

*Christianity on Trial: A Lawyer Examines the Christian Faith*  
Available June 2014

\$16, 240 pages, paperback  
978-0-8308-3667-3

## What is your verdict on Christianity?

*So I ask, does Christianity provide a plausible account of the universe both broadly and in its particulars? Does it explain why we are the way we are, and why things are the way they are? Does it make sense of our life experiences?*

*I will conclude our trial with a summation, known in legal terms as a closing argument . . . [and] we will work through the conclusions reachable from the evidence presented. We will consider the teachings of Scripture along with the world around us. We will see if science, current knowledge and common sense can combine to produce a rich understanding of God and the strength of the foundations for faith. The verdict can then be determined. Each person has to decide how to live in light of the verdict he or she reaches.*

- Why did you, a top trial lawyer, decide to write a book about the Christian faith? Isn't that the jurisdiction of the theologian?
- You say that more and more young people are losing their faith as they leave for college or the working world, yet they are not hesitant to research and even debate their decisions.
- How does *Christianity on Trial* speak to these educated young adults?
- What is legal "burden of proof," and how do you use it to make a case for Christianity?
- What is the difference between direct evidence and circumstantial evidence? How do you use such evidence when examining God and the Christian faith?
- Describe some of the witnesses you call to the stand in this case for the Christian faith.
- Who is J. B. Phillips, and why do you bring him to the stand to explore who God is not?
- You put Charles Darwin, Socrates and Friedrich Nietzsche on the stand to examine questions of right and wrong. What do their testimonies reveal in this case?
- Why was it important to include a chapter on heaven and eternity in this case for Christianity?
- What does the case for Christianity have in common with the O. J. Simpson trial?
- How did making this case for Christianity compare in difficulty to preparing another of your cases, like Toyota or Vioxx?



## AUTHOR BIO



**W. Mark Lanier** (JD, Texas Tech University) is a trial lawyer and founder of the Lanier Law Firm. His work for clients across the country is supported by firm offices in Houston, New York and Los Angeles.

**W. Mark Lanier** founded the Lanier Law Firm in 1990. Since then, Mark has earned widespread recognition as one of the top trial lawyers in the United States. His work for clients across the country is supported by firm offices in Houston, New York and Los Angeles.

His peers and the media consistently recognize Mark among the country's leading legal minds. In its coverage of Mark's stunning verdict in the nation's first Vioxx trial *Ernst v. Merck*, the *New York Times* described him as "one of the top civil trial lawyers in America." Under his leadership, *U.S. News and World Report* and *Best Lawyers* has named the Lanier Law Firm to their list of Best Law Firms for the last four years. *The National Law Journal* has twice named Lanier one of the nation's Top 10 Trial Attorneys, as well as one of the 100 Most Influential Lawyers in America. In 2010, the *National Law Journal* named Mark as one of the Most Influential Attorneys of the Decade. He has earned similar honors from other publications, including being named to the *Trial Lawyer Magazine's* America's 100 Most Influential Trial Lawyers of 2011. Mark also earned a spot on the 2012 *Chambers USA* America's Leading Lawyers for Business list of the country's top attorneys. He also earned special recognition as one of their Leaders in Their Field based on his work in product liability and mass tort cases.

In addition to national recognition, Mark has also earned accolades from his peers in Texas. In a statewide attorney survey published in *Texas Monthly* magazine, Mark has earned selection to the Texas Super Lawyers list in 2003 through 2012. The same publication also named him as its 2005 Impact Player of the Year. In 2010, *Texas Lawyer* named Mark as one of the Top 25 Attorneys of the Past Quarter Century. Further he has been recognized in *Texas Super Lawyers* as one of the Top 10 Attorneys in Texas for several years and most recently in 2012. In 2002, 2007 and 2012, *Texas Lawyer* newspaper named Mark as one of the Top 5 Go To Personal Injury Plaintiff Attorneys in Texas. *Texas' Best Lawyers* magazine has also listed him on their Texas' Best Lawyers list for nine consecutive years.

Mark's courtroom work has resulted in feature articles in the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *American Lawyer*, *National Law Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Bloomberg*, *New York Lawyer*, *Texas Lawyer*, and *Houston Chronicle* among others. He also is a frequent guest on news shows such as CNBC's *Squawk Box*, Fox News' *Your World with Neil Cavuto* and Fox Business News' *Money with Melissa Francis*. He also is a regular co-host and contributor to Fox Business News' highly rated *Varney and Company* with Stuart Varney.

