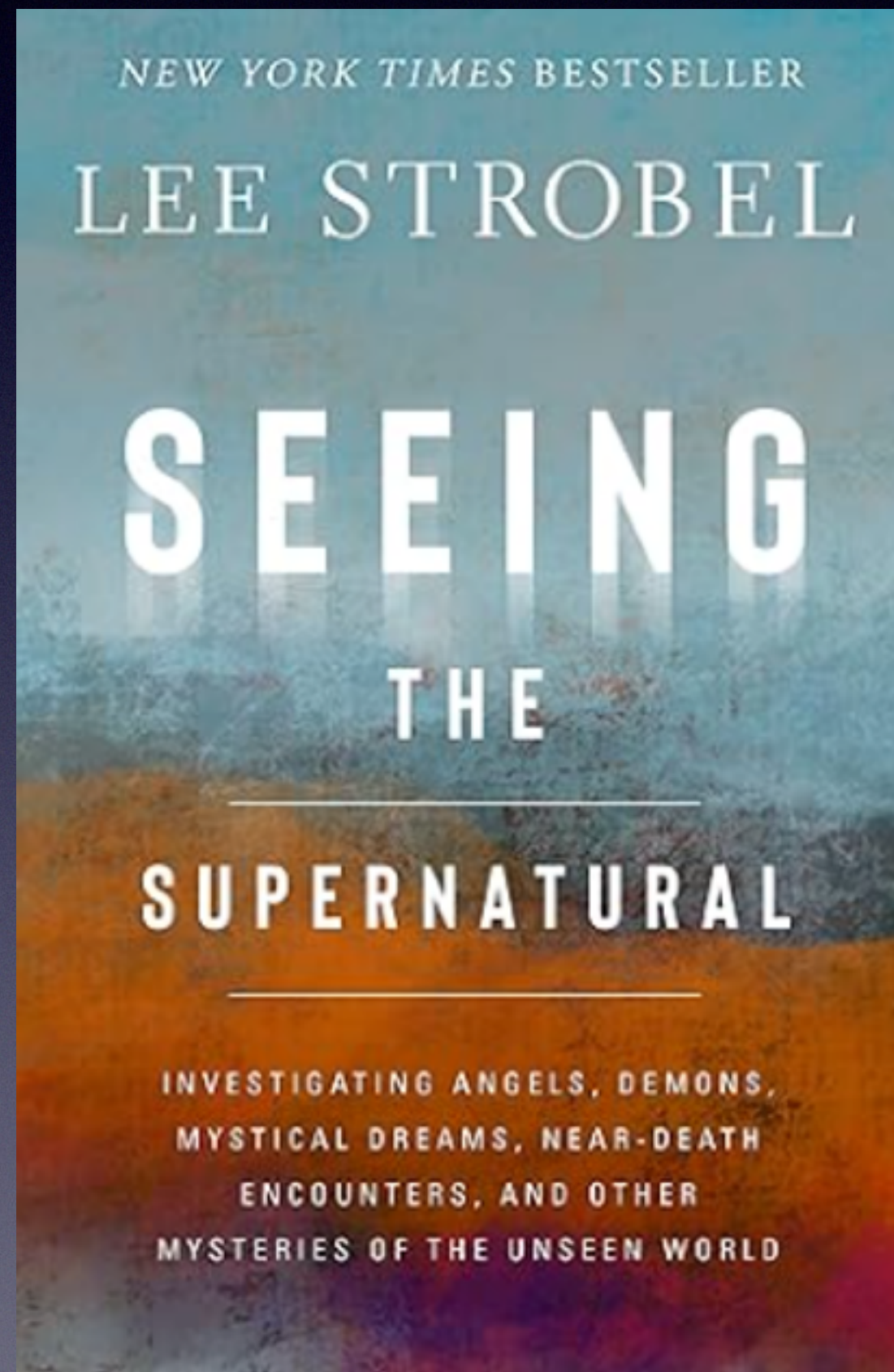


# Supernatural and the Dangers of the Paranormal



# Seeing the Supernatural



- Lee Strobel was asked to write this book about the supernatural.
- The first six chapters focus on “the supernatural among us.”
- The last six chapters explain “the supernatural that awaits us.”



