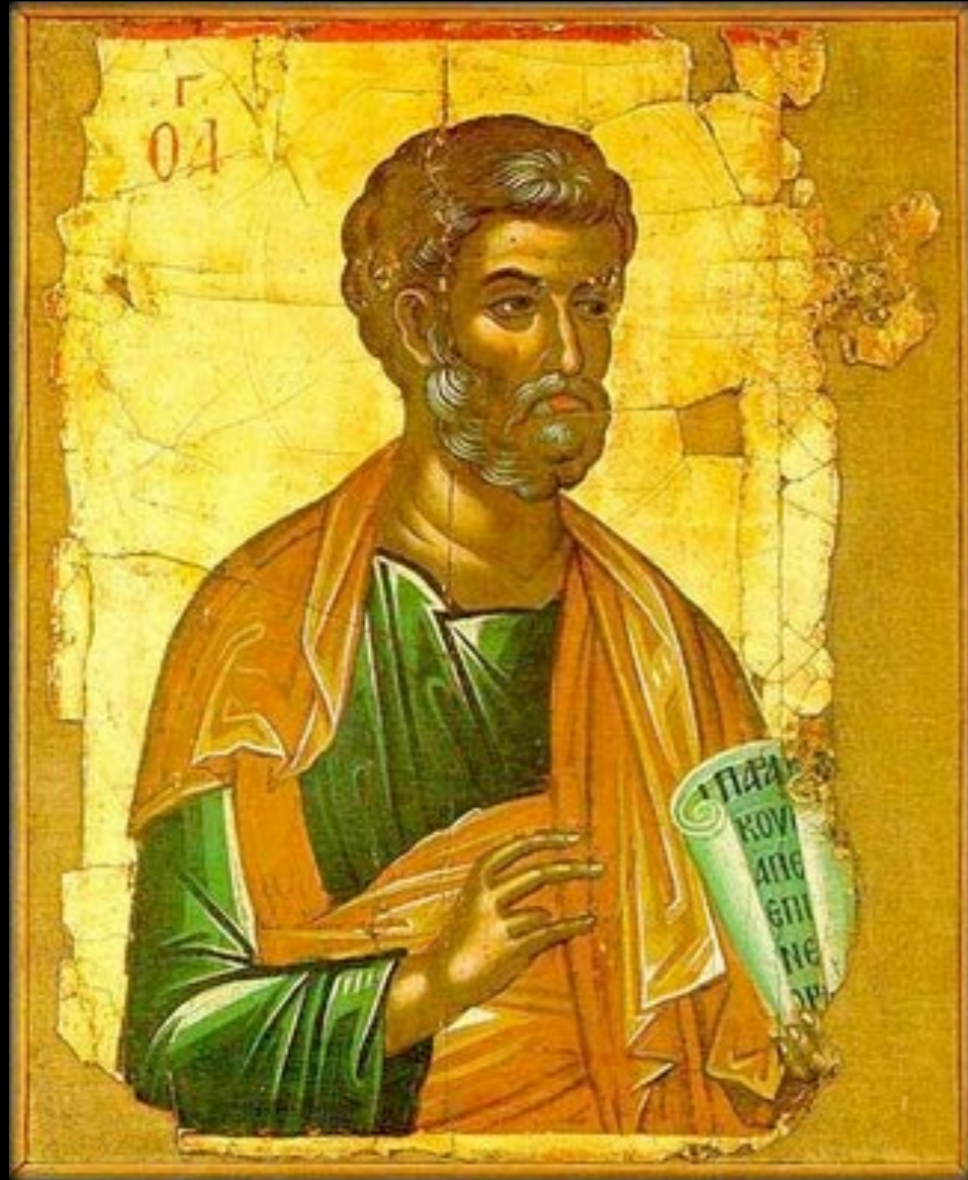


Of First Importance

= 1 Corinthians 15 =





The Apostle Peter

— 1 Peter 3:15 —

**...in your hearts
set apart Christ
as Lord. Always
be prepared to
give an answer
to everyone who
asks you to give
the reason for the
hope that you have.**

How come we are Christians?






**Why am I a
Christian again?**

**So, why
are you a
Christian?**



A professional studio light fixture is positioned on the left side of the frame, mounted on a black stand. The light is turned on, casting a bright, circular glow. The background is a dark, textured wall. The text "Why are you a Christian?" is overlaid on the right side of the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

**Why are
you a
Christian?**

Bono | U2



**The Question:
Who, or what, was
Jesus as far as you
are concerned?**



I think it's a defining question for a Christian...and I don't think you're let off easily by saying, 'A great thinker,' or 'A philosopher,' because actually he went around saying he was the Messiah.



**That's why he was
crucified. He was
crucified because he
said he was the Son of
God. So he either, in my
view, was the Son of
God, or he was...nuts.
Forget rock-and-roll
messianic complexes;
I mean Charlie-Manson-
type delirium.**



**And I find it hard to
accept that whole
millions and millions of
lives—half the earth—
for 2000 years have
been touched, felt their
lives touched and
inspired by some nutter.
I just don't believe it.**

— Bono on “The Meaning of Life” —
Ireland's National Public Service Media



That response was good
as far as it goes....

**What is the one
thing that if you
took away, there
would be no
Christianity**





Re • Formation Gospel • Community • Mission



A 6-Week Study in How the Gospel
Forms Us Into a Community of Jesus
that Exists for His Mission in the World

Of First Importance

1 Corinthians 15





**We will give you three
“E’s” to remember
that will help you be
prepared to give
the reason for the
hope you have
in Jesus Christ.**

Paul the Apostle

- Member of the Pharisees that conspired to put Jesus to death
- Persecuted the church
- Suddenly converted by a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus
- Ambassador of Jesus to kings and paupers
- Wrote ~ half the New Testament



1 Corinthians 15:1-9

1 Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of **the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved.....**

What is the **GOSPEL**



- It is **NOT** advice or a suggestion
- It is **NOT** a tip for successful living
- It is **NOT** about self-improvement

What is the
GOSPEL?



“GOOD NEWS”



**BREAKING
NEWS**

**THE GOSPEL IS
"GOOD NEWS"
ABOUT WHAT
GOD HAS DONE
IN CHRIST FOR
THE SALVATION
OF THE WORLD**



1 Corinthians 15:1-9

1 Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of **the gospel** I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being, if you hold fast to **the word I preached to you**—unless you have believed in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:1-9

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received....

1 Corinthians 15:1-9

3 For I delivered to you as **of first importance** what I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the Scriptures 4 that **he was buried....**



The First “E”

**There was an
Execution**



John Dominic Crossan

NT Scholar - DePaul University

Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography

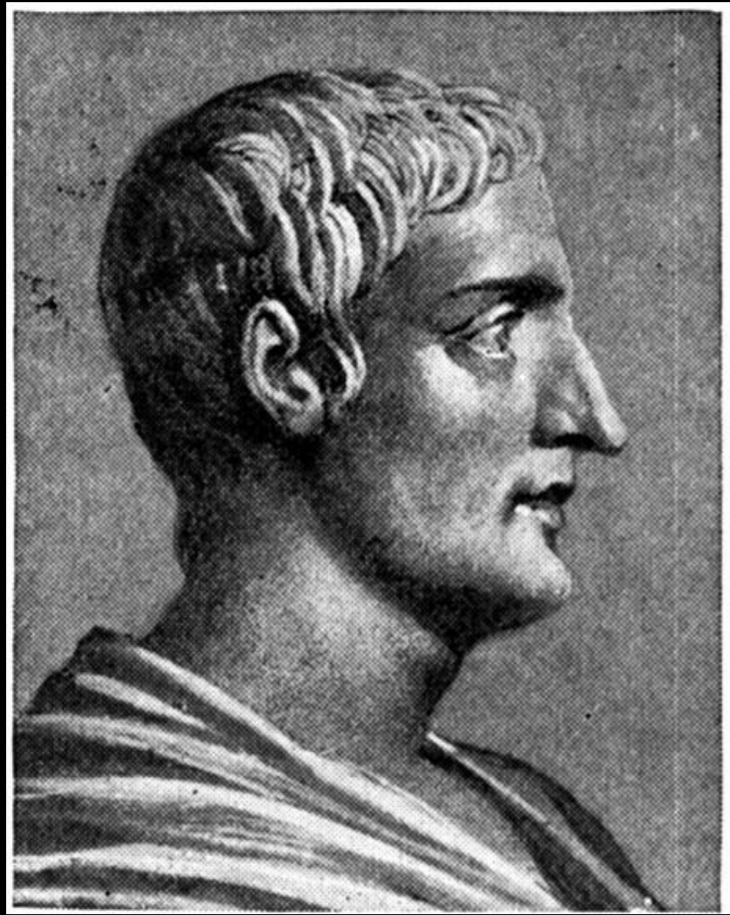
That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be. For if no follower of Jesus had written anything for one hundred years after his crucifixion, we would still know about him from two authors not among his supporters. Their names are Flavius Josephus and Cornelius Tacitus.

