

CHRIST REVEALED



Episode 3

Transcript

Gretchen Jensen: We are so glad that you're joining us today for episode three. Now coming up we're going to hear an interview with Amir Tsarfati Tsarfati. And also, the second part of the J. WARNER WALLACE Warner Wallace interview. First of all, let's talk about Amir Tsarfati.

Patrick Gentempo: Amir Tsarfati is an amazing human being. You can not take your eyes off him as you're listening to him speak. The focus, and the force, and the depth, and the certainty in his faith is really contagious. And he makes a very important point during the course of this interview that I think he drives home in a very profound way. And it's the idea of relationship, not ritual, not religion, but relationship with Jesus. And when you hear his story, and listen to how he describes what that means, it can't help but transfix you. So definitely watch that interview. Enjoy that interview. And pay attention to the details of what he has to discuss during the course of it.

Amir Tsarfati. Thank you so much for doing this. I'm very excited because coming here I got to see for the first time, the Sea of Galilee.

Amir Tsarfati: Thank you.

Patrick Gentempo: Beautiful area.

Amir Tsarfati: I'm sure that you're pleased with what you see right here.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah. Well it's very exciting coming in through Tiberius and coming here. So I'm really feeling very inspired for this interview.

Amir Tsarfati: Two thirds of the gospel took place right here. How can you not be excited about this?

Patrick Gentempo: So tell us a little bit about your background.

Amir Tsarfati: Well I come from a Jewish family. I grew up with parents that ... My mom is a daughter of Holocaust survivors. My dad actually came to Israel when he was ten years old. Originally his family's from France, moved to Portugal, and was expelled with all the other Jews at the end of the 1400's by Ferdinand and Isabelle, and landed in Northern Africa in the country of Tunisia. That's what my family name Tsarfati means French, from France. The Jews from France basically. And my parents got divorced when I was about three years old. My parents couldn't, for some reason, raise me and my brother. So they handed me over to foster care. Different families along the- I don't know. About 15 years of life there.

Life were not easy. You know. Growing up as an infant, and then of course as a teenager, you need your security. You need your parents. You need your home. I went through a very, very big crisis towards the age of 17 asking the big question of why am I here for? What is the world all about? I was desperately in love with a girl that I don't think that she even knew that I exist. And knowing that I can not even invite her to a place that I don't even have, I realized that it's not good. I felt that there is no hope and I have no future. And so I planned to put an end to my life. And that was when I was 17 years old.

I carefully planned it, and I was about to execute it by basically swallowing hundreds of pills and not waking up the following morning. But that night that I was about to do that I kind of realized that it's an irreversible thing, and maybe I should give the world one last chance. And that week was an incredible week because I realized that my best friend in school is actually a Jew who believes in both the old and the New Testament. And I found out about it when we decided to study together for the STA, for the final exams of high school. I went to his house and I'm ready to eat, and everybody holds hands and close their eyes, and they talk to God as if he is their best friend.

Patrick Gentempo: Right.

Amir Tsarfati: And I was shocked. I never seen anything like that because Jewish people, if they pray, they use a prayer book. And they don't just talk like that. And not only that, they even mentioned me in the prayers, like, "Thank you God for having Amir Tsarfati here with us and every-" It really touched me but the same time also intrigued me. I felt I have to ask. I lost my appetite already and started asking questions, and I knew it's true. It's genuine. It's real. But I couldn't put my finger on who really Jesus is.

So one day I just asked a question, "Why do you pray in the name of Jesus?" We the Jews, we have God. Why do we need to end up Ye Shaam Yeshua [phonetic 00:05:30] the name of Jesus. And they explain, and explain, and explain and then one lady told me, "Why don't you just pray and ask God who Jesus really is?" And I was shocked because you know, prayer you know, it's the easiest thing. You don't need to have money, you don't have to be in a certain place. You don't have to own anything. You don't have to do anything. Just talk to him. And sometimes it's the hardest thing.

So here I am writing a prayer on a piece of paper. I put it on the wall. I kneeled down and I read from it cause I'm afraid I'll say the wrong thing. And I just asked God to show me who Jesus is. That's all. I woke up in the next morning. I went to work before school. I had to work because that place where I worked was owned by my foster family. So they forced me to work every day from 6 a.m. to 7:30. I went to school, went back to work and then only at 8 p.m. I would do my homework and everything. So I went to work and put together the morning newspaper, and it was a grocery store. And then I saw in the most sold Israeli newspaper, inside a big advertisement with big, bold, capitol Hebrew letters Yeshua. Which is the Hebrew name of Jesus. The correct Hebrew name of Jesus.

I thought I'm hallucinating. I thought I lost it. So I closed the newspaper, and I said, "That can't be right." I just prayed last night. And then I open it again, it was still there. And apparently was the Jesus film of Campus Crusade that was done in the 70's in the Hebrew language, shown in the regular movie theater in Jerusalem for two nights only.

Patrick Gentempo: Ah-huh.

Amir Tsarfati:

Man, I'm so blessed and important that God threw this whole production just for me. And I went to see the movie, and you know ... The movie leaves no room for doubt, really, because all it shows is the story of the gospel but with old testament prophecies along that line. So, you know, you can't really argue with the fact that he, literally fulfilled every single Messianic prophesy regarding obviously, the Messiah. So at the end of the movie I was like, okay, now I have to choose. I have to decide. And they lead you to that choice making, and the prayer. And I prayed, I received Yeshua Jesus into my heart, went back home, and I told everyone "You're all sinners, you need Christ." And I didn't even read a single verse in the New Testament. I didn't even know the New Testament.

All I know is prophecies in the old testament, predominantly the book of Isaiah. And I remember when I read the New Testament, in the book of Acts I realized the Ethiopian eunuch, all he had in order to be baptized is hearing the gospel through the prophet Isaiah. So I ... You know, Isaiah 53. That chapter really changed my life. I made that decision to follow him. I got kicked out of the house. They thought it's something that will pass away two, three weeks later, but no I stuck to it. In fact I got stronger and stronger in my faith, and then eventually they kicked me out of the house, and I had to find a place. I moved to live with my friends, those who led me to the Lord. And I joined the Israeli army. And the rest is history.

Even in the army I saw the good hand of the Lord. Cause I'm so not a military person. I actually wanted to run away the first month or so. And I got wounded. My hand was paralyzed. I mean, I was operated. They had to remove a sort of a ... a growth that was right here sitting on my nerves. And I couldn't do anything. I thought, "That's it. I'm done." And then I get a letter in the mail that the Israeli military summons me to the officer's academy.

And I thought, "Well, they don't know me. I don't like the army. I'll go there. I'll just make sure they understand that." And before I knew it I graduated. And then I thought, "Okay. Well, they did a mistake, but now I will make sure they understand how big of a mistake it is. Where is it that nobody wants to go? I'll go." And they said, "Jericho". I said, "I'll go."

I joined the Israeli military government in Jericho. I thought, "It's the most God forgotten place. Nobody- Even the flies go to bed at noon. Cause it's so hot." And then, little did I know that two months later the peace process will begin in Jericho from a forgotten place became the center of world attention. It is the first time ever, in the history of planet Earth that that city will be self governed by Palestinians. I was the deputy governor at the time, and I'm supposed to conduct the whole turn over of the city to the Palestinian authority at the time.

So here I am from someone who wanted to run away from the army, I find myself in the center of the world attention at the time. And I realize, there's a lot of power in what a person is saying in regards to a place, or country. Cause delegations of people from all over the world would come to see the preparation of the Israeli side to the pull out from Jericho. And I was the guide. I was the one who showed them

around. And that's where God gave that desire in my heart to lead people in my country. Cause I knew, eventually they'll go home with Israel that I show them, through my eyes. And I, as a Bible believer, I know I can give them a better understanding of the land, and the history with the truth of the scriptures.

Patrick Gentempo: So this ... Jericho is a pivotal time of transition in trying to send a peace process in the region. And you happen to find yourself right there. So you mentioned this, but I want to dig in a little further. How your faith and your knowledge played a role in being able to make that transition in Jericho?

Amir Tsarfati: Well, it's interesting because to get to the level, or to the point where I was appointed as the deputy of the governor, it has a lot to do with my faith. Apparently the new governor was someone who was part of the Israeli intelligence. Military intelligence for the longest time. He didn't trust anyone. When he showed up, he apparently ... I didn't know that. He tested without knowing every single officer in the unit.

Now bear in mind I was one of the youngest officers in that unit. I'd just showed up six months earlier. There's about 40 officers ahead of me for promotion. And one day he summons me to his chambers, to his office, and he says, "Please close the door behind you and sit down. This is a folder that I want you to take a look at. If a word goes out of your mouth regarding that ... the content of this, you're gonna sit in jail for many years. And after you read it, I want you to give me your decision, whether you want to be part of history, or you want to go back to your office and just do nothing. And I said, "Well, can I pray about it?" You know, Jewish people don't say that.

And he knew my faith. Cause I shared my faith with him. He was an Orthodox Jew that wouldn't practice it the way most Orthodox would do. He wouldn't walk with a yamaka, but he had a tremendous knowledge of the Bible. And so we found great common language because I'm not wearing yamaka. I don't look an Orthodox Jew, yet I know the Bible pretty good. Because I read it every day. I quote, I chant it, I memorize it. So we had a common language here.

So I believe my faith played a role because he trusted me. He told me later on that of all the officers in the unit, I'm the only one he would take with him to a war. And that's why he took me from being the last to be promoted to be his deputy when I was 21 years old. And so I do see my faith playing a significant role in my promotion, and in the role I played in Israel's pulling out of Jericho at the time.

Did I think then that it will work? That the peace process will be a wonderful beginning? No. Because, A: I know the Bible. And B: I knew that when you take all the core issues, and you push them aside, and you just talk about the fluff, you know, "Let's do this. Let's have a flag here. Let's have a soldier here." Then everything is good. But then when comes the point where you deal with the core issue, Jerusalem and the borders, and the status as Israel as a Jewish state, and the refugees. It'll explode. And that exactly what happened. And ever since, 20 years later, we can't find a way to solve this problem because all the time,

the core issues are the reason for that not to move. Which I believe by the way ... Again, I'm a great advocate of Bible prophesy, and of the truth of the Bible. I believe that eventually we will see peace. But it's gonna be a false one. And Jerusalem will be on the table. But it's gonna be for a bad thing. So we'll see.

Patrick Gentempo: So we're talking about here at Christ Revealed that the history, the evidence, the inspiration. And I'm wondering if you could describe when you became a Christian. When you went and saw the movie. When you sat in ... cause it was very poignant talk about hands, and hearing a prayer, and your name being mentioned in the prayer. And how this started to move you. What ... How would you describe that inspiration that had you commit, and that commitment has held for all these years, and has served you in many ways?

