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J. Warner Wallace: Cold-Case Christianity, Updated & Expanded

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Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Christian apologist J. Warner Wallace about the updated and expanded edition of his book "Cold-Case Christianity". Can modern people take a book seriously if it contains miracles? Are the biographies of Jesus reliable? Did the bias of the Gospel writers affect their accuracy? We also discuss the other sections, including the new afterword that responds the critics.

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Transcript

Welcome to the Knight & Rose Show, where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today, we will be interviewing a special guest, Mr. J. Warner Wallace. But first, let's introduce the host.

I'm Wintery Knight. And I'm Desert Rose. So, let me tell you a little bit about today's

guest.

J. Warner Wallace is a cold-case homicide detective, a Christian casemaker, and an author. Jim was a conscientious and vocal atheist through his undergraduate and graduate work. His experience in law enforcement only served to strengthen his conviction that truth is tied directly to evidence.

But at the age of 35, Jim took a serious and expansive look at the evidence for the Christian worldview and determined that Christianity was demonstrably true. After becoming a Christ follower in 1996, Jim continued to take an evidential approach to truth as he examined the Christian worldview. He eventually earned a master's degree in Theological Science and Science.

He was a writer for the following historical studies from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He has written many books, including adaptations designed for young readers. And I'll just mention three of his books that I liked, Cold Case Christianity, God's Crime Scene, who I got my manager to read that one at work, and Person of Interest.

We asked Jim to come on today to discuss his brand new, revised, and expanded edition of Cold Case Christianity. So, welcome to the Knight & Rose Show, Jim. Well, thanks for having me.

I appreciate it. You know, I'm a big fan. So I mean, we've been connected online Going back years.

Yeah, so it's cool. Yeah. Well, we really appreciate that.

You've also met Rose in person. Yes, I have Yes, he's giving me some great advice on for ministry and for life So I'm grateful for you on a personal level as well as through your books Yeah, I think is what happens to you get older. I feel like your your book has changes, right? So so when I wrote this book 10 years ago, you know, I was still I had I think I was actively had two cases in trial Or three cases in trial as I was writing the book You're in the game you're in the fight and you're just have a little bit different attitude and as you get older You realize that you age out of law enforcement because a lot of law enforcement, you know When you work as a detective you still have to be patrol ready And so because at any time you could deploy and everyone gets back in a uniform They've got to work, you know a riot or work whatever it is.

And there's a point at which you're just not as effective Physically as you would have been on your in your 30s And so that's why you don't see a lot of cops who are in there, you know They get to their 50s we we age out and so Then you look at yourself and say well, who am I now? Yeah And a lot of what has to happen is is this also happens while you're on the job like you're on the job and you're In your 30s and you can handle a situation when someone is trying to hurt you you can respond physically In a way you

cannot explore respond when you're in your late 40s So you find yourself in your late 40s trying other, you know, how do I manage this situation? Well, it's gonna have to be a little bit of you know You're probably gonna get in a wrestling match, but you gotta be a little smarter about how you do it It's a wisdom thing, right? So you're trying to employ wisdom rather than just reflex And so I think as you get older too as an apologist you realize, okay There's a time when somebody needs to step up and now we're moving toward more wisdom kinds of books And that's what we're doing I think person of interest is really a book that talks about the beauty of Christianity Not just a hard case for Christianity, right and the next book I'm writing I've just finished writing that that book is definitely a wisdom book And I think that's what you do is you kind of get older you start to change your interests Yeah I can hardly wait to ask you about the afterward but why don't you go ahead and tell us a few you know Of the big improvements that you made to the new edition. Well, I mean look that I didn't want to I hate selling books I mean, that's just I just that's just I just don't like it I don't think probably anybody who I remember one time listening to an author when I first started I was working at a camp and I was the next speaker up and the speaker before me was a guy who was with the same Publishing house that I was with and he was an older guy He was probably in his 70s and he was complaining about how this dang publishing house I always have to have him do these radio interviews and all this stuff that he hated going and I thought ah This is the life of like I didn't think about it. I didn't think okay That means you're gonna have to be responsible for sharing what's in your book with all these people at the time because you're marketing your book It is the most uncomfortable thing that you will ever do if you're an author is have to talk about your work especially if you're Like you wrote this and you wish it would just have a life of its own but it turns out no You need to talk about it.

Yeah, and I hate doing that So I didn't I didn't want to do a tenth anniversary edition because I'm gonna talk about this all over again I was glad that the marketing cycle was done ten years ago And and but no but but I saw that that a couple things happen number one I had a chance to read my book for the audio version Where for like the first six or seven years it had been an actor who that version was out there because when I first wrote the Book they didn't know who I was so they just had somebody else read it And when I read the book for this version the first version of the book I realized wow, there's a lot of things that I have Rearticulated slightly differently since I wrote the book if you were to follow my stage presentations You say oh that there's a better way to say this Or there's a better body of different angle a better body of evidence you could use and so Things do change and the more you you talk about something the more you realize this is a stronger argument over here It is stronger articulated in this way So I thought ah, this would give me a chance to rewrite it Also, there's a bunch of stuff that I wanted to improve when you first write a book They don't want what your full your full-throated version of the book because they don't want to print as many pages And they don't know if it's gonna sell one copy or ten So they're like, yeah, let's try to keep it short

so so I was able to blow this up and Be more full-throated on certain sections because I don't have to worry about the page count anymore Like we proved to them we can have a bigger page count. It'll be okay I also was able to go back and re illustrate it so I went from 90 illustrations and graphic elements to 390 so that was that it's a much more visual book I got to put in an afterward that kind of handles a lot of some of the common objections I've gotten in the last 10 years. So as I kind of kept a record of the red I Whatever was new I would haven't read right? I would show the publisher.