**At this time there
was a wise man
called Jesus....
Pilate condemned
him to be crucified
and to die....**

Flavius Josephus, c.37-97AD

Antiquities XVIII





Cornelius Tacitus c. 55-120AD
"The Annals of Imperial Rome"

**Christus...suffered
the extreme penalty
during the reign of
Tiberius at the
hands of one of
our procurators,
Pontius Pilatus**

**One of the most
certain facts of
history is that Jesus
was crucified on
orders of the Roman
prefect of Judea,
Pontius Pilate.**



Professor Bart Ehrman

James A. Gray Distinguished Professor
Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill







**God made him who knew no sin
to become sin for us...**

— 2 Corinthians 5:21 —



By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh....

— Romans 8:3 —



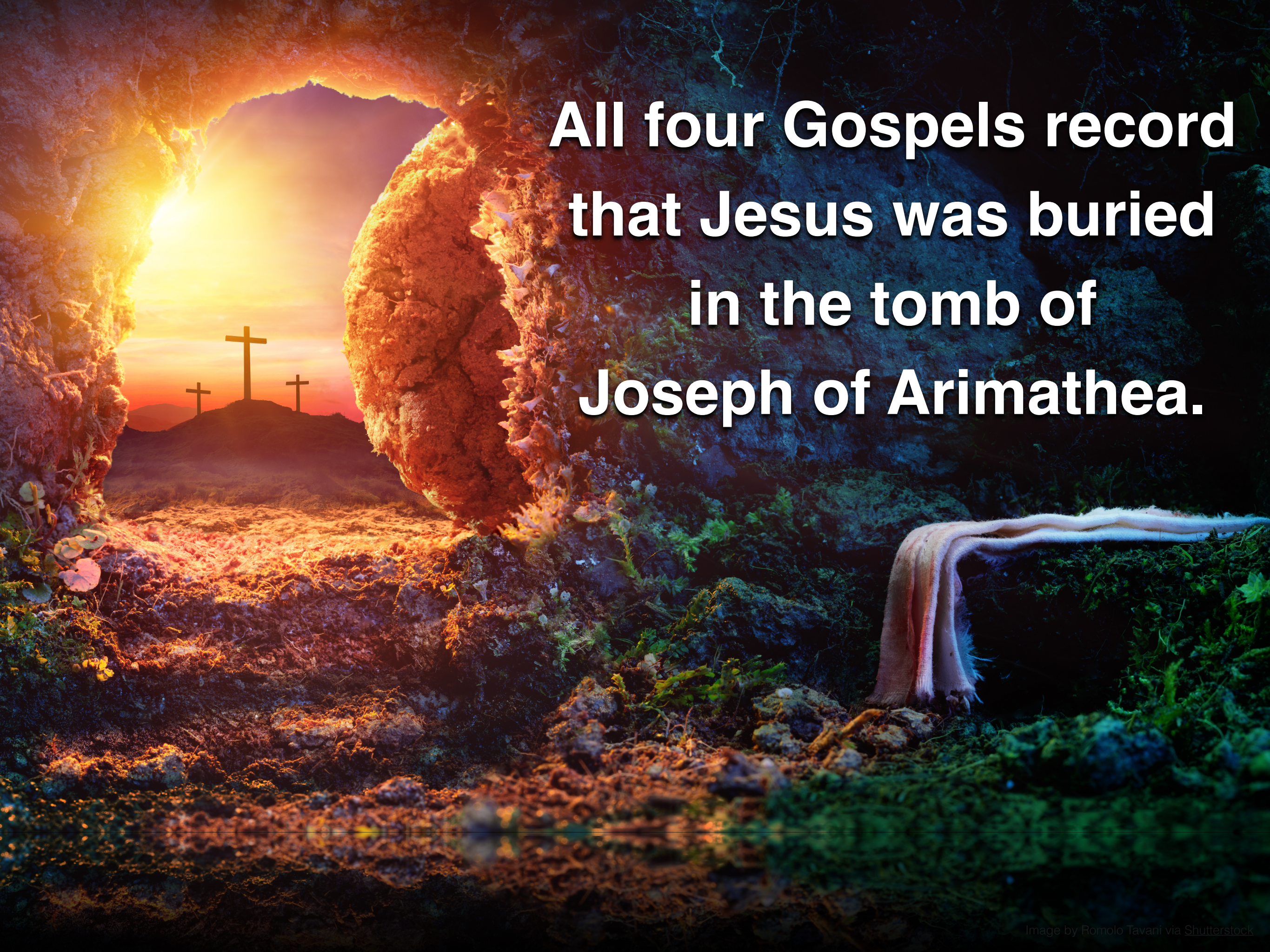
**Most Christians
get an A+
on this part of
the Gospel.**

3 For I delivered to you as **of first importance** what I also received: 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...



The Second “E”

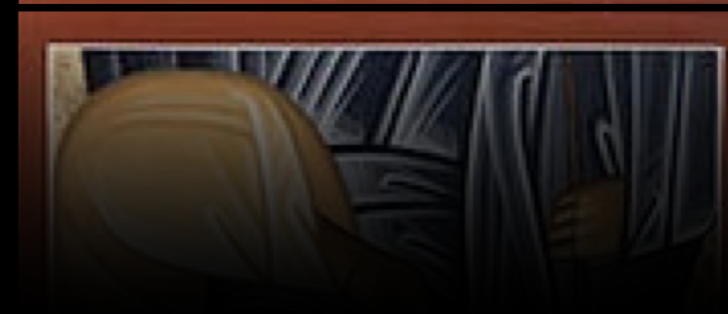
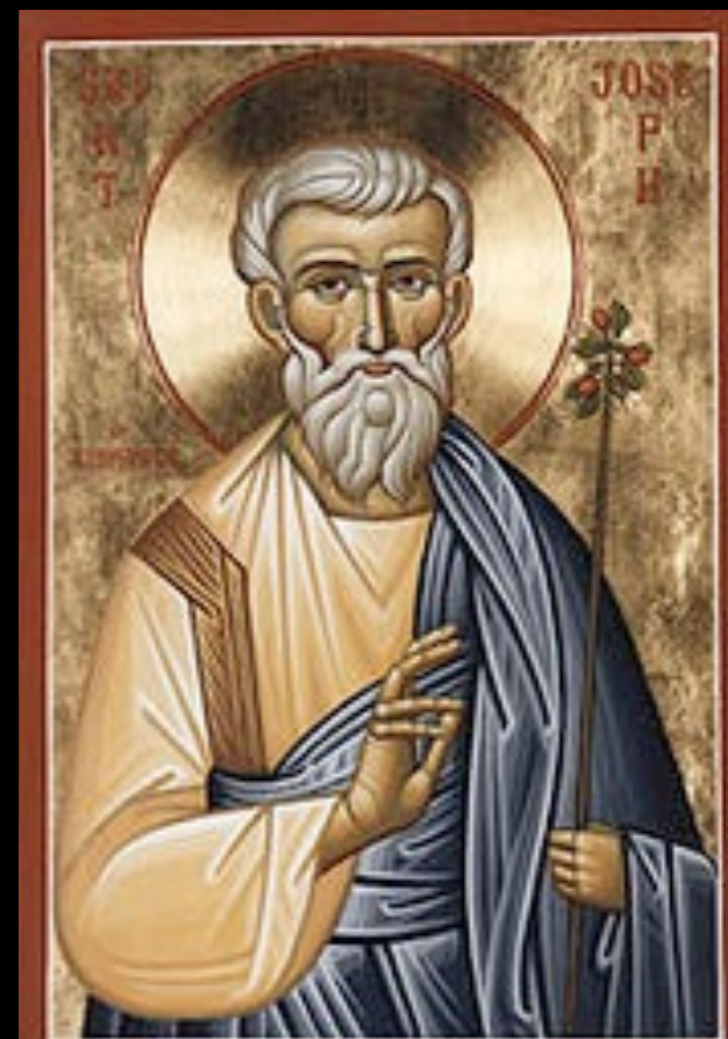
**There was an
Empy Tomb**

