

Do Naturalistic Alternatives to the Resurrection Work? With Dr. Gary Habermas

(June 20, 2025)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, there would be no Christianity without the Resurrection. Scholars from across the ideological spectrum, from atheist to Christian, agree, that if Jesus hadn't risen from the dead, or at least if the disciples hadn't thought he had risen from the dead, there would be no Christianity today. Now, the world renowned expert on the Resurrection is my friend, Dr. Gary Habermas.

He has released three volumes of his magnum opus, here's number one. For those of you watching on YouTube, I'm holding this up. We had a show with Gary about a year ago 'On the Resurrection.' Oh, sorry. That's the second one. Here's the first one, 'On the Resurrection: Evidences.' This is 1100 pages.

The second edition is 'On the Resurrection: Refutations'. When people are trying to say, well, maybe he didn't rise from the dead. And the third volume, which just came out very recently, is called 'On the Resurrection: Scholarly Perspectives.' And what we're going to do is have Gary on here to talk about particularly volumes two and three.

So, here he is, all the way from Liberty University, ladies and gentlemen. The great Dr. Gary Habermas. Always wonderful having you on the show, Gary. How are things at Liberty? How are you doing?

GARY:

Thank you, Frank. That's a good, that's a really good studio crowd there.



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FRANK:

We've got a great studio crowd, Gary. And you deserve two rounds of applause because you've done two volumes since we had our last interview. And I know the first one pretty much the first printing sold out immediately. How are volumes two and three doing?

GARY:

I really don't check. I'm just, I'm just not that way. I look to see how many reviews come in, but I don't even read the reviews. So, I don't. My chief interest by far is ministry. And I like, you know, I like volumes to sell, but I'm not interested in so much in royalties or money or whatever. We've got to, we think of some place to give it. But I'm a lot more interested in how many people are reading and how many are being challenged.

And I just got emails from two people in the last week who have become Christians from studying the Resurrection. And one of them said, just so you don't think this happened to me a few days ago and I'm wishy washy and I'll go back to atheism next week. He said, I've been doing this now for a year, and I have my own podcast, and I'm praising the Lord. So, these are pretty good. That's the kind of stuff I think is valuable from these volumes.

FRANK:

Oh well, the volumes are so well put together I could see that this took years, Gary. Let's talk about the second volume. The first volume's on the fact that there's evidence, a lot of evidence for the Resurrection. The second is on refutations. Give us an overview of what's in this volume.

GARY:

Yep. I take the reader through a history of natural-- And not all theories are natural, but mostly natural theories and a few supernatural.

They're supernatural and they allow that Jesus was raised in some sense, but they don't, they basically don't follow the New Testament in some few key things. So, I've got a chapter on the second century because that's the-- Remember the second century is the 100's A.D., so that's early enough to make a fuss about the Resurrection.

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We need some people answering. That would be people like, at the very beginning, Clement, Ignatius, Clement of Rome, that is, and Ignatius, and Polycarp, and Justin Martyr, and moving on.

But after the second century, I don't have very many early chapters because my thinking is whatever happened in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries are not apropos to history. They don't have anything to do with-- Like Eusebius. Everybody likes Eusebius. Good church history textbook for a church history course. But he's writing in 325 A.D. So, when he gives you stories of how certain apostles died, it's hard to be sure. I mean it's 200 years after Jesus.

So, I jump up after the second century, all the way up to David Hume and 19th century liberalism. And I have two chapters on David Hume. I think those two chapters go over 130 pages. That's printed pages. My manuscript pages were a lot longer. But the first chapter is on David Hume and his argument. And then the second chapter is on reformulations of David Hume by contemporary analytic philosophers.

Then I have three chapters in 19th century liberalism. It was called German liberalism. That's not me giving them a bad name. They called themselves German liberals. And three chapters, one where the fountainhead of naturalistic theories comes from.

Second chapter, Liberals versus Liberals. That's a really interesting one because when a liberal would think of a liberal theory, they would go off on their predecessors first because that's like a political guy who goes off on other Democrats or Republicans in his own fold before he tells you he's special.

And then the third one is Conservatives versus Liberals, but still in the 19th century. And these guys aren't pastors that write self-published books and so on. These are mostly professors from Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale. They're the big, really big guys: Westcott, Hort, Milligan. And they go after the liberals. And that chapter is where I do most of the stuff, hallucination.