This is how much is new Well, I caused a book this now we had to take and put the the footnotes in a PDF file Which is available online and even doing that we still added over 50 pages to the book Nice. Yeah, so we took out a section until it still added over 50 pages So so I think that you know, it is a bigger book and it is a more robust book But I think because of the illustrations it reads even faster than the original book Yeah, I absolutely love your illustrations by the way your your background is in originally in architecture. Is that right? Yeah my bachelor's degree isn't designed and you do a lot of Sketching and sculpting and painting and all the kind of art precursors You'll have to do that if you have a design field, right? I did did some time and did I did interiors I did graphic design industrial design You do all those things as kind of like rabbit trails as you're getting your design degree And then I leveraged that toward a master's in architecture and then you know I ended up becoming a cop but I from the very beginning of working Cola cases We were making these visual for juries Now they weren't line drawings like you see in books because it's still cheaper to reproduce a line drawing in a book than it is Something that's got like a photo kind of thing, right? So when I do that in front of juries It's always like photo realism when you're doing it on a book It's just line drawings that are easy to reproduce But I think they're pretty robust and we took those line drawings and created a 410 slide PowerPoint Which we offer with the book.

We actually offer a 30 nice session ten and a half hour video course Which includes all of my books As a giveaway because I'm I think at this point in life that the idea and I tell people all the time you should you should Leverage which you can get for free. Mm-hmm as much as possible because this we're in such a great internet age and information age We're this is all out there for nothing Right, you know, we post three times a week on our website and we hope that people use those resources Before you spend the what is it 18 bucks or whatever it is for this book? You you you want to you know, you want to exhaust what's out there that's available for free So when I write a book and they're gonna charge \$18 for it I want to make sure we give way more value than the \$18. So with this book, there's the 30 session It's a it's completely written out.

It's there's a notebook. You'll assemble if you do this course You get a certificate at the end of it. It's free.

There's a 410 slide PowerPoint is free You can teach it to others and over 50 Bible inserts

that have all of the illustrations from the book and articulate like this Is what it means you can pull it out and show somebody here's the case for this. Here's the case for that So I hope that those resources number one because I feel bad that we have to charge anything for a book Yeah, I want to make case makers. That's what we're trying to do even with young people.

That's all we have kids books We're trying to make case makers out of kids. Yeah. Yeah, I can tell that's one of the there's two things about you That are kind of distinctive come in comparison to the other you know Christian apologists I think I think the first thing is probably more than anybody else you take an interest in training like people to come after you to take over and you also lift up other voices more, you know just so that other people can comment on these on these things and and so on but also I think your police background It's kind of reminds me of my engineering background Like you have to deal with people who have a presupposition of naturalism You have to you can't assume that they think the Bible is an error Actually the first entire section of the old edition of cold case Christianity You spent a lot of time refuting this presupposition of naturalism and right do you do anything with that in the new edition as well? Yeah, we live with left me.

We tried to leave the what's we just try to expand it, right? We don't we don't want to cheat there's the problem when you have a book that you did pretty well and people actually are using They're using it in their youth groups are using it in their church Like I don't want to do anything to mess it up. So so we want to expand it not not Redact it not change it. So I think that that that presupposition is So huge I hear us to hear this all the time like what you bet you never Infer that there was a ghost or a demon in one of your crime scenes.

Well, the truth the truth of it is no I haven't here's why there's an order In which you look at things. There's a hierarchy you go you move from simple to complex You know, even when I'm looking at potential suspects, then you know, I'm who knows this woman who she dating Well, what am I doing? I'm starting with a circle That is the I called it the proximity principle in terms of working homicides It's people typically are murdered by people who are in their proximity. Mm-hmm, right? Or they just were there all along and the first proximity is is relational like who is the closest relationships? And i'm not going to go to a stranger for this murder until that's going to be a different circle It's a much larger concentric circle Well the same thing we true here if you know if I run out of physical suspects then and there's this and this evidence is only Fits the description of something outside the physical realm then of course i'm going to go there But you start with the tightest concentric circle And you move yourself outwards am I this is how science in the earliest Years of the scientific revolution when it was being guided and chartered by by christians.

They were doing science this way They're like look i'm I know that there's a god that

exists But I also know he's distinct from his creation And that this phenomena i'm studying May not be the direct intervention of god It may just simply be the distinct creation that he has created which is now reflects his orderly nature And so I can do the same thing in my crime scenes So I don't that's so I think that's but yeah, you're right. Do you have this presupposition? Let's put it this way If the new testament and I put this in the new book if the new testament did not include a single supernatural event A single supernatural event no miracles. No resurrection.