Amir Tsarfati: Well the one thing that struck me the most, is the personal relationship that people have with the creator of the universe. See, for me, God is Holy, we are here, we want to talk to him. We have a book. We need to read certain things. We need to say certain things. If you want to go to the synagogue you stand, you sit, you pray, you fast, you do, you go, you don't ... All these things are just rituals.

And I remember the first book I read is Isaiah. And the first chapter I read is Isaiah 1. And in Isaiah 1, I was shocked to find out that God told the people of Israel "I hate religion. I hate the way you do things. Your appointed feasts, your Sabbaths, your new moons, your holidays." You know what he said, "My soul hates." And then I wondered, "Wait a minute, this is the God of Israel telling the people of Israel that something is terribly wrong with the way they conduct themselves with Him. And God says, "Wait a minute. You first need to wash your hands. Clean your heart. Take care of the widows. And of the orphans. And do righteousness. And then come to me. And now let's reason together. Now let's-

Now realize ... I realized that's the God I want to serve. The God of not religion, but relationship. And that's the thing that struck me the most when I first came to that family. Over lunch I saw a relationship between people and God. They close their eyes and they just talked to him with the full confidence that he's there listening, and answering. And that's the God I think everyone wants to worship.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah. Over time, as you're having the experience, how has that relationship grown?

Amir Tsarfati: Look. Well, right after that I've seen the good hand of God even in my military service. Even in my officer's academy when I would go to navigate in the middle of the desert. In the middle of the night it was pitch dark, and you couldn't see anything, and then I lost something and I prayed, "God where is it?" And then somebody two hours later will come and give it back to me in the middle of the night, in the middle of nowhere. The little things. I'm not talking about the big things. I'm talking about the small, little things that I ask God, "Please help me."

You know, I'm always remembering ... I'm reminded of the relationship that David had, King David had with God. He would talk to him, just like "Should I go there?" "Yes." "Should I turn right?" "Yes." "Will they turn me in?" "Yes, so don't go. And move." And it was like, a day to day thing. It wasn't like, let's see each other in synagogue next week. Or, let's talk next holiday. Or ... It was amazing. And that's why I think, when David was confronted by Nathan the prophet, regarding his sin, the one thing he asked is, "Do not take your Holy Spirit from me." Cause that's the thing that distinguished him from the rest of the people. He had the Spirit of God in him. He had that personal relationship with Him. And he knew "I can not do anything without it."

That's why we are told, "I can do all things through Christ. But I can do nothing apart from him." So I learned that in almost every step of my faith as I continued my journey. And I had my ups and I had my downs, and you know ... I often tell people, "Jesus never deceived his followers. He never told them, 'This is an uneventful journey.' He never said to them, 'Let's go into the boat, and there will be no storms.' He said, 'Let's cross to the other side.'" And I always tell people, you know, Christianity is not the absence of troubles. But it's the presence of Christ. It's, as long as he's with you in the boat, you'll make it to the other side. Even though storms will come. And I learned to see that. You know, and you learn it the hard way sometimes.

But I have never seen God failing to show up at the right time, the right place. And when I really needed it. And so, this is a story of the faithfulness of a God to a person who did not even know about him, nor acknowledge his existence. And it is Christ, Yeshua, Jesus that brought me together with the creator of the universe. So now I can enter ... before the throne of grace, and receive mercy in time of need.

Patrick Gentempo: You spend a lot of time speaking about prophecy. What got you interested so much in prophecy and why is that an area of focus for you?

Amir Tsarfati: Because I, even before I became a believer, world events, news, what's going on around the world, always fascinated me. I actually, the army wanted me to be in the radio station of the Israeli military because of my knowledge of politics and what's going on. The only problem I had is that I was fit. And my medical profile in the military was so high that you know, I had to go to a much more combat unit than just sit in a studio.

But my point was, is ... that I was always attracted to world events, and only when I started reading and believing the Bible everything made sense to me. Everything. Even today, I was with my group on top of the Golden Heights and we looked at Syria. And I told them, you know, 2800 years ago, the prophet Ezekiel said that there will be a Russian/Iranian invasion into Israel. And for the last 2800 years, there was no presence of Russian or Iranian soldiers around, beyond the border of Israel. Never. Today there is. Ezekiel is more accurate than yesterday's newspaper. Or tomorrow's newspaper. I don't even need to try and convince someone that the Bible is ... I mean everything around me says, "get ready". Says, "The Bible not only is true, but the Bible is more relevant than ever before."

And I'm a great advocate of Bible prophecy because I believe that people want God to show himself, and they want action. People are okay with nice inspirational sermon, but when you talk about current events, when you talk about what's really going on. You don't talk about 2000 year old story that may or may have not happened as far as they are concerned. You talk about the things they read and they watch every day. That's a different opera. That's a different story. And then when you connect it with that which the Bible said.

And by the way, Jesus never contradicted any old testament prophet. The bible says, in Hebrews chapter 1, "God who spoke to the fathers through the prophets in the ancient times, now in these last days speaks to us through Jesus Christ." In other words, Christ continues that which started by the prophets. And the bible says in 2 Peter, chapter 1, verses 20 and 21 that "Bible prophecies is no private interpretation of anyone. Bible prophecy is actually holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

I don't think Ezekiel understood what he said about Gog and Magog. I don't think he realized that Russia's Russian and that Persia is Iran. I don't think he realized ... I don't think Isaiah realized that when Damascus will be destroyed and it has never been destroyed in history. And what we see today. I don't think he realized it's gonna happen this way. But look. We live in unbelievable times. Unprecedented times in history. We as a generation saw more prophecies fulfilled than any other generation since the time of Jesus Christ.

Patrick Gentempo: You're speaking to many of them, but here's what occurs to me experientially. It's one thing when I'm sitting back in America and I'm hearing these types of things, and it's kind of very abstract. But today I know we're 25, 30 miles from Damascus where we're sitting right now. And you talk about going to the top of the Golden Heights, which I saw across the water when I was pulling up here to come speak with you. And as you're saying it now, it vibrates differently inside of me. Basically because there are the ... I'm seeing now the Golden Heights. I'm hearing about the prophecy. I now saying it's one thing to read in the New York Times back in the States, something about, you know, what's going in Syria. And the Russians, and the things that you're describing. But now that I'm here in it, it has a different meaning to me, or different experience for me.

And I'm wondering, you know, how much because you're here, you're living here, you've served in the Israeli military here. And I'm just wondering how much the prophecy more comes to life in you from being witness on the land, as compared to an abstract thing you're hearing a preacher talk about thousands of miles away.

Amir Tsarfati: Well I believe I do have an advantage.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah.

Amir Tsarfati: But the advantage is because Israel by itself is a fulfillment of prophecy. I wake up in the morning. It's a fulfillment of prophecy. My grandparents being survivors of the Holocaust, then yet coming to Israel when it was

a barren wasteland, and seeing that now Israel is one of the most fertile countries on planet earth. We are in the size of New Jersey, yet we have five different climate zones. We are cutting edge in so many ... Apple. This is the only country outside of California that has a research and development center for Apple. Samsung. The same. Intel, the same. The whole world, Indian prime minister was here and he was amazed at how Israel takes the oceans water and within 20 minutes gives you a glass of water to drink. Within 20 minutes.

So Israel is a miracle that can not be explained. Even, by the way, West Point, in America will not teach the story of the six days war. Because there is no explanation. Even from a military strategic position, you can not even teach anyone of how things went. Because it was all miraculous. Story after story after story, you can see that it was all an amazing display of God's sovereignty, and God's, I would say, faithfulness. Faithfulness to his word and his promises to his people.

So I wake up in the morning, I hear the F16's taking off. I am right in front of the air base in the Jezreel Valley. In fact I know that Israel attacks way before the world hears about it. When you wake up at 3 a.m. and the F16's are taking off, you know something is going on. And so my point is, I'm there. I live next to the Valley of Armageddon. I live below Mount Carmel. I see it. I feel it. I smell it. I live it. I breathe it. And to me Israel is the fulfillment of the promises of God. For me, Israel by the way, is the insurance policy for all the gentiles around the world. The same way God is faithful to his promises to Israel, he will be faithful to his promises to you.

And if you, for some reason think that God is done, is through with Israel, then I think that you're insulting his ability to be a faithful God. And also, you're basically ignoring reality.

You know, our prime minister, first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion was not a messianic Jew. Was not a believer in Christ or anything, but he had in his bookshelf, Hal Lindsey's Late Great Planet Earth. And on his desk he had verses from Isaiah about how the land will once again come back to life. And I'm reading Ezekiel 36 verse 8 says, "And I speak to you, oh mountains of Israel. Shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit for my people Israel, for they are about to come." Ezekiel said, "Israel is about to come to the land, God has to resurrect the land." And then in chapter 37, he resurrected the remnant from the Holocaust and he says, "I'm gonna bring you back to your land." No one else. No one helped us. And then in chapter 38, which I believe we are right there, he's talking about Israel, prosperous Israel, standing in Israel has something that the world wants.

And I'm thinking to myself, up until five years ago, we could only give them falafel, shawarma, I don't know what ... But today we are super power of energy. We have trillions of cubic feet of natural gas and oil. Israel is ... we're something. And we can not even explain it. So I do have an explanation. And the explanation is in this book. You take this book away, you don't have any justification for us to be here in this place. That's why when an Israeli soldier is pledging his allegiance to the army, to the country, he's receiving two things. A rifle, and a Bible. The

rifle you defend the country with. The Bible, because you need to know why you're here.

A nation without a past has no future. And we have a past. We have a future. Jeremiah 31 says, "That which promised to Israel, a future of hope and not of destruction. And to give us future." And we have it. And we are the testimony to the amazing validity, authenticity, and accuracy of the scriptures.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah. And it is so much about the land. And God's promise, right?

Amir Tsarfati: Correct.

Patrick Gentempo: And Ben-Gurion, didn't he like ... He, I think, eventually went back out to the desert. Wanting to experience. Saying this is what the experience we're suppose to have here.

Amir Tsarfati: And he was holding on to the promises that God said that he will bring that desert back to life. And so he said, "Well, I'm going there. And I'll do that." You see I ... There's a whole generation of pioneers, and they were non believers. But somehow God used that unbelievable generation, the greatest generation ... I know you call that to your veterans of World War 2. To come and just fight the malaria. Fight the terrorists, and the Arab gangs all around. Before Israel was born. And then, of course, fight prejudice from all around the Earth. And have the vision that what the Bible said regarding the future of Israel indeed will happen. You know Mark Twain shows up in the middle of the 1800's and all he can say about this land as a believer is, "It's a barren wasteland. Nothing grows here. And I haven't even seen a single living soul in this country." And then look what we have now.

We export fruits and vegetables. We grow more species of fruits and vegetables any other country in the world. If that's not the hand of God, what is it then?

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah. And you're walking through some of the markets this morning in Jerusalem and looking at just the abundance of food and things that are put out there. You know. And I remember that Mark Twain quote, and saying you know, "How did it go from this point to this point?" So what else do you see as far as prophecy that you like to highlight relative to your experience about biblical prophecy and what's happening in the world?

