

# OpenTheo

## Easter: Making the Case for the Resurrection of Jesus to Non-Christians

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### **Knight & Rose Show** - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Did Jesus really rise from the dead? In this week's special Easter episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose equip you to have daring and exciting conversations about the resurrection of Jesus with your non-Christian family, friends, co-workers... even strangers. We will show you: 1) how historians evaluate ancient documents, 2) which New Testament reports pass historical tests, and 3) how to construct an argument for the resurrection that will challenge skeptics. Please subscribe, like, comment, and share. Show notes: <https://winteryknight.com/2022/04/17/knight-and-rose-show-episode-1-the-minimal-facts-case-for-the-resurrection-of-jesus/>

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## **Transcript**

Welcome to the Knight & Rose Show where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today's topic is the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. I'm Wintery Knight.

And I'm Desert Rose. Yeah, let's start by saying Happy Easter to all of our listeners. And just before we begin discussing the resurrection, I do think it's helpful to remind

everyone who wants to discuss the resurrection with a non-Christian that it can be very helpful to establish the existence of God using arguments and evidence so that there is someone there who can perform a miracle like the resurrection.

Yeah, I think that's a really good thing to note because if you're going to convince people that the miracle of the resurrection happened, it helps that they already agree there's some sort of creator, designer, miracle worker who could perform such a deed. Yes. So Rose, you get into a lot of discussions with people.

Why don't you tell me what is the most standard way that you present the resurrection? Well, the argument I find most effective, most convincing, most powerful is known as the minimal facts argument. So scholars have noted over the last several decades that there are several facts surrounding the life, death, and apparent resurrection of Jesus that are agreed upon by virtually all scholars regardless of their worldview, their religious affiliation, anything like that. So just based on facts agreed upon by virtually all scholars in this area, we can use those facts to make a case for the resurrection.

That is the best explanation for the facts. Wow. I'm surprised that there is such a consensus among virtually all scholars.

So why would they agree with these facts? Well, there are several criteria that scholars look for in determining how historically reliable something is. One of them would be multiple attestation. So if several different sources confirm the same event or the same facts, then that's of course considered more powerful than if just one historian.

Like having multiple witnesses to a crime. Yes, exactly. So we have that with the gospels and especially the letters of Paul.

And we have this with the events surrounding the life of Jesus and his death and what people thought were appearances. And so Mark attests to the circumstances very early on. Paul in his letters attests to a lot of the same facts.

We have a source. There was some source that was commonly used by Matthew and Luke as they wrote their historical accounts. And so we have several different sources that have a lot of agreement on facts.

And so this is one example of a criterion that convinces scholars something really happened. That makes sense. Are there others? Yeah.

So there's also early attestation, of course, something that was reported earlier and closer to the events is considered more reliable than something that happened, you know, than something that was reported hundreds of years later. And historians agree that the letters of Paul were very, very early. Really, as far as ancient history goes, the gospels were also very early, but there's a consensus that Paul's letters predate the gospels.

Early enough for eyewitnesses to be around? Absolutely. Yeah. Yep.

And that's a strong argument in favor of the trustworthiness of these historical documents. So yeah. Okay.

So if it's multiple and one of the sources is early, that's a good sign that it's historically reliable, whatever the tradition is. What else? So there's also enemy attestation. So if your enemies or skeptics or people who don't have any reason to promote your account, your testimony of what happened, if they agree with you on things, then that's also going to lend more credibility to those facts.

Okay. Is that all of them? I know there's also the criterion of embarrassment. So for example, the gospels report that women were the first witnesses to the empty tomb.

And this is just not something that would have been made up in those times. In fact, a lot of people in those early days rejected the gospels because they said, well, you can't trust women. Women's testimony wasn't even permitted in a court of law.

And so this is something that just would not have been made up. So that's an example of embarrassment. And then there's also the criterion of dissimilarity.

If something was not common before an event and it was not common after an event, then it's likely that that fact really occurred. So for example, Jesus referred to himself repeatedly as the son of man. Well, the Jews did not refer to the coming Messiah as the son of man, nor did the church refer to Jesus after his lifetime as the son of man.

That was just not common. And so it's highly likely that Jesus really did refer to himself that way. Okay, so multiple attestation, multiple sources reported.

One of them or both of them or all of them are early within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses. If you can get your enemy to agree to something that you report, that's good. If the thing that's being reported is embarrassing to your message or your community, that's good.

