

## I Still Believe... Romans 5:1-5; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

- Jeremy was an extrovert tertiary student with a heart for God and a passion for music and singing. In the film “I Still Believe” he is pictured as a single man who has “fallen” for fellow classmate Melissa. Melissa eventually warms to his innocence, his voice and his faith. The relationship deepens and soon marriage is on the horizon but before Jeremy can propose Melissa is diagnosed with Stage 3 ovarian cancer and facing a grim prognosis.
- Melissa’s scared – yes – but she remains steadfast in her faith. *“If one person’s life is changed by what I go through, it will all be worth it,”* she says. Their story is captured and presented in the film “I Still Believe” and is based on the real-life story of Jeremy Camp and his first wife, Melisa Henning. For six months the cancer goes into remission and they marry. Everything seems perfect until after their honeymoon when one morning Melissa wakes up in pain. Jeremy takes her to the hospital where they find out her cancer has returned, and that nothing more can be done for her. As Melissa grows weaker Jeremy begins to question his faith in God. Soon Melissa dies
- So Jeremy—like millions of us over the years re-examines his faith. Why does a good God allow suffering? Is it all true? Perhaps you might be one who has/is questioning your faith as you go through a hard time? Or perhaps you are “rock solid” but what about your friend, or family member or neighbour who is far from Jesus and is asking some hard questions of you as you share the Good News... might we be able to “*give a reason for the hope*” that we have



Apologetics: 1 Peter 3:15 *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer (ἀπολογία) to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect & Jude 3.. contend earnestly for the faith which was once handed down to the saints....* **How do we know the Bible is true and not fake news?**

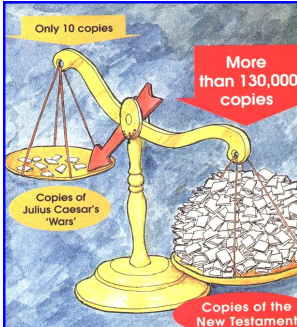
1. \_\_\_\_\_ accounts of Jesus

- Eyewitnesses still play a vital part in testimony today...police will often seek after eyewitnesses.
- ♦ Many eyewitnesses... eg Dr Luke.— Luke 1:1,2... *Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eye-witnesses and servants of the word.* ... also 1 Corinthians . 15:3,4... over 500 witnesses of the resurrection.
- ♦ One thing we soon discover is that some of these writings were written within ..... years of the times of Jesus.... this is just a “newsflash” time frame for these times. (Think Westagte Bridge collapse—50 years ago ..still many witnesses)



2 . The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Scriptures

- ♦ FF Bruce *“If there had been any tendency for the disciples to depart from the facts – the presence of possible hostile testimony in the audience would have served as a corrective”*

- ◆ The Gospel of Mark was written around \_\_\_\_\_ years after the resurrection.
  - ◆ There was a creed circulating speaking of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus within \_\_\_ months of the ascension of Jesus..and names are mentioned of those to whom He appeared alive.. (The Christ Files.. Dr John Dickson). 1 Corinthians 15:3,4 .. *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures 4 that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the ... Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.*
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- ◆ When Josh McDowell released “Evidence Demands a Verdict” back in 1973 he was able to document 14,000 manuscripts relating to the Scriptures—eg the Dead Sea scrolls (a group of manuscripts which were a thousand years older than the then-oldest-known Hebrew texts of the Bible -manuscripts, many of which were written more than 100 years before the birth of Jesus) —now the figure is over 24,000. God’s Word has been passed on incredibly accurately to us today. 2 Timothy 3:16,17.
  - ◆ FF Bruce .. *The evidence for our NT writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning*

### 3. Fulfilment of \_\_\_\_\_

*For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21*

- ◆ Jesus fulfilled many prophecies—most of the prophecies were foretold hundreds of years in advance. The skeptic would say Jesus manoeuvred His life in such a way so as to fulfil the prophecies...but Jesus could not have arranged His place of birth! (Micah 5:2)
- ◆ Josh McDowell calculated the odds of Jesus fulfilling only \_\_\_\_\_ of the prophecies as 1 out of many millions. God was definitely at work in and through the life of Jesus Christ.

