TRANSCRIPT

An Undeceptions podcast.

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Christianity is a bookish faith. It's really into words. In fact, the word in Greek, logos, is one of the titles for Jesus in the way he embodies God. "In the beginning was the word," says the opening line of John's gospel, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The word became flesh and dwelt among us. This is because words are about communication. They're the principal way we reveal ourselves, our inner thoughts, our inner life to other people. Without words, it's mostly guesswork.

John Dickson:

I mean, I can't tell if producer Kaley is frowning at me or just professionally concentrating. Words matter. Today, we have 15 words for you that are often misunderstood or sometimes forgotten. My guest today reckons these words, communicate the heart and soul of the New Testament of the Christian faith of God himself. I'm John Dickson, and this is Undeceptions.

John Dickson:

Undeceptions is brought to you by Zondervan Academic's Bright Hope for Tomorrow by Chris Davis. Each episode, we explore some aspect of life, faith, history, science, culture, or ethics that's either much misunderstood or mostly forgotten. With the help of people who know what they're talking about, we're trying to undersee that ourselves, and let the truth out. If this hour of undeceiving isn't enough for you, join the Undeceptions' Plus Community for just $5 Aussie a month. That's just 33 Cronus, 76 off for our many Norwegian listeners.

John Dickson:

Hi guys, I can't wait to get back to Scandi. Anyway, you'll get extended interviews with my guests, bonus episodes, and tons of other stuff. Head to undeceptions.com/plus.

John Dickson:

Some people don't like how wordy Christianity is. They think Christianity is too propositional, too much about dogma. Are you feeding that beast?

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I think, I'm trying to do the opposite because when I... I teach Greek. I'm now part of a translation team. My heart really is breaking down the Christianese. If we think that [crosstalk 00:03:00].

John Dickson:

That's Dr. Nijay Gupta, professor of New Testament at Northern Seminary, just outside Chicago. I'm soon to be his neighbor. His most recent book is called 15 New Testament Words of Life: A New Testament Theology for Real Life, and that's what we're talking to him about in this episode.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

If we think that most of the New Testament or much of the New Testament is written in the language of the people versus the ivory tower, then we should stop translating things as hollowed, and realize that sometimes the language of the New Testament is more like every day language that we use. I feel like our translations should change. I feel like they should be more in keeping with the New Living Translations, the message Bible translations that really try to communicate in the everyday language of the people. What I try to do is I take these words like righteousness, holiness, and I think, "How would we actually talk about this today in regular language?"

John Dickson:

This is one of the cool things about the New Testament. I mean, I know I'm biased and brilliant. I think there are many cool things, but it's written in the language of common speech, not in a highly literary language. Of course, if you remember our between testaments episode, one of the most downloaded episodes ever, you'll know that after Alexander the Great in the late fourth century BC, much of the ancient near east and most of the Mediterranean adopted Alexander's language, Greek. Even Jews, many of them anyway took on Greek as well as Aramaic and some Hebrew.

John Dickson:

The second largest Jewish city in the ancient world after Jerusalem was Alexandria in Northern Egypt named after Alexander, of course. The Jews there mostly spoke and wrote in Greek. It got to the point where they felt the need to translate the Hebrew and Aramaic scriptures, what Christians call the Old Testament, into the local Greek. We call that great translation, the Septuagint, so called because of the tradition that 70 scribes were involved in the translation. In nerdy books, it's often represented by Roman numerals LXX, 50, 10, 10, which equals 70.

John Dickson:

The Septuagint predates Jesus by a couple of centuries, and it massively influenced the way the New Testament authors like Paul or John or Mark wrote their works. I mean, words like Christos, Christ, or Euangelion, gospel, or kurios, Lord were all chosen under the influence of this Septuagint. Anyway, the

point is our authors chose what's called koine or common Greek to communicate the things they had seen. If you are planning along in our August competition, that's our code word for this episode, koine, K-O-I-N-E, the word for common.

John Dickson:

You intimated that the New Testament is written in a... We call it common Greek. Even the kind of Greek it is, it's not as rarefied as the Greek of Josephus and Philo, or Plutarch. It's several levels below that. Can you tell us about that? Nerd out for a second? I don't mind. That's fine. But then why is that important for us to understand?

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Well, even the phenomenon of Paul, for example, as a Jew, writing to people in Rome in Greek is a really interesting phenomenon. He's not writing in Latin. He's not writing an Aramaic. Greek ended up being the lingua franca of the Roman world. It was the language of common communication across cultures. Something this tells us is the metropolitan cosmopolitan nature of the Roman world, where you have lots of cultures and people mixing. Part of that tells us that Jews pretty early on in the Greek world thought it appropriate and right to translate their scriptures into Greek.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

The fact that the Septuagint translators are choosing regular words to translate what we think of as the Old Testament, I think that probably sets the tone for what these early Christian writers are doing. That in itself is helpful to think through. They're writing for everyday people. I think this hit home for me, John, reading a book by Bruce Longenecker called Remember the Poor, where he really points out that most people listening to the New Testament in the first century were what we think of as poor.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

When you say that compared to the great university tradition of Christianity, there's a mismatch between the loftiness of some of our academic traditions in Christian theology, and the reality of first century Christianity, which would have been very street on the ground thing.

John Dickson:

Way back in season one of Undeceptions, I spoke to Theresa Morgan at Oxford about what life was like for the average person living on the outskirts of Rome around the time of Jesus. It was episode four called Moral Classics. I reckon it's well worth a listen. One of the things she said really struck me. The New Testament is a unique set of texts in antiquity, because it doesn't come from elites. It comes from what she called pretty ordinary people. Theologically, I'd want to say that God chose to communicate to normal people, not just the rich and powerful.

John Dickson:

The language chosen for the New Testament matters, and the keywords used from that language provide windows into the central message being communicated. Here are 15 of those words. Ready? Are you ready?