And if something is unique to Jesus, it's not shared by the people who were before him or the people came after him, but just his own thing, like the son of man title. These things all make a historian think this is historically accurate. So what are the facts that pass most or all of these tests? So there are a whole bunch of them, but scholars today use about six of them really commonly.

So the first one would be that Jesus was actually killed by crucifixion. The next would be that the disciples of Jesus believed they really saw the resurrected Jesus. Even scholars who do not believe there was a resurrection, there was a resurrection, believe that the disciples believed they saw the resurrected Jesus.

Right. Got it. So another so-called minimal fact that virtually everybody agrees to is that the enemy of Christ, Paul, the apostle who actually went by Saul before he became a Christian, became a follower of Jesus when he believed he saw the risen Jesus.

Similarly, James, the brother of Jesus was a skeptic. He did not believe Jesus was the Messiah during Jesus lifetime, but he also became a follower of Jesus, became a Christian when he believed he saw the risen Jesus. So these are four of the facts most commonly used.

There are two more that I hear used all the time today. So the early proclamation of the resurrection in Jerusalem. So scholars agree that within one to three years of the crucifixion, we have evidence that Christians were proclaiming the resurrection and they were proclaiming it right there in Jerusalem where the event supposedly took place.

So people had the opportunity to say, no, I was an eyewitness. This didn't happen. But that was not what was happening.

Eyewitnesses were attesting to the accounts that were going around of what happened. And then also the lives of the disciples were transformed. They had been cowards.

They had been doubters and they became courageous, bold apostles preaching this message of a resurrection, even knowing that their lives were at risk for doing so. Interesting. So these minimal facts pass the critical tests that we outlined earlier.

You know, picking up on one of these facts, I am surprised that virtually all critical scholars accept that there were post-mortem appearances of Jesus. Give me an example of somebody who accepts us. Yeah.

So one example would be Gerd Ludemann. He is a liberal German scholar who rejects miracles. He is not a Christian.

And yet he agrees that these appearances were something that actually happened. Paul James, the disciples believed they saw the risen Christ. And there is actually an excellent debate between Gerd Ludemann and William Lane Craig.

There was a book written up about it with the transcript and some comments from scholars on the debate called Jesus Resurrection. He debated William Lane Craig. He debated against William Lane Craig on the resurrection? Yes, that's correct.

Yes. Oh, that's skeptical. Okay, go ahead.

Yes. Yeah. And so this book on the debate is called Jesus Resurrection, Fact or Figment? Of course, William Lane Craig is defending the position it's fact.

Gerd Ludemann claiming that it's figment. But either way, Gerd Ludemann grants these post-mortem appearances in some form or fashion. Yeah.

In fact, Ludemann had written a book, *What Really Happened to Jesus*, where he affirms some of these facts. And so... Go ahead and tell us what he says. Okay.

Yeah. Why don't I just maybe read from his words for a couple of paragraphs? Yeah, go ahead. So he says, "The testimony of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, 1 through 11, is the earliest text in the New Testament to make concrete mention of the death, resurrection, and appearances of the risen Christ.

Here Paul uses traditions which he knows from an earlier period. As 1 Corinthians is usually dated around 50, we may note first that the traditions which he mentions must be even older. This early text will be the guideline for our investigations." So there he's saying that 1 Corinthians 15 was very, very early attestation.

Yeah. And he says that he's able to get the death, resurrection, and appearances of the risen Christ as historical reports. Exactly.

Yep, exactly. Okay, continue. Keep going.

Okay. He says, "A fairly certain date can similarly be worked out for the conversion of Paul as well. The Acts of the Apostles credibly reports a stay of Paul in Corinth when Galio was there as governor of Achaia in Acts 18.

Now this Galio was in office in 51 and 52. If we calculate back from this date the intervals which Paul mentions in Galatians 1.18 and Galatians 2.1 and add two years for traveling, the date of his conversion comes out at around 33. Very, very early.

Another sentence or so. So we may state that the appearances mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15.3-8 took place in the time between 30 and 33 CE, common era, because the appearance to Paul is the last in this list and is not to be dated later than 33 CE. Yeah, I see him pulling in some of the criteria that you mentioned.

Like he's going for multiple sources like Acts and 1 Corinthians, and he says 1 Corinthians is early. So this is probably why he accepts this, because it's passing your criteria. And then he even had the enemy attestation in there with Paul.

