

Enchanted

A person stands on a dirt path in a dark forest, illuminated by a bright light source from the left, creating a magical atmosphere. The path leads into the distance, and the surrounding trees are silhouetted against the light.

The Thomas
Question

Recap

Western Christianity is in the perfect storm of dwindling interest and superficial engagement

We have forgotten **what** we are and **who** we belong to

"What I've heard in church over the years doesn't just miss the boat—**it makes the supernatural boring**. And even worse, the church's teaching **emasculates** the unseen, supernatural world, rendering it powerless."

Michael S. Heiser

Recap

But now the people believed Philip's message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized.

Then Simon himself believed and was baptized.

He began following Philip wherever he went, and he was **amazed** by the signs and great miracles Philip performed. **Acts 8:12-13**



Recap

You are following a different way **that pretends to be the Good News** but is not the Good News at all.

You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ.

Galatians 1:6b-7

Dear brothers and sisters, I want you to understand that the gospel message I preach is not based on **mere human** reasoning. **vs 11**

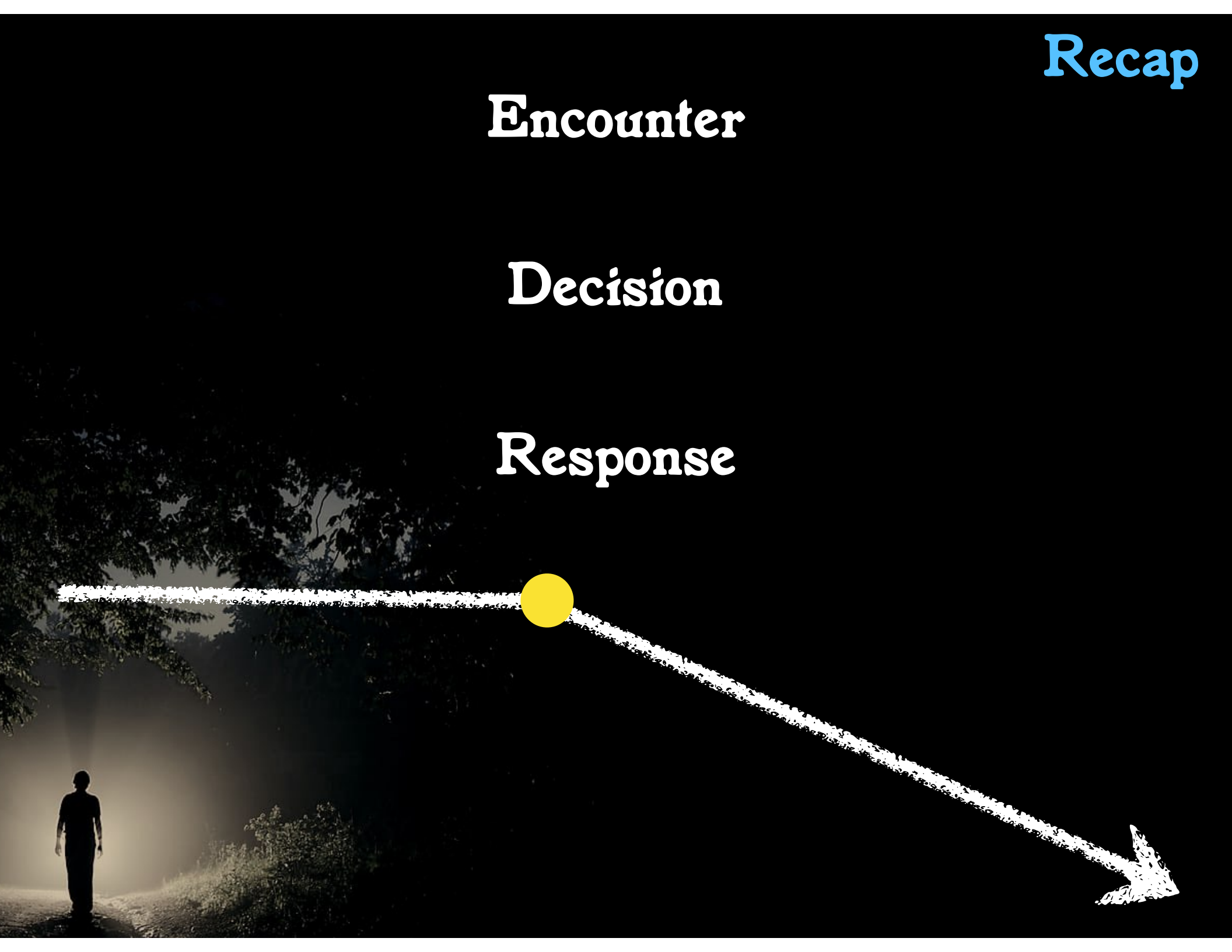


Recap

Encounter

Decision

Response



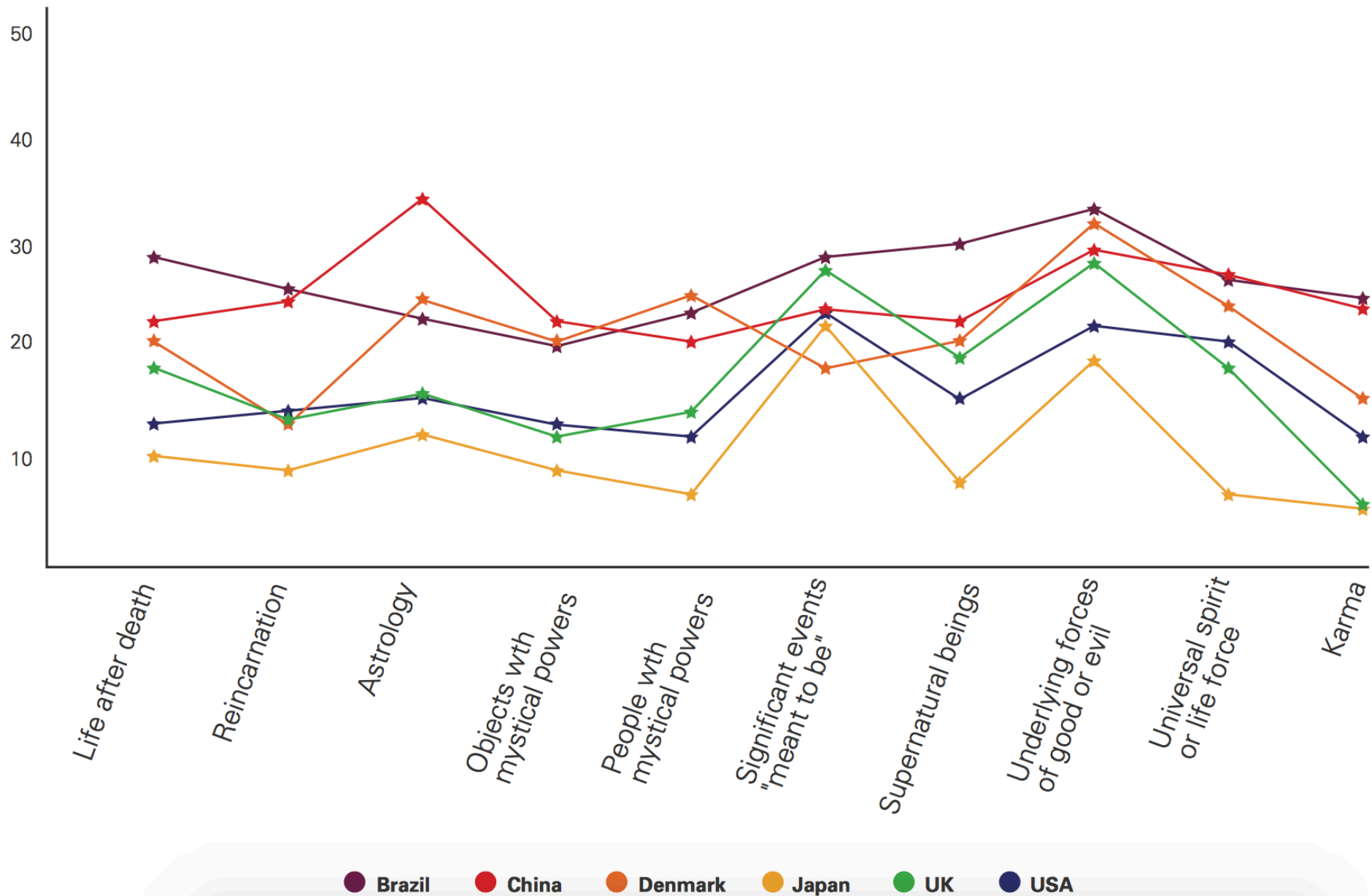
Understanding Unbelief, 2019

This multi-year research programme is motivated by the growing public, scholarly, and media interest in **atheism**, nonreligion, and secularity, fuelled by the growing proportions of religious 'nones' and 'unbelievers' in many countries...

While 'belief' and 'unbelief' are normally used in relation to God (or gods), there are many other **supernatural beings and phenomena** that substantial percentages of the general population believe to exist. **Logically, unbelief in God need not entail unbelief in these other things.** Accordingly, our survey probed the extent to which unbelievers agree that various supernatural phenomena either exist

