

# 24-1120wc Transcript

**24-1120wc - Christian Apologetics, p78, Tom Freed**

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## 24-1120 Wed. Class - Christian Apologetics, p78

Transcript (0:04 - 23:33)

### Transcript

**Teacher:** Tom Freed

(0:04) Well, we are finishing up the class. (0:06) I think I've been teaching around two years. (0:09) So this is the last class, and like Mike said, Scott's going to be teaching.

(0:14) So I'm looking forward to that. (0:16) Thanks for hanging in there for this class. (0:20) We've been looking at how atheists, the atheist doesn't have the answers, (0:26) the deeper questions in life like the Christians do.

(0:31) Who are we and why are we here? (0:34) What is the problem with the world and what is the solution? (0:38) And where are we going? (0:40) They're not simply answered with statements and logical arguments, (0:45) but with stories that seep into our bones and powerfully shape our daily lives. (0:52) The Christian story told and embraced in life-changing ways (0:57) in incredible numbers over the past 2,000 years (1:01) has provided powerful answers to these universal questions, (1:06) which even non-believers have noted. (1:08) So the atheists, they walk around in life and they can't figure it out.

(1:13) They don't know why they're here. (1:14) They don't know where they came from, what their purpose is. (1:18) But the Christian does.

(1:21) We looked last week at some historical signposts (1:24) from the climax of the Christian narrative (1:27) to provide a model to persuade others that is both a beautiful and a true story. (1:36) We looked at Jesus' death and resurrection. (1:41) So even though we don't have 100% proof of the death and resurrection, (1:46) we have plenty of eyewitness testimony, prophecies and evidence to believe it's true.

(1:52) You can't have 100% proof of anything in the history. (1:58) You know, there wasn't cameras, cell phones, all this stuff back then. (2:02) But there is documentation.

There is witnesses. (2:06) There's a lot of documentation other than the Bible. (2:09) There's a lot of evidence pointing to Jesus.

(2:13) So we have other facts we shouldn't overlook when talking about the resurrection. (2:18) We looked at the unexpected death. (2:24) Jewish scholars, before Jesus arrived, (2:26) did not seem to have been expecting a true Messiah to die on a cross.

(2:32) This is why it would have been strange to the first century ears (2:36) to hear the disciples continue to proclaim that Jesus was a Messianic king (2:42) after he was shamefully crucified. (2:47) They thought their Messiah would be a warrior king like David, (2:49) not someone who would die on a cross like a common thief. (2:55) So why would they make that up? (2:56) Why would they follow a savior that died on a cross like a thief? (3:02) They wouldn't, unless he had risen.

(3:05) Also, the resurrection is a counterintuitive claim. (3:10) The resurrection of Jesus was an unpopular notion with the first century Jews and Greeks. (3:15) Not the sort of thing one would make up in an attempt to start a movement.

(3:20) The dominant non-Jewish view was that bodily resurrection was impossible and unwanted. (3:27) The disciples simply would not have made up a story of Jesus' resurrection (3:32) because people were not expecting the Messiah first to be killed and then to rise from the dead. (3:38) A Jewish revolutionary whose leader was executed by the authorities (3:43) and who managed to escape to rest himself had two options.

(3:48) Give up the revolution or find another leader. (3:51) Claiming that the original leader was alive, again, was simply not an option. (3:57) Unless, of course, he was.

(3:59) That's a great point. (4:00) We can see throughout history with the Jews, (4:02) they had many people claiming to be the savior, (4:06) and a lot of them were killed. (4:09) And none of them were followed, only Jesus, (4:11) because he did actually rise from the dead.

(4:15) We also saw how women were eyewitnesses to the four gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection. (4:22) At this time, women were not believed to give trustworthy testimony on important matters, (4:28) which is why they were not allowed to testify in a court of law. (4:33) How would the public respond to an unpopular doctrine being propagated by people (4:40) who did not culturally count as eyewitnesses? (4:43) It surely would not have helped.

(4:46) Also, we looked at multiple appearances. (4:50) Peter, James, Paul, and at one time more than 500 people claimed to have seen the resurrected Jesus. (4:57) Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15 that the appearance to 500 was just one of many times people saw Jesus, (5:07) and that many of these witnesses were still alive, (5:09) which meant Paul's claim could have easily been invalidated if these witnesses weren't really around, (5:15) so they could go and talk to the witnesses.

(5:17) They were still there. (5:19) We also see very unlikely disciples, especially with Paul, the persecutor of the church, (5:26) and James, the brother of Jesus, who was also a skeptic-turned-believer. (5:32) They both suffered great persecution for the gospel, (5:36) and according to sources, both became martyrs of the faith.

