

I don't have enough FAITH
to be an ATHEIST

with Dr. Frank Turek

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The Most Influential Life in History

(April 10, 2020)

A number of years ago, I was at the University of Maryland, one of the many universities I've had the privilege at which to speak over the years. And we were done with the, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist presentation. A number of atheists hung out after the presentation was over, and we were just talking, and one of the young men there was saying some pretty negative things about the New Testament. And he was saying things that really weren't true about the New Testament, so I finally said, "Have you ever read the New Testament?". And he was flummoxed. He froze. The answer was, he had never read it.

And I said, Look, I don't care where you're from, I don't care what your background was, or how you were brought up. Jesus of Nazareth is inarguably the most influential human being to ever walk the earth. If you're gonna call yourself a seeker of truth, you have to at least read what he allegedly said and did. You may read it and think it's not true. You may read it and call it bunk. But you got to at least read what the most influential human being to ever walk the earth supposedly said and did. Otherwise, don't call yourself a seeker of truth. Why would you call yourself an atheist if you've never investigated the person around whom the world's largest religion is centered? Why would you do that?

And how did this one solitary life become the most influential human being in the history of the world? In fact, there was a sermon about 100 years ago called, The One Solitary Life. It's a very short little sermon. I'm going to read it to you. We actually have it in the book, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*. Here's what this sermon actually said, speaking of Jesus of Nazareth.

"Here is a man who was born in an obscure village as the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty and then for three years was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He



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never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself. He had nothing to do with this world except the naked power of his divine manhood. While still a young man the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him. Another betrayed him. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon the cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth while he was dying, and that was his coat. When he was dead, he was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Nineteen [now twenty] wide centuries have come and gone and today he is the center of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon the earth as powerfully as has this one solitary life."

If there was no resurrection, how could this life be the most influential life of all time? How could that be, ladies and gentlemen? Think about it. Think about all Jesus of Nazareth accomplished since 1987 years ago, when he was brutally executed. How could that one life be the most influential life of all time? Maybe because he actually rose from the dead and that's what we celebrate this weekend. But could he have risen from the dead? I mean, really? What evidence do we have for that? How can you believe such a thing? But what I'd like to do here today is to talk about some of the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. There's a lot of it. I can't get through it all in one sitting. We have books written on this. Many people have written books on this, not just me, obviously. There's a lot of evidence that Jesus rose from the dead.

In fact, you may know that every day through this Coronavirus season, when we're locked down, we're live at 11:30am on our Facebook pages, CrossExamine.org and Dr. Frank Turek, and also on our YouTube channel, the CrossExamined YouTube channel, and our website, and even now on Twitter. We're streaming a one hour live show called, Hope One. We're trying to bring hope to people. We've done 10 shows because we've been on for two weeks. Just this past week we've had Dr. Dan Eichenberger on. He was on Monday. He's our medical doctor that's given us updates on the coronavirus situation. Tuesday, we had the great Dr. John Lennox. You can watch that show. All these shows are archived on our YouTube channel and on our Facebook pages. We've had Dr. Mike Licona on talking about the resurrection on



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Wednesday. And then on Thursday, I talked about the four things to do in a crisis. These are the four things the Apostle Paul did in a crisis. Watch Thursday's show; four things to do in a crisis. I'm not going to repeat myself here. You can just watch it. Paul did four things in a crisis and we ought to do the same thing. And then just Friday, Good Friday, we had the great Jack Hibbs, Pastor Jack Hibbs on from the Calvary Chapel, Chino Hills. Amazing guy, great church, just spoke out there a few weeks ago. And Jack, we talked a lot about the passion. We talked a lot about Jesus. We talked a lot about salvation and sanctification and took a lot of questions.

In fact, we took questions every with every one of these programs. So, avail yourself so those shows coming up this coming week. On Monday we're going to have Brian Crain, who is the CEO of the Orange County Rescue Mission. What can you do to help the people who need food and clothing right now, and the homeless? On Tuesday, we plan to have Dr. Stephen Meyer on to talk about viruses. What are they? Are they intelligently designed? Wednesday, Charlie Kirk from Turning Point USA is scheduled to be on. If you haven't heard of Turning Point USA, amazing on-campus ministry. And then we've got some other shows coming up after that. But check out Hope One because we're doing the show live every day. I hope it's actually bringing hope.