Understanding Unbelief, 2019

i) Atheists



Understanding Unbelief, 2019

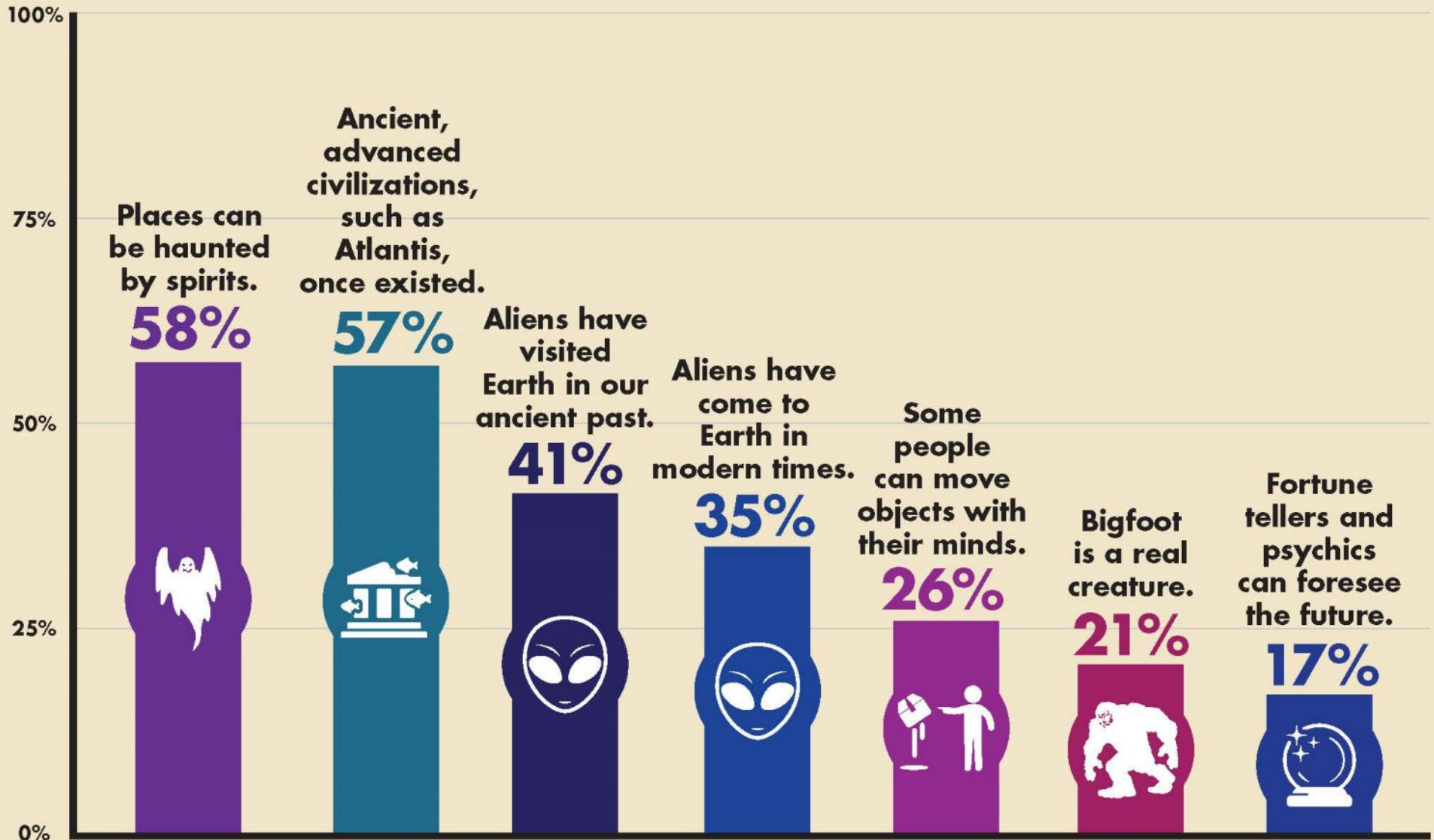
Up to third of self-declared atheists in China believe in astrology. A quarter of Brazilian atheists believe in reincarnation, and a similar number of their Danish counterparts think some people have magical powers.

The study's findings are "in line," Hendricks points out, **"with previous studies that show non-believers are just as prone to irrational thinking as their religious counterparts."**

Significant percentages of atheists and agnostics express some belief in astrology, karma, "a universal spirit or life force," and other supernatural phenomena.



Paranormal Beliefs



** Percent reporting agree or strongly agree*



Any conversation on the supernatural or mystical aspects of faith will invite **skepticism** and **derision** from various people

The other reason is less self-congratulatory. **The believing church is bending under the weight of its own rationalism**, a modern worldview that would be foreign to the biblical writers. **Dr Michael Heiser**

