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with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

## **He is Risen! Examining the Evidence for the Resurrection with Dr. Jonathan McLatchie**

(March 29, 2024)

### **FRANK:**

Welcome to CrossExamined with Dr. Frank Turek, ladies and gentlemen. "Ninety-eight years ago, in 1926, Dr. James Allen Francis wrote a short sermon called 'One Solitary Life.' It's about Jesus. Here's how it goes. He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant. He grew up in another village, where He worked in a carpenter's shop until he was 30.

Then for three years, He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a home. He didn't go to college. He never lived in a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where He was born. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself.

He was only 33 when the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for His garments, the only property He had on earth. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave, a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure of the human race. I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one solitary life."

Now, ladies and gentlemen, how can this one solitary life from a remote corner of the ancient Roman empire be the most influential human being in history? How did this happen? If He had just died, would it have happened? Would He be the central, most influential human being in human history if He hadn't resurrected from the dead? And since this is Resurrection Week and Resurrection Sunday, I want to talk about this in some depth with my friend, Dr. Jonathan McLatchie.

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Jonathan has his PhD in evolutionary biology, but he's not an evolutionist. He's actually an intelligent design proponent, and he works with the Discovery Institute out in Seattle, Washington. But Jonathan is also a skilled apologist in many of these areas, including the resurrection.

So, I wanted to have Jonathan on, and he also has started a new ministry where you can actually get a scholar on the phone or in a Zoom meeting personally if you're experiencing doubts about Christianity. And we'll get into that as we progress in the program. But first, Jonathan, welcome to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, my friend. How are you?

**JONATHAN:**

Great to be here. Thanks so much for having me on. Doing very well.

**FRANK:**

Thanks for getting up early here out there in Seattle. And Jonathan, you've debated a lot of people. Your website has links to all the debates. In fact, the website you want to go to, to see all those debates, which one would it be, Jonathan? Is it on talkaboutdoubts.com? Where is it?

**JONATHAN:**

You can go to my website, JonathanMcLatchie.com, that links to a lot of my YouTube videos and my channel there as well. You can also go to YouTube.com and type in my name, Jonathan McLatchie, and you'll find my channel.

**FRANK:**

Yes. And Jonathan, originally from Scotland, as you can see. And McLatchie, by the way, is spelled McLatchie. And Jonathan, let's start with, in talking about Jesus, I know not many scholars would say He never existed. I mean, even Bart Ehrman, the most vociferous, probably opponent of Christianity who is a New Testament scholar, says it's crazy to say He never existed. But is there anybody out there really saying that Jesus never existed?

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**JONATHAN:**

Not really seriously. I mean, the number of scholars that actually take that position seriously, I can count on one hand. And that's out of thousands and thousands of scholars who are experts in New Testament studies or the historical Jesus, early Christianity, that sort of thing. So, no, it's not really a position that's taken seriously in academia.

I mean, even scholars that don't take the gospels to be, granted an incredible eyewitness testimony like I do, would still nonetheless argue that the letters of Paul alone are sufficient to conclude that a historical Jesus existed because Paul was personally acquainted with Jesus' own brother James, and Jesus' closest disciple, Peter. And so, since Paul evidently thought that Jesus existed, and He's very much connected with Jesus' closest disciple and his brother, it provides, I think, a strong basis for thinking that Jesus in fact exists historically.

**FRANK:**

Yeah, it would be really hard to figure out how the most influential human being in history didn't exist at all. How did that happen? In fact, that little poem or sermon I read at the top of the program, friends, we have in our book 'Hollywood Heroes: How Your Favorite Movies Reveal God.'

And one of the questions that you can consider, if you're trying to say Jesus never existed, it would be like somebody saying that, imagine 2000 years from now, the most influential human being in history is Luke Skywalker. Right? Like, nobody would imagine that that would be possible, that a fictional character would be considered 2000 years from now to be a historical person who is also the most influential human being in history.

Nobody would even suggest that's possible. And that's essentially what you'd be saying about Jesus of Nazareth. If you're trying to say He never existed, okay? We all know He existed. It would be really hard to invent this character Jesus, as the New Testament documents have invented them according to this theory. But let's just deal now with the resurrection itself, Jonathan, because that's the center of the Christian faith.

If the resurrection's true, Christianity is true. If the resurrection's false, if He didn't rise from the dead, then Christianity's false, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15. So, there's a couple of

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possibilities here, it seems to me. One is that the New Testament writers invented this whole story about Jesus rising from the dead. Another is that they thought it was true, but they really were deceived.

And of course, the third possibility is, no, it really happened. He really rose from the dead. Why don't we talk about the idea that they invented this? Where would you start? I mean, it's a big subject, but where would you start if somebody said, hey, Dr. McLatchie? No, this was all invented by the New Testament writers.

