

CHRIST REVEALED



Episode 2

Transcript

Gretchen Jensen: Glad you could be here for episode two of Christ Revealed, now today we're going to hear an interview from J. Warner Wallace, and also Claire Pfann. Now, Patrick, what can we expect to hear from this interviews?

Patrick Gentempo: Well, these interviews, I think, are riveting. Jay Warner Wallace, it's an extensive interview, so it's in two parts. Today we're going to see Part one of two, and we're in his home. Jay Warner Wallace was a homicide detective, a cool-case homicide detective for decades, and also he was an atheist. He decided that he wanted to take his skills as a detective, open up this case on Jesus and the resurrection, and apply that and see where it led him.

I have tell you that his discerning logic in deliberation, step by step through the process as you experience, as he explains it, it is riveting. It reads like a great novel, and at the end the conclusion is startling, and it's sincere, and it's, in some respects, explosive. I invite you to really dig in and watch Part one of that interview today, you'll see the second part on a latter episode.

Claire Pfann is the Academic Dean in Jerusalem, at the University of the Holy Land. She's an American that immigrated with her husband to Jerusalem to start this University. Her perspectives on the New Testament, and her ability to translate the facts of the New Testament, into the experience of faith, is something that's quite unusual, and something that is enlightening. You can expect to get some goosebumps through that interview as you're experiencing what she says about the Trinity, about the New Testament, about the Life of Christ, and what he taught, and what it means to experience faith in today's world.

Dig in, lean in, and enjoy these interviews.

Jay Warner, thanks so much for coming and sitting with us, and I'm really looking forward to this conversation. Can you give us a bio-sketch on you?

J. Warner Wallace: Well, I was somebody who never thought I'd be sitting and talking to you about things related to Jesus. I was raised up in a place where I didn't really know many Christians, and I wasn't in a Christian family. I came to this late, I was probably about 35. At that time I was already working as an investigator, I was doing a lot of robbery and a couple of murders we were working at the time. I working in an undercover team.

My wife was somebody who was more interested in church, and things of church, not really knowing what Christianity proposed, or what was true, or not true, but she felt like, "Hey, we're raising our kids, don't you think we should bring them to church? Isn't that what you do when you raise your kids." I thought, "Yeah, I'm happy to go, just not going to go as a believer." My dad is still in that position today, he would be happy to go, but is not going to go as a believer.

My first step into a church was really just to make Suzy happy. I was more than happy to do that. The pastor was creative enough to throw Jesus in a way that I can catch him, you know, he said a lot of things that day, but the thing that stands out was that he described Jesus as

the foundation for Western Civilization. The smartest man who ever lived, all these profound statements and teachings of Jesus, counter-cultural teaching at the time, intuitive even today. All these things that provoked me to want to know, "Well, what did He say?"

You're not going to get all that in one sermon, so I said, "Listen, you've got me interested", and I didn't know where to even look. I went out and bought a New Testament, I bought a Bible. I didn't spend a lot of money on it. I didn't really think I would go very far with it. I really was thinking that the wisdom teaching of Jesus might just a series of proverbs, you know, like fortune cookie Jesus. That's what I was expecting, and it didn't work out that way.

I saw that these were encroached in the gospels, these accounts, that someone appears to want me to believe actually occurred, they're historical narratives, at least that's the way they're being pitched. I started thinking, "Okay is this all a fictional, mythological narrative that teaches a good story? Is it really the remnants of an eyewitness account? Is it truly an eyewitness account from the first century?" I just needed to know before I could access this, and I really wasn't trying to disprove it. My goal was not to ... I didn't think it was worth even proving. I thought it was so patently absurd that this miracle worker who rose from the dead, so I didn't even think of it aggressively. I just thought it was blatantly and obviously false.

I started to read the gospels, by this time in my career I was already working cases where I had several eyewitnesses who would make a claim about something in the back, say 30-35 years ago. I really finished my career doing nothing but cold case homicides. That skill set teaches you things, and one of the things it'll teach you is how to assess eyewitnesses. You know, is this really an eyewitness account? Can I really trust this is an eyewitness account? What about the statement is reliable, or not reliable? What are the techniques we use to determine if something is reliable? I thought, "Well this is a good opportunity to test and use the skill set that I had." Then it was off to the races.

As a matter of fact, I think, within about six months of really tearing through ... I still have that first Bible. It's like a forensic statement analysis, it's what I was using, it's a process we use. Determined, I thought, I told Suzy, "As much as I hate to admit it, this feels and has a texture of reliable eyewitness accounts." What do we do? What if this crazy idea, this crazy story, is actually true? I'm measuring this in every way that I knew to measure it, and I was becoming comfortable with the reliable nature of the accounts. Then you're stuck with this guy who rose from the grave, so I had to make a decision.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah, so you had many years of experience in police work, and you had this point in your life, you're a detective, and you're working cases. Like you said, cold cases, so that means that some of them are historic.

J. Warner Wallace: Yes.

Patrick Gentempo: It maybe, and maybe not a couple thousand years historic, but they're ...

J. Warner Wallace: Here's another thing it unwraps, I mean, if you think about the nature of my cases, I get a case where someone has interviewed 30 years ago about what they said they saw. That person sometimes will pass away, before I can even get to the case, so you're going to go to the detective, right? Well, he's written a report, but, guess what, sometimes those detectives have also passed away. There's a good chance they were even older than the witness they were interviewing. Now I'm stuck with a report of something that occurred in the past, according to some eyewitness, and I only have access to the eyewitness, or to the report writer.

Well, about looking at that in the gospels? I've got an account of something that allegedly happened in the distant past. I have no access to the alleged eyewitness, or the report writer. Really, it's the same process, it's the same skill set you're going to apply, and that's where I found myself. I really didn't think of it that way, I didn't think of it, "Wow, I'm in a unique position to be ..." I just thought, "How else would you assess this?" I mean, how would anyone know if this is true. I only knew one way to do it, and so that's how I approached it.

Patrick Gentempo: You seem to have taken, at least in one aspect, a special interest in the resurrection.

J. Warner Wallace: Right.

Patrick Gentempo: Really digging in deep there.

J. Warner Wallace: That's right.

Patrick Gentempo: With that, can you walk us through the actual process you went through? Give us the little bit of the narrative, the personal narrative, as far as, psychologically, what's going on because you said you've approached this, in the beginning, as thinking this is an absurd thing. Now you got my curiosity. I've got some interest here and I have a particular set of skills, and why shouldn't I apply them here if I'm applying them out in the rest of the world with what I do?

J. Warner Wallace: Yeah, this is the centerpiece I think. The entire philosophical, historical system that claims themselves, hinge on whether or not Jesus rose from the dead. I didn't even ... I'd get to the point where I was reading Paul's letters to hear him say something similar in 1st Corinthians, but I knew, just from my own perspective, it's all going to come down to this. If you're an ancient, wise sage, and by the time I read the gospels I had read other ancient wise sages, but none of them made a claim to die and come back from the grave. This puts Jesus in a separate category, and I knew that was going to be a deal killer for me, probably.

I was a philosophical naturalist, there was no way I was going to accept something this supernatural. I approached it in two ways, number one; what is it that we would typically say verifies that an account is reliable? Typically, that's built on a number of questions that we would allow jurors on a criminal trial to think about when they're assessing eyewitnesses on the stand.

We actually have jury instructions that'll help jurors assess the reliability of eyewitnesses. There's a bunch of them, you know, about 13-14 different instructions and questions they get asked. They all come down to four broad categories; number one, was the person who is making this claim really there to see what it is they said they saw, because someone could lie? If you discover he's not even there on that day, that witness is going to be off the table.

Two, is there a way that we could corroborate, or verify, knowing that we're not going to necessarily have a recording, we're not necessarily going to have a video of every account. If he says he leaned over the counter to do the robbery, and that's what you're telling me, and then I find his palm print on the counter, well that one little piece will help corroborate your story, even though it says nothing about all the other things you describe. What did he say? Was he holding a gun? That palm prints not going to tell me that, but we know that that one little piece will corroborate the eyewitness account, so I'm looking for those kinds of things.

Three, we're looking to see, has he changed his story? I mean, is he honest and accurate, and has he been honest and accurate over time? Anyone who's changing their story over time is probably not telling you true.

Patrick Gentempo: It's their consistency -

J. Warner Wallace: Yeah, consistency. Then, finally, bias. We're looking for, what is it that would motivate this guy to lie to me? Now if you find a guy who's got bias, good reason to lie, motive to lie to you, it doesn't mean he's necessarily lying to you. It's a cumulative case, you build it this way. As I looked at those four areas with the gospels, I realized that in every way you could test an eyewitness account, and in every way that I had tested eyewitness accounts, these seemed to pass the test.

Here's the problem, they include miraculous events, and there's where, I, for the most part, was ... I would have said, "Okay, there's some truth in this, and there's some fiction." Really it was a matter of my asking myself, "Why would I separate these two, these categories? Why do I think that this event could never have happened? He didn't feed 5,000, he didn't walk on water, I mean, come on. He might have been on the boat, but that part is not true. Well, why am I saying that? Because we reject, out of hand, to begin with, any ... I had a pre suppositional bias against anything miraculous.

