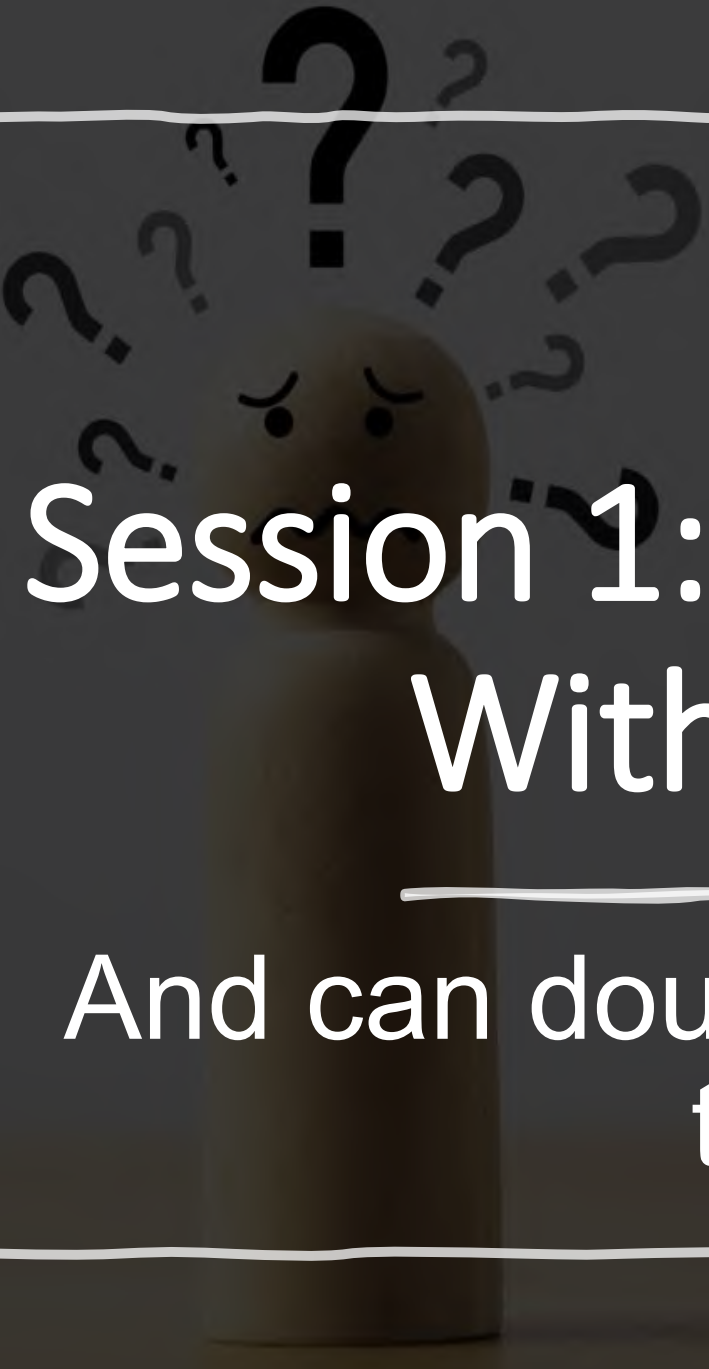


Apologetics

Living as Light in a
Dark World



A person with a sad face is shown from the chest up, surrounded by several question marks of varying sizes. The person's face is partially obscured by the text.

Session 1: What Do I Do With Doubt?

And can doubt ever be a good
thing?



Mr. Keystar,
the ex-Christian skeptic

Q&A with Mr. Keystar:

I'm a skeptic – ask me anything!

How did you feel?

Were you...

- Confused?
- Curious?
- Frustrated?
- Angry?
- Scared?
- The reason many of us feel uncomfortable is because we aren't prepared to answer those questions.
- That's why apologetics matters.

Did you know...

- What percentage of Christian students stop believing by the time they graduate college?
- 70%
- The main reason is because they weren't prepared to be confronted with those kinds of questions.
- Professors, friends, and peers will ask tough questions and make big claims about God, Jesus, the Bible, Truth itself.
- Lack of preparation makes faith vulnerable to doubt.



What can
cause
doubt?

When is
doubt
Good?

- It's like a weak muscle that needs strengthened.
- Doubt can drive us to seek answers and strengthen our faith.
- Asking hard questions leads to deeper understanding of why we believe what we believe.

When is
doubt
Bad?

- Ignoring it
- Ignoring doubt can lead to cynicism or emotional/spiritual breakdown.
- Using it as an excuse
- Many people walk away from God, not because they can't find answers to legitimate questions, but because they want to live life within God's rules.

God is not disappointed
by your questions!

- Jesus and John the Baptist's disciples
- God welcomes honest questions.
- If what we believe is true, then we should expect there to be reasonable answers to any reasonable question we ask.

Parents:



- **Make your home a safe and comfortable place to talk about God, the Bible, etc.**
- **Encourage your kids to ask their questions and express their doubts.**
- **Provide apologetic resources in your home (books, videos, etc.).**
- **If you don't know an answer, find it with your kids – grow together!**

Students



- God is not angry or disappointed when you have questions or doubts.
- Don't let doubts paralyze you. Instead, let them drive you to pursue answers. "Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving." - Frederick Buechner
- Defeat your doubts (what you don't know) with what you do know.



Session 2: What is Apologetics?

And how can we know what is true?

Apologetics refers to giving a reasonable answer or defense to anyone who asks about the Christian faith.

“In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense [apologia] to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”

(1 Peter 3:15 ESV)



2 Reasons Why Apologetics is Important:



- 1. Non-Christians have good questions, and apologetics equips us with good answers.**
- 2. Apologetics strengthens our faith in times of doubt.**

The image features a hand holding a red question mark against a dark background. In the upper left, there is a stylized eye with a white sclera, a green iris, and a black pupil, set against a red background. A black diagonal line crosses over the eye. The overall composition is abstract and thought-provoking.

How Can We Know What Is True?

My Truth vs. Your Truth?

- "That's true for you but not for me."
- "I'm just living my truth."
- It does no good to try and convince someone God is true if they don't even believe Truth exists.



What is Truth?

- One of the biggest questions today.
- Truth is that which corresponds with reality.



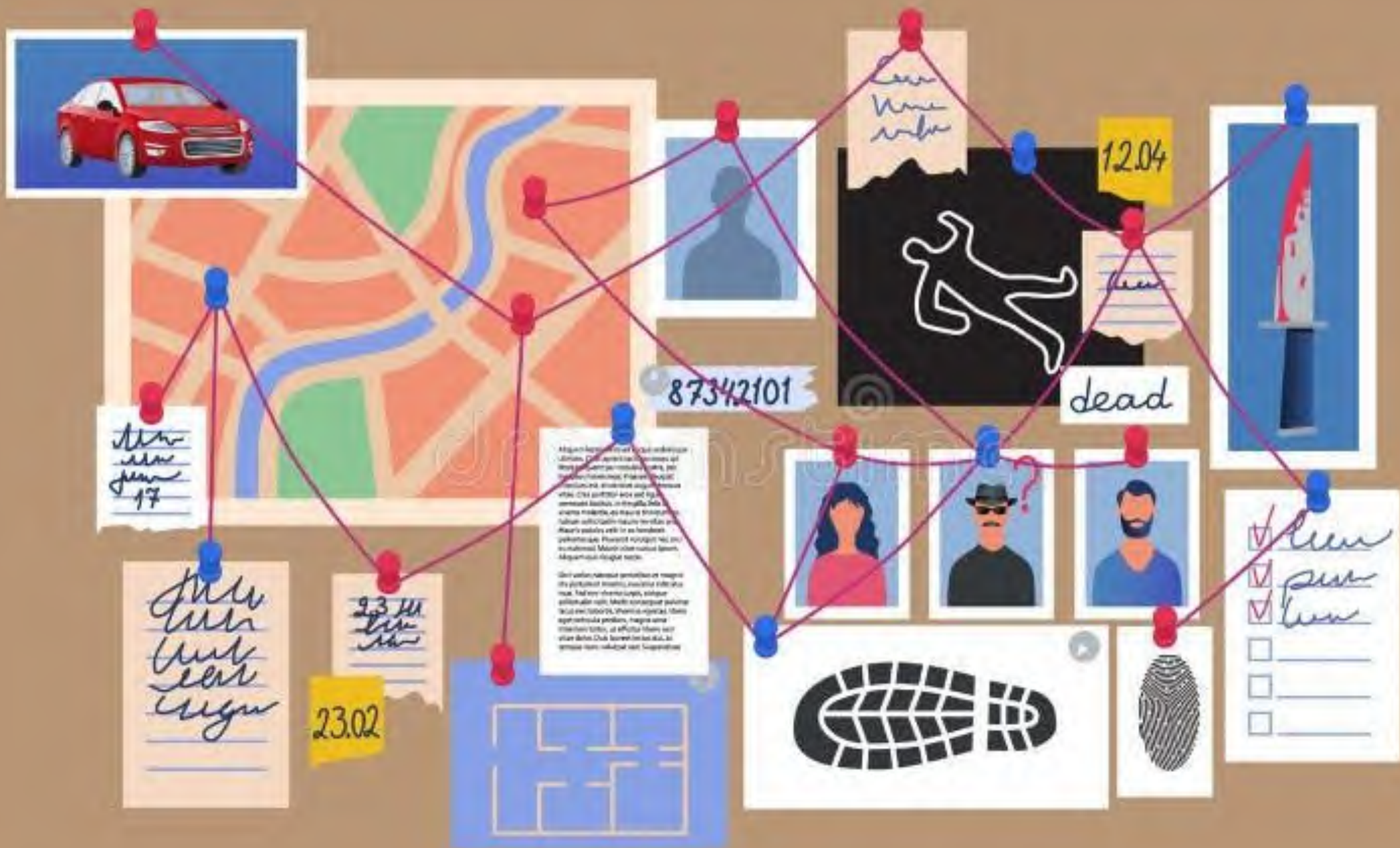
But there are so many ideas and beliefs... can we ever really *know* what is true?



"I only believe things that have been proven."

- We all live our lives based on evidence, not on proof.
- You trust the chair you are sitting in to hold you up even though you may have never sat in it before.
- The evidence is that the chair is reliable, so you choose to sit on it.







