

“Reasons to Believe the Resurrection”

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Date: 21 July 2024

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[0 : 0 0] Okay, so this morning we're going to jump into the scriptures. We're going to be kind of scattered all over. We've been looking at a series, or this is the third in a series, called Reasons to Believe.

And so, as we've talked about in our previous messages, the faith that we have, and by the way, I'll just continue to use this mic here. The faith that we have as Christians is a reasonable faith.

It's not a faith that we just believe. What was the quote that I had from, who's the guy, Mark Twain? He said, faith is believing what you know ain't so.

And is that true? No, but that's how a lot of people view faith, right? But our faith, and any faith that you have, should be founded, have a foundation of reason, of truth.

There should be reasons why you believe what you believe. And that is the case, that's the case for the Christian faith. The first one we looked at is Reasons to Believe in God.

[1 : 0 1] That's just very foundational, right? It's important. That's kind of where you start. If you can't believe in God, you really can't be a Christian. Then the next thing we looked at is Reasons to Believe in the Scripture.

And we looked at all the different evidence there is to support the Scripture as truly being God's Word. And today we're going to look specifically at what really makes the case for Christianity.

It's the foundation of being a Christian. It's what makes Christianity different from any other religion or faith. And that's the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It really is the resurrection is the linchpin of Christianity.

As the Scriptures themselves say, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then our faith is what? In vain. It's worthless. It's useless. Our faith is worthless and useless if Jesus did not rise from the dead.

If Jesus is in the grave, then his life, his teachings, his compassion, his love, his sacrificial death that he died for everybody, it's just nonsense.

[2 : 1 1] It doesn't mean anything. It's just some crazy lunatic or liar or cult leader of some kind who made a big splash in the world and now he's dead and in the grave and no more.

But if Jesus did rise from the dead, then all of Christianity becomes saturated with meaning. All the things that he did in his life, all the things that he taught, the compassion that he showed, the love that he showed, and especially the death that he died for us is of utmost importance.

And so the case for Christianity really rises or falls on the resurrection. You know, the Bible, we've talked about the Bible being a reliable book, reliable for history, especially if you go back to the Old Testament.

We'll look more at the New Testament today. We've talked about the Old Testament is one of the most reliable records for ancient history that you'll find anywhere in the world.

If you want to know about ancient history, the Bible has the most reliable accounts that you'll find. Today we're going to look at more of the New Testament because that's where the resurrection took place and where the accounts of the resurrection are.

[3 : 35] And we're going to look at it in terms of more like an investigative journal. So we talked about last week, I think it was, or maybe it was two weeks ago, that people used the Old Testament scriptures like a map, like a treasure map, to go find archaeological things, old cities, ancient cities.

And they would look and see what the scriptures said about where they were located east of this place and those kinds of things. And then they would dig and they would find those cities there where the scriptures said that they were.

But the Bible is also kind of like an investigative journal. There's a book. In fact, let me, is it up here? I have a bunch of books. There's a book here that I'm going to reference a few times.

It's called Cold Case Christianity. Cold Case Christianity. And this book is written by a guy. His name is J. Werner Wallace.

He's pretty popular today. If you just look up Cold Case Christianity or J. Werner Wallace on YouTube, you'll find lots of content. Just search on the web. He is a retired police detective.

[5 : 00] He was a detective in one of the largest cities in the world, Los Angeles. And his job was cold cases.

And if you're familiar with what a cold case is, for many crimes here in America, there's what's called a statute of limitations.

If you rob a bank, for example, after so many years, you can no longer be prosecuted. If they don't catch you, if they don't prosecute you, then after whatever many years, I don't know what it is, then those cases can no longer be pursued.

It's a statute of limitations. But when it comes to taking someone's life, there is no statute of limitations. And so there are certain cases that just have been unsolved, sometimes for 10, 20, 30, even 50 years.

And so his job was to look at these cases and try to solve them, to try to solve them, try to bring justice where there hasn't been justice for decades.

[6 : 05] I think it's one of the interesting things is, is that he, while he was a detective, and for many years, I think into his 30s, was an avowed atheist.

He found Christianity to be a crutch, not really relevant to his life. And he actually started to look at the Bible, the claims of the Bible, and the claims that Christians make about the Bible and Christianity from the perspective of a detective.

And so through that investigation, he decided that the evidence for Christianity is compelling, compelling enough for him to put his trust in Jesus Christ.