Amir Tsarfati: Well, you know the disciples, when they came to Jesus, they really honestly wanted to know the signs of the end.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah. Yeah.

Amir Tsarfati: I mean, people will ask me, "What are the signs of the end?" I said, "That's exactly the kind of questions the disciples asked Jesus. So let's find out what he answered, and then we'll know." And so, he said to them a few things. He said there will be wars and rumors of wars. Did you know that since World War 2, the world did not have more than 14

days of peace? Not even two weeks since World War 2. And then he says, "Nations against nation".

But in the Greek "ethnos versus ethnos" which mean ethnic groups against ethnic groups. It's not going to be countries necessarily. Look what's going on in Syria. Ethnic groups. In Iraq, ethnic groups fight. In almost all over the world, it's ethnic groups are fighting each other. Whether it's race, or religion, or religious affiliation, doesn't matter. We see that more than ever before.

And then he said, it talks about the birth pangs with earth quakes and pestilences, and you know that we had a powerful earthquake in Mexico for example. But people don't know that there were 1500 earthquakes in the last 360 days in Mexico. And I'm just talking about one country. All the scientists agree on one thing. We've never seen anything like that before. All over the world. You know Romans 8:22-24 talks about how all creating groans. I mean it can't handle it any more. Evil is all around. They can't wait for the appearance of the Lord, and for the redemption of our body out of here. So I see the earthquake and the pestilences, I look at the hurricanes. Look at the weather phenomenas.

You know, every body's focusing on America, but I always tell people, "You know, America is not the whole world." Take a step backwards and see what happened in Sierra Leone. What happened in Bangladesh. What happens in India. And what happened in Southeast Asia. When Harvey took 30 lives, and then at the same exact three days 1200 people died in Asia. From floods, and from cyclones and from typhoons. It's a world-wide phenomena.

So we see those things, and then Christ paused, and he said, "Learn this parable from the fig tree. When it's leaves are green, then you know the summer is near." And that was a parable. He's not talking about a fig tree. And you know the prophets Hosea and other minor prophets, they all say that Israel is God's fig tree. And I'm thinking to myself, "Jesus basically spoke about the restoration of Israel as the greatest sign of the end times."

And here I am, a grand son of Holocaust survivors. My grandparents grew up in Poland, not even thinking in their dreams about moving to Israel. They had the good life in Europe. Jewish people up until today think that they have the good life elsewhere. And I can tell you one thing, look what happened. They managed to survive the most horrible genocide that we had in the last three, four, five hundred years. And they moved all the way to Israel to start afresh. They actually founded a brand new city in Israel called Eilat, on the Red Sea. And they lost their son in the 1967 War of Attrition, in October. And they pay the ultimate price. But here we are. And now I'm the second generation, and I was born in Jerusalem. Jerusalem.

This coin is 1900 years old from the time of the Bar Kokhba revolt when, and it says "To the freedom of Jerusalem." Jewish people minted this coin 1900 years ago with the hope and the dream that they will watch and see Jerusalem free, and I was born in Jerusalem as a descendant of Holocaust survivors. So to me, you see this is not just a coin. This is

piece of my heritage. I look at the city, it's part of me. I look at this country ... I had multiple options to move out of this country and to live very comfortable life. I can not even imagine doing that. This is where I belong. God did so many things, and did amazing things to bring us back here. And now, he's protecting us. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber, nor sleep."

And I'm telling you the years when Israel didn't always, will we even make it tomorrow? Those years of 1948 and 1956 and 1966, they're gone. Israel is no longer a country that can be wiped out within a day. Our enemies are afraid of us. In fact, I will give you a secret. The Saudi crowned prince visited Israel three days ago in secret. They understood already even in Mecca and Medina and Riyadh, that Israel is a fact. And if actually, they want to do well, they better be on our side. And by the way, the Bible says, that Sheba and Dedan, Saudi Arabia will criticize the attack on Israel coming from the Russians, the Iranians and the others. Amazing.

Patrick Gentempo: It is amazing. And when you really think about Israel, and the history of it. It's so unlikely. It is miraculous that it exists in the way that it does, and thrives in the way that it does. Especially surrounded by the enemies that surround it. And with the restraint that I believe Israel has shown, you know, over these years with the threats against it, you know. It just really is an amazing place with an incredible history. And you know, you talked about the connection, you showed the coin around your neck which I think is very poignant. I think there's so many people who would like to have faith but their just not finding it. They're not feeling it. It's not reaching them. Is it ... How important is it to go back and understand the history? And finding the roots? Because if you think that your life and it's meaning starts when you're born, and you don't really trace it back to what happened before, so that it gives you a sense of deep roots and identity. Is that maybe reason why people aren't finding their faith?

Amir Tsarfati: Yes. I believe so. And that is why, by the way, I believe the enemy is trying to rewrite history. Even to rewrite the history of the United States. What you see right now is an unprecedented effort to completely change that with happened. You can not even argue about it. And the reason is, because once you go back, you actually go back to see how it really started. And the good hand of God in it. America, I believe with all of my heart, was given the mandate, the mantle to A: spread the Gospel all around the world and be the home of the free. But what is the home of the free? The home of the free means, free from persecution on religious ground because protestant Christians were persecuted in Europe at that time. But also, to be the garden of Israel. I believe that once you're no longer playing that role, you're no longer understanding that role, that's it. It's over.

So I do believe with all of my heart that, as you said, knowing the history is also giving you the hope for the future. And I believe that the enemy's trying to rewrite history. You know, there's a woman, a journalist. A Jewish journalist who was sent by the Carter administration in the 70's to the land of Israel, to write a book about the right of the Palestinians over the land. And she was a Jewish gal, so they

thought, it's the best thing. Is for a Jew who is a left, and a liberal, to write this. And then that's it. She came and she got already a down payment, you know.

And she started reading all the archive of the U.N. and the Ottoman Empire, and the British mandate, and she was shocked. She was so shocked, that she returned the advanced payment to the Carter administration and said, "I'll write the book, but you really won't like it." And she wrote a book called "From Time Immemorial." In which, and by the way, she's not a believer. She just passed away a couple of years ago. And she wrote the most unbelievable book that I believe gives honor and glory to God. Because it's the story of how God really, truly brought the Jewish people back to the land, and it is against the lies of the enemy that is trying to completely brainwash the people from seeing that.

And if you stick to the facts, and you go back to the word, you will find that God is able, and he's faithful. And if there's one thing that satan wants to do, is to make sure that you don't trust God. And to somehow erase the record of God as a faithful God. And maybe even the fact that he exists.

Patrick Gentempo: So you ... You were talking about your group that you brought up to the Golden Heights. Do you give people tours around Israel?

Amir Tsarfati: Correct.

Patrick Gentempo: And have you seen people who, in being here and hearing your words, and witnessing the land, and experiencing the history from the way that you can present it to them. Have you seen inspiration emerge from them? Have you seen things occur that were transformative?

Amir Tsarfati: Every single tour.

Patrick Gentempo: Every tour?

Amir Tsarfati: Every single- for the last 20 years I've been guiding tours. I led thousands of thousands of people around this country. Every single tour. Not only did I see people that completely get back home on fire, but I see people that give their life to the Lord. People that make the decision to follow Christ during the tour because they give up. They say well, this is it. I can't take it anymore. The evidences are just all around me. Now the problem is me. Not God. He is all over.

This is ... Somebody once said that Israel, the land is the fifth gospel. You have the four gospels, and then there's the land. And the land speaks for itself. So I truly believe that there is a power in coming and seeing the land for yourself. And understanding what it's all about. And sometimes it's also I believe, sort of almost like a must for someone who believes in the Bible. Just to understand the Bible. When Jesus said "Let's cross to the other side." Let's try and understand, where was the other side? Who lived on the other side? Why would it be such a big deal to be on the other side? Things like that. And being on the Mount of Olives, and thinking, "He's gonna come back." The angels said to the

people, "Men of Galilee, why are you so shocked? This same Jesus will come back in like manners." Right here to this place. And to think that he's coming back and we come back with him as the book of Zachariah says. Wow.

To see the city that, you know, will have that unbelievable earthquake and a river will flow in its midst. And we will reign with him for a thousand years there. It's just amazing. I just ... I'm excited every time. And I live here. So I can imagine how the people that don't live here, how excited they are. People cry when they enter Jerusalem. There's nothing like that. And again, I'm not a religious person. I'm actually, I'm against religion. I'm for relationship. And I believe that God hates religion. God wants-

Patrick Gentempo: Well clarify what you mean by that? So when you say you're against religion but for relationships.

Amir Tsarfati: I'm against a set of rules, and I'm against rituals that are have no meaning by them- I mean rituals that are standing by themselves. I believe that if there's one thing that the religious authorities in Israel hated about Jesus, is the fact that he basically exposed their hypocrisy. And Jesus never said that the Bible is not good. He never even said that the Law of Moses is not good. He just said, "I came to fulfill it." Because no one can. It is impossible to fulfill the law of Moses. And if you think you can, by good deeds, then you mislead a whole nation. And then he obviously exposed them. Their hypocrisy and the fact that they say one thing but do another thing. Then they sit on the seat of Moses. They say great things, but then in their own personal walk, you see that it's completely different.

By the way religion, I believe is something that God is not in favor of regardless of the Judaism. It can be, you know, Catholicism, Hinduism, Islam. No matter what it is, God wants a relationship with you. And there is no way and no truth, and no life but through Jesus. And therefore, you could be a Muslim, you can be a Hindu, you can be a Buddhist, but if you want to believe and follow and be accepted and experience God, you must forsake whatever it is and follow Jesus. And that's it. It's a simple truth.

I think about, you know, you're gonna see the Sea of Galilee. And you're gonna see this is an area of fisherman. Very, very simple people. All they knew is how to fish. And think about Peter and Andrew. Jesus said, "Cast the net", and then they couldn't even handle- the nets were breaking almost. Piles of fish were on- because the boats were sinking. And they put it there, they didn't even touch the fish, which is a very, very non-Jewish thing to do. To leave the merchandise behind and walk away. And they left the fish. And they walk after him. And he told them, "I'll make you fishers of men." They could not resist. They realized, this is it. And they walked with him. They didn't fully understand who he was until later. But they understood this is it. We've been lied to, or we've been deceived by religious people who would not even have authority in the way they speak.

I remember when I first read about Jesus in the synagogue in Nazareth, telling the people about Isaiah 61. Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. And I was expecting to read next, that everybody will pick a stone and everybody, the Bible says, were marveled at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. He just said, "I am the Messiah. I'm the one Isaiah 61 speaks of." And they loved it. But the minute he told them that salvation is not by affiliation, that being a Jew is not enough, you must be born again. You must follow me, that's when they wanted to throw him off the cliff. See that's the way people are. The minute you tell them that it's not just about works, but actually they need to have a personal relation- they must come to the understanding that they are sinners. They must repent. They must confess. And then they will be restored. That's it.