Two chapters on the legend theory, almost 100 pages on both so-called mythical people who were believed to have been raised from the dead. And then I have a chapter on historical

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persons who may have been raised from the dead or at least are claimed to, back in that century, back in the 19th century.

So, it goes on. I have a chapter on discrepancies. It's a long chapter, on New Testament challenges to the truth of the New Testament and so on. But I think the heart of the book is Hume, 19th century liberals, and especially legend theory. Those three alone would go over 300 pages.

FRANK:

Give us, I know you've got as you say 100 pages on Hume, but just for our listeners who may not be familiar with Hume's basic argument against miracles. Give us an overview of that, Gary. And why doesn't it work?

GARY:

Sure, well there's a lot of responses, a lot of philosophers get involved. The essay is not a, it's-- First of all, it's an essay, not a book. And it's a standalone essay. It's section 10 of his famous inquiry. And by the way, right after it, he has a chapter against life after death. But in the previous chapter he's got this chapter against miracles.

And he argues what the contemporary view, especially at that time. Now, maybe I should stop right there, say timeout. I've got a book on my shelf of published responses to Hume from immediately after his essay was written before the time of the American Civil War.

And he writes this, and a bunch of guys go off on him. Many of them are pastors, many of them are philosophers and professors. And they take him, the typical view is that his argument is rather circular. What typical writers like C.S. Lewis would be probably the best and most read example in his book 'Miracles.' He says Lewis makes all kinds of problems. He says, for example, if, for example, there are no supernatural events in the world, then seriously, there's no supernatural events.

And if you say there's no supernatural events, then you can't look at the Resurrection. And Hume says, I mean, Lewis says, what we've done is argue in a circle. So, Hume is usually seen as making a definition, ignoring it, and right away making comments against it. As soon as he

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defines very famous definition, a miracle is a supernatural event brought about by God or an invisible agent. And then he says, since these things have never happened, therefore they're false.

And in that same opening paragraph with the-- It's at the end of section 1, in the same opening paragraph, after defining them, he says, it would be a miracle if a man should rise from the dead. And you're thinking, whoa, whoa, whoa, time out.

Let's talk about this. And here's the rest of the sentence. It'd be a miracle if a man was raised from the dead because it's never happened in any country at any time. And he goes right on. I mean, there's no treatment. So, the major argument is that Hume argued circularly, and Hume never refuted it after the trip.

FRANK:

Yeah, we'll finish more of that right after the break. My guest, Dr. Gary Habermas. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Back after the break.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, on stations around the country, including the American Family Radio Network. We're talking to my friend Dr. Gary Habermas, who is putting together a four volume magnum opus set 'On the Resurrection.' They reach roughly a thousand pages.

We're right now talking about volume two. Volumes one, two, and three have come out. Volume four is yet to come. But we were talking a little bit about volume two about refutations to the Resurrection, and Gary was talking about C.S. Lewis.

Here is the quote that Gary had paraphrased. I'll give it exactly. Here's what C.S. Lewis said about David Hume's argument against miracles. Because David Hume was trying to say we have a uniform experience against miracles, so therefore they can't occur. Here's how Lewis put it.

He said, now of course, we must agree with Hume that if there is an absolutely uniform experience against miracles, if in other words, they have never happened, why then they never

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have. Unfortunately, we know the experience against them to be uniform only if we know that all the reports of them are false.

And we can only know all the reports of them to be false only if we know already that miracles have never occurred. In fact, we are arguing in a circle, unquote. And Dr. Gary Habermas has a lot more on Hume in this second volume to point out that his argument against miracles doesn't work. And Gary, it's not just you saying this now. I know there are atheists that have written against Hume's argument and pointed out that it doesn't work against miracles. True?

GARY:

True. The best known one is 'Hume's Abject Failure.' Seems like that was published by Oxford. I'm trying to remember. But that's an unbeliever who goes off on him. And he's not the only one. There's a number of major people. But I think what's really interesting is at that time, you would think in the 1760's, let's say there would be two or three people who would write against him. This book I was referring to has about 15 different authors that have gone off on him in journal articles and whatever.

And their leading interpretation was that he argued in a circle. He defined miracles circularly, and then he rejected them circularly. And I mentioned that sentence, it would be a miracle if somebody has been raised from the dead because it's never happened anywhere. And then he goes right on. No treatment.

