

*Christian Essential
Series:*

*The Resurrection of
Jesus Christ.*



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Luke 24:1-12.

¹ On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered

over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

The importance of the Resurrection:

The teachings of the Apostle Paul formed a key element of the Christian tradition and theology. If **the cross** stands at the center of Paul's theology, so does the Resurrection:

unless the one died the death of all, the all would have little to celebrate in **the resurrection** of the one. Paul taught that, just as Christians share in Jesus' death in baptism, so they will share in his resurrection for Jesus was designated the Son of God by his resurrection. Paul even stresses the importance of this event:

Galatians 6:14 "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

1 Corinthians 15:20-22 "But Christ really has been raised from the dead. He is the first of all those who will rise. Death came because of what a man did. Rising from the dead also comes because of what a man did. Because of Adam, all people die. So because of Christ, all will be made alive."

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 "Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I

preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 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 according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters 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."

He adds:

NB - Verse 12-14 "But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead,

how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."

Some people have no hope of life after death. The atheistic philosopher **Bertrand Russell** wrote, "I believe that when I die I shall rot, and nothing of my own ego will survive." Russell obviously didn't believe Jesus' words." If Jesus did rise from the dead then he alone would have the answers to what life is about and what is facing us after we die. On the other hand, if the resurrection account of Jesus is not true, then Christianity would be founded upon a lie.

Theologian **R. C. Sproul** puts it this way “The claim of resurrection is vital to Christianity. If Christ has been raised from the dead by God, then He has the credentials and certification that no other religious leader possesses. Buddha is dead. Mohammad is dead. Moses is dead. Confucius is dead. But, according to Christianity, Christ is alive.” Many skeptics have attempted to disprove the resurrection. **Josh McDowell** was one such skeptic who spent more than seven hundred hours researching the evidence for the resurrection. He stated this regarding the importance of the resurrection:

“I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon the minds of men, OR it is the most fantastic fact of history. McDowell later wrote his classic work, *The New Evidence*

That Demands a Verdict, documenting what he discovered." So, is Jesus' resurrection a fantastic fact or a vicious myth? To find out, we need to look at the evidence of history and draw our own conclusions. Let's see what skeptics who investigated the resurrection discovered for themselves.

Self-Prophecy

In advance of his death, Jesus told his disciples that he would be betrayed, arrested, and crucified and that he would come back to life three days later. That's a strange plan! What was behind it? Jesus was no entertainer willing to perform for others on demand; instead, he promised that his death and resurrection would prove to people (if their minds and hearts were open) that he was indeed the Messiah. As Jesus predicted, he was betrayed by one of his own disciples, Judas Iscariot, and was arrested. In a mock trial under the Roman

Governor, Pontius Pilate, he was convicted of treason and condemned to die on a wooden cross. Prior to being nailed to the cross, Jesus was brutally beaten with a Roman cat-o'-nine-tails, a whip with bits of bone and metal that would rip flesh. He was punched repeatedly, kicked, and spat upon. Then, using mallets, the Roman executioners pounded the heavy wrought-iron nails into Jesus' wrists and feet. Finally they dropped the cross in a hole in the ground between two other crosses bearing convicted thieves. Jesus hung there for approximately six hours. Then, at 3:00 in the afternoon - that is, at exactly the same time the Passover lamb was being sacrificed as a sin offering (a little symbolism there, you think?) - Jesus cried out, "It is finished" (in Aramaic), and died. Suddenly the sky went dark and an earthquake shook the land. An even greater darkness of

depression annihilated the dreams of those who had become infatuated with his charisma and joyful vitality. Pilate wanted verification that Jesus was dead before allowing his crucified body to be buried. So a Roman guard thrust a spear into Jesus' side. The mixture of blood and water that flowed out was a clear indication that Jesus was dead. "The dead do not bleed, ordinarily, but the right auricle of the human heart holds liquid blood after death, and the outer sac hold a serum called hydropericardium." Once his death was certified by the guards, Jesus' body was then taken down from the cross and buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. Roman guards next sealed the tomb, and secured it with a 24-hour watch.

Meanwhile, Jesus' disciples were in shock.

Dr. J. P. Moreland explains how devastated

and confused they were after Jesus' death on the cross. "They no longer had confidence that Jesus had been sent by God. They also had been taught that God would not let his Messiah suffer death. So they dispersed. The Jesus movement was all but stopped in its tracks." All hope was vanquished. Rome and the Jewish leaders had prevailed - or so it seemed.