Now one thing before we get into the evidence, I got to say about this coronavirus situation. It struck me just this week, do you realize that we know more about the morality of the coronavirus than we do about the science of the coronavirus? You realize that? What do I mean by the morality? We know with certainty that it's wrong to allow a virus to indiscriminately kill people, if we can prevent it, because we know people are valuable. They're made in the likeness and image of God and we want to protect them. Almost everybody agrees with that. We know what this virus is, and what its transmission rate is, and what its death rate is, and how it's transmitted. We know more about the morality than the science of it. Think about that.

In fact, you know more about the morality, about your own behavior, than you know about scientific issues. You know you need a savior more than anyone. I do, too. But why do we have these different models out there that started out saying there'd be 2.5 million people dead if we did nothing. And even the models that said, if we really locked down the country, we could lose up to 250,000 people. Now the models are saying we might lose only 60,000 or maybe even less. Why? Because we don't have the data. We know more about morality than we do



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about science, in many instances. In fact, you couldn't know much about science unless you had a moral code. Like part of the moral code is, report your results accurately when you're doing science. That's part of morality. And if I had more time, I'll do this in a future program, I'd like to point out to you that in order to even do science, you need certain metaphysical principles that can't be proven by science. In addition to morality, you need cause and effect, you need the laws of nature, you need uniformity. You need so many other things. Your senses can understand the truth about the real world. Those are all metaphysical claims and philosophical claims rather than they are scientific results.

Anyway, when we come back, we'll talk about the evidence for the resurrection. Did it really occur? Because if it did, it's our ultimate hope; if it didn't occur, there is no hope. I'm Frank Turek. You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. We're back in two minutes.

Ladies and gentlemen, can you help me with something? Can you help me get this podcast before more people? Not only tell your friends about it but go up to iTunes and put a five-star review on the, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist podcast. If you do that it will help us move the podcast up the charts so more people will hear it. Thank you so much for partnering with me on this.

Did Jesus of Nazareth, the most influential human being to ever walk the earth, who never traveled more than 200 miles from his home, who never wrote a book, who never led a business, who never went to college, who never led an army, or led people politically. Did that person, Jesus of Nazareth really rise from the dead? That's the question. Well, in order to answer the question, we have to figure out, is it really true that God exists? Because there can't be a resurrection unless God exists, because a resurrection is something that overpowers the laws of nature. And if there's nothing beyond the laws of nature, then how can you say Jesus could have resurrected from the dead? And a lot of people will philosophically rule out a resurrection because they say miracles don't occur.

Now, as you know, as we've covered many times in this program, and we cover quite a bit on college campuses, and high school campuses, and in churches, there's very good evidence that God exists. In fact, one primary piece of evidence that God exists is that the universe exploded



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into being out of nothing. That once there was no space, matter, or time, and then the entire space-time continuum leaped into existence out of nothing. This has even led atheist scientists to admit the universe had a beginning. Stephen Hawking famously said, "Almost everyone now believes that the universe and time itself at a beginning at the Big Bang".

Well, if the universe had a beginning, then whatever created the universe must be beyond the universe. If space, time, and matter had a beginning out of nothing, whatever created space, time, and matter seems to, by logic, would have to be something spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful to create the universe out of nothing, personal in order to choose to create, because impersonal forces can't create, can't choose anything. They just do the same thing over and over again. The being would also have to be intelligent. You get this from the fact that space, time, and matter had a beginning, so whatever created space, time, and matter must transcend it. It must be spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, intelligent, at the very least. Now this doesn't necessarily prove the Christian God, but it seems to disprove atheism. There must be a mind, a being out there; a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, intelligent being out there, that chose to create the universe.