I think it's a brilliant book to approach Christianity this way, because our culture is pretty fascinated, right, with crime. We have all kinds of movies, criminal dramas, television shows, true crime, true crime podcasts, TV series, 60 Minutes.

And so it's a great way to approach investigating the claims of Christianity.

[7 : 24] Some of the similarities, in a cold case, you're investigating some event that was in the distant past. We're doing the same thing with looking at the claims of Christianity, who Jesus was, and did he really rise from the dead.

With a cold case, sometimes the witnesses are no longer alive, right? And so you have to continue the investigation when your witnesses have passed away. Sometimes even the police detectives that originally tried to solve the case, even they have passed away.

And the same is true for the claims of Christianity. The original authors of the Bible are no longer around. The original eyewitnesses are not here anymore. And then even in cold cases, there's little or no forensic or material evidence, like fingerprints or DNA.

But many times there is more compelling circumstantial evidence, the circumstances around the case. So here's the claim of Christianity.

The claim of Christianity is this, that Jesus was born, lived, and he died on a cross. He was crucified by Pontius Pilate.

[8 : 32] He was buried, and then he rose from the dead. Now, that's quite a claim. The Bible indicates that many witnesses saw him die, and then three days later, or weeks later, they saw him alive again in the flesh.

With their own eyes, they saw him alive. Paul summarizes it this way in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians 15, 3. He says, For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

And this is what he says next. And that he was seen by Cephas, that's Peter, then by the twelve, and after that he was seen by over five hundred brethren, at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present.

But some have fallen asleep. And after that he was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then after that he says, And then he was seen by me. Of course, this was in his vision, really, of Jesus later on.

He didn't see him in the flesh. But all these people that he described, they saw Jesus in the flesh after he died. Now, we're going to consider two types of evidence, specifically when it comes to criminal investigations in our criminal justice system.

[10 : 05] Evidence is divided into really two types. One is direct evidence, and the other is indirect evidence. Direct evidence is really just of one kind.

It's eyewitness testimony. You have somebody, if there was a crime, somebody that saw what happened. They watched the crime or the event take place.

The other type of evidence is indirect, many times called circumstantial evidence. Things like today we have DNA evidence or fingerprints.

You might have physical evidence that's found at the scene of the crime. You might consider somebody's motives, their motivation to commit a crime.

When it comes to eyewitness evidence, we have to evaluate the person who's giving the evidence.

[11 : 06] Are they a trustworthy source? Because people can, because people can and they do. Why? Why? They'll make things up. And so when you're evaluating a witness, an eyewitness, there are really four things that an investigator will look at.

One, were they present? Were they there when that crime or event took place? You have to verify their account.

Is there other things that really corroborate their testimony? Three, are they an honest and trustworthy person? One, what is their character?

Are they the kind of person that just makes things up? And then four, do they have any biases that we should consider, right? Some people will claim to have seen something because they either have something to gain or maybe something to lose based on the truth of what their claims are.

And so somebody might have a bias to hide the truth or to lie. Circumstantial evidence can actually be, and many times is, even more powerful than eyewitness testimony.

[12 : 28] And we don't usually think of things that way. We usually think, well, if somebody saw it, that's the most powerful evidence that you can have. But really, if you can line up enough circumstantial evidence, you can make it clear to just about anybody who the guilty party is.

From this book, he makes this statement. He says, 70 to 80 percent of court cases in this country are solved based on circumstantial evidence alone.

No eyewitness. No person saw the crime. You just look at all the circumstantial evidence, and the case can be solved. Like I said, eyewitnesses can lie.

And so if you just have one eyewitness, that really doesn't get you very far. You know, what does the Bible say about witnesses? Yeah, that there should be at least two or three, right?

You should never prosecute a crime or convict someone based on just one eyewitness. So circumstantial evidence, even if you have an eyewitness or multiple eyewitnesses, can strengthen or weaken the testimony of the eyewitness.

[13 : 44] I want to give an example here, just through a quick story. This is the case of the missing heirloom. All right?

If you like, anybody like mysteries? In the quiet town of Greensfield, a valuable family heirloom went missing from the estate of the renowned Cartwright family.

The heirloom, it was a gold pocket watch encrusted with diamonds, had been passed down through generations and was last seen in a glass case in the Cartwright mansion's drawing room.

Detective Jose Martinez was assigned to the case. Known for his meticulous approach, he began by interviewing everyone who had access to the mansion.