Something Happened

But it wasn't the end. The Jesus movement did not disappear (obviously), and in fact Christianity exists today as the world's largest religion. Therefore, we've got to know what happened after Jesus' body was taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb. In a *New York Times* article, **Peter Steinfelds** cites the startling events that occurred three days after Jesus' death: "Shortly after Jesus was executed, his followers were suddenly galvanized from a

baffled and cowering group into people whose message about a living Jesus and a coming kingdom, preached at the risk of their lives, eventually changed an empire. Something happened.” But exactly what?” That's the question we have to answer with an investigation into the facts.

Was Jesus Dead?

“Marley was deader than a doornail, of that there was no doubt.” So begins Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*, the author not wanting anyone to be mistaken as to the supernatural character of what is soon to take place. In the same way, before we take on the role of CSI and piece together evidence for a resurrection, we must first establish that there was, in fact, a corpse. After all, occasionally the newspapers will report on some “corpse” in a morgue who was found stirring and recovered. Could something like that have happened with

Jesus? Some have proposed that Jesus lived through the crucifixion and was revived by the cool, damp air in the tomb. But that theory doesn't square with the medical evidence. An article in the *Journal of the **American Medical Association*** explains why this so-called "swoon theory" is untenable: "Clearly, the weight of historical and medical evidence indicated that Jesus was dead. The spear, thrust between His right ribs, probably perforated not only the right lung, but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured His death." But skepticism of this verdict may be in order, as this case has been cold for 2,000 years. At the very least, we need a second opinion. One place to find that is in the reports of non-Christian historians from around the time when Jesus lived.

Three of these historians mentioned the death of Jesus.

- Lucian (c.120 - after c.180) referred to Jesus as a crucified sophist (philosopher).[16]
- Josephus (c.37 - c.100) wrote, "At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man, for he was a doer of amazing deeds. When Pilate condemned him to the cross, the leading men among us, having accused him, those who loved him did not cease to do so."[17]
- Tacitus (c. 56 - c.120) wrote, "Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty ... at the hands of our procurator, Pontius Pilate."[18]

In fact, there is no historical account from Christians, Romans, or Jews that disputes

either Jesus' death or his burial. Even skeptical scholars who deny the resurrection agree Jesus was dead. Noted skeptic **James Tabor** stated, "I think we need have no doubt that given Jesus' execution by Roman crucifixion he was truly dead." **John Dominic Crossan**, co-founder of the notoriously skeptical Jesus Seminar, agrees that Jesus really lived and died. He states, "That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be." In light of such historical and medical evidence, we seem to be on good grounds for dismissing the first of our five options. Jesus was clearly dead, "of that there was no doubt."

Were The Disciples Hallucinating?

Psychologist **Gary Collins**, remarked, "Hallucinations are individual occurrences. By their very nature, only one person can see a given hallucination at a time. They certainly

aren't something which can be seen by a group of people." Hallucination is not even a remote possibility, according to psychologist **Thomas J. Thorburn**. "It is absolutely inconceivable that ... five hundred persons, of average soundness of mind ... should experience all kinds of sensuous impressions - visual, auditory, tactual - and that all these experiences should rest entirely upon ... hallucination." Furthermore, in the psychology of hallucinations, the person would need to be in a frame of mind where they so wished to see that person that their mind contrives it. Two major leaders of the early church, James and Paul, both state forcefully that they encountered a resurrected Jesus, neither expecting, or hoping for the pleasure. The apostle Paul, in fact, led the earliest persecutions of Christians, and his conversion remains inexplicable except for his own testimony

that Jesus appeared to him, resurrected. The hallucination theory, then, appears to be another dead end. What else could explain away the resurrection?

From Lie to Legend

Some unconvinced skeptics attribute the resurrection story to a legend that began with one or more persons lying or thinking they saw the resurrected Jesus. Over time, the legend would have grown and been embellished as it was passed around. On the surface this seems like a plausible scenario. But there are three major problems with that theory. **First, legends simply don't develop while multiple eyewitnesses are alive to refute them.** One historian of ancient Rome and Greece, A. N. Sherwin-White, argued that the resurrection news spread too soon and too quickly for it to have been a legend. **Second, legends**

develop by oral tradition and don't come with contemporary historical documents that can be verified. Yet the Gospels were written within three decades of the resurrection. **Third, the legend theory doesn't adequately explain either the fact of the empty tomb or the historically verified conviction of the apostles that Jesus was alive.** Therefore, the legend theory doesn't seem to hold up any better than other attempts to explain away this amazing claim. **Furthermore, the resurrection account of Jesus Christ actually altered history, beginning with the Roman Empire.** How could a legend make such an enormous historical impact within such a short time period?