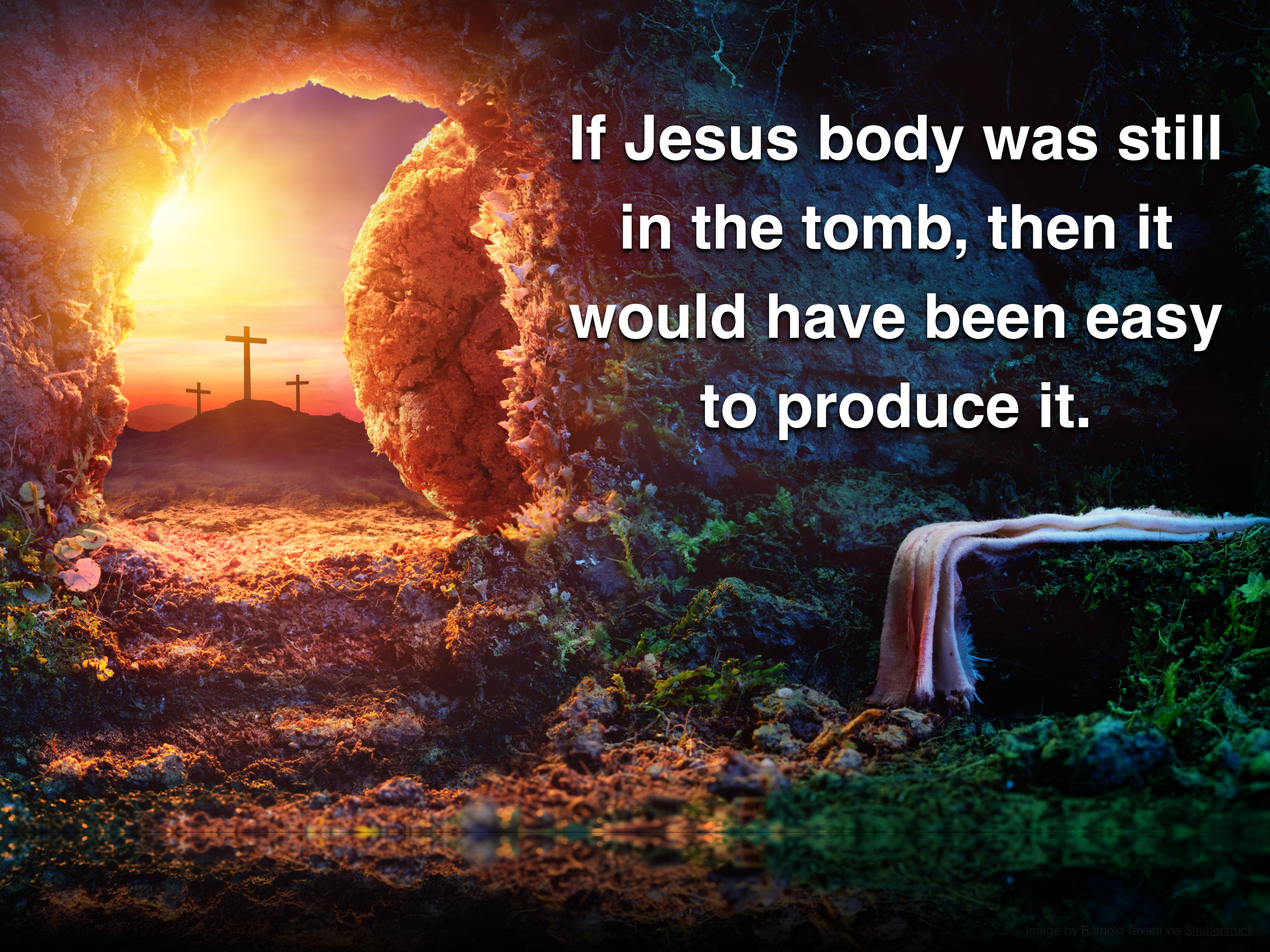


**All four Gospels record
that Jesus was buried
in the tomb of
Joseph of Arimathea.**

Joseph of Arimathea

- member of the Sanhedrin
- “who had not consented to their decision to crucify Jesus” (Luke 23:51)
- requested the body of Jesus & buried him in his own tomb





**If Jesus body was still
in the tomb, then it
would have been easy
to produce it.**



— The Gospel of Matthew 28:12-13 —

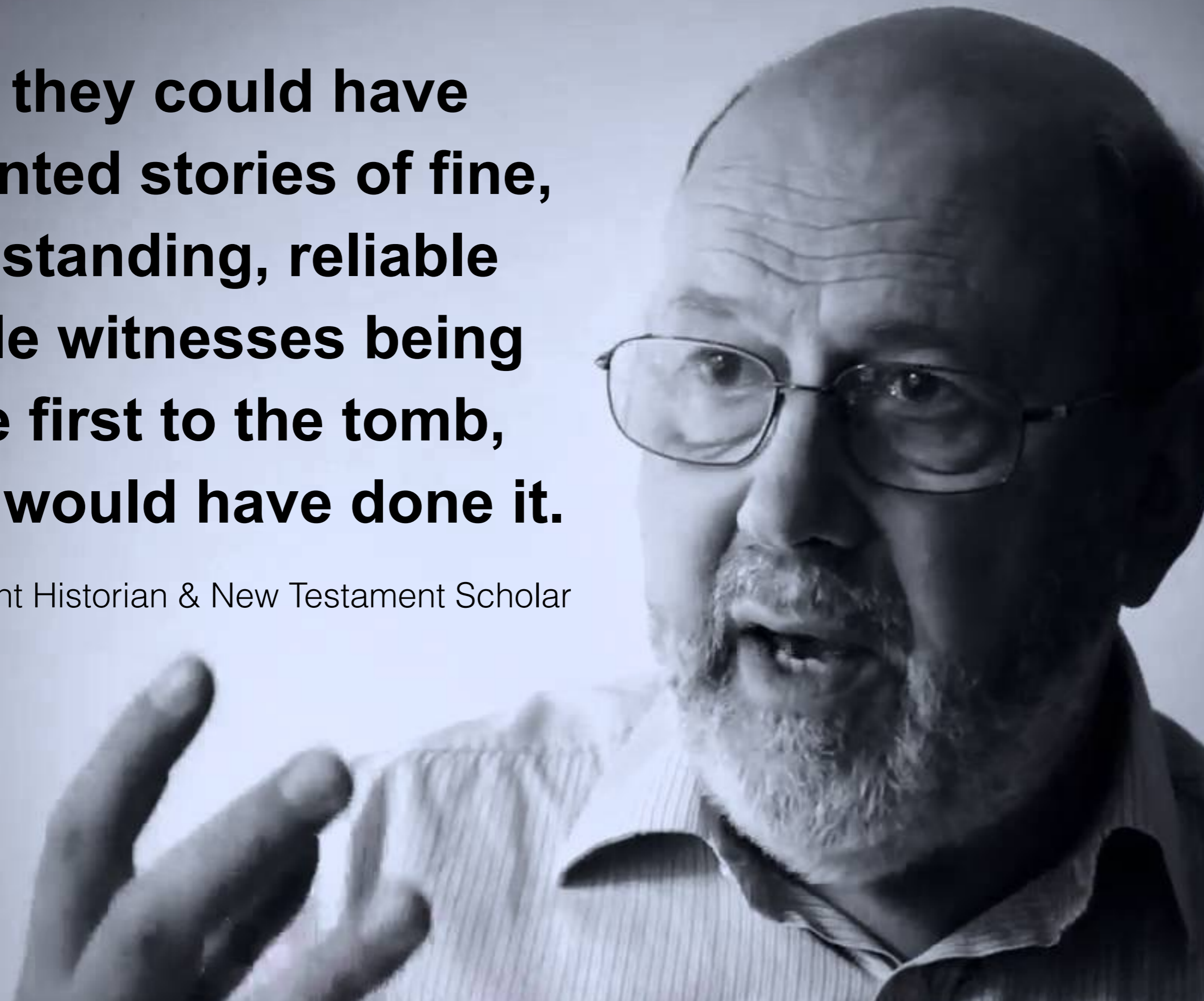
**[The chief priests]
gave a sufficient
sum of money to
the soldiers and
said, “Tell people,
‘His disciples came
by night and stole
him away while we
were asleep.’”**