No virgin birth Just a wise preaching rabbi who taught some neat sermons There wouldn't be a single person on planet earth Who would argue about the reliability of those documents? They would say that the manuscript evidence is remarkable They would say that there is the probably best attested ancient in the history of ancients Take out the miracles and this is now becomes like like wow yet Put them put one miracle in and suddenly everything's up for grabs. Well, why that's the presuppositional bias It has nothing to do with whether the documents are on their face Reliable given the document set we have the transmission of the documents It has to do with the existence of the supernatural in the documents Because if you took that stuff out, there'd be nobody making the same complaints Yeah, neither rose nor I grew up in christian homes So when we you know when we go into churches There's almost a different view than that where they sort of assume that the bible is inerrant and they don't really deal with the commonly held presuppositions of non-christians That would make the bible or the new testament documents just ruled out of court You know a priori, right? So I think I think it is important for people who want to make a case To be familiar with say the science that you presented in the first edition or in god's crime scene Which would uh kind of undo that presumption of naturalism so that they're willing to at least take a look at the text Well, and people always say this all the time, right? We are god of the gaps folks that we don't have an answer therefore god. That's not what we're doing Right for example When we look at the the inferences from design or from the code in the in genes You know the code the genetic code we're not jumping.

We don't can't explain that therefore god No, we're saying that every single example we have in which we find this kind of coded information It's always a mind, right? So this is not a matter of it's same thing Like I always put this is why I even drew this now in this new edition That if you were to find blood spatter at this at the where a body is discovered And you're wondering this he's dead and he apparently he hit his head Was he knocked in the head, you know, they got blood spatter on the wall right next to the body Well that blood spatter does not demonstrate necessarily that it's a murder because you could have hit your head accidentally hit the ground The physics of the blood spatter the chemistry of blood would cause the kind of patterns you're seeing So this could be an accidental for all we know given the physics and chemistry of blood spatter So on the other hand though, if I walked in that blood spatter is there but next to the blood spatter I have written in his blood. He deserved it Suddenly now I am looking

for a suspect Even though why because you cannot get that from physics and chemistry, right? That is information which means a mind was here I'm now looking for the source of that information and I automatically immediately move off of physics and chemistry to do it And that's reasonable. It's not that i'm saying well, I can't explain this with physics and chemistry.

Therefore there's a suspect No, actually it turns out that this is not a you know, a suspect of the gaps This is the most reasonable inference from the evidence on the wall And that's what we're doing. For example, this is why antine flu Was so persuaded as a lifelong atheist that there was a god Because he thought that the evidence from the dna studies even Early studies that he was a privy to as an old guy were demonstrative These things these things demonstrated that there was something beyond space time and matter And I think he's right. Okay, let me switch gears a little bit and uh, You know, we talked about how people come to the text and say well if there's miracles in it Then I I can't accept it But if you can diffuse that one then the next one is going to be something like well those documents came years After the events if the events even happened and there's probably a lot of legends that have emerged Maybe the transmission of of the early text isn't reliable So how would you respond to some of these common objections to the gospels being a reliable and accurate recording? Of the events of jesus's life that was my objection right there.

I mean that was absolutely my objection I mean, I said well, I mean I had a lot of objection, but that was the one that I thought was going to be the the easiest Explanation for why there would be super net Couple of things number one either if you want to lie about jesus and include all this stupid stuff about miracles You just wait until nobody who ever knows the truth is dead You can say anything you want once everyone knows the truth is dead So I needed to know first of all are they early? But even if they're early There could be something written about jesus early but not this thing written about jesus early There could be something about the simple preaching rabbi known as jesus of nazareth But he's not the christ of christianity because he didn't do all of the grandiose spectacular supernatural things That we that we see in the gospels. So I would I would have argued one of two things They're late or I would have argued that they are distorted. They are they have been changed over time And so we have to kind of address both of those issues now lucky for us.

The same thing happens when you have eyewitnesses either Sometimes people will lie So I and people online all the time will say to me Well, why would you trust these as eyewitness accounts number one? And if you even if they were Why would you think eyewitness accounts matter because we know eyewitness testimony is incredibly unreliable? To which I say yep, that's right That's why we don't trust eyewitnesses and if you're a new investigator blindly trusting your eyewitnesses Well, good luck with that because it's not going to go well for you Especially when you get in front of good defense attorneys And I have had witnesses change their story on the stand. There is nothing

more uncomfortable. Wow.

