

Forensic Faith | Part 3  
August 3, 2019

Introduction:

- I. Part 3
  - A. Quincy..!
  - B. CSI: Crime Scene Investigation
    1. CSI: New York
    2. CSI: Miami
    3. CSI: Gastonia
  - C. NCIS United States Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) is the primary law enforcement agency of the U.S. Department of the Navy.
    1. Los Angeles
    2. New Orleans
  - D. All these shows have in common...
    - a) application of scientific methods and techniques to the investigation of crime.
  - E. They have to accumulate evidence, clues...information, resources, people..
    1. To draw a conclusion...that they feel is true..!
      - a) That they 'believe' this is how this went down
      - b) They have "FAITH"...they are right!
  - F. The point I'm getting at is...
    - a) We all know what it means to have belief in something
      - (1) We know what it means to faith in something
  - G. HEAR THIS: In Christianity...
    1. When we use words like...faith & belief..
      - a) They do not take on different meanings just b/c they are used in a religious context
    2. HOWEVER: for some reason...they Become more associated with HOPE
      - (a) Instead of reason...rationale
  - H. HOPE...becomes the word associated with religious faith/belief
    1. But..we don't have to RELY ON HOPE...!
      - a) There is so much evidence and data proving the existence of Jesus Christ...
        - (a) The accuracy of the Bible
      - b) I believe this is why so many college students lose their faith
      - c) They were never given the evidence...the data
        - (1) They were just told...believe have faith...
        - (2) That's what this series is about..
      - d) That's not enough...it's more than an intellectual understanding
      - e) academic...
        - (1) Logical...

(2) historically accurate

- I. Deciding whether or not Christ was real...died...resurrected...
    1. SLIDE: 4 Reasons
      1. It can't be true (intellectual hang-up)
      2. I don't want it to be true (mess my lifestyle)
      3. I'm not sure what is true (out of context)
      4. I believe it's true...now what? (believe/receive/live/share)
    - SLIDE:
      - 5 things needed to pull off a CONSPIRACY (Lee Harvey Oswald, Apollo, etc)
        1. A very small number of conspirators
        2. Great communication
        3. A short time span
        4. Close friendships
        5. Low pressure
      2. 12...120...the 500...
      3. They are all part of the GREATEST CONSPIRACY in the history of the world.....!!!!
      4. Or...They were simply eyewitnesses who just reported what they saw...THE TRUTH!!!!...
  - J. Textual Criticism: (biblical criticism) the process of attempting to ascertain the original wording of a text.
  - K. There are 1,565 copies dated on or around 3rd century
  - L. That's 1100 years from its inception...!
  - M. 5,843 copies...of the Greek New Testament...!!!
  - N. 2nd century AD...
    1. Less than 30 years from the 'original' to the copy..!
    2. Iliad: 1100 years...1565 copies
    3. NT: less than 30 years...5,483 copies...!!
    4. (read out loud) 1 Peter 3:15  
 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.
- II. Knowing this about the NT gives us confidence...boldness...
- A. 27 books
  - B. Bible is 66 books...OT...has 39 books...
  - C. What about the OT?
  - D. 1660s B.C. to the 400s B.C.
    1. 3 parts: Pentateuch: 1st 5 books: Genesis-Deuteronomy:
      - a) PENTATEUCH by Moses
      - b) Prophets-(major/minor...1 scroll)
      - c) The Writings (psalms, proverbs)
    2. PRESERVING THE O.T.
      - a) Moses...first 5 books
        - (1) Placed in the Ark of the Covenant by priests