Here is where faith comes in

- Faith simply means trust.
- We all trust something or someone.
- The only question is, how reliable is the object of our trust?

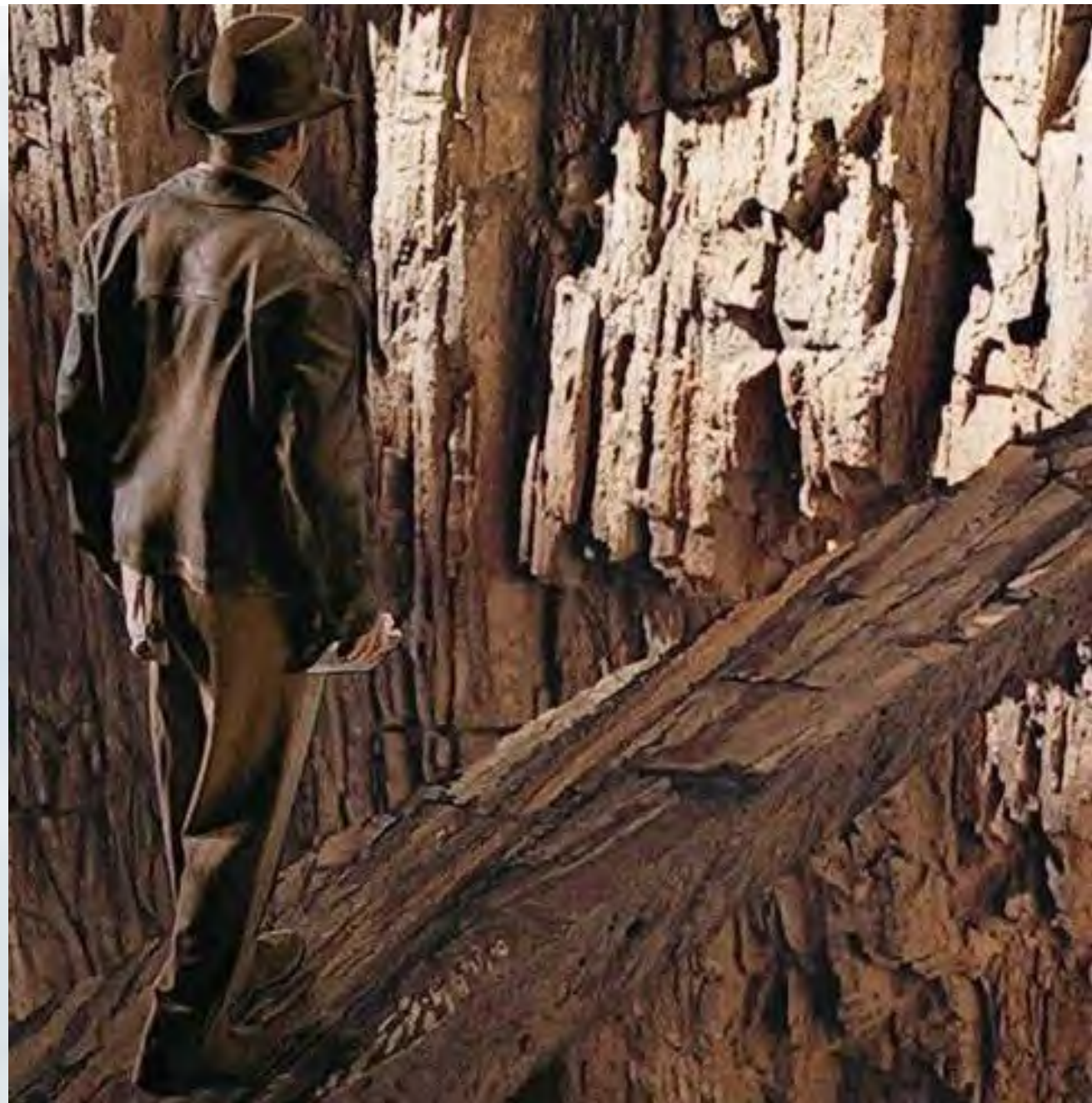


- Blind Faith: There is no evidence that what I trust is reliable, but I choose to trust it, anyway.



- Reasonable Faith: There is evidence that what I trust is reliable.







Why do you think it's reasonable to trust
God?

Session 3: What is the Evidence For the Existence of God?

And why does it matter?



What comes into our minds when
we think about God is the most
important thing about us.