There is nothing more devastating Luckily that's not happened as it happened in a date line I don't think it's ever happened on a dateline case But has not happened publicly in a way that was kind of live, you know being you know being recorded But but it's it makes you realize well What kind of an idiot was I that I didn't push this and test this witness even more thoroughly? So what we do instead of trusting eyewitnesses is we test them And that has always been the approach we've taken as we test eyewitness That's what the entire second section of the book is about is how do you test eyewitnesses? And one of them is do you did they change their story over time? And so we can look and see what the earliest version of the Jesus story is if we have good reason to believe that the earliest versions Of the Jesus story included the supernatural elements. There's two ways to do this, of course One is you could say well Do we have any internal evidence from scripture and Gary's done a great job Gary Hebermass has done a great job job of tracing Back and I talk about this in one section of the new book Is he can trace back given Paul's statements about this road the Damascus road experience he had and how early What he did next and then when he did he visit the disciples and when did that happen? You can trace back from scriptures and he's piecing together different books different letters that Paul's written and where he's described this And of course looking at the book of Acts and you can trace back this notion that the disciples were making a claim about their resurrection within about three years the earliest recorded claim internally Can date back to within a couple of a couple of three years of the actual resurrection Of course, they were saying it from right you can yeah, exactly right 15 three days. Yeah, we've talked about that.

Okay, good So that's one way you can do it. The other way you can do it is to say well, okay Look, so if you're saying this got distorted, where does it happen in the histories? There's this often is a case in criminal trials if you ever watched the making of a murderer That show about that Wisconsin murder The argument is that they they arrested an innocent man and framed him and how they did it was to contaminate to distort to tamper with evidence To make it look like the evidence contained blood evidence linking him to the murder when in fact it didn't and and the argument is That blood was taken out of property Transferred to the scene where it was put on this piece of evidence Okay Get all that that happens a lot those kinds of claims where some will say how do we trust that this wasn't messed with? And what we are forced to show is as detectives is a chain of custody In which we can show what was seen at the crime scene Who documented that? Who collected it? Who'd they give it to? What did he see? What did he write about it? What did he do with it? Is it sitting in property for all that time? Is it ever touched? How do we know it wasn't touched when I was brought to the crime lab? What did they see? And so then we get report after report after report and hopefully Either a polaroid or an image over image over image over the years in which we can see This piece of cut property over the last 30 years if it's a cold case Uh, like what did it look

like from the beginning to the end? And and whoever touched it That's a link in the chain that connects the past to the present and that chain of custody is simply the list of consecutive investigators who touched or photographed or moved or Possessed the actual piece of evidence now we can do the same thing with the new testament gospels. What is the information? Let's say for example, john does he who's the next officer in the chain of custody? Who's he give that information to well? The earliest claims in christian history is that his students are ignacious polycarp and papius and we have some written documents from ignacious and polycarp And we can look and see if the way they describe jesus Is a little more primitive A little less supernatural In other words, what did they learn about jesus from the eyewitness known as john? And when they wrote it down does it sound less like the the jesus we know today? Yeah, it turns out that the earliest links in the chain of custody jesus sounds like he does today Argument that somehow he's changing over time.

He's just like you may not believe it's true fine Yeah, but you can't argue that it changed over time. That's one thing I can say with certainty did not happen Yeah Like you talked about the dead sea scrolls for a little bit in the in the first edition And this is just we had the earliest copy of a bunch of old testament documents We had were the masoretic texts and then they discovered these dead sea scrolls that are a thousand years later around And we were able to analyze how much had changed in that time And it wasn't very much so you can actually test that the people who are in charge of copying this and transmitting it Take this very seriously Yeah, no, no doubt. This is like the when you get if I remember my wife's first car We've known each other since we were in high school.

And so when she got her first car Uh, my great grandmother was selling hers Okay, because she was just getting to the point where she was no longer going to be driving, right? So she she ends up selling hers for like 500 bucks and it's a 1972 olive green Ford pinto I don't know if you know what a for pinto is but it was pretty ugly Okay, and it wasn't even a hatchback version of this car. It had a trunk in the back. It was the ugliest car Um, but it was it was reliable.

I mean it was a car you could you could you could drive now Be honest though How much are you going to take care of your 1972 ford pinto? I mean I drove it in college years later When I needed a car and I remember driving down on the way to ucla And beautiful brentwood area and thinking to myself. I look like a jerk in this this 1972 green Pinto that I stopped washing years before because what's the point? Now it's so if I had a ferrari if I could have bought her a ferrari for her first car Or even if I'd have bought her what you want It was like a convertible bug, you know back in those days. She would have loved I mean that thing would have been kept spotless That's the difference between the ferrari and the pinto the folks who possessed these documents Saw them as holy And and treated them like a ferrari rather than a pinto And and that's exactly what you would expect.

And so we got we got lucky because because the documents were seen this way They were handled differently than they would have been if they were just oh, let's just see if we can get uh, you know, shakespeare's Work, you know transmitted to somebody else. That's not seen as holy And that's why you have so many precious copies that are distributed That's the other great thing about it that the the mass number of copies we have will help us And then of course and you look at people like clement and ignatius and polycarp that the students of the eye witnesses The students of the scripture writers and you can read their writers to their writings rather to see if the earliest version that was Communicated to them is any different and let me say one last thing about it I I think that for me what matters most are essential details of any eye witness account because I expect you To remember some of that stuff. So if if you said for example, yeah, he walked in and immediately pulled out the gun I'm, not sure what kind of was but it looked like it was a semi-automatic I could see the slot on the top and it was chrome Okay, that's something that was power.