So, they go off on him for that. And Frank, I'll add one other thing. There was a popular-- Well, he was a scholar. But there was a popular figure, at that time who-- This is hearsay, but a person heard the guy make the comment, the guy there is Hume.

This guy gave it this-- This fellow gave a critique of Hume, and they heard Hume say that this guy beat him. He lost the debate to this guy. And for Hume-- I had a different view of Hume when I read that. Like, golly, he's a little bit-- He's honest.

He's not trying to cling to his glory at all accounts. And he said, this guy bested me in the argument. But my point is, all the people there in the 1760's and 70's, they all took that

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common view of him arguing a very unlaudatory view of Hume, the great Hume, coming up with a lousy argument.

And Hume never once-- He answers his critics. He never once says, you're wrong. Let me re-explain my argument. Let me defend myself. He just lets it go. And so, that was at that time the leading article argument. Now, the second chapter on Hume, I have a whole bunch of analytic philosophers who try to update Hume and try to make his argument much stronger. And we entertained so many there and so many refutations, close to 100 criticisms that that can be read too.

But that's sort of say, even if Hume was naive and he could have been stronger, this is called the principle of charity and logic. Let's make him as strong as he could be and then still see if we can answer him. And the responses to the refurbished Hume were equally daunting and like I said, almost 100 refutations.

FRANK:

Well, I need to say this, Gary, because I remember this like it was yesterday. It was 25 years ago. It was the year 2000. It was here in Charlotte. You were debating Antony Flew. Antony as A N T O N Y Flew, who was probably the top philosophical atheist in the world in the 20th century. And he was a Hume expert.

And I'll never forget this, Gary, because you were debating about the Resurrection. And Hume, I mean, Flew actually said this in the debate. I'm sure you remember. Well, actually he said it after the debate to you. Why don't you tell the story? Because you walked out of the room and told me this.

GARY:

Yes. Yeah. First of all, Tony was a very good friend. He was super honest. He told me from the-- I had three debates with him and a couple other dialogues. He told me, he said, I don't reject miracles a priori. He said, I'm open. And I kept saying, oh, Tony, I doubt it because of this comment, and that comment, and this comment, and that comment.

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And he also said the same thing about his belief in God. Which later when he became a theist, he proved that he was not rejecting these things without reason. He thought that there was no basis. So, what happened was, Frank, we ended the debate. There was a small studio crowd. You were sitting in the front row. I distinctly remember you were on my left, all the way to the left of that row.

You shot your hand up right away for the first question and you said, Dr. Flew, how do you know naturalism or materialism, whatever version you want to use, how do you know naturalism is true? What are your arguments? Gary's given you a lot of arguments for the Resurrection. How do you argue for naturalism? And first of all, his answer, I thought to myself, I thought that was a horrible answer.

But his answer was in about one sentence. He said, well, I should think the history of science is a good defense of naturalism. And I said, because we got to respond to each other's questions. And I said, Tony, the history of science is led by many, many Christians up until this day. And to say the history of science is an argument for naturalism is to ignore the whole theistic strain going through modern science.

And he didn't say much. Well, we took the rest of the questions, we stepped off the stage, we went out in the hallway. We were alone. We were going down the hallway to have our makeup removed. That was a lot of fun. And he all of a sudden said something to me. He was on my right, and he said something to me. And I heard him. I heard every word, but I couldn't believe he said it. So, I asked him to repeat it. And he said it in the exact same words.

Here's what he said. He said, yeah, I've got no evidence for my position. I said, what did you say? And repeated it verbatim, talking about naturalism. He said, I have no evidence for my naturalism. And that's—

By the way, you have your book, you 'Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.' It does take a lot of faith to be a naturalist. One of the critiques that we're just getting around today as Christian philosophers is to realize that there are no good arguments for naturalism or materialism.

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Let's just call it naturalistic materialism. They're not the same, just like not all Christians are the same, but they have the same underlying view. And some of the leading atheists are coming out now, some prominent ones in the last few decades, and said, you can't prove atheism. You can't prove naturalism. I'll just give one example. Before he died, I believe in 1971, the famous British atheist, Bertrand Russell.

