

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 379

The Bedrock of Christianity

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Episode Summary

Dr. Justin Bass is a scholar of biblical studies and apologetics. In particular, his work addresses the weaknesses of Jesus mythicism and skepticism about the resurrection of Jesus. He is currently teaching at Dallas Christian College and teaching courses online at Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary in Jordan and Asian Christian Academy in India. For more about Dr. Bass go to Justin W. Bass (justinwbass.com).

In this episode we chat with Dr. Bass about his book *The Bedrock of Christianity*, in which he demonstrates that the supernatural claims of Christianity are not late traditions added to the New Testament but are demonstrably early—a fact that is not denied by nearly all historians and liberal theologians. Consequently, the fact that early followers of Jesus believed in the death, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances undermines not only Jesus mythicism, but forces skeptical scholars to explain where early Christians got such ideas and why those beliefs spawned a faith that spread over the entire world.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 379: *The Bedrock of Christianity* with Dr. Justin Bass. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! What's going on?

MH: Well, not a whole lot. I guess I can announce this. I *did* go in our pool. I did.

TS: Ooh! Okay.

MH: So that's one.

TS: That's one! [laughs]

MH: So yeah, I took the pugs in. And Norman has learned to swim. He can swim little distances between myself and Drenna. Mori is having none of it. [laughter] But I was in!

TS: Hey! How long did you stay in for?

MH: I don't know. Half an hour. Something like that.

TS: Okay, alright. Well, dang, Mike, that's one! That's an early "one."

MH: It's a start.

TS: It is. [MH laughs] Well, it is June.

MH: For those who have money on this, or a vested interest, I just thought I'd provide that update.

TS: I've got to know if that's good or bad. It depends on if you have the "under" or the "over." I had the "under."

MH: I'm sure we're going to be talking about statistically improbable events with our guest, because it's about the resurrection and apologetics. Me going in the pool is not quite at that level, but I think it's still a meaningful category, statistically improbable.

TS: Absolutely.

MH: But it has happened now at least once.

TS: And speaking of our guest, I know last podcast I mentioned we were going to have Dr. Michael Bird, but we're going to... We've got a coupon code for Dr. Justin Bass' book, *The Bedrock of Christianity*. And you can go get that link at the podcast episode page at NakedBiblePodcast.com. Go get the link to the book and the coupon code. And that coupon code is going to be good for 30% off until the end of this month (June of 2021).

MH: Yeah, it just makes sense to do that now—have this conversation with Justin—so that people can use the discount code. And we'll get back to Mike Bird's conversation.

Well, we're excited to have Dr. Justin Bass on the podcast. And for those of you who have been listening to the Old Testament in the book of Revelation series, this is a name that should be familiar. We discussed one of his books in relation to a couple of the passages that mention keys (to the Abyss and Hades and whatnot). So he shouldn't be entirely new as to where he's coming from. But on today's episode, I wanted to have him on, not to talk about that book in particular,

but to talk about something else. And the reason for the selection... We're going to focus on his book, *The Bedrock of Christianity*, which is an apologetics book, but it takes a slightly different tack or trajectory. And the reason I wanted to park on this was that I get asked a lot of questions that are really, I think, addressed well in the book in relation not just to general apologetics, but Jesus mythicism. Again, that's going to be a topic familiar to a lot of people who listen to this podcast. So that's where we're going to focus today. But to start off, as we always do, I want to ask Justin to introduce himself. So Justin, tell us who you are, where you went to school, what your fields of expertise are, where you teach. All that sort of stuff.

JB: I really appreciate you having me on. Thanks so much. I would say I'm a professor of really anything Bible, theology, church history, apologetics. I grew up in Plano, TX, and have been here pretty much all my life. But the last three years I've actually been in the Middle East, teaching at a seminary called Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary. It's a lot of words, so they say "JETS" for short. And it's actually the largest evangelical seminary in the Middle East, I believe. And they're just doing such great work. Dr. Imad is the president of that. He graduated DTS, actually, and started this seminary in 1991. And so I'm actually still teaching there online, since I actually came back here last year (in 2020) days before they shut down everything.

MH: Wow.

5:00

JB: So I had all my focus on a book tour. I had planned all these things: conferences, colleges, churches. And everything got shut down right when I came back. But God brought good out of evil. Because I think I've reached more people because everything went online. So throughout the last year, since my book was published, I think I've reached a lot more people than if I had done physical events. So that's been a blessing. But yeah, so we came back here, but I've still been teaching there. I'm also teaching... I'm actually teaching at three schools currently. Not right now, as the summer just hit, but last semester and should be continuing next semester. But a school in India called Asian Christian Academy. One of my buddies that got a PhD at Dallas Seminary with me is head of that department. And so I'm doing PhD seminars with amazingly sharp students there in India. And then a school here called Dallas Christian College. I teach part-time there as well. So that's my primary work (teaching), but I'm doing a lot of writing, writing articles for the Gospel Coalition, Christianity Today, the Stream, and I'm working on some future books. So that's kind of what I'm doing right now.

MH: Wow. You know, the seminary in Jordan... I have to ask. I'm just curious. So this is in Jordan, Jordan? It's not, like, just borrowing the name, right?

JB: That's right. Yeah, this isn't from Jordan, TX, or Paris, TX. [laughter]

MH: And so they're open? The government is open to having a Christian seminary there? I mean, it sounds surprising. But just tell us what the situation is there.

JB: Yeah, I'll keep it brief. You could do a whole hour on it. But yeah, the history there is amazing. But yeah, it's all... God has just been so good to them. But they've gone through true persecution and the government trying to shut them down. But ultimately, Dr. Ahmad and the faculty there, and just the students, and just what they've done in Jordan... They've proven themselves to be good—a true book of Jeremiah, making the nation prosper, doing good for the community. And so the government completely supports them. One issue they've definitely had is having Muslim converts—a Muslim who grew up Muslim but says they're Christian now. That's pretty much illegal in a place like Jordan. And so to have students who say that they were Muslim and now are Christian is anathema. They will... The government started cracking down on them for doing that. But it's really cool. There's a loophole there because you can do online ways. So there are ways to get around that. But overall, they have a very good, positive presence there and favor from the government. Praise God.