**JONATHAN:**

Yeah. So, the approach that I would take to making the case for the resurrection is what we call a maximal data case. And basically, it's a two-step approach. The first step is to establish that the accounts that we have in the Gospels and Acts actually reflect the unembellished testimony of those who are purportedly witnesses of the resurrection.

And having established that, we move on to the second step of the argument, which is to evaluate why the Apostles made the sorts of claims that they did concerning the nature and variety of the resurrection encounters with the risen Jesus. And as you rightly pointed out, when we're evaluating any set of testimonial claims, there are basically three broad explanatory categories.

So, you can give an account of why the claim was made. Namely, the claimant is lying or is sincerely mistaken, or in fact, the claim is true. And you asked specifically about how we know that the early Apostles, those who were purportedly the witnesses of the resurrection, weren't making things up and setting out to deceive people.

And there's a number of arguments for this, most particularly the fact that those who are purportedly witnesses of the resurrection are willing to undergo and voluntarily endure sufferings, and hardships, and dangers, and imprisonments, in some cases martyrdom, on account of their testimony of the resurrection.

William Paley points out in his book, 'A View of the Evidence of Christianity' I'm quoting. He was a famous Christian philosopher who wrote in the late 1700's. He says there was satisfactory

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evidence that many professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles passed their lives, and labors, dangers, and sufferings voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts, and that they also submitted from the same motives to new rules of conduct.

There is evidence for the broad context of persecution in the Pauline letters. Philippians 1, for example, verses 29 and 30. For it has been granted to you for the sake of Christ, that you should not only believe in Him, but also suffer for His sake, engaged in the same conflict that ye saw I had. And now here that I still have. We see other references in 2 Corinthians, and 2 Thessalonians, and Romans, and Hebrews, and in James, and so forth.

You see references to the persecution of early Christians in the Gospels, Matthew 24:9, for example. You'll be delivered up to tribulation and you'll be put to death, and you'll be hated by all nations for my name's sake, and so forth. So, there's a lot of evidence for the general context of persecution.

**FRANK:**

And there's much more with Dr. Jonathan McLatchie. Did Jesus really rise from the dead? That's what we're talking about today. And you can also talk to a scholar live online about any of these issues. We'll tell you how to do it later in the program. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with me, Frank Turek on the American Family Radio network. Back in two minutes.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek on the American Family Radio network. Happy Resurrection week or weekend, ladies and gentlemen. Yes, He really has risen from the dead, and there's great evidence for it. We're talking about some of that evidence here today with my friend Dr. Jonathan McLatchie of the Discovery Institute.

But let me mention before we get back to Jonathan, there's a lot coming up on the calendar this week. We're going to be at the University of Buffalo. Yeah, Buffalo, New York. That's going to be on the third Wednesday night. Everybody is welcome. If you're near Buffalo, come on by.

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Go to our website, [Crossexamined.org](http://Crossexamined.org) for details. Then this coming weekend, the 7th, I'll be at Calvary Chapel Star. That's right outside of Boise, Idaho. And then that's in the morning.

And then on Sunday night I'll be at Mountain Heights Calvary Chapel, also near Boise, Idaho. The next night we're going to be at Boise State University. That will also be live streamed. That'll be 9:00 p.m. on the, let's see, Eastern Time Zone and 7:00 p.m. out there in the Mountain Time Zone. That will be live streamed.

And then keep an eye out because the following weekend, actually the 19th and 20th, I'll be out at the Worldview Apologetics Conference, not far from where Jonathan McLatchie is right now. Jonathan, we're coming out there. That's going to be in Bellevue, Washington and then at Antioch Bible Church. And where is that going to be?

That's going to be in Kirkland, Washington, on the 21st. Culture and Christianity Conference in Murfreesboro on the 26th of, that's a Friday night of April. Then Fervent Church in Las Vegas on the 28th. And then we have some events coming up in May that I'll get to in the next podcast. Just keep an eye out for that.

I'm talking to my friend, Dr. Jonathan McLatchie. We are talking about the evidence for the resurrection. Now, Jonathan, just before the break, you were pointing out that not only did these people who wrote this down, they were very much into the idea that they were going to have to suffer just like Jesus. That doesn't appear to be something somebody would invent, a resurrected story, in order to get themselves beaten, tortured, and killed. Continue with that thought, if you will.

**JONATHAN:**

Absolutely. It goes a long way towards establishing that they were at least sincere in making that claim, because people will be willing to die for something they believe to be true. But very few people, if anyone, is willing to die for something that they believe to be false. So, I mentioned, we've got throughout the letters of Paul, and Hebrews, and James, and so on, we have these references instructing Christians to bear up in the midst of persecution.