I mean how many times the same point I got at you once Okay, that that's probably gonna stick in your mind. Um Do you remember if he had a ring on his on his end on his left hand? I don't even know Um, do you remember was he wearing like levis or like khakis or you know what? I just know this because essentials are the stuff that's sticking in your mind And you can be wrong on a non-essential first of all, and I wouldn't have a problem with that as an eyewitness Now i'm not suggesting that there are errors on non-essentials in scripture at all But I for me as an investigator who wanted to know did the resurrection occur as a non-christian I I didn't have a doctrine of inerrancy that was guiding me I just needed to know Are the essential claims? Reliable And it turns out that there aren't any non-essentials that are contradictory that I I find at all So so we can talk about now we can talk about All this can be resolved in some way. You just don't know The context in which these folks were writing that would cause them to admit certain things So the absence to me does not mean a contradiction Um, so anyway, the point is um as I looked at this I didn't have this doctrine that I thought i've got to wedge Whatever I find into this doctrine, which I didn't possess right.

I simply needed to know Were they reliable in the same way you could test? Other eyewitness accounts. Yep. Yeah, sometimes I wonder about this the way that you and I and rose came to christianity Like uh, it seems like I see a lot of atheists who uh, you know, like bart erment They have this very very brittle view of scripture where if you tug, you know one thing it breaks everything And so he doesn't have like god's existence Which is supported by the cosmological argument and the fine tuning argument or the and the origin of life at his core And then if there's you know a guard at the tomb in matthew or not That doesn't really affect the case for god And so, you know our view of the scripture and our view of the new testament documents is very unbridled It's like if the core facts support a conservative view of jesus's divinity and of his historical resurrection Then we're going to have to deal with that and we accept that but we don't

we don't worry about Minor, you know factors and and I feel like the non christians who come to the tax later on in life Or even early on in life it can be a benefit to approach it that way.

What do you think about that? Well, I think you're right. Here's how I typically put it I think what I love the way you call it brittle I think what happens is that that this is why I tried to write a book called forensic faith I thought sometimes the thing that can help you is to understand the rules of evidence to understand What are the what's what's the foundational expectations we ought to have of any evidence set? Because what happens is if this is what we typically talk about with jurors before we even select them Because we know if they've got an unreasonable expectation of what we're going to be able to show them Especially in a cold case. Yes, they're going to be stuck If there are people who think I got to have every stone unturned.

I have to have a level of confidence That by the way you have for nothing else in your life. Okay There is nothing which would you think you know every single detail and we still get in that car and turn that key Even though we have no idea how it works And even though people get killed in cars all the time people blow up in their driveways You still turn the key and and why do you do it because because you have enough information? I tell jurors all the time. I'm going to tell you everything you need to know But not everything that could be known because I don't even know everything that could be known about this case I know that he did it I can demonstrate that for you But I don't know how he did it or why he did it because he hasn't come fast to this yet So there's some things that i'm not going to be able to tell you and if you're stuck on that If this is the high bar now look on here's the other thing if someone on that jury not only Requires the most or maybe he doesn't require for everything, but it turns out That this guy who's on the the just defendant.

He hasn't revealed it as a juror is a distant relative Well now he's got an even bigger problem because you have a high bar that we're never going to meet and you have a motive A reason to not accept anything we would tell you anyway That's why we do it try to do a good job of of weeding out people who might be inclined for reasons other than evidence To land on one side of this issue or the other Yeah, and I think what happens with a lot of skepticism is that it's not just that I have an unreasonably high bar Which I do I might have that So I got to help them realize that that bar is not that's not not the right bar. It's not beyond a possible doubt That's not the bar. It's beyond a reasonable doubt.

That's a much lower standard and so I got to help them with that but it's also Boy, I would like for this not to be true because The same way i'd like for him not to be this suspect because he's related to me I'd like for this not to be true because I want the freedom that I don't think I would have if I adopted that worldview Right. I'd like to live my life and it doesn't mean you're living a life of any more sin than we do as christians

Okay, but it means that we you want to live a life in which you are the primary authority in your life, right? So I never want to say well Yes, some people they don't want it to be true because they want to they're I want to live with their girlfriend Well, that might be the case, but more importantly We don't want it to be true because we are so consumed by our self-importance That we don't want To to lose the authority that we think we have in our own life And so that's why I think that that's a dangerous combination that motive and plus an unreasonably high standard Means that now i've got a reason to reject it I can say well, it doesn't make this standard, but i'm actually not inclined to accept it anyway. I don't care what standard i'll show you Right.

Yeah, exactly. And we find that in christianity, of course Quite often you mentioned motive and actually before I want to ask you a question about motive But before I ask that question, I just want to say I absolutely love the chain of custody Argument. I love that in the in the first book.

I love that you've um, Expanded it a bit in the in the new edition I've used this argument in conversations with muslims who have told me that the message of jesus was completely changed And so we don't we can't possibly know What the message was i've used this argument with mormons who told me that as soon as the first apostles died We no longer had any idea what jesus taught and that's why We needed uh, god needed to give joseph smith more revelations I've i've used this argument With catholics even recently a catholic I was talking to told me that um That the reason she relies more heavily on Extrabiblical sources than on the bible is because we don't know what what jesus message originally was because it's been changed so much I don't know where people are getting getting this, uh, you know, it's been changed idea except That I think of you know, you said that the prosecutor wants to attack the Strongest line of defense the central aspect of the case and our scriptures are a strong aspect of our case Yeah, you're absolutely right about that if you have a cumulative case, this is the nature of cold cases They're all cumulative. This is also the nature of the case for christianity. So It's if i'm saying well, how do I trust that the gospels are recording the truth about About the resurrection.