**All four Gospels record
that the first eyewitnesses
of the empty tomb
were women.**

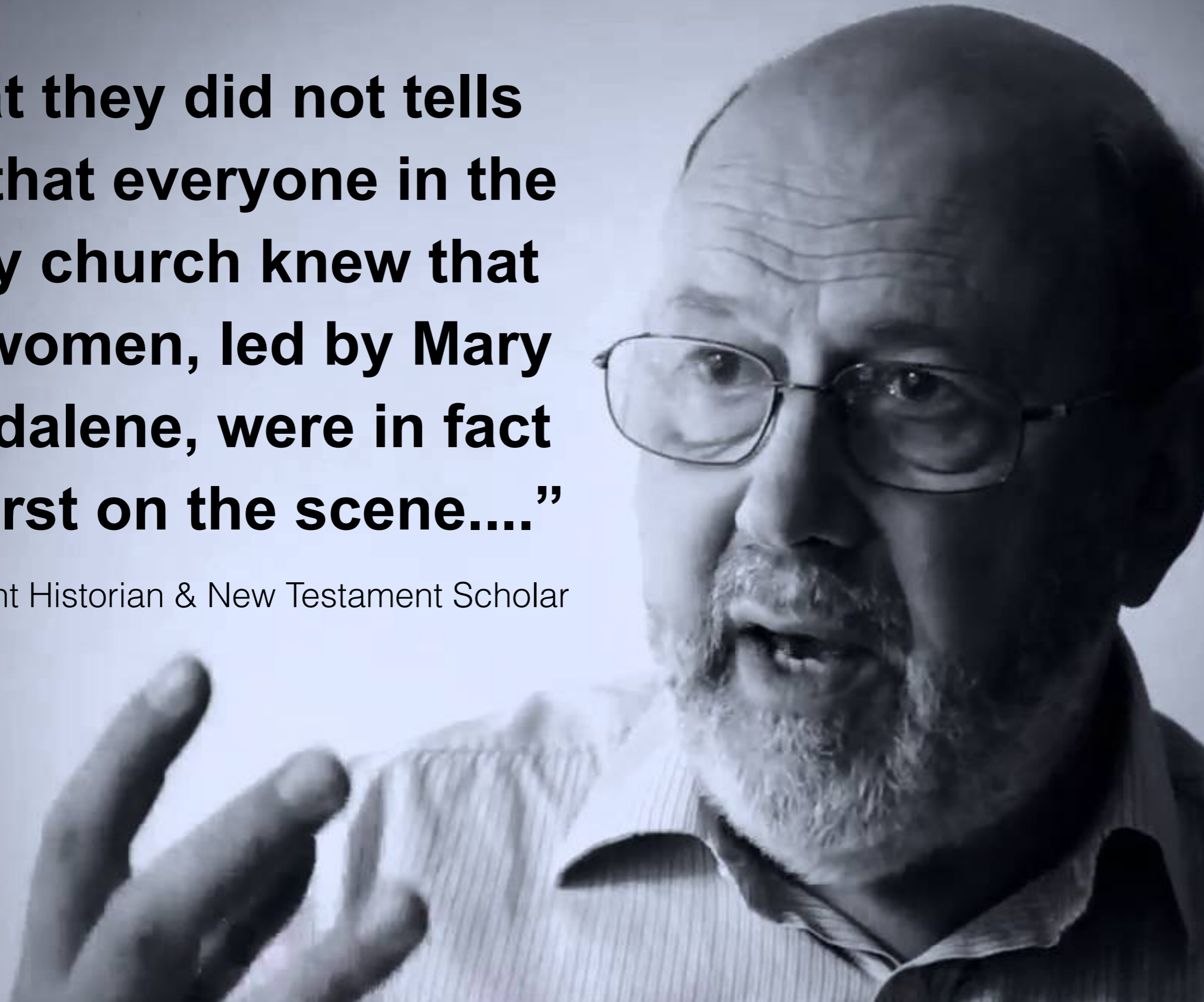
**If they could have
invented stories of fine,
upstanding, reliable
male witnesses being
the first to the tomb,
they would have done it.**

N.T. Wright Historian & New Testament Scholar



That they did not tells us...that everyone in the early church knew that the women, led by Mary Magdalene, were in fact the first on the scene....”

N.T. Wright Historian & New Testament Scholar





The First “E”

**There was an
Execution**



The Second “E”

**There was an
Empy Tomb**



The Third “E”

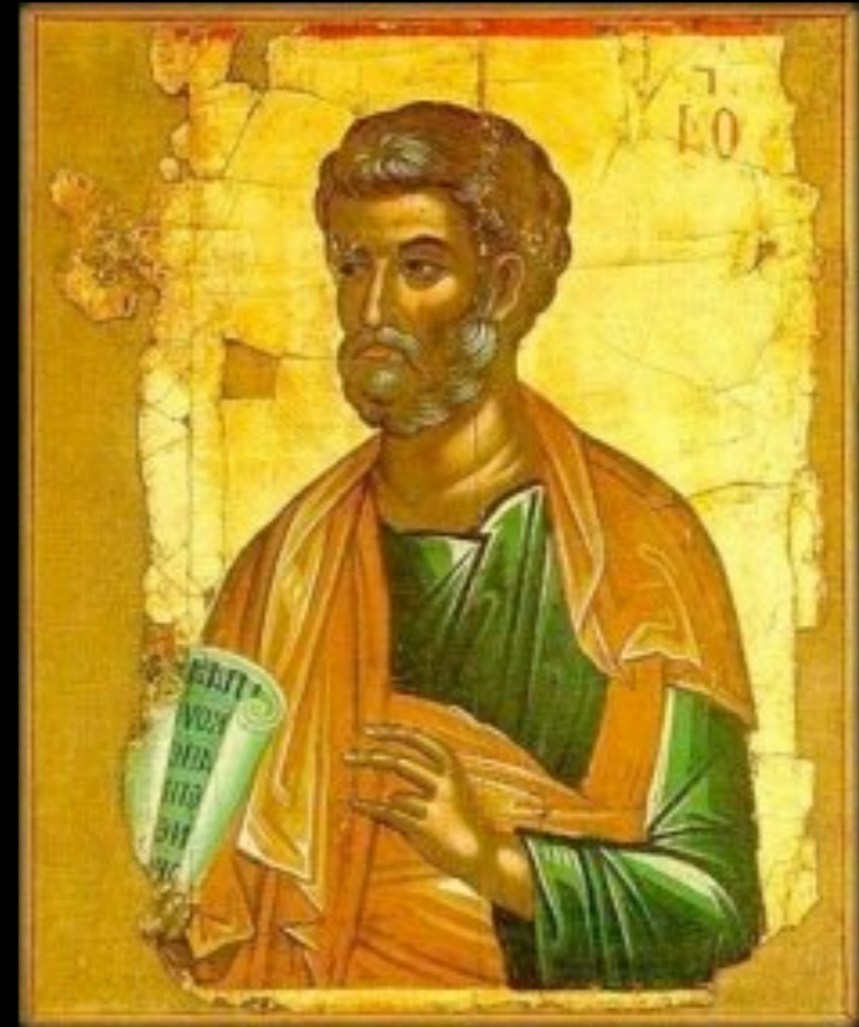
**There were
Eyewitnesses**

1 Corinthians 15:1-9

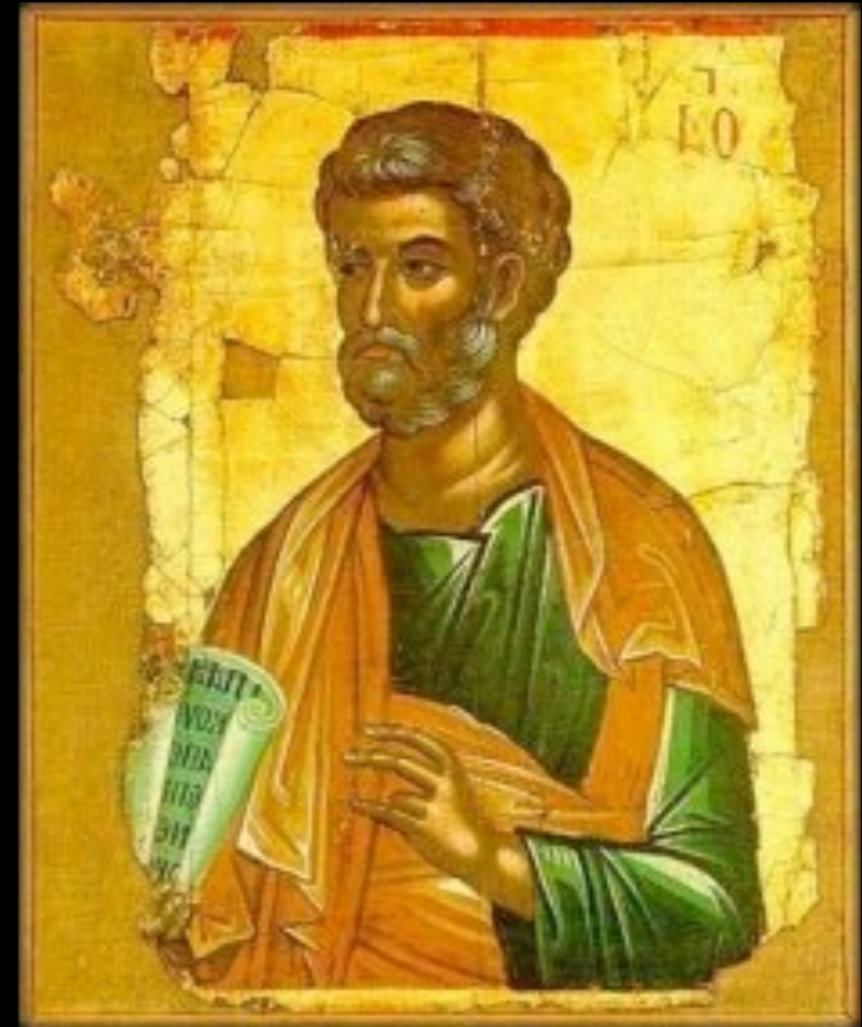
5 ...and then he appeared to **Cephas** [i.e., **Peter**], then to **the Twelve**. 6 Then he appeared to **more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time**, most of who are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to **James**, then to **all the Apostles....**