(5:41) So why would Paul change? (5:45) You know, he was a Jew. (5:47) He was as Jewish as you could get following the old law. (5:52) He was persecuting Christians, (5:56) sending them off to prison, holding the coats while they were stoned.

(6:00) Why would he change? (6:02) It was because he had an experience with Jesus on the road to Damascus. (6:08) So now we're looking at no body was produced. (6:13) The body of Mohammed

lies enshrined behind gold mesh and black curtains (6:19) at the mosque of the prophet in Medina, Saudi Arabia.

(6:24) The remains of Confucius are buried in the cemetery in Khufu, Shandong Province, China. (6:32) And after Buddha's body was cremated, his relics were placed in various monuments, (6:38) like the Temple of the Tooth in Sri Lanka, (6:41) where his followers may visit his right tooth relic. (6:47) In sharp contrast, there is little to show for Jesus' burial place.

(6:52) You cannot even find his body, and that's because of one reason, Matthew 28, 5-6. (7:00) But the angel answered and said to the women, (7:03) Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who is crucified. (7:09) He is not here, for he is risen, as he said.

(7:14) Come see where the Lord lay. (7:17) So you won't find him there because he has risen. (7:21) You can't find his remains like with the other prophets, (7:24) or the other people that, you know, the world follows.

(7:30) If the resurrection claim had been made up, (7:33) it would have been counterintuitive for the story to have begun in Jerusalem as it did. (7:39) The locale where Jesus died and was buried would have been the easiest place (7:44) to disprove the claim of the resurrection. (7:47) All the Jewish or Roman authorities had to do was produce the body.

(7:52) So they were all there. (7:53) If the body was there and it was moved like they claimed, they would have found it. (7:59) They would have produced the evidence, but they never could.

(8:03) Some have sought to explain the inability to produce a corpse (8:06) by arguing that the Roman policy didn't allow the crucified to be buried, (8:12) and thus Jesus' body was likely eaten by animals or discarded after death. (8:18) In other words, there was no body left to produce. (8:21) In some parts of the Roman Empire, especially during wartime, (8:26) the body of those executed were indeed regularly left on their crosses (8:30) to rot or be eaten by animals.

(8:34) But if this was normally how the Romans treated the Jews in and around Jerusalem, (8:39) it seems the authorities would have offered an obvious reply (8:42) to the Christian claim of the empty tomb. (8:45) They would answer, of course there is no body in the tomb (8:48) because he was never allowed to be buried. (8:52) Everyone knows that the standard operating procedure (8:56) is to not allow the crucified to be buried.

(8:59) If it was a common practice at that time in Jerusalem, (9:03) this would have been the obvious response to the claim of the resurrection and the empty tomb. (9:09) Yet this is not how the authorities or Christian critics responded. (9:15) Apparently because it was common knowledge that the Romans normally allowed the Jews (9:19) around Jerusalem to bury their dead.

(9:22) Instead the story was circulating that Jesus' body had been stolen, (9:26) which makes sense as a response if the body was actually missing from the tomb. (9:33) The early disciples would have had little to gain (9:36) and much to lose by advocating for an unpopular story. (9:40) So what was their motive? (9:43) You look at dying for their own lie.

(9:46) If the disciples made up such a claim, (9:49) why would they carry the deception so far? (9:53) Could you imagine lying and knowing it's a lie (9:56) and being brutally killed for it? (10:01) The apostles and early Christians were persecuted for their belief. (10:06) They led miserable lives. (10:09) Stephen was stoned, Acts 6-8.

(10:13) Herod Agrippa killed James, the brother of John, Acts 12-1-2, (10:18) supported by Josephus Antiquities. (10:22) And Nero sponsored the first statewide persecution in the early 60s. (10:28) Paul recounts how he experienced extreme persecution.

(10:33) And most scholars accept the tradition that he was martyred in the 60s. (10:37) 1 Clement 5-5-7, Eusebius 2-25-5-8. (10:47) According to Acts 5-17-42, (10:51) Peter and John were sent to prison and flogged.

(10:54) John 21-18-19 implies that it was well known by the time John's gospel was written (11:01) that Peter died as a martyr. (11:04) It is difficult to see why Jesus' earliest followers (11:07) would have been willing to endure such persecution (11:10) if they knew themselves to be suffering for a hoax they invented. (11:18) Thus, Gary Habermas emphasizes a long-standing and still incisive historical point.