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I'm ready.

John Dickson:

Righteous.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Dikaios. I would translate something like right before God and others towards integrity and justice in the world.

John Dickson:

I love it. When we hear that word now, it's a horrible word. It's so Christianese, and almost the only time you hear righteous. Now, it's derogatory. It's self-righteous, or even now, people would just say, "Oh, you're so righteous." Oh, please.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Well, I start out my chapter by just using a joke that you would never see a job ad looking for a shift manager at McDonald's must be righteous, but that's precisely what we want. The way this term was used in Greek, the way it was used in its Hebrew counterpart, it just means good, honest person, good and honest. You want that in employee, and we don't actually have a good English word for that. Integrity is probably the closest.

Speaker 3:

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure and heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," Matthew chapter five.

John Dickson:

Gospel.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Euangelion.

John Dickson:

The trumpets are sounding.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I would say the story of good news of being changed for the better by God. I mean, that would be a very basic way of saying it.

John Dickson:

It was a huge word in the first century. Wasn't it? I mean, it had a whole connotation.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

It did. I mean, it was the most common word for good news. So if you said, "Good news, I got a promotion at work," you would use this word, but there were some echoes, some political echoes. I like to tell my students, "If you watched Star Wars or the Hunger Games, they're basically ripping off the Roman world." I mean, a lot of these famous movies are just riffing on Rome, and so it's not surprising to see the New Testament doing that as well, picking up terms that have some political resonances, and using them. In the Roman world, you would talk about the "good news" of a particular political leader coming into power.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

When I lived in England, I lived a stone's throw from where constant team was coordinated in Yorkshire, not too far from Durham, where I lived. It's a big thing when an emperor comes into power. Here, we have Jesus, this poor Galilean, and we're celebrating His life. I mean, that would be something special.

Speaker 3:

"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. For what I received, I passed onto you as of first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas and then to the 12. After that, He appeared to more than 500 of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep."

Speaker 3:

"Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, He appeared to me also. Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preached, and this is what you believed," 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

John Dickson:

For us today, the word gospel or good news is obviously a religious term, but that's only because of 2,000 years of Christianisation. In ancient common Greek, it was a media term that referred to breaking news from the real world. It could be used, for example, to announce a military victory. Two of the archers hurried to Sparta, bringing the good news, gospel, that the enemy had been captured, Pausanias Description of Greece, book four. There's a comedic example from a Greek play. The butcher rushes into the war cabinet of the city council and says, "Counsellors, I bring you good news, a gospel."

John Dickson:

"Never have anchovies been cheaper at the market," Aristophanes' Knights 644. As Nijay points out, the word was very often used about breaking news concerning the emperors, and quicker than thought, the good news, gospel, of the new emperor, Vespasian, spread in the east, Josephus' Jewish War, book four. The Christian gospel, of course, was the breaking news of a new and different kind of emperor.

John Dickson:

You say in your book that you think that perhaps the gospel writers, those who wrote a book we call gospel might be disappointed with how we in certain evangelical circles use the word gospel today. Can you explain why?

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I think a lot of times, our rendition of the gospel is kind of pie in the sky, get to go to heaven, get out of hell free card, say the sinner's prayer. But when we look at the Isaiahnic, when we look at the book of Isaiah, the Isaiahnic use of gospel language, that's picked up in what we call the Septuagint, the Greek translational testament. I get this from Tom Wright. They're proclaiming, "Here comes your God. Here comes your king." What does a king do? He leads a people, and this people is able to thrive and flourish, and get back to their land, and grow good food, and celebrate.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Why should we have a gospel that's only important for when we die? Shouldn't it be really important for the here and now?

John Dickson:

Forgiveness.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Aphesis. Forgiveness, often, we think of it as letting go like accident forgiveness from your insurance, but it's interesting. When I looked at Luke, I saw that forgiveness really isn't about letting go. It's really about embracing. It's about letting go of something, which may be guilt or sin, but for the purpose of

embracing. To put in relational terms, it's really about letting go or forgetting something in order to fully embrace someone.

Speaker 3:

"Bear with each other, and forgive one another. If any of you has a grievance against someone, forgive as the Lord forgave you," Colossians chapter three.

John Dickson:

People think of forgiveness as just cheap, letting people off the hook, too light and easy. You're saying it's not quite that.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

It's not because... I mean, there are different kinds of forgiveness. Let's say the relative that died who abused you, you can't reconcile with them. They're dead. But in many cases with our real relationships, forgiveness isn't just saying no problem. A lot of times, that doesn't actually heal a relationship, because there may be patterns. What God does for us is not just with a brush of the hand say, "Forget it." We all know what it feels like for someone to say to you, "Just forget it."

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

That doesn't feel good. That doesn't make a relationship better, but for God to say like, "I'm going to keep working at healing what's going on in this relationship," that tenacity of God, that is one of the most beautiful things, the God who will not let go.

John Dickson:

By the way, you might want to check out episode 39, Guilty Conscience, where we took a deep dive into guilt, shame, and forgiveness. One of our guests, Professor Tyler VanderWeele from Harvard, made the case for forgiveness as a public health issue. I don't know how you're going to summarize this word in rapid fire, because it's so bloom and basic. Life.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Zoe. I'm going to give you an illustration. I have an electric toothbrush. I've had one for years and years and years. Sometimes, my wife will unplug it to plug in the hair dryer or steamer. Over time, I won't realize it's unplugged, and the power will just get weaker and weaker until I feel like it's not doing anything. Then you plug it in, and the next day, that experience of this thing coming back to full life is like what John means by life, this flourishing vitality, vibrancy. I call it... When he talks about life to the full, I call it life in high definition.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

When I came back from living in England after three years, America had just discovered high definition televisions. It's just like, "Oh my gosh, this is a whole different kind of thing."