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And given that you have these letters that are distributed all around the Mediterranean, it suggests that there was in fact in the first century, a broad context of persecution, first from the Jewish side and then later from the Romans. I mentioned Matthew 24:9. There's also Jesus words in Mark 13 where He says, but be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake to bear witness before them.

And the Gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand about what you are to say. But say whatever is given you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit, and so on. And it seems unlikely that if there was no such context of persecution that the early Christians would have attributed those sayings to Jesus.

There's also more direct evidence that bears on the Apostles specifically. So, narrowing in our focus from the broad context of persecution to the Apostles in particular. In John 21:18, for example, Jesus said to Peter, truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you, and carry you where you do not want go.

And John adds that Jesus said this to tell Peter about what sort of death, by which sort of death he was to glorify God. In other words, he was to die as a martyr. Again, John was writing probably around the year 19 to 95 CE. And so, it's unlikely that if Peter hadn't died in that way, that John would have included that statement, that prophecy, and attributed it to Jesus.

We see in Clement of Rome, who wrote around the year 96 AD. He says, writing to the church in Corinth, but not to dwell upon ancient examples. Let us come to the most recent spiritual heroes. Let us take the noble examples furnished in our own generation through envy and jealousy, the greatest and most righteous pillars of the Church being persecuted and put to death. Let us set before our eyes the illustrious Apostles.

Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two but numerous labors. And when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to Him. And he also speaks about the persecutions of Polycarp of Smyrna, who was writing in the early second

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century, probably around 110 CE. To the Philippians in chapter 9 he says, I exhort you all, therefore, to yield obedience to the word of righteousness and to exercise all patience such as ye have seen set before your eyes, not only in the case of the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in others among yourselves, and in Paul himself, and the rest of the Apostles.

This do in the assurance that all these have not run in vain, but in faith and righteousness, and that they are now in their due place in the presence of the Lord, with whom also they suffered. For they loved not this present world, but Him who died for us and for our sakes, was raised again by God from the dead. Furthermore, you also have the book of Acts. And the Book of Acts meticulously lists the names of the eleven in chapter one, even though a list of the twelve is already supplied by the Gospel of Luke.

And then Luke in the Book of Acts records a scene in which Peter himself is extremely explicit about having no fewer than twelve men who can attest as witnesses to the resurrection. And so, the need to elect a replacement for Judas, that's in Acts 1:15-26. And Acts specifically names the two people, Joseph called Barsabbas and Matthias, who were candidates, and names the person who was chosen by casting lots, which turned out to be Matthias.

And this indicates that those twelve were acting in leadership capacities in Jerusalem in that very early period. Now, in Acts 2:12, we are explicitly told that the eleven were standing up with Peter and endorsing his message on Pentecost. And immediately following Peter's speech people start asking what they need to do in light of his speech.

And this is said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, which in the context has to include all the other eleven. And this indicates that the twelve began speaking boldly on Pentecost, that they were planning to have an important ongoing leadership role in the early Christian movement, and that this leadership role would be focused on testifying to Jesus' resurrection.

And by proclaiming the resurrection boldly at Pentecost, the twelve were already risking their lives for their message. This is a mere six weeks following Jesus own death by crucifixion at the instigation of the Jewish leaders. And Peter's speech hardly spares the feelings of those same leaders. Peter's statements in his address are very confrontational.

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In Acts 2:23, this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised Him up, loosening the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. Acts 2:36, that all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

There is also some additional evidence from succeeding chapters of the continued leadership role of the twelve, despite a context of persecution. So, Acts 2:41-47 indicates that immediately following Peter's speech, the Apostles continued to public ministry. Acts 5:12 states that many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the Apostles, and they were all together in Solomon's portico.

So, this indicates that Solomon's porch was a common meeting place for the Apostles, as it was previously, as indicated in Acts 3:11, as well as in John 10:23, during Jesus own time in Acts 5:17-18 indicates the high priests and the Sadducees arrested the Apostles and put them in the public prison. And they were freed from the prison that same night by an angel, and they resumed preaching the Gospel.

The high priest tells them, we strictly charged you not to teach in this name. Yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us. It's in verse 28. Peter replies, we must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed, by hanging him on a tree.

God exalted Him at his right hand as leader and Savior to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him. Verse 40 indicates that when they had called in the Apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus and let them go.

But in spite of this, we read in verse 42 that every day in the Temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus. So, in other words, not only did they rejoice that they could suffer for Jesus, but they defied the order to stop preaching and teaching publicly. In Acts 6:2, it indicates that in the context of appointing deacons to

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administer to widows, that the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, it's not right that we should give up preaching the Word of God to serve tables.