Patrick Gentempo: You know, and I'm really starting to get this as far as how you are explaining this because with ritual, people will seemingly get into- you almost tune out. It almost becomes just a rote robotic thing. There's no spirit in ritual. Over and over again the same thing. And so the inspiration in the way that you're describing it, it's about relationship.

Amir Tsarfati: Correct. The letter kills, the spirit gives life.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah.

Amir Tsarfati: That's what the Bible says. And yeah. Look. I don't mind tradition. I love tradition. But you have to first have the faith. And the tradition will make sense then maybe.

Patrick Gentempo: Well I have to say, you're very inspiring. Very inspiring in your presence, and in your words. And I really appreciate you taking the time in this beautiful setting to have this conversation.

Amir Tsarfati: Thank you very much.

Patrick Gentempo: Thank you.

Amir Tsarfati: It was my pleasure.

Patrick Gentempo: Thank you.

Gretchen Jensen: I was really touched by that interview with Amir Tsarfati. And I just learned that he's a Messianic Jew. So Patrick what, tell us what that means.

Patrick Gentempo: Like so many things that I discovered through the course of this journey. This was something I really wasn't familiar with. The concept of what they referred to as a Messianic Jew. And a Messianic Jew is somebody who's Jewish but as prophesied in the Old Testament about a coming Messiah, they believe that Christ was that Messiah. So they keep their Jewish traditions but also practice in the Christian faith in the sense that they see Christ as the Messiah.

Now one of the things that was interesting before the interview, and he corrected me on this. Is that when we talked about ... I said, "So when

did you convert?" As if he converted to Christianity. But his perspective was there's no conversion. I'm a Jew. I still hold all the Jewish traditions, holidays, et cetera. I just accept Christ as the Messiah that was prophesied so really interesting. And it's a culture that's in Israel and other parts of the world where these Messianic Jews exist. So kind of a fascinating dimension of Christianity.

Gretchen Jensen: I'm so glad you taught me about that. That was really fascinating and interesting. But right now let's take a look at part two of our interview with J. WARNER WALLACE Warner Wallace.

Patrick Gentempo: What do you think are some of the biggest problems for the resurrection? You know, as you're putting the case together, and you've laid out, you know, how you kind of got to your conclusions. But what do you think are some of the problems that exist. Cause like you said, it can't ... we don't have a video tape raw account of it. So when you are dealing with people who are still trying to push back on your own conclusions, what are some of the biggest challenges there?

J. WARNER WALLACE: Well I think the biggest challenges are people would say they can't trust the gospels, for any number of reasons. Now, if they're saying they can't trust the gospels because they include miracles, well then that's gonna be a tough one to kind of counter. Because that's a pre suppositional bias against the supernatural. And that's not something that ... It's a pre suppositional bias. You're gonna have to at least be honest with yourself and suspend it for a season while you look at this. And if you can't suspend it, at least understand it's a heart issue not a head issue. This is something that you just can't let go of. And you kind of have to remember that.

Patrick Gentempo: And with that, though, I mean. Because there's so many other pieces of collaboration between the gospels, you know ... so that would be-

J. WARNER WALLACE: Well, let's put it this way. People would say, "Well how can I trust that this has been transmitted properly?" I think the best, and the most powerful objection I've heard on this is from Bart Ehrman right? Bart is a guy who is a scholar. And seems to be actually a very winsome guy as well. So I think I can understand why people would actually like to read his books. I've read his books.

He was a Christian, raised in the church, first shaken he says in a book called Jesus Interrupted at Moody Bible Institute. So he's at a Christian University, in the first class in textual criticism in Bible. And he is told, and he had never heard this until that point. He is told that we don't have a single original copy, original autograph of any New Testament book. So if you, for example, are curious, well I'm not quite sure the Constitution of the United States actually says that, well you could actually go back and see the original constitution under glass. And you could see what it really said. We can't do that with the New Testament.

Not any book from the New Testament. Not any letter. He also said, to make matters worse, we don't have the first copy of the original. We don't have the copy of the copy of the copy of the first copy of the original. The earliest copy we have of any case is late in history. Third,

fourth, fifth century and the most ancient copies we have of some of these books, some of these letters, some of these gospels, when you compare them to one another, they have thousands of small variations. He says more variations than there are words in the New Testament. That's I think, powerful. It was powerful for me.

But it all comes down to is, I needed to know, even if I could date the gospels early, and I think we can. How do we know what those gospels said. How do we know that the Jesus that was written about in the earliest day wasn't changed dramatically over time. Until finally the version we have today is in a book that Bart wrote, Jesus becomes God because he has been transformed from the wise sage, who never worked miracles, who was never born of a virgin, never died on a cross and rose from the dead. All of these things have been added to the story until finally we have the Christ of Christianity.

Now that was something that was troubling for me. And I needed to know. But I think my case work was helpful in that sense. Cause I know ... There's a claim that's often made by defense attorneys about pieces of evidence we bring in a trial. Oh. You have this piece of evidence you found at the crime scene? Really? And you think there's a mark on that piece of evidence that demonstrates it belongs to the defendant's gun? Oh really? Well it's 30 years now. How do I know that the one you're showing me today is the same piece of evidence from the crime scene? I mean for all I know, you pulled it out of property 20 years later, and you etched in that little mark that you're now saying is so definitive. And it was never part of the original. And now you're trying to make against my defendant when in fact that's been altered evidence.

Okay. Same claim. We have an original, that's different from the version we have today because someone made a change along the way. So what we typically ask is, okay, well how bout this. There's an officer, who was at the crime scene back in 1980 when that thing was collected. And when he took the collection, he wrote a report describing that little mark. That it was really there back then. Maybe he even took a Polaroid. Now he gives it to the next guy, maybe the property room. They make a description of the same piece of property, and they also mentioned that little mark. I bring it to- you know, someone brings it to the crime lab years later, they take phot- they also mentioned the mark. I take it from the crime lab, I write a report, it also mentions the mark.

So now I have report after report after report after report of this thing over time, in which the mark is described. I know it hasn't changed. Each of us is like a link in the chain that brings it from the past to the present. We call this the chain of custody. Who has been handling the evidence over time.

Well it turns out there's chains of custody for the New Testament. So John, for example, he writes something but I'm not sure. I mean, did he really write what we have today? Well, we could test it, because he had three students that he gave it to. And they wrote letters to local congregations describing what he said. They also had a student named

Irenaeus. Irenaeus wrote what his teacher said. That was Ignatius of Polycarp. Then Irenaeus has got a student, Hippolytus. Now we can go through all the links in the chain of custody to see if the story of Jesus is changing. And as I did that I realized, it never changed. Every thing from the miraculous virgin birth, to all the miracles, to the resurrection, to the ascension into heaven, to the Orthodox Christian Doctrines of Deity of Christ. All these things are not late editions.

The very first links we have in this chain of custody, those elements are present. So look, in the end I might not like what I'm reading about Jesus, but you can't claim that that was added later. Cause it wasn't added later. It's the first story. It's early in history, which by the way makes it hard to lie. If you're gonna lie, lie after when everyone's dead. That's a good way to lie. Or lie out of the region. If it's early in the region, much harder. We have early in the region accounts that never change.

So I just knew that every way you look at this, and every objection that I could level against it, all in the end came down to either, I don't like miracles, or I don't want there to be a God. Because I have been God all this time. And I don't really want anyone else to take my place. It really comes down to those two. And so again, was it rational? I mean I was gonna voice these as rational objections. Or were they really deep seated volitional objections that I simply didn't want this to be true. And so I had to ask those kinds of tough questions. Because if every way you could test it, it's gonna pass that test. And then you're just stuck with what might be the underlying reason why we're denying this.

Now like, people can also point to other things they don't like about scripture. But I try to walk through each and every one of those objections because I held those myself. This wasn't in an effort for me to be a good apologist. This was an effort for me to say, were these objections valid? So sometimes when you're working this kind of a thing, you really are concerned about details. You know, the minutia, right? And as you're kind of assessing explanations for any piece of evidence, you have to be as detailed as you can. For no other reason, you know that the defense team is gonna come in, and they are going to with the microscope go through all these details. So if it, for no other reason.

Or you convince, for example, that this is not applicable to you, or this is not a good explanation. You still owe it to yourself to go to all the length of it, because you know at some point in front of a jury, you're gonna have to go through all that detail.

So I always want to go as far as I can before I stop. And that's why I think it took so long for me to look at, if for no other reason, that resurrection was so key that I didn't want to make a false step. Especially with cops who are watching me. Who are already kind of gonna be needling me. Now that's why I kept it quiet for so long. You know, I didn't want them to know I was in this kind of investigation because until I knew I was in, there's no point in them knowing I'm even looking, okay?

So I didn't say anything about it to them. But I did need to kind of go through those explanations in detail, you know? And there's as I say, there's about six that I would have held some combination. Cause in the end it can't be a resurrection. Jesus could not have come out of the grave. There's got to be another way to explain it. Maybe he never was really in the grave in the sense that he was never really dead. And I know that people had, at the time I was kind of pursuing this, I had read a few things that made me qu- I mean I was reading through the gospels themselves. Look at it.

In the gospels you recognize he's crucified along with two other people. Thieves. Now they're on the cross for a short period of time. Surprisingly short if everyone- as a matter of fact, you know when the guards came by to take the bodies off the cross before the Sabbath, the two thieves weren't dead. They had to break their legs to make sure they couldn't push up to breathe, and they would die quicker. So you're saying of the three people, two of them aren't dead. Why would you think the third one is? Why would you think that Jesus? The scripture even seems to affirm the idea that two out of the three, probably all three aren't dead. Now he might look bad, he might pass out. He might even look like he's dead. But that would mean he's not really coming back from death, he's just coming back from a bad beating. And that might make more sense. So I needed to kind of know, is this a way to account for this?

And my experience working with dead bodies was helpful. Because I think most of us in the 21 century done really have a lot of contact with death. We might watch it on movies. We might think we know what it looks like based on what we've seen on movies or on television. But it doesn't look that way. And I can tell you that actors who are laying still are different than dead people. And if you've ever worked with dead people, you know this is true. If you're a first responder. If you're in medical industry. If you're working at a funeral home. You spot death from across the room and you recognize it. Especially if you're looking at death all the time.

Patrick Gentempo: Right.

J. WARNER WALLACE: But in this generation, if your grandmother dies she's ... You're not gonna pick her up and take her to the funeral home. You're gonna call the funeral home. They're gonna come and get her. You don't have to touch her. If she dies suspiciously, you can call the coroner's office. Either way, you're not going to be handling dead people the way every one did in the first century. Because there weren't any funeral homes to call. There weren't any coroner's offices to call.