The Messiah must...	Prophecy	Fulfillment by Jesus
Be born in _____	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1. Luke 2:4-7
Be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:16
Be spat on	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 27:30
Be thirsty during his execution	Psalm 22:15	John 19:28
Be buried with the rich when dead	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
Have no bones broken	Psalm 34:20	John 19:33-36

#### 4. Evidence from \_\_\_\_\_ the Scriptures

**AD 90**

Josephus, the Jewish historian, wrote about Jesus in AD 90:



**AD 115**

The Roman historian Tacitus, wrote about the Christians in about AD 115:



**Josephus' Description of Jesus:** *Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.* The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18, Chapter 3

#### 5. \_\_\_\_\_ discoveries supporting Bible accuracy

eg Discovery of Pool of Siloam verifies John 9:7

Hezekiah's Tunnel discovered verifying 2 Chronicles 32:30

«This discovery helps bring the Gospel alive»

**Miracle pool identified**

**JERUSALEM** — Archaeologists in Jerusalem have identified the Pool of Siloam, where the blind man mentioned in the Bible was healed.

The discovery was made by a team of Israeli and American archaeologists. They found the pool after a series of excavations in the city's Old City.

The pool is located in the Temple Mount area, and is believed to be the same pool mentioned in the Bible. It is a rectangular pool, about 10 meters long and 5 meters wide.

The discovery is significant because it provides evidence for the Bible's account of the healing of the blind man. It also shows that the Pool of Siloam was still in use during the time of Jesus.

Skeptics said the Bible was wrong—these places did not exist! But archaeologists proved them wrong and the Bible right!



Hundreds of archaeological discoveries have authenticated the accuracy of Scriptures.

#### 6. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ

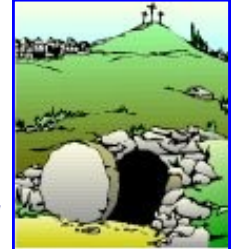
Just a few weeks after the death and resurrection of Jesus Peter testified about this on the day of Pentecost. How do you explain the birth of the church on that day if it was based on lies? At least 3000 believed it was truth and were baptised that day...(Acts 2)

Acts 2: 22 *"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised Him from the dead,*

- ◆ All of Christianity hinges on the resurrection of Jesus—Jesus coming back from the dead authenticates His claim to be Son of God— Jesus is God! Richard Dawkins is wrong!

7. A \_\_\_\_\_ to be considered as we consider the Resurrection of Jesus

- ◆ Something happened 2000+ years ago that changed the course of history from BC - before Christ to AD (the Latin Anno Domini - the year of our Lord). That something was so dramatic it changed 11 men's lives - so that all but one died a martyr's death....James – the step brother of Jesus changed from being a cynic to a martyr who died believing the resurrection of Jesus. That something was an empty tomb! A fact which no doubt Jeremy Camp was aware of. He also needed encouragement and time to work his way through his grief and anger... Encouragement & challenge came from a note Melissa left behind for Jeremy to find after her death—found in his guitar smashed in anger..



- Among other things the note said: “*suffering does not destroy faith but refines it*”. The final words were from Melissa: “*pick up your guitar*” and continue writing songs. .

8. Jeremy Camp found \_\_\_\_\_ in the risen Christ .... So can we!

- Jesus said to “doubting” Thomas 2000 years ago, as recorded in the Bible, “*Blessed are those who don't see but believe*”..John 20:29. Thomas was an eyewitness to the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ and went through much suffering as he lived & died as a martyr for Jesus. In fact there is suffering for all of us as we go through the journey of life on planet earth. In the beginning all was created perfectly but when humankind disobeyed our Creator the consequences of sin - death, disease, brokenness in relationships and a Creation itself “*groaning in travail*” (Romans 8:22) has its effect upon all of us.
- Jeremy Camp, even in the midst of terrible grief after his wife died at just 21 years of age after just four months into their marriage was to discover that significant things can be wrought in times of suffering if we keep our eyes Jesus on in the midst of the suffering. The Bible says: *We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.* Romans 5:3,4.
- Two years after Melissa’s death Jeremy was to write a new song “I still Believe” and then pick up his guitar and then before thousands of young people on many occasions he sang this song.

*I still believe in Your faithfulness,  
I still believe in Your truth,  
I still believe in Your holy word,  
Even when I don't see, I still believe.*

- Many young people had their faith in Jesus affirmed and others came to follow Jesus because they could see a genuine, refined faith in the life of Jeremy. In fact one of these people, Abigail, impacted and changed by the message of the song was to become the new wife of Jeremy. Together now they proclaim “I Still Believe” and show that Melissa’s words “*suffering does not destroy faith but refines it*” are true if we declare that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9 & Matthew 16:13-20) and keep our eyes upon Jesus. May this be true for each of us.