Give me another. Do you know any other non-Christian or atheist skeptical scholars who also accept things like this? Because this is pretty surprising, I think. Sure, absolutely.

I mean, just about any scholar you could find is going to agree to these facts. But I'll give you another example. Atheist historian John Dominic Crossan, who is part of the Jesus Seminar, who basically, yeah, they basically reject, was it two-thirds or so of the Gospels? Yes.

And he, and miracles and such, he wrote a book excavating Jesus beneath the stones behind the texts. And he also debated William Lane Craig. There is also a transcript of

this debate in the book, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?* So yeah, I like that title.

That's a funny title. Yeah. So I'll just read a couple sentences from that as well.

Okay. Oh, wait, you're reading from that book or you're reading from Crossan's book? Sorry, I'm reading from Crossan's book. Okay.

What does Crossan say? Yeah. So Crossan says, "Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s CE, but he says in 1 Corinthians 15.3 that I hand it on to you as of first importance, which I in turn received. The most likely source in time for his reception of that tradition would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s, when according to Galatians 1.18, he went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, Peter, and stayed with him 15 days." Okay.

So these guys are saying that because they've got multiple sources, early sources, now they're bringing in Galatians into this and confirming with the eyewitnesses, Peter, okay? They're saying that because these things are passing these historical tests, they're willing to give you the burial. They're willing to give you the appearances. Right.

So they keep mentioning this passage from 1 Corinthians. Tell me about that. Yeah.

This is considered a very, very early passage that was actually an oral tradition, an oral creed that was passed along. They believe this because of the structure and language, and it took some time to develop this creed and put it into something so memorable, easily memorized, passed, you know, able to be passed on quickly and easily memorized. And so the structure and the language indicate it's very, very early.

Let me go ahead and read that to you, actually. This is from the early 30s. Go ahead and read it to me.

Yes. Okay. So Paul is speaking.

He says, "For I handed down to you, as of first importance, what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. After that, He appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles." And then he adds, after this creed, he adds on his own, "And last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also." Right.

Ludamud was saying, "Paul's appearance is the last, so the other ones must have happened first." And he thinks Paul's appearance is 33. Yes. So the other appearances are prior to 33, and Jesus dies in 30.

Right. Okay. That's impressive information and evidence.

So from an apologetics point of view, why do I care about this passage? Like, what's useful to me? I know it's got some of the minimal facts, but people might argue against those minimal facts. So what should I be noticing here? Yeah. Well, one thing you might want to notice is that there were appearances to several different groups, as well as to individuals at different times in different situations.

And so, you know, one of the most common naturalistic explanations for what people thought were the appearances of the risen Jesus, people will attribute, non-Christians, atheists will attribute to hallucinations. I think we'll talk about that. Hallucinations.

Yeah, exactly. So keep in mind that there were appearances to different groups of people of different sizes at different times and places who were, you know, in different frames of mind and such. Group hallucinations are hard.

That's not as easy to do as one person hallucinating something. Exactly. And then also there were appearances to Paul, who, as I mentioned earlier, was an enemy of Christianity, an enemy of Christ.

So that's significant. Paul persecuted the church, which we see in Galatians 1 and Philippians 3. Paul was martyred in Rome for his faith later on. So something big happened.

Yeah. What happened? Yeah. So exactly.

We have to explain that. Somebody's got to explain that. Yeah.

Right. Exactly. Somebody has to explain it.

Paul explains it as an appearance of the risen Lord. His life was totally turned upside down. Similarly, this happened to James, who was a skeptic.

You know, everything was going great for him, too. He was a good Jewish boy. He did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah.

He's reported to have been a part of these appearances, to have seen them. And, you know, then he's suddenly a leader in the Jerusalem church and then later martyred for his faith, which is reported by Josephus, who was also not a Christian. So have you got this stuff, the unbeliever and the leader in the church? Have you got this in a, you know, something early and multiple sources? Yeah, absolutely.

Because I'm starting to look for this now. Yes. Yeah.

So Mark is probably the earliest gospel. And Mark three talks about James being an unbeliever. We also have this reported by John, who was two sources, one early.

Got it. What about leader in the Jerusalem church? Yeah, we find that in Acts 12, 17 and in Galatians 1, 19. Okay, two sources.

Galatians is early. All right. I'm getting good at this now.

All right. So I've heard some skeptics say this. So Paul is writing this and he's recording this early creed.