Well, that's a cumulative case. I'm going to make it on the on four different legs With lots of evidence that points to those so this ends up being a you know, two-hour conversation in which i've got 60 pieces of evidence Okay, I get that But if you're do that in a criminal trial and at the end of it now you rest So you've presented the case positive Now the defense is going to start And now they're going to go after something in a cumulative case. You really can't go after everything You're going to go after select things because there's too many pieces to to I mean you're going to you want the jury to not see the forest through the tree You know you want them to focus on this one tree that you think you can knock down And then you discover what they think is important because they end up focusing most of their response case To the thing that they think is if I can just knock this one thing down.

We're good So when you see the attack On what you're claiming as a christian You'll get a sense of where the case is the strongest because that's the thing they're going to attack with the most vigor Absolutely. Yeah, and so another reason for people to get this book is is it's this is probably my favorite book on The reliability of the scriptures there. There's a lot of excellent work out there, of course, but it is it's just so accessible It's presented in a fun way where I mean who doesn't find it fascinating to learn about how Detectives think and how they solve crimes and that sort of thing I think I think most of us think it's intriguing and you've applied it so well to the christian case So I wanted to ask you about motive though Because you mentioned that you considered the motive of writers of the gospels and and other eye witnesses to the the case of jesus What motives did you find and and how does that impact the reliability of their accounts? Well, you know, you i'm not required to show a jury that what this guy's motive is because sometimes I don't even know And that's because I you know, he hasn't I don't know enough about him I just I can i've got a good evidence trail that leads to him, but it doesn't necessarily tell me well Why would he kill her though? Like what what happened that that got him so angry? Well, I might guess but i'm not required to tell a jury that yeah If you can you can render a verdict without even knowing the motive, but as an investigator it does help me To structure my interviews if I think I know or have some sense about what might have motivated him Because I can tickle those things in the interview So part of what i'm doing is and there's only three reasons why anyone commits a murder now what's helpful to us Is yeah, it's always you know sex money and power The sex money in the pursuit of power and the pursuit of power is like an umbrella that probably is about 70 of all stupid Is in the pursuit of power because it's very nuanced, you know when somebody is uh walks into a walmart and kills 30 people They're a different color.

That's about my thinking that Pridefully that my color is more important than your color When somebody is stealing from their parents to support their drug habit. My pleasure is more important than your inconvenience That's about you know, when one gangster shoots another gangster because he was disrespected at a party That's about authority power respect that all falls in that a bigger umbrella So knowing that I know that up front so if you ask me, why is she dead? Why is this guy dead, you know if it's not a robbery or a sexual assault It's probably in the third category and that's much more nuanced. It's going to be a harder investigation It's much easier if he's missing his wallet.

It's much easier. Um, if it's if it's clear But in that bigger set category the pursuit of power that's a much more difficult case So you start thinking this way as your opening cases or starting that first interview or whatever it is You're starting to explore. So I think it's helpful now now here you're going to do the same thing If they're lying, I know why they're lying if they're lying about their resurrection.

I know why it's sex money or power And I think someone like bart erman is probably more convinced. It's a power issue that these folks became important and they were

willing now Here's what I would say about that two things number one Most of the new testament is written by paul And paul would be a fool To jump out of the position of authority power and respect that he possessed as a jew who could draw papers against the christians That's much smaller group That he had the authority to persecute and then jump in with this group and get beaten And all the ways that he describes right all around the the the roman empire Uh just to do what hopefully someday have the authority and power and respect that he started off with Which to me is like this that it makes no sense But it's easier if you're looking at the motive of one person Who maybe was motivated this way and willing to tell a lie It's much more difficult in groups Because groups don't aren't motivated the same way It's very hard to get groups that somebody's going to break ranks Somebody's it's so it's just to me. It's donna re now.

Is it a pos if you ask me isn't x possible Whatever the x is i'm always going to say yes because anything and everything is possible. It's just not my standard My standard is reasonable. It's not reasonable and that's why i'm not interested in things that are possible Anything is possible.