- b) Later, God used priests like:
    - (1) Samuel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel to write other books
  - c) Books kept in the temple treasury
  - d) Some who were not priests:
    - (1) King David & Solomon, major/minor prophets
  - 3. Ezra (Priest) and other priests and Levites completed the assembly of the OT late 5th century BC
    - a) Torah: kept in the Most Holy Place in 2nd temple
      - (1) Copies produced by METICULOUS transcribing process...
    - b) 3rd century BC
      - (1) OT books translated from Hebrew into Greek
        - (a) 70 Jewish scholars
          - (i) The Septuagint
            - (a) Latin for 'translation of the 70 interpreters'
            - (i) Oldest manuscripts date 1st and 2nd century
- E. From there..able to produce more copies...holding on to the integrity of the original works...
  - 1. For almost 2 thousand years...the process of transcribing manuscripts of OT continued...
  - 2. Argument: were they sure it was still accurate?
- F. That questioned was answered in 1947..!
- G. SLIDE: 1947...Dead Sea Scrolls
  - 1. Time Magazine: April 15, 1957
    - a) A decade later...they knew they'd found something
    - b) obscure cave west of the Dead Sea,
  - 2. Bedouin (Bed-o-in) shepherds discovered some scrolls carefully placed in ten tall jars.
  - 3. They did not know what they had come upon,
    - a) but they sold the scrolls to a nearby dealer.
    - b) eventually some
      - (1) 800 different manuscripts would be found in
    - c) 11 caves near the valley called Qumran.
    - d) In all, some 60,000 fragments, portions, or complete scrolls
    - e) of these
- H. Found in Qumran: (Koom-ron)
- I. SLIDE: World Map: DEAD SEA...Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan...Israel
- J. SLIDE: Closer map...showing Bethlehem...Jericho...
  - 1. Location of the caves...11 caves
- K. SLIDE:
  - 1. Pic of outside of cave...give you a feel for terrain..area

- L. Either fragments or complete copies were found of every book in the Old Testament except Esther.
  - 1. They had been placed in these caves around the middle of the first century AD,
  - 2. they had lain there undisturbed for 1900 years!
  - 3. But why are these Dead Sea Scrolls so important for us?
    - a) The reason is that before this discovery the earliest manuscripts of biblical texts dated from the 9th century AD.
- M. SLIDE: picture of laboratory...
  - 1. So as these scrolls were painstakingly unrolled and translated,
    - a) biblical scholars and Christians everywhere wondered what the results would be.
    - b) Would the new finds provide contradictory texts, quite different from the text of our Bibles?
    - c) Would the Bible have to be altered or expanded?
  - 2. SLIDE: 2 pictures of the manuscripts...
    - a) we have a scroll of the complete book of Isaiah dating from the 2nd century BC
      - (1) It is a thousand years older than any previous Hebrew Scripture document that we had before 1947.
  - 3. The texts are amazingly similar to the documents we already have.
    - a) The variations are less than 2%, and
    - b) not a single teaching or doctrine of the Bible we have is altered.
    - c) Rather than posing a threat to the Christian faith,
      - (1) the Dead Sea Scrolls have, in fact, provided
      - (2) convincing support for the genuineness of God's revelation as given to us in the Bible.
  - 4. Dead Sea Scrolls (housed in the Shrine of the Book, part of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem)
- N. Even more proof...more evidence...
- O. for us to have confidence when discussing our faith
  - 1. Not just hope...rational reasoning!!
- III. More rational reasoning can be found in what's called the 4 Gospels...of the NT
  - A. SLIDE:
    - The four Gospels..(Good News)
    - Matthew
    - Mark
    - Luke
    - John
  - B. Why are these books important...?
    - 1. Narratives of the life, teachings, miracles of Jesus Christ...
  - C. They represent the backbone of our Christ-following faith...
    - 1. We need to know and understand these men and these books...

- D. We don't give them deity...but knowing a little bit more about who they were helps us determine the full picture they each paint of Jesus...
  - 1. Think of them as 4 squares...that put together...give us 1 BIG square...
    - a) Of understanding...full picture of Jesus' life here on earth
- E. The 4 Gospels: 'Good news' 'good tidings!'
- F. SLIDE:
- G. The four Gospels..(Good News)
- H. Matthew: 41 AD
  - 1. Wrote to Hebrew audience
  - 2. Jesus' genealogy
- I. Mark: 50-56 AD
  - 1. Wrote to Gentiles
  - 2. Christ as "Suffering Servant"
- J. Luke: 60 AD
  - 1. 1. Only Gentile in NT
  - 2. Master historian
- K. John 90 AD
  - 1. Theological content: (person of Christ, faith)
  - 2. Deity of Jesus
- L. IMPORTANT REASON: for multiple writings of Jesus..
  - 1. Goes back to the time of Moses...and OT law
    - a) A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15).
  - 2. Each account has varying details...!
    - a) Same broad strokes...different perspectives of the same events
- M. Do you know why there are 4 different perspectives...b/c we need them...
  - 1. Mortals...even when there's only 2 of us...seeing the same thing...we get varying perspectives!!!
    - a) Illustration:
  - 2. Most common example of different perspective is a Glass half filled with water. WATER BOTTLE..!
    - a) Some see is half full, some see half empty and some say it's always filled. (air & water)
  - 3. A shoe manufacturer who decided to open the Congo market sent two salesmen to the undeveloped territory. One salesman cabled back: "Prospect here nil. No one wears shoes." The other salesman reported enthusiastically, "Market potential terrific! Everyone is barefooted."