And I know that, you know, cross and already cross and allude to men. I think both of them mentioned that Galatians as a confirm, confirm a confirmation on the creed because he goes and visits the eyewitnesses on the eyewitnesses, Peter, and maybe others. Maybe you know, if there's others, I would think he would have met with everybody in Jerusalem who was there.

Maybe, maybe James. Yeah. And so Galatians 1 verses eight through 10 report that he met with Peter and James in Jerusalem.

Okay. I would imagine he probably met with more than two people while he was there, but he reports having John's there. Yeah.

And by Galatians 2 John is mentioned. Yeah. Okay, good.

It sounds like they're talking about the same stuff, but some people say that Paul's gospel statement in first Corinthians is different from what's in the four gospels. What would you say to that? Well, that's just not based on any sort of historical fact. The oldest historical documents report that Paul visited with the apostles, you know, James and Peter and then another visit with John.

And in both of these visits, they were speaking about the gospel message. And so Peter and James and John were confirming and affirming that Paul's message was fully accurate. And vice versa.

Paul was also making sure that Peter and James and the others were reporting on the facts as he knew them to be true as well. So there was a lot of accountability. There were checks and balances going on here.

Yeah, I like this because Ludamond and Crossan both mentioned Galatians. So they're accepting that there was some interaction with these eyewitnesses as well. Yeah, and I'll go ahead and mention that Galatians is one of seven letters of the Apostle Paul that everybody who's a scholar in this area would agree are valid, reliable, historical letters of the Apostle Paul.

There is written by Paul and early. Exactly. Virtually no disagreement by anyone at all.

So, okay. All right. So I'll give you your minimal facts.



I'll play the skeptic. I'll give you your final thoughts. I'll play the skeptic.

I'll give you your minimal facts. Fine. Excellent.

What is the most common naturalistic response to this set of minimal facts? Because I know these guys don't go where Craig goes in the debates. I've seen those debates. Right.

So they disagree with him. So yeah, so in the probably about, I don't know, when were those debates, the early 2000s, the ones that I've mentioned, I watched them later than that. 90s.

90s. That's what I was thinking. Okay.

So yeah, in the 90s, the most common and non-miraculous explanation for the minimal facts was the hallucination theory. I'll go ahead and say now that that most non-Christians, atheists have been persuaded at this point that that's not very likely after all. But this is what they were arguing for in the 1990s.

And this, this is still the best explanation they have, even though they agree it's not a good explanation. So. Well, why is it not a good explanation? Why do you, do they think that or do you think that? Well, why do you think that? Yeah.

So the reason that there's now a widespread consensus that the hallucination theory is not all that reliable is that for one thing, hallucinations occur in the mind. They are individual experiences, much like dreams, and they rarely, rarely happened with more than one person having a similar hallucination. There are a few very rare exceptions of like, for example, there's a report of a small group of soldiers out in the desert on the verge of dying of dehydration, and they all claimed to have seen water.

Water. Yeah. Right.

And so, you know, they're all in the same state of mind. They're all in the same physical state. They're all desperately in need of.

That's a big difference. Water and resurrected Jesus. Right.

Right. Exactly. That's it.

Yeah. So these are hallucinations occur in the mind. So it's not likely that all these different groups of different sizes of different people in different states of mind would have had the same exact hallucination.

Yeah. Also, it doesn't experience a hallucination theory does not explain the, you know, the diversity of the appearances themselves. These were not people even reporting the exact same experience, but they but Jesus is meeting with them at different places,

different individuals under different circumstances.

So, you know, Paul was in a completely different state of mind as an as a persecutor of Christians, an enemy of Christianity. Yeah. Then would be, say, Peter, who was, you know, a close, close intimate friend of Jesus's.

And they would be in a different state of mind than James, who was just, you know, who's the brother of Jesus, but was like, yeah, he's not the Messiah. I think he's lost his mind. You know, so these are these are different people in different circumstances, different sizes of groups over the course of about 40 days.

It just does not fit anything like we have recorded in history at any other time. Yeah. I've read a little bit of of of anti right on this and and he talks about the early proclamation of the resurrection, you know, how that fits with the earlier Jewish thought.

So apparently, the traditional Jewish doctrine of the resurrection is that there's no individual resurrection that first of all, the Messiah is not even supposed to die. Right. He's supposed to conquer and establish a new age of prosperity and peace, you know, so he's not supposed to die.