**This Jesus God
raised up, and
of that we are
all witnesses.**

The Apostle Peter in Acts 2



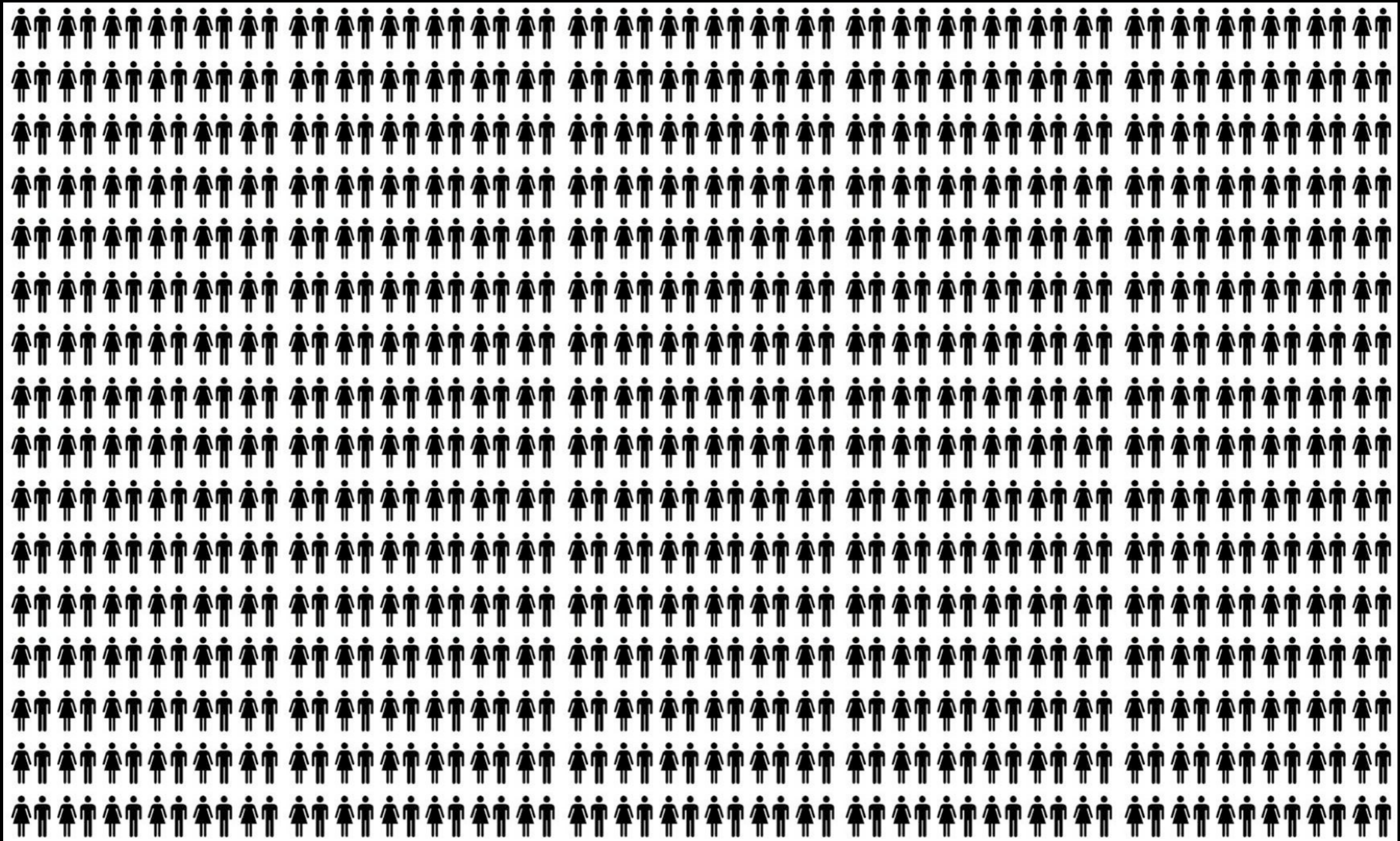
**For we did not follow
cleverly devised
myths when we made
known to you the
power and coming
of our Lord Jesus
Christ, but we were
eyewitnesses....**



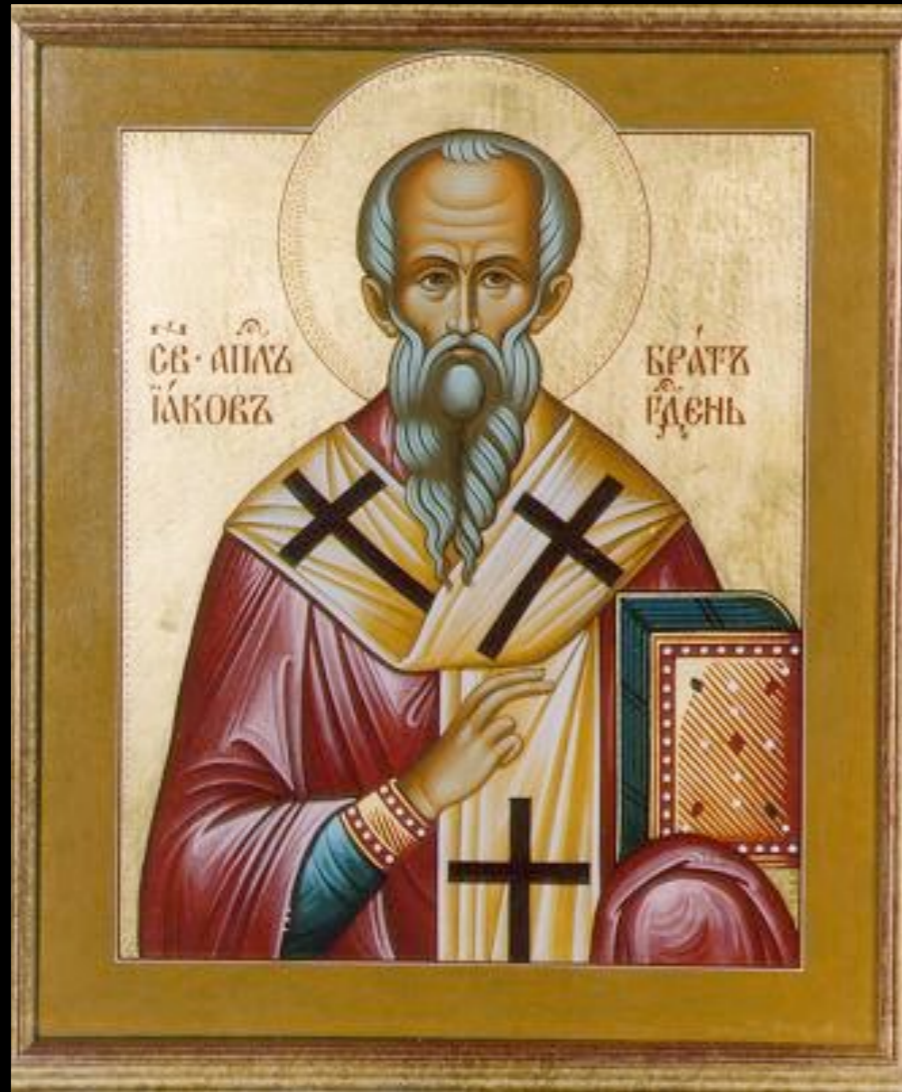
The Apostle Peter

2 Peter 2:16

**“...he appeared to over 500 people
at one time....”**



James the Brother of Jesus



- Did not follow Jesus during his public ministry
- Thought Jesus was out of his mind (Mark 3:21)
- Became the leader of the persecuted Jerusalem church

1 Corinthians 15:1-9

8 Last of all, as to one untimely born,
he appeared also to me. 9 For I am the
least of all the apostles, unworthy to
be called an apostle because I perse-
cuted the church of God.

Paul before King Agrippa



“Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead...?”