Now we've got a whole generation of people who are familiar with childbearing and familiar with death in a way that most of us are not. Because we've got professionals in those industries that do the hard work for us. So I started thinking about well, I now know ... I didn't know until I became a police officer, what death looks like. There's a thing called a mortis triad. And the mortis triad exhibits certain features. Three features. So the first thing that happens when your heart stops beating, is that you start to cool down. That's called algor

mortis. This is a cooling down in your body, cause the hot blood is not circulating anymore. You're cool to the touch. It's noticeably cool to the touch. If you're gonna handle anyone for an extended period of time, you are going to notice that they are not their usual body temperature.

So we're thinking, okay I get it, but they wouldn't notice this? They take down a body that's passed out, hoping, just hoping he's not dead. Making any effort. And they wouldn't notice that he's cool- I think if anyone would have wanted to think he was still alive, it would be this group. Yet he's showing signs of death. He is, I'm sure, cooler than a living person.

The second thing that happens, you start to get stiff. And that's called rigor mortis. Right? And they're not going to notice this? And the third thing that happens is the most decisive and probably people think about it the least. And it's called liver mortis. What happens is, when your heart stops pushing the blood, gravity works to draw the blood to whatever surface is lowest to gravity. If you died on your back, and I get there, and I roll you over, your back will now be red and purple and blue from the blood being drawn by gravity to the back. That bruising is called liver mortis.

So you're gonna see this in the feet of anyone who's suspended on a cross. And do we honestly think that these folks who were treating the body of Jesus, for the time it took to actually anoint the body, to wrap the body, to place it in the tomb, wouldn't notice those three features of death? I think it's easy for us to kind of make that claim in the 21st century. Cause we don't even know what the signs of death are. But that's the generation that would've known.

I think it's certainly possible. I always say, is it possible they missed it? Sure. But it's not reasonable. And the only thing I care about is what's reasonable. Possible doesn't matter. You can never know anything beyond a possible doubt. I could always level some possible doubt. We're trying to get to beyond a reasonable doubt.

The second thing, though about that, that I thought was pretty convincing was this piece of hidden science in the gospel of John. John's a fisherman. He writes a gospel and he-

Patrick Gentempo: When you say hidden science, what do you mean?

J. WARNER WALLACE: Well I mean there's a piece of hidden science in a verse that describes that Jesus is hanging on the cross. He's next to the two thieves, the guards come by. They need to take the bodies off the cross. If they're not dead yet, they need to make sure they're dead. And they would typically do that by breaking the legs so you can't push up and catch your breath, and you suffocate basically. So the idea here is they get to these three bodies, they see that two are still alive, the thieves, they break their legs. But they don't break the legs of Jesus. Instead they take a spear and they plunge it in his chest. And when they pull it out, they see a separation of blood and water. Interesting. He writes in his gospel, that he saw water come out of the chest cavity of Jesus.

Now that's interesting because I don't think anyone in that generation, or for several hundred years following that generation understood why that water was there. As a matter of fact, if you read the church fathers, Tertullian, Origin. You read the church fathers in the first three or four hundred years, none of them will describe that water as water. They'll try to make a metaphor, an allegory. It's got to be the Spirit of God. It's got to be a symbol of water baptism. It's got to be a symbol of regeneration. It can't be water. Because they don't understand the science of death. They just can't figure out why a spear, when plunged into his body would actually produce water.

Now we know if you suffer cardiac arrest, if you're beaten the way that Jesus was beaten, before he got to the cross. His path to the cross is different than the two thieves. If you're beaten like that and you go into cardiac arrest, or you go into shock first, and then cardiac arrest, once that occurs and you've died of cardiac- of heart failure, you're gonna suffer one of two forms of effusion. And I have actually seen in autopsies, and the first is called paracardial effusion. It's where the water collects around your heart. But I've talked to coroners about this, even when I was seeing in criminal work. That really never happens to the extent that you would see a separation of blood and water. But if you suffer what's called plural effusion, of course you'd have to be in the right position. Then water begins to collect in your lungs. Now he's suspended on a cross. Now this would explain why when you shove the spear in his side, you would see the water as a product of plural effusion come out of his chest cavity.

But this is a sure sign of death that is missed by every early reader of scripture who wanted to kind of spiritualize it. You know, it's a symbol of something. It couldn't be water. What if John's just writing what he saw? He saw water. He's not trying to say ... to draw an analogy. He's not trying to spiritualize this. He's just saying, hey, they stabbed him in the chest. And they pulled this thing out. Water comes out. Well that makes sense. Unless you think that John is so clever that he decides to include this little known fact that no one's gonna know for centuries. Knowing that when they finally figure it out, they'll say this is a really legitimate account.

So I think that really the best explanation is, he's just reporting what he saw. And what he saw is best explained by fact that Jesus has already suffered a hear- you know already suffered heart failure. And is now experienced plural effusion. And I think that for me, coupled with the signs of death that I think anyone would notice. I just had to cross out that explanation as unreasonable. And so I moved on from that explanation. And I think a lot of people, when you really kind of explain this and they think about it deeply, they're like, yeah. Also, you'd have a hard time explaining the post resurrection account, because the kind of beating he took, you don't just bounce back from in 24 hours and all of a sudden you're dancing around and entering rooms miraculously, and you know, at the edge of a lake eating fish with your disciples. I mean, it's really hard.

But forget about all that. For me, I just looked at it from the kinds of autopsies that I'd been present at. I don't know if you realize this or not,

but when there's a homicide in Los Angeles county, the investigator has to be present at the autopsy. Because they're not going to subpoena the coroner, they're gonna subpoena me. And I have to be able to tell the jury, or tell in this case the prelim, the judge, what occurred at the autopsy. So if you've been to autopsies, you start to look and see death and understand what they surly would have seen. And that's why it was harder for me to believe they missed it. He was really alive, and they just missed it. So I just crossed that one out.

And so then I was off and looking at the next possible explanation. That's really how, though for me, I moved beyond this possibility. That's all it is. It's not a reasonable explanation, but it is a possible explanation, but I just didn't ... I couldn't embrace it for me as a reasonable explanation.

Patrick Gentempo: So then, what was the next one. So you said, "Okay. That one's off the list." And very compelling arguments, you know, based on your experience. What's the next one that would be an objection that you had to work through?

J. WARNER WALLACE: Well, I mean. I think that probably the most commonly ... It's a lie. If it's a lie, we can explain, why it's a lie. These guys came together and fabricated this story as a group for some purpose, perhaps to start a new world religion. You have to kind of understand what the purpose would be. It's again, all motives come down to sex, power or money. So what ... can I ask, well what are you really after here? But aside from that, this idea is pretty oftenly trafficked that this is a conspiracy.

And I think people in our culture love conspiracy theories. We love to write fiction about them. To write ... to make movies about this. To think in our imagination. But it's probably because we've never worked conspiracies. If you've started to work conspiracies, and tried to unravel these to prosecute conspirators on a crime, you realize how difficult it is to pull off a conspiracy. It actually takes five things. If you have these five things, you can successfully conspire to commit a crime. To tell a lie. I think there are successful conspiracies, but they're difficult. And when they succeed, they have these five things in common.

The question then becomes well, are these five things present for the disciples to successfully pull ... And when people tell me they think, look I can describe for you. I know there are some successful conspiracies. Oh really? So you know some successful conspiracies? Oh yeah. Well then by definition, they weren't successful, right? Because by definition, if you want to succeed in this, you've got to be able to get away with it and no one even know about it.

Patrick Gentempo: Right.

J. WARNER WALLACE: That's why they're so ... The fact that we know about so many conspiracies, just proves my point. These are ... you gotta have these five things. Number 1, smallest possible number of co-conspirators. Again, this is not rocket surgery. Right? I always mix that metaphor, but the point is, it really is just straight forward thinking. Two people can lie, keep a secret better than 22. 222. So if you think a large number of

people are conspiring to keep a secret, eh. Think twice about it. Because it's really hard.

Also, keep it for the shortest possible amount of time. So a great conspiracy is where two people go out and do a crime together, and then immediately one kills the other. Great conspiracy. Probably gonna get away with it. Because you've only had to hold it for one day. And you only had two to begin with. Now you have none. Just one. That's a good conspiracy.

Third thing people don't think about, is excellent communication between co-conspirators. Cause at some point someone's gonna get stopped, and forced to make a statement. And then we're gonna separate those folks and talk to the other guy. His st- by the way we're gonna get into the weeds in terms of questions. We're not just gonna do this surface stuff. We're gonna go, think about all kinds of crazy things that I'm sure you haven't thought about before hand when you're getting your stories together. So. Your stories have to match, you have to be able to call and say, "Hey. What did he ask you? And what did you say?" So you can actually say the same things. Or "What shouldn't I say?" You know. Don't let it go in this direction, okay. Fine. But if you don't have great communication it's hard.

The fourth thing is you ... If you've got a family relationship, or some bond that is- you have a familial relationship with somebody, you usually get away with things. I mean, Mom's for example are not gonna rat out their kids. Because they have a familial relationship. So if you've got that kind of re- that helps.

And then the last thing is, no pressure. If you've got no pressure, it's easier to get away with a lie. It's harder when people are pressuring you. So I'm looking at these five things that are required and I'm asking myself do any of these exist- any exist for the disciples. We've got a group that is large. Way too large. It's not just James, John and Peter. It's the 12 at least, there's always a group of disciples. We have no idea, for example, how many disciples are in some of these accounts we have that saw the resurrection. We know this, at one time there were 500 people who saw the risen Christ together on the same day, and he challenges the Corinthians to go out and actually talk to those people. He says, cause most of them are still alive and available for you to talk to. So that's a large group. You're suggesting there's 500 people involved in a conspiracy? I'm already skeptical. I'll just be honest with you. To me, that's already way to many people.

But, then you gotta hold it for the shortest period of time. And we're talking about, not six minutes, that would be easy. Or six hours. Or six days. Or six weeks, or six months or six years. We're talking about six decades. They're gonna- five hundred plus people are gonna hold this tight without anyone ever recanting or changing their story? For six decades? Okay? It's possible. But is it reasonable?

Also, do they have any family ties? Well, there were some brothers in that first set of disciples. Right? You have Peter and Andrew, you've got James and John. But you've got a lot of people who had no connection

to the story aside from having seen. Like Matthew. What is in it for Matthew? He's not related to anyone. He wasn't even associated. He was Levi collecting taxes when he was entered into the group. He wasn't part of the discipleship of John the Baptist. Not part of the discipleship of Jesus. Yet he's writing a gospel. He doesn't flinch.

Fourth thing. You've gotta have great communication at ... between co-conspirators. Really? Okay. You can't snap chat each every one ... Each ... and they're not together. They're all over the empire. You got some in India, Thomas. You've got north Africa, Matthew. You've got Italy and Asia minor, and Jerusalem. There separated. And they're being pressured. That's the last thing is pressure. They're being tortured. Yet no one recants? I mean is it possible it's a lie? Of course it's possible. It's just not reasonable. And so I just couldn't hold on to that having worked conspiracies.