So there's no expectation of a dying Messiah. And then in addition to that, there's no expectation that the Messiah is supposed to rise from the dead or that any individual is supposed to rise from the dead. So.

Right. At least not until the end of the age. Right.

Yeah. Right. Resurrection is what happens to all the righteous people who have a relationship with God and are, you know, well, it's in this in the Jewish case, it's the Jewish people, the righteous Jewish people are all resurrected.

Right. You know, at the end of the year, not back on earth right. Yeah.

Right after they die. Yeah. You're exactly right.

Right. So this is completely different from what these people are coming up with these early Christians. So is that a defeater for the hallucination hypothesis? Yeah.

I mean, it really is because hallucinations, to quote William Lane Craig, he says hallucinations have a no extra mental correlate, but are projections of the percipient's own brain. So the person who is perceiving the hallucination doesn't come up with additional information and, you know, worldviews and theologies and such in their hallucinations. Their, their whatever is already in their mind is projected into what they see or hear.

And so it just doesn't make sense that the Jews would have concluded that they would have a would have concluded, even if they had had a hallucination of Jesus, they

wouldn't have concluded that he was brought back to life, to earth from the dead then and there, they would have concluded, oh, he's alive in paradise. Yeah. If they're looking for vindication, like they joined the Jesus club and their Jesus got killed.

And they're like explaining to their families why they were not crazy to follow this guy. They could just say, Oh, well, we saw him, you know, we saw an appearance of him rising up into the clouds, you know, with a halo and everything like that. And that was God saying that he was vindicated and all his ideas were correct.

Yeah, exactly. They didn't have to come up with a bodily resurrection guy who's like eating fish. Right.

And it certainly doesn't explain why 500 people at once would have hallucinated. And then, you know, the apostle Paul would have pointed people to say, go interview those people, you know, because they'll testify that they really did see the resurrected Christ. Just none of, yeah, this, it's hallucination theory really starts to fall apart big time.

Well, I've heard some, I've seen lots of Bohemian Craig debates and I've seen some people who debate him on this say that, well, you can't use the appearance of Paul because even though, you know, Paul had some sort of appearance. He was his, his was a hallucination for sure because he was, he was so grieved at having persecuted Christians like you established before. What do you make of that? Well, that actually, not only is there no evidence for that, but that flies in the face of the historical evidence that we do have because when Paul was talking about his pre-Christian life in Philippians 3, 6, he called himself blameless.

He's, he was proud of having persecuted Christians who he thought were heretics. He was not in a state of feeling guilty or horrible about what he was doing. He thought he was preserving the chosen people.

Of God and the true message of God. He was very proud of that. You know, just grief for any other reason doesn't make any sense either because he didn't know Jesus during Jesus lifetime.

So, you know, he certainly wasn't sad, but it also doesn't make sense that he would have felt guilty. He specifically said in Philippians 3 that his state of mind was not one of guilt, but one of pride. He goes through that long list of all his achievements.

It's like he's got like a PhD. He teaches at the best university. He's, he's really happy with his life.

Everybody around him likes him and they're affirming him for what he's doing. So he's not feeling guilty. He's feeling like a rockstar.

Exactly. You know, I'm really good at this. Yep.

Okay. Another one of the appearances, the appearance to Peter, that one you, I could kind of see this like he just finished denying Jesus a couple of times and the cock crows. I don't know if that story is multiply attested and early enough, but if you accept it, then that might give you evidence to think that Peter's appearance is the result of guilt, you know? Yeah.

So, yeah, so yeah, Gerd Ludeman actually theorizes that Peter had a hallucination and then Peter's hallucination became contagious. But even Peter... That seems weird. Yeah, exactly.

I mean, hallucinations, yeah, are not contagious. It's not the flu. But the historical records don't report much on Peter's state of mind.

But what we do know is that Peter thought that Peter's thought Jesus had failed him. He most likely, after Jesus was killed and dead, Peter would not have been likely to be sitting around going, "How shameful that I betrayed the Messiah." He was undoubtedly thinking, "How could I have been so fooled? I thought this guy was the Messiah and now he's dead." So he thought Jesus had failed him. And then, you know, he would have been really struggling in all likelihood with dashed expectations, not with his own personal shame or guilt once he thought Jesus was dead.