Paul before King Agrippa



**“The king knows about these things,
and to him I speak boldly.”**

Paul before King Agrippa



“For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner.”

— Acts 26 —

And with great
power **the apostles**
were giving their
testimony to the
resurrection of the
Lord Jesus, and
great grace was
upon them all.



— The Book of Acts 4:33 —

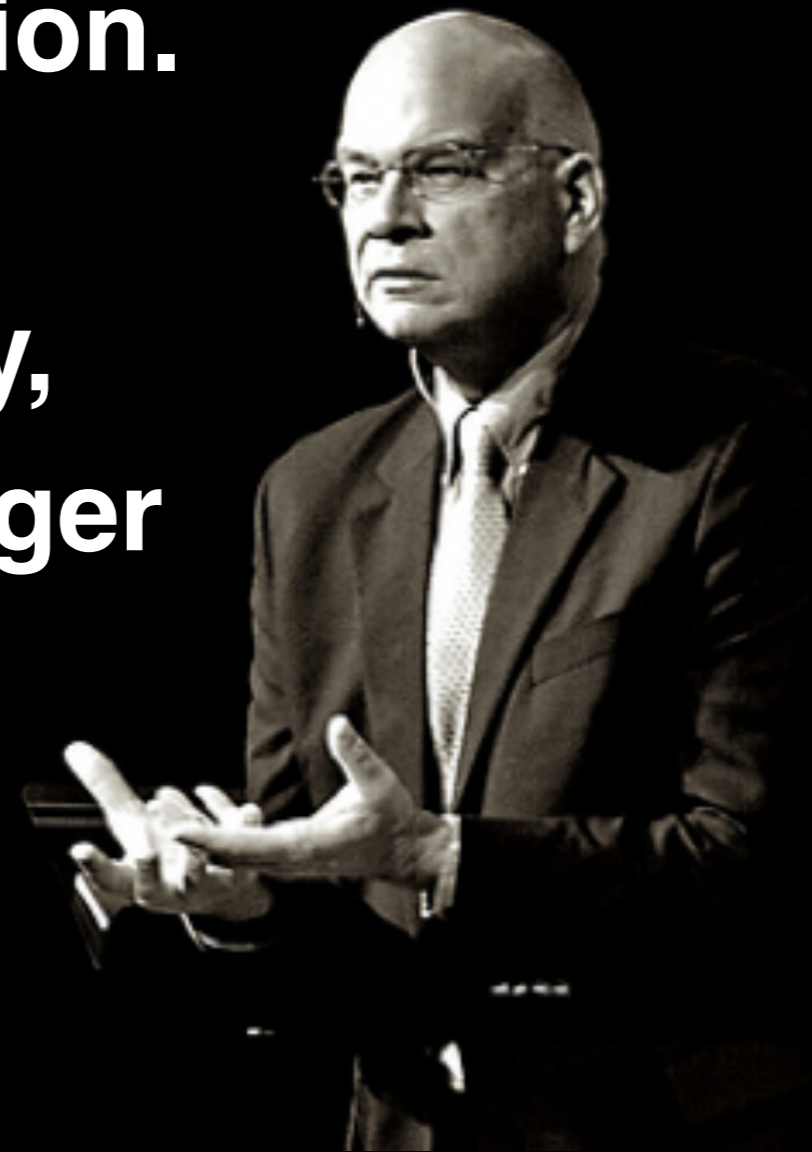
It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus' death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ.

Gerd Ludemann, Professor of History and Literature of Early Christianity at Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany



In the Christian view, the ultimate evidence for the existence of God is Jesus Christ. If there is a God, we characters in his play have to hope that he put some information about himself in the play. But Christians believe he did more than give us information. He wrote himself into the play as the main character in history, when Jesus was born in a manger and rose from the dead.

Dr. Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*





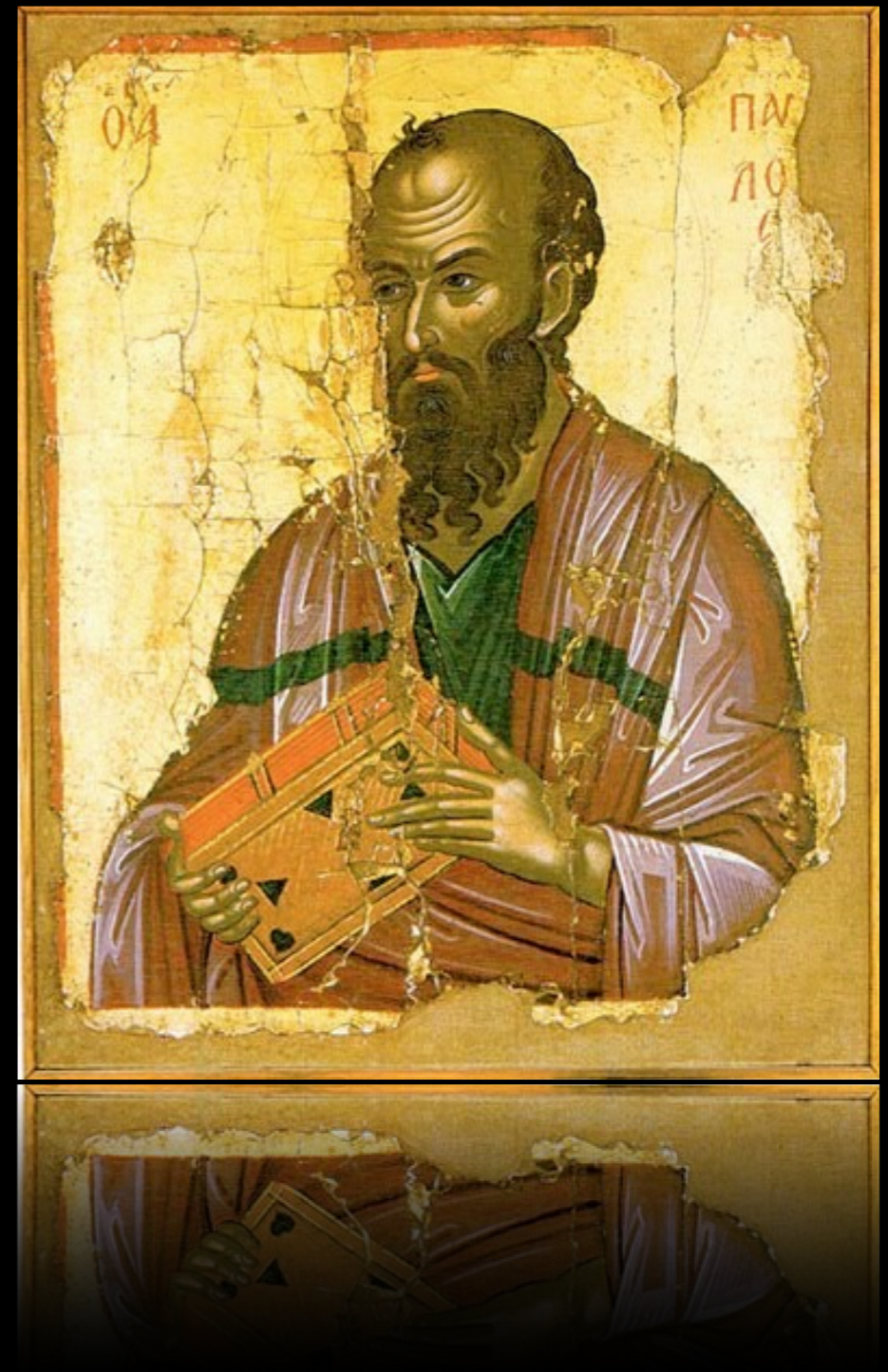
The Three “E’s”

Execution

Empy Tomb

Eyewitnesses

**And if Christ has not
been raised, our
preaching is useless
and so is your faith.
More than that, we are
then found to be false
witnesses about God,
for we have testified
about God that he raised
Christ from the dead....**



For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.... If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.