At some point what got me over the hump was having to test my biases. Why do I believe there's no way? Why do I believe that everything in the universe I can account for with just the stuff of the universe? I would have said, "Hey, if you can't get it with space, time, matter, physics, and chemistry, you can't get it." These events, there's no way that could have happened, because this required something supra, or extra natural to occur, and I just denied the existence of those kinds of things. I had to eventually address that issue.

Patrick Gentempo: When you did address it, what path did that open up for you?

J. Warner Wallace: Well, I started to ask myself, as an atheist, "Are there some things that I believe are true, or exist, that are extra natural?" I was a guy who loved thinking about cosmology, and all of us grew up in the Star Trek generation, we're always thinking about space travel and time and all these different issues. I was always somebody who believed in the standard cosmological model, this idea that everything in the universe; all space, time, matter, comes into existence from nothing.

When we say nothing we don't mean, space, time or matter. Space is not nothing, space is something, so we're stuck with either redefining the term nothing, or having to account for some first cause that is not spatial, temporal, or material. Now if that first cause is also personal, in other words if it's not an impersonal force, it's a personal being, that's still an option even, I think, in Big Bang cosmology. I mean, I always think that this is still an incredible, reasonable option for us, and if there is a being that's powerful enough to blink everything into existence, all space, time and matter, I'm betting that being could probably walk on water.

I think what that did for me, is I said, "Look, I really am focusing on what would be much smaller miraculous activity, much less miraculous than the beginning of the universe." That would be the ... Genesis 1 would be the penultimate miracle in all of scripture, given the way we're thinking here. If that could happen, if there's a personal being that could accomplish that, then I think you've got to at least consider the reasonableness of all the lesser miracles that you see in the New Testament. That, at least, put them in play for me.

In the end though, the question is, were these accounts? How do we account for the accounts, if they're lies? Or did they imagine them? I think it's about any criminal investigation, we're looking at all possible explanations when we first begin. We basically eliminate those explanations that are either impossible based on evidence, or less reasonable based on evidence. This is what we do in every crime scene, in every criminal investigation, in front of every jury. The juries going to do the same thing. You're going to get a proposal from the prosecuting team, and then another alternative explanation from the defense team, and they're going to have to decide, which of these two explanations is most reasonable in light of the evidence. That is a process that's actually known abductive reasoning.

I just applied this to, we got this claim about Jesus rising from the grave. We got some bare minimal pieces of evidence that I think we have to account for. It certainly emerges pretty quickly, this idea, about the resurrection. We've got what appears to be an empty tomb, and no body available. I think that's a reasonable conclusion, given the fact that you can end this entire story in the first century, by simply taking the body of Jesus and displaying it. It'd be over, and that never happened. You could explain that, though, a number of ways. It doesn't mean the resurrection occurred, but you have to explain it.

We've also got to account for the eyewitnesses who never recanted during any of this time in the first century. Clearly, the second way to get this to go away quickly, if you're opposed to Christianity, is if you

don't show the body of Jesus, well at least get those people who said they saw him alive to recant. We see this in the second, third, fourth generation of Christians, people who weren't eyewitnesses, but they were trusting the testimony of eyewitnesses. Some of those people were tortured, and we have people reporting back to the Emperor that they successfully got some of these people to recant. You have absolute historical silence about the eyewitnesses ever recanting.

I could see why somebody who didn't know if it was true or not, and was just trusting somebody else's story, might want to recant the story under pressure. The eyewitnesses, we have a collection of martyrdom stories and even if we don't know that all of those martyrdom stories are necessarily reliable, we do know that we have no record of anyone ever recanting. They went to their graves with this claim, so the question we have to ask is, does that make it true? No. Again, there's ways to explain that.

We're looking at a few facts, the empty tomb, the transformation of the disciples, the fact they never recanted their story. There are a number of simple facts I started to assemble.

Patrick Gentempo: They had motive to recant, which is interesting, right? If they're being tortured -

J. Warner Wallace: They're being tortured right. The question is, what's their motive to ... Look, motive comes down to three things. There are only three reasons why anyone commits a murder. I learned this years ago, and it's also the same three reasons why anyone steals something, or commits another kind of crime, or lies about anything. Or anything you've ever done wrong in your life, you only did it for one of three reasons, because there's only three motives behind bad behavior. Once you know those three motives it makes it easier to work a homicide.

I'm not walking in death scenes, and going, "Oh my gosh, there's a thousand reasons why someone could kill this woman." No, there are only three reasons. You find me somebody in one of those categories and we're good to go. A lot of what we're doing is not to blend that metaphor, it's not rocket surgery. It's really straightforward. It turns out it's pursuit of money, sex or relationships, and power. Those three things will motivate people to do things they ought not do, and if you're suggesting a conspiracy came together of a large number of people, well they've all got to have something in one of those three areas. That's where I found this to be really compelling in the sense that I could not find motive.

I look at all the ways I could explain the basics facts, right? I think there are like, seven ways to do this. Either the gospels are true, that's one way to explain it, that's the Christian way to explain it. I might suggest that they're lying, or they're hallucinating. Or He didn't really die on the cross, He was badly beaten, He went unconscious, but He needs resuscitation, not a resurrection. Or He had an imposter sat in for him, or this was a late legend of an early version of Jesus that was twisted over the years until it became the supernatural version.

There's a number of ways to explain this without affirming the Christian explanation, and as an atheist, I held one or two of those other six explanations. Different ways, alternative ways, to explain the minimal facts that we have to explain about this event called the resurrection. Look, I asked juries, "Look through your list of evidences, examine the evidence, compare that evidence to the explanations, and you tell me, which is the most reasonable explanation in light of the evidence." I found myself asking the same question, "Okay, here's the evidence, look through these six or seven explanations, you tell me, which is the most ..."

Now remember, every explanation has a strength and it has weaknesses, every one does, even when you have the truth. Cases in which we have convicted guys who confessed later, our cases had weaknesses in certain areas, we just pushed through. Even when you have the truth it's going to have something that seems confusing, it always does. I would say, all of those explanations, I think they all have deal killers, I don't think this is a lie. I think He really did die on the cross, and I can go through all that with you, but to be honest I went through all six, and got to the last one, which is the Christian explanation. I said, "Wow, the Christian explanation does account for the basic facts best."

Everything makes sense if it just happened the way it was written, but it has a deal killer for me, a flaw. I thought it was a fatal flaw at the time, and that is that it requires a resurrection. Now, it turns out, I have to ask myself, "Well, what am I really investigating here?" I'm investigating whether or not a supernatural event, like the resurrection, could ever be a reasonable explanation, but I would have said, "No. I don't believe in the supernatural", so I'm starting off then with the conclusion, when that's the very thing I'm supposed to be investigating.

I said, "Let's at least suspend your doubt for a second. Let's take a look and compare all these explanations." Every one of those has three or four problems, this one has one problem, and guess what it is, it's my pre suppositional bias against the supernatural. In other words, I could remove it. The only thing that's keeping me from it, was my pre supposition against the supernatural. Now look, when it comes to conspiracy theories, I can tell you five or six reasons why that just did not happen that way because I've worked conspiracies. I know how hard they are to pull them off.

When it came to this side, the Christian explanation, it doesn't have any of those kinds of fatal flaws. The only flaw it has, is that I don't like supernatural explanations. It turns out, when I looked at my collection of explanations here, the one that had the least problems was the Christian explanation, and the only problems it had, were me. It was my bias against the possibilities of anything supernatural.

I knew it was time for me to be really honest, and that's really when I started to ask, "Well, can I explain everything in the universe with my naturalistic approach?" Can I explain, I mean simple things, like, consciousness, free agency? Can I explain the appearance of fine tuning in the universe? Can I explain the origin of the universe? Can I explain the appearance of design in biology? Can I explain the beginning of life?

Can I explain objective transcendent moral truth? Can I explain this incredible standard of good, by which we call anything evil? I think those are the things that I had to try to explain, given my naturalistic perspective, and it turns out, really, to be honest, the best explanations for those things are also something supernatural.

In the end it was this cumulative case that started to weigh on me, and I realized that resurrection, really, is only out of bounds for me because I chose it to be out of bounds. If I'd simply lay that bias down, the New Testament began to open up to me.

Patrick Gentempo: Are there cases in general that because of a detective's bias, it starts with a premise that there's a commitment to, and as a result they're going enthusiastically in the wrong direction, and they never get solved?

J. Warner Wallace: Oh gosh. Oh absolutely, that's my casework. My casework is filled with unsolved cases, that's what murders are, cold cases are only murders. There's no statute of limitations on a murder. All of my cases are cases that, for one reason or another, didn't get solved. Sometimes it's that, it's the detective spent a year chasing something they were so sure of, just to have that not be the case, and then they're a year behind it. If you're a year behind a murder, I mean, it's really hard to pick up the pieces. Or, they had someone insight, the right person in mind. They knew who actually did it, but for whatever reason they couldn't make the case evidentially.

You're absolutely right, I've been on scene at murders where the first intuition of a partner was wrong, where we had to really work. Now, we were gracious, because that was a senior partner, so we listened to him and we chased it as far as we could. Then all of us were then shocked when we discovered who the real killer was, because, being honest in that particular case, none of us saw that coming. I get it, but we cannot let ... The biggest tool I try to teach people when they work investigations, the first tool I'll teach any rookie, the first tool I'll teach any audience, is this simple skill of don't be a know-it-all. Of, don't think you know the answer before you start, that's the surest way to waste time, or close a case, or suspend a case without being able to close it, because you chased the wrong thing for too long.