MH: Wow, that's interesting. Yeah, that's really interesting. I mean, I've heard of the school and I've seen name tags and such. So I probably have seen other faculty affiliated there at ETS and SBL and whatnot. But I didn't realize that it was, like, really, *really* in Jordan. [laughs]

JB: Yeah. And it's really cool, because it's not in any way Western-led. I mean, it is truly all founded by Dr. Ahmad, who is from Jordan originally, who is Palestinian as well. And he wants all the faculty to be Arab faculty eventually. But they need people like me to come over and serve right now, because they just don't have enough Arab faculty that have PhDs. But eventually, God willing, they'll get there. And so it's training Arabs for the Arab world. And so doing just really great work. It's a blessing to be a part of it.

MH: Yeah, yeah. It sounds like a really significant work in a strategic place, obviously. Let's jump in a little bit to the book. The book is *The Bedrock of Christianity*. And this is Lexham Press. And of course, our listeners will have the opportunity through a coupon code to get this at a discount. But I want to just sort of set the stage for some questions I want to ask as we kind of talk through the book. At one place in the book, really early (I think it's probably the Preface or Introduction), you sort of try to explain kind of where you're going with this. And it might sound surprising to listeners, but essentially the claim of the book is that there is a certain small set of facts that no reputable historian or classical scholar—people who are in the relevant disciplines—are going to deny.

JB: That's right.

10:00 **MH:** And so that's going to sound a little like a bit of an overclaim. We need to unpack that. But on your way to trying to get the reader to realize that this notion, not only that Jesus didn't exist, but some of the core ideas as being absurd... Because that's kind of the way a lot of Christians feel. You know, you see something on TV, you see something online, or you get into a discussion with somebody, and the impression is created that it's exactly the opposite—that all the real reputable scholars don't believe any of this stuff. And so you're going exactly 180° away. And at one point in the book, you write:

That Jesus existed is virtually undisputed among scholars teaching in the relevant fields of ancient history classics and biblical studies.

And then you explain how you say “virtually all scholars,” because the ones that are sort of out there on the periphery who are denying this are like holocaust deniers. So I think that's actually an appropriate analogy. Because it's so fringe and there are so few of them. But you have to say, “Yeah, there's a couple people out there that maybe we can count on one hand. But they're there. They're doing that.” And then you go into a Bart Ehrman quote, which I loved, because both on my FringePop channel and occasionally on this podcast, we run into the Jesus Mythicist thing and just essentially the poor thinking behind it. But Ehrman says this:

Once you get out of your conclave...

And again, he's speaking to the Jesus Mythicist group. And Ehrman, of course, is an atheist. He's speaking to this group on the fringe.

Once you get out of your conclave, there's nobody who thinks this [that Jesus didn't exist]. This is not even an issue for scholars of antiquity. There is no scholar of any college or university in the Western world who teaches classics, ancient history, New Testament, early Christianity, any related field, who doubts that Jesus existed. I think atheists have done themselves a disservice by jumping on the bandwagon of Mythicism. Because frankly it makes you look foolish to the outside world.

[laughter] You know? Points for Bart. I mean, occasionally we can give him some points. But he's direct and he's right.

JB: Yeah. He's doing a great service for the Christian community. [laughs] For truth, and for history.

MH: Yeah, and then you do the same with Bultmann. And Bultmann is the favorite point of reference that comes up in mythicist discussion. You say here:

Even mid 20th century German scholar Rudolf Bultmann, who is famous for his attempt to demythologize almost everything about Jesus in the New Testament, wrote this:

Of course, the doubt as to whether Jesus really existed is unfounded and not worth refutation. [JB laughs] No sane person [MH laughs] can doubt that Jesus stands as founder behind the historical movement whose first distinct stage is represented by the Palestinian community.

JB: They're either foolish or they're insane, according to Bultmann and Ehrman.

MH: [laughs] Right, they're either fools or insane. So, I mean, those are two really good quotes. And then you explain, "Okay, here's what we're going to do. We're going to take a look at Paul's early letters, without getting distracted by the academic dispute over 'Did Paul write this or did he not write that one?'" You're going with the early letters.

Seven of Paul's early letters are considered undisputed by virtually all scholars today: Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

Then you even take a stab at Carrier, which is nice.

Even a Mythicist such as Richard Carrier does not deny the undisputed letters were written by Paul, and dates them to the 50s A.D.

JB: Yep.

MH: And so this is where you're going to go off and you're going to focus a lot on 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. So you conclude where you're coming from with this:

I want to lay out the plain historical facts that no ancient historian, classicist, or biblical scholar disagrees with. These plain facts concern the essentials of the essentials: the death, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances of Jesus of Nazareth and the rise of his indestructible movement, the Nazarenes, i.e., [MH: the first Church].

So let's get into some questions. Now you refer to these as "plain facts." So there's a set of plain facts upon which all historians agree: death, resurrection, post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, and the rise of the initial Church. Now I can imagine historians might object to the resurrection part, saying that it's not verifiable. So before we get into whether that's really true or not, how do historians more generally approach subjects like these four things?

15:00

JB: Yeah, those four really... I get into more when it comes to the resurrection. Those four... I really highlight as the four bedrock facts that I would share anytime I do a lecture on this or share with people: the crucifixion, the *claim* of the resurrection, the resurrection appearances, and then the indestructible movement—the rise of that movement, the rise of the Church. And so on the resurrection, it's important to highlight that it's not that Jesus rose from the dead that everyone agrees on, obviously. Bart Ehrman and atheists and Jews and more liberal scholars aren't going to accept that. But what I'm arguing on the resurrection part is the *claim* of the resurrection.

MH: And that's important. Our audience needs to know that's important. Because a lot of liberal scholars will say that the *idea* (the claim) for resurrection is late. Like it's a couple centuries removed from the first century. And so that's what you're saying is, no... [laughs] "Good luck with that."

JB: Exactly. It's right there at the beginning. And it's so... You know, the late Larry Hurtado is one of the... His work is very pivotal here. And I don't know anyone that would disagree with his arguments here, that this really is a mutation. He calls it a mutation—a new innovation—which is that they were claiming that in Jesus the resurrection that... The Jewish idea of resurrection that was prophesied very clearly in Daniel (as you've discussed many times)... I know Daniel 12. That resurrection that Jews were expecting at the end of the world, the early Christians were saying that this happened in Jesus—in this crucified man named Jesus. The Daniel 12 resurrection began there. Now that *idea* is the bedrock fact—that they were claiming *that* is what is the bedrock fact. And then as a historian you have to say, "Well, where did they get that idea?" Why would they claim *this* about Jesus when they had so many other categories about a martyr who had continued on in the afterlife?" Like the Maccabean martyrs or Job's children or even in Revelation, what happened to the Two Witnesses?