Cause what we'll do, is we will unwrap the conspiracy. We will separate people immediately. So we're gonna defeat their ability to communicate. We'll do all of these things. And I've done it over and over and over again. And as you do this, you realize, Okay. Yeah. It's possible, but man it's not reasonable. And it's ... to me, this is far too long, far too many people, under far too much pressure. So again, I'm back to that same point, where I've got a possible explanation but it's not a reasonable explanation. So off to the next explanation.

And I just keep doing this, right? We can go one more step. Let's just go one more step for the sake of argument. I think the top three explanations that are typically offered for the gospels ... or for the resurrection account from an atheistic perspective is, are ... Didn't really die. Or this is a lie. Or three, they imagined it. Cause they wanted it. I mean they clearly wanted it. And nobody wanted it in this group, wanted to see Jesus die. I mean, they could have honestly just imagined it because they were so desperately wanting it to be true. You got Mary, she's by herself in the garden tomb. She sees the gardener. Oh. It's Jesus. No Mary, it's the gardener. You've imagined it to be Jesus because you so desperately want it. And you're by yourself. So you know, I can see why you might imagine that.

And we've got an account with Peter by himself. We've got an account of James by himself. We've got an account of Paul on the road to Damascus. He's the only one who sees a figure of Jesus standing on the road to Damascus. Okay.

But I started having problems as I was assessing these though. Because I could see why maybe Peter or James or Mary would want to see Jesus alive. But why would Paul want Jesus to be alive? So now we're starting to, I think the idea that it's just a vision on the part of people who wanted it to be so becomes harder for me when it gets to Paul.

And then you have a bigger problem because you have multiple eye witnesses who see the same thing, and report it for years to come. It makes it into the gospels, for example, the people on the road to Emmaus. They see Jesus. There's more than one person. There's two at least. Now that's tricky right. Cause if I told you I had a dream last

night, and you were able to recount the details of my dream that would freak me out, right? Because we don't have group dreams. If we have a group anything it's gonna be a group memory. So now we have group accounts. We have three women at the tomb. We have seven at the lake who see Jesus at the same time. We have ten in the upper room. No Judas, no Thomas. Then we have Thomas return, we have eleven. Then we have eleven again at the mountain top. Could be more there. We have the ascension of Jesus, could be more. We have 500 all together at one time according to Paul. Really? So their imagining this? These are group imaginations?

And again, you could very easily falsify this, just run back to the tomb. If you're imagining this, there should be a body in the tomb. Oh. No body in the tomb. Well, what's that about. Back to conspiracy theory? I mean. You see how everything kind of devolves back to some kind of conspiracy. So again, these are ... I can see why would might want to offer these alternatives. Because they kind of get us out from the burden of having to consider Jesus the way that Christianity wants us to consider him. But at the same time I look at that and I think, okay. Well. These are all possible explanations that really, if when push comes to shove they don't work. Which is why we see so many people offer new possibilities.

Why do we have six or seven explanations for this? Because everyone knows they don't work. And they keep on offering a new one. Hoping that one'll stick to the wall. And it doesn't really work that way. It turns out there is one explanation, but boy you'd have to surrender your naturalism. You have to surrender ... and honestly, anyone who thinks seriously about their position already will have to admit there are some places in their own understanding of the universe where they've already surrendered their naturalism. They already know there has to be something more, something that starts all of this that can't be space, time, or matter.

We already, if you think carefully, you already have. The only question left is, is that first cause personal? Or is the first cause an impersonal force? And that's where I got at the end of all this. The only difference between Jim the Atheist, and Jim the believer was that Jim the Atheist believed there was a cause that started the universe. That cause itself was uncaused. But that cause was an impersonal force. Something we don't quite understand yet. We will some day. And that impersonal force kick starts everything in the universe.

Now as a believer, on this side, I still believe in that force, but that force is not impersonal. Because it turns out the best explanation for moral obligations, for the intelligent information we see in DNA, for the appearance of design we see in biology, for the fine tuning of the universe, these things require a personal agent. That would be ... Now we're in the same place. Something started the universe. But it seems to me that the personal agent could explain all the other stuff we see in the universe. Where as the impersonal force doesn't quite get it done. And so I realized, Hey, again, I'm back to that same place.

If there's a personal agent that could do all of this, that's pretty powerful. Probably could rise from the grave. Probably could walk on water. Probably could feed 5,000. Suddenly all of that stuff seemed like child's play. And I was able to assess it in a different way.

You know, when you work a crime scene, you typically get an idea, a view of who your suspect is before you really ever meet that person. Because the stuff in the scene is accountable. I mean, you're gonna basically attribute this stuff to your suspect. Or if it's not to your suspect, other people people have been in the scene. But if you're gonna isolate the stuff that's in the scene, that you know your suspect deposited there, it's gonna tell you something. Even where the crime occurred is gonna ... cause some people wouldn't ... not even know how to get here to this location and do the crime here. So you can actually start to narrow down and do what we call a suspect profile. And basically all we're doing is we're saying okay, given the I- Okay. That piece of evidence ... the only way that could get there is if that person who did this is like, X. And that piece of evidence he must, or she must also be like Y. Because you're starting to shape together what kind of person could account for this stuff we're seeing in the scene.

And so at some point that's something that I had to do also. Right? I just needed to know. I had stuff I thought was in the universe that had to be explained. I've already described some of that. Right? The beginning of the universe, the fine tuning of the universe, the appearance of life in the universe, the appearance of design in biology. Consciousness, free agency, morality, objective moral truths, and even evil has to be accounted for. But you have to have a standard so what we're really looking for is what is the standard by which we call something evil?

Okay. That stuff has to be in the universe. It has to be explained. And whatever explains it, if it's one suspect that can explain all of it, that's gonna give us a pretty robust picture. We're looking for something, and this is why I thought that a personal agent was the best explanation for the beginning. We're looking for something that is powerful enough to blink everything into existence from nothing, and is therefore not part of the something that it's creating. It's not spatial, temporal, or material. It's uncaused. And by the way, everyone's looking for the uncaused first cause, not just the theists. If you think it's a multiverse generator that's created the universe, and ours is one of those. Well, you probably believe that multiverse generator is uncaused. So. To ask who created your creator, is no better than saying, well what caused your uncaused multiverse generator? We're all in that same boat.

So we're looking for something uncaused, that's non spatial, non temporal, non material. But also, is concerned about an end goal and has therefore fine tuned the universe in just a certain way that allows for life to emerge. Doesn't have to be this way. So we're looking for something that seems to be purposeful, and it has the ability to fine tune the elements and the conditions in such a way.

We're also looking for something that accounts for the origin of life. And the most key ingredient about that of course, is the genetic code. We see information in the genetic code. We have no way to explain

information by our common experience, or by any scientific process from purely physics. You can get some kind of information from physics. And chemistry. But you can't get the kind of information we see in DNA. That's a very high level of information and we only in our common experience can attribute that to intelligence. But that would mean the ability to decide between ... we're looking at a personal, intelligent being, because you're ... That agent is deciding between alternatives. That's what information is. It's the selection between alternatives.

Then you're looking for the appearance of design- how do you? Well now we're looking for something that is actually has the ability to design. We typically ... The ID movement banks on this idea that there's an intelligent designer. So now we're looking for four characteristics. Plus it appears to be a mind that is creating in its own image, which is why we can account for something more than our brain. We account for our immaterial consciousness. If there's a conscious being that is designing in its image, that might explain why we have consciousness.

And we have free agency. We're sitting here thinking about this right now. It's not predestined for us to conclude our conclusions. We actually can change our mind but you can't change your brain, that would be a series of events that are entirely physical. You can't control. You arrive at this conclusion because your neurons have fired in this way and that started at the beginning of the universe, and all those dominoes have been falling in a certain way all that time. And you don't even have free agency. And that's why people who are consistent like Sam Harris, a consistent atheist who's a neuroscientist, he denies free agency of this kind cause he knows that you have to be a series of physical events in your brain. But we seem to experience free agency. If there's a mind that can choose freely, and design what we seen in biology, and creates in its image, we might also possess minds that can choose freely. Again, we have a better explanation.

And there's last two things. Objective moral truths. Well, we believe there are some objective moral- it's never okay to torture babies for fun. That's an objective claim that doesn't change no matter where you are in history, or where you are in the planet. If there's a Star Trek universe, it's not okay to torture Klingon babies for fun. This is an objective transcendent moral obligation. We know that all obligations are between persons. So now we're looking for the source that is an objective, transcendent, moral person. Again, a better explanation is personal rather than impersonal.

And finally we're looking for a standard of good by which we could all agree that when we see the shadow from the sunlight, that's evil. You gotta have that standard of sunlight that we all agree on. And so again, we're looking for a source, and objective source of good. And I think that Dockins says it best when he says that if the universe is simply a collection of physical processes, there is no good or evil. Just blind pitiless indifference. Yet we think there is good and evil. How do you ground that?

So I looked at entire collection of evidences and realizing I need a non spatial, non material, non temporal being that could fine tune, was

intelligent enough to provide information in DNA. You can design, is a designer and has a conscious mind that can choose freely. It has got the source of all moral standards, including the standard of righteousness by which we call anything evil. Well what am I looking at here? Isn't that the classic definition that we have been using for God for eons? Yes. So I realized the best explanation.

Now, of course, that doesn't mean that Christianity is true. And that's why I spent so much time on the resurrection. Because if we're looking for the one system that actually gives us a picture of that God, if Jesus rose from the grave, that would change everything. I have a tendency to believe people who rise from the grave. So I think I was stuck with the narrative that Jesus provided. Because he demonstrated his authority from the resurrection. And that's where I ended up saying, okay. It's time to make a decision.

Patrick Gentempo: So, and this is again, you know, I mentioned this earlier. But I think it bears mentioning again here. It's not like saying, Hey I kinda just feel this in my heart therefore I'm following this path.

J. WARNER WALLACE: Yeah.

Patrick Gentempo: It's really quite the opposite of that. But what I find fascinating is that culturally, and then I wonder if you had the same context before you became a Christian. It's the idea that people who would adopt this faith, who would become Christians are people who had to subjugate their rational faculties to a feeling they have inside. In your case, you keep coming at it by a chain of logic that says that this is the best explanation for all of this stuff.

J. WARNER WALLACE: Well. You know, I do envy though people who are not always wrestling with these ideas. You know, there are people I know who have been Christians for as long as they can remember. And they are true Christian brothers and sisters who love God, love Jesus, are saved, and have experiences of their faith that I envy. Because for me it's just the cop in me that always says, "Really?" You know, cause if you believe everybody, if you believe every feeling that's out there, no one goes to jail. You just bump around from one feeling to another. It's doubting everyone. It's doubting everything that's ever said to you that eventually ends up in someone going to jail. It's suspicion. Constantly being suspicious. Never just allowing yourself to feel that stuff. And that's why a lot of the cops you meet who've been doing this for 25 years, it can hurt you. It can change you.