Patrick Gentempo: How long was the period of time between when you first started to go on this journey, looking at the resurrection, and then came to your conclusion?

J. Warner Wallace: Well, I can't even say I came to a conclusion. I think I spent probably six months or so, in scripture every day, for hours. I was obsessed, because I started to get interested in little nit-picky things. You know, words selection -

Patrick Gentempo: You're not reading them spiritually at the time, you're reading it factually.

J. Warner Wallace: Oh no, yeah. I wouldn't even know what spiritually meant, right? I mean, I just knew that I had this book, and I did some research to see how it was transmitted through time. I wanted to know what the

original languages were. I wanted to make sure that I knew what my limits were. I didn't speak Greek or Hebrew, so I knew I had limits in those areas. I did my best to, kind of, to get some resources to help me do that, and try to do that as best I could. Then I started to dig in, just to really look at word selection. To look at, I understand how witnesses report things, and why witness testimony never, ever matches. You'll never work a case in which two witnesses will say precisely the same thing, about anything. It doesn't mean that anyone's unreliable, it doesn't mean that anyone's lying, it just means that we bring our entire life's package to the table when we look at something, when we see something.

Patrick Gentempo: As a matter of fact, if you have two witnesses that perfectly match, that's almost a red flag, isn't it?

J. Warner Wallace: Right. Well first, the only thing I talk about when I get a call in the middle of the night, and someone has been killed in our city, they're going to give me a location. They're going to say, "Hey, there's an officer there", it's usually a sergeant at a command post who's waiting for you. I only have one really instruction from my house when I'm on the phone, and then I'll typically say, "Okay, so officers are there, right? Are the officers with the witnesses?" "Yes." "Have them separate the witnesses and stay with the witnesses until I get there."

The separation of witnesses is really important to me, because if you don't separate them, you will get there and get one story from all five guys, or gals. You'll get one story because they've had an hour to sit around and compare notes, and think, "Look, maybe he's right? Maybe she's right?" Then they merge. No, no, no, don't worry about what might be, or appear to be a contradictory, because, in the end, it's not going to be. I need you to give me the varied accounts. I want all five. They're not going to be perfect, they're going to puzzle together in a certain way. The question that you didn't answer, somebody else is going to answer. The question that you raised, because you don't understand why it happened that way, don't worry, another witness is going to give me a piece of the puzzle, I'll be able to answer that.

The witnesses may never know how I puzzled it back together, because I don't want them to even know that before they go to trial. I don't want them to ever know what the other person said, because I want their statement to be clean. What you see, if you do this, over a period of time is that, yeah, witnesses never agree. It could happen right now, someone could run in here right now and do something to me, and I could ask all of us in this room what happened, and I would get different stories. I've done it in front of groups, I can't get people to agree on the sex of the perpetrator. This happens, it doesn't mean anyone's lying, and in the end, our job is to be able to piece back together.

Now, I also think, if you had accounts that were early, and we have good reason to believe that these accounts were circulating simultaneously, at the same time, early in history, why doesn't somebody correct the obvious contradictions? It'd be easy enough to say, "Take that out, because in the future someone's going to think ..." No, all the warts and

bumps that you might think are ugly, or embarrassing, they're still in the accounts, and that is typically what I see when I get an old casebook and I open it up. I've got four witnesses who were interviewed back in the day, and there's some things in that account that I could just see up front, on what a defense attorney is going to have a great day with this because he said this, and she said that, and these don't match. He's going to try to convince a jury that you can't trust anyone here.

Now what we'll do is come in and say, "This is the nature of my witnesses, and let me show you how these things come back together. Let me show you some physical evidence that corroborates the narrative", and off we go. The same thing can occur with the New Testament.

Patrick Gentempo: What you're saying is, in reality, when this Bible was being assembled, the New Testament was being assembled, they could have scrubbed it?

J. Warner Wallace: Oh sure.

Patrick Gentempo: You know, and basically adulterated, changed varying accounts, so they would line up better. It's almost the fact that they do have departures, what you're saying, in your mind as a detective, the implication drawn is that they left it alone.

J. Warner Wallace: There were early Christian's, in history, Taschen is one, that really made an effort to harmonize the accounts. There's this impulse that we have. It's interesting that no one's doing that immediately. That these four accounts are bringing to a slightly nuanced variations between the accounts, which were with ... I never flinched. As a detective who was an atheist, reading it for the first time, I didn't focus on the differences and go, "Oh, this is junk." No, in fact, the differences were what kept me reading because the variations I was seeing were within the range I would expect if these were really eyewitnesses.

As a matter of fact, another thing that was happening as I was reading through the gospels, I call this unintentional eyewitness support. Now, I discovered years later that there's been some work on this, but I didn't know this at the time. I just knew that when I interview eyewitnesses, it's not unusually to have one say something, and you're going, "That makes, like, no sense." They'll even say to you, "Okay, I don't care. I know that doesn't make any sense, but I'm telling you, that's what I saw." You're going, "Okay", so they have this weird account that some witness has given you. It's all good except for one little piece, you're like, "That doesn't make any sense."

Then a year later, or maybe in the same day as you're interviewing other witnesses, somebody gives you a fact that now that makes sense. This guy didn't even know why it made sense, but now because this guy saw it from a different angle and he provides that missing piece, now it makes sense. I was seeing this in the gospels, over and over again, where people would say something, a writer would say something, and it makes no sense.

There's one of these in the gospels where Jesus is standing in front of Caiaphas in a trial, right before He's about to be crucified, and the account the writer says that he is struck by people who are challenging Him. They're saying, "Hey, you think you're God? Prophet, tell us who hit You." I'm thinking, "If all you have was that one account, this would make no sense because clearly if you've just hit me, I could tell you who hit me. Why would that be so remarkable? Why would that even be proof of my deity?" It's not that account, but it's another account that walks through the steps and mentions in the other account that he's being blindfolded just prior to this.

Now, this account never mentioned it, so that is one of those unintentional eyewitness support that comes in, and fills in the detail that is left hanging. These have been recently, or in the last 100 years or so, been called the undesigned coincidences of scripture. I was familiar with this term later, but I'll tell you, as I was looking through it as an investigator, I was encouraged by the variations I was seeing, and the fact that the variations puzzled together the way I would expect them to puzzle together. That gave me, at least, the confidence to go another step. Do another test, another week reading through scripture.

I was so obsessed with it that I was sitting in one of the rooms at my house, that was empty at the time, and I would just get up every morning, I didn't want to wake anybody up, and I would go in there, and I would read through. A forensic statement analysis is a process we use with people in custody, when we ask them, "What did you do yesterday? That's the day of the murder. Really? Okay, do me a favor, write down on this piece of paper everything you did from the time you got up in the morning, to the time you went to bed. You can only use the front side of the paper." That front side happens to have 24 lines, and "You can only use this pen." They would write, and fill that in.

Now you have to make decisions. If it's a 12 hour day you're up, you've got to account for 12 hours in 24 lines. Now if you did this evenly, you'd have two lines per hour, but people don't do it that way. They expand, or compress time for a number of different reasons. We're looking at that expansion and comparison of time. We're looking at the use of pronouns, why did they use certain names for certain people? We're looking at all the optional words, words you don't need to use. Every adjective, every adverb, you don't need to use those kinds of words. When you put those words in, I know you're selecting from a palate of options, that tells me something about you.

I'm looking at these kinds of variables, and I had heard in some of the early months of doing this, that Mark's account was allegedly written at the feet of Peter in Rome. Mark is not an eyewitness, he is writing the account of the eyewitness, in Rome, according to an ancient Bishop named Papias. I said, "Okay, that's an interesting claim." This is a short account, it's very brief, and it doesn't feel like it's as heel to toe robust, it feels like it could be a series of talks that have been seamed together. I said, "I can use forensic statement analysis I bet, and just see if Peter's fingerprints are in that account. Is there something about the account that really makes more sense if Peter is the source for Mark?"

That first six months, a lot of that was me, in my extra room, getting up every day, not knowing anything about the narrative, anything about Biblical history, but just going through Mark's account using a forensic statement analysis. Everything you examine, if it's compression of time, that's one color pen. If it's pronouns, that's another color pen. If it's adjectives and adverbs, that's another color pen. If it's deception indicators, that's another kind of pen.

Patrick Gentempo: You're applying these pens and colors right through the whole book?

J. Warner Wallace: Oh yeah, it's just ... I still have that Bible, it's just filled with my notes, and every time discovered something that I thought, "I've got to come back to this, because this seems to be, it would involve Peter." Or maybe it wouldn't involve Peter, I would put a little 'P' next to it. I'd say this is something I'd need, if I'm making a case to anyone in the future. When I got done with it I was very comfortable with Papias' claim, historic claim, that Mark's account was a described eyewitness account of Peter. Just another one of the pieces that I was assembling to look at whether or not those accounts were reliable.