There were four famous atheists at that time. One of them was Australian J.L. Mackey, but he taught at Oxford. So, there were four. A.J. Ayer and Anthony Flew, that makes four. And Bertrand Russell was asked repeatedly, can you prove there's no God? In other words, can you prove naturalism is true? And he said, no. I can't do that. Now, he would change the subject real quickly. And what he almost always said was, and I can't prove Odin doesn't exist, and I can't prove Jupiter doesn't exist, and I can't disprove any of that.

Well, okay, that's nice. People don't believe in those things. But he said no, you can't prove God's lack of existence. I'll add one more thing real fast Frank. Russell said to be a good theist you had to believe in God and an afterlife. Got one-two punch, got and afterlife. Then he said to be a Christian theist—

This was strange. To be a Christian theist, you had to believe some kind of nice things about Jesus. And he says even if you don't believe his deity, you've got to think he was a good ethical guy.

Well okay, I guess that means millions of messiahs in the world. But back to theism, God and an afterlife. You can't prove there's no God. And the second one, as you know I've been doing a lot of work on near death experiences, and I think I just talked to a guy, a philosopher of science who put percentages on the arguments for and against atheism, and he's got near death experiences higher than any other argument for natural theology.

He's got above intelligent design, above the kalam argument, above the moral argument. It's hard to refute. But if you got not be able to prove God, but strongest evidence is for an afterlife, you're in trouble if you're a naturalist. And Frank, I tell you. I give people credit. I think that your first question asking him Dr. Flew, how do you prove naturalism? I think that is the

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question that he thought about during the whole Q&A, and that's what caused him to spout off when he was walking down the hall.

FRANK:

I remember you walked out of that room, and you said to me that Dr. Flew just told me I have no evidence for my position. I remember you saying that. That's what Flew—

GARY:

He said it very clearly. And of course, later, he became a theist. He knew the gospel. We talked about it many times. I would like to think of the dead of night somewhere, God has a way to give a beatific vision if you're a good Thomist. Some people think that's what happened to Thomas in the end of his life. But God has a way of giving beatific visions to people.

And a good friend of mine, Dave Beck, who you know too Frank, the minute when we heard Tony Flew died, Dave said this could be the end of a good story then. And I said how so? He said because my view was that God comes to people at the end of their life and Tony might have heard it, and we might see Tony in the kingdom someday. So, pretty, you know—

FRANK:

We just had Lee Strobel on the show, and he was talking about death visions which is kind of a near death experience except people actually do die. I don't know how much you've looked into that, Gary. But you've been the expert on NDEs where people come back. People do see death visions, and they have some commonalities. You can go back to the show we just did with Lee Strobel, ladies and gentlemen, to hear more about that. We're talking to Gary Habermas a lot more. Don't go anywhere. Back right after the break.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Ladies and gentlemen. Don't forget I'll be down in Orlando on October 29th. Faith Assembly, Orlando, the morning services and evening where we'll continue with I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist and take any questions. That's June 29th. Hope to see you there.

We may have a couple of seats left in CIA. Don't forget about that, the CrossExamined Instructor Academy. Go to Crossexamined.org. Click on events. You'll see 'What is CIA?' there.

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And don't forget about our online courses this summer. Don't stop learning this summer. There are a ton of great self-paced online courses. One of them is with the great Dr. Gary Habermas on the Resurrection. You may want to check that out this summer. Let me go back to Gary.

Gary, we've been talking about your second volume, 'On the Resurrection: Refutations.' Gary's making books that that actually double as weights. You can work out with these things. And this one I want to ask you about, Gary.

You have a chapter toward the back talking about the five reasons why naturalistic explanations for the Resurrection fail. We've kind of talked about one of them already. And that is, the first one you mentioned is that David Hume's argument doesn't work. Do you want to mention a couple others?

GARY:

Yep. The reason I put that one first is there are big time scholarly, a couple history professors at Columbia university in the 1940's and afterwards David Strauss, the famous, probably the most famous 19th century German liberal. And they say things like ever since David Hume, I don't even have to entertain any kind of thoughts about the possibility of miracles.

David Hume ended it for us. And so, my first reason is if there's no Humean backdrop that takes away the plank that so many of these Columbia and David Hume's case, Tübingen University, Germany. He was so liberal that in liberal Germany, in the most liberal university in liberal Germany and Tübingen, he got kicked out of the university and pensioned off for life for being so liberal. But he said, I can't believe in miracles because of David Hume.