MH: Yeah, just make him another Enoch. It's easy. [laughs]

JB: Make him another Enoch. Exactly. This was... They never claimed... And to this day, Jews have never claimed that an individual who died rose again in the sense of the resurrection that they've been looking for for everyone at the last day, basically what Martha says in John 11. "I know Lazarus will rise at the resurrection at the last day." That captures the idea of what most Jews believed who believed in the resurrection who actually took Daniel seriously. They believed that all would rise at the end, the wicked and the righteous. But that this individual rose in the middle of history and we don't have the consummation of the ages... We don't have all rising at the same time. That was absolutely unique. So the question is then, "Where did they get this idea, if Jesus didn't rise from the dead?"

MH: Yeah, and even if... You brought up John 11. Jesus' answer of course is, "I am the resurrection and the life." So even if you get some people who want to take John and say, "Well, that's John writing 100 years or more after the early Church. And he's under the influence of this, that, and the other thing." It's like you're ultimately going to loop this back to Paul's early letters, and say, "No, you can't make that argument. Because it's there. It's right there."

JB: That's right. And again, you know, just as a kind of a side note. It's fun, and I think your audience would appreciate this. Of course, this is all adaptable to who you're talking to, right? We need to apply these methods of apologetics and evangelism to who we're talking to. So if we're talking to Muslims or Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons, of course John is going to be probably my first place to go, for them. But if I'm talking to skeptical academic-type scholars like Bart Ehrman, I'm going to go to Paul's early letters because that's what *he* accepts. So to me it's all about finding the common ground. I really believe in that. Jesus going to the Torah with the Sadducees or Paul going to the inscription "to the god unknown," "to the unknown god" with the philosophers in Athens. I think we have that beautiful stream all the way through Church history of Christian apologists looking for the common ground with their opponents or the unbelievers they're engaging with. And so that's where we should go. And so I find to engage with these types of knowledgeable scholars who deny all these things, there are certain things that they accept. And so let's start there.

20:00

MH: Mm hmm. You know, this also... I don't know if you've interacted with Jim Tabor. But it undermines...

JB: I haven't interacted, but I quote him in the book. He affirms these bedrock facts for sure. [laughs] Which is crazy because he believes all kinds of other weird things.

MH: Well, I know. And when you get him on the Gospels, he'll want to say things like, "Okay, Mark's the earliest Gospel. And where's the resurrection stuff in Mark?" His thing is... It is kind of odd. I have a long posted response that's... Good grief. I don't know how old it is now. But it was when... It was with the Talpiot Tomb stuff, whenever that was in vogue. But he wants to affirm the resurrection in the reconstititional sense (and of course, putting it at the eschaton), and then thereby denying that Jesus rose from the dead at this point, himself. He denies that. But yet he still wants to sort of be a Christian. It's very odd. But again, let's go with Mark. How much older (or maybe it's not older at all) is Mark than the early letters of Paul? You know? So it sort of undermines that, too.

JB: Or even Jesus predicting that he's going to rise from the dead in Mark multiple times. Was he lying? [laughs] Was he wrong?

MH: Right. “Well, that was just added later.” You know, it’s always “That was added later—whatever doesn’t fit my theory was added later.”

JB: Exactly. And that’s one of Bart Ehrman’s problems, is he is kind of a pick-and-choose—whatever fits his theories. It’s pure eisegesis.

MH: Mm hmm.

JB: On your point about the historians, just a quick word on that. Thinking about the different historians and how they approach the history of miracles, I think it really ultimately comes down to the historians’ philosophical presuppositions. Because I find, even among what we would consider the more liberal historians, someone like Wolfhart Pannenberg, they would say, “No. We need to be open-minded. We need to be able to... If faith can discover the resurrection, then history and the historical method and historiography should be able to discover what really happened on Easter. And many have followed that path. Like in the past, Raymond Brown, James Dunn, I think Dale Allison would be in that mix. And so solid historians and biblical scholars, even ones who are very liberal on other things, would say, “No, we should be able to discover if the evidence leads there to a miracle. We should be able to discover that.” But on the other side you have people like Bart Ehrman, who I would say it’s because of their philosophical presuppositions that, “No, a historian could never discover a miracle in history because it’s the most improbable event. Statistically it’s the most improbable event.” But I just find that ridiculous. Because even if it happened, it’s the most statistically improbable event. [laughter]

MH: Right.

JB: So to me, it’s just whether you’re open-minded or closed-minded. I mean, that’s just to me... We should follow Socrates’ great maxim: “Follow the evidence where it leads, even if it leads to scary and strange places.”

MH: Yeah, it’s a good point. So if it did happen, where did the unlikelihood... How did that help? [laughter]

JB: Exactly. I mean, even if all... I feel like even if all the miracles that have been claimed across the world happened, they’d probably still be statistically improbable.

MH: Yeah, it’s one of those things that sounds impressive or intimidating until you really think about what it means. [laughs]

JB: That’s right.

MH: Oh gosh. So I don't know if... I want to rabbit trail just a little bit here. I'm just wondering if you're in the same camp as I am here. I have a bit of a bone to pick with scholars that are, I think, overly fond and a little bit too assured of the conclusion they're assuming with when they say stuff like this. They'll say, "What we read in the New Testament in terms of the Gospel writers—their hermeneutics—what they're saying about the messiah..." And they're going to include resurrection. But they're going to include other things in here. They say it "doesn't conform to the messianic expectations of the Judaism of their day." Whenever I hear that I just want to cringe. Because it's like, "Well, first of all there was no one Judaism. Second of all, if you're going to pick on the Septuagint and say the Septuagint translators were fudging or fiddling here, and then the New Testament writers pick it up, well news flash: the Septuagint translators were Jews! Okay? [laughs]

JB: That's right.

25:00

MH: And they're from this period. So somebody prior to Jesus (a few centuries) is looking at an Old Testament passage and they're thinking these thoughts. So the view that you see in the New Testament eventually was on the table in the Second Temple period. In other words, it's not a contrived hermeneutic. It's one of several things that was getting discussed or wondered about. I mean, would you sort of lump some of this stuff in that same issue there, as far as how historians might look back? I mean, do you find that they try to dismiss things too easily and then they kind of get caught in a consistency trap here?