So I didn't know any other way to believe this or anything else. I couldn't feel my way into this because that's just not what we do. And I have no interest in that. I often say I'm not a Christian because it works for me. Because I'll be honest, it doesn't work for me. I don't think it works for anybody, really, if they were to really analyze it. Is this the easiest life you could ever live? No. It's easy to throw the dart on the wall and just draw the bullseye around wherever the dart lands. Okay. It's much harder to have the bullseye there first. And then for the years that I was not a Christian, I was the only God that Jim ever had. So if you asked

Jim, "How's your day going? How's your year?" "It's great." "By whose standard?" "By mine. I'm the only standard I have to meet."

You know it's hard to be a hypocrite when no one really knows your fuzzy standard that always moves back and forth because your standard is you. It's easy to call out the hypocrite when the standard is incredibly high and public. So I would expect everyone who is a Christian to eventually be called out as a hypocrite. First of all, we're all hypocrites, but no one is as public a hypocrite as the Christian. Because everyone knows our standard. It's this Jesus of Nazareth standard. Oh my gosh. Forget about it. I'm always going to fail according to that standard. I can't even hold- I disagree with myself half the time. How am I gonna hold up to that standard?

But I think that the years before I was a Christian were in some ways easier years to live. More convenient years to live, I don't want to do that. I'm not gonna put myself last. I'm not ... I was always in the first position. It was all about me. Now I'm called to something different. The more difficult life. The life that says that stuff doesn't matter. The stuff that we're kind of told by the culture we should chase. The stuff we should chase. Careers, houses, properties, the perfect relationships. These are things now that have been put on their ear. That have been turned upside down. Now I see their proper role. What am I called to be? Who am I called to be? What really matters? Do you have a temporary perspective that talks about how good will this year be? Or do I have an eternal perspective that really measures things in light of eternity? It's a very different way to live. And I think it's counterintuitive. And it's difficult.

So it doesn't always work, if what you mean by work is that you're gonna have your best life now. You're gonna have your ... you know, you're gonna have the best year you could possibly have. Well, this is not what Jesus called us to. You see it all the time in scripture. Hey, they're already coming after me. Guys, you're next. You think they're coming after me? They're gonna come after you too. You got to pick up this cross and carry it. This ... It's gonna be the same for all of you. This is not an easy life. Get ready to lose it all. And unless you're willing to say, "I will lose it all" you can't be part of this. Cause you'll always be holding onto something you're gonna call God instead of God.

And so I realized this ... I'm not Christian because it works, in that sense, or because I was raised in a Christian family, because I wasn't. Or because I really was hoping for heaven, or afraid of hell. Because those things just don't animate me. Or because I had this train wreck I was trying to correct, get back on the rails cause I didn't have a bad ... I had a great life before. I actually think that in some ways this is harder because the stuff I use to celebrate, once I realized that God existed, and that Jesus did this for me. I now, sometimes still struggle with sin. Still struggle with my sinful nature. The only difference is that now I wrestle with it because I know the Spirit is kind of woken up. We talk about being woke, well I'm woke in the sense that I know what is right and wrong, and before ... I defined right and wrong before. Now I realize, that's not my definition. It's harder to live this life. Especially in

a culture that is more and more hostile toward the teaching of Jesus. And the true fact is it's not going to get any better.

And people will say, well, I don't mind Jesus, it's Christians. Or it's Christianity. Well, okay. You can't love Jesus and hate his teaching. And what we have right now is a culture that sometimes says they love Jesus, but not all of his teaching. Well, if we were gonna ... We have to be faithful. And what helps me to be faithful is knowing that it's true to be ... Put it to you this way, I think it's clearer.

I had a case years ago where a guy was in a bullet proof vest. We all wear a bullet proof vest. We know they stop bullets because we've seen them stop bullets in the range. So we wear these in every shift under our shirts. And one day he pulls over this drunk driver, and the drunk driver gets out of the car, and the drunk driver had a gun in his waistband. And the officer didn't know it. And the drunk driver decided that day he was gonna kill the officers so he pulled his gun out, and he pointed it at the officer. And the officer was just far enough away he couldn't do a gun take away, he couldn't do anything. He stood there, and he told me afterwards, cause I'm working officer involved shootings at the time. He told me afterwards, "I didn't know what to do. I couldn't ... I thought about a couple options in that split second. I could dunk behind the car, I could hit the deck, could just charge him. But I decided instead, cause I knew I was wearing my vest, just to take the first couple of rounds and get my own gun out and get involved in the gun fight."

And I thought when I heard that story, "Wow. That's a guy who doesn't just have belief that, he has belief in." Because he's about to trust that vest to do what he knows it can do. And the only reason why he's doing that, I think, is because, like me, he has seen that vest stop bullets. So why do I continue to take this approach toward my Christian faith? Because if you know the vest can stop bullets, can answer every objection, you're far more likely to stand calmly in the battle. And what's really great about it is, it affects your character. So there's ...

You ever notice how Chihuahuas are really noisy?

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah.

J. WARNER WALLACE: They're constantly barking. You get em in a yard full of dogs, they think they have to constantly like, puff up and be the big dog in the yard because they're so small, right? Meanwhile, a great dane walks in the yard, doesn't make a noise. Just walks, and he owns the yard from the time he steps in. Well, what happens if we don't see Christianity as the big world view that can hold up to the battle, we're gonna be like Chihuahuas. Always barking, always hoping that somebody will think that we're bigger than we are. If we saw that this thing can stop bullets, then in that gun fight, we're just gonna stand still and be calm. I didn't over react ... He didn't over react. He didn't panic. He just said, "Okay. Tonight I'm trusting the vest." And he only got there because he had a good evidence to support his believe that the vest would stop bullets.

So I think that's why I really hope that all of us, as we kind of examine evidence, that we, number one, have more confidence. Two, allow it to change our character in the challenge. And three, we move from believe that to believe in.

Patrick Gentempo: So you said earlier, you almost wished that you could accept things from the way you feel, from the more emotional perspective. Do you ever have concerns that you might somehow think toward a path that move you away from where you are right now?

J. WARNER WALLACE: Well, you know, that this is something that's kind of a theo- there's a theological argument about this, right. I mean, what is really happening here. What I believe happened for me was that I had an enmity toward God. And God's spirit, he removed that enmity from me. And that's when I could actually assess the evidence fairly. I never would have given it a fair shake. But it wasn't on my own intellectual prowess that I said, "Oh, today I'm gonna assess the evidence fairly." No. It's that God did something that I could not do for myself first. And that's what opened the door. The evidence does not ... it's just a means to an end. It's a means that God used to that end, but it was God who did it.

I was being prayed for for years. And I know that people like me ... My dad is like me. And he is not a believer. I am not going to talk him into this. But I can pray him into it because at some point, if I pray him into that position where he's receptive. That's something I can do. I can not do that. I can not get him to be re- But God can do that. I simply have to be asking God to do. And while I'm asking, I'm gonna be modeling Christ for him. But at some point when he moves into that position where he has ears to hear. I can't make him have ears to hear. God does that. But then I can voice the case, I just explained for you. And for myself. And at that point I do believe he will hear it. Because he can not resist this force of God acting in his own life. But again, it's not that the evidence has this mystical power. It's the same evidence people have been looking at for 2000 years. It's that God has to first do something to make us receptive.

Patrick Gentempo: So your passion, your focus, your energy now is really in a highly charged, and I mean this in a positive way, state.

J. WARNER WALLACE: Right. Right.

Patrick Gentempo: What ... Do you feel like you're at your best when you are being a pastor? When you are sharing the message? When do you feel like you are at your best?

J. WARNER WALLACE: I think everyone's shaped so differently, right? And people will say to me, "Well, I don't have that gift." I don't have a lot of gifts either. I mean, I know what my gifts are and what they aren't. You know, I pastored for a number of years but I think I'm probably more of a teacher than a pastor. I think pastors are incredibly special, and highly underappreciated. So I have a great respect for pastors. It's a hard job and those who do it well are just amazing. Okay. So I just have learned that I have these limited things I can bring to the table. But that's not unlike all of us. All of us have something that we have.

Who would have thought that a year ... that my background was in ... I was a designer. And I never would have guessed as a designer as a kid, and through undergraduate school. Then I became an architect. And I went to grad school for architecture. You wouldn't have told me the year I was entering my masters program for architecture, "hey Jim, someday you're gonna be a cop." Okay? That ... I didn't know. I didn't see that coming. But it turns out I used a lot of that design process, that interest in the arts, to communicate cases to juries. So it turns out that those gifts that I developed early on were not lost in my 25 years working in law enforcement.

But who would have guessed, if you'd have caught me five years into my law enforcement career and say, "hey, some day, you're gonna be a believer." I'd have said no way. Everyone who knew me would have said no way. But here we are years later. But with the design gifts, hopefully, and the law enforcement gifts are being used in this stage of life. Well all of us are at some point in our lives where the gifts are being assembled so we can use them to do this work. And I am not a PhD'd ... But I'll tell you something. And people who kind of experienced Christ and who are believers. We have a tendency to think, "Well, I can't do that Jim, cause I don't have a PhD. I don't have a back ground in neuroscience. I don't have a background in cosmology. I don't have a background in biology." Clearly I don't either.

But it turns out, that the people who get to vote in jury trials are not the expert witnesses. They're the lay people we put in the box. As a matter of fact, if I knew you were an expert, I wouldn't put you in that box. Why? Because you'll allow your expertise to cloud your thinking. A lot of them can't be told very much. I need you to openly assess what the experts are saying. And if you are an expert you may not be so fair to those experts. Number two, you'll notice that when I call an expert to trial. He is testifying about a piece of evidence. Well, the next defense train does not ... Bringing a bunch of new evidence. No. Typically the defense attorney uses the same evidence that I brought in. He just calls a new PhD who says the exact opposite thing of this PhD. So then you have the same piece of evidence, two very good, honest people, honest PhD professionals, and I have great respect for the expert witnesses we call. But they clearly don't agree on this piece of evidence. Who gets to decide which of these two PhD's is actually telling the truth?

Patrick Gentempo: A non PhD.

J. WARNER WALLACE: A lay person.

Patrick Gentempo: Yeah. Exactly.

J. WARNER WALLACE: So in the end I think we're in a great position. And don't be inhibited by the fact. We can't be inhibited by the fact we may ... But I'm gonna read like crazy. I read a book called God's Crime Scene. I read 132 books of all the skeptics before I began writing that book. You gotta read. But in the end, don't underestimate the power of a lay person to assess a case. We use it all the time.

Patrick Gentempo: So you've got some decades on this planet. And you're doing the work you're doing now. Do you think that right now that Christianity is more under attack than it has been in the past, say, 20 or 30 years? Or do you feel like there's ... it's being embraced more?