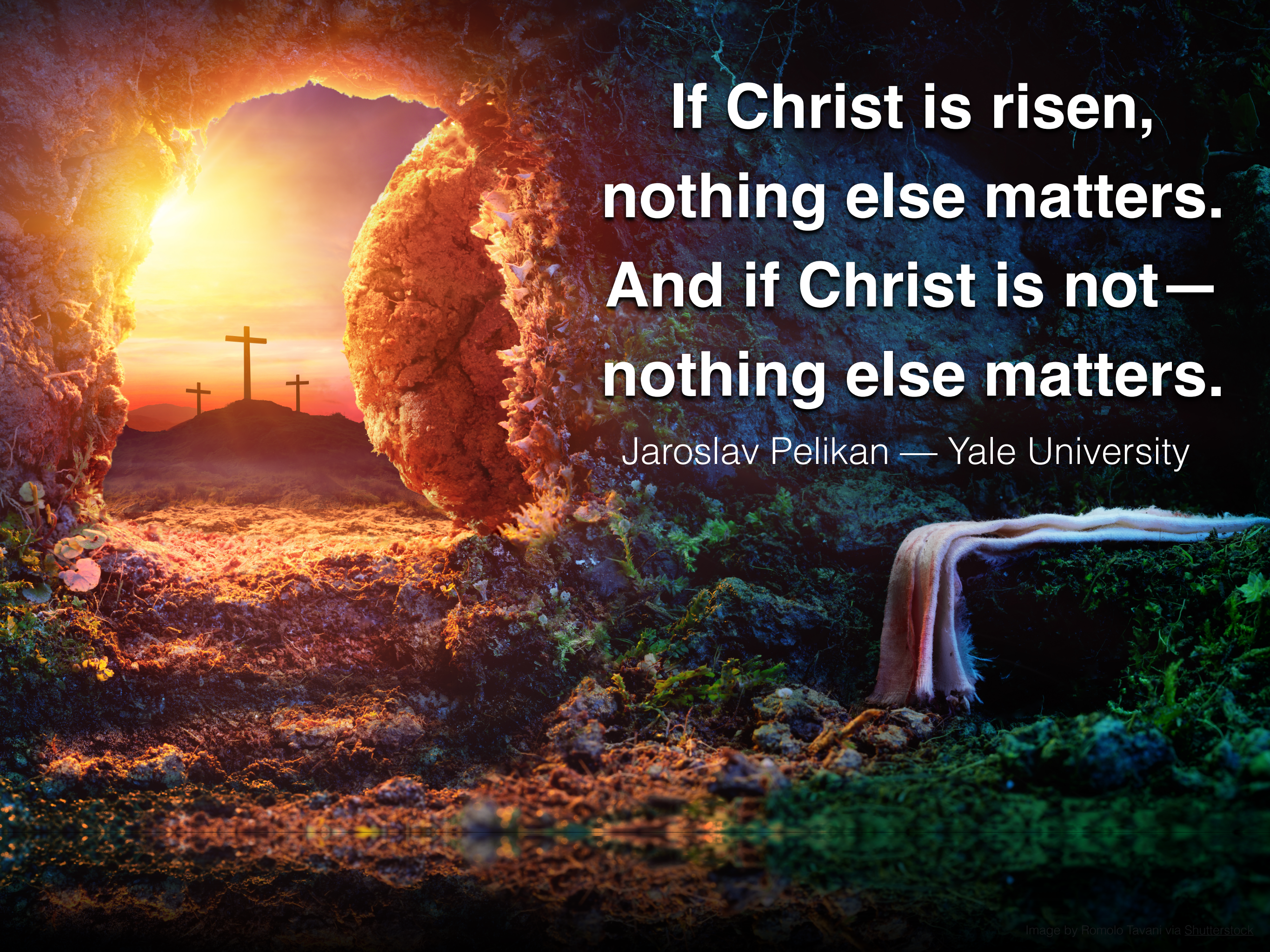
But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.



The Apostle Paul
— 1 Corinthians 15:14ff —



You owe it to yourself to come to terms with execution, empty tomb, & eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.



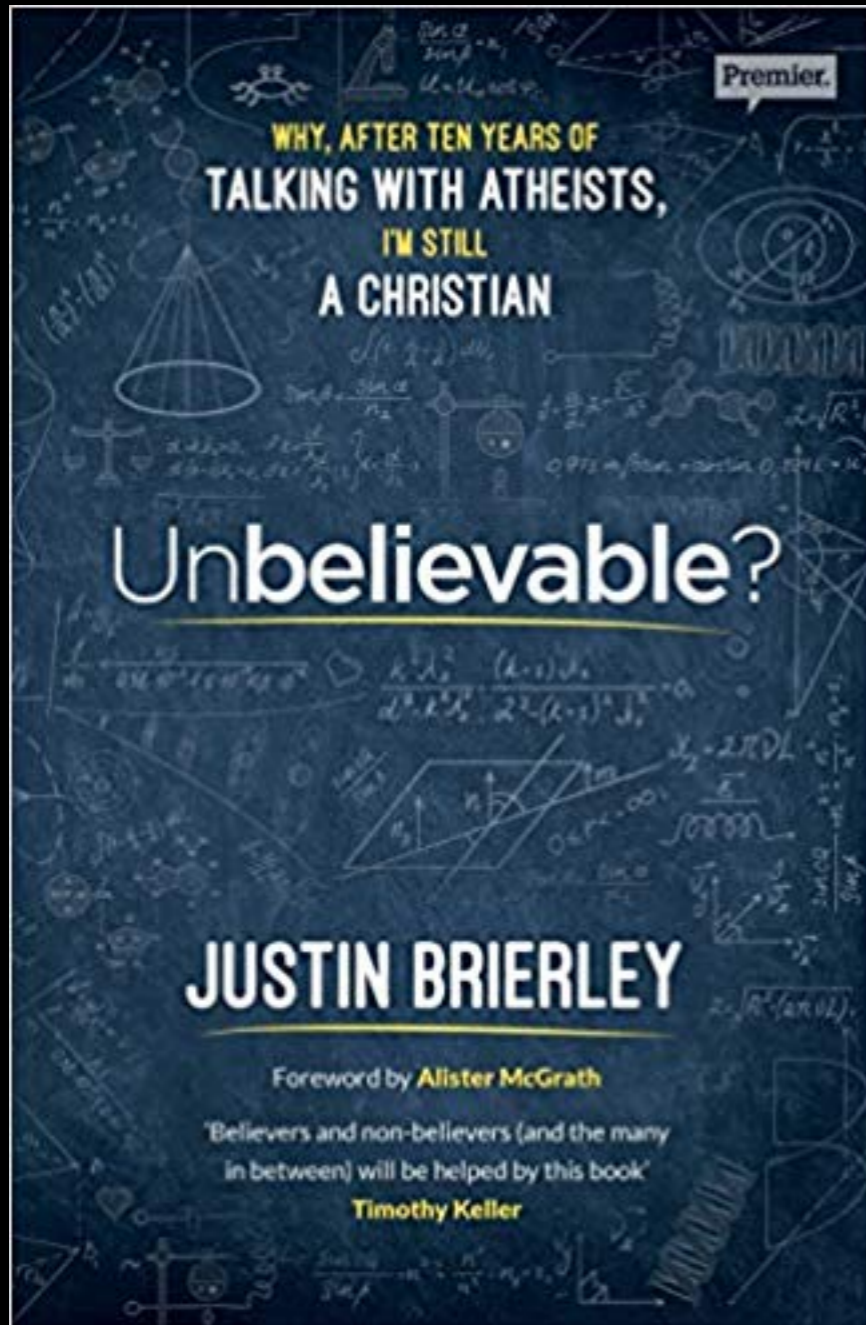
**If Christ is risen,
nothing else matters.
And if Christ is not—
nothing else matters.**