So, that's the first one. But then I go on and say, there's refutations for each of the naturalistic theories. And then secondly, I think no one theory, you could push this and get kind of close. But no one theory, if it worked, could explain the Resurrection data. So, a third one is you need more than one theory to work. And if you have two probabilities, let's say you have two unlikely theories. And the hallucination is getting hit hard today.

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I'm reviewing a book right now which is a refutation of hallucinations, very scholarly. And if naturalistic theories don't work, two of them that are improbable make a more improbable view. This is called, "God of the Gaps" or Tony Flew's "10 leaky buckets theory."

You keep putting buckets with holes in them inside of each other, and it might delay the water a little bit, but pretty soon the water is going to be coming out. And that's my first three. Hume doesn't work. Each theory has multiple problems, and you need a combination of theories, and that makes things worse, not better. That's three of them.

FRANK:

Let's talk about hallucinations for a second because that probably is the front runner or has been the front runner. Because Gary, as you point out, and friends, for those of you that don't know, Gary, is surveying scholars across the ideological spectrum. These are people that, sure, there are Christian scholars in there, but many of them are atheists or agnostics.

And in fact, in the third volume, which we'll get to Gary, you're going through a hundred of these scholars. At least you list them all out in this volume, and you're talking about what they believe on several different aspects of the Resurrection.

And one thing that struck me in going through this was the fact that, so many-- Well, let me go back to hallucinations for a second. So many of the people admit-- So many of the scholars admit that the disciples believed Jesus had risen from the dead. The disciples believed it.

GARY:

It's virtually unanimous. It's going to be-- I don't put percentages. People think I put percentages on the minimal facts. I don't. But I would think high 90's of critical scholars. Bart Ehrman doesn't hesitate to say the disciples believe Jesus was raised from the dead and believed that they saw him. And Bart Ehrman even says, why shouldn't I be willing to say this? It's a historical fact. He says that.

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FRANK:

Okay, so, is their explanation for why they believed it hallucinations? Is that the primary one?

GARY:

Well, Bart Ehrman might disagree on this, but I think in earlier works he leaned toward hallucination. In his later book, I call him for my grad students. I go by book colors. You have a lot of books in the Resurrection or a lot of books against, theism. You go by colors.

And in his red book, 'How Jesus Became God,' he says, I'm no longer going to take naturalistic theories. He said, I don't take them to be true. And he said, let's admit it. The disciples stealing the body is a stupid theory. [Laughter] This is Ehrman.

He says the disciples stealing the body is a stupid theory. However, it's better than a resurrection because resurrections don't happen. It's David Hume and he always cites Hume. And I want to go, time out, time out, time out. If you don't have Hume, what does that do to your argument? What I want to—

You know, the back of that volume two, Frank, that you held up, the rust colored one, there's an appendix on what's wrong with naturalism. And I cite a number of naturalists, prominent naturalists, who say you can't prove naturalism's true.

So, here's my question. If you can't prove naturalism's true, how can that be my backdrop against rejecting miracles and saying the supernatural world is non-existent? And then I go at this two ways. One is back door. One is front door. Back door is you can't prove naturalism.

So, don't use that argument with me because it doesn't sweep the evidences for the Resurrection under the door. The front door argument is, have you ever heard of near death experiences? And if NDE's show there's an afterlife, that is what we call the supernatural world.

They're not miracles. NDE's are not miracles, but they're supernatural events. And NDE's show there's an afterlife. Now, you've got the back door. You can't prove your view. You've got the front door. There's an afterlife. And if there's an afterlife, you go, yeah, you're getting off the subject. What's that got to do with the Resurrection? Because if there's an afterlife, you've got

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to be more open to my argument for resurrection, which is a specific theory on the afterlife. So, if there is an afterlife, don't complain about me talking about the Resurrection.

FRANK:

And as we've said so many times on this program as well, ladies and gentlemen, when people claim they don't believe in miracles, we ought to say, look around. You're living in one. Because if Genesis 1:1 is true, every other verse in the Bible is at least possible. And there's evidence that the universe had a beginning.

Not only that, you add Gary's near death experiences in there. Not just Gary, but many people are talking about this now. There are death visions we spoke about with Lee Strobel a few weeks ago. You can look at that. And I know, Gary, it's interesting that somebody like Hume would say we have a uniform experience against miracles.