# Seeing the Supernatural

- Lee Strobel provides lots of evidence for what he calls “the supernatural among us.”
- This includes the existence of the soul, astounding miracles, and mystical dreams and visions.
- He also provides interviews on the subject of angels, and another chapter on Satan and demons.

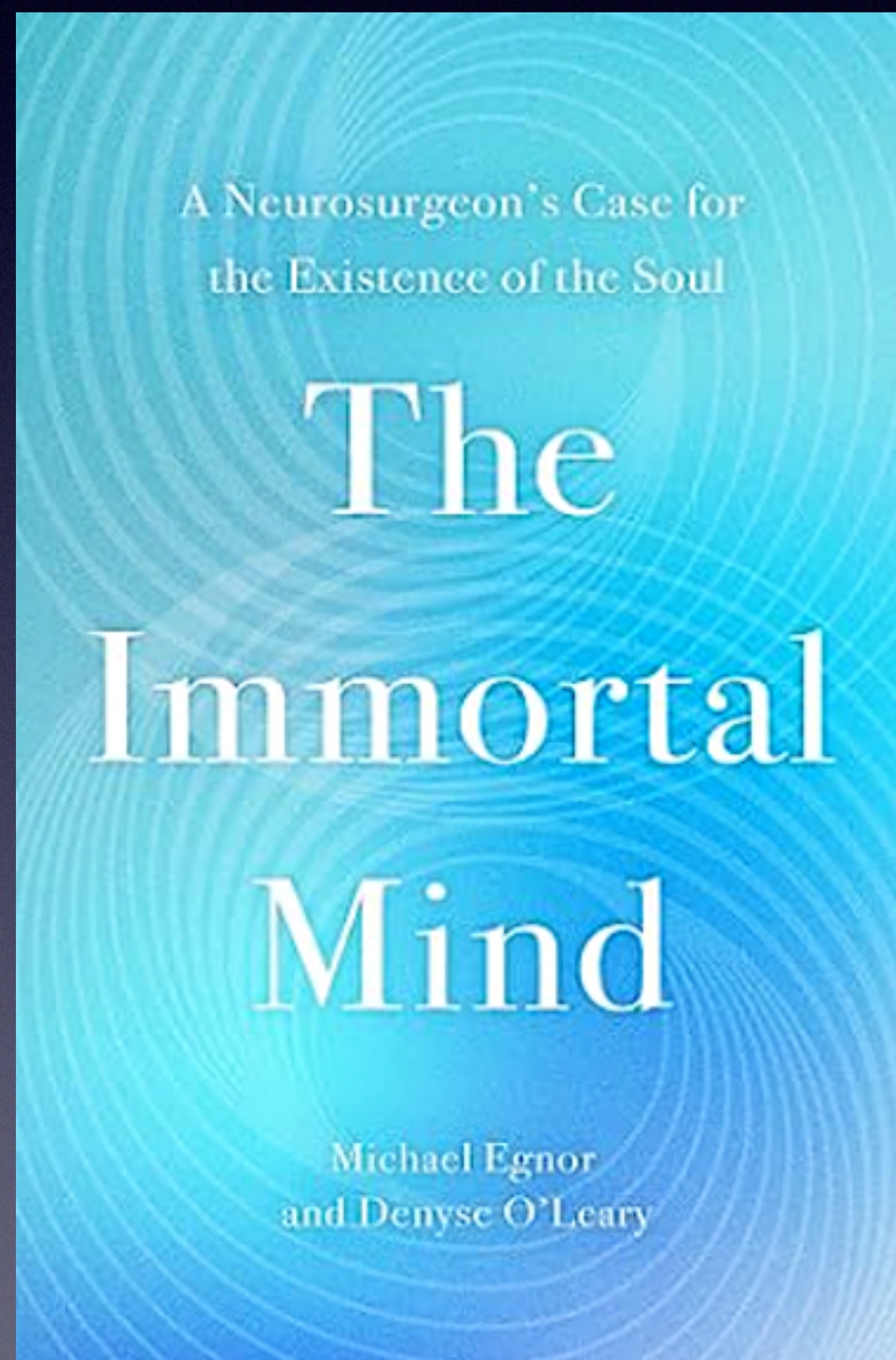


# Seeing the Supernatural

- Existence of the Soul - can everything be explained by the firing of neurons.
- “Describe the smell of coffee” - we can give the chemical structure of caffeine but cannot describe your experience.
- Wilder Penfield - father of modern neurosurgery. “Why did you move your arm? You made me move it.”