So, the twelve then appoint certain individuals to deal with this issue, since the twelve need to focus on prayer and religious teaching. And in fact, the twelve are so committed to their dangerous leadership role, the ministry of the word, that they want others to be chosen for other jobs. In acts 7:54-60, it recounts the stoning of Stephen, who was one of the appointed deacons.

Now, he wasn't an apostle himself and wasn't necessarily a witness to Jesus' resurrection. But nonetheless, it should have served as a warning shot for those who were in fact Apostles. And so, that should have been a disincentive if they were in fact making things up in Acts 8:1.

**FRANK:**

Let me jump in for a second, Jonathan, because I can almost hear some of the skeptics listening, going, but Jonathan, you're assuming that all of these texts are true. And isn't that part of the question? In other words, aren't you basically arguing in a circle? Now remember, friends, the context of our question here was, did the New Testament writers invent this for some sort of reason? And nobody's really given us a reason why they would have invented this.

But Jonathan, you're pointing out that these people were persecuted and expected persecution for an invented storyline, that they could have avoided persecution and ultimate death if they hadn't invented this storyline. That's sort of the context of what we're talking about here. So, two things I want to ask. Are there sources outside the New Testament documents that confirm that the early Christians were persecuted for believing this?

And then secondly, do even atheistic New Testament scholars admit that much of what you read in the New Testament documents really did happen? In other words, it's really historical. We're not assuming it's the word of God. So, deal with that second question first. Do these non-Christian historians agree that much of what's written in the New Testament really happened?

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**JONATHAN:**

Well, I don't particularly care what the majority of New Testament scholars say. I'm more interested in the actual data. And the approach that I would take to making the case for the reliability of Acts is to appeal to various lines of external corroboration, as well as undesigned coincidences between the book of Acts and Paul's letters, which show, cumulatively, the book of Acts is composed by an individual who was very well-informed, very close up to the facts, and in the habit of being scrupulous.

And that being the case, that is best explained by him being a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul as well. And so, it's an inductive argument for the substantial trustworthiness of those sources, that he really was trying to get the facts right. He's being scrupulous, of course. He's also putting his own neck on the line, traveling around with Paul during Paul's imprisonments, and persecutions, and so forth.

So, yeah, as for what New Testament scholars say, I mean, scholars are divided on how to understand Acts, both in terms of genre, in terms of reliability and trustworthiness, and so forth, where Luke was a traveling companion of Paul. But I think the evidence is really quite overwhelming for the substantial trustworthiness of Acts and its grounding in credible eyewitness testimony.

**FRANK:**

Yes, in fact, we have in the book 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist,' the 84 details that Acts gets right. In other words, he was an eyewitness, or new eyewitnesses, because it would be very difficult for him to write what he did if he hadn't. But we're going to talk a lot more with Dr. Jonathan McLatchie on the truth of the resurrection so don't go anywhere. He is risen indeed, ladies and gentlemen. We're giving evidence to prove it. Back in just two minutes.

Did Jesus really rise from the dead? We're talking to Dr. Jonathan McLatchie about that right now. We're investigating the question, could the New Testament writers have invented this? And there's really no motive to invent this. As you well know, ladies and gentlemen, as we talked about on this program before, you've really got to detect a motive that seems reasonable for this group of people to invent a resurrected Jesus.

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As our friend J. Warner Wallace has pointed out, from a cold-case homicide perspective, there's really only three major motivations why people would invent something, and that is for sex, money, or power. One of those three things. And if you look at the New Testament writers, they didn't get real popular with the ladies for saying Jesus had resurrected from the dead.

They certainly didn't get money. They weren't 21st century prosperity gospel preachers, and they didn't get power. They got the opposite. As Dr. McLatchie has been highlighting for us, they were persecuted. They didn't get sex, they didn't get money, they didn't get power. There's no motive to make it up.

And just before the break, Jonathan, we were talking about the fact that Acts does appear to be a very reliable source for history. And so, when you're going through the history there in the book of Acts, it can pretty well be trusted. And even scholars that aren't Christians will admit that in many cases, and there are non-Christian sources that talk about the fact that Christians, early Christians, were persecuted. Can you mention a couple of those, Jonathan?

**JONATHAN:**

Yeah, there is certainly evidence of that. We already mentioned references in Polycarp and Clement of Rome. We've looked at the Book of Acts. We've looked at the Gospels. We talked a little bit about the sorting of Stephen, which should have been like a warning shot for those that were involved in the Christian ministry, of the danger that was posed by being associated with the early Christian movement in those days.

Acts 8:1 also informs us that there arose in that day a great persecution against the Church in Jerusalem. And they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles. And so, the text makes this explicit distinction between the Apostles who remained in Jerusalem under the persecution launched by Saul of Tarsus and the other believers.