It's possible that you know that all this is a computer simulation It's been a computer simulation from the very beginning even our memories and our accounts of history are all part of the simulation It's possible. We're in a matrix world These are possibilities and you would be hard to press to either, you know confirm or Reject these possibilities evidentially if we're in a matrix world But I don't operate on what's possible by the way, if you're going to operate on what's possible you'd be frozen You'd be afraid to get it in your car afraid to get in a plane because it's anything is possible And there are people who are so anxious and they suffer from anxiety Problems that they they can't get away from Living in the possible worlds and if that's the case But most of us recognize that we live in what's reasonable the world of what's reasonable And that's the same thing we have to do here as we assess these kinds of claims. Is it reasonable? All right So there's two new I think there's two new sections in the book one on archaeology And then there's a new afterward there might even be more new stuff But I wanted to ask you especially about the afterward because you have had 10 years of presenting this material On college campuses i've been connected with bringing you to some college campuses With some friends and I would like you to tell us a little bit about some of these critics or at least One of their objections kind of give us a taste of what's in the afterward So I tried to pick out like 12 things that I typically hear that are related more to the reliability of scripture Because a lot of what you hear in college campuses in terms of critiques of christian worldview I've answered in other books like god's crime scene the problem of evil For example still occupies a huge percentage of objections a lot of times you'll hear I think what's shifting guys is that the objections and the the way we make a case is Very different for gen z than it is for someone like me who's a boomer for me I needed to know is it true and I i'm not into my feelings so much as I want to know what's true I think it's different now.

I think it's not just is it true. It's is it good? Because it there are some things that are true that the culture would say there's yeah But they're not good and therefore you should reject them even if they are true And I think for young people they are struggling with their friends who hold different views Especially different moral views different views related to identity to marriage to sex to sanctity of life We are so polarized right now as a country politically We are so polarized ideologically That the claim is and if you haven't already started to hear it, I mean you'd have to be not paying attention It's not that christianity is untrue. It's that it's a vicious lie That it's an evil lie that is their cause of all misogyny and racism and homophobia And if we could just eliminate people who hold this antiquated view, which is evil We'd be a better culture And if you don't think our kids are hearing that We the case has to shift And when I say it has to shift is not just to defend our position on these hot topic issues and people do that That doesn't convince young people.

It's beautiful though They want a positive case For for not just constantly defending our views But a positive case for the beauty of christianity and that's why you know, the last book I wrote was person of interest These first books Cold case christianity god's crime scene forensic faith are books that I think this is why I think this is true This is why not that I think it's true. I think this is an objective case For the reliability of scripture and the truth of the resurrection. Okay, so we've answered the question.

Is it true? Person of interest is about is it beautiful? Is it good? Does it produce goodness in the world? Beauty in the world and the next book truth and true crime continues in that line Is it that is is the best version of you? The version that is submitted to the gospel Is it is it is it good for us? Is it good for humans? So it's it's it's a different approach because I think that's where the case needs to be made now For a generation that doesn't really even care. What's objectively true? I mean They would say if hinduism works for you and it's producing a beauty in you that's good for you And if buddhism is producing beauty for you the real issue is is what is your personal? Journey to goodness and whatever it is is fine As long as it leads to goodness and tolerance and all the things that the culture has sold to our kids So I think it's important for us to be able to to make the case for goodness Yeah, I absolutely agree with you and i'm so glad that you're addressing that I Keep hearing that response from younger people. Is that fine? You know, maybe it is true, but but I I still hate it So i'm not interested in that sort of thing So and i've been asked to speak at some upcoming conferences on specific topics that Look at that question essentially, you know, is it good? Is it beautiful? And as i've been thinking about, you know, planning the talk and stuff A lot of a lot of my peers have said who cares tell them, you know, it doesn't matter as long as it's true And I but i'm thinking that's not where they're at right now.

So I love that you're addressing that Well a lot of it is we would you the three of us would would say would argue That the bible describes the world the way it really is Right. All right now What's interesting is that part of our problem and part of the problem I see

with men And women who work as cops who are struggling after a critical injury or a critical incident And they're not quite sure how to move forward past the trauma Uh, the largest part of their suffering is an identity issue Because we trauma by definition is when something occurs that shatters the way you think of the world It shatters your world view you have a certain expectation of how life ought to go And then you get cancer Yeah, and you think oh i'm never gonna know that's that's something that happens to other people And then you start to rethink who you are and rethink what is an identity is a triplet It's synonymous in in studies that are done in secular studies for purpose and value Your identity is so tied to your purpose and value that they're inseparable And so when you have identity shaken you start to wonder what am I here for? Like who am I like what's the point of all this and do I matter? That's what happens when our identity is shaken And so a lot of this for me is trying to figure out for young people like okay This this matters this identity thing matters and your purpose in life is tied to who you are And if you're going to put your identity in something that is fragile something that could change an inner desire An inner achievement a level of achievement if your identity isn't something you've been achieving like your work Your academics there's always a better version of you out there because there's always somebody can do it better than you If it's in your talents, there's always a better version of you out there somewhere And those things change your talents change your interests change your desires change and every time you have a change in your identity You are going to suffer trauma because your worldview is changing with it So I think for us we would say hey identity is if you can place it in something that's unchanging You will suffer less trauma over the course of your life for sure And when something bad happens to you your identity won't be gut punched because you you will have placed it someplace outside of your profession or your school or your desire or whatever it may be So I think for us in this generation I'm more interested in helping them see that the best version of you is the version that is ancient that has been described So if if I have a widget and i'm holding it in my hand and i'm asking you is it what is this for? I don't know. I've never seen it.