The Matter of an Empty Tomb

No serious historian really doubts Jesus was dead when he was taken down from the

cross. However, many have questioned how Jesus' body disappeared from the tomb. English journalist **Dr. Frank Morison** initially thought the resurrection was either a myth or a hoax, and he began research to write a book refuting it. The book became famous but for reasons other than its original intent. Morison began by attempting to solve the case of the empty tomb. The tomb belonged to a member of the Sanhedrin Council, Joseph of Arimathea. In Israel at that time, to be on the council was to be a rock star. Everyone knew who was on the council. Joseph must have been a real person. Otherwise, the Jewish leaders would have exposed the story as a fraud in their attempt to disprove the resurrection. Also, Joseph's tomb would have been at a well-known location and easily identifiable, so any thoughts of Jesus being "lost in the graveyard" would need to be dismissed.

Morison wondered why Jesus' enemies would have allowed the "empty tomb myth" to persist if it weren't true. The discovery of Jesus' body would have instantly killed the entire plot. And what is known historically of Jesus' enemies is that they accused Jesus' disciples of stealing the body, an accusation clearly predicated on a shared belief that the tomb was empty. **Dr. Paul L. Maier**, professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University, similarly stated, "If all the evidence is weighed carefully and fairly, it is indeed justifiable ... to conclude that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was actually empty on the morning of the first Easter. And no shred of evidence has yet been discovered ... that would disprove this statement." **The Jewish leaders were stunned.** They accused the disciples of stealing Jesus' body. But the Romans had assigned a 24-hour watch at the tomb with

a trained guard unit (from four to 16 soldiers). **Josh McDowell** notes that these were not ordinary soldiers. "When that guard unit failed in its duty - if they fell asleep, left their position, or failed in any way - there are a number of historical sources that go back and describe what happens. Many of them are stripped of their own clothes, they are burned alive in a fire started with their own garments or they are crucified upside down. The Roman Guard unit was committed to discipline and they feared failure in any way." It would have been impossible for anyone to have slipped by the Roman guards and to have moved a two-ton stone. Yet the stone was moved away and the body of Jesus was missing.

If Jesus' body was anywhere to be found, his enemies would have quickly exposed the resurrection as a fraud. **Tom Anderson**, former president of the California Trial

Lawyers Association, summarizes the strength of this argument: "With an event so well publicized, don't you think that it's reasonable that one historian, one eye witness, one antagonist would record for all time that he had seen Christ's body?. The silence of history is deafening when it comes to the testimony against the resurrection." So, with no body of evidence, and with a known tomb clearly empty, Morison accepted the evidence as solid that Jesus' body had somehow disappeared from the tomb.

Grave Robbing?

As Morison continued his investigation, he began to examine the motives of Jesus' followers. Maybe the supposed resurrection was actually a stolen body. But if so, how does one account for all the reported appearances of a resurrected Jesus?

Historian **Paul Johnson**, in "*A History of the Jews*", wrote "What mattered was not the circumstances of his death but the fact that he was widely and obstinately believed, by an expanding circle of people, to have risen again." The tomb was indeed empty. But it wasn't the mere absence of a body that could have galvanized Jesus' followers (especially if they had been the ones who had stolen it). Something extraordinary must have happened, for the followers of Jesus ceased mourning, ceased hiding, and began fearlessly proclaiming that they had seen Jesus alive. Each eyewitness account reports that Jesus suddenly appeared bodily to his followers, the women first. Morison wondered why conspirators would make women central to its plot. In the first century, women had virtually no rights, personhood, or status. If the plot were to succeed, Morison reasoned, the

conspirators would have portrayed men, not women, as the first to see Jesus alive. And yet we hear that women touched him, spoke with him, and were the first to find the empty tomb. Later, according to the eyewitness accounts, all the disciples saw Jesus on more than ten separate occasions. They wrote that he showed them his hands and feet and told them to touch him. And he reportedly ate with them and later appeared alive to more than 500 followers on one occasion. Legal scholar **John Warwick Montgomery** stated, "In 56 A.D. [the Apostle Paul wrote that over 500 people had seen the risen Jesus and that most of them were still alive (1 Corinthians 15:6ff.). It passes the bounds of credibility that the early Christians could have manufactured such a tale and then preached it among those who might easily have refuted it simply by producing the body of Jesus." Bible