It's a very low probability, so we have to assume they can't occur. But miracles by definition have to be rare if they're going to get our attention as special acts of God, Gary. I mean, if people were resurrected all the time, what would the Resurrection of Christ mean to us?

GARY:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And now I told you, in the next chapter, Hume goes off on life after death. But you know, Frank, the leading interpretation of Hume today as I understand it-- Hume scholars tell me this. I've got 131 pages here on Hume, but I don't call myself a Hume scholar.

The guys that are Hume scholars say that Hume was probably a deist. Like Anthony Flew, he was probably a deist. He was a theist of some species, not a naturalist. And in his 'Dialogues on Natural Religion', which is a brilliant book, you can read this debate. The moderator, there's a moderator and these guys are debating. And at the end of the book gives the victory to the deist.

It says the deist wins the debate. Now, I had a buddy who was doing his PhD years ago at a major, one of the best known universities in the U.S., and he was doing his PhD dissertation on Hume's dialogues. And why would Hume say the deist won the dialogue? And a lot of the old

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interpretation was, well, he was an atheist, but he's trying to be a nice guy. And he thought that that particular debate, the deist got the best of it. But now people are saying no, no, no.

The reason he said that is because he is a deist. And if you're going to allow God's existence-- In a recent book by a prominent atheist philosopher published by one of the major universities again in America, the guy says, here's a quote for you. I don't have enough faith to be an atheist, Frank.

The guy says, if there is a God who is omnipotent. Okay, that's your "what if?" If there's a God who is omnipotent, I make the probability for resurrection 1, 1 to 1. [Laughter] He said that in the book, published by an Ivy League publisher, and he is a philosopher at a major university.

But he says if there's a God who's omnipotent, I think the probability of resurrection is one. Now, if Hume is a deist, I think he's got to be a lot more understanding of resurrection. By the way, you talk about Lee Strobel. Lee interviewed Flew after Flew became a theist. And Lee took him down a list of attributes of God.

And he asked Tony, is God this? Is God this? Is God this? Is God this? And Tony affirmed every major attribute for God except omni benevolent. He did not think God was omni benevolent because his major reason for not becoming a Christian was the doctrine of hell. So, if God sends people to hell, there's some problem there with being omni benevolent. But what I'm saying is, if he admits all the other attributes of God, he just doesn't have a God.

And he's not a deist. That's a theist of sorts. He's a higher level than deism. And if maybe Hume is in there. I told Tony, he got a really good laugh out of it. I said, Tony, I don't believe in reincarnation, but if I did, I think you'd be a reincarnation of David Hume. And he just laughed us off. But I said, if you believe in just about every major attribute of God, you've really got to be open to miracles in general, afterlife, and resurrection in particular.

FRANK:

Now, I thought he said this, Gary. Maybe you would know for sure. I thought I heard someone say that Flew got to the point in his life after he wrote that book, 'There is a God', that he had to rewrite all of his, pro Hume writings. Have you heard that?

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GARY:

Well, he didn't rewrite all of them, but he rewrote some of the big ones. And I'm going to tell you something. I won't be able-- I can't talk about this because Tony told me a lot of things. I got him in letters. I have them in writing.

FRANK:

But hold. Hold the phone, Gary. We're coming up to a break.

GARY:

Sure.

FRANK:

And we'll come back to this right after the break. We're talking to the great Dr. Gary Habermas. We're talking about his magnum opus, three volumes so far, 'On the Resurrection.' We've been talking about 'Refutations.' That's volume two. Go wherever you get books and get it. Let me tell you friends, you're not going to find a better resource on the Resurrection anywhere. Get it.

The center of the truth of Christianity is the Resurrection. Scholars will tell you, whether they're atheists, or Christian, or anywhere in between, that if the disciples did not believe Jesus had risen from the dead, there would be no Christianity. And Gary Habermas has devoted his life.

By the way, Gary was a skeptic early on in his life. He had a 10 year period of doubt. He's written a lot on doubt. You can go to his website, GaryHabermas.com, and you can see articles and even books that you can download, and you'll see interviews there.

GaryHabermas.com, a great resource. He's an expert on this issue of doubt, on near death experiences, the Shroud of Turin, and mostly the Resurrection. So, Gary has a wealth of information that can help the Christian and even the non-Christian who's interested in the truth.