JB: Yeah, I think definitely. I think it goes back to the assumptions. It's almost like the assumption isn't that it happened and that created this new way of looking at everything and new way of reading different ideas. And it's more that they are going back... The Christians are taking a passage in the Septuagint and then reading that back into what they are trying to fix for the early claims about Jesus. And yeah, I really like the way Dr. Bock lays it out in his commentary on Luke. Where did the early Christians (the apostles) get a lot of their exegesis? It was from Jesus himself during that forty days after he had resurrected and he was teaching them how he had fulfilled all the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms. And see, sadly, someone like Bart Ehrman and others can never go there. They can't discover that kind of truth because they don't believe... They have the assumption that there's no way Jesus actually rose from the dead and taught the disciples after he was crucified. So I think they miss out on a lot of truth because of those philosophical assumptions.

MH: Mm hmm. So you label Paul as the bedrock witness to Jesus. And I think the listeners are getting a bit of a drift as to why. But I want you to explain why you refer to Paul that way.

JB: One reason would be, as you mentioned, he's the earliest of the New Testament authors. And so we have 13 letters from him (14 if you count Hebrews, as the early Church did). I don't think he wrote Hebrews, but many in the early Church did. But 13. And then seven, as you said, are agreed upon across the board, whatever previous belief system scholars have. They agree Paul wrote these seven. That's why they're known as the seven undisputed letters. They go back to the early 50s A.D. And not only that, but Paul knew Peter. He knew James (Jesus' brother). He even mentions John once in these contexts, that he interacted with him in Jerusalem. And so Paul is not only early, he's not only... Across the board everyone says, "Okay, Paul really wrote these things. And what's he's talking about in his letters (in these early letters) are historical. They are authentic. And he had access to the earliest followers of Jesus (Peter, James, John, and others of the twelve)." And on top of that, he also is our one eyewitness who (assuming the scholarly bedrock facts, what they all agree on), that he's the one writer we have that actually believed he saw the risen Jesus. So you and I would agree we have Matthew. We have John. We have Peter in 2 Peter saying, "We were eyewitnesses to his majesty." Things like that. But many of the scholars debate whether Peter, John, and Matthew actually wrote those. They would claim that they're pseudonymous. And so but Paul... Again, across the board. No, Paul the apostle, the Pharisee, he believed Jesus appeared to him and he had that complete transformation. And so for all those reasons, I think Paul is our bedrock eyewitness if we kind of play their game in the sense of, if we level it all and go down to the common ground. Where everyone agrees, he's the one that we get the key information from on the historical Jesus. Bart Ehrman even says in one of his books, "It's hard to get closer to the historical Jesus than this." In the context, he's talking about the fact that Paul knew James and Peter and things.

MH: Yeah, and he can be... I mean, Paul is pretty securely tied to Roman chronology—Roman history. I mean, his chronology is pretty secure, even though there are points of uncertainty, like when exactly did he die, and all this sort of stuff. I mean, the general flow of his life is pretty firmly secured by the people and places that are referred to in the book of Acts about the life of Paul and other things he says in his epistles, too.

30:00 **JB:** That's another one I find inconsistent in a lot of modern scholarship. Because many scholars question things in Acts and consider a lot of what's in Acts legend. And yet it's in the book of Acts that we have the key chronological marker for Paul's timeline, which is the inscription that was discovered sometime around the turn of the 20th century—the Gallio inscription that basically puts Paul in Corinth around 50-51 A.D. So that scene is kind of the Archimedean point where you can then go backwards and forwards. Because again, they trust what Paul is saying in Galatians. "Fourteen years I did this; three years I did this." And so it's funny that that's from Acts. It's similar to John, because John is questioned, but yet John is the only way we know Jesus' ministry lasted more than a year and a half.

[laughs] We know it lasted three to four years because of John. [laughs] But yet John is considered the most unhistorical, which is crazy to me.

MH: Yeah, I know, it's quite inconsistent. Now you... Since we're talking about Paul, we go to 1 Corinthians 15. You treat 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 as the bedrock source for where you're going to camp out in the book. So why that passage?

JB: Yeah, so I hone in, so... What I wanted to do with this book, as you shared very well at the beginning, I'm honing in on the earliest writings in the New Testament that are agreed upon by all, and that's Paul's seven letters. But then I hone in even more. I go straight to this early creed that, again, everyone agrees across the board that Paul is quoting this. This is something Paul did not write. He did not originate this. This is something Paul is quoting. He even says, "For what I received I delivered unto you." And so this is something Paul received and then quoted (put in Greek) and into 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. And scholars call this a creedal tradition, a creedal statement, something like that. But it basically goes back to within two to five years... I find a few scholars maybe that say it was about a decade after, but on average, pretty much everyone would say within two to five years that that was composed. And most of them would say in Jerusalem, probably going back to the earliest apostles (people like Peter, people like James the brother of Jesus, people of the twelve). And so this is probably what we have here, where it says, "Christ died for our sins, was buried, rose again, and he appeared to all these people," this is probably a kind of an early catechesis that was originated by, I think, the original apostles to teach new converts and to train new believers in the new churches that were starting to be founded, surrounding Judea and beyond, and teach them the foundations of their faith. And so I call it the True Apostles' Creed. We have the Apostles' Creed that many churches quote every week, and that is probably dated to around 400 A.D. But this creed I think we can date to 32 or 33 A.D. (depending on when you say Jesus was crucified).

MH: Yeah, you have a quote in here from Dunn that puts it within months.

JB: That's right. Yeah, and I agree with that. It makes sense that they were... We know from Acts (if we trust Acts, which I think we should)... I think we have every reason to trust that those... How Christianity started to form as Acts portrays is accurate. And what did they do? They immediately started preaching and telling these stories. And so it only makes sense that they would kind of put these stories down to a creedal, memorizable form, which in Greek you see how it's written in a way that you could easily memorize it. And so then from that creedal statement, you'd have the expounding of it in what we see in the sermons, and then I would say the literary expounding of it is the Gospels. And so we basically see the outline of the creed in all four Gospels in the passion narratives.

MH: Yeah, that makes sense. Why would you say historians... I mean, I guess this is another way of asking you to elaborate a little bit, but... So you have 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. I'm going to just read these for the listener in case they don't have access to the text where they're at. This is where Paul says:

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received [MH: there you go, the "received" language]: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...

35:00

So that's verses 3 and 4. So what are some of the bases for historians kind of saying, "Yep, for sure we know that's early." Like we've commented on Dunn. He's within a few months. Is it the "reception" language? I mean, drill down a little bit more specifically as to why a historian (maybe even like an Ehrman) would sort of have to admit this, that this is definitely early. Like really, really... It's not only early, but it's just within a very short amount of time to when these things actually happened.