Speaker 3:

"I am the gate," said Jesus. "Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it to the full," John chapter 10.

John Dickson:

Because some people read that statement of Jesus in John's gospel as referring to extended life. It's really eternal life in the future. That's the life to the full.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Right. I think of Indiana Jones' Last Crusade. We have this just really old guardian, and nobody wants that life. Nobody wants a weak, wimpy life.

John Dickson:

In Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, the grail knight was a knight from the first crusade who had discovered the holy grail while in Jerusalem, and protected it for a 1,000 years. In the film, the Grail Knight is appointed to protect the holy grail thought to be the cup Jesus used to drink at the last supper. It has miraculous powers to sustain life. But in protecting the grail, the knight has to stay confined in the cave where it's hidden. Sure, the Knight can drink from the cup, and live forever, but he's also spending an eternity in a cave on his own.

John Dickson:

By the time Indiana Jones finds the cave, the knight is a shadow of his former self. That sort of eternal life mere extended life actually sounds terrible. Now, I have to tell you, because producer Kaley wants to keep the promotions rolling, we have full-blown episodes on the real crusades, episodes 41 and 42, God's War, and there's no holy grail in it. Sorry about that. More recently, episode 64, Kingdom Come, has tons to say about what eternal life in the Bible really is, and it's fantastic. The episode is pretty good too.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I've read some translations that say immortal life, this idea that you're not subject to death. Immortality is actually closer to what it means than eternal. Eternal gives that sense of never ending, but immortal gives that sense of indestructibility.

John Dickson:

So, it's that kind of elevated, not just extended life.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

That's right.

John Dickson:

Cross.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Stauros. We think acquiring power, acquiring success, acquiring money, acquiring wealth, acquiring prestige is the way to get ahead in life. Here, we have Jesus climbing down the ladder of success, Philippians chapter two. He'd lowered himself becoming like a mortal succumbing to death on a cross, and then God overcame that. What's interesting is many people mistake what Paul's saying as the resurrection flips, the crucifixion. It erases it. Lou Martin has this famous saying, "The resurrection, though it comes after the cross, doesn't thereby replace it."

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

The resurrection has got stamp of approval that the sacrifice that Jesus made was worth it in the end. This sets a pattern for us of what we call cruciformity, which is the idea that suffering, giving, being other centered like Jesus actually brings us the life of God, which is counterintuitive in the world we live in sometimes.

John Dickson:

I heard Tom Holland, the famous British historian, just recently saying that really, it was the cross more than the resurrection that transformed Western culture. When I first heard him say that, I was like... Something in me went, "No. No. No. The resurrection changed everything." But actually when you think about it, the New Testament does. I mean, precisely what you just said, it doesn't say, "Happy ending," the resurrection. We don't think about the cross anymore. It actually puts the cross at the front because the cross is the thing that turns things upside down, and that's what transformed Western culture according to Tom Holland.

Speaker 3:

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, who being in very nature God did not consider a quality with God something to be used to his own advantage. Rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross," Philippians chapter two.

John Dickson:

Next rapid fire, it's a big one. It's a cliche. Faith.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Pistis. I wrote a book on this called Paul and the Language of Faith. I talk about the problem of people thinking of faith as passive, thinking of it as opinion, thinking of it as mental ascent. I talk about faith in Paul's theology as participation in the life of God. It is the way we link into who God is and what he's done. It's not something we earn. It's not something we "do" as a individual act, but it's this idea of grasping Christ, holding on for dear life. It's like when you're on a rollercoaster, and you're clinging to that bar. That's what faith is. It's that clinging closely to Christ.

Speaker 3:

"For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last. Just as it is written, the righteous will live by faith," Romans chapter one.

John Dickson:

What would you say to the criticism that faith is the opposite of reason?

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I mean, I'd say so many things, but in some ways, in my book, I talk about for Paul, faith is believing the unbelievable. One of my reviewers really critique that saying, "Well, Christians have reason." At the same time, there's this sense of faith as seeing with what I call a second type of sight. This is where Paul talks about seeing with the eyes of faith in 2 Corinthians 5:7. What does that mean? Hebrews 11, there is some sense in which there's mystery in faith. We're talking about things that we can't visibly see sometimes, right? But to say there isn't reason there, I don't...

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I never like when my students say, "I don't have reasons. I just believe it by faith." The average ancient letter was about half-a-page long, about 200 words. Paul wrote many, many times that think of Romans, think of 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians. He wrote these extremely long texts to regular people, not to academics. He's doing that because he has these really beautiful... I mean, Romans is the best example, but he has these beautiful arguments he lays out, but they're arguments of a different kind. He does use rhetorics, sophistry sometimes. He does use logic, philosophy. He quotes from the Old Testament occasionally.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

He quotes from philosophers. He uses metaphors from the arts. He's quite intelligent. Actually, Larry Hurtado, in his wonderful Destroyer of the Gods, talks about the early Christianity taken on a "bookish"

culture. Meaning that increasingly became, I think, more academic, because they really wanted to convince people. I would say it's both end. In some ways, faith is counterintuitive. In other ways, writers like Paul were very sophisticated in the way they try to argue by reason.

John Dickson:

There's a lovely paradox there. I mean, we've talked how the New Testament is written in common Greek. A 16-year-old could sit there listening to one Corinthians, and get what's being said in the ancient world. Yet by the second century, certainly into the third, they have long catechetical classes, lectures that are detailed and very bookish. Christianity holds these together. Doesn't it?

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Yeah. I mean, the Christian intellectual tradition preserved Philo and Josephus. We wouldn't really have Philo and Josephus. Now, the Christians tried to Christianise at least Philo, but we wouldn't really have some of these texts if it weren't for these Christians saying, "We really need to do our homework."