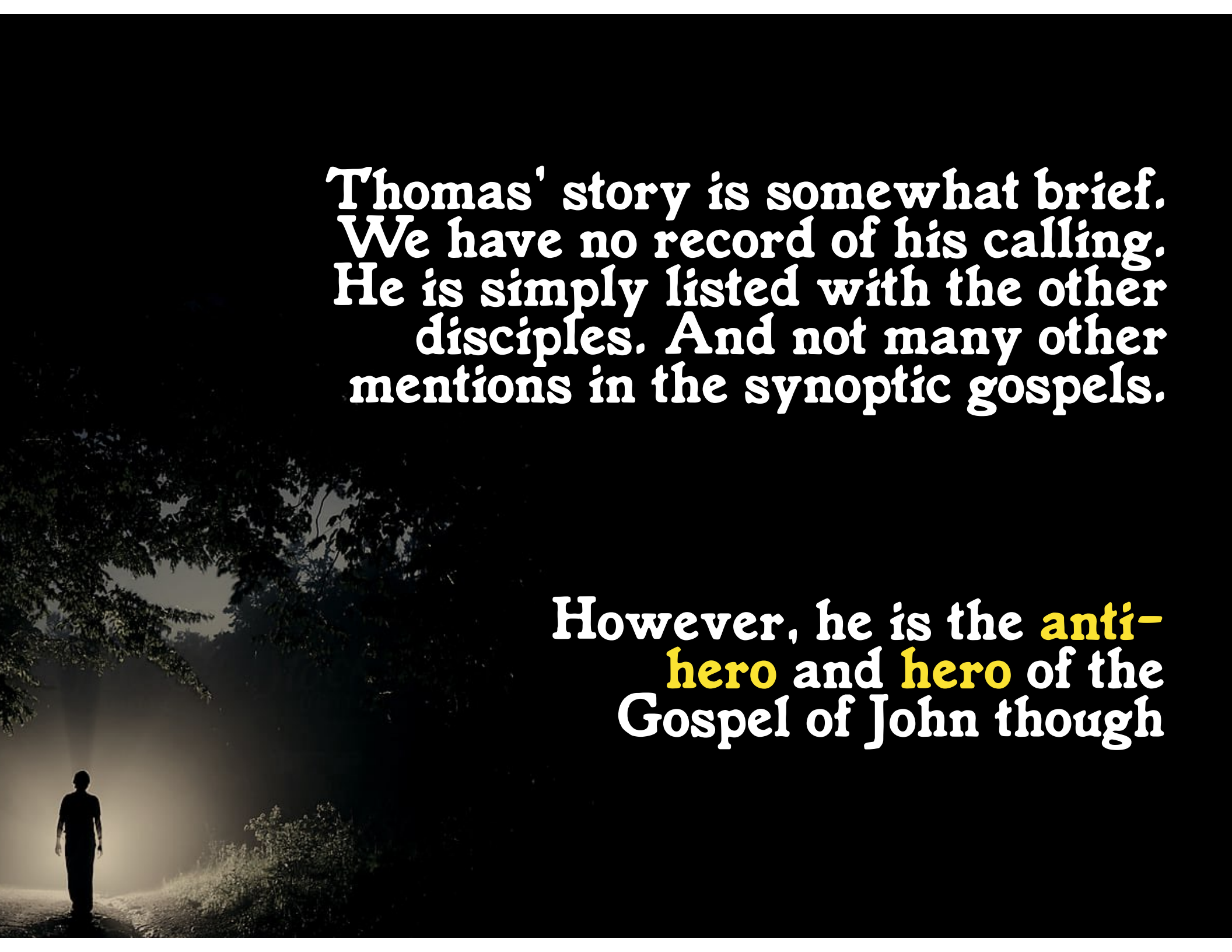
"Surprisingly, the Christian faith today is perceived as **disconnected from the supernatural world** – a dimension that the vast majority of outsiders believe can be accessed and influenced."

unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters, David Kinnaman



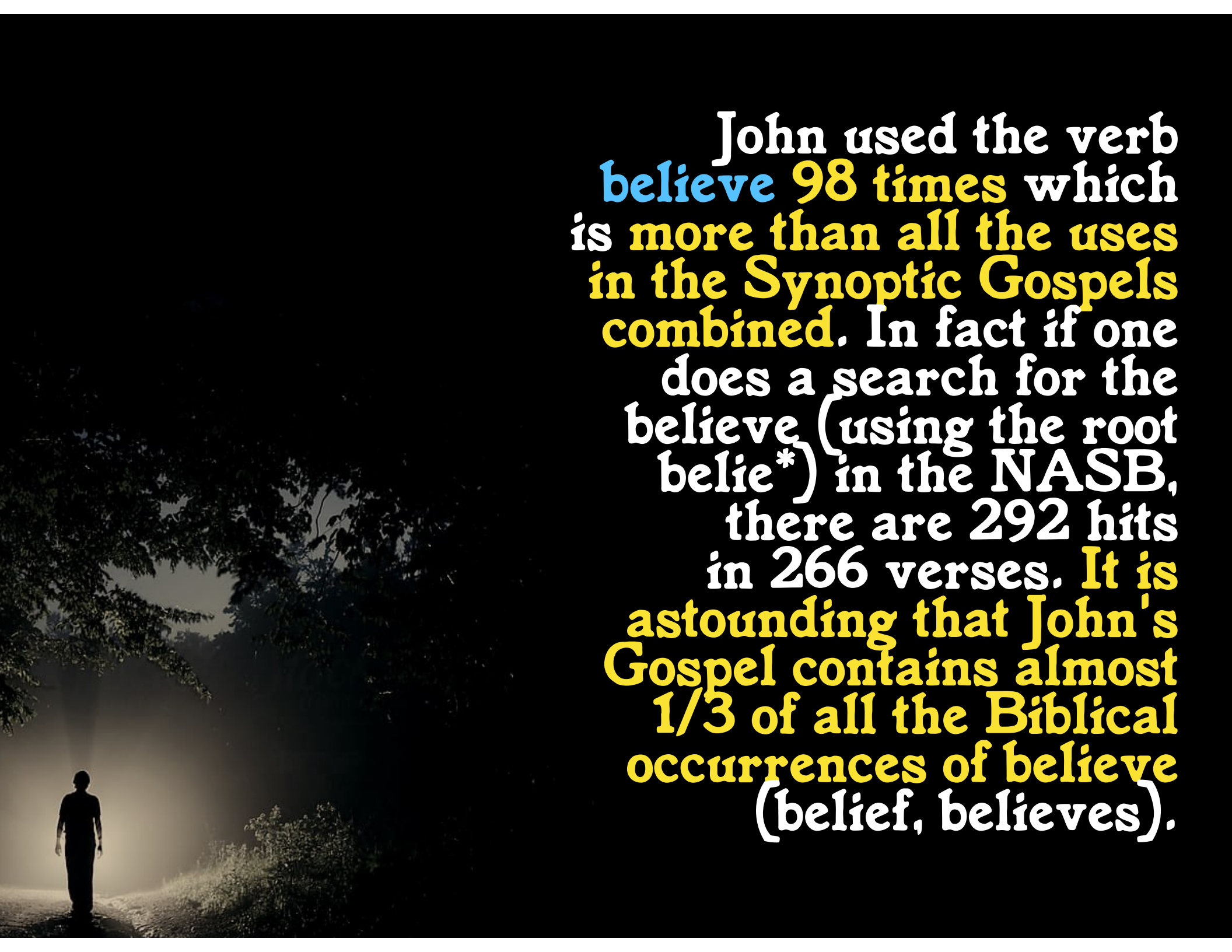
A silhouette of a person stands on a path in a dark, misty forest. The person is facing away from the viewer, looking towards a bright light source that creates a strong glow and illuminates the path ahead. The surrounding trees and foliage are dark and shadowed, creating a sense of mystery and depth. The overall atmosphere is somber and contemplative.