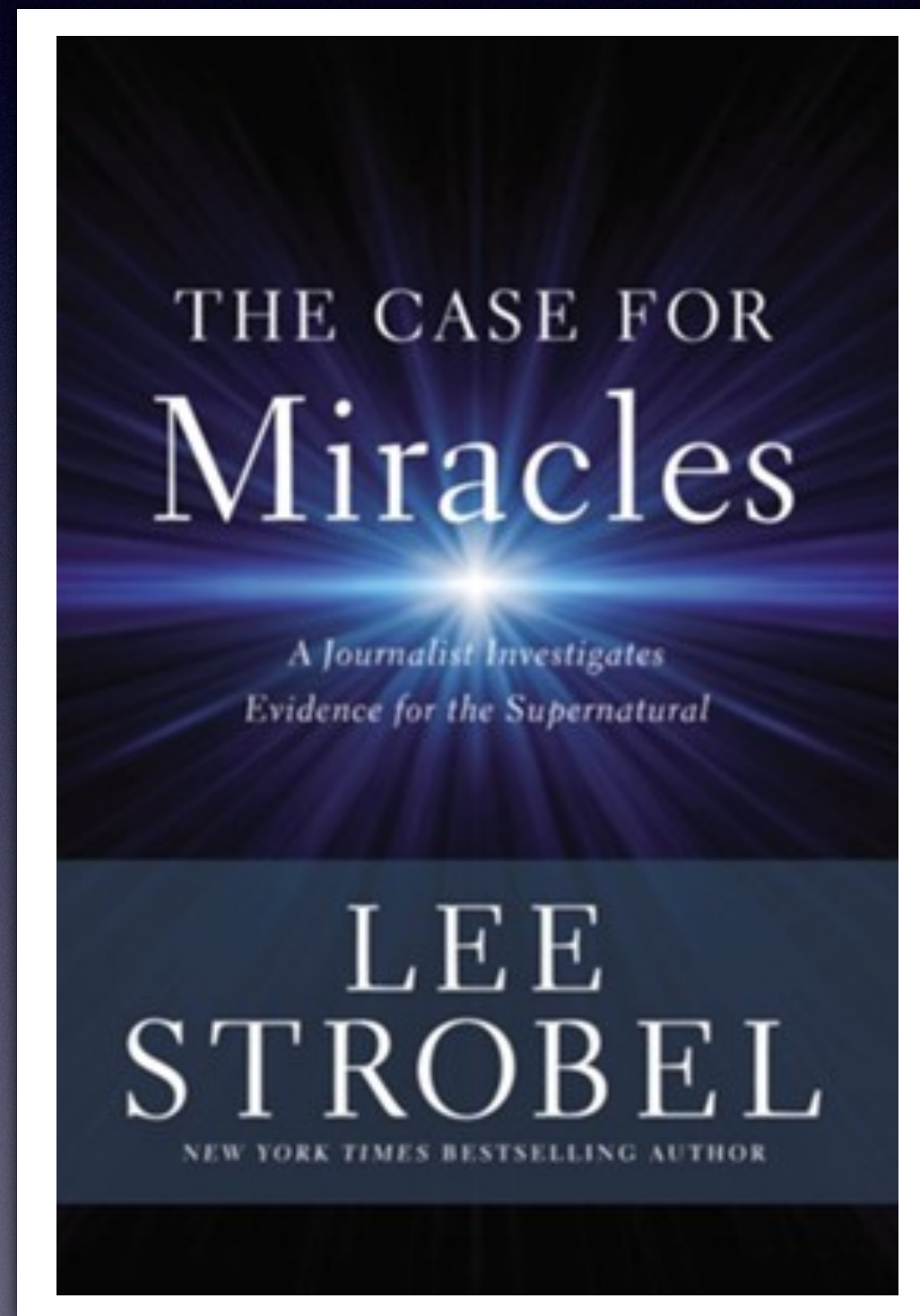
# Seeing the Supernatural



- Can your mind exist without key brain parts?
- Just ask Game of Thrones actress Emilia Clark.
- She had large parts of her brain removed due to life-threatening aneurisms. Yet she lives her life without major repercussions.