JB: Yeah, the early nature of it is a key point here. And how we know that is, again, the Gallio inscription is how we pinpoint when Paul was in Corinth, which we're looking at 50-51 A.D. There's always a year or so difference, because I think that Gallio reigned from... He was there as governor from 50-51. So different scholars, that's why you see different years on Paul's chronology. But that would've been around the time... So he... I think on my timeline in the book I put it at 49 A.D. when he actually planted the church.

MH: Mm hmm. Yeah.

JB: And he was there a year and a half. So it would overlap. But either way, around 49 A.D., let's say, Paul then delivered this creedal tradition to the Corinthian church when he founded it, which I think is what pretty much all the apostles were doing as they planted the churches. They were probably using this kind of foundational teaching.

MH: So if he invented it, that's 15 years, we'll say.

JB: Yeah, that's only 15 years.

MH: But he doesn't invent it; he gets it from somewhere else.

JB: Exactly. He received it. So he had delivered it then, but he received it before that. And so when did he receive it? And again, you really only have a few options. You have the times when he was in Jerusalem (because that's what he makes clear in Galatians when he met with Peter and he met with James). And

the fact that he says in the creedal tradition, Jesus appeared to Peter first. He appeared to the twelve. He appeared to James. You know, that leads...

MH: Yeah, so he's kind of linking it. He's linking what he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 with these individuals.

JB: That's right.

MH: And again, where would he run into them? Well, they were in Jerusalem.

JB: Exactly.

MH: That's kind of obvious.

JB: Because he tells us in Galatians that immediately after he saw Jesus on the road to Damascus, he was in Damascus for a while but then he went to Arabia. And then he returned to Damascus. And then three years later he went to Jerusalem. So on my chronology, it's around 37 A.D. is when Paul went to Jerusalem that first time and had that two weeks basically as Peter's houseguest, which is incredible to think about. And they spent that time together. And I think that is when... And he also says he met James at that time. And so I think that is when he received that creedal tradition that then he would use about 13 years later, when he planted the church in Corinth, and probably any other churches he was...

MH: Yeah, so now if you're listening, now you're at four years. Paul basically hears this—he receives this tradition—four years after the fact, after the resurrection. So... But again, nobody's inventing it then. It's already in circulation.

JB: Exactly. It would've been composed sometime before that. [laughs] So that's where you get into the Dunn... The earliest statement is something like what Dunn says—a few months after Jesus' death. And then you have even someone like Gerd Lüdemann, who is an atheist New Testament scholar, and he says two years. So he says within two years this formula was being used (it was composed). And it was being proclaimed by these earliest followers. And so you have it that early. And of course, even an early statement could be false. But again, it's because you have basically this multiple testimony surrounding it. So you have Paul; you have Peter; you have James. And these are your key source materials if you want to learn about Jesus. I mean, this is about the best you can do. Like if you want to learn about Socrates, you want to go to Plato; you want to go to Xenophon; you want to go to people who actually knew him. And so we have that within Galatians, within 1 Corinthians 15, and then this creedal tradition, we are getting this information straight from the earliest inner circle of followers of Jesus.

40:00

MH: Well, let's pause and ask our listeners to just catch this as well. Okay, if you're a Jesus Mythicist [laughs], look at the situation you're in now. So now not only are you insisting that Jesus never existed, but now you've got to basically say that Peter, John, and Paul (in other words the people circulating this within a few months to a few years after when the New Testament has the crucifixion and the resurrection occurring)... And the talk of this is *in Jerusalem*. Okay? So now you're in the situation where you basically have to deny that these other guys exist. [laughter] Because if you have people talking about this so early *in Jerusalem*, where you'd think it would be easy to falsify if this happened. This is what you're left with.

JB: That's right. And this is why Richard Carrier has to do exegetical gymnastics to try to make it to where in Galatians 1:19, James is not the literal brother of Jesus. He's like a brother like... It's using brother like "brothers and sisters in Christ" type thing. Even though again, it's an amazing thing, we have Josephus using the statement "James the brother of Jesus." So here you have this independent testimony from a Jewish historian that even he is saying what Paul says back in Galatians, that James is the brother of Jesus. So I mean... And Josephus isn't using it that way. He's not using it like a brother and sister in Christ kind of thing.

MH: "Bro." [laughs]

JB: Yeah, "Hey, bro!" "This is one of Jesus' bros." That's not what Josephus is saying there.

MH: Yeah.

JB: So they actually have to deny that passage too, which is a whole 'nother... [laughs] So this is the fun thing about mythicists. They just... Anything that goes against their theory, they just deny actually exists. They just try to say it was interpolated or something like that.

MH: Right. And it doesn't bother them if the list of things they have to just plain deny grows. In other words, they don't see that as a problem. Like, okay, if the list gets too large, at what point am I going to think to myself, "This is kind of getting a little absurd."

JB: Exactly. And honestly, I really do think for some of them who really know the material well, I wonder if it's more like a racket. This is a way they can be known. This is a way they can sell books. This is a way they can have a following. That's my personal theory.

MH: Well...

JB: Because I just can't imagine how someone intelligent in looking at this could actually believe these things.

MH: Well, as someone who has spent 20 years in the fringe community, let me say with complete assurance, "Yes. That happens." [laughter] There are people who it dawns on them that, "I don't really ever have to get another job."

JB: Exactly.

MH: "I can just run around..." And now with the internet, it's even better. "I can actually make a living doing this stuff, and it really doesn't matter..."

JB: Just proclaiming the fringe... [MH laughs] I mean, it's almost like a cult. It's a version of the David Koresh...

MH: It beats punching in 9 to 5. You know? Yeah. Yeah, I've known a few of those people. So they do exist. It's not an exaggeration.

JB: Good, I'm on the right track here. [laughter]

MH: It's just... Oh, gosh. Now see, now there's this little bit of me that just wants to start throwing out some names here, but I'm not going to do that. [JB laughs] What we've been talking about is essentially addressed in the first four chapters of the book. And so let's just progress a little bit more. Because I want to try to give the book some representative coverage here. Post-resurrection appearances. This is really the next few verses of 1 Corinthians 15. So verses 5-7. Can you discuss post-resurrection appearances for a little bit? On what basis would historians consider these items historical and real? Or how should we talk about that?