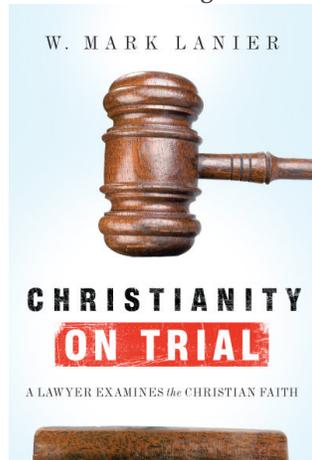
Additionally, Mark frequently instructs other attorneys about his trial techniques and how to try better cases in seminars held across the nation. He is solicited often to be the featured lecturer at many of the nation's top law schools including Harvard, Stanford, Pepperdine University, University of Chicago and Texas Tech University.

Mark is enthusiastically involved in government and community activities outside the



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— Peter Williams, warden,  
Tyndale House, Cambridge,  
United Kingdom

practice of law. Chairmen, presidents and senior executives from major American corporations and universities often call on him for his respected business views on national and international issues. In 2011, Mark was also bestowed the distinguished Ambassador of Peace award by the Guatemalan government.

A strong supporter of his alma mater, Mark earned his law degree from Texas Tech University School of Law in 1984. He remains active at Texas Tech by serving on the law school's Foundation Board. He was selected as the Texas Tech University School of Law Distinguished Alumnus for 2005. Mark was elected to the American Bar Association's Fellows of the American Bar Association and was named a Life Fellow of the same organization in 2012. He is the founder of the Christian Trial Lawyers Association, a non-profit organization whose goal is to create a network of principled attorneys to minister to others through civic-minded endeavors.

Mark is the founder of the Lanier Theological Library, one of the nation's largest private theological collections. Also, Mark teaches a weekly 750-plus-member Sunday school class focusing on biblical literacy at Champion Forest Baptist Church. He serves on the boards of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) and the Albright Institute.

Mark is the father of five wonderful children and lives in Houston with his wife, Becky.

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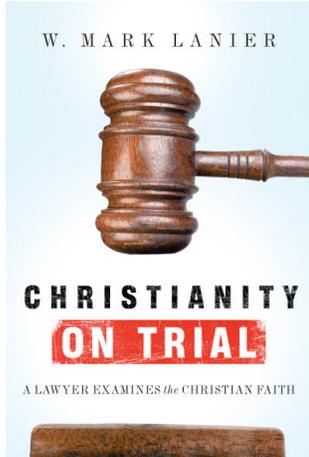


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# ENDORSEMENTS



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**“As good a theologian and Christian communicator as he is a trial attorney.”**

“Mark Lanier is uniquely qualified to give God a fair hearing today. His skills as a trial lawyer are renowned. So too is his apologetical persuasiveness and winsome delivery. When you combine these gifts you hear a lawyer’s examination of the claims of Christianity and an evangelist’s appeal for a decision. *Christianity on Trial* is a great read for any wishing to examine the compelling evidence about Jesus Christ and reach a verdict about his claim on people’s lives.”

– **Simon Vibert**, vice principal, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford

“In his first major Christian book, Mark Lanier brings to Christian publishing the same expertise, communication skills and pure, enthusiastic joy for the subject that he has brought to courtrooms and TV-network interviews across America for decades. But most folks don’t know that Mark is as good a theologian and Christian communicator as he is a trial attorney. In some ways this book is a modern *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. It is an excellent read for anyone who wants to see the evidence for the basic objective truths of Christian faith.”

– **John Michael Talbot**, author of *The Jesus Prayer*

“Trial lawyers are often noted for incisive analysis, broad knowledge and the ability to spot the weakness in the opposition’s argument. Mark Lanier demonstrates every one of these instincts in *Christianity on Trial*. His expertise in using the biblical languages uniquely qualifies him to ask – and answer – all the really tough questions. As a fresh assessment of the intellectual validity of the Christian, this book will delight pastors, theologians, church members and even critics.”

– **Paige Patterson**, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas

“Mark Lanier has probably read more about the Bible than many biblical scholars and combines this with his experience as a leading trial lawyer. The result is a gripping read and a compelling case for Christianity. He touches on so many different kinds of arguments that there is something for everyone in this feast.”