John Dickson:

Christianity is bookish and wordy, but it's also simple, and I reckon beautiful. We've got some more simple, beautiful after the break. This episode of Undeceptions is sponsored by Zondervan Academic's new book, Bright Hope for Tomorrow: How Anticipating Jesus' Return Gives Strength for Today by Chris Davis. So Chris, tell me in one sentence what your book is about.

Chris Davis:

It's about how Jesus' appearing should change our lives today.

John Dickson:

It's about that future return of Jesus that people hear about, which is often casts as pie in the sky, heaven when I die. You are really making the claim that it impacts now.

Chris Davis:

Well, I'll tell you, one of my close friends is an atheist. I was telling him that I was writing a book, and he said, "What about?" I said, "The return of Jesus." You know that gift where the gal spits the water out of her mouth? It was like that. We were eating lunch together, and he almost spit his food or his drink out of his mouth. He said, "You really believe that?" I said, "John, if Jesus rose from the dead, then Him coming back is a much... That's downstream from the resurrection." It's just the... In fact, a theologian would even say it is the consummation of the resurrection. It is the returning of the resurrected Jesus.

Chris Davis:

Here's what I would say to the sceptic. I am sorry for how crazy Christianity has gotten about the return of Jesus. With all the hoop law in the books, we have turned this into a puzzle when really it's the return of the lover of our soul. Just like when I was engaged to my wife, we yearn for the day when we would... We were long distance, so we yearned for the day when we lived in the same place, went home at night, and were happily... It was happily ever after. This is the end of our story. What I'm trying to do in this book is to rescue this from a lot of the wackiness that has surrounded the return of Jesus and say, "The simple testimony of the New Testament authors is that we long to see Jesus face to face."

John Dickson:

Rescuing Bible concepts from the wacky is a key motive of Undeceptions. Thank you so much for your time.

Chris Davis:

Absolutely.

John Dickson:

Chris Davis's Bright Hope for Tomorrow is attempting to recover the excitement and anticipation of Christ's return. Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again is a traditional refrain in churches. What if our fresh hope in the return of Christ could drive our daily response to suffering discouragement and how we live in a broken world? You can get your hands on a copy of Bright Hope for Tomorrow on Amazon right now, or head to zondervanacademic.com for more information.

John Dickson:

In Tarime in the Mara Region of Tanzania, schools are often built one wall at a time, raising money brick by brick. The Tarime Girls Secondary School currently has one classroom block for about 160 students. It also has one wall of a science lab and another wall of a proposed library. The roof and the rest of the walls are, well, it's up to us. The vision for this school belongs to Bishop Mwita, a respected Anglican Bishop, who is hoping the school will offer an attractive alternative path to the girls of Tarime.

John Dickson:

Many of these girls are dropping out of school too early keeping to traditional views that girls are more useful in the home as wives and mothers, even girls under the age of 18. Anglican aid is working with Bishop Mwita and local churches to get this school up and running to serve these girls. Once complete, it will give 800 girls an opportunity to complete their secondary education, giving them an extra four years of learning that is bound to open doors, and give them options. You can help Anglican Aid in this important work, valuing women and championing education. It's an organization I really trust. Go to anglicanaid.org.au to give today. That's anglicanaid.org.au.

Speaker 5:

It's been seven years since Terri Roberts' life changed forever. In October 2006, her 32-year-old son, Charlie, walked into an Amish school in Lancaster county, and shot 10 young girls before killing himself.

Terri Roberts:

I heard the sirens and saw helicopters. Then the phone was ringing, and it was my husband. He said, "I need you to come to Charlie's house right away." I got out of the car, and I looked at my husband, and these sunken eyes just saying it was Charlie. That could not be, and yet truly was, it was true. It was our son.

John Dickson:

In the tiny village of Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, the events of the 2nd of October 2006 are referred to as the happening. Charlie Roberts entered a schoolhouse deep in Amish country, and shot 10 young girls, and five died. That was a clip from CBS News. We heard the killer's mother, Terri Roberts, talk about her shock when she heard what his son had done.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

There was a man who shot a bunch of school children in an Amish community, and then the man killed himself, so he's dead. But the community made a decision very quickly as a group to forgive the man and to take care of his family, so they actually went to the family's house, the wife's house. They talked to her. They expressed their forgiveness. Even at the funeral, this is fascinating, they shielded the family from the media so that they could mourn in private. Amish, obviously, if you know anything about Amish, they're very shy about being on TV. They don't like the public eye. I think, they even created some funds to take care of the child.

John Dickson:

Charles Roberts wasn't Amish, but most people in the village knew him as the local milkman. In the days after the killing, the Amish community was quick to express their forgiveness to Charles' family. On the day of the killings, members of the Nickel Mines community took food to Roberts widow. Six days after the shooting, families, who'd just buried their daughters, attended Roberts' funeral. Many families who had lost their own daughters were seen hugging and comforting the killer's wife, Marie, and his mother, Terri. That's why they call it Amazing Grace.

John Dickson:

We'll come back out of the weeds now. For a glorious word, grace.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Charis. People often use these acronyms like God's riches at Christ mercy, things like that, which are helpful, but mostly not. Similar to you as actually trained in classical Greek, I studied classical Greek for my undergraduate, and our actual translation of that is favour, favour meaning someone showing favour towards somebody. The best example of this really is our relationship with our children. We want them to be healthy, and yet we spoil them with food, and screen time, and all kinds of stuff, and to have this understanding that God has that feeling towards His creatures of spoiling them, of giving them.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Just like the gospels say, even though you're evil, you know how to get good gifts to your children. How much more the heavenly father? We're not evil, but he's saying, "You're flawed. You're mortal. You're sinful, but you spoil your kids. How much more God?" The idea of God's grace really is His disposition of wanting to spoil His creatures.

Speaker 3:

"But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ. Even when we were dead in transgressions, it is by grace you have been saved, and God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus in order that in the coming ages, he might show the incomparable riches of His grace expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God," Ephesians chapter two.