Among the suspects was Edward, a longtime gardener for the Cartwrights who had worked for the family for over a decade. Piece of evidence number one, the muddy footprints.

[14 : 41] On the day the watch was reported missing, it had rained heavily. Unfortunately, Martinez noticed muddy footprints leading from the drawing room to the back door where the gardener's shed was located.

The size and the pattern of the footprints matched the gardening boots Edward wore regularly. Hmm. Could be a coincidence, right?

I mean, a lot of boots would make the same print, right? Piece of evidence number two, the torn glove. While searching the gardener's shed, Martinez found a torn gardening glove.

The glove's fabric matched a piece found snagged on the window latch of the drawing room, suggesting someone had used the window for access. The tear in the glove aligned perfectly with the snag on the window latch.

Another piece of circumstantial evidence. Piece of evidence number three, the missing keys. The Cartwrights reported that a set of keys, including one for the back door and the display case, had gone missing a week before the theft.

[15 : 51] Edward had access to these keys for his work, but he claimed that he had misplaced them. The keys were later found in Edward's shed, hidden under a pile of gardening tools.

Happenstance? A piece of evidence number four, the financial troubles. Edward had recently come under financial strain. Martinez discovered that Edward had accumulated significant gambling debts and had been receiving threatening letters from loan sharks.

This provided a potential motive for stealing and selling the heirloom. Piece of evidence number five, the pawn shop ticket. Martinez found a pawn shop ticket in Edward's jacket pocket during a search.

The ticket was dated the day after the watch was stolen. Interesting. Circumstances, huh? Piece of evidence number six, the false alibi.

Edward initially claimed he was at the local pub during the time of the theft. However, Martinez interviewed the pub staff and found no one who could confirm his presence. Surveillance footage from the pub security cameras did not show Edward at the pub during the specified time.

[17 : 04] Now, these are six pieces of evidence, and any one of them by themselves, right, might just be happenstance.

No one saw this guy, Edward, at the scene of the crime. No one saw him with their eyes. But as you, as in reading those six pieces of circumstantial evidence, do you think there's any doubt as to who committed the crime?

No, it seems obviously clear with just six pieces of circumstantial evidence that it must be Edward. And any, basically any court of law, I guess not any.

But most courts of law, right, would convict Edward just based on those pieces of circumstantial evidence. You know, today in the age in which we live, and I talked about the movies and the books, the thrillers, the crime thrillers that we enjoy.

But it seems like the standard for evidence is a way, it's unreasonable today. We have this unrealistic expectation of what evidence should look like.

[18 : 17] A lot of times we require that somebody actually be caught on camera before we can charge them with the guilt of a crime. And I think that's really an absurd standard.

Because of our cultural interest in crime dramas and books and that kind of thing. When you read a book or watch a movie, it's kind of boring, right?

If somebody commits a crime and then there's a court case and all the evidence points to that one person, it's obvious, and they're prosecuted and then it's over, right? That's a boring book, a boring movie.

The kind that's really interesting is when all the evidence points to the gangster thug and really at the end of the movie, it was the quiet librarian that did it, right?

That's more interesting. That's the kind of movie we want to watch. That's the kind of book that we want to read. But is that real life? No, that's not real life at all.

[19 : 21] In real life, the evidence, the bulk of the evidence usually always points to the true culprit, the true guilty party. Not always, but most of the time.

When it comes to the resurrection, we need to look at things the same way. Where does the evidence point to? So let's look at the resurrection.

First, eyewitnesses. There are multiple eyewitness accounts to both the life, the ministry, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We also find, and we'll talk about this a little bit later, dozens, even hundreds of corroborating circumstantial evidence that bolster those eyewitness accounts.

There are four investigative journals in our New Testament Bibles about the life of Jesus. What are they called?

[20 : 31] Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These are the Gospels. These are historical records of eyewitness accounts. Two of which were written by those who actually saw what happened.

Which ones are those? Matthew, one of the disciples of Jesus. And John, one of the disciples of Jesus. They were there from the beginning all the way to the end.

They saw Jesus live. They saw him die with their own eyes. They saw, or at least they claim, to have seen him raised again from the dead. And then two are written by those who, like a police detective, interviewed people who saw with their eyes the evidence and wrote it down on their behalf.

Luke was one of those. And I'm going to read from the very first few verses of the Gospel of Luke. Here's what Luke says. And remember, Luke was a Gentile. He was not a Jew. He was a Gentile.

