What is the Meaning of Life?
Program 53
The Divinity of Jesus and His Miracles
by Ernest O'Neill

Wouldn't it be great to know why we were here? Wouldn't it be great to know what the meaning of this life is? What the point of it is and how did we all ended up here and why we're here and where we're all going to end up? You probably have felt the same as I, that it would be great to know that, but how can you ever know that? How can you ever be sure?

All we have are theories and philosophies and all kinds of religions that claim to tell us that, but who knows? Who could know? You would have to be the maker of the world itself to know that and who knows if there is a maker of the world?

It seems that there is a lot of complex order and design in this world, but what evidence have we that there is a maker behind it all? There ought to be, I agree; there ought to be to explain the order and design we see in our bodies and that we see in the world of nature and in the chart of the elements and the DNA molecules.

There ought to be, but I don't know how we'd ever find out if there was -- unless He somehow came to earth and appeared in such a plain obvious way that we knew it was Him, or somebody that was closely related to Him. Of course, that's what happened.

Nineteen hundred years ago there was a remarkable human being, not an ordinary man like Zoroaster, or Buddha, or Muhammad, but a remarkable human being. This was a man who actually lived like the rest of us, talked like the rest of us, except that he talked like the Son of God. He talked as if he was the Son of the Maker of the universe.

He said, "If you've seen me, you've seen God. If you honor me, you honor God." When an interrogator asked him, on pain of death, "Are you the Christ, the Son of God, he said, "Yes, I am. And you will see me coming with the clouds of heaven at the end of this world."

Many of us, of course, tend to say, "Well, all lunatics claim that kind of thing." But he was not a lunatic.He didn't behave like a lunatic. In fact, we've all regarded him, almost without exception-- whether we're cynics or whether we believe in him or not -- we've all regarded him as the highest ethical teacher the world has ever seen and the highest example of his own moral teaching the world has ever seen.

So of all people, he would not be a lunatic nor would he be a liar, because he is the man that is looked upon by all of us as the example of absolute integrity. To call him a liar about the focal point of his teaching -- that is, his identity - makes madness out of all our logic.

Was he a legend? No, there wasn't time to develop a legend. He was hardly dead before people were beginning to talk about him and to write about him. So there wasn't time for a legend to develop. All the eyewitnesses were still alive who had observed his life and death and they were able to corroborate or contradict the things that were written about him.

None of them contradicted the historical records that you and I have today in the last quarter of the book called the Bible. In fact, they corroborated and confirmed it. Men like Tacitus and Josephus, men like Tertullian and Pliny, men like Celsus and Porphyry -- these are writers outside the Bible who have confirmed that what he said and did he actually said and did.

Is there any evidence to suggest that he was more than an ordinary human being? Yes. He not only talked like God, but he acted like God. He was able to still a storm on a lake just by saying, "Be still!" He was able to turn water into wine just by commanding it to turn into wine. He was able to raise a man called Lazarus from the dead.

Moreover, he was unlike all other great religious leaders. All of them are conscious of some moral shortcoming. Indeed, it is obvious to even their followers that they are morally less than perfect. Muhammad's life is full of acts of vengeance and violence. No one questions that.

Buddha's life was withdrawn and reclusive, but Jesus' life was sinless. This man's life was absolutely sinless. If you wonder, "Did anybody ever live a sinless life?" Yes, this man did. Not because he claimed it, but because his enemies even claimed it. Pilate, who was the man appointed to check him out on behalf of the Jews and the Roman authorities, said, "This man has done nothing wrong; I find no fault in this man."

Now Pilate was the person responsible for prosecuting Jesus. He said he found no fault in this man; he has done nothing wrong. That's recorded in the last quarter of the book that we have known as the Bible. It's in the book of Luke, Chapter 23 and verse 14. This man Pilate said, "This man has done nothing wrong."

The centurion who supervised the crucifixion, who was responsible for killing this man Jesus, said after he died, "Surely this man was the Son of God. Surely this man was the Son of God. He has to be! I've never seen a life like this." These were the two men responsible for His death; they said he was flawless; he's sinless. He has no fault. He must be the Son of the Creator of the universe.

When he asked his most militant critics, the Pharisees, "Which of you convicts me of sin (and John recorded that in what's called the Gospel of John, in Chapter 8 and verse 46), when Jesus said, "Which of you convicts me of sin?" they were all silent. They just said nothing. In other words, they themselves admitted that this is a sinless life that we have before us.

Moreover, twenty centuries of painstaking critiques by the behavioral experts of the world have served only to confirm that the life of this man is the one perfectly sinless life that was ever lived on earth. So, yes. He was different from ordinary men. He lived the one sinless, faultless life that has ever been lived on our earth. That is by the testimony of not only eyewitnesses, but those eyewitnesses who were responsible for killing him. His enemies admitted that his life was a flawless, sinless, perfect, moral life.

But perhaps the most significant thing about his life is not his life; the most significant thing about his life is his death. When we talk about this man Jesus as being different from Zoroaster and being different from Muhammad, we mean it was different most of all in his death. All these men, as we've said a dozen times before, died like dogs. They died like dogs.

They died and were buried and their graves were honored and respected for years, because their bodies could be dug up at anytime and could be found there. They died like ordinary men. They never left the earth as far as their own physical body was concerned. But this man Jesus' death was different. All of the evidence that this man was the Son of God pales before the one event in his life that sets him apart from all other religious leaders and prophets.

He said throughout his public ministry that he would rise from being dead on the third day and he did. He did. He said continually that on the third day he would rise from the dead and he did. Now there have been many gurus who have been buried alive and through controlled breathing, have been able to survive in a kind of trance under the earth.

But none have been executed by experts like the Romans and then actually risen from the dead. This is what happened with this man. The soldiers were so sure he was dead that they didn't even bother breaking his legs. They simply thrust a spear into his side and a mixture of blood and water poured out.

Then he was buried in a private tomb, bound tightly in grave clothes, and then a large stone was rolled across the mouth of the tomb. He was buried on Friday night. On Sunday morning, he met Mary, one of his followers, in the garden. When she reported it to the other disciples, they wouldn't believe her. But in a moment Jesus appeared suddenly in the room with them. He did this for the next month or more, appearing on more than a dozen occasions.

Sometimes he appeared to a few of them; sometimes to more than five hundred at one time. Sometimes he ate breakfast or allowed skeptical Thomas to poke his finger into the holes in his hands, to make it clear he was not a ghost or a psychological hallucination. Then he explained that he must return to his Father, the Creator of the universe, and his body has never been found on earth since.

That's why we believe this man Jesus was the Son of God. Is there any other explanation for this resurrection from the dead? Let's look at some of them next time.