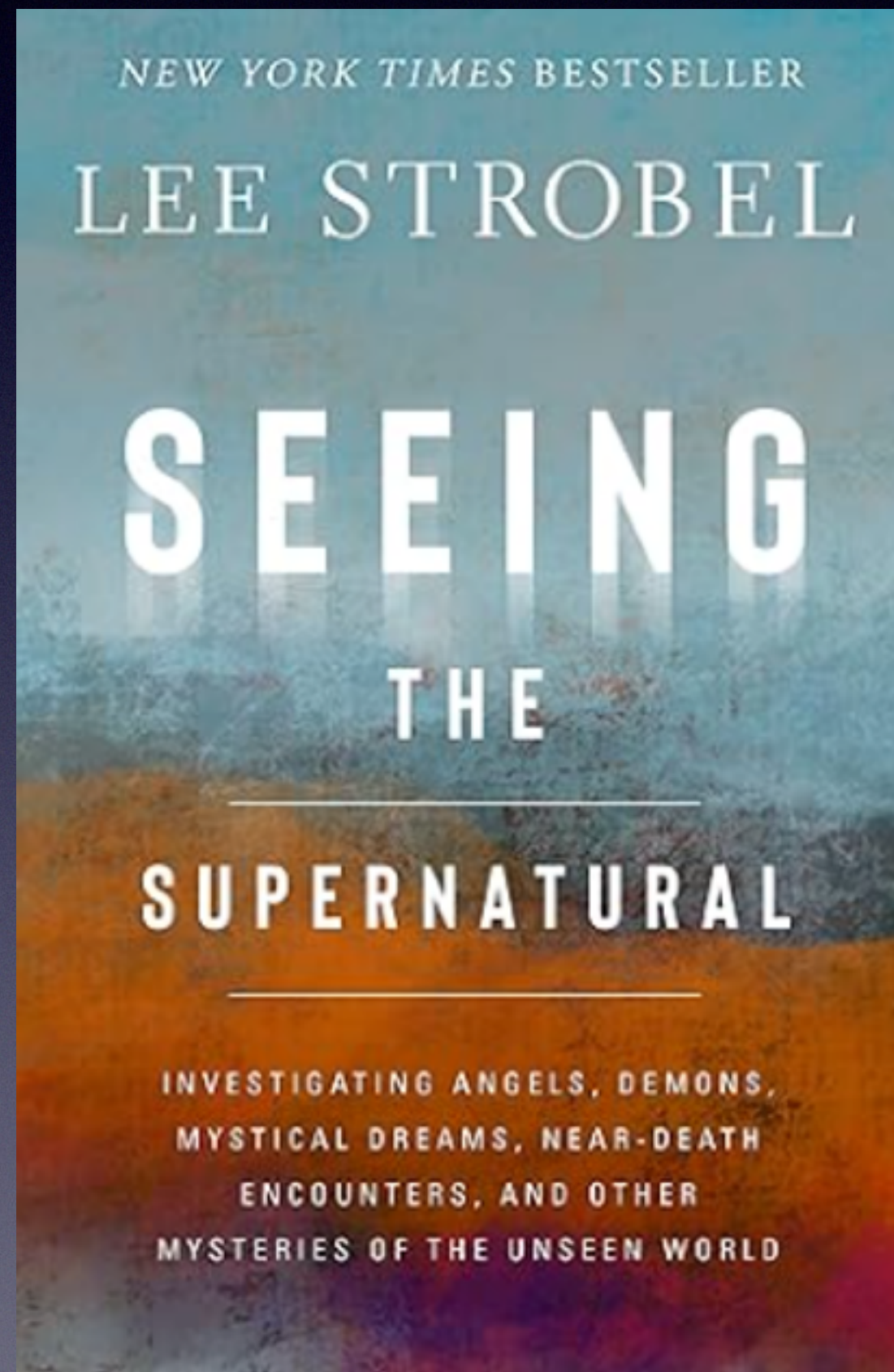
# Seeing the Supernatural



- Modern miracles - his chapter provides an overview, and his earlier book goes into much more detail.
- Many examples: a deaf child hears, an invalid walks, and a blind woman sees.