How much **proof/**
evidence do you need?

A silhouette of a person standing on a path in a misty forest, looking towards a bright light source. The scene is dark and atmospheric, with the person's figure centered in the lower-left quadrant. The background is a dense forest with a bright light source creating a misty glow.

Thomas' story is somewhat brief. We have no record of his calling. He is simply listed with the other disciples. And not many other mentions in the synoptic gospels.

However, he is the **anti-hero** and **hero** of the Gospel of John though

A silhouette of a person standing on a path in a misty forest, looking towards the light. The scene is dark with a bright light source in the distance, creating a hazy atmosphere. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame, facing right.

John used the verb **believe 98 times** which is more than all the uses in the **Synoptic Gospels combined**. In fact if one does a search for the **believe** (using the root **belie***) in the NASB, there are **292 hits** in **266 verses**. **It is astounding that John's Gospel contains almost 1/3 of all the Biblical occurrences of believe (belief, believes).**

The Story of Thomas

The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!" They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died. So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And for your sakes, **I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe.** Come, let's go see him." **John 11:12-15**

you know when your reading something and a sentence comes up and your like, what did i miss?

Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go, too—**and die with Jesus.**" **vs 16**



The Story of Thomas

why do you call it blasphemy when I say, 'I am the Son of God'? After all, the Father set me apart and sent me into the world. Don't believe me unless I carry out my Father's work. **But if I do his work, believe in the evidence of the miraculous works I have done,** even if you don't believe me. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father." **John 10:36-38**

Once again they tried to arrest him, but he got away and left them. **vs 39**




The Story of Thomas

When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. **And you know the way to where I am going.** **John 14:3-4**

"No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. **"We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"** **vs 5**


Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. **If you had really known me,** you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!" **vs 6-7**



The Story of Thomas

One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. They told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he replied, "**I won't believe it** unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side." **John 20:24-25**

Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said. Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. **Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!**" **vs 26-27**



The Story of Thomas

Thomas never doubted,
he simply **never believed**

Strong's Greek lexicon **doubt** (distásō) means, "to waver, hesitate, be uncertain." Doubt is not rejection of belief, but holding a belief with hesitation and uncertainty. **Doubt involves believing something with questions about whether it is really true or not.**

When we think about it this way, its clear that Thomas was not a doubter. He didn't doubt the resurrection of Jesus—**he fully rejected it until he could have physical proof.**