Speaker 7:

How we gather in community is changing. People are drifting away from religious institutions so that more than one in three millennials, when asked to name their religious identity, says none of the above. Meanwhile, there's a growing crisis of isolation. One in four Americans now says that they have nobody to talk to.

Speaker 8:

Our research at Harvard Divinity School has revealed a landscape of young people who are urgently looking for communities of belonging. We've mapped out how secular organizations like CrossFit and Meetup and Local Makerspaces are fulfilling traditionally religious functions, like community building, purpose finding, and personal transformation.

John Dickson:

In 2015, two researchers from Harvard Divinity School released a report called How We Gather, outlining the emerging landscape of millennial communities that had begun to function and take the place of religious communities. They did so with mixed success. That's what our next word is about. It's what all

of us, millennials, gen X, boomers, and all the rest are really craving if only it weren't covered in all the Christian cliches. Next word is a bit of a daggy word in Christianese. Fellowship

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Koinonia. I remember my first line in that chapter is I hate fellowship, because often that means superficial socializing. I'm an introvert. I do not like to chit chat with people at church. I'm the one that takes the kids to children's ministries, so I don't have to say hello during the fellowship minute, but Paul doesn't really mean that when he's talking about fellowship. Often, we think of fellowship as giving to somebody or something, but I explain it this way. If I have two cookies, and I eat a cookie, and I give you a cookie, that's not fellowship. That's giving. I'm giving it to you.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Fellowship is when two people actually have forced to share one thing. I uses the example of the YMCA locker room. This would be how the word koinonia was used in the first century. This is a place where you're going to the pool to swim. It's publicly funded or whatever. You have to use the same locker room. This is the cheapest, easiest way to do it, so you're going to respect each other's space. You're going to respect the belongings. You're going to clean up after yourself. This is what Paul really wanted with other churches.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

He wanted sharing, community, giving, sacrifice, caring for one another. Fellowship is not entertainment, and it's not just getting along. There's nothing wrong with going out to the movies with your Christian friends, or having a prayer gathering, but fellowship really is about sharing life together, which requires sacrifice, but also brings a lot of benefits as well.

Speaker 3:

"The new disciples devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day, they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes, and ate together with glad and sincere hearts," Acts chapter two.

John Dickson:

Koinonia is almost untranslatable, camaraderie, partnership, friendship, family, all rolled into one. It's all the things experts today call social capital, which producer Kaley wants me to tell you is the title of an Undeceptions episode, episode number five, with Australian atheist, academic, and now government minister, Dr. Andrew Lee, who reckons religious communities might just be the backbone of social capital in the Western world. I promise that's the last inside promotion I'm going to do. Hope.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Elpis. Hope, I like to say, is faith reaching into the future. One thing I really discovered in my use of hope language, in the biblical use of hope language is we often think of hope as this really far distant thing. I found it really interesting that the Septuagint, which is the Greek translational testament, will sometimes choose hope in place of faith language, thinking that sometimes faith is just reaching into the next minute. Hope is just faith reaching into the next act, the next moment that do the next right thing.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Hope is really important, but really instead of hope being about living in the future, it's about drawing resources off of the future. We've been promised to live well in the present today.

Speaker 3:

"Dear friends, now, we are children of God. And what we will be has not yet been made known, but we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. All who have this hope in Him purify themselves just as He is pure," 1 John chapter three.

John Dickson:

Do you think that perspective helps the sceptical listener get around the problem, the perception that Christianity is pie in the sky? You're so heavenly might. You're so future oriented. You've forgotten about the present.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Yes, but one thing that's really helped me is thinking through, for example, in the American maybe even British era of slavery, the 19th century era of slavery. A lot of the black spiritual songs emphasized future hope, because the world was so hopeless. They didn't do that because they had a pie in the sky theology. They did that because they believed in a God of transformation, and so sometimes it can be a mark of privilege to say, "Oh, future hope is not that important."

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

When we look at people who've lived through really horrendous down and out times, I remember Jürgen Moltmann saying the Shema and the Lord's prayer were prayed in Auschwitz. That stayed with me. I read that probably 10 years ago. That line has stayed with me because often, we cling to hope when the world is hopeless or seems hopeless.

John Dickson:

Jurgen Moltmann is one of the most influential theologians of modern times. When people say that theology might just be the most comprehensive and demanding intellectual discipline, the queen of the sciences, they mean the work of Augustine, Aquinas, Banvick, [inaudible 00:41:51], and Moltmann. A

scholar like Moltmann is integrating top-tier linguistics, history, Bible study, of course, sociology and philosophy. I don't agree with everything Moltmann says perhaps because I don't understand everything he says, but his central vision for theology as a theology of hope, a future-looking theology is intellectually mind bending and life changing from first to last and not merely the epilogue, wrote Moltmann.

John Dickson:

Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking, and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present. "When you put last things first, he argued, it elevates not negates the present." Back when I was a theology student, Ben Shore and I wrote a song about all of this.

John Dickson:

[Singing 00:42:54].

John Dickson:

Maybe not our finest work, but a sincere attempt to be musically Moltmannian.

Speaker 9:

You are saying the novel Lord of the Flies is wrong. You are saying that would never happen?

Speaker 10:

Well, if tens of millions of children around the globe still have to read Lord of the Flies in school today, I think they also deserve to know about this one time in all world history when real kids shipwrecked on a real island, because that's a very different story.

Speaker 11:

A story of cooperation, hope, and eventually salvation. In September 19-

John Dickson:

That's a clip from Australia's 60 Minutes program back in April 2021 with historian Rutger Bregman talking about the real Lord of the Flies story that he reported in his book Humankind: A Hopeful History. The story was extracted by The Guardian, and went viral on social media, getting millions of reads. There's a link in the show notes, of course.