(11:26) Virtually no one, friend or foe, believer or critic, (11:30) denies that it was their convictions that had seen the resurrected Jesus (11:38) that caused the disciples' radical transformations. (11:42) So not even a critic can argue it was a radical transformation, (11:46) it was because of Jesus. (11:50) They were willing to die specifically for the resurrection belief.

(11:54) Down through the centuries, (11:56) many have been willing to give their lives for political or religious causes. (12:01) But the crucial difference here is that while many have died for their convictions, (12:07) Jesus' disciples were in the right place to know the truth (12:11) or falsify or falsity of the event for which they were willing to die. (12:18) Like I said, what sense does that make? (12:19) It's a great point.

(12:22) Why in the world, if they knew it was a lie, (12:24) why would they push it that far? (12:26) Why would they suffer miserable lives and die for Jesus? (12:32) It makes absolutely no sense. (12:34) They would come forth with the truth. (12:38) Also, we can look at a radical transformation.

(12:42) To offer a historical explanation for these events (12:46) surrounding the origins of Christianity, (12:48) one must be able to explain, as Chris Bloomberg writes, (12:53) how a small band of defeated followers of Jesus (12:56) were transformed almost overnight into bold witnesses, (13:01) risking death by proclaiming his bodily resurrection (13:05) before many of the same people (13:08) who 50 days earlier had participated in his crucifixion. (13:13) Remember, a prominent alternative narrative (13:17) is that the early disciples had to make up the idea of a raised Jesus. (13:24) But where would this novel idea have arisen from? (13:28) There was no precedent in Judaism for a raised Messiah.

(13:33) For those who believed in the resurrection, (13:37) it was something that happens for all the faithful at the end of history (13:40) rather than for a single man in the middle of history. (13:44) Thus, there was no clear context to formulate the idea. (13:48) Unless, of course, an actual event generated it.

(13:53) Also look at worshipping a man, (13:57) a Jewish paradigm shift that happened too fast. (14:02) The worship of a crucified and resurrected Messiah was scandalous (14:05) in the first century world and calls for an explanation. (14:10) To Jews, it was blasphemy to worship a human.

(14:13) And as New Testament scholar Michael Byrd has explained, (14:16) to Greeks, worshipping a man recently raised from the dead (14:22) was like paying homage to the first zombie you met in a

zombie apocalypse. (14:28) So that's a great point. (14:31) You know, it would be like worshipping a zombie to the Greeks.

(14:34) They'd never heard of that. (14:37) While there could possibly be occasional exceptions in the Jewish community, (14:43) devout first century Jews such as the very first disciples (14:46) were strict monotheists. (14:49) In other words, they worshipped only one God, the Creator of all things.

(14:54) These were not pagans who worshipped many gods. (14:57) And they were not Jews who had radically departed (15:00) from one of the most central verses in the Hebrew Scriptures. (15:05) The Lord our God, the Lord is one, Deuteronomy 6.4. (15:10) And yet, quite remarkably, they worshipped Jesus.

(15:13) And it is important to note, Jesus was not worshipped as some kind of special angel. (15:20) Angels did not create. (15:22) This was not a function of God in the Hebrew Scriptures.

(15:26) He did come as the angel of the Lord in certain instances, but he was not an angel. (15:33) He is God. (15:34) But it is clear that in some of the earliest biblical texts, (15:39) we have Jesus does create, 1 Corinthians 8, 4-6, Colossians 1, 15-20.

(15:48) Look at Colossians 1, 15-16. (15:51) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (15:56) For by him all things were created that are in heaven and on earth, (16:00) visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.

(16:04) All things were created through him and for him. (16:10) We can see that he was a creator. (16:13) Angels are not to be worshipped.

(16:16) Yet Jesus was worshipped in the early church (16:18) because his followers viewed him as sharing in the divinity (16:24) and the divine identity with God the Father. (16:29) He even says, you know, the Father and I are one. (16:34) The devotion began almost immediately rather than growing over a long gradual process.

(16:41) The historian Larry Hurtado emphasizes a point that the early disciples (16:48) define and reverence Jesus with reference to the one God (16:53) and explains further that we see the powerful effect of Jewish monotheism (16:59) combining with a strong impetus to reverence Jesus in unprecedented ways. (17:08) How did such a dramatic paradigm shift happen so fast? (17:12) What motivated this almost immediate shift? (17:15) Such shifts in thinking normally come in gradual stages, (17:19) but the evidence suggests that these conservative Jewish disciples made the shift rapidly. (17:28) You should not make the mistake of thinking it was only one thing that caused the almost immediate shift.