But he went about writing this Gospel, this story about the life of Jesus. Really, an investigative journal. Luke chapter 1.

[21 : 46] Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word delivered them to us.

Luke was a doctor.

I'm sure he was fastidious in the record-keeping that he did as part of his work as a physician. And he took on, he put on the hat of a detective, of an investigator.

And he wrote this account, and he says, listen, I have understanding in all of these things. Is it because he saw them himself with his own eyes? No, he doesn't make that claim.

But he talked to the people who did. And he put together, he says, an orderly account of all the things that he took record of, of those who did see it with their own eyes.

[22 : 57] So let's look at those four things when it comes to those who are eyewitnesses. One, they have to be present at the scene of the crime. If they weren't there, they can't be an eyewitness.

So were the eyewitnesses, were they there? Not somebody who heard the story pass from one person to another to another many, many years ago.

But these eyewitnesses were there. They saw these things with their own eyes. And they, and for some, like Luke and Mark, they were written down by others based on the oral statements of those who did see the, see these things with their own eyes.

So we, we can look at when were these accounts written. And some people might think that, well, these accounts were maybe written several generations later.

And people just, you know, wrote down the story of Jesus's life based on maybe what was heard over several generations. And, well, they probably, you know, didn't get a lot of details right.

[24 : 09] But you know that most of the circumstantial evidence points to these accounts actually being written very early. We won't get into the details.

If you get a book like this, you can get more into the details of why we can date the account specifically of Luke. Luke wrote two books.

Did you know that? What's the other book that Luke wrote in the Bible? Acts. He wrote Acts. And Acts is kind of like part two, right? Yeah, like part one is the Gospel of Luke and then part two is Acts.

So Acts actually provides a lot of detail about the history of what was going on at the time, who was in power. It also describes the people who died, who were killed.

James was killed by, was it Herod? I think, yeah, Herod. And so that account is in the Bible. There were certain people, though, that it doesn't describe who were killed.

[25 : 11] Paul was never described as being killed. Peter was never described as being killed. James, the Lord's brother, was never described as being killed in the book of Acts. And why?

Why not? Well, almost certainly, the evidence points to, the circumstantial evidence points to, it's because they had not been killed yet when that account was written, when the testimony was taken.

And so we know it had to be very early. This was within 10 to 30 years after the resurrection. And so, which book came first, Acts or Mark?

Or, excuse me, Luke? Was it the Gospel that came first or Acts? It was the Gospel that was written first. So if Acts was written before those guys passed away, and we know when they did, then his Gospel must have been written even further back.

And so this narrative, this investigative journal, this account that was written down, was done very, very early, very close to when these events happened. The second thing that we can look at is corroboration.

[26 : 18] Is there corroboration to this eyewitness testimony? Well, one, we have four witnesses from four different people. Really, Luke is a collection of people, many, many witnesses.

And they all corroborate each other. They all tell the same account, the same story. There are differences. And when you interview four witnesses, let's say, who have witnessed a crime, are they going to all give you the same details?

No. And sometimes it might actually seem like there's some conflict in their details. Because somebody might say, well, I actually saw two people at the scene of the crime.

And another person might say, well, I just saw one. And we see the same thing in the Bible. We see the account of, for example, a healing.

Remember blind Bartimaeus, if I remember this correctly, because we just studied this a month or so ago. And in one account, there's only one blind man, blind Bartimaeus.

[27 : 21] But in another account, there's actually two blind men. Well, is one of them lying? Well, no. Not at all.

But one person remembers two, and the other either just remembered one or just didn't think it was important enough to talk about the second one. And that's typically what we find with witnesses.

They focus on different details. The other thing to consider is what J. Warner Wallace calls unintended witness support statements.

There are things where details that we find in the scriptures, accounts of what happened, where there is a corroboration, but it's not intended.

It's somewhat accidental. Here's the example. In Matthew 26, verse 67, it says this. This is during Jesus' trial and suffering.

[28 : 21] Then they, the soldiers, the Roman soldiers, they spat in his face and they beat him, and others struck him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy to us, Christ, who is the one who struck you?

That's just kind of a strange account. Why would people hit him, multiple people, or one person hit him among a group, and then they ask him to prophesy who hit you?

Well, we read the same account in Luke, Luke chapter 22. Now the men, verse 63, Now the men who held Jesus mocked him and they beat him. And having blindfolded him, they struck him on the face and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is the one who struck you?