In other words, Genesis 1:1 appears to be true; "In the beginning God created the heavens in the earth." If Genesis 1:1 is true, then resurrections are possible. In fact, if Genesis 1:1 is true, every other verse in the Bible is possible. You just can't rule it out because you say, well, miracles don't occur. Well, the greatest miracle, the beginning of the universe out of nothing, has already occurred. So, lesser miracles inside the universe are certainly possible. If God can create the universe out of nothing, He can certainly resurrect Jesus from the dead.

First piece of evidence. We have a theistic universe. And there are other arguments, for God. That's not the only one but let's just stop there. This is a theistic universe and miracles are, at least, possible. You just can't philosophically rule them out.

Secondly, love exists. How is that an argument for the resurrection? Well, it's not an argument, directly, for the resurrection, but it's an argument that says, there's a being that created us that loves us. And if he knows that we're in trouble, in the sense that we're sinners, and we need someone to take our punishment, he might come and save us. And everyone knows love exists. Well, what is the ground of love? It's God's nature. If God is a loving being, you would expect he



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would come at some point to rescue us, and he does. We should expect God to somehow rescue us, and according to the Scriptures, according to Genesis 3:15, as soon as the crime occurred, the redemption plan was put into place. The first prophecy is Genesis 3:15, that God's gonna send deliver to crush the head of Satan. It starts there. The rest of the Bible is the story of that redemption plan.

In fact, if you had to sum up the Bible, in one word would be the word redemption. You have paradise lost in Genesis, paradise regained in Revelation, everything in between is the story of redemption. And God, because He loves us, sets that plan into place. You also have Old Testament prophecy that points to a Messiah, who would be a suffering servant, who would die and pay for our iniquities. Isaiah chapter 53. We've been through that many times before. You could also look at Daniel nine. If you do the math on Daniel nine, by the way, you find out that the Messiah would come and be cut off in 33 AD. We've cover that in the book, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*.

You've got that the Messiah would be born and he'd be called eternity. He would be born in Bethlehem, according to Micah 5:2. By the way, there are two Bethlehems in Israel. You know, there's one in the north and one in the south. It actually names the right Bethlehem too. It's one in the south, down near Jerusalem. You got Old Testament prophecy that talks about this Jesus is the only one that fits these Old Testament prophecies. By the way, this Messiah would come from the line of David. Jeremiah 23. Born of a virgin. He was born of a virgin, actually. By the way, born of a virgin. Why is that important? Well, it's just another miracle. No, it also seems to indicate that the reason Jesus is born of a virgin is not just for a miracle. It's so Jesus doesn't have a sin nature. Apparently, the sin nature is transmitted by the man. Sorry guys. We're the carriers. But a woman impregnated by the Holy Spirit would give birth to a baby that didn't have a sin nature. He's innocent. Doesn't have the sin of Adam. Doesn't have a sin nature. Jesus didn't, but he was 100% human. So, you got Old Testament prophecy.

Also, you've got early testimony that New Testament documents are written very early. And the data from which some of the New Testament documents are taken, or are informed, or this data informs the New Testament documents, are extremely early. For example, if you go to First Corinthians 15, the earliest evidence for the resurrection anywhere in the Bible, if you go there, you're going to read that there is a creed in First Corinthians chapter 15:3-8. I don't have



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time to read it right now, but the creed tells who Jesus appeared to. That he was buried, that he rose again, that he appeared to so many people. That creed, even atheists agree, goes all the way back to the event itself.

Bart Ehrman, the famous atheist says, this is within one or two years of the alleged resurrection of the crucifixion. So, we're talking in the early 30s AD, or 35 at the latest. Yes, Paul wrote that in First Corinthians, which he wrote in about 55 AD, but it comes from an oral tradition, a creed that was in a rhythmic form so people could memorize it easily. It comes from right near the event itself. So, the documents are early and some of the sources for the documents are extremely early, like this creed. Gary Habermas is, you know, the top scholar in the world in the resurrection, wrote a book number of years ago called, *Historical Jesus*, in which he identified at least 41 creeds that are found in the New Testament. This is probably the most famous one First Corinthians 15:3-8.