JB: Yeah, so in this early creed... Which again is *unparalleled*. There are so many reasons why this creed is unparalleled in all of ancient literature, not just of things in the New Testament. But in all ancient literature, you don't have a list like this of post-appearances of a ghost or a god or an angel or anything like this. This is absolutely unique in the ancient world.

MH: Yeah, like the ones you'll see in... What Justin means, for this audience is, you get a lot of this stuff in antiquity. And we talk a lot about this, because of what I... Like *Unseen Realm*, and this is sort of my baby here, all this weird stuff. But none of these things spawn movements [laughs] is the point. They show up in the literature, sure. But...

JB: Well, one appearance... And correct me if I'm wrong. Have you found anywhere there's a multiple list where it'll say, "and then he appeared to this person, and then he appeared to this person, and then this person"?

MH: No.

JB: That's what I've found. Of course you've got Romulus. I give some examples in the book. And I'm sure you could name more. But there are many that are like, one isolated appearance...

MH: They're one-offs.

JB: Yeah, of like a person that had died. It's still not resurrection language. But something like, "Romulus coming down from heaven and appearing to one of his disciples," or "Appolonius of Tyana." Things like that. But still it's not, "He appeared to this person, this person, this group, now 500, then this..." You know, that's incredible.

MH: Yeah, there doesn't seem to be any impulse to root the description of the appearance in something that feels like a historical record or some sort of documentary style. You don't get that.

45:00

JB: It's really an apologetic claim. And that's what's cool about what Paul is doing here. I mean, it's the whole point of why he's even talking about this, because in the context of 1 Corinthians he's answering a question about resurrection—what our resurrection bodies will be like. But he has to first establish that Jesus rose from the dead to then talk about *our* future resurrection. Our future resurrection is connected to Jesus' original resurrection because he's the firstfruits of the resurrection. And so he's giving kind of some apologetic arguments, I would say, as he even discusses the creed. And so he mentions Peter. The three individuals he mentions are Peter, James, and Paul, which is very interesting because those are the same three that we have strong historical evidence that they actually died for their faith. Again, Josephus tells us how James was basically stoned for blasphemy. You wonder, what did he say that was considered blasphemy at that time, by the high priest?

And then we know Paul and Peter were martyred under Nero. And again, this would be considered by many... Even nonbelieving scholars would agree that they died... They don't agree across the board, all these other traditions and legends that we find of what happened to some of the early Christians. But those three in particular who happened to be in this early creed, we know that they believed Jesus appeared to them, and we know that they died believing it. We know that they sealed their testimony with their blood. So an incredible thing. But then you have some of the other claims, like the 500, and to all the apostles. I think with those two in particular, there is debate. Many of the skeptical scholars would say, "No, that's made up." But "to all the apostles," I get that one because it's so vague. We just don't really know... I argue that that's the same appearance as Acts 1 when he appears to the 120 and then ascends into heaven. I think that's... But we don't know for sure. But the 500, it's kind of fun

reading them try to get around the 500. Because really, what I find when I read the basically attacks on that one as historical, is basically just that it's so extraordinary. I mean, it couldn't be true because it's just so amazing. [laughs] I mean, that really is what some of the arguments are. Because it does sound like something you would find in some of these second and third century apocryphal Gospels. Like the Gospel of Peter talks about the cross bursting out of the tomb and speaking to the women. And so you can just imagine the next verse would say, "And then Jesus appeared to over 500 people at one time." But that's not what we have here. We actually have that extraordinary claim in the *earliest* testimony we have of Christianity! I mean, it's just really amazing.

And I think for every reason we have... If you look at it without some of these presuppositions, I think there's no reason to doubt that appearance, that at least it was believed at the time of the early 30s A.D. that this happened. Because Paul probably knew some of them because he mentions how some of them had died, but many of them are still alive. And he even is implying to the Corinthians to go and travel to meet some of them. Eyewitness testimony of Jesus is readily available in the 50s A.D., apparently. So it's just an incredible thing.

So basically, when you get down to it, it's those three: Peter, James, and Paul. And the twelve. Peter, James, Paul, and the twelve. Maybe not the exact number, but some group of original disciples. That I find to be bedrock, as far as they *believe* Jesus appeared to them.

MH: Yeah. What about... We've hinted a little bit about how these other... If you want to call them parallels. There are sort of parallels (or shallow parallels) in other religions about appearances of ghosts, phantoms. There's a whole bunch of vocabulary for this stuff. None of that really spawned a movement. [laughs] You know?

JB: Right. Exactly.

MH: So let's talk about the rise of the Nazarenes, the followers of Jesus. Because this is the fourth of your four bedrock points. So what are you trying to articulate and establish with that particular bedrock point?

JB: This bedrock fact, I find that in most apologetic books, whether on Jesus or the resurrection, you don't find this one very often. And in fact, I can't remember the last time I found this, except in the early Church Fathers. I find this argument is used very often by the Fathers, which I love. John Chryostom has this excellent writing. I think it was originally a sermon he gave to the pagans of his time. But he's using arguments like this. But I don't find this very often in modern day, and I find that very strange because Jesus didn't just appear to all these people in the 30s A.D. and then disappear over the last 2000 years. [laughs] I mean, I feel like that's kind of the way it's left a lot of times. Because we talk

50:00

about all this (I agree) powerhouse evidence from the early 30s, but what's happened since then? You know? I mean, if Jesus is alive forevermore (Revelation 1:18), he's Lord of the world, and Caesar is not, then we would expect him to continue directing the world—for him to continue showing his kingship and his lordship over people and nations, and especially his Church. And so speaking of Caesar, within 300 years of Jesus' death, the Caesars were being baptized into the name of the crucified Nazarene. I mean, how did that happen? This is the kind of thing that I look at—how Jesus said, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it.” And then I think if you do a careful study of church history, I think it reveals exactly this. I mean, many times (not just in that early 30s A.D. timeframe after Jesus had been crucified) that the movement should have never begun... Because we compare it to so many other Jewish movements of the time and other Greek philosophies and many other things that were happening at the time that did not continue. But even throughout church history, there were many times where the Church could have been destroyed—where it could have just been wiped out or at least been set aside as kind of a little minor movement, like Jainism in India for example (some group of people that believe a certain thing that have been relegated to a certain part of the world for 3000 years). Christianity could've easily done that. But it didn't. It has gone on to dominate the world. It is the largest religion in the world. That doesn't prove it's true. But I think... Like I said, a careful study of church history, I think, shows a risen Lord—a risen Christ—directing his indestructible Church (individuals and nations) to accomplish his great commission. And you know, since I've been in the Middle East, one of the arguments I like to share that you don't hear often (and I've used it with Muslims) is how dreams and vision have been one of the number one ways that many Muslims, and even other people of other faiths, have become Christians. And this has been documented across North Africa and the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

MH: I'm glad you brought that up. Because I'm trying to remember... I read a book about that specifically. The author's name escapes me now. But I'm glad you brought this up. So what about Jesus' appearances in Muslim countries? So go ahead. If you have any good personal anecdotes as you're trying to get Muslims into this conversation, by all means, let's hear that.