We see this additional detail that makes the other account make sense. They fit together, even though they don't have the same level of detail.

History corroborates the accounts of the Gospels. The names of places, people, events, leaders, are corroborated by history outside of the Bible.

[29 : 28] Extra-biblical historians corroborate even the events of the crucifixion and the claimed resurrection. Josephus, who wrote a history of the Jews around 100 AD, this is just over a generation after Jesus was crucified, he testified that there was a man named Jesus who was killed, crucified by Pontius Pilate, and that it was reported that three days later, he rose again and was considered the Jewish Messiah.

So there was a report within a generation that at least there was this claim that this thing had happened, that this man was crucified and that three days later, he rose again.

The final thing we'll look at with eyewitnesses, were they biased? Now, when you look at somebody who's giving an eyewitness testimony, whether they're going to lie to cover up a crime, whether looking at somebody lying or committing a crime, there are really only three motivations that a detective will look at for why somebody committed a crime or tries to cover a crime up.

Three motivations. The first one is money. That makes sense to us, right? People will do all kinds of things that they shouldn't do for money. The second one is, we'll just say sex, or some kind of relationship with somebody, usually some kind of romantic relationship, the love of a woman or the love of a man or something like that.

And the third one is power. There's some kind of power to be gained. Well, let's look at this with the witnesses that we have in the Bible, the writers of the Gospels, the apostles that witness these things.

[31 : 29] Were they looking to enrich themselves? These 12 apostles and the others with them? Well, is that what we find? Do we find them enriching themselves through the story that they made up about this Messiah being raised from the dead?

Did they become fabulously wealthy? Did they attempt to become fabulously wealthy? No, they all lived in relative poverty. In fact, they sold all their possessions and shared it among themselves so that they could support widows.

In fact, we find later on that the early Christians, later on about a generation past, were collecting money. The Gentile Christians were collecting money to send back to the early Christians in Israel because they were in abject poverty.

What about sex? I think about certain cults like Mormonism. Joseph Smith, who created his own kind of religious faith, or somebody like Muhammad, who created a very popular today religion, Islam.

And very interestingly, in Mormonism, Joseph Smith claimed that you could have many, many wives, and he did. He had many, many wives.

[32 : 48] And that was part of the teachings of Mormonism that he taught. Muhammad did the same thing. He gained for himself many, many, many wives.

And so that seems to be a motivation behind, or could be, right, behind why they came up with the things that they did. The last one is power.

And we've seen people, right, who will create religions, cults, movements, so that they can gain some kind of power.

But the witnesses to the resurrection, those that claimed that Jesus rose from the dead, did they gain positions of prominence and power? Or was it actually the opposite?

They suffered greatly under both the Jews and the Romans. And not only that, but they taught their disciples, their followers, to also suffer along with them. In fact, this is one of the most powerful evidences, that the men who claimed that Jesus rose from the dead actually believed what they saw was true.

[33 : 55] Ten out of the twelve apostles all died at the hands of the Jews or the Romans. Six were crucified, two were killed by sword, one by a spear, and one by arrows, according to early history.

Paul, another one, he did not have power and prestige. He did before, right? He actually had a lot of power. He had a lot of prestige among the Jews.

And within a matter of days, he gave it all up to become an evangelist for Jesus. He stirred up much strife in the Roman Empire.

He submitted to arrest, and ultimately, Paul was beheaded for his trouble. So what was the motivation left? If it's not money, sex, or power, why would these guys make up something?

Well, there's really only one reason left, only one motivation, that Jesus really was the Savior of the world. He really was the only hope of eternal life, that he really did transform their lives, and that they were compelled to tell others.

[35 : 09] We'll wrap up with this, and I'm just going to do this quickly. But there's so much circumstantial evidence in the Scriptures. Too many things that just so happened that, just like that case that we looked at with the six pieces of evidence, it just so happened that we found these muddy footprints that matched this.

It just so happened that somebody was just at a pawn shop. It just so happened that somebody is in dire straits financially. And eventually, after so many it just so happened, it becomes clear what the truth is.

So did all these things happen by coincidence? You know, it just so happened that Jesus happened to be the son of David, both through his birth mom and his adopted father, just like the Messiah was supposed to be.

It just so happened that he was the firstborn in his own family. When the law of Moses said that the firstborn males were to be consecrated to the Lord, it just so happened that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, like the prophets said the Messiah would be born.