In Acts 12, we have a specific reference to James, the son of Zebedee, and his martyrdom. So, it says about that time, Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the Church. He killed James, the brother of John with the sword. And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also.

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So, you've got persecution there against Peter as well as James. James gets executed. We also have a reference in Josephus to the brother of Jesus, whose name was James, being executed by stoning. This is from 'Antiquities of the Jews: Volume 20.' It says, Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road. So, he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others or some of his companions.

And when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned. So, to summarize what we've been talking about then, the evidence that I just laid out indicates that the early Apostles, in particular the twelve, continued to hold leadership roles within the Church. And the role of an Apostle was as a witness to Christ's resurrection from the dead. And they did so in spite of a hostile context of persecution.

There was this broad context of persecution. And we have direct evidence that the Apostles themselves voluntarily endured and were subjected to persecutions, imprisonments, dangers, hardships, and so forth on account of the resurrection. And that really goes a long way towards establishing their sincerity.

**FRANK:**

Now, the event you just mentioned, we need to marinate on for just a second, Jonathan. And that is the death of Jesus' half-brother, James. Yes. The same guy that wrote the book of James. The same guy who didn't think Jesus was God while Jesus walked the earth prior to the resurrection. That's what John 7:5 says. His own brothers didn't believe in Him. Now, that's embarrassing.

Yet 30 years later, after the alleged resurrection of Jesus, James, the half-brother of Jesus, dies as a martyr, as essentially the pastor of the church in Jerusalem. He's thrown off the Temple Mount and then stoned to death by the Sanhedrin. And it's Josephus, the Jewish historian, who was probably in Jerusalem at the time. He lived from 37 AD to about 100 AD. He's the one that tells us this.

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And so does Hegesippus, a writer who lived later. Why would his own brother believe that Jesus rose from the dead and pay with his life if he was inventing this? That would make no sense at all, ladies and gentlemen. In fact, according to Sean McDowell, who's done his PhD work, his dissertation on the fate of the Apostles, points out that we have really good first century evidence for four primary Apostles being executed.

James, what we just mentioned, Peter, Paul, and the other James that Jonathan mentioned a minute ago, I think that's recorded in Acts, chapter 12. Why are these people dying brutal deaths if they're inventing all this? It makes zero sense. So, let's move to the next possibility, Jonathan. And that is, they just were deceived.

I mean, they thought He had risen from the dead. They had hallucinations, they had visions. In fact, I was just reading something from Bart Ehrman last night, who says there's no doubt that Paul had a vision of Jesus. There's no doubt about it, he says. And of course, he's an atheist. He's saying he's had some sort of vision. That's what Ehrman is saying. So, he's trying to come up with another explanation. So, for them saying that Jesus had risen from the dead, were they deceived, Jonathan? Did they just think it happened, but they were deceived?

**JONATHAN:**

Yeah So, when we look at the nature of the claimed experiences, we find that they're not the sort of claimed experiences about which one plausibly can be honestly mistaken because they involve, we're not just talking about individual sightings at a great distance and very briefly. But we're talking about group sightings, group conversations with Jesus, physical contact with Jesus. Like He invites Thomas to touch Him, for example, in John 20, involves extended discourses with the risen Jesus.

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus and Luke 24, where He even opens the Scriptures to them and explains the things concerning Himself. It is across the 40-day time period according to Acts one. It involves eating with Jesus on more than one occasion, including an occasion where Jesus cooks breakfast for seven disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. And so, it's really difficult to envision one being plausibly, sincerely mistaken about that sort of claim.

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I mean, think back to a time when you were in high school, and you were hanging out with a friend you used to hang out with over summer break. Do you think that you could testify under oath that this was in fact your friend and not someone else? And number two, that they were in fact, alive and not dead?

Well, if you can testify to that, then why can the Apostles not testify to the fact that they saw the risen Jesus? They saw Jesus, whom they hung out with for three years, a close friend at close proximity, had engaged Him in group conversation, extended discourses, and physical contact, and so forth, even eating breakfast with Jesus.

It seems very difficult to envision them being sincerely mistaken about that sort of claim. And it's not one brief and confusing episode we're talking about. As I said in Acts 1, it informs us that it was over a 40-day time period.

**FRANK:**

Also, ladies and gentlemen, we have a new video on our YouTube channel, the CrossExamined YouTube channel, dealing with the hallucination theory. And I point out in that video that first of all, hallucinations aren't group. Like, if I were to walk into a room right now and we were all in this room and I said, hey, what a great dream we had last night. Everyone would say, what are you talking about? Dreams aren't collective. We don't have dreams together. Well, the same thing is true about hallucinations. You don't have hallucinations together.