(17:35) The reflections on the claims and actions of Jesus together (17:39) with a close re-reading of the Hebrew scriptures (17:42) were part of the impetus behind the shift. (17:48) But their re-reading of the scriptures, (17:50) their re-evaluating of their previous understanding of Jesus' teaching (17:54) and most importantly their worship of Jesus is difficult to imagine (17:59) without a paradigm shift event. (18:02) So while unbelievers will offer various theories that counter (18:05) the historical evidence surrounding the question of Jesus of Christian origins, (18:11) once combined the strands of history weave together (18:14) to present a powerful case for the resurrection.

(18:19) We can see all these things that point to the resurrection. (18:22) The climax of a Christian story. (18:29) The biblical story.

It all led up to that. (18:34) So we can look in conclusion. (18:38) Josh, the author, once asked one of his students (18:41) why he was so enthusiastic about apologetics.

(18:44) He immediately replied, (18:47) I want to crush atheists in their own intellectual game. (18:53) He asked, would that be the goal of Christian apologetics? (18:58) The student's smile suggested that he had made his point. (19:03) This short exchange stimulated the author's thinking (19:07) beyond what was talked about in class that day.

(19:11) What does it mean to do Christian apologetics? (19:14) Answering this question has been the aim of this book. (19:18) Apologetics should start with a conviction (19:20) that Christian apologetics must arise from the gospel of Jesus Christ. (19:26) Otherwise there would not be Christian apologetics.

(19:30) The gospel in both the goal and the lens (19:33) through which the apologetic task is approached. (19:38) The gospel spurs us on to put others before ourselves. (19:41) Hence the importance of an other-centered (19:45) and holistic apologetic approach.

(19:49) This book has not presented every possible (19:53) apologetic argument or question, (19:56) but has rather introduced guiding emphasis (19:59) and modeled an approach that is flexible enough (20:02) to adapt to any situation. (20:04) As a survey book, this volume's purpose (20:08) is to get you in the game. (20:11) Now it's time for you to put your training into practice.

(20:14) While apologetics should be contextual, (20:17) it should also be formed out of the right context. (20:21) A healthy church remains central to the healthy apologetic. (20:27) Cruciform lives functioning as apologetic portraits (20:34) to the world around us are not ultimately (20:37) or primarily cultivated by attending weekend conferences, (20:41) watching your favorite apologists on the Internet, (20:44) or even reading books like this.

(20:48) These help, but the church remains central (20:50) to the formation of an apologist of the cross. (20:54) The wisdom of the cross, so central in drawing (20:57) the right apologetic map for the right situation, (21:01) grows within the rich soil of God's people singing, (21:05) reading, feasting, praying, and confessing around God's Word. (21:09) We ultimately have to do our best to talk to others (21:14) and show the love of Christ through us.

(21:18) We need to do what Jesus has said and commanded us to do. (21:23) Matthew 28, 18-20, (21:26) Then Jesus came to them and said, (21:28) All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (21:31) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, (21:34) baptizing them in the name of the Father (21:36) and the Son and the Holy Spirit, (21:39) and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

(21:42) And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age. (21:50) So this, like I said, it doesn't give you every answer. (21:52) It's not a completely exhaustive study.

(21:55) I mean, we did go over plenty of material. (21:58) Hopefully you guys learned something (22:01) and we have an apologetic foundation (22:05) and we could use that to help talk to people. (22:09) Maybe use some of the information to help convince them.

(22:14) A lot of it is just going out there and talking to people. (22:16) I mean, you don't need a ton to begin with, (22:19) but it definitely helps to have some apologetic arguments. (22:24) But that's the end of the class.

(22:26) I'm glad you guys stuck it out. (22:27) I know I'm not the best teacher. (22:29) I don't know if this topic was interesting to everybody.

(22:32) I was trying to do something that we haven't gone over thoroughly (22:36) and that could help us reach out to others. (22:38) So hopefully at home I'll be looking forward to Scott's class. (22:44) We could end in a prayer.

(22:46) Thank you, Lord, for this day, (22:49) for everybody that made it to the building, (22:51) for those who couldn't. (22:53) Thank you, Lord, for this class and the learning experience, (23:00) the experience to grow as a teacher. (23:04) Help us to reach out to others.

(23:06) Help us to grow as a church. (23:09) Watch over the sick and suffering of the congregation (23:11) and be with Mike with his health issues (23:15) and the rest of the congregation. (23:16) You know everybody's needs.

(23:19) You answer prayers. (23:20) You watch over us and bless us. (23:23) Help us be on fire for you, Lord.

(23:26) Help us to spread the word. (23:28) Give us safe travel back again Sunday. (23:32) In Jesus' name, amen. (23:33)