— *Aiden Wilson Tozer* —

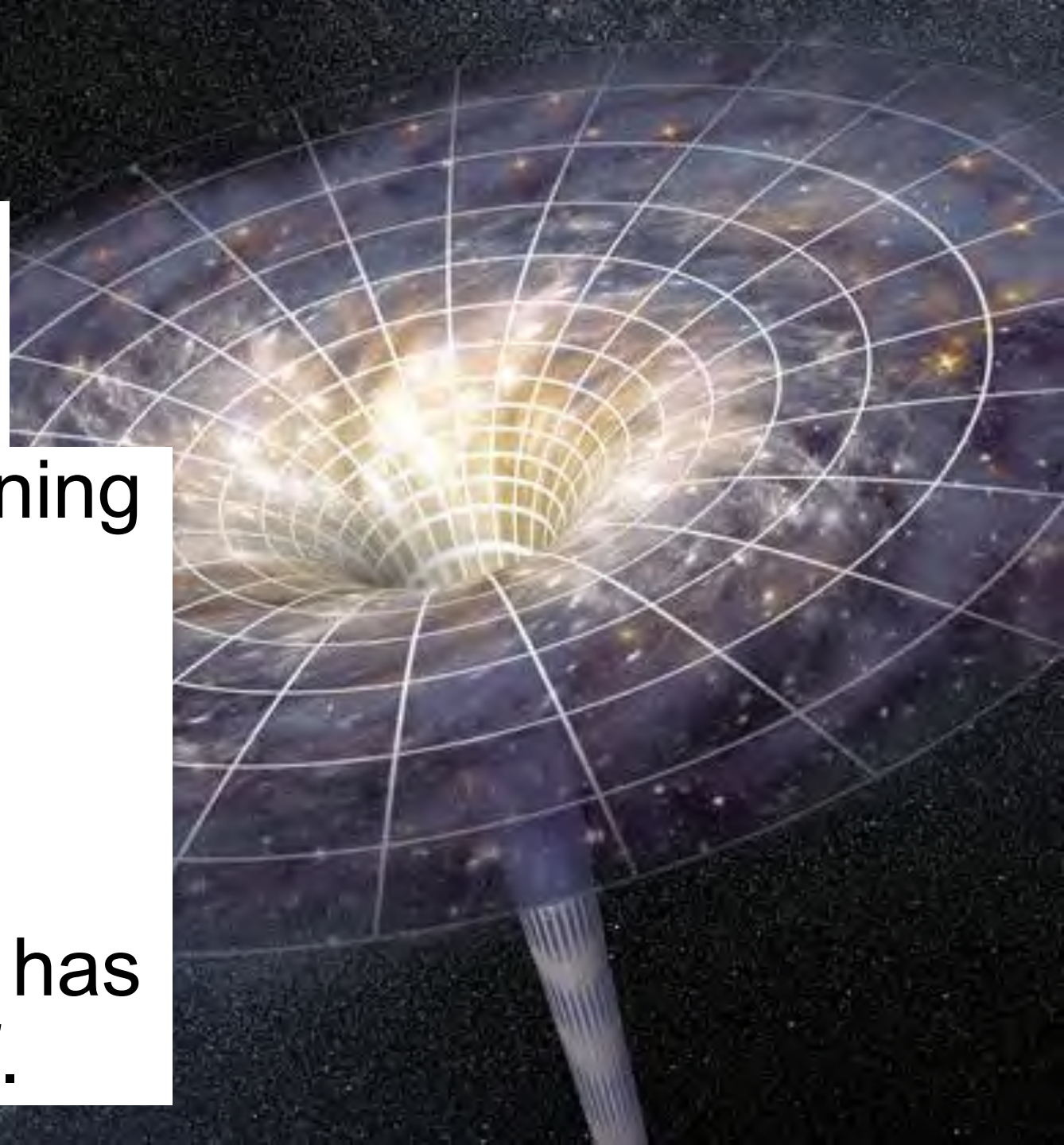
AZ QUOTES

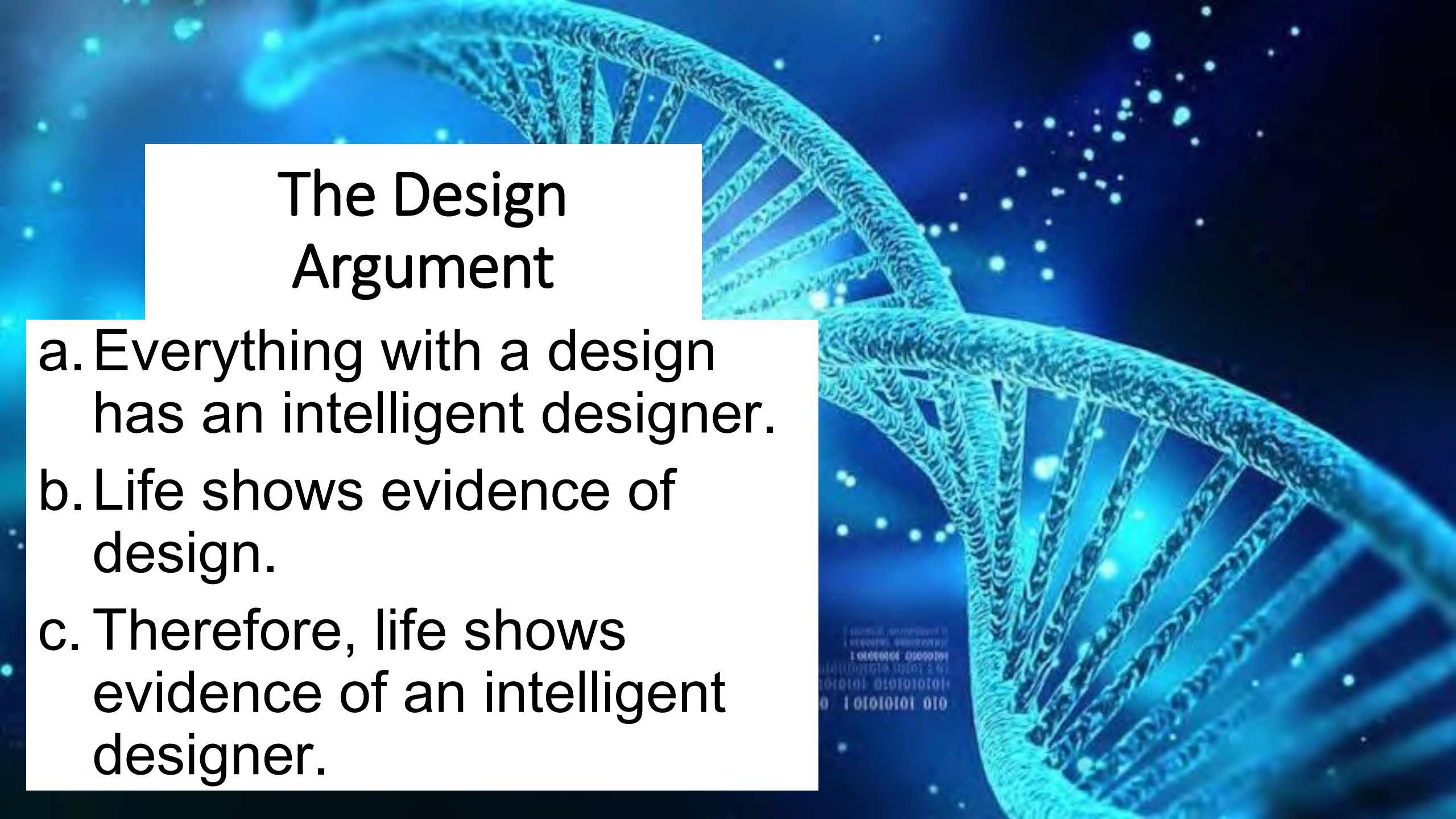
- Simply believing something is true does not make it true.
- What is the evidence that God exists?



The Cosmological Argument

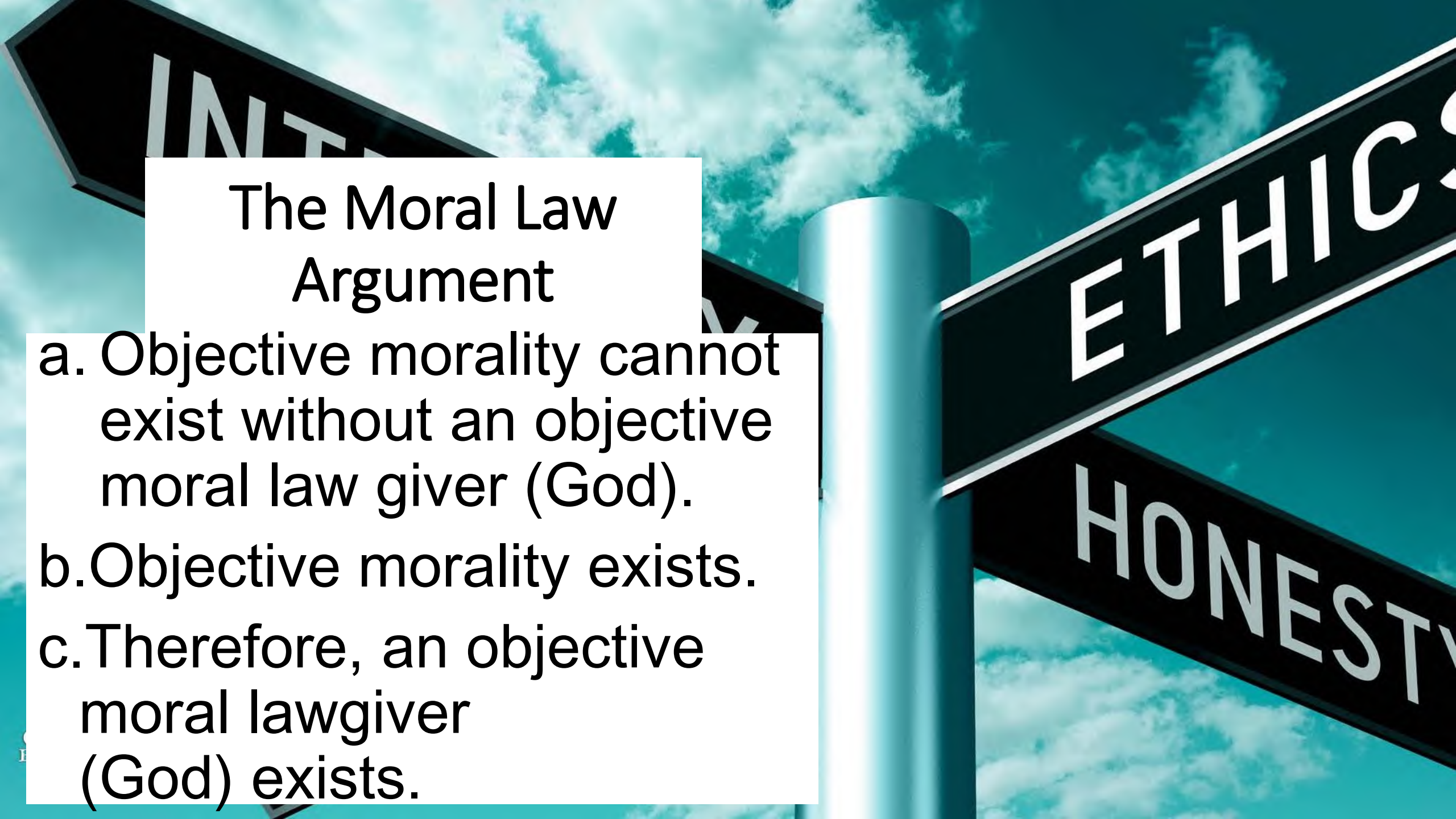
- a. Everything with a beginning has a cause outside of itself.
- b. The universe has a beginning.
- c. Therefore, the universe has a cause outside of itself.





The Design Argument

- a. Everything with a design has an intelligent designer.
- b. Life shows evidence of design.
- c. Therefore, life shows evidence of an intelligent designer.



The Moral Law Argument

- a. Objective morality cannot exist without an objective moral law giver (God).
- b. Objective morality exists.
- c. Therefore, an objective moral lawgiver (God) exists.

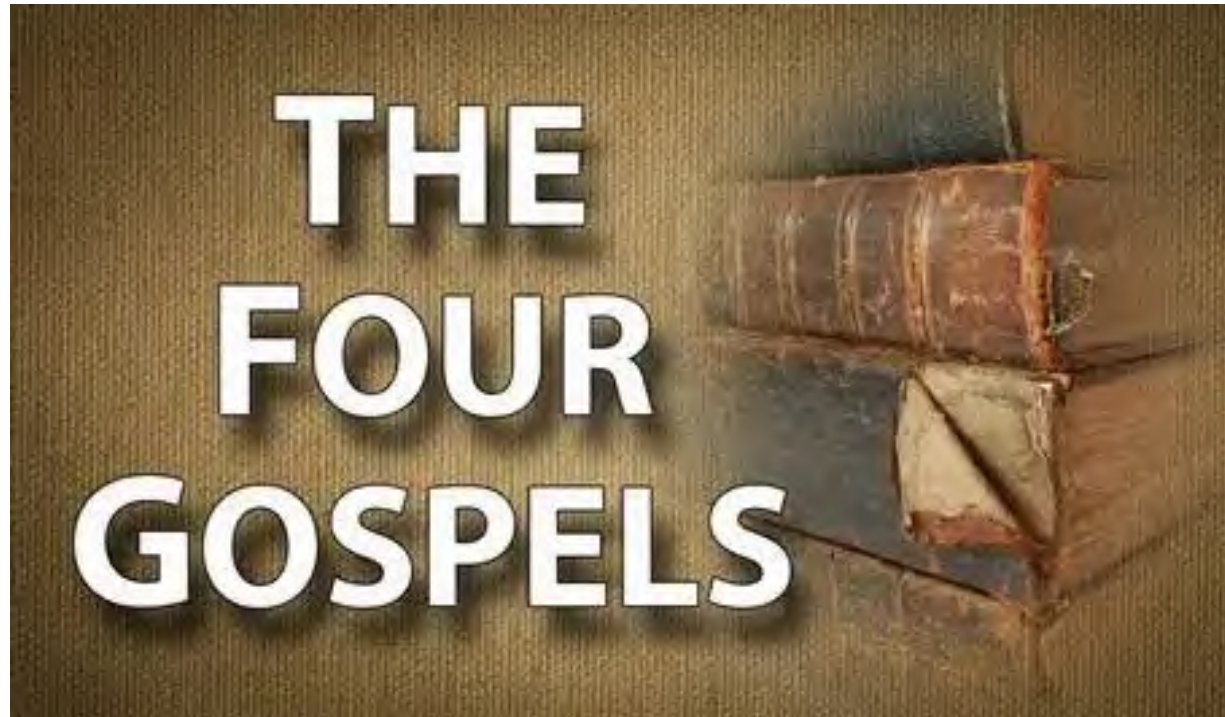
Evidence vs. Proof



Session 4: Are the Gospels Historically Reliable?

And how can we tell?

The gospels claim to be biographical accounts telling the objective truth about the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of the man Jesus of Nazareth.



“...many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses ... it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you ... that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.” (Lk.1:1-4 ESV)



Historical Reliability

- Any ancient historical document undergoes tests to show evidence of authenticity and reliability.
- Let's apply these tests to the gospels.
- You decide based on the evidence if faith in the gospels is blind or reasonable.



Test #1: Internal Consistency



Test #1: Internal Consistency

- Are there any glaring contradictions within the writings?
- Contradiction vs. Different Perspective
- Contradictions are two different claims that cannot both be true.
- Different perspectives are two different claims that can both be true.

Test #1: Internal Consistency

- "John said that he was at the movies when it happened, but James said that John was at home at that same time" is a contradiction.
- "John said he went to the movies after school, but Jim said John took a nap first then went to the movies with friends" is a different perspective.

Testing the Gospels



Testing the Gospels

- The gospels have some differences in certain details. Let's see if they are contradictions or different perspectives.