Speaker 11:

In September 1966, after 15 long months, Australian lobster fisherman, Peter Warner, was sailing near Ata when he spotted a burned-out patch. When he went closer, he was shocked to see a human figure.

Peter Warner:

This first figure was swimming towards us doing the Australian crawl as I call it, and then another five bodies leapt off the cliff and into the water, and followed him.

Speaker 11:

They clambered aboard and told the crew how they'd run away from boarding school, and ended up shipwrecked. Peter radioed to Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga, to check out their story.

Peter Warner:

The operator very tearfully said, "It's true. These boys were students at this college. They've been given up for dead. Funerals have been held, and now you've found them." That was a very emotional moment for all of us.

John Dickson:

The six boys had been stranded on an uninhabited rocky islet, south of Tonga, for 15 months. Salvation. This is surely the jargon of jargons.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Soteria. I'll do quickly what my illustration is from the book, because I think the opening illustration really tells it all. There's a story about these children that want to embark on this journey by themselves to some faraway island. They go without a compass. They go without proper amount of food, and ended up getting shipwrecked on a desert island. So, you have the cliche story of a sailor going by and rescuing them. Most stories of salvation would end there, but what's beautiful about this particular story is he actually then...

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

They were going to get in trouble for stealing a boat. He actually bails them out. He takes them home, bails them out, and then he invites them to work on his crew. He wants to give them a livelihood that give them jobs. This is closer to the biblical understanding of salvation, where it's not just plucking you out of hell, and sticking you a no man's land, but really saying it's more like adoption, where I'm going to rescue you, let's say, and I'm going to care for you, take care of you, help you thrive, be in relationship with you.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Salvation could be translated as commitment to someone's flourishing.

Speaker 3:

"Jesus entered Jericho, and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short, he could not see over the crowd, so he run ahead and climbed a Sycamore fig tree to see him since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." He came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

Speaker 3:

All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner," but Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord. Here and now, I give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham for the son of man came to seek and to save the lost," Luke chapter 19.

John Dickson:

What would you say to the sceptical friend who sees this salvation idea as the imaginary carrot and stick that religion uses to control people? Because it invents the problem of sin and fallenness and judgment. Then what do you know? It invents salvation to make it all beta.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I mean, how many movies have we seen that are based on this premise that religion is manipulative or religion is coercive? I mean, the whole point is you can't really prove it one way or another. As I have conversations with my parents, who are Hindu, and as I have conversations with other Hindus, I would say, "Does this religion in its way lead you to a better path? Does it lead you to a better life? If so, what have you lost in the end, really?"

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I would be more concerned if a religion was asking you to do really, really destructive and horrible things, and then promises salvation. That would be where I would be really concerned. But if it's okay, this person is wanting to love their neighbor. They want to give to the poor. I would say read the gospels. Is Jesus leading people towards a better path? I think that's where the focus of the conversation should be.

John Dickson:

Let's press pause. I've got a five minute Jesus for you. I mentioned earlier that the New Testament is a rare text from the ancient world for loads of reasons, but one curious fact is that everything about it tells us its history from below, not from above. Here's how the famous classical historian and New Testament expert Teresa Morgan put it to me.

Teresa Morgan:

One of the fascinating things about early Christian text is that they are exactly the kind of evidence for the ancient world that we have very little of. These are not the productions of the elite, so this really is the community literature of very ordinary people. As such, it's actually a priceless document in social history of a kind that we have almost no parallel for.

John Dickson:

Very ordinary people. I love it. Theologically speaking, I'd say that God chose to speak the New Testament from below, not from on high. Most ancient sources are elite sources, Pliny, Tacitus, Suetonius, Philo, Josephus, Plutarch, and on and on. There's always a suspicion when you're reading an elite source that we are missing the voice of the vast majority of ancient people. There's another suspicion that what we are reading is an expression of power and an attempt to maintain control. Now, I know people sometimes fear this is also true of the Bible, but the fact is the New Testament raises none of those power suspicions.

John Dickson:

The language of the New Testament, as we've already seen, is non-elite language. It's koine or common Greek. Early manuscript copies are all in non-elite handwriting, nothing like the handwriting you get in manuscript copies from, say, the fifth or sixth centuries, and key figures of the story. Jesus and his fishermen are all non-elite. Emperor Augustus and Tiberius and people like that, of course, get mentions as does high priest Caiaphas, and Governor Pontius Pilate, but astonishingly for ancient literature, these are marginal characters in the story.

John Dickson:

Despite the later history of the church as a bully toward others, the texts themselves are the writings of the underdog. The last thing the New Testament is about is control or manipulation. Indeed, the texts themselves are like the events that Christian gospel recounts about a Lord who entered the world from below, born into a manger, died on a Roman cross. Christianity, like the language its documents are written in, is humble, open to everyone because it is for everyone. You can press play now.

John Dickson:

Peace.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Eirene. Often, we see peace as the absence hostility, but a Hebraic, especially Hebraic understanding of peace is really about Shalom, which is not just the end of hostilities, but I think it goes hand in hand with life, flourishing, vitality, thriving, peace. When we talk about God is the God of peace, He's not just the God that ends wars, but those biblical visions of the child putting its hand in the pit of the asp, and it

won't get bit. This is really about community, about creatures dwelling together towards the common good.

Speaker 3:

Jesus Said, "Peace, I leave with you. My peace, I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid," John chapter 14.

John Dickson:

I find this fascinating, because it's very common in modern Bible reading to see in the New Testament the word peace, and just think it's the end of our enmity with God, or it's the end of disunity in a congregation, that that's all it is. But can you press in a bit more why given its background and usage, it must mean more than that?