The other problem, of course, with the hallucination theory is the fact that the empty tomb would create a problem. If Jesus tomb wasn't empty, if He really was dead and some people were hallucinating that He had risen from the dead, the Jews and the Romans, who were all too eager to squash Christianity, could have done so by going to the known tomb in Jerusalem and taken His body out. So, the hallucination theory doesn't work. Jonathan, are there other theories that maybe are being put forth today to say, here's a naturalistic explanation for the resurrection that people are starting to maybe suggest is possible?

**JONATHAN:**

Well, the most popular alternative hypothesis, of course, is hallucination theory, but that doesn't really work against a maximal data approach such that I defend because we're not just

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talking about the Apostles having experiences which they interpreted as appearances of the risen Christ. But we're actually saying that we can say something about the detail of those claimed experiences and that the sort of experiences that they claim are not the sort that can be plausibly accounted for by some sort of hallucination or objective vision. It seems that they really did have an encounter with the risen Jesus.

Of course, the crucial premise in that argument is establishing that the accounts that we have in the Gospels and Acts actually do reflect what the witnesses themselves said. So, I mean, we could get into some of the evidence for that if you would like.

**FRANK:**

Sure, go ahead.

**JONATHAN:**

Jump to a number of approaches you can take here. One approach, for example, is utilizing the book of Acts. So, the Book of Acts, as you know, claims to have been written by a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul. From Acts 16 onwards, you have the introduction of the so-called "we" passages.

The most face-value interpretation of the we passages is that the author is claiming to be a travel companion of the Apostle Paul. And there's a lot of evidence that bears that out and establishes that he really was a travelling companion. Not only does he claim to be. But he in fact was.

And he in particular was present with Paul in Acts 21 when Paul visits the Jerusalem leaders. And we know from Galatians 2 that the Jerusalem leaders included, at minimum, Peter, James, John, that is, James, the brother of Jesus. And so, Luke, not only does he claim in the prologue to his Gospel that he received information from eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, but we can also show that he had direct access to living witnesses of Jesus public ministry and in particular, purported witnesses of the resurrection.

Of course, Luke was also present with Paul when Paul was imprisoned for at least two years in Caesarea Maritima in Acts 24. And so, Caesarea Maritima is relatively close to Jerusalem. It's

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about 45 miles away. And so, during those two years, he would have had ample opportunity to go into Jerusalem, meet with, interview Apostles and purported witnesses of the resurrection.

And so, Luke is in a unique position to know what the witnesses themselves were claiming. And given his demonstrated track record of meticulousness as a historian, coupled with the fact that he's putting his own neck on the line, traveling on earth, pondering Paul's imprisonments, and persecutions and so forth, it seems very probable that he's giving us an accurate representation of his understanding of what the Apostles were saying.

And so, the crucial aspect of that argument then, would be to establish that Luke really was indeed a traveling companion with Paul, and therefore was present with Paul at the Jerusalem church. And there's a whole suite of arguments that one could put forward to establish this. So, for example, we could look at points of external corroboration of the book of Acts.

So, for instance, in Acts 27, we read about Paul's shipwreck, where Luke claims to have been present. And it says, I'm reading from Acts 27:1-2. When it was decided that we should set sail for Italy, it delivered Paul and some other prisoners. And it goes on to say that we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. And then in verses 3-5 it says, the next day we put in at Sidon. Okay, we'll pick this up after the break.

**FRANK:**

Yeah, hold the thought, because this is really interesting. There's so many little details that can be verified in all these accounts from Acts, and the shipwreck is one of them. We're going to look at it in more depth right after the break because Luke's telling the truth. He was an eyewitness to much of this. You're listening to. I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist on Resurrection weekend with me, Frank Turek. Back in just a couple minutes. Don't go anywhere.

Jesus is the most influential human being in history, ladies and gentlemen. How did this happen? The best explanation is that he rose from the dead. Oh, we can't believe in resurrections. That's ancient. Come on, that didn't happen. Ladies and gentlemen, if Genesis 1:1 is true, every other verse in the Bible is at least possible. And even atheists are admitting the evidence that the universe exploded into being out of nothing.

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Now, they don't think it's God, ladies and gentlemen. But what else could it be? If space, time, and matter had a beginning, it's got to be a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, intelligent cause. So, if Genesis 1:1 is true, resurrections are at least possible.

And my guest, Dr. Jonathan McLatchie is talking about some of the evidence for that. We'll get back to Jonathan in just a second. You're going to get an amazing opportunity to see the evidence for Christianity in a first time ever course [OnlineChristianCourses.com](https://www.onlinechristiancourses.com). Our colleague, particularly Jonathan's colleague, the great Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, is going to teach a course live for us on Zoom live. Meaning you're not going to watch videos alone. You're going to be with Dr. Meyer live.