It just so happened that he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, just like Zechariah said that the Messianic king would come into Jerusalem. It just so happened that Jesus was lifted up on a cross, just like that snake was lifted up on the pole in the desert.

[36 : 31] It just so happened that he was hanged on a wooden cross to take on our curse, just as the law strangely, bizarrely called for a curse on anybody who would hang on a tree.

What a strange law. It just so happened. It just so happened that just like Isaiah in Isaiah 53 describes a suffering servant as somebody who would be numbered among the wicked, it just so happened that Jesus was crucified between two criminals.

And in that same passage that it says, it describes that this man was buried with the wealthy, and it just so happens that Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man.

It just so happened that just like in Isaiah 53, the suffering servant, it says, opened not his mouth, that Jesus suffered in silence. Not opening up his mouth to say a word through all that suffering.

It just so happened that in Isaiah 53, that suffering servant is said to have interceded for transgressors. And Jesus just so happened to pray and ask God to forgive those who are torturing him.

[37 : 43] It just so happened that in Psalm 22, David writes this Psalm in which he says, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? David says that in the Psalm.

And it just so happens that Jesus said the same thing on the cross. In that same chapter, or in that same Psalm, Psalm 22, it describes that David was mocked and ridiculed. It just so happens that Jesus was mocked and ridiculed.

It just so happens that in that same Psalm, David says that he was told that he should trust in his God to save him. Mocked and ridiculed. You should trust in your God to save you.

And it just so happened that Jesus had the same thing happen to him. Strangely, David says in that Psalm that his hands and his feet were pierced.

There's no record of that actually happening. But it just so happens that Jesus, his hands and his feet were pierced. In that same Psalm, David describes being surrounded by Gentiles.

[38 : 41] And it just so happens that Jesus and his death was surrounded by Gentiles. In that same Psalm, David says that his clothes were divided by lot. There was lots cast for his clothes.

And it just so happens that that's exactly what happened to Jesus. It just so happened that Jesus was crucified on a day called Passover, which is a remembrance of the crucified lamb that saved the people of Israel from death.

It just so happened that he was buried before sundown in the same way that the law commanded that the Passover lamb must be disposed of before the next day.

And it just so happened that Jesus was crucified on a hill, the very same hill, that 1,500 years later, or before, a man named Abraham had been instructed by God to take his son on a hill to sacrifice him.

The very same hill. And on that same hill, God told Abraham, stop.

[40 : 07] Don't kill your son. I have provided the sacrifice. on that same hill.

Is this all just happenstance? Either Jesus was the luckiest liar or lunatic cult leader in the history of the universe, or he really is the Lord of all creation.

He really is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He really is the soon and coming King who will make all things new. These are the reasons why we should believe.

And they're just some of them. There's so much more. This was just a taste. There's lots of great books you can go to.

This is just one of them. And it's so interesting. So many of these books that provide apologetic cases for why we should believe the Bible or the claims of Christianity were written by people who were originally skeptics.

[41 : 20] Lee Strobel, The Case for Christ. He was a skeptic, an investigative journalist. He investigated, and then he writes a book. It must be true. I became a Christian because it must be true. Here's another one.

Who Moved the Stone? This guy, he was a lawyer. Christianity is kind of nice. Nice teachings, but Jesus didn't rise from the dead. That doesn't happen. He investigated. I'm going to check it out.

He wrote this book, Who Moved the Stone? It had to have happened. There's no other explanation. More Than a Carpenter by Josh McDowell. He was a skeptic in college.

He checked out the evidence. He wrote a book because the evidence was so compelling. Did you learn anything today?

Was that helpful? Was anybody encouraged? Let's end in a word of prayer. Father, thank you so much for the evidence that you gave. Just like Luke said there at the beginning of Luke, of his gospel.

[42 : 21] He said he was writing an account of eyewitnesses so that we could know, so that Theophilus and all the rest of us could know the evidence for what actually happened.

And you provided many eyewitnesses and so much evidence surrounding those eyewitnesses that is so clear to anybody who will just take the time to look, to investigate, to look at the claims, that we can know and have confidence that what is reported in these accounts, that Jesus died for our sins and rose again, that we might be justified, that we might be made righteous, that we can put our full confidence in the truths of what happened and what you have accomplished for us.

We thank you for that. In Jesus' name, amen.