In the end, the deal is this, you can believe that those accounts are reliable, and are telling you something true about Jesus, and you won't have belief in it, you would just have belief of that. You would know that these accounts are telling you something that you could trust about Jesus. It doesn't mean you would trust Him, it doesn't mean you become a Christian, and I was not a Christian at that point. I was just somebody who was becoming very comfortable with the reliability of scripture.

Patrick Gentempo: With the people around you, who see you throw yourself all in on this, and going through a Bible and marking it up this way, what are they saying to you while you're doing this?

J. Warner Wallace: My wife was really, I think, encouraged. She wasn't a Christian herself either, but I think she was like, really thinking, "If this is true, I'd like to have my husband be in on it with me." She was, I think, more encouraged. She's always been, you know, we were together 18 years, neither one of us were a Christian at that time, so it's not as though I ever even really felt any pressure at all from her, because she wasn't a Christian either. I think she was just more interested in God than I was, but my partners, they started to notice. Surveillance teams are very tight. There are five officers and a sergeant, we're in cars, every day and we're following bad guys all around Los Angeles County.

They don't know we're following them, because we think they've done a crime in our city, but we're not quite sure, or they did it with somebody else, we don't know who the second person is, so we're just watching them long enough to identify them and get all this done, right? We get to be very tight, you're working long hours together, and you're always watching somebody, and if you're not on the eye, watching the bad guy, you're on a perimeter, waiting for the bad guy to go mobile. Whenever I was on the perimeter, I was studying, and I was pretty close to being a Christian by the time a partner of mine caught me.

I remember I was backed up in my surveillance car, in a terrible neighborhood, but I was in a funeral home. Usually funeral home parking lots are safe places to park your car and just sit, so I'm backed up into a space, and I'm so engrossed in what I'm doing that I commit the biggest sin of any surveillance officer. I don't see him walk up on me, because you've got to be situational learners. You have to know where you are, and you can't let guys walk up, that's how you get shot. I was so entrenched, right, that I didn't hear him walk up. His name was Steve, and he walks up, and gets behind me and he sees I've got a Bible, and I've got some other materials on the seat next to me, and he says, "I knew it! I knew there was something different about you. Don't tell me you're a Christian now?"

For years together, we had maligned Christians. We arrest a lot of Christians, okay, and we just would mock these guys. We did this so much that everyone knew I was probably the most outspoken non-Christian on our team, and now here, he catches me with this Bible in my lap. He says, "Oh, I know how you are", because he knew how adamantly opposed to Christianity I was, he says, "I'll bet you end up being a pastor, because I know you. You're either all the way you hate it, or you're all the way in." You know, sure enough, he was right. It took several years for that to happen, but he ... I ate my words for probably the rest of my career at that point.

I've got people who eventually promoted to become my chief, my captains, my lieutenants. I stay as a detective working these cases, and these guys knew me when I was a very committed atheist. They still, I just saw some yesterday, they went to an event at our agency, and sure enough, these guys are still saying, "Yeah, so you're still preaching?" They think, you know, it's such a joke that I went from one extreme to the other. Yeah, I had to take a little bit of abuse, that's okay.

Patrick Gentempo: It's a great story because, I think, it's one thing to say what your findings are, it's another thing to say what the experience is as you're having the findings.

J. Warner Wallace: Yeah, and cops are so, at least I think we have a tendency to be so analytical about things, that we never trust experiences. You'll talk to witnesses who will try to ground what they're telling you, based on an experience, or based on how they felt about it. It's so unreliable, and so we're always, like, "Just the facts." If you've ever watched the old TV shows, "Just the facts, ma'am." I think we are that way by nature, and so I was the kind of person who would have resisted any impulse to feel my way into this. I would have just resisted it, and I knew that if I was going to become a Christian, that I would be challenged by the other evidence case makers that I knew in my agency. That, for years, had watched me belittle ... Most of the Christians we met could not make a case for what they believed. Even a few officers we knew who were Christians, could not make a case for what they believed.

Patrick Gentempo: This is the other, very fascinating point, you didn't get there, you didn't become a Christian by taking a leap of faith. You took an intellectual path that led you there, which is counter-intuitive to what you probably would have believed is the way that people find you later.

J. Warner Wallace: Yeah, I think the word faith is loaded, right? I mean, it's defined in a certain way by culture and if you weren't careful you don't realize that that definition that people typically think of as faith, is not a Biblical definition of faith. What I try to say to people is, "Look, every case you make for a jury, has unanswered questions." We actually even ask jurors before we start, we'll say, "Are you the kind of person that needs every question answered before you can make a decision?" If you are, we'll excuse you, you're not going to be on our jury panel, because we're not going to be able ask, or tell you in advance, that you're going to have open questions. This is the nature of every criminal trial, no one ever has the perfect evidence set that answers every possible question.

What we ask people to do, is make an informed decision even though they're going to have to step across a gap, a gap of unanswered questions. Now we hope to make that gap as small as possible, and make you as comfortable as possible stepping across it, but we know we're going to ask you to take a step of evidential trust. Now you might describe that as a step of faith, but it's not a blind faith, and it's not an unreasonable faith. It's what I would call a forensic faith, it's the idea here, that it is a faith that is grounded in an evidence trail that will never get you all the way there, but it'll get you close, you'll be going in the right direction. You're going to have to take a step across your unanswered questions.

A blind faith is one where you say ... For example, an unreasonable belief is one that you hold in spite of evidence to the contrary. You might think, for example, you get warts from frogs. Okay, you don't get warts from frogs. We already know what the science is behind this, we know that it doesn't happen that way. If you hold that belief, you're holding it in spite of evidence to the contrary, that's an unreasonable belief. I don't believe that Christianity is that kind of belief, it's not. There is no evidence to the contrary, that you can point out, that says this is unreasonable, but you could say, "Yeah, but I think that faith is blind in the sense that isn't faith the thing you do when you don't have evidence? Isn't faith?"

Well, that doesn't appear to be how Jesus saw it, because Jesus never operated that way. He continually said, "Hey, if you don't believe what I'm telling you, at least believe the evidence of these miracles I worked in front of you." When He always relied on evidence then you wouldn't have a doubt, so when John the Baptist sends his disciples to Jesus, "Hey, John sent us, he's in custody. He wants to know, are you the one?" I get it John's suffering, he's not sure now what's going on, he's got questions, he sends his disciples.

Well, I think, Jesus right then, could have scolded John, because John is his cousin, raised by parents who knew each other, his mom knew Jesus' mom. He doesn't do any of that, instead He works three miracles in front of John's disciples, says, "Go back and tell John what you just saw." That is an evidential approach, because you could say, "Hey, you need to trust. You need to pray about it. You need to remember how you were raised." No, He doesn't do any of that. He says, "Okay, I'll give you a little more proof. Off you go."

I think that's really what's valuable to me as a guy who was investigating this as somebody who loves evidence. That Jesus seemed to love evidence too, and that kind of faith is neither blind, nor unreasonable. It's that, yes, He gets it, you're going to have some unanswered questions. You may have some doubts, but you've got more than enough good evidence to point you in this direction, and that little step you're going to take, of trust, is not unwanted.

Gretchen Jensen: Wow, that interview with J. Warner Wallace, that was just Part one, there is another one coming up tomorrow. That was so, so incredible. We also have Claire Pfann coming up, but we want to talk a little bit about sharing Patrick.

Patrick Gentempo: I think you can see the power of this information, and how important it is right now, and we are trying to make it as easy as possible for you to share this message. There's social media links right here on the page, or you could just send people to ChristRevealed.com. There's so much great information content and inspiration coming. You don't want anybody to miss this, so please, share this message. Enjoy my interview with Claire Pfann.

Claire, thank you so much for inviting us into your home, and having this interview. We're in an interesting part of the world, we have like we're up on a perch here looking toward the Old City.

Claire Pfann: Yes, we're on the far north extension of the Mount of Olives, in fact. The north-eastern side of the city, and in fact, when the Roman legions came and besieged the city of Jerusalem in 70, they came from this vantage point, stopped, looked over the city, and then headed down and took it from the north.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow, so that's an interesting place to be viewing the city from. You originally grew up in America, so tell us about your journey a bit.

Claire Pfann: I'm from San Jose, California, and my husband as well, from Cupertino. We both studied Bible in the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. We both grew up Catholic and became part of the renewal movement, and the Jesus movement back in the late '60's, and early '70's. We had a fabulous education at the GTU. In the area of Bible, Steve did Hebrew Bible, I did New Testament. At the end of his MA, we were advised by Professor Jacob Milgrom, a very famous Jewish scholar teaching at Cal Berkeley, to go spend a year in Israel. That was 1982 to '83.

We took leaves of absence from our jobs, we flew across the ocean, we said good-bye to our family, "We'll be gone for a year." Little did we know, that we were stepping into Disneyland in its most positive sense, meaning, everywhere we turned in this country there was something that made the Bible come alive. Something that illuminated history, that helped us to encounter Jesus in a more powerful way.

Although we had had this great education in Berkeley, there was part of the context of the Biblical world, and of encountering a large Jewish population living a Jewish lifestyle. The interactions with gentiles, with

seeing the geography, and the topography, with living a calendar that was the calendar of the Bible, speaking the languages, it made the whole Bible come alive. Not just the Old Testament, it made the New Testament come alive.