But Gary, before the break, we were talking about David Hume, and you had so many interactions with David. Not David Hume, with Tony Flew, who was the reincarnation of David,

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as you mentioned, until he became at least a deist, probably a theist. Tell us what else he told you.

GARY:

Well, you made the comment, didn't he have to rewrite some of his major things after? And I've got to be really careful what I say and don't say. This is lawsuit country, maybe. But I have it in writing from Tony in his letters. But there was a lot of pressure put on him by at least one of those publishing houses not to say in the beginning that he had become a theist or a deist, take it either way.

Our lead article, by the way, was 'My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Deism.' And he said later he would use the word to theism, not deism because he thinks people don't understand deism. But he gave me some critiques of the way people tried to twist his arm. They tried to add endnotes into his text. They tried to say, yeah, here's a comeback from the atheist side. And Tony didn't want to say those things. And there was a big push to make it convenient, because they were doing the book.

And this is according to Tony. It's Tony's word. It's not mine. I wasn't a witness. But Tony said that they put pressure on him, and he sent me all kinds of quotations, and comments, and Xeroxes on things that were done while he was doing some of this rewriting.

FRANK:

Well, friends, you can find-- I'm looking on my shelf for Tony's book. I know I have it up here somewhere. It's called, 'There is a God.' It originally was titled 'There is No God,' but no is crossed out.

This is a book from probably around the mid-2000s, 2005, 2006. Gary, you had debates with him. The debate that I attended that you had with him was in 2000. It was on the John Ankerberg show, but it was filmed here in Charlotte. And that book is a great book. And one of his evidences that pushed him over to at least deism, probably theism, is the evidence from DNA. It was the intelligent design argument, Gary.

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GARY:

Yeah, Yep. By the way, Frank, when you said that, you said you're looking for your book. I'm looking right at mine. It's right ahead.

FRANK:

You got it?

GARY:

On the fifth shelf up over my head, and I have a signed copy of the book from Tony. But here's what he told me. There were two arguments when we did our article for Philosophia Christie, the philosophy journal.

He said there were two arguments. Later when he did that book with Varghese, he added a third argument. And the two arguments he told me as a Thomist you will love this. I suppose you still call yourself a Thomist? Right?

FRANK:

Close, yeah. Yeah. I don't know if I agree with everything, but—

GARY:

Well, that's fine. Nobody agrees with everything. But he cited Aristotle, Thomas's mentor from centuries before. And he said my first reason to believe in God is Aristotle's question, why is there something rather than nothing?

So, if you've got a big bang, for example, or-- A lot of Christians don't like that, whatever. If you believe the universe has a beginning, you have an issue because as C.S. Lewis says in his 'Miracles' book, this time I'll quote him instead of paraphrasing him. If there ever was a time when nothing existed, then nothing would exist now.

So, you don't get something from nothing. And Aristotle was number one, number two, you already said it. Intelligent design and fine-tuning arguments. And then with Varghese, he added a third one, which is kind of a continuation of ID.

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He said the laws of nature always operating correctly. Why does two plus two always equal four? Why doesn't it equal four, 17, and 100,000? What makes the laws of nature such that they operate? And again, that sounds like fine-tuning and intelligent—

FRANK:

Well, that's-- Gary, that's Aristotle's unmoved mover, and that's Thomas Aquinas' fifth way.

GARY:

There you go.

FRANK:

Yeah, you're right. And I think that's one of the strongest arguments for God, because, you know, Aristotle mistakenly thought the universe was eternal, and Aquinas, didn't think you could prove that it wasn't eternal.

But they're saying that even if it is eternal, you need a here and now cause that keeps the natural world going in the direction in which it's going. It's Aquinas's fifth way, and that's what probably got Flew as well. I think that's what you're describing right here.

GARY:

He's got three arguments there. Hey, I will tell you this, to put a couple of these together. Right next to my book, I'm looking on the shelf. Right next to Tony Flew's 'There Was a God', is Stephen Meyer's book on the 'Signature in the Cell.' It's right next to it.

And Stephen Meyer, I've heard some people say that that is the book right now that put an end to some of the major evolutionary arguments. And the guy's doing Intelligent Design. I sent him to Dembski, and Steve, and some of those guys, and he started reading them. This is interesting. He said, I tried reading Dembski's Cambridge book, which is his technical one. He said, I am no mathematician. I could not get through that book.