These aren't stories made up. They're not even made up decades later. They're not made up at all, but they don't even come from decades later, because the creed, in particular, is quite early. And the earliest documents in the New Testament are probably written in the 40s AD. Some, some have even suggested the late 30s. But it's early, regardless, because you have very early testimony. This is not legendary stuff two generations later. This is stuff that comes very, very early. In fact, Collin Hemmer, the great Roman historian, makes a great case we repeat in, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, that most, if not all of the New Testament documents are written prior to 70 AD. Actually, his case was that Acts was written by 62. And if Acts is written by 62, Luke is before then, and then all the dominoes fall after that.

Dr. Geisler and I said, it seems to us that most if not all of the New Testament documents are written prior to 70 AD. This is all in the lifetime of the eyewitnesses while they're still around. So, you've got Genesis 1:1 being true. This is a theistic universe. You get the fact that love exists. We all know love exists. The source of love is going to come rescue us. You've got Old Testament prophecy. We've got early testimony. We also have eyewitness details that only an eyewitness would know. This is throughout the New Testament documents, but here's just a few examples. The second half of the book of Acts has 84 eyewitness details in it, or eyewitness historically probable details. Collin Hemmer, the guy I just mentioned, the Roman historian, wrote a book on this called, *Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, in which he went through



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the entire book of Acts with a fine tooth comb, and picked out all the places that Luke talks about, and all the things he says, and he finds on 84 four occasions they're all telling what appear to be something only an eyewitness would know. Or someone who knew an eyewitness.

Luke is an eyewitness to some of this stuff, or he knows eyewitnesses, and he's a meticulous historian. In the Gospel of John, as Dr. Craig Blomberg has found, there are 59 eyewitness details, or historically probable eyewitness details. These things are something only an eyewitness would know. At the crucifixion, by the way, you know, it talks about Jesus having...after the spear goes in his side, blood and water comes out. And John, who reports this, probably thought it was miraculous. But actually, that's what you would see in a crucified victim, in the sack around the heart, the pericardium, there would be a watery fluid. And if you were to puncture that with a spear, blood and what appeared to be water, would come out. Now, how would he know this if he wasn't a medical doctor? How would he know this unless he saw it? Or somebody saw it and told him about it? This seems to be an eyewitness detail.

You said, maybe he saw somebody else getting crucified. Well still, even if he did, I mean, it's an eyewitness detail. I mean, you could say almost anything. But to explain this, except the most reasonable thing was that he saw it. That's the most reasonable thing. Maybe somebody else saw somebody else get crucified and said this was... Yeah, but there's too many ad hoc ways of explaining something, when in fact, if you look at all the details, it seems like these people were eyewitnesses. In many other respects, as well. This is one out of 59, just in the Gospel of John. There's 84 in Acts. There are several other eyewitness details, scattered throughout the New Testament, that have been proven to be eyewitness details, or, at least to a great degree, a probability. If that's the case, these people are really eyewitnesses. They're not making this up. And why would they make it up? They're Jews. We'll get to that a little bit later.

You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek. Did Jesus of Nazareth really rise from the dead? That's what the Easter weekend is all about. Is it really true? I don't have enough faith to believe it wasn't. More on that after the break. Don't go anywhere.

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knowledge of God, and become a better defender of the Christian faith. Also, don't forget to subscribe to our YouTube channel, where we have hundreds of videos, and over 100,000 subscribers, that are part of an online family. Find those by searching for Frank Turek or CrossExamined in the search bar. You can find many more resources like articles, online courses, free downloadable materials, event calendars, and more at crossexamined.org.

Our website crossexamined.org, where you will find a live stream every day at 11:30am (ET), on the weekday, anyway. Hope you can join us for, Hope One. And there are several other resources up there. There are online courses you can take. There are scores of videos, actually hundreds of videos on our YouTube channel. They're also on our Facebook page. If you're just sitting around and you got nothing else to do, even if you got something else to do, hopefully they're edifying and helpful. Check out those videos, check out the blog, check out what we have there on the website, on the online courses. And join us every day if you can for the Hope One show. You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek.