SAME QUESTION...DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE:

Man: Father, can I drink alcohol while I'm praying?

Father: NO, it's a sin.

A different scene...same question...perspective of the wording!

Man: Father, can I pray while I'm drinking alcohol?

Father :Yes my child.. Of course you can!...people do it all the time!

4. Quick..short...funny examples of perspective and how different it can...with just a subtle variance...or change..
    - a) That's why I LOVE that there are 4 Gospels...
    - b) God knew exactly what we needed to fully understand the story of Jesus...
  5. We needed perspectives...
  6. the stories aren't different...
  7. the point of views are...
    - a) Modern composition of elegant lines meeting contemporary style.
    - b) building..simple/sleek design...efficient design
      - (1) Makes all feel welcome
      - (2) NOthing pretentious..
    - c) UPS-looking hub..no steeple...concrete everywhere...
      - (1) Don't know if you should pray or look for a package...
  8. Perspectives...and we needed more than ONE to tell the ENTIRE STORY!...
    - a) We got it...here they are!..
    - b) The 4 Gospels...!
- N. Listen to how they all start...!...the same but with slight variances...
1. They are all 4 about to write about the life of Jesus...same story...even start with different styles of introduction..
  2. Matthew 1:1 (genealogy)
  3. 1This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham
  4. Mark 1:1 (narrative to the Gentiles)
  5. 1 This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God
  6. Luke 1:3 (Master Historian)
  7. 3 Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write an accurate account for you, most honorable Theophilus,
    - a) wealthy relative of Caesar,
    - b) an influential government official,
    - c) a wealthy benefactor who supported Paul or
    - d) Paul's Roman lawyer
- O. John 1:1: Deity of Christ
1. 1 In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- P. Gotten started: first question....
1. Were these 4 men telling the truth...?

- Q. Just like with conspiracies...there are 'tests' that we can perform or play out to better help us measure the authenticity of the 4 Gospels...!
1. We can trust that they are the original writings of these men...
    - a) However...is what they wrote accurate...were they truly witnesses...?
- R. Let's use what is called a '3-part witness test'
- S. Slide:
- T. 3-Part Witness Test
1. Were they actually there?
  2. Can we verify what they say in some way?
  3. Do they have some reason to lie?
- U. Slide:
- V. 4-Part Witness Test
- IV. 1. Were they actually there?
1. -if they weren't there...they can't help us...
  2. Jesus lived from AD 1-33
    - a) And the different church councils didn't begin affirming the writings until closer to AD 350...
  3. To be 'eye-witnesses'...the apostles needed to have lived during the life of Jesus..to be considered as authentic accounts..
  4. 70 AD is a great place to start..
    - a) For this was the year that the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed..
    - b) The one that Jesus predicted would occur...
  5. Slide:
  6. Matthew 24:1-2
  7. 1 As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. 2 Then he asked them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."
    - a) With Jesus predicting this to occur and the disciples being so anxious to know when it would take place...
      - (1) It's easy to see that the Gospel were written before the Temple was destroyed
        - (a) We know that the temple was destroyed in AD 70
        - (b) Rome dispatched an army in AD 66 in response to the Jewish rebellion and ultimately the temple was destroyed in AD 70
      - (2) Think about it:
      - (3) the writers would have LOVED an opportunity to promote the prediction of Jesus...
        - (a) They would've certainly wrote that account of the temple in their writings...
        - (b) but it had not occurred yet...