At the end of that year, 1982 to '83, we prayed very seriously about whether we would go back to Berkeley and do his Ph.D. there, or whether we would do Ph.D. here. We felt strongly he should do his Ph.D. at Hebrew University, so that was phase two. We said to the family, "We won't be home for five to seven years."

Patrick Gentempo: Wow.

Claire Pfann: They were shocked. Then, during the course of studies, while he was working on his Ph.D., and I wrote my Master's thesis, and sent it back to the United States. We really, seriously considered about starting a school that would make contextual studies available in English for International Christian students, because we find this context to be so transformative for their faith in ministry.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah. A part of our reason for coming here to Israel, was for this series to really have that, almost Disney World experience. To be able to take people on, what we feel like is an epic journey. What's been very interesting for me, and I suspect it sounds like what your experience was when you first got here also, was that all these things that we learn about, live abstractly over in the United States, North America. You learn about these things, but it's really an entirely different thing to come here and see it, and witness it right here on the land. Do you encourage people to have that experience?

Claire Pfann: I absolutely encourage people to have that experience, because what you say is true. Things that are abstract, or theoretical, when we read them in the Bible, suddenly become concrete. That goes all the way from things like, the plants and the animals. How do you understand the prophets, or Jesus' parables, without understanding the natural setting of His ministry? Also, things that are cultural religious, like when you read about the law in the Apostles of Paul, and the question of Jewish practice in gentile Christians, and what should they do, those things that are theoretical in America become real because you live those situations out.

I always think that people who aspire to be ministers, or teachers, or informed Christians who take their Bible seriously should come as early in their lives in ministries, as they possibly can. Don't save it as a reward at retirement, come at the beginning because it will transform the way they read the Bible.

Patrick Gentempo: As you've said, you've studied, I guess an area of focus is, the New Testament, and you're in the old Biblical land, but of course, this is where Jesus was, and what are some of the things when you're teaching? Or, you're organizing these courses, I mean, there's so much to learn, what do you find the areas of study are that are important, here in Jerusalem, when Christians are coming over, and they want to have an understanding?

Claire Pfann: Yes, well of course the first thing we always have to remember is that Jesus was Jewish. His disciples were Jewish. Paul was Jewish. Jesus represents the flowering of a certain aspect of Judaism into the fullness of time. If we want to understand Jesus, we need to understand Judaism, and the subjects that I would always recommend right off the bat, are to study the gospels here in context. Study Mark, Matthew and Luke side by side in the context of Israel, in the context of Jewish society.

Archeology is very helpful to know the archeology of Jerusalem, to know the archeology of the country and it's topography. You've already seen Bethlehem is 20 minutes from Jerusalem. Jerusalem is in the mountains, it's not in a sandy desert. Nazareth is a two hour drive, so that means at the time of Jesus, for people like Mary and Joseph to come from Nazareth to go down to Bethlehem, is going to take them several weeks. Whereas to go from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, to pay the redemption price of their first born, or whatever they're going to do, would take them about an hour or two walking.

It just gives you context, so study the gospel, study the Acts of Apostles. The first half of the Acts of Apostles takes place in Jerusalem, you would need to know what that context is, and what the issues were that were driving the earliest Christians. For Christians there is just this payback, this win-win of these kinds of contextual studies.

Patrick Gentempo: With the, I guess I'd call them, for lack of a better term, the popular, the famous holy sites where certain things occurred, for you, what was your experience the first time that you visited them, and then now, what kind of experience do you try to give other people who show up here?

Claire Pfann: Well, we have to admit that when we step here, into this context, there is a bit of culture shock. We take something like, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which for Western Christians is challenging. The Catholics, of course, have some comfort zone because there is a Catholic part of the church, and that is something that they're familiar with. For us to come face-to-face with the Orthodox Christian world, is to see iconography, paintings, décor, and traditions that are unfamiliar to us.

Sometimes that's off-putting for Western Christians, but when we realize that underneath all of that building and artifice, is actually the probably historical place of the burial of Jesus, and that what we see is a reflection of the power of the gospel going out to so many lands, and so many languages, and peoples, and they come back to express their love for Jesus. Then it becomes a lesson in church history, and it becomes an expression of devotion, so that's a transformative experience, which you don't necessarily expect to have. A little bit challenging, but with some thought and understanding you can see this tapestry of church history.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah, and then obviously the varying places where certain main events happened, you know, as we look at the Last Supper, and the crucifixion, and the resurrection, and the ascension. I mean, you can pretty much

stand in one place and look around when you have a view, and you can point and say, "There's the areas that we believe it all happened."

Claire Pfann: Yes, I think that there is one Jewish conception, really that Jerusalem is like the belly button of the earth. It's like an umbilical cord connecting heaven and earth, and from the point of view of church history, certainly it is the happening place. It's so tiny, a kilometer on each side of the Old City wall, it's amazingly small.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah, so when you talk about the Old City, and the Old City walls, there's a lot of history there. When people are new to the city, that are Christians, that are coming here to have the experience of Jerusalem, is there a specific order of things that you feel like they should be doing to have the experience?

Claire Pfann: I think it's very helpful to work chronologically when you come. =I you're going to focus on the life of Jesus, to go chronologically is very helpful, because it takes you from origins. It puts you in the Jewish community, a community that was waiting for the blessed hope and recognized it, people like Simeon and Anna at the Temple Mount. Then to walk through the Passion Week to visit places like the Pool of Siloam, which is, to me, one of the most exciting excavations going on right now.

Patrick Gentempo: It is.

Claire Pfann: The actual Pool of Siloam and the road that led up to the Temple. Amazing stuff, you know? To visit the Israel Museum, really important, and see how second level period Jerusalem looked, because of the model, it gives you such an overview, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. To go to the wilderness, and experience John the Baptist, and the Essenes and to understand from the perspective of the New Testament there's a prophetic move happening. In that those centuries leading up to the time of Jesus that culminates with Jesus.

From the Essenes with their Dead Sea Scrolls, to John the Baptist preaching the coming of the Kingdom, both of them preaching a repentance from the heart and individual relationship with God, and yet one has power in miracles, the Essenes. John the Baptist is a preacher, but he's not a healer. Then in Jesus we find someone who takes the preaching of the kingdom, the personal-ness of God, individual responsibility in relationship.

The preaching of that good news, coupled with power and miraculous ability, and He's willing to step outside into the public sphere, and risk approaching all the marginal people. All the people who are not players in the religious status quo; women, Samaritans, people who are uneducated who are just the local people, and to talk to them about God in the language that they understand, which is the language of his parables. Shepherds with sheep and goats, fathers with their children, farmers with their seed. This isn't the language of the academy, this is the language that the everyday people know, and He opens out that hopeful message of God's mercy and love, and the kingdom, to everyday people.

Patrick Gentempo: I'm really glad you spoke to that because nobody's really brought that to light, as far as who He was speaking to, the audience, and the varying classes, and that that was an unusual thing.

Claire Pfann: It was a very unusual thing. He reflects on that in His parables when He says, "The kingdom of God is like a net cast into the sea that brings in good fish, and bad fish both." Or, you know, "At the end there will this separation of these sheep and goats, and then God will say, 'You thought you were with me, but you weren't actually with me, because you didn't feed the hungry, clothe the naked, preach the good news.'" He sees that there's risk, and that in mixture, in opening this message, you're going to get a few wolves in sheep's clothing, but mostly you're going to get sheep.

He includes women as disciples, not just doing the laundry and cooking the meals, but sitting at His feet, learning and hearing from Him, and being commissioned to go tell the apostles that He's written. Women had a very unusual role to play, in Jesus' followers.

Patrick Gentempo: I guess that would be especially unusual, you know, being that He was Jewish, and again, given the context of the time that they were in, that He would include women in such a way.

Claire Pfann: Yes, it's very unusual, and I think we have two things in the gospels and the acts that reflect on this. The first is that the early followers of Jesus, the writers of the gospel, never hedged on the fact that it was women who were the first to the tomb, and who saw it empty, and who received the message from the angels. If you wanted to perpetrate a hoax, you certainly wouldn't pick women as the witnesses, because they weren't even allowed to give testimony in court. The veracity of the account stands strong because they don't fudge on that ideal.

The second thing is this very small note that we have in the Acts of the Apostles, in Acts Chapter 8, when Paul, Saul at the time, he's still a Pharisee and hasn't yet come to faith in Jesus, when Saul is persecuting, and this persecution is happening in the Old City, which was just called Jerusalem, it wasn't called the Old City then. They are going from house to house, and they're arresting the leaders of the house churches, everybody needs some houses, there's no church buildings yet, and they arrest both men and women. They arrest women also, and throw them into prison, and this is a very unusual thing to have happen.

Normally you would arrest men, like we see that the disciples all abandoned Jesus when He's crucified. They expect to be arrested. The women are at the cross, and they're watching. They're not expecting to be arrested, but as the movement gained momentum women emerged in roles of leadership as well, so both men and women are arrested and thrown into prison because they both wheeled influence and authority in this early movement.