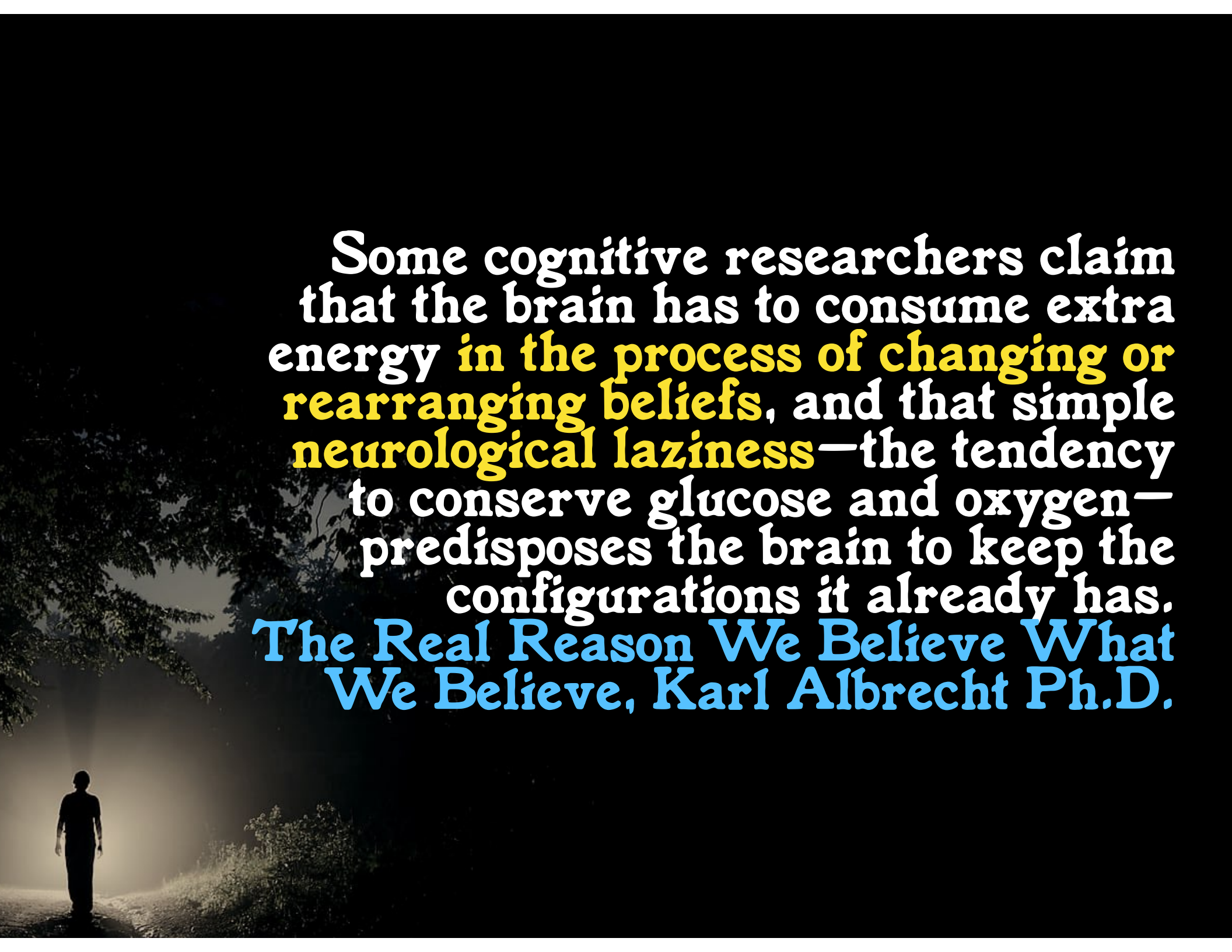
The Secret About Certainty, Sarah Cy

Whether or not you believe in God, think you will succeed or fail, or accept or reject whatever you've been taught, **everything you do is done on faith**, which in a sense is a synonym for choice.

Uncertainty allows you to experience surprise, develop persistence, embrace hope, and feel satisfaction. **It keeps life interesting.**

To be sure, probabilities are a good thing to be aware of. **You can be more than 50% certain about some things**

The secret about certainty is simple: **it does not exist.** Not if you're looking for 100% certainty



Some cognitive researchers claim that the brain has to consume extra energy **in the process of changing or rearranging beliefs**, and that simple **neurological laziness**—the tendency to conserve glucose and oxygen—predisposes the brain to keep the configurations it already has.

The Real Reason We Believe What We Believe, Karl Albrecht Ph.D.

Pride vs Humility

40% 60% 92%
71% 10% 50%
80% 33%

False equivalency

25% How much **proof/evidence** do you need?

my doubt fuels my faith

51% 75%
47% 20%
17% 80% 7%

0%



The Story of Thomas

John's gospel is all about belief, what do you need to believe?

"My **Lord** and my **God!**"
Thomas exclaimed. **vs 28**

Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. **Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.**" **vs 29**

Thomas' proclamation is the end of John's gospel. It culminates the entire intent of John's biography



The Thomas Answer

Lord, Kurious: he to whom a person or thing **belongs**, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord

God, Theos: spoken of the only and **true** God

relational-intellect and behaviour
supernatural-divine, eternal

It's as if John believes **two parts** are needed for belief, Jesus as Lord (**relational**) and God (**supernatural**)