J. WARNER WALLACE: Well I think we have to be careful when we use the word attack, right. Cause every time you talk about, well, is Christianity under attack, I think it's fair for people to say, "Give me a break. You want to see where Christianity is under attack? It's not in America." We have people being crucified still in other places on the planet. That's where Christianity is truly under attack. And I get that. But I think what I do see in our culture, is that it's waning in its influence in culture. At least we can agree on that. And whether we agree there's this overt concerted kind of coordinated attack on Christianity. That would be over stating it for sure. But what I do see is, that there are wedge issues, right? It's the moral teaching of Jesus that's gonna become the moral teaching of the New Testament. That's gonna become more and more unpopular. And there's only gonna be a couple of ways to respond to this.

One, we can say nothing and kind of hope that it kind of goes by. Just stay silent. Don't even talk about those issues. Two, we could just acquiesce to everything. And decide that whatever we had ... we know is true from the teaching of scripture, and we've affirmed for 2000 years, we're now going to abandon in light of a new sexual revolution that we're experiencing. Or three, we can be faithful in what's going to feel at times like a loss. We can be faithful in what feels at times like it's ... there's no way we can win this. And I think that's probably where we need to be.

Regardless of what happens, the measurement can not be, well, can we elect so and so? Really? That can't be the measure ... the measurement's going to have to be can we remain faithful in our families and our communities in spite of the fact that the very core beliefs we hold are going to be less and less popular. And they were not popular to begin with. They weren't popular in the Roman Empire. And Jesus talks about this. So I think we've got good teaching and scripture that can help us.

What's happening I think, for the most part, is that many of us have been raised in a Christian culture that accommodated Christianity quite nicely for a number of years. And we got soft. We got comfortable. We kind of were in the majority of people who believe this world via ... That's gonna shrink. And I was not one of those people who believed it was true. So I'm really. I'm okay. I'm comfortable with the idea that this is going to become ... God's gonna do what God's gonna do. And the reality of it is, is I think we have to be more and more comfortable with discomfort.

Patrick Gentempo: So are you seeing in the colleges, or in the younger generation, that there's more follow up, or that there's this sort of uncool ness to be a Christian?

J. WARNER WALLACE: Yeah. What you see is there's a movement ... we've been studying it for years ... kind of Pew has been reporting on this also. Of people who would have in the past, claimed an affiliation with a particular religious

belief, who now when polled, will ... They'll say, "no. I have no religious belief." They'll check the box that says none. It's called the rise of the nones. The growth of the nones. That group is growing. It's in the low 20's right now percentage wise. And it seems as it grows by a percent or so a year, it is coming off the number of people who would have previously called themselves Christians.

I don't know that this necessarily means that Christians are leaving. Although we do see that young Christians are far more likely to either number one, hold a view that's really not Christian. And they don't understand that it's not Christian. Or two, walk away from the church all together. I think we see that's statistically true. But the real question is, do we really have ... how can I say this?

If we had a big pot, and those were all the people that called themselves Christians, but in that pot we had a little cup. And in that little cup were people that not only call themselves Christians, but actually understood what Christianity teaches. That group would have been much smaller. This larger group, said yeah I'm a Christian. But what does that really mean? Well, I really can't tell you ... They just kind of are cultural Christians. They were kind of raised in this system. But don't really understand the core teaching of Christianity. That group is much smaller.

Now that group that was in that big pot in the past I think was comfortable being in that pot, but as things have kind of tightened down a little bit in the culture. And shifting away from Christianity, those people are jumping out of the big pot, into the larger environment. I don't know that the cup is shrinking at all. The pot is shrinking. But the cup may not be shrinking. And if we stop and think about it, well, in this big pot before, who were the real Christians? Were everyone in the pot? Or was just the folks who were in the cup? Probably just the folks who were in the cup. So while the pot is shrinking, I'm not sure the cup is.

So I think there's hope for us to know that maybe nothing is really changed in terms of those people who actually understood what Jesus taught, and embraced what Jesus taught. That people who really believe this were probably ... that number may not be shrinking at all. I think the future will certainly show that to us. But here's what I do know. There are a entire group of people now who would say they have no religious affiliation. And that group is not claiming to be Atheist or Agnostic. That's a box they could check. They're not checking that box. They're just saying "I'm not over here anymore." That is a mission field.

Those are people who can be reached with the truth. Cause they are not saying, "I'm against it." They're saying, "I'm just ... And they're not saying they're for that, they're saying, "I'm just no longer part of that pot." Well it's time for us to get serious and grow the size of the cup. And if nothing else, I hope the work that we do in thinking ... Number one, we're called to do this. We're called to worship God with both our heart and with our mind. All of it. It's a wholistic approach. And a lot of us have not really been thinking much about what we believe. And I

think the acts that we actually spend the time we spend thinking about this and talking about it.

Look, this is an act of worship. This is ... When you spend your time on this. This is an act of ... Oh, you got to sing in order to worship? You gotta pray in order? No. No. This is an act of worship. It's talking about this. We're worshipping God with our mind. And I think when we do that, and we grow, we're gonna grow that cup. People who are able to worship with God with their minds. And that's really, I think the goal of ... My personal mission is to have people shift from what's either an unreasonable faith, or a blind faith, to what I would call a forensic faith. A faith that number one is reasonable. Is Biblical. And can withstand the pressures of culture.

Patrick Gentempo: So then, you could say to my final question. So for the next, say, 10 years of your activities, your work, your effort, your purpose. What is it going to be directed toward?

J. WARNER WALLACE: When you look like this and you're an old guy. It's probably gonna be in the context of being an older guy. And I think what that, for me ... When I was a youth pastor, I became a believer, and then within eight or ten years I was youth pastoring. And I loved it. My kids of course were the age of my youth group. So I had my own children as part of that. And I realized as a youth pastor that I was not gonna be the cool 28 year old youth pastor who will go surfing with you, and wake boarding with you, and snow boarding with you. That's not who I was. I was 40 you know. I was already too old to do those kinds of things. And at least I wasn't interested in those kinds of things. I was a cop. I was working full time and I was a detective.

And I realized that I wasn't going to be able to connect with high schoolers on the basis of my coolness. Instead, I connected to high schoolers on the basis of my paternal relationship with them. And I had worked years in gangs where I saw what lack of Dad led to. Because all the gangsters I worked, regardless of what they were racially, economically, socially, they all had one thing in common. Lack of Dad. It looks different. Sometimes Dad's a workaholic. Sometimes Dad is in custody. Sometimes Dad's just a deadbeat who never shows up. Lack of Dad looks different. And I realized that working in youth pastorate, that you can fill that gap. That everyone of us can take that step and fill in where somebody else has dropped the ball.

And so my ... I think the experience I had in youth pastoring was that I wanted to step in and be that paternal role model, or that paternal relationship. You don't come to me for cool. You're not gonna get that from me. You already know that. You're gonna get Dad from me.

But for a lot of young men and women, Dad is ... you know it's related to lower criminal activity if you've got Dad is present. Lower rates of teenage pregnancy if Dad is present. You can go on and on. Higher educational levels if Dad is present. Less poverty if Dad is present. All these things are related to lack of Dad. So I think of the next ten years, you know we've written adult books, and now my wife and I are writing children's books. And now we'll be doing high school books. I think we're

gonna spend time investing in the lives of young people. Really not from the cool factor, but just because we are parents who care about kids. Even though our kids are grown right now. I think it's important.

By the way, you remember when our kids were young, we would do anything that was in the best interest of our kids. So you pick a restaurant. Not the one you want to eat at, no, it's the one your kid'll eat at. Right? You pick a movie? It's not the one you want to see. It's the one your kids want to see. Oh, you pick a vacation? It's not your destination, it's the one that's good for the kids. Well now we are a family called the church. And we've got kids. They may not be our kids, but they're kids. I think every decision we make as a group going forward ought to be through the lens of, we're raising kids.

Oh, you don't like that kind of music? We're raising kids. Oh, you don't like that kind of thing, that kind of retreat we're go ... We're raising kids. Oh, you don't like that kind of calendar we're ... We're raising kids. And if we would do that, we would raise up a next generation that would be amazingly committed. And wouldn't suffer from all the lack of parenting that we ... I think in someways a disintegration of the family that is the problem at it's core. And we could actually address that from a Christian world view that calls us to family. So I think the next, for us, 10 years will be trying to do what we can to strengthen family.

Patrick Gentempo: Well I wish you very well with that and I think you'll probably be very successful in what you're trying to achieve. Thanks so much. I mean, your context is so unique, and I think really kind of thrilling. It's an intellectual thrill ride the way that you approach and describe this. And your passionate energy is contagious and I very much appreciate you spending time here with us today.

J. WARNER WALLACE: Thanks brother, I appreciate it.

Gretchen Jensen: I really enjoyed episode three. But coming up tomorrow for episode four, we're going to have an interview with Gary Habermas. Also a tour of Capernaum, and professor Aviam tell us about that.

Patrick Gentempo: Well, tomorrow's a big day with episode four. When I was interviewing so many of the people in the Christian apologetic community, all of them kept asking me, "Are you going to be interviewing Dr. Gary Habermas?" And I said, "Yeah, he's on our list. We're definitely going to be talking to him." And he is somebody that they really look up to, and for good reason. He's an interesting blend of character where he has this academic side. You know, he's a PhD, a very academic guy but he kind of grew up on the streets of Detroit. So he's got a little bit of the street roller nature to him. Which is why he's so effective in the debate in defending the faith of Christianity. So, you're gonna love that interview. The guy is a great and big personality. We had a lot of fun.

We also tour Capernaum. This is the central area many people refer to it as the home of Jesus during the great three years of his ministry. Also noteworthy about Capernaum is that it was the house of the apostle Peter, and this is right along the northern shore of the Galilee. We're gonna have a great tour of that, so check that out. You're gonna enjoy

it. And then professor Mordechai Aviam. We are in a new archeological site with him. Literally right in the dig. And this is the Biblical site for Bethsaida. A lot of significance around this. It's something that's very, very recent, has got a lot of people very excited and stimulating. He's a really intelligent man who's got a lot of wisdom and experience. And I believe that when we bring Bethsaida to life, it's gonna have a reverberation in your spirit. So I look forward to taking you on that journey.

Gretchen Jensen: You know, I know you've been enjoying the whole set of the series that we have provided for you so far. And it's really important that you share. Who do you share with? You share with the people that you care about. Share with those that want to learn and explore this journey with you. It's so simple. Just go to our social media links, or you can go to our website at ChristRevealed.com.

Patrick Gentempo: As a final thought, I want to convey a heart felt sentiment. And that is thank you. Thank you for taking this journey with me. Christ Revealed was an amazing project for us to engage in, and sharing this journey with you is very, very meaningful because of the impact it had on me. I'm very excited to see this shared with the entire world, and to be here with you personally. Also, I want to say thank you to our supporters who have invested in purchasing Christ Revealed. Without that support we couldn't give this away free. So thank you to our supporters. Thank you for being with me. And I look forward to seeing you tomorrow.