On this Easter weekend, this resurrection weekend, before we left, we were talking about some eyewitness details. And there are so many that we list in, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. You can get that to go further. Let's talk, also, about embarrassing stories. This is another reason to think that the New Testament writers aren't making this up. They're not making the resurrection up. Because there's embarrassing stories that actually make them look bad. For example, Peter, their leader, is called Satan by Jesus. Do you think they made this up? You think Mark, who wrote that down, said to Peter at one point, hey, Pete, I'm gonna make this a real interesting story. I'm gonna have the Lord call you Satan. Have him call you Satan. If I'm Peter, I'm not allowing him to do that. That's embarrassing. That makes me look bad. And also, their leader, Peter says, Lord, I'll never deny you. What does he wind up doing? He winds up denying him three times. That's embarrassing.

And then at the crucifixion, what happens? All the disciples, maybe with the exception of one, they all run away. This is like a Monty Python movie. Run away. They all run away. And who are the brave ones? Ladies? Yes. The women. The women are the brave ones. Now, who wrote the New Testament down? Men. Now what man is going to make up that he was hiding for fear of the Jews while the women went down discovered the empty tomb? Would any man you know make that up? No way. I mean, if I was there, and I wanted to make it up, I'd make myself look



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good. I'd write something down like, we marched right down to that Roman tomb, and we saw those Roman guards, and we overpowered them. Peter said, Get out. John said, we'll be back. And then on Sunday morning, we marched right down to the tomb, and we saw Jesus, who congratulated us on our great faith. And then we went and comforted the trembling women. I would never say, I was Mr. Sissy Pants while the women went down and discovered the empty tomb. But that's what the New Testament documents essentially say. This is embarrassing. They're not making it up.

And I can't believe this next verse is in the New Testament, but it is. Well, before I get there, the other thing...think about this...it's embarrassing to have the men not be the first witnesses and have the women be the first witnesses. That's embarrassing right there. The men run away, and the women are the first witnesses. But for a completely non-related reason, it's also embarrassing to say the women were the witnesses at all. Why? Because a woman's testimony was not considered on par with that of a man. So, if you're making up the New Testament story, you'd only have the men be the first witnesses. Yet all four gospels say the women were the first witnesses. Why? Because they really were. They had no motive to make this up. They had every motive to say it wasn't true, not every motive to say it was. I actually had a woman come up to me once and she said, "Frank, I know Jesus appeared to the women first". I said, "why?" And she said, "cuz he wanted to get the story out". I said, "that is an excellent point. I hadn't thought of this." I mean, you know, think about it. Ladies, when your man comes home from work does he say much? There could have been a nuclear explosion down at the plant. He's not going to tell you. You'll see it on the news before you hear it from him. He'll be watching the news going, hey, hon, what happened? Oh, yeah, I forgot to tell you the nuke blew up. I've been hot for three days. What's for dinner? You know, he's not gonna tell you.

Also, this verse...it's hard for me to believe this is in the New Testament. But it is. You know, the Great Commission? Of course, you do. You're listening to the American Family Radio Network. You know the Great Commission. This is Matthew chapter 28. This is the climax of the Gospel of Matthew. He's about to give his disciples the Great Commission. He's standing there saying, "Go therefore, make disciples of all nations". By the way, notice he doesn't say make believers. He says make disciples. There's a difference, right? Anyway, he says, make disciples of all nations. Right there in verse 17, about his disciples who were there, it says, some believed, but some doubted. What? He's standing right in front of them. The resurrected Jesus is standing in



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front of the disciples. And the text actually says some believe but some doubted. Do you think they're making this up? This is not a flattering situation. If you're making this up, you'd say nobody ever doubted. We always believed. In fact, we knew before you were killed, you'd be resurrected. No, they don't say any of that. They're scared, scattered, skeptical, doubtful disciples. It's not a made up story.