Patrick Gentempo: It's fascinating to observe and to bring to light. Our approach, which you're speaking to really, all three things, with Christ Revealed is the history, seeing there's a historical record there. The evidence, saying, "What's the evidence that supports that history?" Then the inspiration

that emerges based on that history and evidence. You know, when you start ... We live in a very interesting time because of what evidence has emerged just in our lifetimes, and right before our lifetimes as far as what we're seeing archeologically. To validate the veracity of what's written in the Bible, and then when you're here, and, I think, this is where I want to ask you, just on a personal level. You got here, you thought you'd be here a year, and now it's been over three decades.

Claire Pfann: Yes.

Patrick Gentempo: What was the inspiration that brought that about?

Claire Pfann: I always say that we came to study for a year, but we found our vocation.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah.

Claire Pfann: I mean, we didn't intend to start a school, but all the resources that are here, from a scholarly vantage point, wonderful Christian scholars, wonderful Jewish scholars, if they're not here, they come here. Jerusalem serves as a hub, this kind of magnet pulling people together, that leads to interconnectedness worldwide. It's a very powerful thing. Learning to live as a gentile Christian in a Jewish society, actually helps you to identify with the early gentile Christians, and the issues that were so important to them. How do you have a congregation of Christians from Jewish backgrounds, and gentile backgrounds, and the Jews keep kosher, and the gentiles don't, and that's everybody's freedom, but you want to have a potluck dinner? These are issues that Paul addresses in his epistles, and these are issues that you can live out here.

That kind of thing, and the access to the archeology, it just, it doesn't ever grow old. There's always something more to learn, and my husband and I, both being teachers at heart, just felt that this was where we were supposed to be, and where we were supposed to teach. He also was a Dead Sea Scroll editor, and we've had tremendous opportunity, both working with the scrolls to see how they have helped illuminate the New Testament and the world of Jesus.

Patrick Gentempo: Can you discuss that a little bit?

Claire Pfann: Yeah, I mean, these are really fun. There are two primary examples that always come to mind, when we listen to the proclamation of the angel Gabriel, to Mary, so we're in Luke Chapter 1, and he's talking about the child who's to come, and he says, "He'll be called the Son of the Most High. He'll be called the Son of God", etc. Scholarship used to say, "Oh, this is just bogus. I mean, somebody's putting these words into Gabriel's mouth", because the conceptions of a messiah who would be the Son of God, wasn't found at that time, in any Jewish literature.

When they found 4Q246, so that's 4Q means, cave number four at Qumran, 246 is the manuscript number. They used to call it the Son of God text, but now they call it the Aramaic Apocalypse, I think. Anyway it says those exact same things, now this, it says that, "He will be called

the Son of God, He will be called the Son of the Most High, He will be called Great." Exactly the phrases that we find reflected in Gabriel's pronouncement, and the document itself though, 4Q246, is a Jewish document. It's not a Christian document, it existed, it was copied before the Christian era. That meant that there was at least one group of Jews, at the time, we call it the late second temple period, who believed that the messiah would be somehow a divine figure as well.

That the Christians are not post-facto making it up, but they're reflecting actually a very specific line of Jewish thought from the time of Jesus, and that these are truly Jewish concepts, and not gentile mythological inventions. Another one is the pierced messiah text, which talks about a messiah, a kingly, princely figure who would be put to death, very unusual and unexpected. The third text has to do with the question that John the Baptist sends to Jesus.

You remember, John the Baptist, all four gospels spend a lot of time on John the Baptist, because we always have to clarify, was Jesus a breakaway? Did He steal disciples? What's the relationship between these two? John the Baptist was a much more famous prophetic preacher in the first century than Jesus was. John the Baptist has a bigger following all the way from Asia Minor, to Egypt. Josephus spends more time on John the Baptist, so what happens, John the Baptist is thrown in prison. Herod Antipas, who's the Herod of the Galilee, is going to put him to death, and he knows he's going to die. Now he's facing an imminent death, and he sits there, and he says, "Did I get it wrong? What happened? I thought Jesus was the messiah."

What does John know? John knows that Jesus is up in the Galilee, going from place to place, preaching good news, healing people, praying for them, delivering them, but he's not doing what John and the other Jews of Jesus' day expected. They expected the messiah to go down to Jerusalem and overthrow the Romans, and restore Jewish independence. Now he says, "Did I get it wrong?", and he sends his disciples to Jesus, and he says, "Ask him." So they ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" That's the question of Chapter 7.

Luke says, at that time, Jesus did many things, He healed the sick, He gave sight to the blind, He gave hearing to the deaf, the lame walked, and He raised the dead. Okay, now He raised the dead was the problem, because scholarship said, "Okay, this is not correct." Nobody expected the messiah to raise the dead. Jesus clearly didn't do that, or people were just creating these fictions, until they found 4Q521, cave four Qumran, manuscript number 521, Messianic Apocalypse. In which it lists the things, the very deeds, that the messiah is going to do, same list, blind see, lame walk, deaf hear, and the dead are raised.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow.

Claire Pfann: It's exactly the expectation and the answer that Jesus gives to John the Baptist. Until 4Q521 was found, it was thought that the only expectation for resurrection among Jews was going to be at the end of time, but in the words of Jesus, and in this document, we see this

expectation brought fore to the present. He says to the disciples of John the Baptist, "Now go back, and tell him what you have seen, and blessed is he who does not take any offense in Me." What does that answer mean? He is saying to John, "Remember what the prophetic words say about the messiah. What Isaiah says about the day of the Lord, what he says about the coming of God's goodness." It's not political.

It has to do with Jesus' own vision and mission statement, to care for those who are in need. To bring the good news to those who are oppressed. To set at liberty the captives. To clothe the naked, feed the hungry, heal people's diseases. That is the sign of the messiah, not overthrowing the Romans.

Patrick Gentempo: Interesting, and I love the characterization, the good news. That's how it's referred, here's the good news. Why do you think He referred to it as the good news, I mean, it could be referred to a lot of ways, but here is the good news?

Claire Pfann: Yes, well you know, in the book of Isaiah there's a special blessing, it says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the person who brings good news, who proclaims glad tidings of joy. Who says to Jerusalem, your king comes." Good news, what we now call the gospel from the Greek word, euangelion, when we say evangelistic, or evangelism, or the evangel, it all comes back to that prophesy in Isaiah, that the one who brings the good news bring glad tidings of hope. There was this expectation that this would be the job of the servant of the Lord, and that's the job that Jesus was doing, bringing that good news.

Patrick Gentempo: What other parts of the New Testament do you personally find, maybe the most inspiring, you know, when you teach them? That you love to bring it to the classroom, and say, "I can't wait to teach this part today."

Claire Pfann: Okay, well, first of all I have to say, I love teaching all my classes, because I get to do New Testament and it's the most wonderful and exciting material, number one, but I am a huge fan of Paul. Paul is really so misunderstood, and people resent him and they think he's so repressive and terrible. It is because they do not understand the context of the world in which he lived, and how he envisioned this good news for gentiles. People think he's terrible, but I think we just need to get a fresh look at Paul. I love teaching Paul in context.

Patrick Gentempo: Can you give us a fresh look at Paul then?

Claire Pfann: Well, there are all these discussions about law, and whether the gentiles have to follow the law or not, and the final outcome was that, no, gentile do not have to convert to Judaism, that's what follow the law means. It means to convert to Judaism, and be circumcised, in order to be a follower of Jesus, who is the Jewish messiah. This was a passionate debate in the early church, because it seemed like logically consistent that if Jesus were the Jewish messiah, and the gentiles want to believe in Him, they should have to convert.

Paul's position won out, and Peter aligned with that, etc. Then he has to face these issues that need to be worked out, which are thorny issues.

Issues of meat offered to idols, issues of how to have table fellowship in congregations that are both Jewish and gentile, and we see that despite his very emotional outbursts at times in his letters, sometimes he's quite excited, and very blunt and hard hitting, he develops maturely as a pastor.

By the time we get to the book of Romans, and he's writing to the church at Rome, which is truly a gentile Jewish combo, with leadership who are Jewish Christians, and gentile followers, primarily. He deals with how to have a potluck dinner. I love this, and he says, "Well, you know, there are some people who think that you can eat all foods, that all food is clean." He calls them the strong, and he says, "There are other people who think that you can only eat vegetables", and he calls them the weak.

Now this is just code language, obviously the people who are only eating vegetables are the Jewish Christians who feel that you can only eat kosher. They don't want to eat food offered to idols, and they don't want to eat meat that hasn't been ritually slaughtered, so they're going to just play it safe. Whereas the strong are the Christian gentiles who feel, "Well, you know, it doesn't matter, I can eat anything."

He says, "Now, when we come together to have food, you strong ones", strong, of course, is a positive thing, everybody wants to be strong, so he's going to ask them to do the difficult thing. "You strong ones need to take consideration for your weaker brothers." He says, "You have freedom. Freedom means that you have two choices. Freedom means you can partake, but freedom also means that you can abstain. Whichever you choose is an expression of your freedom, whereas your poor, weaker brother, who can only eat the vegetables, he only has one choice. He can only abstain, because of his conscience, it creates a crisis of conscience."

He says, "So, do the big thing, be magnanimous. When you come together, you abstain for the sake of your brother, because Christ laid down his life for that man, or that woman, and if Jesus was willing to die for them, why should you make life hard over the food? The kingdom of God is not about what you eat, or what you drink, but it's about righteousness, and peace, and joy." Now this, to me, is pastoral wisdom, it's very clever. He's very analytical and he's really getting people to do what he wants.