Testing the Gospels

Number of Women at the Tomb

- Matthew — Mentions two women: Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary”
- Mark — Mentions three women: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome
- Luke — Mentions several women: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and others
- John — Only mentions Mary Magdalene visiting the tomb

Testing the Gospels

Number of Angels at the Tomb

- Matthew — Mentions an angel who rolls back the stone and speaks to the women
- Mark — Mentions a young man (interpreted as an angel) sitting inside the tomb
- Luke — Mentions two men (angels) in dazzling clothes appearing suddenly
- John — Mentions two angels sitting where Jesus' body had been

Testing the Gospels

Jesus' Post-Resurrection Appearances

- Matthew — To women, then disciples in Galilee
- Mark — Mentions Mary Magdalene first
- Luke — To two disciples on road, then others in Jerusalem
- John — To Mary Magdalene, then disciples in Jerusalem





Test #2: Archaeology



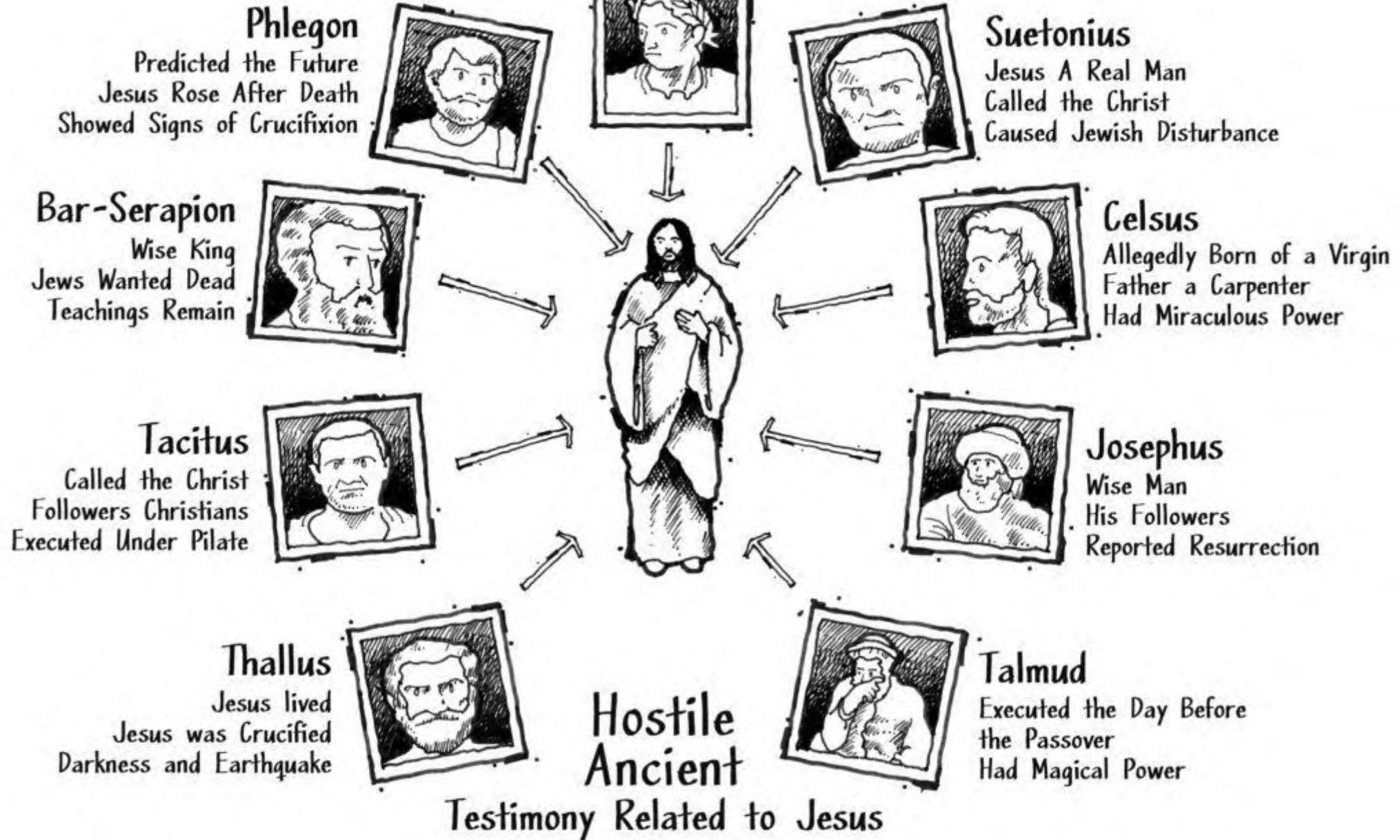
Test #2: Archaeology

- Does the account talk about archaeologically verifiable people and places?
- "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away..."
- "On Sunday, Gandalf visited the Shire..."
- Are the people and places mentioned in the gospels affirmed anywhere outside the Bible?

Person	Verified By	Relevant Scripture
Pontius Pilate	Pilate Stone (Caesarea)	Matthew 27:2
Herod the Great	Palaces, coins, Herodium	Matthew 2
Herod Antipas	Coins, city of Tiberias	Luke 3:1, 23:7
Caiaphas	Ossuary inscription	Matthew 26:57
John the Baptist	Mentioned by Josephus	Matthew 3

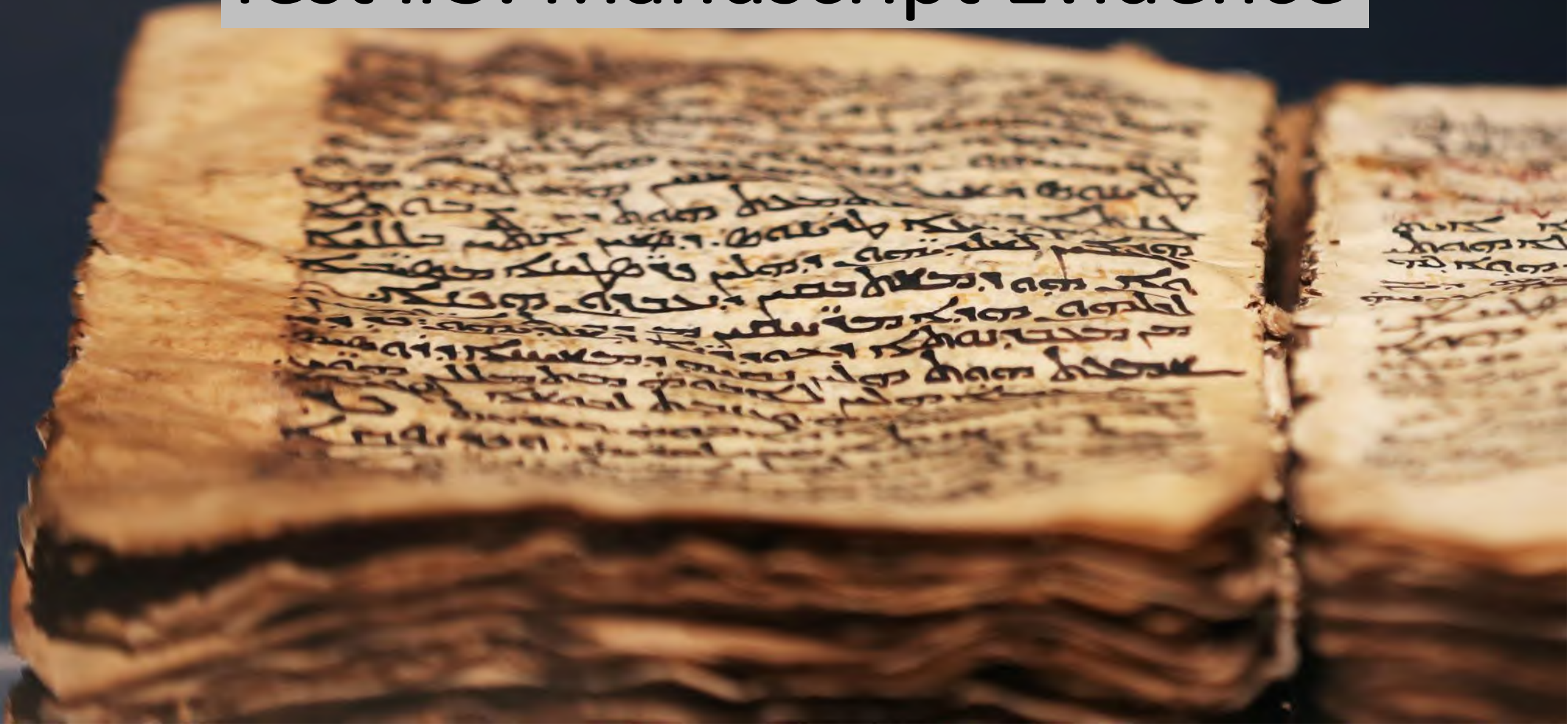
Pliny the Younger

Followers Thought He Was God



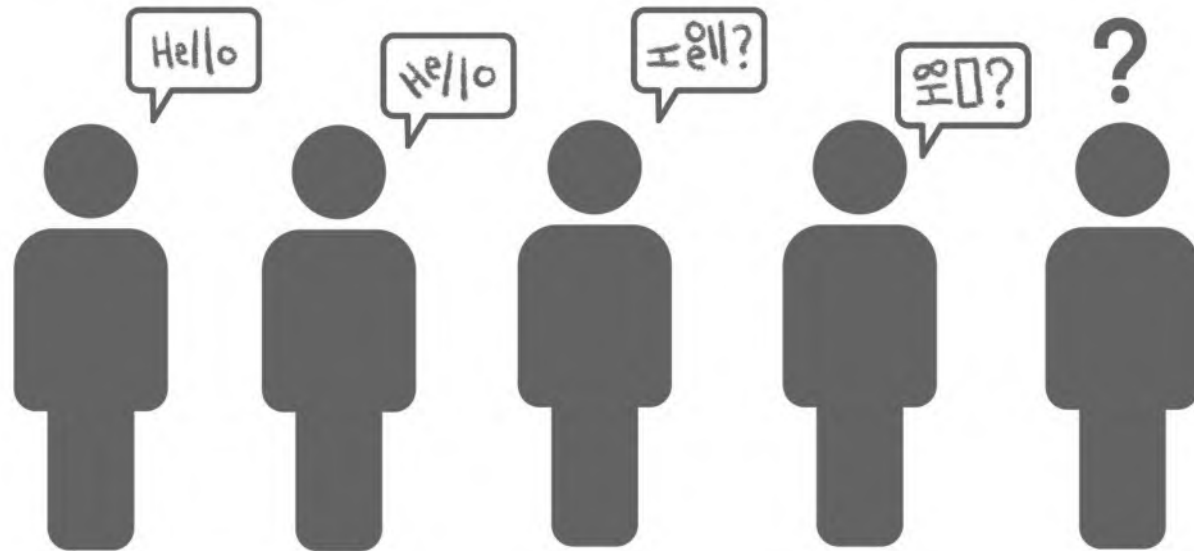
Place	Verified By	Relevant Scripture
Capernaum	House, synagogue ruins	Matthew 4:13
Bethlehem	Continuous habitation	Matthew 2:1
Jerusalem	Pools, Temple Mount, Pilgrim's Road	All Gospels
Bethany	Tombs and houses in al-Eizariya	John 11
Sea of Galilee	Boat remains, harbor cities	Luke 5:1–11
Chorazin, Tyre	Archaeological ruins	Matthew 11:21–22
Synagogues	Found in multiple cities	Luke 4:16, Mark 1:21

Test #3: Manuscript Evidence



Test #3: Manuscript Evidence

- Manuscript evidence asks if what we have now is what was originally written.