There's embarrassing stories about Jesus in there. His own brothers don't believe in him. That's embarrassing. He's called a drunkard. He's called demon possessed. He has his feet wiped with the hair of a prostitute, which easily could have been seen as a sexual advance. In fact, there's even two prostitutes in his bloodline. The Jewish Messiah, his bloodline has two prostitutes in it. Rahab and Tamar. Do you think they made this up? Do you think Matthew and Luke got together and said, you know, when they're putting together the genealogies, and said, you know what, I really think we need to spice up the Messiah's bloodline a little bit? Let's put a couple of prostitutes. No. They're just telling the truth, as embarrassing as it is.

There are many more embarrassing details we have in the book, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*. You can get those if you want. But this is just telling me this is not an invented story. There's also embedded confirmation. What's embedded confirmation? Embedded confirmation is what is sometimes called undesigned coincidences. Undesigned coincidences. We talked at length about this, probably a couple years ago, and we had Lydia McGrew on who did a book called, *Hidden in Plain View*. You can go back and listen to that podcast, *Hidden in Plain View*. I talked about it a little bit in the book, *Stealing from God*. But if you just Google undesigned coincidences, you'll find them. What are undesigned coincidences? Let me just give you one example. There are many examples, but one Gospel says that there was at Jesus's mocking, on Good Friday, they were hitting him, and spitting on him, and saying, tell me, prophesy to us Christ. Who hit you? And you're going, really? Why would that be a prophecy? The guy is standing right in front of them.

Then you go to another gospel, I think it's the Gospel of Luke, and he describes the same situation except it says, Luke says, they blindfolded him. Now when you're reading the first gospel, you're going, I don't quite get it. Why would it be prophecy to say, the guy who's standing in front of you, right in front of you, hit you? But now I understand when I read Luke's Gospel, because Jesus was blindfolded. In other words, both writers are independently



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witnessing the same historical event, but one is giving a little bit more detail that clears up ambiguity in the other gospel. In other words, they couldn't have invented this. It's not like one guy left that little detail out so the other guy could fill it in. Hey, let's, you know, let's conspire to do that. No. This is what happens with eyewitness details. You have people giving some details, and other people giving other details, but they all agree on the central fact. What's the central fact? Jesus was crucified. First of all, he was mocked, and then he was whipped and crucified. They all agree on that. They just tell the story with different details. And when you compare the details, you go, oh, this one guy tells me a little bit more and it clears up the ambiguity I had with the other account. They couldn't do that. If this was contrived. And there's several of these. I just gave you one in the interest of time.

Another reason to believe in the resurrection is, there's an empty tomb. An empty Jewish tomb, in fact. And the Jews could have stopped Christianity in its tracks if they could just take the body out of the tomb, Jesus's body out of the tomb, and parade it around the city. The Romans could have done the same thing. None of them did that. Why? Because Jesus was still using his body. His body wasn't in the tomb. It was empty. Yet, they could have stopped all the trouble they were trying to stop by simply producing Jesus's body, in a known tomb, in a known place, and they couldn't do it.

In fact, here's another piece of evidence they're telling the truth. The Jews actually admitted the tomb was empty. That's why they came up with the story about, the disciples came and stole the body. You say, well, how do you know that? Well, it's in the Gospel of Matthew. Well, how do you know Matthew is telling the truth? Isn't that circular reasoning? No, it's not just Matthew, who's saying this. There's Jewish writers at the time saying this, which is admitting the tomb is empty. And by the way, if Matthew, who was writing to the Jews, put a blatant lie in his text to say, here's the Jew's explanation of the empty tomb, and it wasn't really their explanation, he would have discredited his entire message. That must have been the Jews explanation for the tomb being empty, that the disciples came and stole the body while the guards were asleep. But that very admission presupposes the tomb is empty. It's an admission that the tomb is empty.

And by the way, when you have enemy testimony that helps your case, that's very powerful. Why? Well, look, if it's friendly testimony, the guy might lie. Right? Or is biased toward you. You



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know, your mother says you're brave, everyone goes, okay, that's mom. We get it. But if your arch enemy says you're brave, guess what? You're brave. That's it. Your enemy has affirmed something that helps your case. Here's a situation where the Jews are affirming something that helps the Christian case. The tomb was empty. Christianity could have been stopped if the tomb wasn't empty. And it wasn't.