Well, how would you find out what it's for? Well, does it have a brand? Yeah, it's right here on the side. Okay, give me a second on your phone now and you're googling the brand And you find the the page the manufacturer and go it's designed to be a this Well, how do you know because you return to the manufacturer? If you're wondering who you are and what your purpose is Well, it makes a difference if there's actually a manufacturer because if there is you can return to the manufacturer to figure out What your purpose is if there isn't worldview matters and it matters in how we identify ourselves especially for young people Absolutely. So so I think in the end this is what we have to do is we have to say look This is true and this gives me a context in which I can find my identity And and it turns out that the bible describes you the way you really are And if you want to thrive If you want to flourish it turns out that every secular study performed in the last 35 years Has identified attributes of human flourishing that are not

new even though it might be discovering them for the first time they're ancient Right.

They're on the pages of the new testament Exactly. If you simply knew what the manufacturer said about you you would flourish So in the end it's beautiful because it produces the best you you can be Yeah, excellent. I love that we're getting uh toward the the end of our time together.

I know you have a full schedule So I wanted to ask you about some of your expressions that you use We both are are fans of several of what we kind of have referred to as wallace-isms at times You say things like um You know become a tent making apologist a two decision christian Um a sheep become a sheep dog. We need sheep dogs. We need one dollar apologist We've got we've got plenty of you know Million dollar apologist what we need is a bunch of one dollar apologist It's important to be training for the test things like that So we were talking about what we wanted to ask you About and we just couldn't eliminate any of them.

We were like, well, we can't know we can't take that one out We can't take this one out. Uh, so i'm just gonna ask you Can you would you be willing to explain a few of those you can maybe pick a few of your favorites since we couldn't Narrow it down. Oh gosh.

Uh, well a lot of times you're just trying to figure out how to contextualize this in a way You're saying the same thing that everybody else is saying But you're trying to say it through the identity that god has given you right because he wants to maximize And sometimes it's more accessible if you say it right like like you know, we we are I wanted to put this in the first version of cold case christianity that I said As the closing of the first version in the manuscript. I said look we don't need another Million dollar apologist we need a million one dollar apologist We all have to embrace our duty to defend the case and if everyone here's what I would say today And that's just that one expression is a one dollar apologist does not mean he's getting paid a dollar because there's no million dollar Apologist if that's what the case is. No one's getting paid a million dollars to make the case for christianity But there are people that we would say that are in the christian community that we think have that huge value Because they are like they're like the gold standard for being able to defend the faith Well, why do we have those people in the community? They're not in scripture Mm-hmm, there's no there's no positions as a pastor position and you can argue well, it's a teacher.

Okay. Well But if this is so important wouldn't you mention? That some of you are pastors. Some of you are evangelists.

Those are two positions Some of you are casemakers some of you. No, that's not in there That's not a position that is that's a position that has emerged because no one's doing their job That is in there for all christians in first peter 3 It's in it's in several letters and we're there to defend the faith we're there to To to make us to make a case for why this is true But this is not given to leaders. It's given to laymen And and because no one's

doing it.

We now hire a christian apol We created an industry of christian apologists, which don't need to exist if we as christian laymen would just do our job Just just do the thing That we're supposed to do and and and that's what to me is the hardest Part of this is that I often realize that yeah, we've created this when it's not necessary For example at some point you get so good. I use this analogy a lot. So forgive me But at some point I get so good at tracing who's on my fantasy football team But I don't need an expert to come in and help me I'm really good at figuring out who I should play next week Because i'm paying attention And i'm reading i'm you know, i'm watching who's got injured.

I know who which one of my guys is injured I know who to replace them with like i've mastered that right because i'm interested, right? So I don't need to hire an expert I don't think anyone's paying experts to help them manage their fantasy football team There's just some things we're so geeked out on that we do them without thinking Yep, and that's not what we're doing when it comes to christianity. We are still Creating a space for a cottage industry That I would argue was never Supposed to exist. Yeah, I would absolutely love it if what all of us do Was no longer needed because everybody in the church knew this stuff and was making a case and teaching one another That's right the younger people learning from the older across the board.

That'd be amazing No, this is I appreciate you guys making room for me And this has been i'm glad i'm you reached out to me that we had a good spot to do this this week So I just want to say to continue the good work. This is what we need is we need, you know We can always argue. Well, do we need another podcast for this? Do we need another podcast for that? Yeah, actually we do.

Uh, this needs to be like part of the culture In which we are constantly talking about these things and uh, this is if there's a million one dollar apologists That means we're going to be a lot more of these podcasts going forward. That's okay. Absolutely Absolutely.

Well, thank you so very much for joining us and I want to say to our listeners check out the book There is so much more that we didn't get to the book talks about the names in first century, palestine and um Name disambiguation, which if you're not familiar with that, it's it's really cool Undesigned coincidences, which is something we've talked about in a previous episode on this show But again, very very cool forensic statement analysis corroboration from from non-christian authors as well as other christian authors and and so much more so Please, uh, uh, get the the new book. It's excellent. I would love everybody to have this I think i've given the book to at least a half a dozen people and uh, I may be giving it this new one probably to a dozen more in the next few months So thank you so much jim for for writing this book for Using your mind and your background your skills to be a case maker.

We all learn from you regularly Well, thanks so much for having me. I appreciate your kind words This is a joy to be part of the process along with you guys. We're all on the same page doing the same work So keep working.

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