- b) STory of NRC: built 2008...built again in 2015...but if i finished my book in 2014...you're not gonna read about it
    - c) Giving us evidence that they were alive at the time of Christ...and the Gospels were written in the 1st century during the lifetime of said witnesses!!
- V. 2. Can we verify what they say in some way?
  - 1. We look for other pieces of evidence to see if they agree with what the witness said.
  - 2. Were there 'non-biblical' eyewitnesses to what these 4 men wrote..?
- B. Thallus: 5-60 AD
  - 1. Samaritan historian
    - a) Wrote 3 volume history of the Mediterranean area in the middle of the 1st century...
  - 2. Chronicled the ALLEGED crucifixion of Jesus
    - a) Felt he had to give an explanation of the darkness that occurred at the time of Jesus' death
    - b) Page 197
    - c) In trying to explain away the darkness
      - (1) He inadvertently backed up the writings of M, M, L, & John
      - (2) Jesus was crucified
      - (3) Darkness covered the land when He died...
      - (4) More VALIDATION...credibility to the eye-witness accounts
- C. Tacitus (Tas-si-tus) AD 56-117
  - 1. Known for his analysis and examination of historical documents
    - a) Trusted ancient historian
    - b) Senator under Emperor Vespasian
      - (1) Proconsul of Asia
    - c) In his "ANNALS" of AD 116 he described Emperor Nero's response to the great fire in Rome and Nero's claim that the Christians were to blame:
    - d) PAGE 198
      - (1) Tacitus in describing Nero's actions and the presence of Christians in Rome...has again reluctantly admitted
      - (2) Key facts of Jesus' life
        - (a) That Jesus lived in Judea
        - (b) Crucified under Pontius Pilate
        - (c) Had followers who were persecuted for their belief in Jesus
  - 2. Josephus: AD 37-100
    - a) Josephus...credible historian whose work provides a thorough understanding of Jewish life in the first century
    - b) and the Jewish War.
    - c) Page 196 writing of Josephus:



- D. according to the Jewish historian Josephus Flavius.
- E. Roman city of Julias was born out of the Jewish fishing village of Bethsaida during the first century A.D,
- F. The New Testament describes Bethsaida as the home of Jesus' apostles
  - 1. Peter, Andrew and Philip.
  - 2. Jesus also healed a blind man at Bethsaida,
  - 3. according to Mark 8:22-26, while Luke 9:10-17 describes a nearby location for the feeding of the five thousand people.
- G. There was a structure built named
  - 1. The Church of the Apostles, which is said to have been built over the house of Jesus' disciples Peter and Andrew,
- H. has been discovered near Israel's Sea of Galilee, according to a team of American and Israeli archaeologists.
  - a) "Of equal importance, the church indicates that there existed a living memory in the Christian community about the location of Bethsaida, home of Peter, Andrew and Philip (John 1:44)."
  - b) John 1:43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, follow me." 44 Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown.
  - 2. History keeps lining up...with every new discovery...!!!
- I. Slide:  
Church of the Apostles
- J. Slide:  
(2 pictures-attached)  
Elara1: excavation site  
Elara2: mosaic flooring
- K.
  - 1. That's just 3 non-biblical accounts from historians of that time...
    - a) 1st century and one from present day...published on Friday of this week!
- L. Here's what the 3 non-biblical accounts and discovery from this past week have informed the world...!!
  - a) -Jesus traveled to Galilee
  - b) -nearby location of the feeding of the 5K
  - c) -lived in Judea
  - d) -Wise King of the Jews
  - e) Accused by Jewish leaders
  - f) Crucified by Pilate
  - g) Darkness explained
  - h) Reportedly rose after death
  - i) Believed to be the Messiah
  - j) Called Christ