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I think, a lot of it is the way we use peace language, which tends to be in relationship to war. I would say a lot of the Greek usage is actually about the ending of hostility and war. I think, you really have to rely on the Hebraic background to get the biblical vision of the God of peace, but the way I talk about... With my students, the way I talk about the Bible is you understand biblical theology best when you look at protology and eschatology. How was it in the beginning, and how will it be in the end? You're getting the most complete vision or the most perfect vision of human life.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

So, you have this garden with Adam and Eve and God walking in the cool of the evening. You have a serenity there that's very different than a lot of the origin stories in other Mediterranean, Mesopotamian cultural legends of how the world came to be, where it was very noisy, very violent, a lot of bloodshed. The gods are annoyed with humans. They're using them as slaves. Then you look at Book of Revelation and what it's meant to be like in the very end with this beautiful city, and the singing and the joy. I think, that loads up this word peace better than just doing a lexical study.

Speaker 13:

About a quarter of U.S. adults, 27%, now say they think of themselves as spiritual, but not religious. That's up eight percentage points in five years, according to a Pew Research Center survey.

John Dickson:

That's an article from the Pew Research Center in 2017. The phrase spiritual but not religious or SBNR really took off in the early 2,000s. In an article in the Atlantic, Matthew Hedstrom, a professor of religion at the University of Virginia, said the phrase became popular at the same time as internet dating. "Of course, you had to identify by religion. You had to check a box," Hedstrom told the Atlantic. Spiritual but

not religious became a nice category that said, "I'm not some kind of cold-hearted atheist, but I'm not some kind of moralizing prudish person either. I'm nice, friendly, and spiritual, but not religious," which brings us to our next word.

John Dickson:

Many Christian readers will be surprised that you included the next word, so give us a rapid fire on this, religion.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Threskeia. Religion gets a bad rap, because so many sermons will say, "Religion is bad. Christianity is about relationship, not religion." I wanted it to point out it's actually used in a positive way here at James, and that's important in and of itself. It's just really how we define religion. I really wish people would say legalistic religion if they want to criticize religion, or hypocritical religion, but religion itself is really just a system or structure that connects God to a people, and a contractor relationship they have.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

What I really wanted to point out there in the book of James is yes, religion is about this relationship, but there is this element of Christians are actually called to do right by the people around them as a part of their religion.

Speaker 3:

"Those who consider themselves religious, and yet do not keep a tight reign on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this, to look after orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world," James chapter one.

John Dickson:

What would you say to the person who's not a Christian, but will say, "Oh, I'm spiritual, not religious?"

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Well, I live in Portland, Oregon where most people do say that. I'll say in many ways, we're all religious. If you go to the local soccer game here, and I'm a huge soccer fan, there's ritual. There's religion. There is chanting. You do hands with fingers, and the liturgy is so obvious. I don't want to insult them, but I would say in some way, we're all religious. Maybe you're just choosing one over another. It's really our construct of how we engage with the divine or not.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I'll try to have a conversation about that. Then spiritual, I'll say, what is spiritual? Are you spiritual to other people? Where did you get your views from? I mean, all this leads down the road of, "Okay, maybe that's more religious than I thought."

Speaker 3:

"Make every effort to live in peace with everyone, and to be holy. Without holiness, no one will see the Lord," Hebrews chapter 12.

John Dickson:

For our next word, let me quote you and get you to unpack it briefly. You write, "I believe holiness may be the hardest concept to capture in our modern world, because we are the generation of widely available mass quantity, low quality, utility products, and experiences." Holiness.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Hagios. The whole point of this book is to say the words Christians use were everyday words, except this word. It's really interesting in the pagan meaning, non-Jewish, non-Christian. In the pagan side of language, they would actually use other words than hagios. They tend to use [inaudible 00:59:32]. Hagios really is a Jewish word. It's not exclusively a Jewish word, but it's primarily a Jewish word. Here's where you can't really deconstruct it down to its secular usage. It does... You just can't.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I think, there's actually something beautiful about that, because we live in a world where in many ways... Right now in America... I know you watch the news, John, but I know in America, we're having the abortion debates. There's a big Supreme Court ruling, and a big terminologist used the sanctity of life. Well, sanctity comes from the language of holiness. Where do human beings get a sense of life being sacred? They get this from religion. If you have a whole society that's unreligious, you're going to stop talking about sanctity of life.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

You might talk about the value of life. You might talk about the worth, but you're not going to talk about sanctity, because sanctity comes from somewhere. Where do we get our views of sanctity from? I think we have to actually believe in a higher power that has a bigger plan than we'd use. Holiness is not able to be broken down further than holiness. I think there's actually something helpful about that.

Speaker 3:

"A new command I give you, love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another," John chapter 13.

John Dickson:

Love.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Agape. I think the problem is we just tend to treat this very superficially. I would say in the Greek or Roman world, love was used often in a way representing commitment, and not just kind of, "I like you today. I don't like you tomorrow." We have to take that into the equation when reading the Bible. We live in a society that feels very comfortable getting divorced, feels very comfortable changing partners. My parents had an arranged marriage, and people find that unfathomable. My parents have a great marriage.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I don't have an arranged marriage, but there are a billion Indians, or let's say 700 million Indians that have arranged marriages. They have a different view of love than many of our hallmark approaches to love. I think, it's actually closer to the biblical understanding of love, which is yes affection, but also commitment.

John Dickson:

So Aquinas wasn't far off when he talked about love as willing the good of the other.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I think he spot on there-

John Dickson:

In a rather arcane discussion of whether true love requires loving the beloved more than we love ourselves in contradiction of the Bible's love your neighbor as yourself, Thomas Aquinas concludes his point with these famous words, excuse the sexist pronouns. "The one who loves goes out from himself in so far as he wills the good of the beloved, and works for it. Yet, he does not will the good of his beloved more than his own good. He wishes the same good, and so it does not follow that he loves the beloved more than himself," Summa Theologiae, part one, section two, question 28, article three.