Test #3: Manuscript Evidence

- Manuscript evidence asks if what we have now is what was originally written.
- Historians ask 2 questions:
 1. How long after the events are the earliest writings we have?
 2. How many copies of these early writings do we have?

Comparison of Ancient Historical Documents

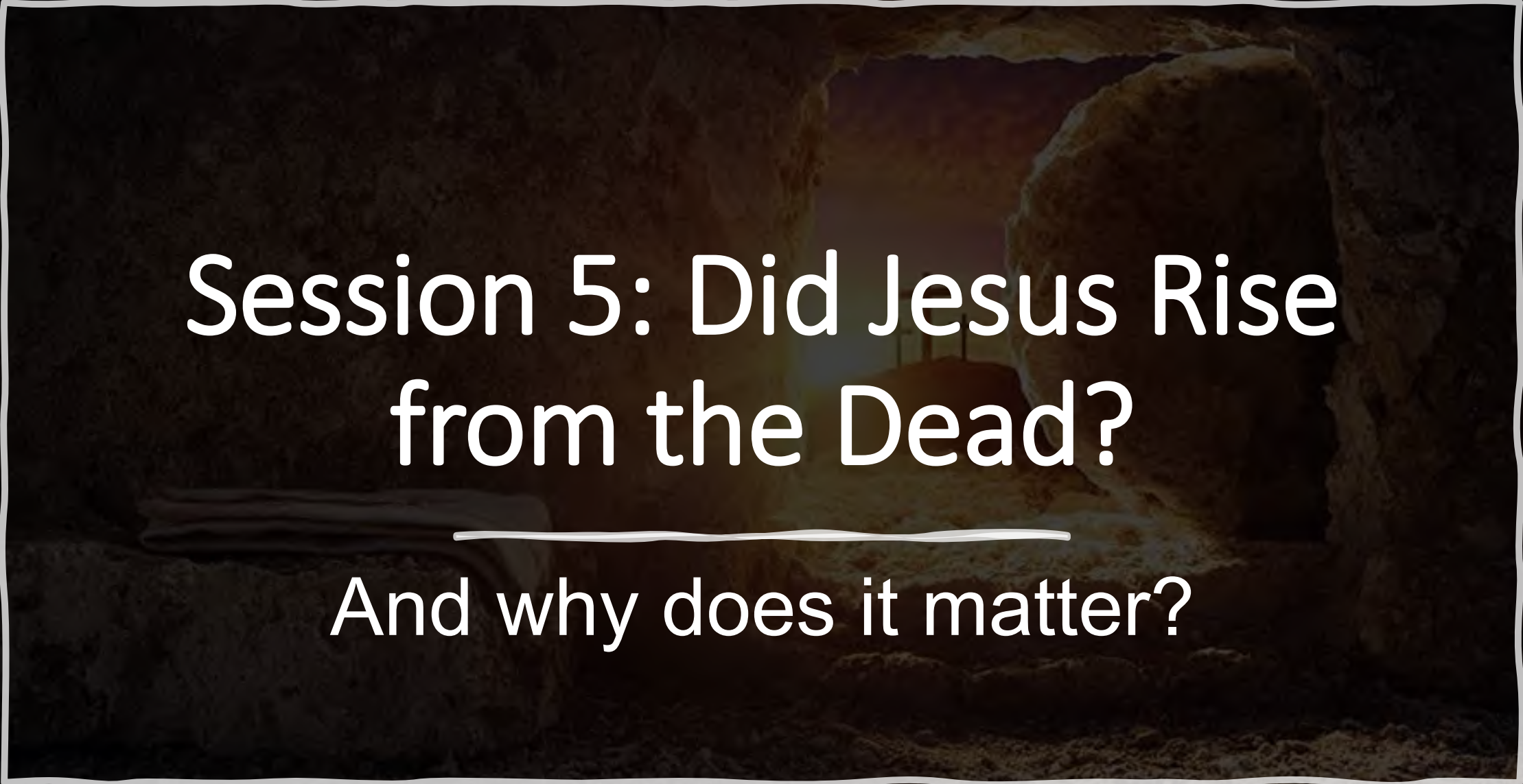
Rank	Historical Document	Original Composition Dates	Earliest Manuscripts	Time Elapsed	Number of Manuscripts
1	New Testament writings				
2	Homer's <i>Iliad</i>				
3	Aristotle's writings				
4	Demosthenes' Speeches				
5	Caesar's Gallic Wars				

Test #3: Manuscript Evidence

- We know beyond any reasonable doubt that what we have now is what the original authors wrote.
- Any differences or variations are superficial and do not change the core Christian beliefs.

Evidence vs. Proof





Session 5: Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?

And why does it matter?

Everything Depends On This!

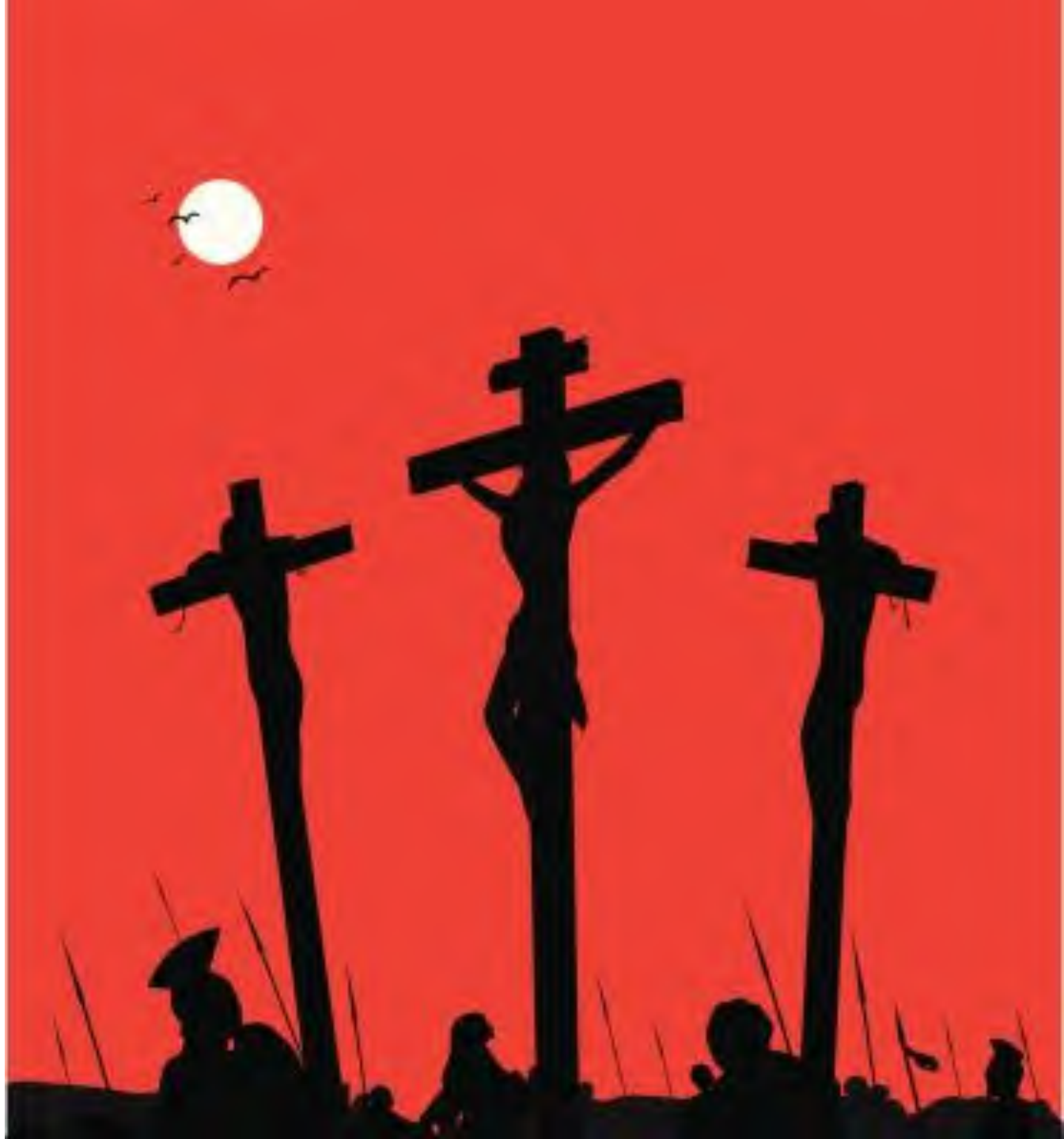
"And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished." (1 Cor.15:14-18 ESV)

The Minimal Facts Approach

The "Minimal Facts Approach" accounts for the facts that nearly all scholars agree upon and leads us to the rational conclusion that the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best explanation for the known historical data.