Or we have the letter to Philemon, why is the letter to Philemon, this one page letter about a runaway slave, why is that in the New Testament? Well, he addresses this letter to Philemon, and Apphia, and Archippus, and the church in their house, so these are three church letters.

In this letter, after he's addressed it to all of them and the church in their house, then he writes, and he talks only to Philemon, and it's "I, Paul, and you", second person singular Philemon. "I want you, Philemon, to forgive the runaway slave Onesimus. He did a bad thing, but he's come to know the Lord, and I've been mentoring him, and he's sorry. I know that he owes you money, but of course, you're not going to ask

him for that money because you owe your debt of life to me, because I'm the apostle of Jesus. I'm Jesus' prisoner", in prison as he writes this. "So, forgive the debt, but accept the guy back, and take him and nurture him and let him be part of your congregation."

Now this whole letter, if you took away the "Dear, three people", and the church, and "Love, Paul", at the end, it's all a personal conversation. Paul addresses that letter to Philemon, and Apphia, and Archippus, and the church in their house so that the letter will be read out loud in the congregational setting, with all of the people there. Then what is Philemon going to do? Philemon has only one choice, everybody has heard Paul ask him to forgive Onesimus, and so he's going to have to do it. Why is that letter in the New Testament? There is one suggestion about how the canon of Paul's letters came together, was that Bishop Onesimus, of Ephesus, was that same slave who later became one of the church leaders in Ephesus, and who kept copies and compiled the letters and added to it, his own letter of liberation and forgiveness.

Patrick Gentempo: Wow.

Claire Pfann: It's just wonderful stuff.

Patrick Gentempo: It's really a fascinating study. When people come, because you have people coming from foreign countries, to come study at your school here, and from different cultures, what's the average amount of time they would spend here to study in your post-graduate courses?

Claire Pfann: Yes, our school is international, and interdenominational, so Christians from all backgrounds are studying with us. The Master of Arts program is designed to take two years, but that usually is dependent on the student already having their Biblical language prerequisite, so Biblical Hebrew and Biblical Greek, under their belt. If they haven't already fulfilled their language requirements, then it could take three or four years to do a Master's because you have to have ... Those are like the tools in your toolbox of Biblical studies. You need your languages.

Master of Divinity is offered in Korean only, and it takes three years minimally to do a Master of Divinity. Sometimes it will take five, probably if you don't have your languages.

Patrick Gentempo: Interesting that it's offered in Korean, why Korean?

Claire Pfann: Our degree programs grew as the need, and demand emerged, so the Master of Arts was our first degree program. It's preparatory for usually doing Ph.D. studies, but some people will do an MA without going on to a Ph.D. As our Korean student body grew, there was an expressed need, or desire, for a Master of Divinity, where they could do their course work here. We said, "Well, we're not a church sponsored school. We're interdenominational, and we don't ordain anybody, so doing an M.Div., is a hard thing because, what would you do?" There is an organization in Korea called KAICAM, it's a para church organization, that our school became a member of, The Korean Association of Independent Churches and Ministries.

Our M.Div. Graduates go back to Korea so that they can be evaluated and tested, within this Korean organization and received ordination. It's just totally a Korean thing because they desired this particular path into para church ministry.

Patrick Gentempo: Now, when you're looking at the Far East, and these people come from a different cultural context completely than the West, yet they're coming to faith, from a different land. Do you find distinctions in the way that they experience Christianity?

Claire Pfann: Yes, I think it's a real privilege to study scripture with people from various cultural backgrounds, because I always learned from them. For example, the issue of venerating ancestors, which in the early church was a big issue because when people came out of paganism, they were often accused, the Christians were accused of neglecting the tombs of their ancestors, or neglecting their ancestors. The pagans, meaning all of the gentile world, not the Jews, the pagans felt that the ancestors still were actively involved in the events of their present. If you did not bring them offerings to their tombs, if there was a birth, or a wedding, or something, something bad could happen.

It is in studying with our Japanese students, for example, that we find that this still a living issue. That people who come out of Shintoism, and become followers of Jesus, face the exact same crisis. We had one Japanese student who was a Church of the Nazarene pastor, who said, "Yes, I face this." He says, "This is what I do, when they come to me and say, 'They're burying my father, what do I do? Do I go to the funeral? Do I burn incense? What do I do?'" He says, "Yes, you go, and you just, while you're doing it, you just pray the Lord's prayer, and be at peace", because he understood that to break relationship over ultimatums, would be to close the door to expressing the love of Jesus to these people. He says, "You just pray the Lord's prayer, and work through it."

Another interesting observation we had from one of our African students. In the Epistles of John, there's a church split happening, a huge schism has happened, and there are two sets of people who are both at one time in the same church, and now they're going out and they're approaching the daughter churches, like the network, their own small little group of house churches. They're trying to split the community, so in third John, the writer of the Epistle, we call him John, is angry with a particular church leader who not only closes his door to the people who are the heretics, but he also closes his doors to the representatives of John, the letter writer.

He's so mad that this guy closes his door to everybody, so I said, "What do you guys think? Do you think that this guy is wrong?" This one African pastor raised his hand, and he said, "Well, I think he's right." He says, "In Africa, we have traveling ministers who go around, and they go from these small churches that are in remote places, and they come, and they preach, and they get the people all stirred up. They get given lots of money, and goods, and things like that, and then they go away, and you have to clean up the mess."

"The next thing you know, that traveling, roaming preacher is in jail somewhere. They've had a run-in with the law, or they've done something, and then you have to deal with the disillusionment of the congregation, that they were led astray by somebody who was really inauthentic." He says, "I'm really for closing the door. I think that this pastor, in antiquity, made the better choice." That was really radical. That was hard for a lot of the students to think that, but it just showed you how challenging it is to bring Christianity to other regions or to pastor in places that don't have a lot of structure. These are real challenges, so it's a wonderful thing to have this, kind of, dialogue and experience integration in a classroom.

Patrick Gentempo: One of the challenges, because you have three children, you have grown children.

Claire Pfann: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Patrick Gentempo: I think one of the challenges that I've found through a lot of the interviews I've done, especially the United States, is there's a concern that Christian households, there are children that grow up Christian. I don't know if this is a validated statistic, but this was the statistic I was given, and I'm sure it's probably approximately right, is that when kids go off to college about 80% of them lose their faith.

Claire Pfann: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Patrick Gentempo: What advice would you have for parents, you know, who are facing this, saying, "Hey, I'm raising my kids this particular way, and I'm sending them off to these schools, and it seems like the schools are somehow leading them astray, or away from what the values were that they were taught growing up." Do you have any thoughts about that?

Claire Pfann: Well, this is a really tough question to answer because we grew up, or we raised our children here in Jerusalem, with just our five member nuclear family. Our children grew up as a minority, and it's a privilege to live as a minority, but it's also a challenge to live as a minority. You have to work harder to keep your traditions and your identity when you're a minority. Being a Christian minority here means that you learn to interact with Christians of all different kinds of backgrounds. Its not like you can be a Baptist, and be in a congregation of 10,000 and carry out your whole life only talking to Baptists.

Here you're always engaged with differing practices, and options, whether they're within the greater Christian world here, or whether they're in dialogue with Jews and with Muslims. For me, it was part of it, of course, is only thanks to God that anybody raises kids successfully, we know that. Also, talking with them, throughout their lives. I mean, communication between parents and kids, to me, is like the bottom line, and talking about the hard issues. Talking about diversity, and talking about tolerance within the religious sphere. Being willing to listen to thoughts and ideas that are other than your own.

It was, I think, that that made a difference, and, of course, here Israeli schools, you start studying Bible as a subject in 1st or 2nd grade, and

you're actually reading the Hebrew Bible, you're reading the Old Testament. They don't ... You think about it in critical ways, I mean, they ask questions that we normally don't ask, or that are different than the questions that Christian school will ask. You're not shocked by differing opinions, you're exposed to it.

I think that keeping the dialogue going, letting people hear diverse opinions, because I think the shock when you get to college, in the United States, is that actually a lot of people disagree with you, and you've never had the opportunity to hear that before. Now you're 18, and you don't really actually know what your answers are. The more that there can be dialogue, and the more that there can be exposure to ideas that are not the same as your own, the stronger you can be about what you do believe.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah, it would make sense because maybe the guardian reaction is to shelter them from divergent views, when actually it has the opposite effect, it's like, let them experience them now, so that they have a foundation and a structure to work from, as compared to suddenly they're out of the shelter and suddenly they're into culture shock.

Claire Pfann: That's right. Then we don't have to be afraid to ask tough question of the Bible because Jesus is the Word of God, and the Bible is the Word about the Word. The Bible isn't God, the Bible is the Word about the Word, and that means that there is a process of interpretation. It's not the end in itself, the end in itself is having a relationship with God, and knowing that God is truth, even when our scriptures present us with thorny problems and issues of exegesis, or interpretation. That doesn't change the truth of who God is, His character remains firm, and He just expects us to work hard, and to struggle, and to know that there are some things that we're not going to be able to answer, but it's the relationship that is at the core.

Sometimes when we think that there's just no challenges in the Bible, well then we're not really hearing the own tensions that the Bible writers have with each other.