Jaroslav Pelikan — Yale University

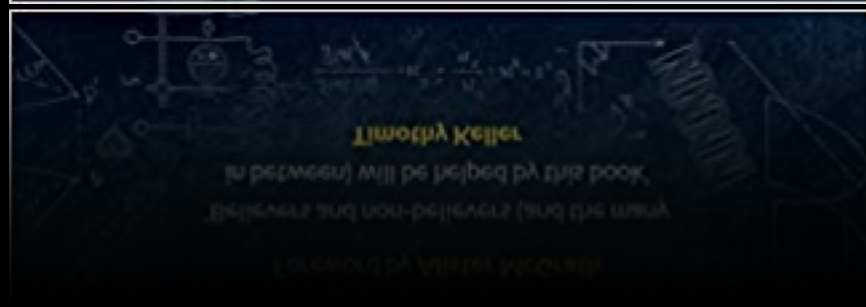


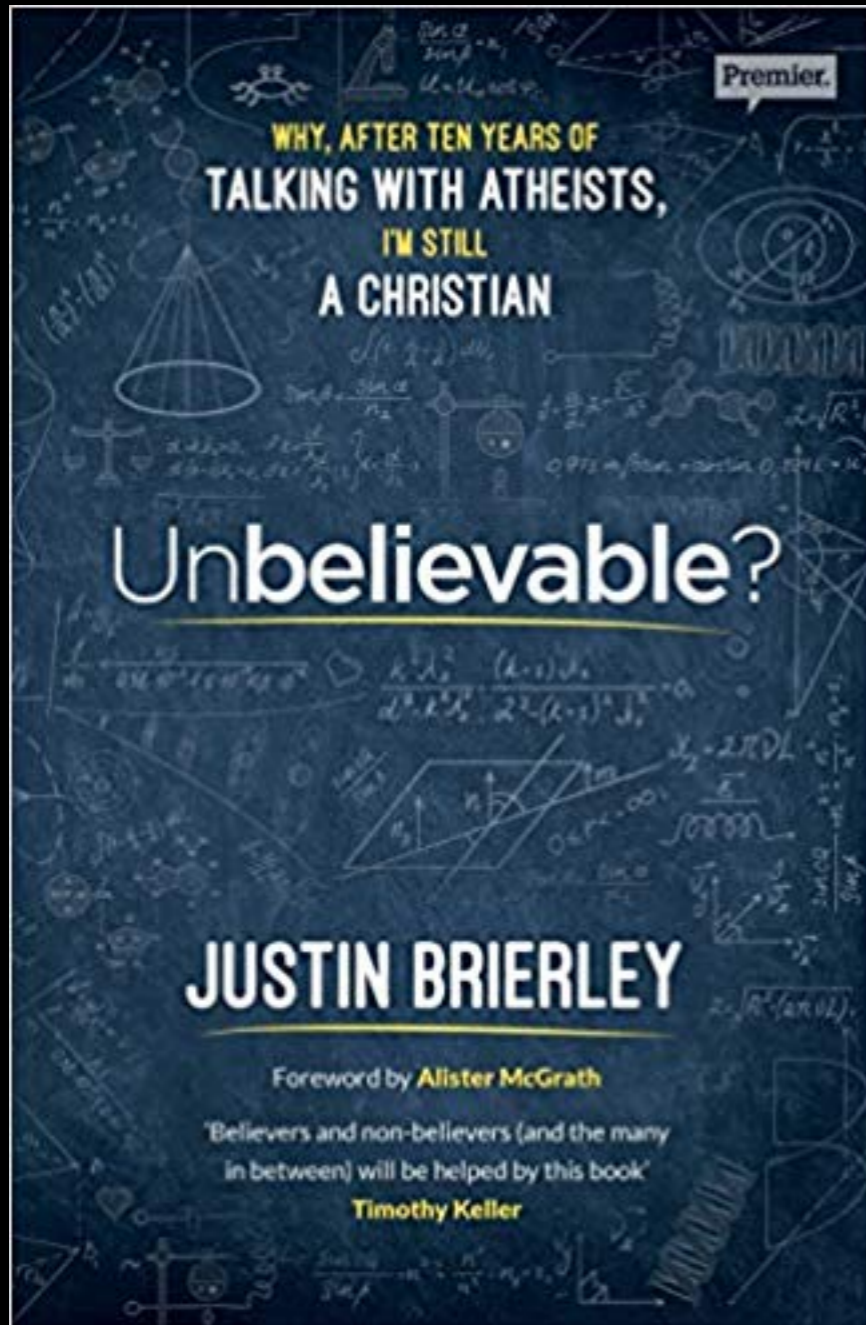
A Bonus “E”

**The Gospel of Jesus
is for Everyone**

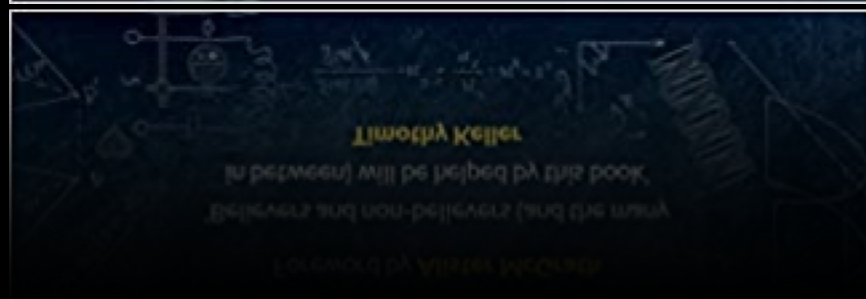


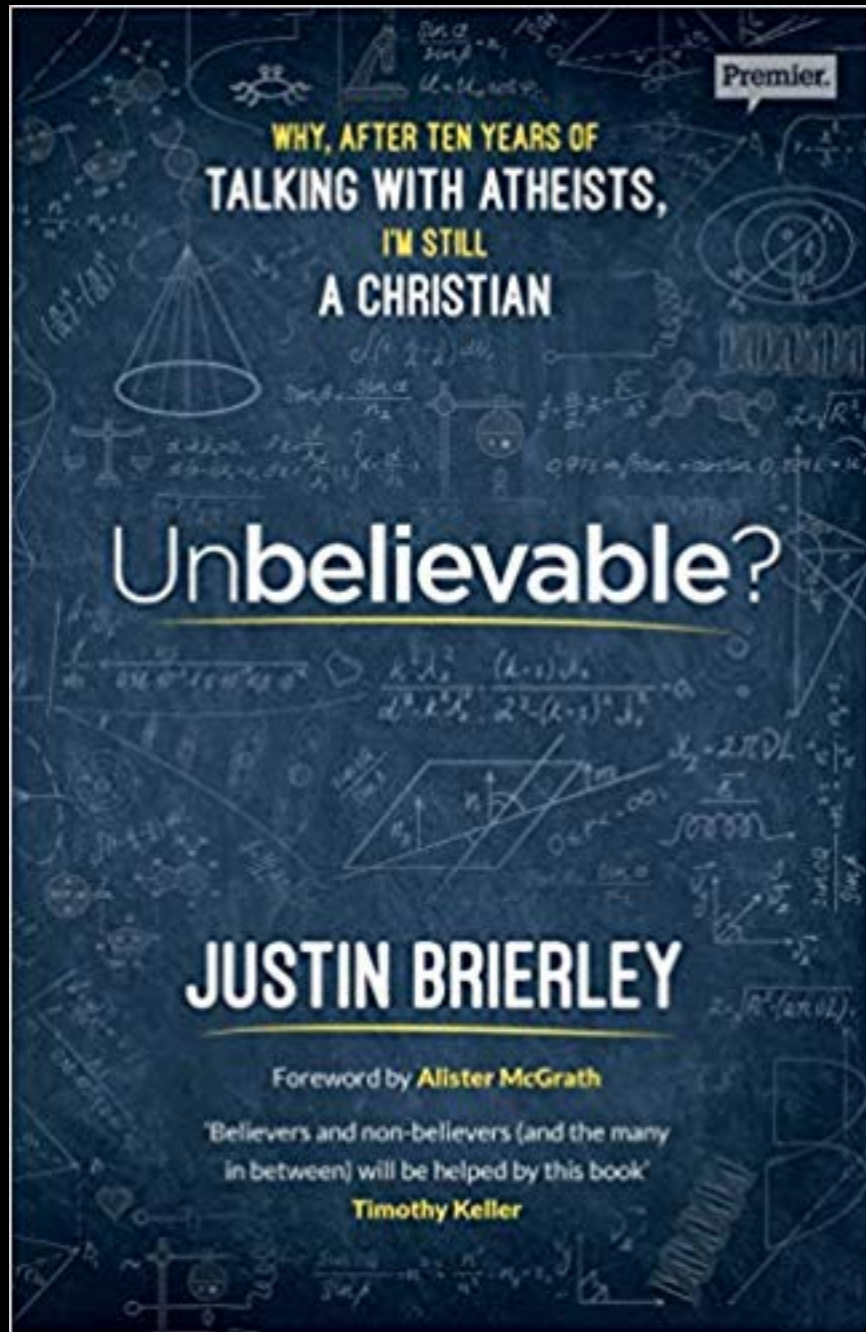
As a Christian, my reality is centered on the person of Jesus Christ. It all begins and ends with him.





His death is the defining act of love by a God who came in person to rescue and redeem his broken-yet-loved creation.





And his resurrection is the breaking in of a new world where death, pain and despair will one day be swallowed up in a glorious new creation.

**NOT ONLY IS THE GOOD
NEWS ABOUT JESUS
THE GREATEST NEWS
THAT HAS BEEN HEARD,
BUT IT IS THE BEST
POSSIBLE NEWS THAT
COULD EVER BE HEARD
AND BELIEVED.**



Question:
So therefore it
follows that you
believe he was divine?

Answer: Yes.



Question:
**And therefore it follows
that you believe
he physically rose
from the dead?**

Answer:
**Yes. I have no problem
believing in miracles....
I am surrounded by
them. I am one.**



Question:
And when you pray,
you pray to Jesus?

Answer: Yes.

Question:
The risen Jesus?

Answer: Yes.





As a community of Jesus' followers, let's commit ourselves to this Good News of Jesus. This is priority number one. It is of first importance.



The Three “E’s”

Execution

Empy Tomb

Eyewitnesses

+

Everyone