The new course is called 'Reasons for Faith: Follow the Evidence Where it Leads.' There is a discount if you sign up prior to April 2, so you better get on this right now. We're taking a limited number of students that are going to actually teach you through the evidence for Christianity and stuff that you've probably never seen before as well.

Dr. Meyer's real love is teaching about not only biblical archaeology, but also the prophecies that point to Jesus as the Messiah. He's going to do so with you live online. Our guest today, Dr. Jonathan McLatchie will teach one of the sessions as well as archaeologist Titus Kennedy and some other folks. Go to [Crossexamined.org](https://www.crossexamined.org), click on online courses. You'll see it there. It starts in April.

And as you know, we're in an election year right now. How are you going to deal with some of the more contentious issues in the public square when the election is just several months away? You can join our course, 'Jesus vs. the Culture.' We're going to talk about the purpose of life, socialism vs. capitalism, what does it really mean to be free?

We're going to talk about cancel culture, how to find your true identity, can the Bible be trusted? Does love require approval? We're going to talk about equality vs. equity. And what about Jesus, and politics, and critical race theory, and transgenderism? It goes on progressive Christianity.

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It's all going to be in the 'Jesus vs. the Culture' course. You need to sign up soon. It starts in eleven days. Go to [Crossexamined.org](http://Crossexamined.org). Click on online courses. You will see it there. I will be your instructor.

Let me go back to my guest, Dr. Jonathan McLatchie. Jonathan, you are about to talk about some details in the shipwreck that Paul and Luke apparently experienced as recorded in Acts 27. Pick it up right there.

**JONATHAN:**

Sure. So, in Acts 27 and 28, detail the shipwreck of Paul and his way to Rome. And it's the section of Acts that is most chock full in points of historical confirmation. There's a whole book written on it by James Smith called 'The Void and Shipwreck of St. Paul.' Really excellent piece of work. Highly commend to your reading.

But in verse 3-5 in Acts 27, it says, the next day we put in at Sidon and Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for. And putting it out to sea, from there we sailed under the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. So, when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia.

So, they start from Jerusalem and then they're in Caesarea. And then from Caesarea they go to Sidon and then to Myra. And from here, according to verse six, they transfer to a Greek Alexandrian grain ship. It says that the centurion found a ship of Alexander sailing for Italy and put us on board.

Now, Colin Hemer, in his classic work, 'The Book of Acts and the Setting of Hellenistic History,' which I highly commend to your reading. This is from page 134. He writes that Myra, like Patara, again, was a principal port for the Alexandrian corn ships, and precisely the place where Julius would expect to find a ship sailing to Italy in the imperial service. This official standing here is further illustrated by the Hadrianic granary.

Myra was also the first of these ports to be reached by a ship arriving from the east, as Patara had been previously, from the reverse direction. End quote. And so, that's an example of specialized local knowledge, which suggests that the author is indeed a traveling companion of

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Paul. Remember, this is before the era of Wikipedia and Google, where you could just look things up with ease. It wasn't easy just to go down to a contemporary reference library. or consult a reference work that would give you this sort of specialized information.

**FRANK:**

There are so many other details in there too, Jonathan. I mean, we could spend a whole program on the shipwreck and talk about all the details that Luke gets, right. He even gets the water depth off Malta right when they were on the ground. I mean, it's all in there. And we actually list all those findings that Roman historian Colin Hemer found in his book 'Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History.' We put all those details in I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, ladies and gentlemen.

So, if you go to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, you can see all those details. There's just detail after detail that only an eyewitness or somebody who knew an eyewitness would know. These people were not deceived. They did not invent it. They weren't deceived. The only conclusion we can come to, and since we live in a theistic universe where miracles are possible, is that Jesus really did rise from the dead, to not only demonstrate He was God, but also to show us that we will one day rise again.

If we trust in Him, we're going to be forgiven and given His righteousness. Now, we could talk a lot more about this, but we're running out of time here in this program. And I want to get to a resource, ladies and gentlemen, that you can avail yourselves of, that Dr. McLatchie has created for you to help you with any doubt you may have about any aspect of the Christian faith, not just the resurrection. And Jonathan, it's called [TalkAboutDoubts.com](http://TalkAboutDoubts.com). Tell us about that, if you would.

**JONATHAN:**

Sure. So [TalkAboutDoubts.com](http://TalkAboutDoubts.com) is a ministry that I launched in 2021 and basically at [talkaboutdoubts.com](http://talkaboutdoubts.com), we seek to mentor Christians who are struggling with doubts about faith, or also ex-Christians who are sincerely interested in exploring whether there's a rational path back to faith. And so, the idea is that someone comes to our website, [talkaboutdoubts.com](http://talkaboutdoubts.com), and they submit a contact form, and then we distribute that to one of our volunteer specialists

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who will get in contact with you to schedule a private one-on-one Zoom call to talk about your doubts with you in confidence.