scholars **Geisler and Turek** agree. "If the Resurrection had not occurred, why would the Apostle Paul give such a list of supposed eyewitnesses? He would immediately lose all credibility with his Corinthian readers by lying so blatantly." Peter told a crowd in Caesarea why he and the other disciples were so convinced Jesus was alive. **Acts 10:39-41** "We apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Israel and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by crucifying him, but God raised him to life three days later ... We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead." British Bible scholar **Michael Green** remarked, "The appearances of Jesus are as well authenticated as anything in antiquity ... There can be no rational doubt that they occurred."

Consistent to the End

As if the eyewitness reports were not

enough to challenge Morison's skepticism, he was also baffled by the disciples' behavior. A fact of history that has stumped historians, psychologists, and skeptics alike is that these eleven former cowards were suddenly willing to suffer humiliation, torture, and death. All but one of Jesus' disciples were slain as martyrs. Would they have done so much for a lie, knowing they had taken the body? The Islamic terrorists on September 11 proved that some will die for a false cause they believe in. Yet to be a willing martyr for a known lie is insanity. As **Paul Little** wrote, "Men will die for what they believe to be true, though it may actually be false. They do not, however, die for what they know is a lie." Jesus' disciples behaved in a manner consistent with a genuine belief that their leader was alive. No one has adequately explained why the disciples would have been willing to die for a

known lie. But even if they all conspired to lie about Jesus' resurrection, how could they have kept the conspiracy going for decades without at least one of them selling out for money or position? **Theologian J.P. Moreland** wrote, "Those who lie for personal gain do not stick together very long, especially when hardship decreases the benefits." **Chuck Colson**, highlights "I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, and then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Everyone was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world - and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely

impossible.” Something happened that changed everything for these men and women. **Morison** acknowledged, “Whoever comes to this problem has sooner or later to confront a fact that cannot be explained away ... This fact is that ... a profound conviction came to the little group of people - a change that attests to the fact that Jesus had risen from the grave.”**Morison** was bewildered by the fact that “a tiny insignificant movement was able to prevail over the cunning grip of the Jewish establishment, as well as the might of Rome.” Why did it win, in the face of all those odds against it? **He wrote**, “Within twenty years, the claim of these Galilean peasants had disrupted the Jewish church ... In less than fifty years it had begun to threaten the peace of the Roman Empire. When we have said everything that can be said ... we stand confronted with the

greatest mystery of all. Why did it win?"By all rights, if there were no resurrection, Christianity should have died out at the cross when the disciples fled for their lives. But the apostles went on to establish a growing Christian movement. Eminent Historian **J. N. D. Anderson** wrote, "Think of the psychological absurdity of picturing a little band of defeated cowards cowering in an upper room one day and a few days later transformed into a company that no persecution could silence - and then attempting to attribute this dramatic change to nothing more convincing than a miserable fabrication ... That simply wouldn't make sense."

A Surprise Conclusion

With myth, hallucination, and a flawed autopsy ruled out, with incontrovertible evidence for an empty tomb, with a

substantial body of eyewitnesses to his reappearance, and with the inexplicable transformation and impact upon the world of those who claimed to have seen him, Morison became convinced that his preconceived bias against Jesus Christ's resurrection had been wrong. He began writing a different book - entitled "*Who Moved the Stone?*" - to detail his new conclusions. Morison simply followed the trail of evidence, clue by clue, until the truth of the case seemed clear to him. His surprise was that the evidence led to a belief in the resurrection. In his first chapter, "***The Book That Refused to be written,***" this former skeptic explained how the evidence convinced him that Jesus' resurrection was an actual historical event. "It was as though a man set out to cross a forest by a familiar and well-beaten track and came out suddenly where he did not expect to come

out." **Morison** is not alone. Countless other skeptics have examined the evidence for Jesus' resurrection, and accepted it as the most astounding fact in all of human history. **C. S. Lewis**, who once had even doubted Jesus' existence, was also persuaded by the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. He writes, "Something perfectly new in the history of the Universe had happened. Christ had defeated death. The door which had always been locked had for the very first time been forced open."