John Dickson:

The point is Aquinas, following the Bible, doesn't deny there is typically an affective or emotional dimension to love, but he insists rightly that love is constituted by willing the good of the other. Nice.

John Dickson:

Our final word comes from the final book of the New Testament, witness.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Martus. This is really important, John. I think you can appreciate this, because I think in many ways, this is what your ministry is about. I used to hear the language of witnessing as knocking on a door, telling people about Jesus, point blank getting in their face, and this is playing the martyr. But when you look at the Book of Revelation, the way it talks about witness, a witness really is an agent, a representative of somebody pointing to that prime figure. I live in a post-Christian anti-Christian context here in the Pacific Northwest.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I'll tell you what, door-to-door evangelism doesn't work too well here. I'm from Ohio where it worked just perfectly fine back then, but it doesn't work very well here. I think the name of the game here in terms of just getting people interested in Jesus is just being a great living witness. Use your words. Use your lifestyle. But I think the Book of Revelation is really trying to say be like Jesus as much as you can, as often as you can, and that's going to attract people like a magnet to Jesus that are going to want Jesus.

Speaker 3:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in old Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth," Acts chapter one.

John Dickson:

People who aren't sure what to make of the Christian faith are sometimes really creeped out by this concept you're talking about. Can you allay their fears that a Christian who wants to witness is not a creepy ghoul?

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I mean, just to say, we do this... All of us do this one way or another with our heroes. What I tell my students is it matters what posters you put on your wall. Who are the people you idolize? I'm trying to remember, John, that you're into basketball, American basketball, right?

John Dickson:

NFL.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Oh, dang it.

John Dickson:

The Packers, mate.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

So you didn't see The Last Dance documentary about Michael Jordan?

John Dickson:

No.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

Well, there was this famous commercial ad back when I was a kid that was, "Be like Mike. Be like Mike."

John Dickson:

We got that here.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

This was a huge, huge thing. This documentary tried to reveal he didn't want people to be like him. He didn't want to be idolized. He didn't want people to copy his lifestyle. He's like, "I'm a basketball player. I do basketball, but people..." We copy. We tend to copy and become attracted to the lifestyles of the people that we love and respect and idolize. We all do it, I think, in one way or another, whether it's a political figure or a celebrity or a music band or whatever. In this case, we, Christians, are doing it with Jesus. I'll just end by this.

Dr. Nijay Gupta:

I don't remember in this book, but I talked about Christianos, which is the Greek word for Christian. Some scholars say it means Christ's adherent just like herodian means a Herod supporter, and so a Christian is a Christ supporter. I mean, what I love about that is this terminology stuck to Christianity that was essentially political terminology. It's not that different than what people do when they promote CrossFit, or they say, "I'm Apple versus Microsoft, or I'm Pepsi versus Coke." We just go all in on this weird Jewish person from the first century.

John Dickson:

I really relate to this. I've often described my own conversion to Christianity as a rotten, godless 16-year-old as becoming a fan of Jesus. I know that's not super theological, but it's a fairly accurate description of the emotional dimension. I'd never been inside a church before all of this. I had all sorts of ridiculous stereotypes in my head about Christians and their Christ, but it was one of my teachers at high school who dared to answer my smart-aleck questions with grace and good sense, and it really challenged me.

John Dickson:

She was a witness to me, and it made a massive difference. I may have told you this before, but I asked her after class once what she reckons God might think of me if God exists that is, I said. She replied,

"John, God sees everything you've done, said, and thought," and she left this really awkward pause. Boy did I feel awkward, but she followed it up with, "But he loves you even still." I thanked her for her comment. I shot off into the playground, and I tried to forget those words, but they went round and round my head. God sees everything, but he loves me even still.

John Dickson:

Humanly speaking, those words, her witness were my doorway into the faith. This brief conversation opened me up to learn the teachings of Jesus, which simultaneously inspired me and convinced me I was badly flawed. Most of all, though, it opened me up to the amazing news that Jesus' death and resurrection were the proof and pledge that, indeed, God loves me even still. That's when I began to learn to really ponder all these words, righteousness, gospel, life, cross, faith, grace, fellowship, hope, salvation, peace, religion, holiness, love, and witness. For me, these were and remain words of life.

John Dickson:

If you like what we're doing here at Undeceptions, perhaps you'd consider a donation to help us with the cost of the show. We have our Undeceptions Plus program, which you can find in our website. But if you don't want all those extras, and you'd like to just give us a one-off donation, I'd really appreciate it. Just go to the website undeceptions.com, and you'll see an oversized donate button. We're always looking at ways to expand and improve this show, and what you contribute really does make a difference, and I appreciate it.

John Dickson:

I'm excited to tell you we're actually launching another new podcast as part of the Undeceptions Network really soon. Imagine you could jump in a time machine, and someone would show you around the world as it's going to be in 30 years. Do you like what you see? Does it frighten you? That's the premise of our new podcast on the Undeceptions Network, DeLorean Philosophy with Steve McAlpine. Steve is a super well-known theologian, author, and social commentator here in Australia. I'm excited to introduce him to the International Undeceptions Network. Check out DeLorean Philosophy coming just in a few weeks. We'll throw a link in the show notes.

John Dickson:

Next episode of Undeceptions, our brilliant guest wants to convince you that science is an imaginative, creative, and emotive enterprise just as it is obviously a rational mathematical evidence-based discipline. This ultimately is because the creator is logician and artist in one. See ya.

John Dickson:

Undeceptions is hosted by me, John Dickson, produced by Kaley Payne, and directed by Mark Dikaios Hadley, editing by Richard Hamwi, social media by Sophie Hawkshaw, administration by Lyndie Leviton.

Our librarian is Siobhan Mcguinness. Special thanks to our series sponsor Zondervan Academic for making this Undeception possible. Undeceptions, of course, is the flagship podcast of undeceptions.com, letting the truth out.

John Dickson:

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