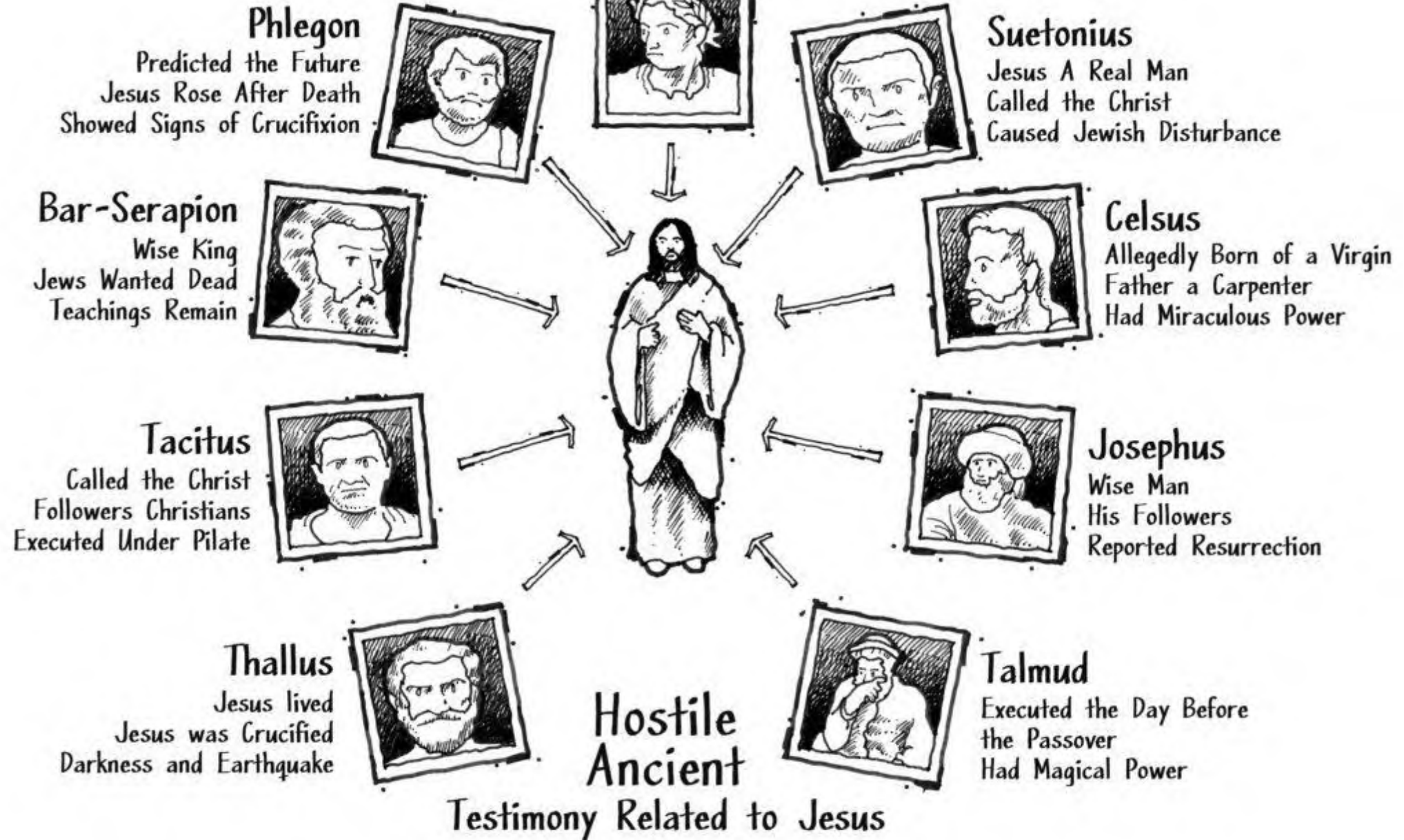
1. Jesus died by crucifixion

- Recorded by all four gospels and non-Biblical sources like Tacitus, Josephus, and the Talmud.
- Crucifixion was a well-known Roman method of execution.



Pliny the Younger

Followers Thought He Was God



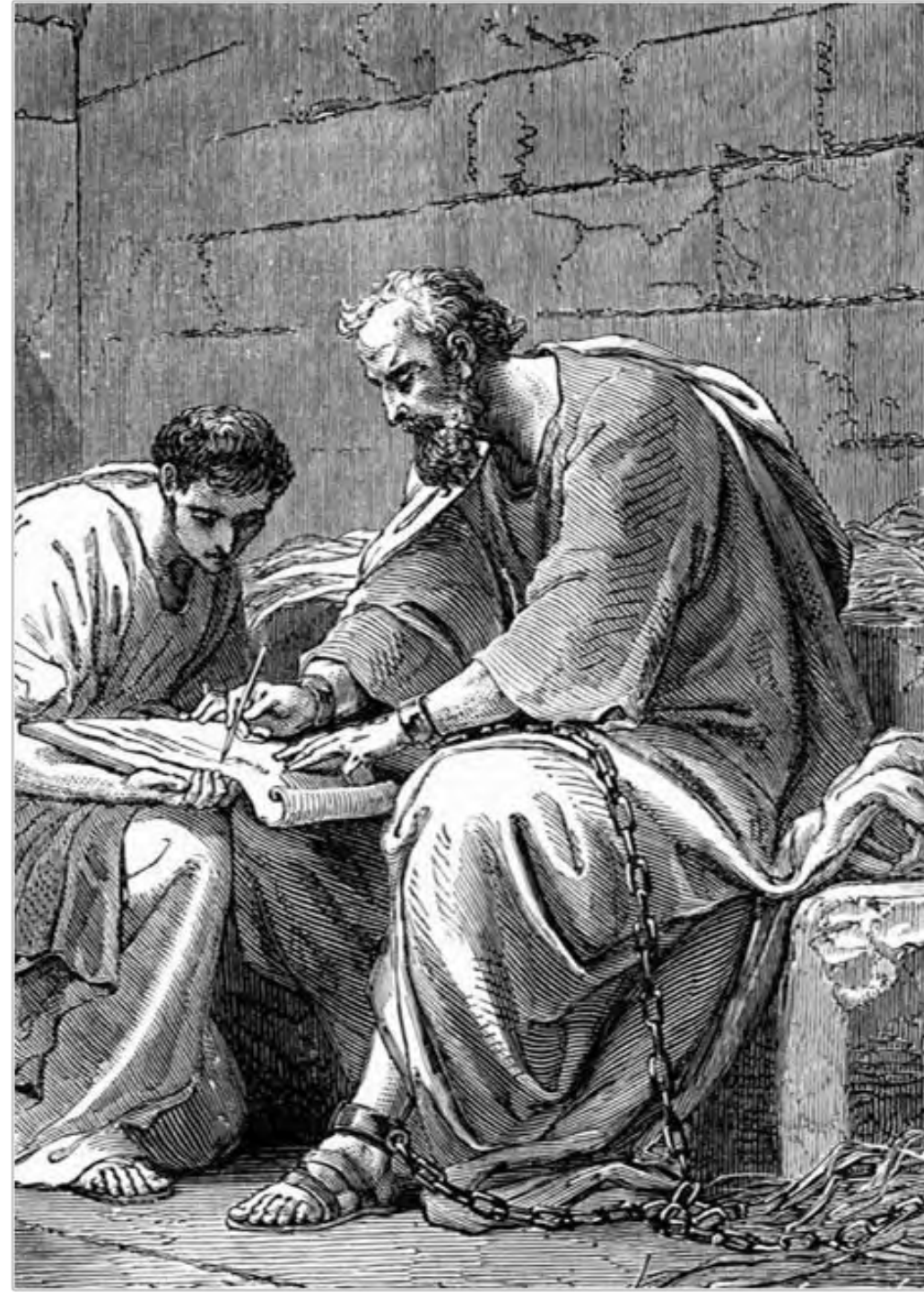
2. Jesus' disciples died claiming to have seen Him risen from the dead

- Notice that they did not die claiming they believed Jesus had risen-they died claiming that they actually saw Him risen.
- People will die for what they believe is true, but people do not die for what they know is a lie.