What other evidence do we have? Paul was converted. James was converted. In fact, Gary Habermas, who I mentioned earlier, has a minimal facts approach to the resurrection. He says, virtually more than 90% of scholars, that he has surveyed...and these are scholars who are New Testament scholars, trained in the field. There are anywhere from atheists to Christian. Yes, there are new testament scholars that aren't Christians. They're atheists, agnostics you know, Bart Ehrman, others. More than 90%, based on the evidence, more than 90% of scholars will say, yes, Paul was converted. He was an opponent of Christianity who was converted.

They will also say James, although it's lesser attested about James. He's not as central a figure as Paul, but they agree James was converted. Really? The half-brother of Jesus, who didn't think his own brother was God when he walked the earth. And then suddenly, he's converted, and 30 years later dies as a martyr for his own brother, in the city in which Jesus allegedly rose from the dead in. Yeah. You know, tells us this? Josephus, the Jewish historian. That James was killed in 62 AD, in Jerusalem, by the Sanhedrin, who threw him off the temple mountain and stoned him to death. It's not even a Christian source telling us this. It's Josephus, the Jewish historian. Why is James doing this? Because Jesus appeared to them. That's what the creed First Corinthians 15 says. There's more evidence that Jesus rose from the dead and we'll get into it after the break.

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What evidence do we have that Jesus of Nazareth, the most influential human being to ever walk the earth, actually rose from the dead? Been through some evidence here. Let me just mention some more evidence before I want to read to you something about the passion, which is very moving to me.

In addition to James being converted, priests were converted. Look at Acts 6:7. Luke actually says that many priests were converted to the faith. Luke would have lost all credibility with the Pharisees if he had suggested they had been converted and they weren't. Why is that in there? Because it really happened. There are 500 eyewitnesses cited in First Corinthians 15. Who are these eyewitnesses? Do we have anything from them? No, but that's not the point. The point is, Paul would have lost all credibility with the church at Corinth if he had said all these people had seen the risen Jesus, and many of whom are still alive, if it didn't happen. The Jews proclaimed it and die for it. Why are Jews inventing a resurrected Jesus? They're not. These people were believers in Yahweh. They thought they were God's chosen people. Why are they inventing a resurrected Christ? They're not. They had every reason to say it wasn't true, not every reason to say it did. There are also extra-biblical writers, which I don't have time to get into. And there's even the growth of the church from Jerusalem. How do you explain that if Jesus' tomb was occupied? Jews would never write about this unless it really happened. Remember, the New Testament writers did not create the resurrection. The resurrection created the New Testament writers. There wouldn't even be a New Testament, written by Jews in the first century, unless Jesus rose from the dead.

All right, friends, I hope I have enough time to do this. But every Passion Week, resurrection week, I read an account of the crucifixion, because it reminds me of what Jesus did for me and you. I'll try and get through as much as this is I can. It's in the book, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, page 381. I want to warn you right now young people, very young people. You got young people in here, this is going to be pretty brutal.

It's on page 381. And it's an account of the crucifixion of Jesus. The whip the Roman soldiers use on Jesus has small iron balls and sharp pieces of sheet bones tied to it. Jesus is stripped of



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his clothing and his hands are tied to an upright post. His back, buttocks, and legs are whipped, either by one soldier, or by two who alternated positions. The soldiers taunt their victim, as they repeatedly strike Jesus's back with the full force of the iron balls. They cause deep contusions and the sheep bones cut into the skin in the tissues. As the whipping continues, the lacerations tear into the underlying skeletal muscles, and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh. Pain and blood loss set the stage for a circulatory shock.

When it is determined, by the centurion in charge, that Jesus is near death, the beating is finally stopped. The half-feigning Jesus is then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with his own blood. The Roman soldiers see a great joke in this provincial Jew claiming to be a king. They throw a robe across his shoulders and place a stick in his hand for a scepter. They still need a crown to make their travesty complete. A small bundle of flexible branches, covered with long thorns, are plaited into the shape of a crown, and this is pressed into his scalp. Again, there is copious bleeding, the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body.