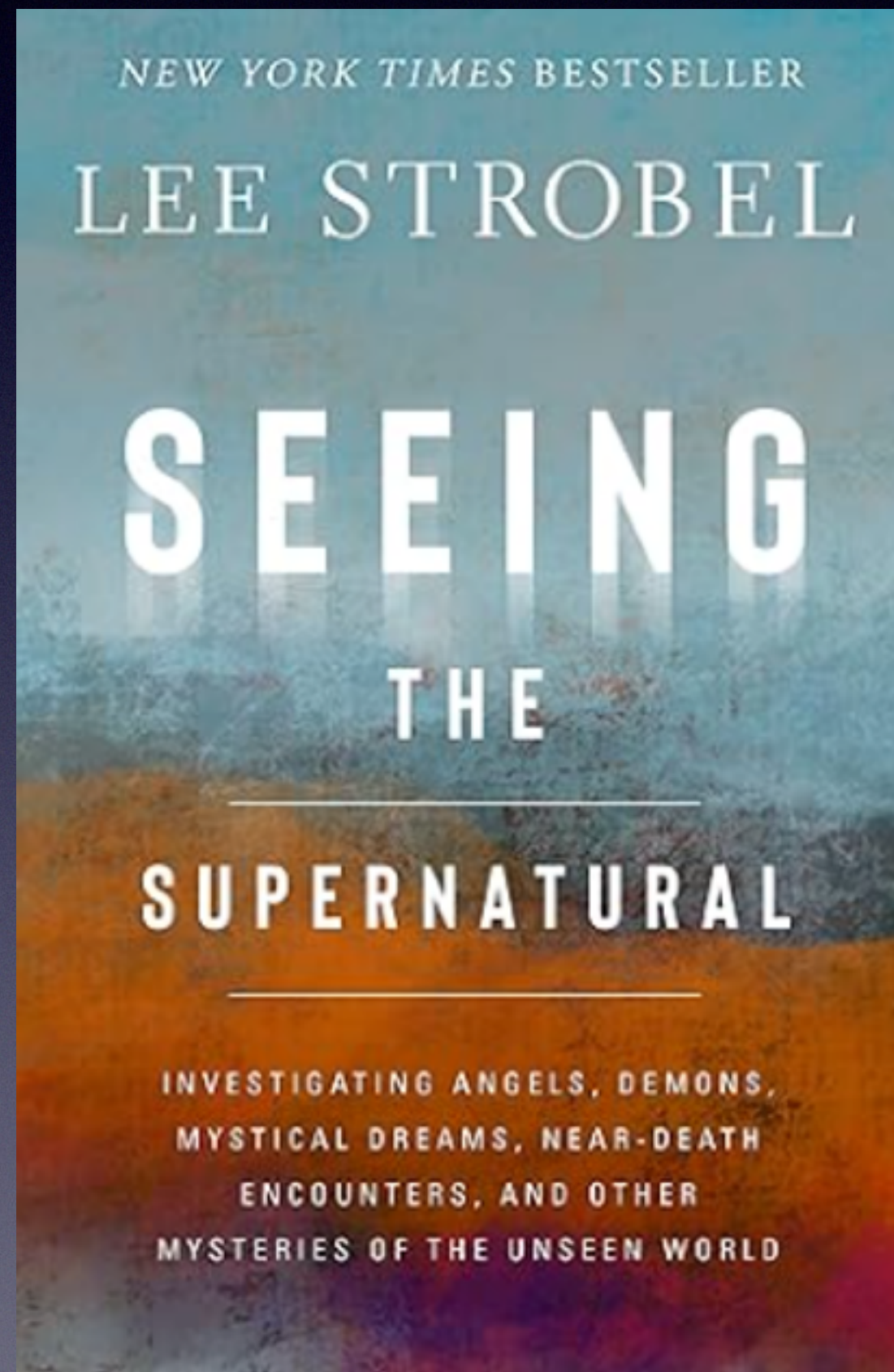
# Seeing the Supernatural



- Dreams and vision (last week)
- Near-death encounters: Hebrews 9:27 says that “it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.”
- Final judgment - Revelation 11:15-18.