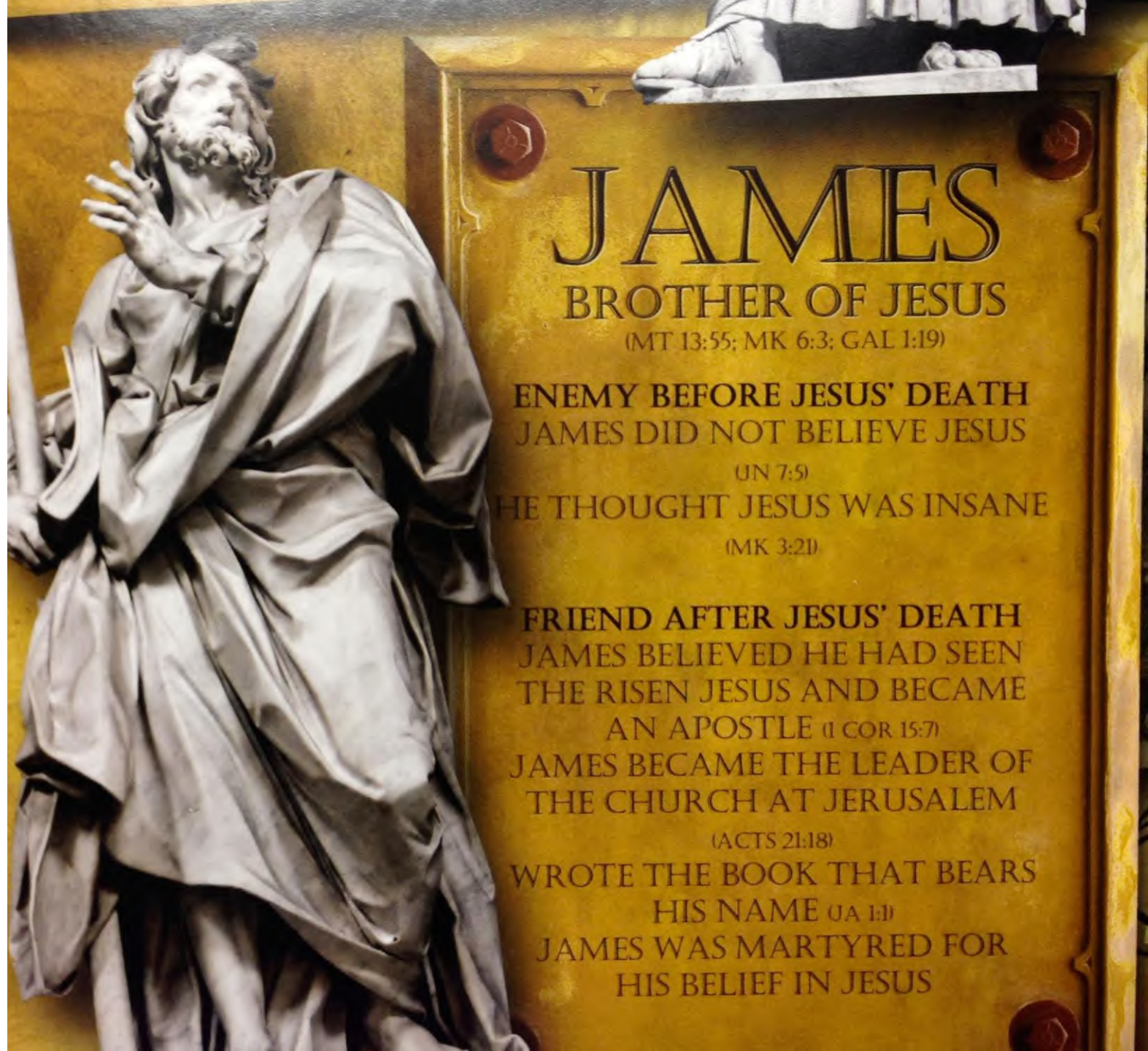
3. The conversion of Paul

- These are the historical facts:
- Paul was a known persecutor of Christians.
- On his way to Damascus to arrest more Christians, he suddenly had some kind of experience that completely changed him.
- He claimed that Jesus bodily appeared to him and spoke to him.



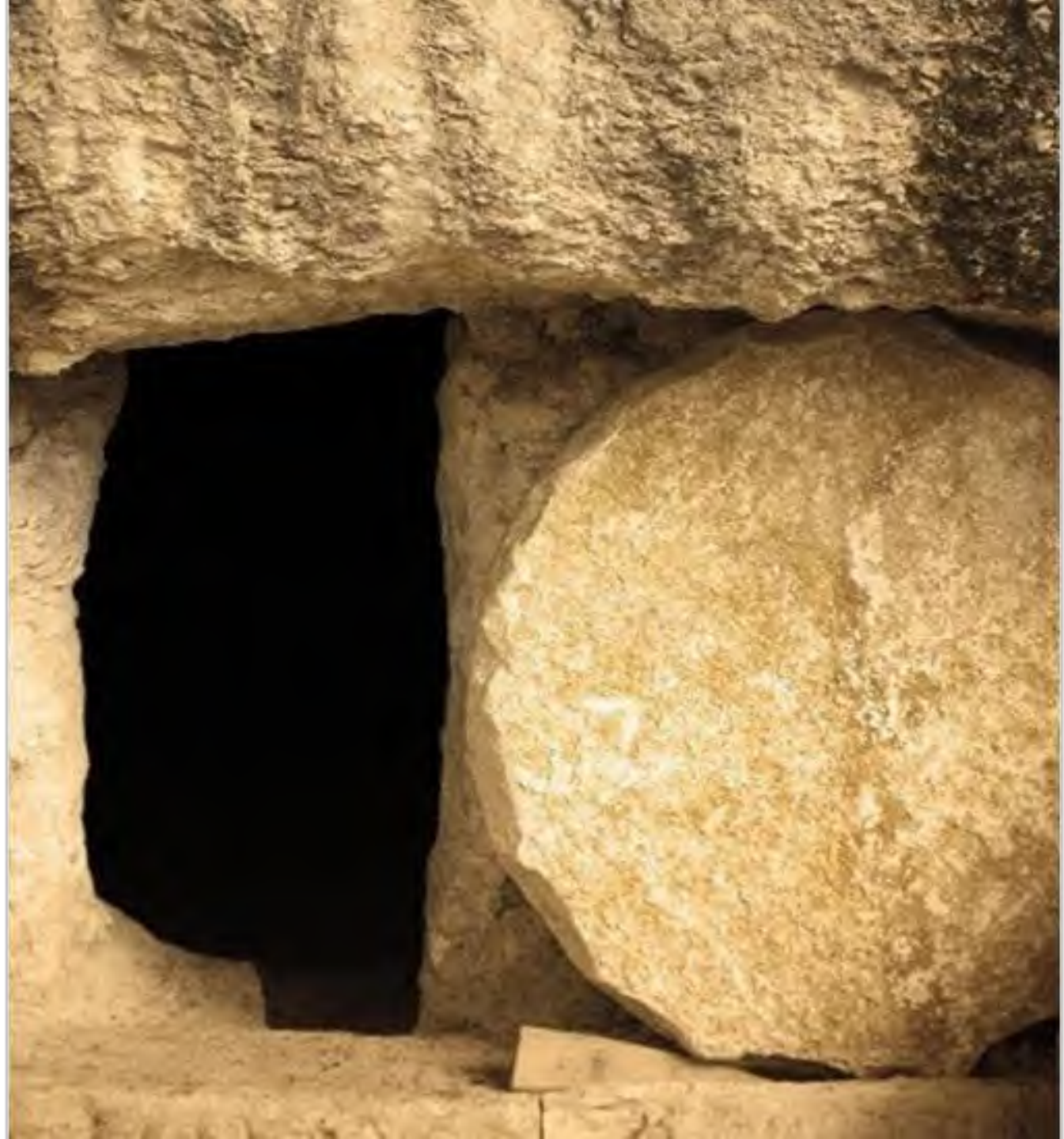
4. The conversion of James, Jesus' brother

- James was skeptical of Jesus' ministry (John 7:5).
- After claiming to see Jesus risen from the dead, James became a major leader in the church and was willing to die for this claim.



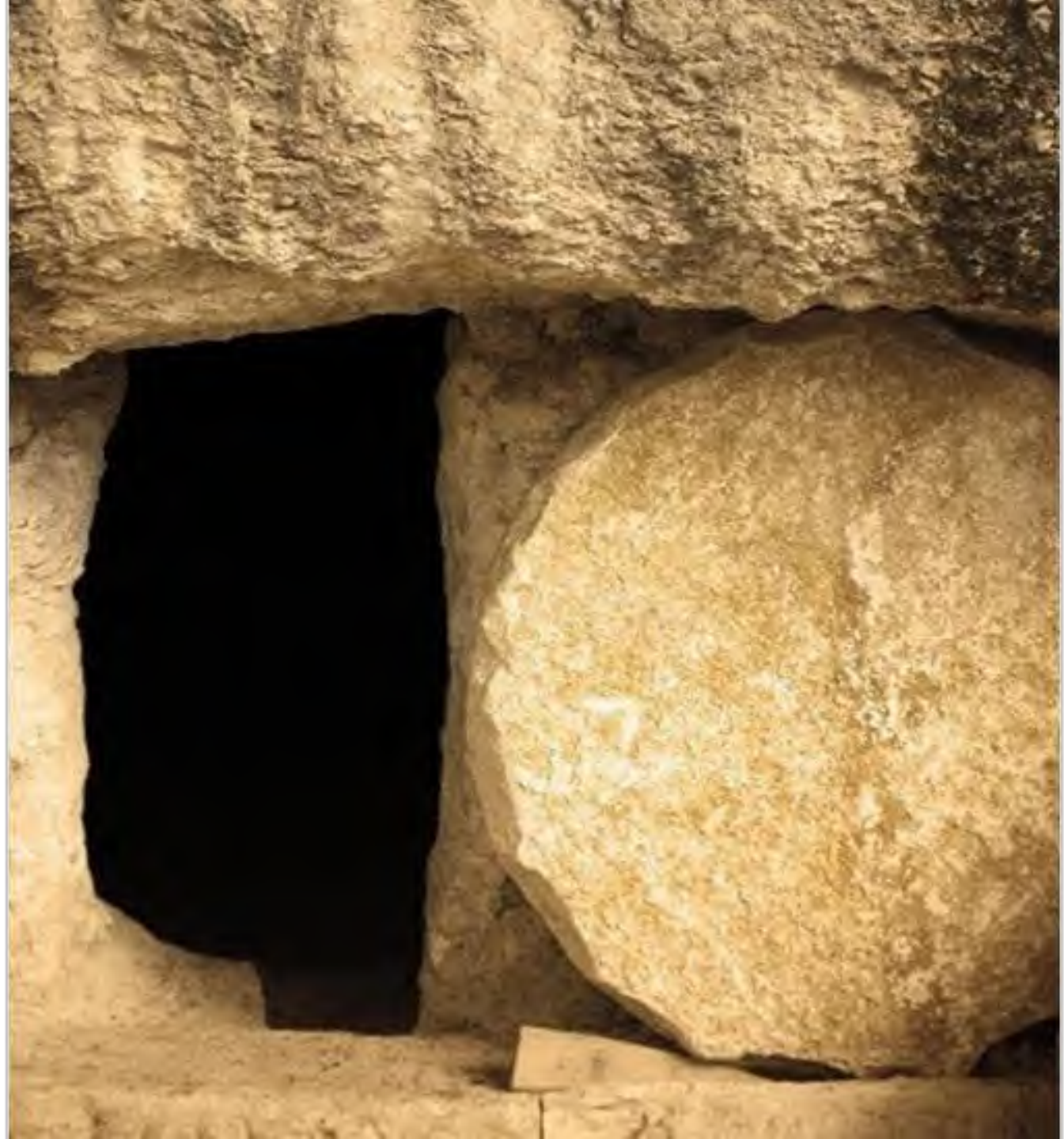
5. The empty tomb

- Though not as universally accepted among critical scholars (still the vast majority), the empty tomb is supported by several pieces of evidence.