And so, we have on our team people with diverse academic expertise in New Testament scholarship, textual criticism, Old Testament scholarship, typical archaeology, physics, biology, philosophy, philosophical theology, science, physics, biology, chemistry, that kind of thing. We also have pastors and psychologists on our team as well.

So, the idea is that whatever area of doubt you're struggling with in regard to the veracity of the Christian faith, we have a specialist who will have expertise, PhD level expertise in that particular area and can get in contact with you to schedule a private Zoom call to talk about your doubts with you in confidence.

**FRANK:**

Yeah, it's very well done. And ladies and gentlemen, Jonathan has assembled some of the best scholars in the world. I mean, you got Bill Dembski, who has two PhDs, maybe three. I don't know. He's got two. He was one of the founders of the intelligent design movement. You got Luke Barnes, who's an expert in the fine-tuning argument. You're on there, of course, and your expertise across the field. You have expertise, obviously, in biology, having a degree in that. You've got several other folks on there that are just world class scholars.

And ladies and gentlemen, if you want to, if you have a question, you have a doubt and you want to talk to one of these folks, Jonathan here can set it up for you. You need to go to [talkaboutdoubts.com](http://talkaboutdoubts.com) to avail yourself of it. How do they actually go about doing that? What do they have to do to get a conversation with one of these experts, Jonathan?

**JONATHAN:**

So, all you have to do is go to [talkaboutdoubts.com](http://talkaboutdoubts.com) and scroll down. You'll see a contact form which you can fill out. Just give us your name, and email address, and the days and times that work best for you, and a short summary of the questions that you're struggling with. And then we will be in contact with you to schedule a private Zoom call to talk about your doubts with you. Often these lead to long-term mentoring relationships.

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We also have a discord community for past inquirers, where people can continue to network with one another and participate in the chat. We have a bi-weekly emotional support group that we invite past inquirers to join as well. That's actually run by one of our past inquirers. It runs on two separate days of the week to maximize those that are able to attend, both on a Thursday and a Friday. We have two different past inquirers that run those emotional support groups. A lot of resources for you if you are struggling with doubts about the faith.

**FRANK:**

What kind of testimonies do you have from this ministry, Jonathan? People have gone through it. Have they found it valuable? What have they said?

**JONATHAN:**

Absolutely. So, you can find some written testimonials on our website, and there's also some video testimonials on our YouTube channel, which is just Talk About Doubts. And we've mentored people of all kinds of backgrounds, students, pastors, people in full-time ministry, highly confidential. So, if you are in full-time ministry or a pastor, we'd particularly like to talk with you about your questions and doubts about faith. But yeah, been very transformative for a lot of people as far as giving them renewed confidence in the truth of Christianity.

**FRANK:**

Talkaboutdoubts.com for those of you seeing the video. If you're on the CrossExamined community, ladies and gentlemen, the CrossExamined community is a place you can go where you can talk about these issues in great depth without being doxed or having trolls interrupt you. You can also see all these podcasts in video form. You can see Jonathan's wearing his hat. Talkaboutdoubts.com, that's where you go. Now Jonathan, before we leave, we do have to talk for just 1 minute. That's about all the time we have, about the significance of the resurrection. What is it?

**JONATHAN:**

Yeah, so the resurrection is ultimately God's vindication of Jesus' messianic and divine self-claims. And so, if Jesus really rose from the dead, then He is in fact who He claimed to be. He is the Messiah of Israel, the fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the prophets, and so forth. And so, the message of the Gospel begins with God's holiness, that God is maximally just and

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holy, and so He must come against sin with perfect righteousness. But in the person of Christ, God himself broke into human history.

And having lived a perfectly righteous life, He went to the cross according to God's foreordained plan, and bore, and absorbed the judgment that was due to us on His own head. And so, if we trust in Christ and repent of our sins and throw ourselves at the foot of the cross, God will forgive us and allow us to enter into fellowship with Him and adopt us as sons. And we might become co-heirs with Christ and spend an eternity with God in heaven.

**FRANK:**

We'll be forgiven and given His righteousness. My friend Dr. Ray Siervo, who has a ministry up in New Jersey, puts it this way. God created it, we broke it, and Jesus fixed it. God created it, we broke it, and Jesus fixed it. And that's what the resurrection is all about. He fixed it. Jonathan, thanks so much for being with us, my friend.

**JONATHAN:**

Thank you.

**FRANK:**

That's Jonathan McLatchie. Go to [Talkaboutdoubts.com](http://Talkaboutdoubts.com), also his website. He's got a lot of great articles on all sorts of different topics as well. And Lord willing friends, I'll see you here next week. He is risen.

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