against the heavens,

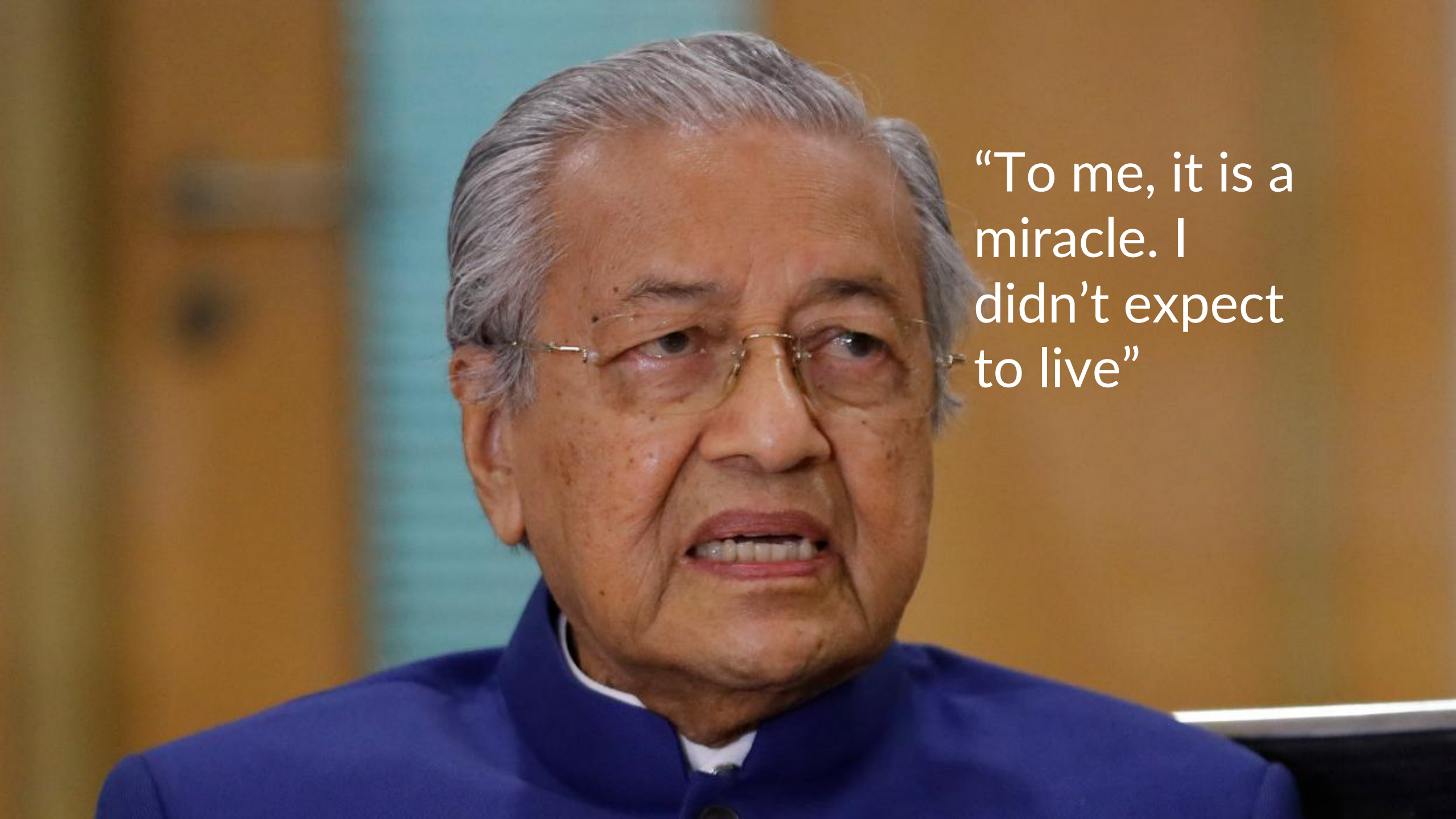
and their tongue struts through the earth.

10 Therefore his people turn back to them,  
and find no fault in them.

11 And they say, “How can God know?

Is there knowledge in the Most High?”



A close-up portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, an elderly man with white hair and glasses, wearing a blue Nehru-style jacket. He is looking slightly to the right with a serious expression. The background is a blurred mix of blue and brown tones.

“To me, it is a  
miracle. I  
didn’t expect  
to live”

A close-up portrait of an elderly man with white hair, wearing gold-rimmed glasses and a light-colored suit jacket over a white shirt. He is looking slightly upwards and to the right. The background is a plain, light gray.

SLASHED  
SENTENCE FOR A  
PATHETIC,  
PLUNDERING  
PREDATOR

Aliran 3/2/24



# DOUBT BECAUSE OF COMPARISON

Psalms 73:12-15 (ESV) Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches.

The wicked are doing so well

*Sacked airman says dismissal proves honesty doesn't  
pay in Malaysia*

*[www.themalaymailonline.com](http://www.themalaymailonline.com)*

**MAJOR ZAIDI  
AHMAD**



*“The honest ones are  
often the ‘criminals’,  
while liars who betray  
are the ones who are  
adulated and given  
various recognitions”*



“I was just doing  
*I was merely*  
the right thing as a  
*exposing the fact*  
citizen and a  
*that the indelible ink*  
serviceman... to be  
*used in the election*  
disciplined and  
*could be washed off.*  
truthful. However,

these qualities  
FMT May 28, 2018  
were hated by the  
4:00 PM  
previous  
government.



# PHILIP YANCEY

## DISAPPOINTMENT WITH GOD

*Three Questions No One Asks Aloud*

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NOW INCLUDES QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

“We tend to think, 'Life should be fair because God is fair.' But God is not life. And if I confuse God with the physical reality of life– by expecting constant good health for example– then I set myself up for crashing disappointment.”



# THE MISMATCH OF SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL REALITIES

Psalms 73:1-2 (ESV) 1 Truly God is  
good to Israel,  
to those who are pure in heart.

2 But as for me, my feet had almost  
stumbled

God is supposed to be on my side  
My steps had nearly slipped

A close-up portrait of an elderly man with dark hair, a mustache, and glasses, wearing a dark suit and white shirt. He is looking slightly to the right with a gentle expression. A red rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of his face, containing white text.

What we see does not  
correlate with what we  
know

13. All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence.

14 For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning.

15 If I had said, "I will speak thus," I would have betrayed the generation of your children.

**PS RAYMOND KOH  
ABDUCTED FOR HIS FAITH**



# PHILIP YANCEY

## DISAPPOINTMENT WITH GOD

*Three Questions No One Asks ALOUD*

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NOW INCLUDES QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

### THE ISSUE

“No matter how we rationalize, God will sometimes seem unfair from the perspective of a person trapped in time. Only at the end of time, after we have attained God’s level of viewing, after every evil has been punished or forgiven, every illness healed, and the entire universe restored—only then will fairness reign



"Finitude includes doubt. . . . It is an expression of the acceptance of his [man's] finitude that he accepts the fact that doubt belongs to his essential being. . . . Doubt is not the opposite of faith; it is an element of faith."

Paul Tillich. Systematic Theology (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press. 1957), 2:73.116



# PHILIP YANCEY

## DISAPPOINTMENT WITH GOD

*Three Questions No One Asks Aloud*

OVER 300,000 SOLD  
NOW INCLUDES QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- “One bold message in the Book of Job is that you can say anything to God. Throw at him your grief, your anger, your doubt, your bitterness, your betrayal, your disappointment—he can absorb them all. As often as not, spiritual giants of the Bible are shown contending with God. They prefer to go away limping, like Jacob, rather than to shut God out



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