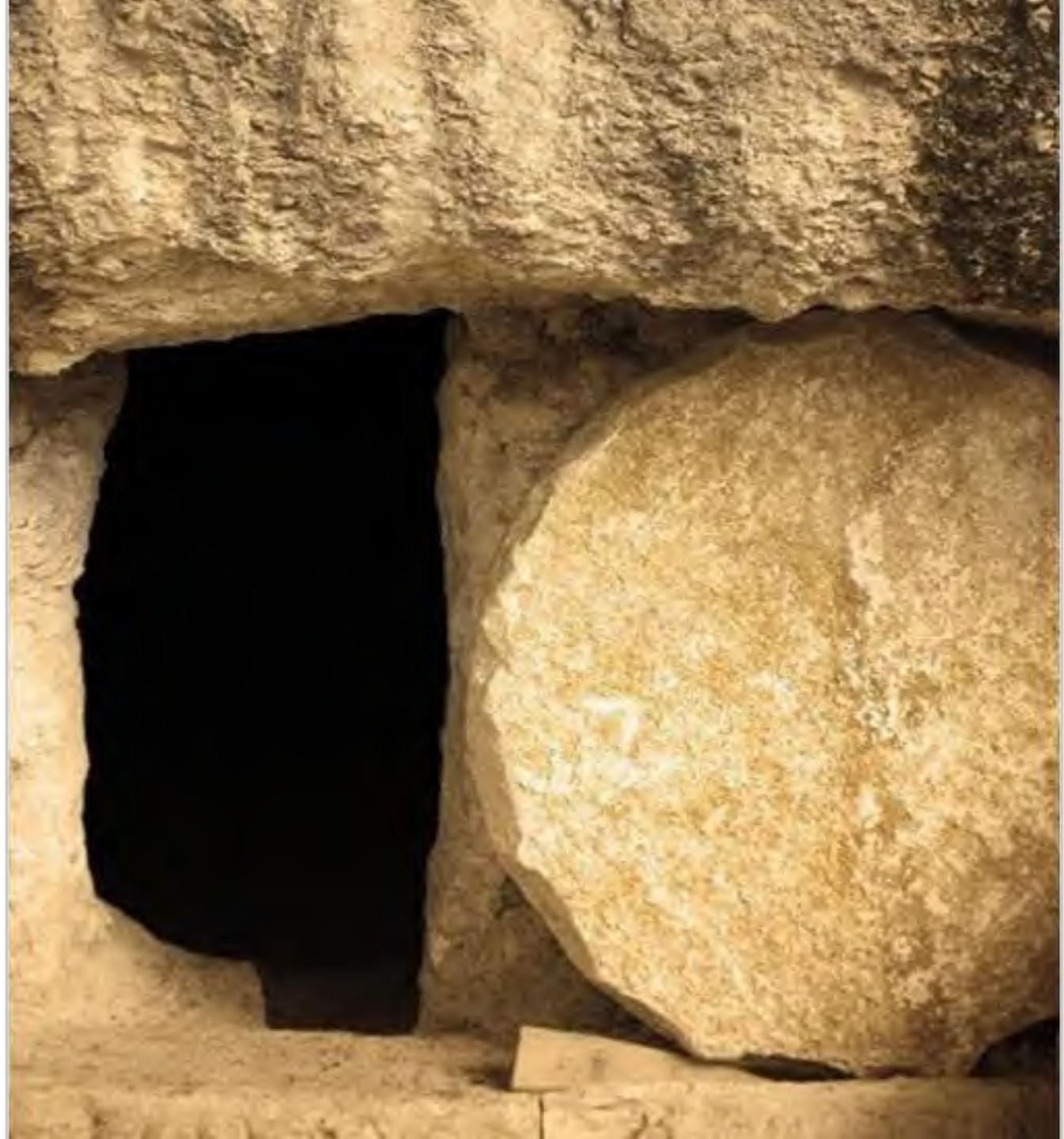
5. The empty tomb

The discovery of the empty tomb by women.



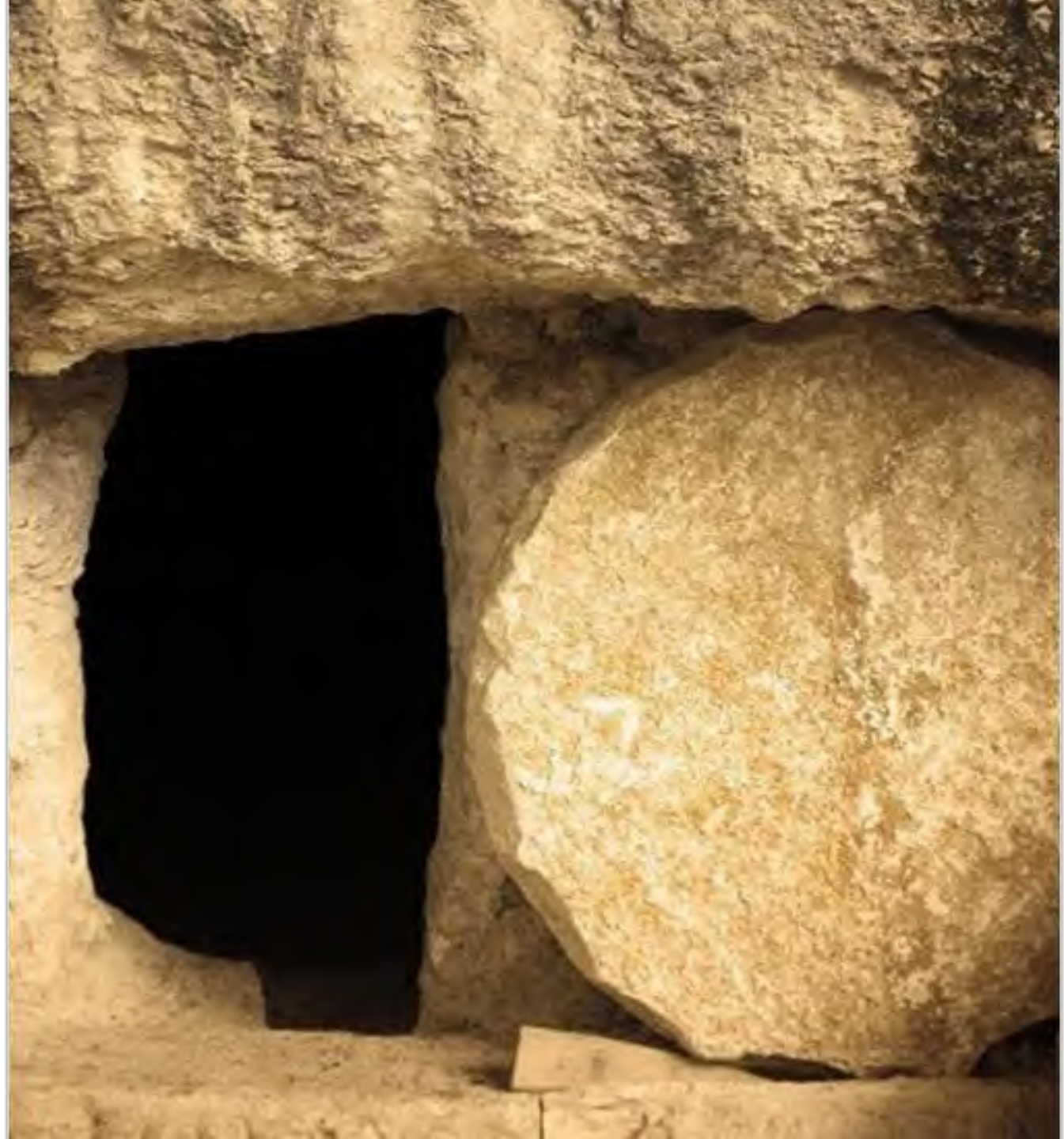
5. The empty tomb

The Jewish leadership's explanation that the body had been stolen.



5. The empty tomb

The fact that Jesus' enemies never produced a body to counter the claims of a resurrection shows that there was no body.



Evidence vs. Proof



Session 6: How Can I Be Prepared to Use Apologetics?

And how do we answer questions
the Bible doesn't answer?

It is not enough to just know what is true. How we speak truth matters.

“In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense [apologia] to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”
(1 Peter 3:15 ESV)



The 3 C's

- Compassion
- Composure
- Confidence



Compassion

We are called to speak
the truth in love
(Eph. 4:15).



How Do I Develop a Compassionate Heart?

1. Prayer



How Do I Develop a Compassionate Heart?

2. Scripture

Remember:

- It is possible to win the battle but lose the war.
- It is possible to win the argument but lose the person.

Composure

It can be easy to feel overwhelmed when confronted with tough questions and objections.



How Do I Maintain Composure?

1. Stop and pray. Ask God for wisdom and a compassionate heart.

“...do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.” -Luke 12:11-12 (ESV)

How Do I Maintain Composure?

2. Focus on what you do know.

- While we may not be able to fully answer certain questions, do we know enough to have reasonable faith that a good answer is out there?

Remember:

- It's okay to say, "I don't know."
- People will often respect you and take you more seriously if you are willing to admit that you hadn't considered their point before and that you'll need to look into it.

Confidence

- Joshua 1:9 (ESV) - *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”*
- Psalm 27:3 (ESV) – *“Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.”*
- 2 Timothy 1:7 (ESV) – *“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”*



I can't
do it

How Do I Build Confidence?

1. Preparation

- Read books on apologetics, watch videos of debates and discussions, read about ideas that go against what you believe.
- Most importantly, have a strong prayer life and know the scriptures.

How Do I Build Confidence?

2. Experience

- Confidence comes from experience, and experience comes from stepping outside of your comfort zone.

Remember:

- You don't have to depend on just your own understanding.
- James 1:5 (ESV) says, *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."*

The 3 C's

- Develop Compassion: Love the person like Jesus loves them.
- Maintain Composure: Ask God for help and wisdom.
- Build Confidence: Keep reading, listening, and learning. Don't let the fear of being outside of your comfort zone stop you from



The background is dark with a large, faint question mark and a stack of papers or documents. The text is centered and white.

Session 7: Recap

And Some Q&A!

Recap

Session 1: How to handle doubt

Session 2: The importance of apologetics
and truth

Session 3: The existence of God

Session 4: The reliability of the Gospels

Session 5: The historicity of Jesus'
resurrection

Session 6: How to effectively use apologetics

Evidence vs. Proof



Q

&

A

See the Suggested Resources
at the end of your notes.