- k) Followers called Christians
    - 2. Description of Jesus...although not exhaustive ...is amazingly similar to the accounts given by M, M, L, and John
  - M. 4. Were they there?...it appears so
  - N. Can we verify what they say in some way?...
    - 1. several non-biblical historical writings coupled with present day discoveries!!!
- VI. Do they have some reason to lie?
- A. -Some people are driven by a bias or are trying to gain something by lying.
  - B. What were these 4 men hoping to gain by lying?
    - 1. Jesus to be God..? a lie can't help with that
      - a) Did they lie about the resurrection?
  - C. What was their motive?
    - 1. Typically...a motive is one or more of 3 things..
      - a) Financial Greed:
        - (1) Monetary gain
        - b) Sexual or Relational desire
        - c) Pursuit of simply just having POWER..
      - 2. Those 3 things are present in just about any BAD DECISION or ACTION we take..money, sex, power...
  - D. All investigations or court scenes...
    - 1. What do we see or hear?
      - a) They are always looking for "what was the motive?"
  - E. Did these 4 men (M, M, L, J) have an ulterior motive when writing their Gospels?
    - 1. Any good reason for them to be driven to lie by one of these motives?
    - 2. There is no evidence to suggest that claim...!!!
    - 3. Financial Gain:
      - a) Nothing in history or in the text describe these men as having much material wealth..
        - (1) Actually:
        - (2) We know that were chased from place to place
        - (3) Picking up and leaving in a moment's notice
      - b) They left their homes and followed Jesus
    - 4. Paul described them as, ..
      - a) "Both hungry & thirsty and poorly clothed..."
      - b) None of them were in it for the money...!!
      - c) They were known as men of poverty
    - 5. It was obvious that 'money' financial gain...were not the motives that drove these men to make claims about Jesus Christ..
      - a) In fact...it was just the opposite...their claims about Jesus Christ left them in poor, tired, hungry and in poverty...
      - b) Making their claims did not make them rich!
  - F. The 2nd motive of Sex/lust/relational desire

1. That doesn't make a lot of sense either...given their stories
  2. The claims that they were making about Jesus Christ didn't make them popular (MORE LIKE INFAMOUS) and attractive...
    - a) Poverty doesn't make you attractive
  3. Actually, it is believed that these men were married...
    - a) And some took their wives with them
      - (1) Their 'love-life' was not the crux of the message of Jesus...
        - (a) So we don't really know about their marriage...
          - (i) Some had children
  4. We know this:
    - a) At this time...many men in that day and age had several wives..
      - (1) But not these men or the apostles...
    - b) Even wrote in 1 Tim. 3:2:
      - (1) Men could not take on church leadership roles unless they had only one wife...
  5. Most were married and sexual purity in very HIGH REGARD
- G. Sexual motives/lustful motives were not the reason for claims of Jesus
- H. 3rd motive of the pursuit of POWER
1. Now..this thought comes up at first glance...
  2. Think about the power of the church especially in Rome
    - a) State-sponsored religion by the 4th century
      - (1) No doubt: Popes of the Roman Catholic Church were incredibly powerful/influential...
        - (a) Religiously & Politically
  3. But..remember...these men (M, M, L, J) made these claims in the 1st century
    - a) Polar opposite lives than those of the Popes
  4. Think about POWER:...strength, control
    - a) These men had neither...
    - b) they didn't even have the power to protect their own well-being...or even their own lives!!
- I. Their claims about Jesus were more a liability than any kind of power or asset!
1. All 4 of these men were persecuted for their claims...
    - a) 3 of them lost their lives...
    - b) That's not the kind of power that motivates someone
- J. Tragic events occurred to these men would were simply trying to do good...
1. They weren't driven by money, lust, or power...but by what they WERE WITNESSES TO...!! The Son of Man...
  2. Remember:
    - a) This doesn't come down to 'HOPE'...it's true...have faith it's true...!
  3. After studying the evidence ourselves...
    - a) The thousands of manuscripts that have proven to be accurate...

- b) Scrolls and manuscripts from 2000 years ago still matching what we read and study today..!
  - c) All these ancient historical records containing all the same OBJECTIVE information about the life of Jesus...
    - (1) What more do we need?
  - d) Understanding the social behavior of men:
    - (1) How it couldn't have been a conspiracy for this long?
    - (2) How they each witnessed the life, miracles, death and resurrection of Jesus with their own eyes...
    - (3) I love that they documented it in their own perspective...
    - (4) It's the same STORY...
    - (5) just like you and me
      - (a) We each love Jesus...
      - (b) But there are so many different ways to view His Love for us...
      - (c) If you and i wrote the story about 'why' we love Jesus...
        - (i) It would all be about Him and His Love..
          - (a) But we would all use different words and perspectives!
        - (ii) That's what makes Him God's Son...
4. I hope you can say these words right now:
- a) I've never had more boldness...confidence...in my Savior than I do right now...at this moment
    - (1) It's more than just HOPE...I believe it is FACT!.

