



# Links Players

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## Breaking Bread

*When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24: 30-32)*

Knowing and seeing are two different things. If you look at Tiger Woods's stats, you can't help but be impressed. The facts and numbers speak for themselves. But if you watched Tiger play all four rounds of the 1997 Masters and witnessed his twelve-stroke victory, your response was visceral.

When considering the truth about Jesus, most want to gather the facts first. Unfortunately, popular culture suggests that knowing the facts about Jesus' life is next to impossible. Contemporary theory states that after Jesus died, multiple legends circulated. Following the oral circulation of legends, dozens of gospels were produced.

It is then suggested that around AD 300, church leadership gathered and selected just four gospels from countless other so-called gospels. They did this to unify their message, solidify their leadership, and consolidate power. This theory cannot be further from the truth.

A quick overview of the gospels will show that the writers gathered the testimonies of living eyewitnesses to make sure exactly what happened when Jesus walked the earth was clear. In the gospel of Luke, Luke uses stylized, historiographic language in his opening when he explains:

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 eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

So, who were the eyewitnesses?

Mark states that "they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene...the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross." (Mark 15:21). Mark essentially is saying, "You know of Alexander and Rufus, it was his dad, Cyrene. Go talk to them to corroborate my story."

John names Malchus as the guy who lost his ear from Peter's sword in the garden.

Mark names Bartimaeus ("the son of Timaeus") as the blind man healed by Jesus in Jericho.

Luke names Cleopas as one of the men on the Road to Emmaus who encountered Jesus after the resurrection.

Most historians agree that the gospels were recorded between 50 and 90 AD, so the eyewitnesses mentioned above were still alive or their relatives were still living when they were written.

If the reader was concerned about the veracity of the gospels, they could easily talk to the eyewitnesses as proof that what was written about Jesus was true.

Knowing and seeing, though, are two different things.

The facts alone about Jesus will never change your heart. Only a personal encounter with Jesus can do that. However, the facts support belief, which can lead to genuine faith. So, how can we have a personal encounter with Jesus today?

Consider the facts! Break bread with believing friends and listen as they share their encounters with Jesus. Where a few are gathered, Jesus is present (Matthew 18:20).

Engage with others in worship. When doing so, your heart will burn within you as you adore the one who gave his life for you.

Kneel at the Lord's table regularly, and symbolically and spiritually, Jesus' flesh and blood will mix with your own, transforming your heart.

Only Jesus' presence, in combination with the facts, will make him increasingly alive in you. It's then that you will realize what C.S. Lewis observed:

"[the story] of Christ is simply a true myth: a myth working on us the same way as the others, but with this tremendous difference that it really happened: and one must be content to accept it in the same way, remembering that it is God's myth where the others are men's myths."

**Prayer: I believe Jesus, help me with my unbelief.**

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Boo Arnold

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