I had to close it and put it aside. But Steve Meyer's book, Tony died before that. But they're just right next to each other on the shelf. And Intelligent Design was a major influence. Oh, he also told me, near death experiences. He told me one thing in an informal meal over our dining

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room table at my house. He said-- He had written a book years ago, one of his first books, if not his first one, on parapsychology, because it bothered him.

And he'd written a book against parapsychology, J.B. Rhine, Duke University. You know, what's the likelihood of guessing cards before you flip them over everything. He said that near death experiences were the strongest argument for an afterlife that he ever heard. And that was before the vast mass majority of evidential cases came out. Frank, I'll tell you one thing about that. When I wrote my first major article on NDEs, which was published by Blackwell, the secular-- They call themselves the number one theoretical publisher in the world.

They published it and I had 300 case studies of NDE's with evidences. I just wrote another one for Blackwell for another Blackwell book. And it was a general article on arguments for the afterlife. And you mentioned Lee Stroebe's-- And I have four arguments for an afterlife. Resurrection, deathbed visions, post death visions, and NDE's. And the difference between the first essay and the last essay is moved from 300 evidential cases to 500 evidential cases for NDE's.

And some of them are unbelievable. Some of the evidences are so good, I don't know anybody could refute them. I sent them to a couple doctor buddies who work in that field, and they said, I've never heard anything like this before.

FRANK:

Give us one, Gary. Because I know people are thinking evidentiary NDE's. You know, these are veridical. We can verify these. What do you mean? Give us one quickly. We've got like a minute and a half.

GARY:

Okay. One of the recent ones that came out, I'll shorten the story up. An anesthesiologist, they brought a guy in to do surgery, and the guy was already, like, I guess you'd say in a coma. He was out. They said he was dead. He had flat brain waves, but they had to do an operation on his heart and his aorta. A very, very dangerous open heart, open aorta surgery. And they did the surgery, but they had to close the guy's body down.

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Now, they said, he said the longest anybody had ever done that was 54 minutes where you have no heart, no brain. And they put ice packs on each side of his head so something wouldn't happen to his brain deteriorating. But instead of 54 minutes, what they thought was the maximum, it went 92 minutes before they could finish the surgery.

And two days later, he went to the emergency room. He went into ICU, and the guy said, hey, doc, how you doing? He called him by name. And he looked down. He didn't have a tag on. The guy said, I know who you are. I read up above. I was up above you. And he said, hey, what's a guy who's trapped on the ceiling--? What can a guy do? He said, so, I looked around. And he said, there's three lights up here in the operating room. He said, I memorized the codes on the back of the lights. There are three of them.

And they were defined as having eight to ten letters and numbers each. He memorized all three. And the anesthesiologist said this is too much. All right, give them to me. The guy gives him the numbers. He got his own ladder, went up there. The nurse had to show him how to change the light.

They have to clean them all the time. They had to show him. And he checked that all three numbers. The numbers were right, but the guy was flat brain, flat heart, out for twice the amount of time that a person could be out. And he reported accurately the numbers.

And I saw a long dialogue that he had with unbelievers, scholars, and they made him tell the story three different times how he got up on the ladder, and went up there, and checked the numbers out. That right now, I would say has got to be in the top five most evidential NDE cases.

FRANK:

There are, as Gary said, 300 of these that you can verify. Friends, there's remote viewing. There are people who are witnessing things, and they're separated from their bodies. Naturalism is false. It's just another explanation or another piece of evidence that naturalism is false.

Now, Gary, we've got to continue this conversation. We're still in volume two, called 'On the Resurrection: Refutations.' But we've got to deal with some of the scholarly perspectives. So,

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Gary's going to be on the next podcast, the next radio program that we do. Now, if you're listening to this on the American Family Radio Network, you may not hear it.

So, you've got to look for the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist podcast to hear the next show with Dr. Gary Habermas. Just go wherever you get podcasts, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Gary, we're going to do the next podcast, so don't go anywhere.

It's been great having Gary on. Go to his website, GaryHabermas.com. That's GaryHabermas.com. A wealth of great articles, and videos, and interviews up there that will help you know why Christianity is true. And Lord willing, we'll see you here next time. Don't Forget our website, CrossExamined.org. See you next time.

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