# Seeing the Supernatural



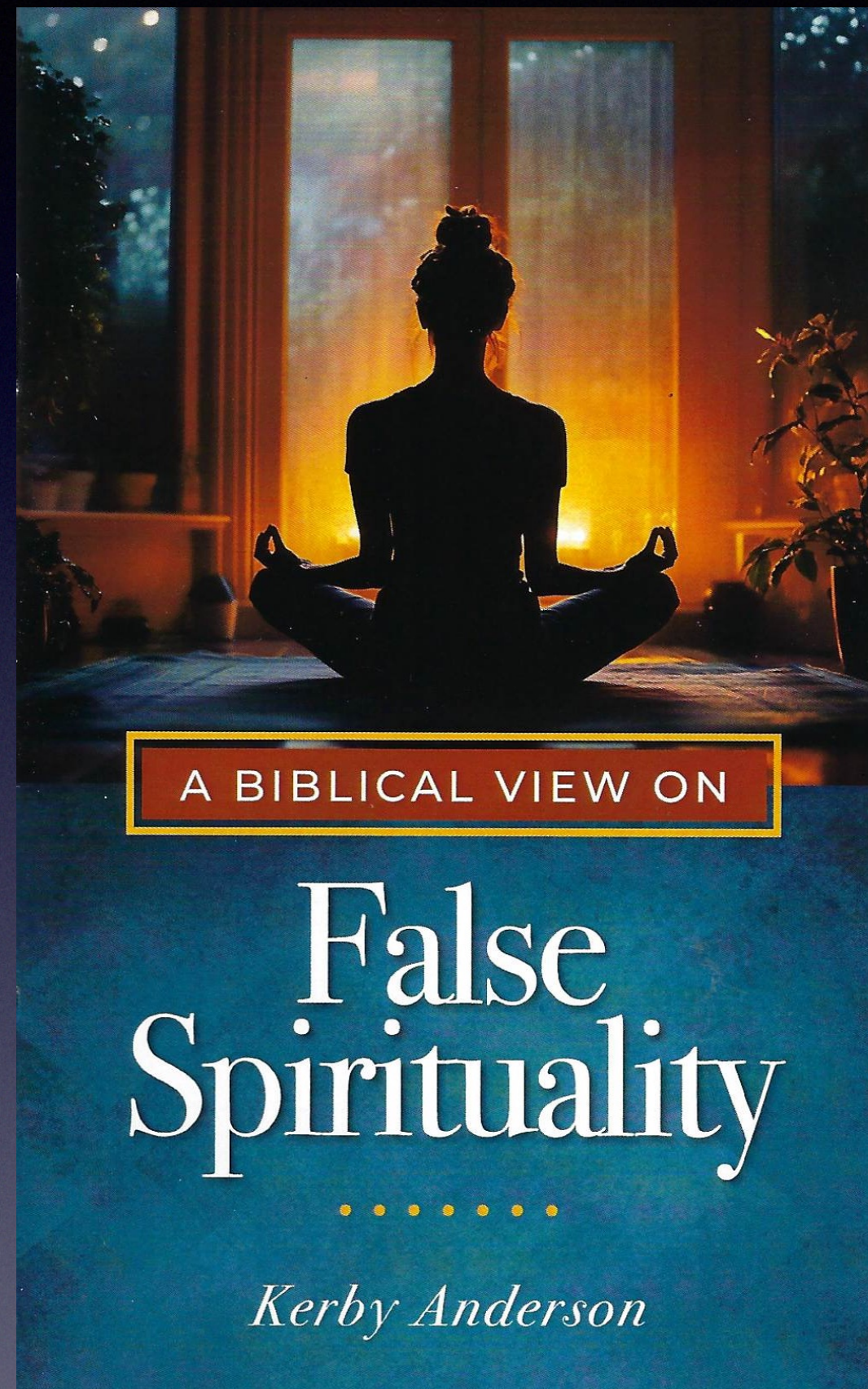
- In the final chapter in his book, “Ghost Stories, Psychics, and the Paranormal,” Lee Strobel interviewed Ron Rhodes.
- He explains that people are looking for the supernatural, but often in the wrong places.