This doesn't even fit. Yeah, there's a lot of problems with the hallucination theory. So what... Okay, so if they accept that there's too many holes in their case for the hallucination theory, what's their best explanation for the minimal facts then? Yeah, I'll tell you what scholars are primarily saying today because they know that even their best, previously best explanation, the hallucination theory is quite unlikely.

What those in the know, the latest scholarship of today is saying is that something happened. This is the best they have. Something happened.

Well, yeah. I mean, no kidding, something happened. But they don't know what it was because there is currently no... Oh, they're literally saying something happened.

They're not saying what the something is. Exactly, exactly, because they literally have no naturalistic explanation that is reasonable today. All of their naturalistic theories have been really disregarded by atheists, by agnostics, by scholars of all colors.

So, yeah, they don't have a great answer. Yeah, so that's what they have. And I'll point out that when they say something happened, but it wasn't a resurrection, they're not rejecting the evidence.

They're rejecting the conclusion. The evidence overwhelmingly points to an actual literal resurrection. The opposing theories fail across the board.

It seems to me like what you're basically saying is we've got a body of evidence here

that is agreed to by most critical scholars. You've got the critical scholars agreeing to the evidence in their own words. They don't like the conclusion, so they come up with something different.

You shoot down what they come up with, and then they go, "Well, something happened, but not what you say happened." Exactly. It seems to me that this is starting to make me really want to try this out. I mean, I do get into this, but it seems kind of fun.

Oh, it's a blast. It's a blast. When you go... It seems like you're going to win doing this.

Yeah, exactly. It always cracks me up when somebody who prides himself on being some great atheist or agnostic scholar or pantheist scholar who rejects the resurrection and is all proud of knowing all these facts of what happened and everything. When I ask them, "So how do you explain the minimal facts?" and all they can come up with is something happened.

They either have to deny one or more of these minimal facts to get out of this, or they're going to have to come up with a better naturalistic explanation that accounts for the facts as well as the resurrection explanation. Yeah, you're absolutely right. And in fact, one of the facts that used to be widely accepted and is still accepted by about 75% of scholars is that the tomb of Jesus was actually found empty.

But what has happened is that some of these non-Christian scholars have kind of found a way to say they reject the empty tomb without having evidence for it by saying things like, "Well, sometimes they left the bodies on the cross, even though all the historical evidence we have shows that the Romans were more than happy to accommodate the Jews, especially in their holy days, to take down a body." Yeah, you were talking about enemy attestation earlier. The story of the burial of Jesus, there's a very famous member of the Jewish community, Joseph of Iremathia, who is involved in the burial. Yes.

If they're upset with that community right now, it's unlikely that they would have had one member of that community doing the right thing and giving Jesus a decent, honorable burial. Exactly. Once again, it doesn't make sense for the people at that time in that situation to have made up that detail, to make a Jewish leader look so good and sympathetic.

And then again, like you said before, the earliest witnesses to the empty tomb are women witnesses. And I've heard skeptics who, I've heard one skeptic who debated William Lane Craig say that was a very convincing piece of evidence for him for accepting it. Right.

So if you can get the empty tomb into your list of minimal facts, that would be even worse for the hallucination explanation, because the hallucination explanation doesn't explain how the tomb got empty. Exactly. So it would be even, yeah.

Yeah. I mean, the fact remains that, you know, all of the message started right there in Jerusalem where all of these events occurred. And the only thing that anybody would have had to have done to shut down Christianity for good right from the beginning is show a body.

Yeah, exactly. Yeah. Okay.

Give me your summation. Give me your conclusion. Okay.

So the hypothesis that God raised Jesus from the dead best explains the minimal facts. That is how I would summarize the bottom line here for all the reasons that we've been talking about. It explains why the tomb was found empty, why the disciples saw post-mortem appearances of Jesus, and why the Christian faith came into being.

It also explains why the body of Jesus was gone, why people repeatedly said they saw Jesus alive despite his public execution. It fits the historical context because, you know, Jesus had claimed to be deity in a whole variety of different ways through his actions, through his words. In fact, that's what he was accused of.

He was accused of blasphemy, and that's why he was crucified. And if he wasn't claiming to be God, you don't have any good reason for him being executed for blasphemy. So Jesus was making these claims.

He was, according to countless eyewitnesses, he was doing miracles and claiming to be deity. And so it really fits the historical context of Jesus' life and his claims to say, to, you know, conclude that there really was a resurrection. Really, the only problem, and I'll put that in quotes, problem that exists with the resurrection theory is that it was a miracle.