After mocking him and striking him across the face, the soldiers take the stick from his hand and strike him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into his scalp. Finally, when they tire of their sadistic sport, the robe is torn from his back. The robe had already become adherent to the clots of blood and serum in the wounds, and the removal, just as the careless removal of a surgical bandage, causes excruciating pain, almost as though he were being whipped again. The wounds again begin to bleed. In deference to Jewish customs, the Romans return his garments.

The heavy horizontal beam of the cross is tied across his shoulders, and the procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves, and the execution party walked along the Via Della Rossa. In spite of his efforts to walk erect, the weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by copious blood loss is too much. He stumbles and falls. The rough wood of the beam gouges into the lacerated skin and muscles of his shoulders. He tries to rise, but human muscles have been pushed beyond their endurance.

The Centurion, anxious to get on with the crucifixion, selects a stalwart North African onlooker, Simon of Cyrene, to carry the cross. Jesus follows still bleeding and sweating the cold clammy sweat of shock. The 650 yard journey from the Fortress Antonia to Golgotha is finally



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completed. Jesus is again stripped of his clothes, except for the loincloth, which is allowed the Jews. The crucifixion begins. Jesus is offered wine, mixed with myrrh, a mild painkilling mixture. He refuses to drink.

Simon is ordered to place the cross beam on the ground and Jesus is quickly thrown backward with his shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square, wrought iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tight, but to allow some flexibility and movement. The beam is then lifted, and the title reading, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, is nailed into place. The victim, Jesus, is now crucified.

As he slowly sags down, with more weight on the nails than the wrists, excruciating fiery pain shoots along the fingers, and up the arms, to explode in the brain. The nails and the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As he pushes himself toward upward, to avoid this stretching torment, he places the full weight on the nail through his feet. Again, there's the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet.

At this point, another phenomenon occurs. As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push himself upward. Hanging by his arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed, and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but it cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon monoxide builds up in the lungs, and in the bloodstream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, he's able to push himself upward to exhale, and to bring in life giving oxygen. It is undoubtedly during these periods that he utters the seven short sentences that are recorded. Now begin hours of this limitless pain, cycles of cramping and twisting, partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from his lacerated back, as he moves up and down against the rough timber.

Then another agony begins. A deep, crushing pain in the chest, as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart. It is now almost over. The loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level. Compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into



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the tissues. The tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain.

His mission of atonement has been completed. Finally, he can allow his body to die. With one last surge of strength, he once again presses his torn feet against the nail, straightens his legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters his seventh and last cry. Father into your hands I commit my spirit.

Jesus went through all that, ladies and gentlemen, so that you and I could be reconciled to him. So, we could be saved from our sins by affirming, father into your hands I commit my life. That one solitary life is the most influential life in human history. So, because three days after this, on the third day, he walked out of that tomb, after being tortured in that way, the risen Lord of life. And that's why he's the most influential human being to ever walk the earth. Because he rose from the dead to prove he was also God. And he said, "I did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give my life as a ransom for many". That was the ransom.

The question is, have you ever accepted the ransom, because you and I have sinned. We've fallen short. We need to be punished for what we've done, because God is infinitely just. And if there's any justice at all, God is the standard of justice. I haven't been just. You haven't been just. So, why wouldn't you accept the fact that Jesus was just and took your punishment on himself, so you could be forgiven for what you've done, and you could be given his righteousness? Why wouldn't you accept that? This is the greatest news ever spoken of. This is the greatest news ever. It's the good news. Why wouldn't you accept it? Why wouldn't you repent of what you've done and accept it?

Look, you don't achieve your salvation in Christianity. You receive your salvation. You don't achieve your identity in Christianity. You receive your identity. Because there was an eyewitness there by the name of John who said, that God has given you the right to become his child, by believing in what Jesus has done. Have you ever done that? Have you ever repented of your sins, and believed, and trusted in Jesus? That's the message of this weekend ladies and gentlemen.



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