– **Peter Williams**, warden, Tyndale House, Cambridge, United Kingdom

“Historians, scientists and lawyers are after the same thing: to discover what really happened. Mark Lanier, one of America’s best lawyers, introduces us to history’s expert witnesses regarding our most profound questions and tells a compelling story sure to convince any jury.”

– **David B. Capes**, Thomas Nelson Research Professor, Houston Baptist University

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“A witty, well-paced and thoroughly engaging account of the place of evidence in the courtroom and in life. Mark Lanier makes a powerful case for the trustworthiness and reasonableness of the Christian faith.”

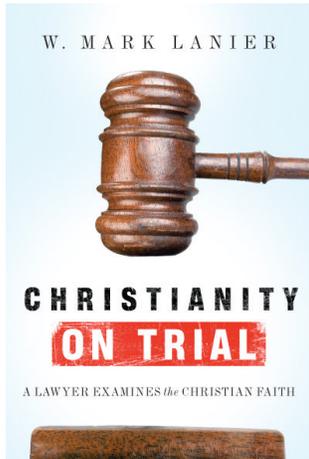
— **Alister McGrath**, author of *The Passionate Intellect*

“Mark Lanier has made a successful career at seeking out and defending truth in the arena of the American legal system. Now, serving as biblical legal defense, he methodically presents his case for the fundamental truths of our faith.”

— **Michael Card**, award-winning musician and author of *Scribbling in the Sand* and the *Biblical Imagination Series*

“Because Mark Lanier is my Sunday school teacher, I have the joy of following his teaching week by week no matter where I am in the world. I eventually print out every lesson for my own reference because he is the quintessential teacher, using every means to invest his discerning exposition and wonderful insights into those of us who follow his teaching week by week. I look forward to this volume not only for my personal edification but also as a book that I can place in the hands of those seeking to know Christ in a personal way and to grow in the Christian faith.”

— **Dorothy Kelley Patterson**, professor of theology in women’s studies, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas



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## Will Christianity Hold Up in Court?

I have spent thirty years as a lawyer, although I began my formal training receiving a BA in biblical languages. My Bible studies continued through the decades as my courtroom experience took me coast-to-coast trying everyday cases as well as those on the front pages of the *New York Times*. People frequently come to me after Googling me with one of two lines. If I am approached when I have been speaking as a lawyer, they say, “I Googled you. I had no idea you are a Christian thinker and teacher.” Where I speak on matters of faith or Bible, I often hear someone say, “I Googled you. I had no idea you are a recognized lawyer.” This book is a project that intersects these two lifelong interests – faith and law.

So, give this lawyer his day in court. Let’s use the basic approach of court, along with the practical judgments from decades of work. Let’s put these tools to work on questioning core Christian beliefs. Then you be the jury and cast your vote. You can decide what is reasonable and what is not. Each trial begins with a lawyer’s opening statement. From there the lawyer presents the case, calling witnesses and putting documents into evidence. Once the evidence is in, the lawyer has a chance to give a summation or closing argument. At that point, deliberations begin and a jury makes its decision.

This book will proceed with the format of a trial, but with a few practical changes. Like a trial, I will begin with an opening statement that serves as the book’s introduction. There, I lay out the road map of issues and witnesses. I explain where the evidence in trial will go. From there I present the evidence. I cover the “witnesses” in a narrative fashion rather than the typical question-and-answer format of a trial. Evidence goes beyond witnesses. We will consider science, documents and the world as well – just like a trial. I will then give a summation or closing argument, where I draw conclusions from all the separate pieces of evidence.

We are missing one major component to a trial: opposing counsel. That does not mean we do not face the cynics’ challenges. The public is bombarded by those skeptical about Christian faith. Those opposing my view are not silent. We can readily find television shows that question or make light of the reasonableness of Christian faith. The Internet is replete with articles, Web legends and blogs opposing most every aspect of Christianity.

So I begin this book at the trial stage. The preparation behind this book has followed the rules I would follow in legal discovery. All that remains is for me to present my opening statement, the evidence in support of my case and the closing argument to you, the reader and jury.

So I begin, “Ladies and gentlemen of the jury . . .”

– Adapted from the Introduction

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