The Two Truths of Belief

Lord

**King,
Rabbi,
Teacher**

**The reign
of God**

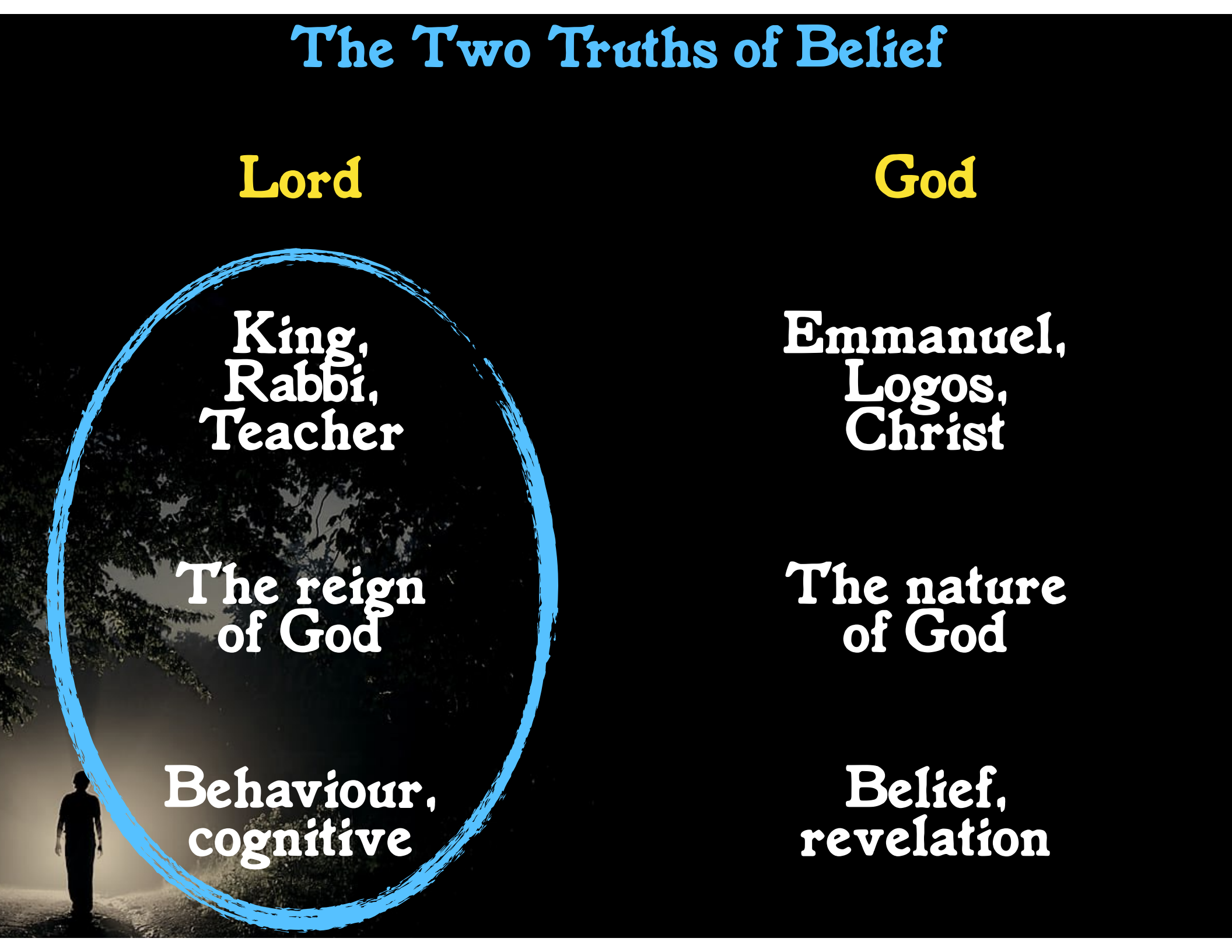
**Behaviour,
cognitive**

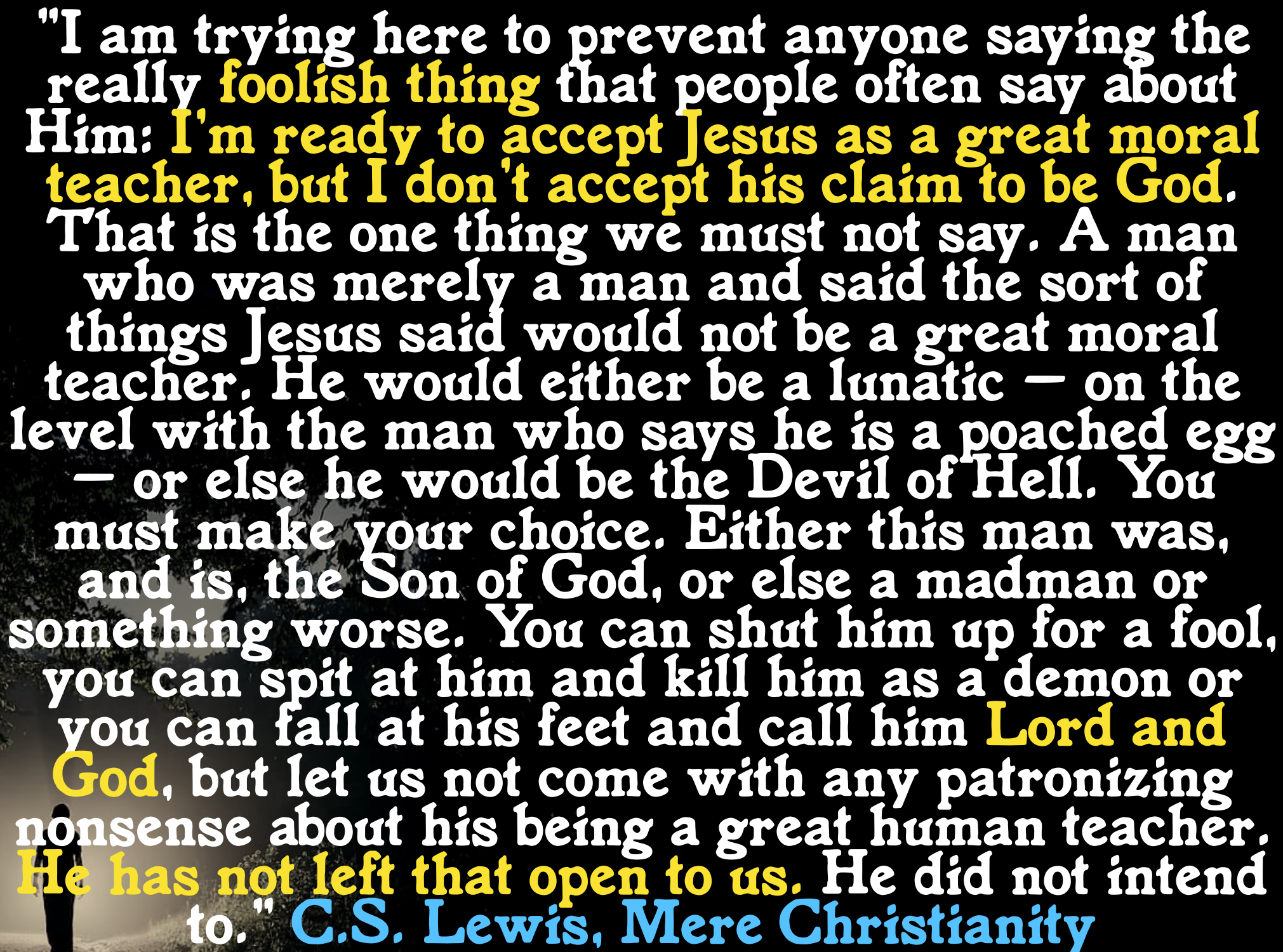
God

**Emmanuel,
Logos,
Christ**

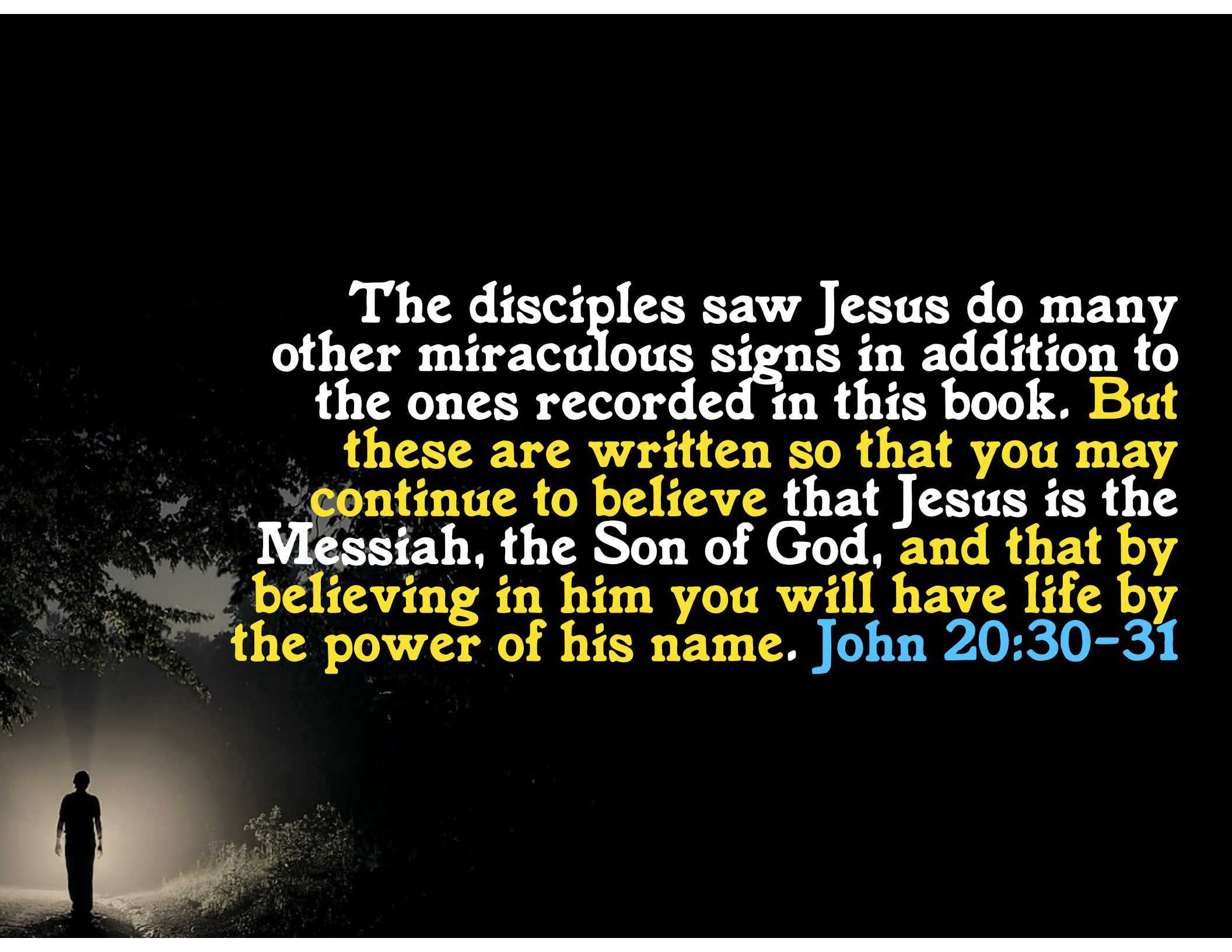
**The nature
of God**

**Belief,
revelation**



A person is standing in a misty, wooded area, looking towards the camera. The background is dark and foggy, with trees and a path visible. The person is wearing a dark coat and a hat. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really **foolish thing** that people often say about Him: **I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.** That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him **Lord and God**, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. **He has not left that open to us.** He did not intend to." **C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity**

A silhouette of a person standing on a path in a misty, wooded area, looking towards the light. The scene is dark with a bright light source creating a misty atmosphere. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame, looking towards the right. The background is filled with trees and foliage, creating a sense of depth and mystery.

The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. **But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name. John 20:30-31**