Concluding Captain Discussion

**Note:**

*Throughout the presentation there are opportunities to engage the audience through questions, Scripture reading, writing on the poster, etc.*

*If you are running short on time, you could skip some of the questions or answer them yourself.*

*If you have a larger group of children/teens, you could include more interaction like having different volunteers come up and help with the poster or read the Scriptures.*

*If you have a larger group of adults you may want to have 1 volunteer, near the front, write on the poster. You could have the “Detective Sergeant” do the writing since he/she is the “team leader” for the group.*

**Formatting Key:**

**Bold** = Question to ask

*Italics* = Answers from participates

Normal Text = Part of the script to be read to the attendees.

**Bold and Underlined** = Words to emphasize.

Highlighted yellow = Notes to you the reader

***Script Time: 15-30 minutes***

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**Script:** You are now in the debriefing room, detectives. I am Captain \_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am looking forward to going through the evidence you found to solve this important case! If you did not get a chance to fill out your “Official Report” you can do so as we go over the evidence you gathered. You may also refer to the poster up here (point to the poster) or your paper for hints as we talk about the evidence.

**Theory #1—Fainted**

Let’s start with Theory #1 – Fainted (point to the poster) which proposed that the reason Jesus’ tomb was empty was because Jesus fainted on the cross and then regained consciousness after being in the tomb, but that he did not really die and come back to life.

**What EVIDENCE did you discover in the room that addressed this theory?** M*edical cards talking about the medical analysis of the crucifixion.*

**From a medical standpoint, why couldn’t Jesus have survived the crucifixion? You don’t have to tell me the technical name; just describe what happened to Jesus.**

* *Hypovolemic Shock = Severe blood loss due to flogging*
* *Asphyxiation = Could not breathe due to the position of being nailed on the cross*
* *Cardiac Arrest = The abrupt loss of heart beat*

*(Direct question to the “Investigative Reporter”)* **Therefore, what is the official conclusion based on the evidence for this theory?** *Jesus Died.* **So was this theory TRUE or FALSE?** *False*

*(Either you or someone from the audience circle* ***FALSE*** *on the poster for Theory #1 and write the word* ***DIED*** *on the blank in the “Conclusion” section; remind the audience to do the same on their “Official Report” if they have not done so already.)*

Due to the violate nature of the crucifixion it is not probable that Jesus only fainted on the cross and merely walked out of the tomb after regaining consciousness.

**Theory #2— Stolen Body and Lying**

Theory #2 was that the disciples **stole** Jesus’ body and then **lied** about the resurrection. For this clue you learned that there are generally three reasons why a person commits a crime: **money, power, or romantic relationships.** If it was true that Jesus’ disciples stole his body and then lied about the resurrection, there would have to be a motive for why they did it. But Jesus’ disciples did **not** receive money, power, or girlfriends. Rather you discovered evidence that the disciples received torture, persecution, and death for their testimony that Jesus rose from the dead.

**What types of persecution did you discover that they received?** (Let attendees list 1 or 2 examples.)

* *Crucifixion (Peter, Philip, Bartholomew, Andrew, Simon)*
* *Lanced/pierced and burned in an oven (Thomas)*
* *Beaten and flogged (Bartholomew, Andrew)*
* *Beheaded (James, Paul)*

No one in their right mind suffers to maintain a lie they know is a lie!

**Investigative Reporter,** **what is the official conclusion based on the evidence for this theory?** *The disciples had no motive to steal or lie. (On the poster, circle* ***FALSE*** *and write* ***MOTIVE*** *and* ***LIE*** *on the blanks.)*

Since the disciples were willing to suffer excruciating experiences for their testimony that Jesus was alive, that is evidence that they didn’t steal his body and lie about his resurrection.

**Theory 3—Hallucination**

**What does “Theory #3-Hallucination” mean?** *The disciples saw Jesus alive in their mind or in a dream/vision (hallucinated) but he was really still dead.*

The clue for this theory was a poem which read:

*Over 500 saw with their* ***eyes****—And when the disciples* ***touched*** *him, they realized—that he wasn’t dead—but since he was* ***fed****—they knew the one they* ***walked*** *with was truly alive.*

The clue items that you found for this theory showed that Jesus’ resurrection could not have been a hallucination because over 500 people saw him with their **EYES**, and large group hallucinations are not likely. People also **TOUCHED** him, **ATE** with him, and **WALKED** with him. These things are not possible if the risen Jesus was a mere dream or hallucination. So this theory is false.

**Investigative Reporter,** **what is the official conclusion based on the evidence for this theory?** *The disciples* ***DID NOT*** *hallucinate. (On the chart, circle* ***FALSE*** *and write* ***DID NOT*** *on the blank.)*

The disciples could not have hallucinated seeing the risen Jesus. There is too much hard evidence that could be seen, touched, and experienced for it to just be a figment of one’s imagination or a dream.

**Theory #4—Added Later**

Theory #4 was that the resurrection was something added to Jesus’ story much later in history but that it wasn’t part of the original testimony about Jesus. The evidence that you found that proved this theory wrong was 1 Corinthians 15:3-6. (*Read 1 Corinthians 15:3b-6a from the Bible or the text below. Remind the group that they can follow along as most of the passage is in the “Evidence Discovered” box for theory #4.)*

*1 Corinthians 15:3b-6a* “…Christ died for our sins … that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive…”

**For those of you who like math, here’s a math problem for you: If Jesus died and rose again in 33 A.D. and the book of 1 Corinthians was written in 55 A.D. how much time was there between those two events?** *22 years.*

Is anyone here in their twenties? It would be like your parents writing about something now that happened around the time you were born. Since that is a very short amount of time between the event and when it happened, there would still be eyewitnesses around that could confirm that account.