JB: Yeah, I've met some myself personally. I've met Muslims who had become Christians and their story originally is basically they had some sort of vision or dream of... And it's very consistent. If you look at these stories that have happened across the world, independently from each other, they're very similar. Usually Jesus is dressed in white. A lot of times he's shining in a bright way. And usually what he says is something like... Like the one I talked to actually... It is a really cool thing because I'm skeptical of a lot of these modern miracles. I'm not one to believe most modern things, even from Christians' stories. And so I was actually kind of asking him these questions with a skeptical attitude. And one of the things that convinced me that he was telling the truth was that he had never

read a Bible to that point, which I know from talking to Muslims, that's true. Most people growing up in the Muslim world are not going to be reading the Bible. Just like Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, they're kept off of Christian literature. But when Jesus appeared to him, he was basically quoting the Gospel of John. He was basically saying things like "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life." And he was saying things that were from John, but he had no idea that it was Scripture. He was just saying, "This is what he was saying to me." And so that was one of the things that rung true to that this really happened. He really had this experience. But other ones are usually, Jesus will direct them to a Christian they know or to a church they know, things like that. But yeah, a guy named Tom Doyle wrote a book called *Dreams and Visions*.

MH: That's the one, yeah. And he makes a good point, that it's not like a Muslim goes to bed and wakes up and now they're converted.

JB: That's right.

MH: Or like somehow now they're saved or something. But it's always something like this: they either get the gospel in the dream or the Lord says, "Go to this place at this time," and lo and behold, there's a believer there! You know?
[laughs]

JB: Exactly.

MH: It's over and over that kind of thing.

55:00 **JB:** A lot of times it's a process. And a lot of times they reject it for a while. It's amazing. It's such a stronghold. They will reject it, even visions. Some of the people that we experienced, that we heard their testimony, they were rejecting it for a while and then finally kind of submitting to it. Even Jesus would appear to them multiple times. Nabeel Qureshi is another one that this happened in America with him. He died, sadly, of cancer a few years ago. But his book, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*, is excellent. And he tells his story of how Jesus appeared to him multiple times. But I look at that phenomenon and I say... I look at it sociologically. I mean, why don't Christians ever have dreams of Krishna or Buddha? [laughter] And why don't Muslims have dreams of Krishna or Buddha or Joseph Smith? Mormons are in Middle Eastern... There was actually a Mormon presence in Amman, Jordan. And so it's fascinating that at least I've never heard of an example where a Muslim has a dream of anything that has to do with Mormonism and wakes up and says, "Oh, Mormonism's true!" That hasn't happened. Why is that? But we find Muslims and Hindus and other people... And throughout church history, really. This isn't just of the last... I think there could be something specifically happening in the Muslim world of more recent. But if you study church history, Jesus has... These aren't resurrection appearances, but dreams and visions have been happening all throughout church history. And so

this all gives evidence to me of a living savior—of a risen Christ. I mean, if Jesus rose from the dead in the early 30s A.D., we would expect him to still be changing people’s lives all over the world, up to 2021 and beyond. And I think that’s exactly what we do find.

MH: I was struck with two things with Doyle’s book. One was that a lot of the context... And these are Muslim countries so it’s easy to see the fit here. But this is very... It’s in a first century context. I mean, there is no Bible. There’s no written revelation for all this stuff. So the odds of somebody in the first century hearing the gospel other than by means of someone talking to them, that’s just not going to happen. You can’t read it anymore. There is no word of God that should be circulating and people... You can just hand it to somebody. And again, that context in a Muslim country is very obvious, where it’s a serious offense to have a Bible and read it.

JB: Exactly.

MH: So that was one thing. And the other thing was, Doyle makes the comment in the book that the people involved in his ministry started hearing these same stories so often that they actually (I don’t know if it was them or somebody within their network) put up a billboard that said, “If you’ve seen this man in a dream,” with a picture of Jesus, “call this number.” [laughs] You know? I don’t know what country it was in, but it was so overwhelmingly frequent that, it’s like, “Why don’t we set up a hotline? They’ll find a Christian on the other end.” I mean, that alone tells you.

JB: It needs to be done because a lot of them are probably ignoring it, suppressing it. I think that’s probably happening until they finally give way. It’s like the great letter C.S. Lewis wrote to... If you read that book by... *A Severe Mercy*, or something, by Sheldon Vanauken. He’s the guy that came to Christ through C.S. Lewis. But we have his letters with him when he was a nonbeliever. And one of the letters, C.S. Lewis says, “The Holy Spirit is after you, and I doubt you’ll get away!” [laughter] I love that. And he was right.

MH: He was right, yeah.

JB: And I think that’s happening in the Muslim world. And I do think, from what I’ve heard, some of these things are more, some private things that I learned. But I think even high, powerful people that are in the Muslim governments, there are some secret believers. There are some Joseph of Arimatheas in there. And so it’s... Who knows where those original conversations happened. And who knows where that might lead.

MH: Yeah. So lastly here, I want to ask... My impression is that it would be very easy for anyone to read this book and use it in a small group study. But I'd like to hear from you how you think people can best use the book.

1:00:00

JB: Exactly. I think... And in fact, if any of your listeners want to email me (JustinWBass@yahoo.com) I can send the PowerPoint. Actually Kirby Anderson (you probably know him) was so kind, he actually put together... I was on his radio show about a year ago talking about the book. And then he did a study on my book in his Sunday school class at the church he's at, and he put together a pretty awesome PowerPoint. And so I'll send that PowerPoint to anybody who wants to use it. But God willing, that's another thing I want to put together—kind of a... more study questions and, like a Bible study. But yeah, I have a few friends that are doing it that way right now. An apologetics group is reading the book and just discussing it week by week. That would be ideal. Because I would say it was twofold why I wrote it. The number one reason, which is going to be the most dominant (because I think the vast majority of people who read my book are going to be Christians, especially more thoughtful Christians who want to engage the culture and do evangelism and apologetics)... And so to equip them on these basic facts so they can just go straight to the powerhouse arguments for the resurrection and what I think is obviously the foundation of our faith. And then the other side was to engage with skeptical unbelievers that are at least open-minded. And so God willing, I'm hoping to have more discussions and engage with them again and debate in a post-COVID world. But I'm beginning to have some opportunities that that could happen, like as a podcast discussion/debate coming soon. So yeah, that would be the main way I would encourage believers, is to go chapter by chapter and go through the Scriptures that I talk about in the section and make it a Bible study with those Scriptures.