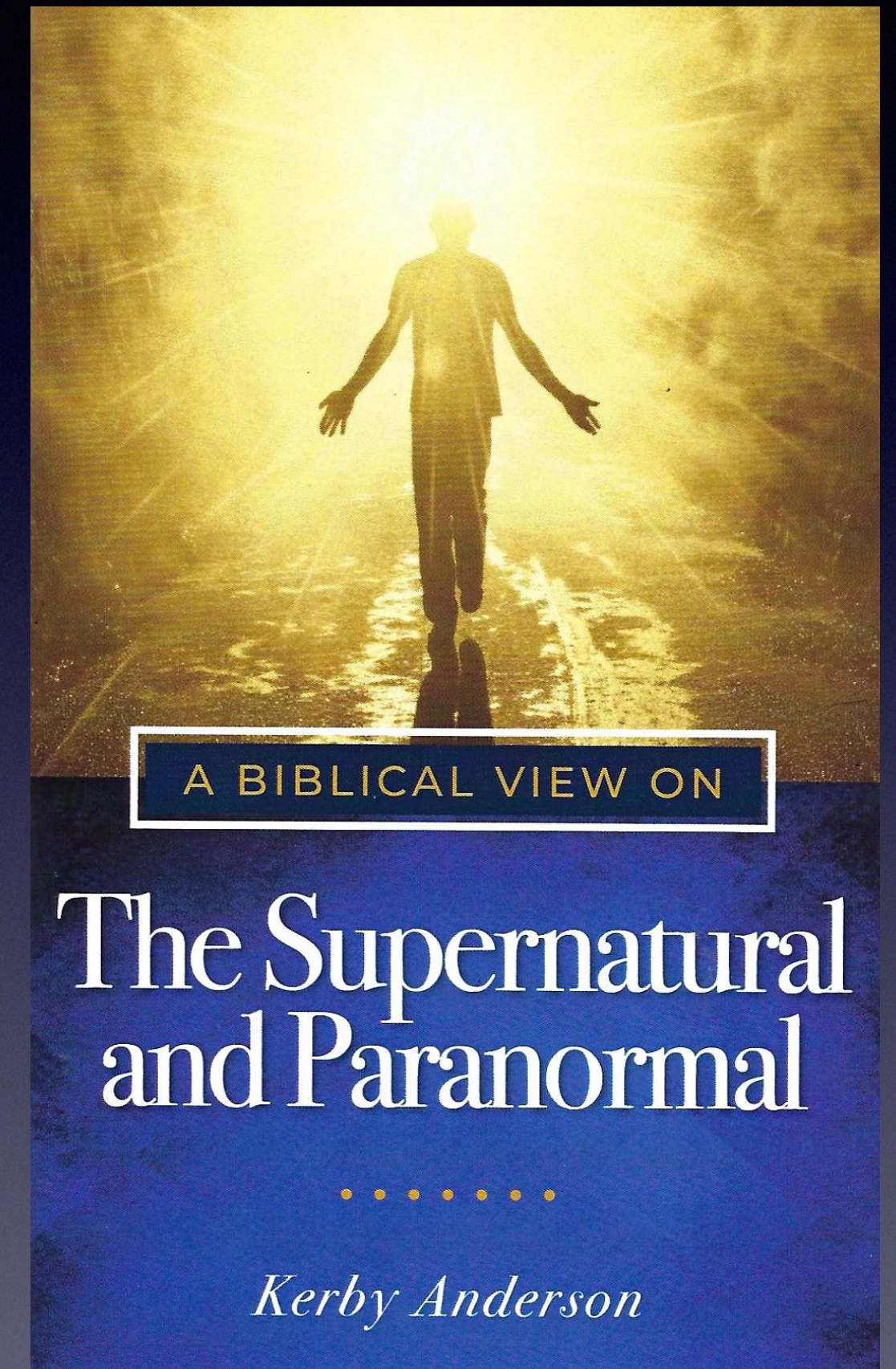
# Seeing the Supernatural

- Satan “has blinded the minds of the unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 4:4). Satan is the master of deception.
- Many psychics promote heresy, even claiming to have such gifts given to them from God.
- That is why Paul warned Timothy that there were people teaching the doctrine of demons (1 Timothy 4:1).





# The Spiritually Interested





# The Spiritually Interested

- According to a recent Pew Research Center article, nearly a quarter (22%) of all Americans fit into the category of spiritual but not religious.
- They think of themselves as spiritual or at least consider spirituality very important in their lives.
- But they don't consider religion important.



# The Spiritually Interested

- Five characteristics of spiritual but not religious:
- They emphasize a personal, subjective connection to something beyond themselves. They avoid religious institutions and groups and don't like to be labelled religious. They believe they have a relationship with God but aren't involved in organized religion. They are more interested in the present life than in the afterlife. They utilize a variety of spiritual practices.



# Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

- Five components of MTD:
- A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over us on earth. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself. God is not involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem. Good people go to heaven when they die.



# Dangers in the Spiritual Realm

- The Old Testament also warns of the dangers of the occult.
- Leviticus 19:26 - “You shall not interpret omens or tell fortunes.”
- Leviticus 19:31 - “Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the Lord your God.”