Patrick Gentempo: Right.

Claire Pfann: Peter says Paul writes things that are very hard to understand. I mean, James and Paul might disagree on how they would approach living out their Christian service. There are divergent opinions, there's diversity, what matters is love covering it all.

Patrick Gentempo: This is maybe, the ultimate consideration, is the idea of relationship. This is what has come out, I think it's something that's, maybe I won't call it unique, but distinguishing characteristic is to say that the ultimate goal is to have a relationship with Christ, and a relationship with God. That, as you said, there's multiple interpretations and conflict, and tensions, but is the edict, or the conclusion of this, that you aspire to, is to get to that relationship?

Claire Pfann: Yes. I think that the bottom line is every human being is made in God's image, every human life is valuable. People are very broken, God

desires to have relationship. God's Holy Spirit is seeking people, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit is out there trying to bring healing, and relationship, and hope. The love of God is best reflected in how Jesus laid down His life, so if people can come to an understanding of how deeply God loves them as individuals, God is the perfect Father, He's not like us. We fail as parents, we get angry, etc, but God is the perfect Father, is a ferociously loving Father. So much so, that He would allow Jesus to model his love by laying down His life.

Now that's a high price to pay, that means that God's love for us is strong, it's like Kevlar. It is something that is unbreakable, and if we allow ourselves to enter into that relationship, and that love, nothing will shake it. To me, this was the most important thing, you know, to transform my own understanding of my relationship with God, because I grew up Catholic, and I always carried this weight of guilt. I was like the scrupulous kid, it took all my courage to go to confession.

It's not that the truth of who Jesus is, isn't there. It is there, but, for me, to get to that point where I felt like I was safe in God's arms, and my relationship with Him couldn't just be broken because I thought a bad thought, or I got angry with my sister or something, That secure, unbreakable love of God, which is articulated, for example, in Romans Chapter 8, "What can separate us from the love of God? He who gave up his own son for us, will not let anything separate us from Him." I mean, He already paid this ultimate price, so neither death, nor life, nor angels, all these things. Nothing can separate us from that love. I mean, do we hear that?

In Romans Chapter 5, were he says, "If while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, how much more are we going to live with Him? If while we were his enemies, if while we were at enmity, He did these things. One hardly will ever lay down their life for good man, but no one ever lays their life down for a bad man, and yet Jesus laid down His life." This is Paul's way of saying, this relationship is sure. I want you to relax in it. Don't feel like you're a slave, don't feel like you could be cast out at any moment.

Relax in the fact that God so totally loves you, and be happy in that, and be like a child. You're not called to be His slave, you're called to be a child, you're called to be confident in His love, you're called to be like a two year old who runs in and climbs in the bed with their mom and dad, and they all tickle and laugh. You are called to realize that assurance, so that you can be set free to love other people. It's only in being secure that actually your service of God becomes something that is freely given, and not just obligation. It's something that becomes transformative.

That is something God wants for every human being, and like I say, He's actively pursuing it. Who knows how the mystery is that people will come to relationship with Him, but He knows the people who are responding to whatever light they have, whether the only light is the world of nature, whether the only light they have is the conscience, they say, "Yes, I want to know." Then the Spirit of Christ is drawing them, and God knows those who are His children throughout the world.

Patrick Gentempo: It really gives a different tone to the sense of it when you say, to relax into this.

Claire Pfann: Yeah, which is hard to do.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah, I mean, I've never heard it presented that way, and it makes a lot of sense to me, is the sense that this is ... I think people get very anxious about the idea of it.

Claire Pfann: Totally.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah, right, and for good reason. It's an intimidating thing.

Claire Pfann: Yes.

Patrick Gentempo: The idea to relax into this relationship, it's safe.

Claire Pfann: Yes, yes. It's a safe relationship. The other thing we know about life is that life is hard. Whether you walk in a relationship with God, or you don't walk in a relationship with God, you are going to experience conflict, illness, accidents, loss, hurt, so that's just the human condition, and it will be that way until after our deaths. You can have a choice, do I walk through that valley on my own, or do I walk through that valley with God present in my life? God doesn't promise to take the difficulties away, but He promises to give them meaning, to use them for good, and to be present in the pain.

It's not that it's just like, an easy, quick fix for all the difficulties that we would experience, but He can be present, and He cares, and He can comfort, and He can pour out His love. Yeah, and so, it's hard for us to relax into it. We work hard, and we're motivated, but the motivation needs to come from love and freedom and joy, not from obligation and stress and feeling like a slave.

Patrick Gentempo: You know, one other thing I wanted to dive into a little deeper on what you said, is that the Holy Spirit seeks us.

Claire Pfann: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Patrick Gentempo: Meaning that, a lot of times people are going out trying to find it, but really the sense that you have about it is that it's seeking us. What ... Can you elaborate a little bit there?

Claire Pfann: Yes, I think that God's purpose is to have relationship with every human being, so the world is pretty huge. This is a hard job to organize. I'd go administratively crazy if I had to figure out how to reach all humanity, but Paul tells us that God speaks through nature, God speaks through the conscience. People know, they intuit, what is right, and what is wrong. Even if they don't yet know the name of Christ, that aspect of it is part of the Holy Spirit moving in their lives. What is it? They have a spirit, a human spirit that is within them, seeking to be connected with God, and the Holy Spirit is presently trying to draw every human being. It's the job of the Holy Spirit to do that.

Sometimes we encounter Him in community, where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them. Sometimes we encounter Him in prayer. For some people through scripture. God talks to everyone individually, and He talks to people in manifold ways, in all kinds of ways. We're not all wired exactly the same, some people might see visions, or dream dreams, and other people might encounter God through music and worship. He is infinitely creative. He is infinitely adept and intuitive at trying to find the place of contact with each human being.

Patrick Gentempo: With your experience now for all these decades of teaching, studying the New Testament, and getting academically, personally, etc, you came here, and you'd already come to faith when you were here in the beginning. Now it's been decades of the work and devotion that you've put into all of this. How would you describe your faith has evolved, is it quantitative, is qualitative, is it both?

Claire Pfann: Well, I hope it's qualitative. I hope that it gets deeper and more mature. I have to say, becoming a parent was something that really helped me to finally come to grips with how much God loves us, and how strong that love is. I also know that just the process of aging helps me to be able to relax about some things that are just not crises. One of my lines with the kids always used to be, "Well, this is not a crisis, this is not the end of the world. The end of the world is when Jesus comes back, this is just a minor problem, and we're going to deal with it."

You know, so just longevity and the ability to live, to feed on the things that are good for us. There's that beautiful scripture that says, "Whatever is good and pleasant, and pure and holy and upright, dwell on those things." We are what we eat, and that is true also in a spiritual sense. We need to pray, we need to read scripture, we need to fellowship and fill our minds, and our hearts with those things that bring life.

Patrick Gentempo: That was very quotable, that you are what you eat is also true spiritually.

Claire Pfann: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Patrick Gentempo: What a great understanding.

Claire Pfann: Yes.

Patrick Gentempo: You know, because we hear that and especially someone who comes from the health field, you know, and looking at these types of things and the idea, you are what you eat, but of course that would be true spiritually.

Claire Pfann: Yes, and of course, I didn't invent that. That's in the New Testament.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah, but I mean, you know, just -

Claire Pfann: It is a principle.

Patrick Gentempo: It's a principle, and it's a principle that, I think it's great that it's brought to light in the New Testament, and that it's brought to light here because there's the material form of things that people will allude to, but what's the reflection of that in the spiritual context. I just really think that that's a great representation and understanding. This has been wonderful to spend time with you, and I feel like I could spend, you know, weeks having these conversations with you. I appreciate not only you spending time here, but also all the work that you're doing here.

Claire Pfann: Well, thank you, it's a real privilege to get to do this, and to get to share some of these thoughts with you. I hope when you come back with your family we can meet them, and have you guys over for dinner or something like that.

Patrick Gentempo: Well, count on it, and thank you for that.

Claire Pfann: That would be our pleasure.

Patrick Gentempo: Thanks for your time, and effort, and energy.

Claire Pfann: Well, again, I mean, it's a privilege to be part of this series, thank you.

Gretchen Jensen: I really loved Episode 2, and I know you did as well, but coming up tomorrow for Episode 3, we have an interview with Amir Tsarfati, and also Part 2 of J. Warner Wallace's interview. Patrick, with you, right?

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah, well I have to tell you, the interview with Amir was amazing. We were in Israel, we went up north to Tiberius, and we were near the Sea of Galilee when we did this interview. In comes this man when we sit down, and get on the set to have this conversation, and you will just experience the light in his eyes, and the power of his conviction in his story, which is amazing. He really emphasized and made the point, something that was startling, when he talked about it's more about relationship than it is about ritual or religion. To have a relationship with Jesus and what that means, so you tune into that interview, it's going to shift you. It was really mesmerizing.

Also we have Part 2 of our interview with J. Warner Wallace, where he brings this whole thing home, and I have to tell you, the painstaking detail in the deliberation he gives to the case for the resurrection is unlike anything I had heard before. I'm really excited for you to hear Part 2 of that interview also. Thanks so much for watching Episode 2 of Christ Revealed, and we'll look forward to being with you for Episode 3.