But if Jesus, I mean, rather, if God exists, then a miracle is really not that far-fetched. Yeah, the other problem I've heard some skeptical scholars say is they don't like the idea that there's a miracle in one religion and the others don't have that. So there's a pluralistic argument for, not really an argument, but kind of like a pluralistic reason for wanting to die at the resurrection.

John Dominic Crosson talks about that in his debate with Craig. I just want to add one quick thing here. So whenever you're making a case for a miracle, as you're making a historical case that a miracle has occurred, a miracle is the best explanation for this.

I think it, like I said at the beginning of the podcast, I think that Christians need to be ready to make a case for some kind of supernatural being who could, in principle, do miracles, like creating the universe. If you've got a being who can create the universe and you can prove that or argue for that with mainstream science, resurrections are a piece of cake. Right.

So I normally use six scientific arguments when I argue for a supernatural creator and

designer. Yeah, why don't you mention what those are? Okay. The origin of the universe is popular, like the Kalama argument, coupled with mainstream cosmology.

Absolutely. Cosmic, cosmic fine tuning, you know, you change the parameters of life, you lose the ability to have complex embodied life. The origin of life, not only the building blocks, but also the information in living in the simplest replicator, the sudden origin of major body plans, phyla in the Cambrian explosion.

Right. I'm just going over these quickly. People have heard of Mike Bee.

He's irreducible complexity and molecular machines in general. You take out a piece and it stops working. And then there's also the habitability argument that there's certain correlations between this, our ability to make discoveries and our ability, our, the ability of our planet and our solar system and our galaxy to support life.

Like if you put, if you put the two together, it kind of suggests that the designer of the universe wanted the places that support life to also be the best places for making scientific discoveries. Right. So if you, if you sustain any or all of those arguments, you got yourself a creator who can do the work that you need.

Right. God to be able to do for this argument to seem reasonable. Exactly.

And that, and that is, as I said, the one and only so-called problem with the resurrection theory is that it involves a miracle. But yeah, with those arguments, there is just so much evidence. Like I said, I think there's another problem with the, it offends pluralism.

Yes. So some people are going to object to it by saying, look, I was raised as a Hindu. I can't accept miracles and other religions because then that would make my religion, you know, false.

Well, yeah, exactly. Which I think is, as you pointed out, is a terrible, terrible argument. I mean, that's, yeah, that sounds like I don't, I don't like it because it doesn't feel good to my previous commitment.

Yeah. It's two presuppositions. One, miracles don't happen.

Two, I don't want my friends who are in other religions feeling bad. And that's not, that's something you have to argue for. You don't just get to help yourself.

Right. So to end off, I want to ask you for our listeners, what would you recommend to them so that they are as prepared and smooth as you are at making the case for the resurrection? Well, Gary Habermas has been studying the resurrection his entire adult life. And he has recently come out with a book called *Risen Indeed*.

In the first, I can't remember if it's the introduction or the first chapter, he gives an update on where we are today with resurrection scholarship, the minimal facts that that

most people are using today and such. And then he goes through the major philosophical objections to the resurrection. Like, for example, that the resurrection didn't occur because miracles are not possible, that the resurrection occurred, but cannot be demonstrated.

Because historical events can't be known and that the resurrection. And then he makes a case for the the that the resurrection did occur and it can be demonstrated and known. So Risen Indeed by Gary Habermas, great new book out at the end of 2021.

I'd recommend that. How about you? I'll have to pick up that book. For me, I like fighting.

So I'm a boy and I like military history. So I like debates. I really recommend that people watch a lot of debates so they can get good at listening to their opponent talk and staying calm and then being able to put together what they need to say in a short period of time.

Yeah. You know, so that you're not doing all the talking. So I like the we mentioned two debates.

I actually like the debate between William Lane Craig and James Crossley better than both of those. So I would say just there's I'll put the link in our show notes. Okay.

To the debate. I wrote a I wrote a summary of it. I think it's a great debate and I would recommend that people watch that.

Excellent. Okay. So I think that's that's all we have for today's episode.

If you like this episode, please like it and comment and share. As always, you can find the references for this episode on my blog, [winterynight.com](http://winterynight.com). W I N T E R Y K N I G H T dot com. We appreciate you all taking the time to listen and we'll see you again in the next one.

Happy Easter.

[Music]