In the same way, since Jesus’ resurrection was written about very early there were many eye witnesses, enemies of Jesus, and people familiar with the situation who were still living to confirm the claim that Jesus’ body was gone from the tomb and that he had been seen alive. That is a benefit to our investigation!

In addition, scholars believe that 1 Corinthians 15:3-6 was an already established creed or teaching of the early church even before 1 Corinthians was written, so this knowledge must have started very close to the time of the resurrection in 33 A.D.. This means that the statement about Jesus rising from the dead is not something added later, but was part of the account from the beginning.

**Investigative Reporter,** **what is the official conclusion based on the evidence for this theory?** *Jesus’ resurrection was stated from the BEGINNING. (On the chart, circle* ***FALSE*** *and write* ***BEGINNING*** *on the blank.)*

**Theory #5—Wrong Tomb**

Theory #5 was that the disciples went to the wrong tomb, which was empty, so they thought Jesus had risen from the dead, but actually Jesus’ body was still in his tomb.

**What people/groups did you discover that would have known where Jesus’ tomb was?***At least 9 people/groups: Those who buried him [Joseph of Arimathea & Nicodemus], his friends [at least Peter, John, Mary Magdalene, & the other Mary], and his enemies [chief priests, Pharisees, & guard].*

**Investigative Reporter,** **what is the official conclusion based on the evidence for this theory?** *Jesus’ friends and enemies KNEW where the correct tomb was and that tomb was EMPTY. (On the chart, circle the word* ***FALSE*** *and write* ***KNEW*** *and* ***EMPTY*** *on the blanks.)*

It is highly unlikely that Jesus’ friends and enemies would have all forgotten or made the same mistake in going to the wrong tomb. And if his friends did make a mistake in going to the wrong tomb, it is highly unlikely that his enemies would not have directed people to Jesus’ real tomb and presented his body as proof that he was still dead. So the correct tomb, must have been empty, which leads us to Theory #6.

**Theory #6 - Resurrection**

The last theory is that the disciples were simply telling the truth that Jesus was alive. Here’s a summary of the evidence you discovered today:

1. No one could medically survive the crucifixion, so Jesus must have died.
2. No one, especially his disciples, had a good motive to steal his body and lie about his resurrection.
3. There is no way that people could have hallucinated seeing the risen Jesus based on his multiple appearances and their opportunities to eat with, touch, and walk with him.
4. The resurrection account was recorded and taught very early in church history, proving that it was **NOT** something added later by people who weren’t eye witnesses or who were just trying to embellish the story at a later time.
5. Jesus’ friends and enemies could not have all gone to the wrong tomb.

**Investigative Reporter,** **what is the official conclusion based on the evidence for this theory*?*** *Jesus is ALIVE. (On the chart, circle the word* ***TRUE*** *and write the word* ***ALIVE*** *on the blank.)*

**So the only conclusion that makes since is that Jesus is truly alive!** We reached this conclusion not because we have a bias or favoritism toward Christianity but **because the evidence points to it.** We investigated other possibilities and theories to explain the empty tomb, and I am sure there are others out there too, but none of them matched the evidence that is recorded. Just because you create a theory, doesn’t make it truth. **Truth matches reality** and the **reality is that the resurrection of Jesus is the only thing that matches the evidence. Jesus’ resurrection is not religious bias…it’s the truth!**

Now the evidence you investigated showed that Jesus rose from the dead, but it is not enough to just agree in your head **THAT** Jesus is alive. You must believe **IN** your heart that Jesus has risen from the dead and that he is God, the Savior.

The reason that Jesus died in the first place was to take on the punishment of sin for mankind. Sin is breaking God’s Law. Have you ever lied, stolen something, not obeyed your parents, or been jealous of something someone else has? We might think that we are pretty good people or that our sin is not so bad, but God says that if you have broken his law in just one point you are guilty of breaking all of it. You might not be as bad as you could be, but you are as bad off as you could be because the wages of sin is death and separation from God forever in Hell. You and I would be left to suffer the punishment of sin forever if God would not have done something for us. Because God is just he must punish sin, but because he also loves you he sent Jesus to be punished in your place. When Jesus was on the cross he took the punishment for your sin. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead shows that His payment for sin was accepted by God and that He is the victor over sin and death.

The reason that we investigated this evidence today was not just to have a fun time, but to discover the answer to Jesus’ empty tomb and how important an event it was. *(Pause)* Does Jesus’ resurrection have meaning for us today? *(Pause)* Let’s see what the last clue that you found has to say about it. (*Read John 20:31 from the Bible or the text below. Remind the group that they can follow along as the verse is written in the “Evidence Discovered” box for theory #6.)*

John 20:31 “But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

Do you believe that Jesus is your risen Savior from sin’s punishment? If now is the first time that you are putting your trust in Jesus, the risen Savior you can tell him that as we end in prayer. \*Pray\*

I would love to talk with you more when we conclude if you have questions or if you would like to talk about your decision to believe IN Jesus as your risen Savior from sin.

If you would like to know more about this topic please check out the ministry of J. Warner Wallace called Cold Case Christianity. The clues for this Escape Room are based off of his booklet “Alive” and his website is coldcasechristianity.com. He is a cold case homicide detective and he investigates the evidence for Christianity from that perspective. Thank you for coming; you are dismissed.