MH: Yeah, I would tell our listeners, I would highly encourage them to get this. Some of the reasons are obvious. It is something you can use in a small group after you read it. The sources are good. And I think the sources are actually really important here, because you're going to find source material from the names that you will often see referenced on TV shows and the internet—this or that skeptical website, the Facebook trolls, all this stuff. They're going to be throwing out Bart Ehrman and Bultmann and all this. It's very useful, again, for getting into some of this material, just as a sourcing basis, and seeing how some of these names that people are going to use against your faith actually say, "Well, now wait a minute." You know? [laughs] That Paul is early, and look at what Paul says. And there's no denying that the Christians believed this. That's useful, again, not... I don't believe in apologetic tit-for-tat. But my take on apologetics is that it ought to enable you to have a better conversation.

JB: I agree.

MH: In other words, not a shooting match, but a better conversation to help the person you're talking with, whether they do it in front of you or they do it when you're separate (when they sort of occupy the space in their own head)—that they'll begin to reassess what it is they're thinking and how they're thinking if you can get them to challenge themselves internally and just have that conversation. And I think that can be very effective. So yeah, it might help you with an internet troll, that's true. [JB laughs] But I think in the long run, rather than doing the Whack-A-Mole with the internet troll guy...

JB: Easily a waste of time.

MH: Right. You can just get sucked into that vortex. It's far better to be able to have just a better conversation—a good conversation—with someone who you can tell, if you talk to them, really *would* like to have a discussion as opposed to a shooting match. And that's where this kind of stuff is more effective. So I would encourage listeners to get the book and make use of it. So I'm thrilled that you were able to do this. In the future we can have you back on and talk about some of the other things you're doing. You have kind of a diverse ministry. And of course, the people on this podcast are fans of your "Keys" book. [laughs]

JB: I appreciate it. Yeah, I listened to the podcast on the Revelation 3. That was great. I really enjoyed it.

MH: Yeah, that's good stuff.

JB: I really enjoyed it.

MH: Yep. That's the sweet spot for us. [laughs]

JB: That's great stuff. And my goodness. I like how you said, it's the... I don't know if you've been listening to some of these top intellectuals that have been either converting or playing with Christianity, but it's fun. They're Douglas Murray and Tom Holland. If you watch their interviews, Tom Holland wrote *Dominion* and Douglas Murray is this British intellectual who wrote *The Madness of Crowds*.

MH: Oh yeah. I've read two of his books. They're awesome.

JB: They're awesome. And what's so cool is both of them... Douglas Murray still says he's an atheist, but he definitely is so... I mean, I talk about how he's dreaming Christian dreams. And Tom Holland has literally converted from atheism to Christianity. He's Anglican now. But both of them have said they've critiqued the church (namely the church in England, that's where they are). But they say, "Preach the weird stuff." That's literally what they've been saying. They say, "Preach the weird stuff." Basically saying, "Preach what Christianity teaches. Preach the Bible. Preach orthodox Christianity. Don't tell me just to wash my

hands, to put on a mask, and to help the environment.” That’s basically the message of many of the church of England sermons, apparently. [laughs] But they’re saying, “Preach the weird stuff.” I love that. We need to get the keys in there. When’s the last time of church of England pastor preached on the keys? My goodness.

MH: Yeah, well I... Gosh. I don’t know if you’re familiar with my 1 Peter 3 story, but it’s right up that alley. [laughter]

JB: Yeah, that’s another neglected one.

MH: Yeah. Well, thanks for coming on. I mean, this was fun. And again, to our listeners, I hope you’ll avail yourselves of the book. And you get a significant discount through Lexham. Justin is just the latest in a line of the kinds of folks we like to have on the podcast—scholars who are doing something important—and the key word is “intentional”—for the lay community. Again, we sniff them out, try to get them on the podcast, and hopefully you’ll use the material that they’re creating. Because they want to be useful. And there are a lot more of people out there in the churches than there are the nerdy scholars. And there are some scholars who have a full grasp of that, and that their content can actually be quite useful if they can make it accessible. So that’s what we look for here. And we’re just glad that you could come on and share with us.

JB: I really enjoyed it. Thanks so much for having me on.

TS: Alright, Mike, another great conversation. Could you touch a little bit more on his “Keys” book, since it’s dealing with Revelation? I know you referenced it in an earlier podcast when you went through it, but can you touch on that book just a little bit more?

MH: Yeah, our listeners are familiar with it because of the “keys of Death and Hades” passage. But in his book, *The Battle for the Keys*, which is Revelation 1:18 and Christ’s descent into the underworld, he has chapters on... One chapter is called “The compartmentalization of the underworld” so you get all these phrases, like “Abraham’s bosom” and the abyss, and Tartarus, and Gehenna. So he has a chapter that goes through some of the vocabulary. He has a full chapter on the descent into the underworld. He’s got other things in there aside from this “keys” language. So it’s an important book because it sort of brings the scholarship on some of these issues up to date, more than other books you’d see out there on Amazon and whatnot. And again, Justin, as you could tell from the stuff we did with the “keys” passage, is not afraid of the weird stuff, like he said. So yeah, I’d like to have him back, and maybe we’ll park on the vocabulary of the

underworld, or something like that. I mean, we'll figure out a way to talk more about his *Keys* book and some of these things.

TS: Yeah, I'm interested in that book, because it focuses on when Jesus died, and when he resurrected, that in between period.

MH: Mm hmm. Yep.

TS: So that's interesting. I'd love to have y'all two talk about that more. Now that book is available on Amazon. But the book y'all discussed, we have a 30% coupon code, which you can get by going to the NakedBiblePodcast.com website and get that 30% coupon code that only lasts till the end of the month (June 2021). And that's for his *Bedrock of Christianity* book, available in the Logos format or print format at Lexham Press. Again, you can get that link at our website.

MH: Yep. It's a good deal.

TS: Alright, Mike. Great conversation. With that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.