The Necessity for the resurrection:

The resurrection is proof that Christ's sacrifice was accepted by the Father. Without the resurrection, the claims of achievement of His sacrificial death would be reduced greatly. It would logically lead me to

wonder about Vicarious Atonement as a whole. "From the standpoint of an apologetic for Christian theology, belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God stands or falls with the question of His bodily resurrection. . . . The resurrection, therefore, is properly considered a proof of the person of Christ, His deity, Messiahship, and His power to save from sin" (John Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord, pg. 191). The belief of the resurrection is a non-negotiable for all Christians.

The resurrection was one of the most prominent aspects of teaching used by the apostles in the New Testament and the early Church. If the resurrection was a farce, I highly doubt the commitment of the early Church to Christ would be taken to the point of martyrdom.

The Resurrection also separates Christianity from all other religions and cults. The resurrection is proof that Christianity offers the only living God. "If Christ did not rise from the dead then, of course, He would not be alive to do all His post resurrection ministries. His ministry would have ended at His death. We would not, therefore, have a High-Priest now, an Intercessor, Advocate, or Head of the church. Furthermore, there would be no living Person to indwell and empower us (Rom. 6:1-10; Gal. 2:20)" (Charles Ryrie, Basic Theology, pg. 308).

If the resurrection is a farce, then scripture and Christianity does not pass the law of non-contradiction. In John 14:1-4, John writes that Jesus promises to prepare a place for the disciples, how can we believe this if Jesus is dead and buried in the tomb? How can He prepare a place for us,

when He doesn't have a place for Himself? Thus, all hope for our resurrection and place in Heaven/New Jerusalem is not logically grounded. I join the sentiments of Mike Licona, Dr. Dave Johnson, and surely many others; if Christianity is false, let's find the truth.

If the resurrection is a farce, then Christianity is not the truth as Jesus claims in John 14:6. Paul writes to the Romans that the resurrection shows proof that Jesus is the Son of God in 1:4.

The resurrection is essential in our salvation. Without it, where do we place our hope? (Charles Ryrie, Basic Theology, pg. 308). "The resurrection was God's receipt for Calvary. Christ died to discharge our heavy debt of sin, and that all claims were fully met is evidenced by His triumph over man's last enemy" (Herbert Lockyer, All the Doctrines of the Bible, pg. 53). Even the

disciples that literally followed Jesus had no faith in Jesus after His death until His resurrection. Think about the ones on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), the angel reminding Mary of the promise of the resurrection at the empty tomb (Luke 24: 5-8), and Thomas still questioning the other disciples until he saw for himself (John 21:24-29). I highly doubt those that were martyred would have been tested to death for a farce. The swoon theory, Judas or Simon of Cyrene being crucified instead of Christ, the body being stolen, or any other theory would have been exposed by at least one of the disciples when pressured by death. **Keep in mind, the New Testament we read today would not have been written were the resurrection not true, as most of the writing makes the resurrection a vital part of the message.** Other men claimed

to be the Messiah near that time, and they were exposed as frauds when they were not resurrected. Those men are highly unknown now, as I assume Jesus would be were it not for His resurrection. It is much more logical to cling to faith when the facts line up in your favor. I find it hard to believe anyone would still be a Christian if it were proven Jesus was not resurrected, mainly because Christianity wouldn't have made it 2,000 years without the resurrection. I believe if the truth were in something other than the Resurrection of Jesus, so would be our faith.

-The End-

How to receive Christ:

Receiving Christ is as easy as A-B-C.

A – Admit your sins

You must first repent of your sins. This means turning away from them and asking God to forgive you. Acts 3:19 says “Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”

B – Believe and confess

What does it mean to believe? It means to trust your life to Jesus. If you jump out of a falling airplane with a parachute, you don't just know or hope the parachute will save you. You believe it! You trust your life to the parachute. Similarly, believing in Jesus means trusting your eternal life to him. Acts 16:31 says “They said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be

saved, you and your household.” Paul affirms this in Romans 10:9-10 “That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

In verse 13 it says “For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

C – Call on Jesus as your savior

Through prayer, invite Jesus to come in and change your life through the Holy Spirit. Invite him to save you. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” – Romans 5:1 (NASB) Remember “he who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the

Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” – 1 John 5:12-13 (NASB)

What Now: Find a Family not just a Church

If you accepted Christ as your savior, the next step is to find a local, Bible-preaching Church in your area. A place where you belong! The author of Hebrews writes “And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” – Hebrews 10:24-25 (NASB)



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