# Discerning Spiritual Practices



# Astrology versus Astronomy

- Often the most popular feature in newspapers was the daily horoscope - based on astrology.
- Many US presidents (Teddy Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan) consulted astrology charts.
- Astrology had its beginnings in the fertile crescent in Mesopotamia. During the period from the Sumarians through the Chaldeans, it became formalized.



# Astrology versus Astronomy

- Astrology is based upon the questionable assumption that the fixed stars, sun, moon, and planets have an influence upon people and historical events.
- This influence can be determined once one knows the exact hour of one's birth. In fact, the word horoscope means "a consideration of the hour." Once the time and place of birth are known, the stars can be consulted and a forecast can be made.



# Astrology versus Astronomy

- Good scientific reasons to question the basis of astrology.
- First, it is based upon a geocentric solar system rather than a heliocentric one. The basic premise of astrology is that the sun and planets rotate around the earth.
- Yet science tells us that the earth and planets rotate around the sun. Thus, the science of astronomy undermines the quackery of astrology.



# Astrology versus Astronomy

- Second, astrology is based upon the assumption that there are seven planets. Moreover it identifies the sun and moon as planets.
- Lacking telescopes and other astronomical instruments, the founders of astrology incorrectly identified some heavenly bodies as planets and were unaware of other planets.



# Astrology versus Astronomy

- Third, astrology mixes and matches stars that should not be grouped together.
- The 12 signs of the zodiac are quite arbitrary.
- They mix together stars in one constellation that are actually quite far from each other—often in entirely different parts of our Milky Way galaxy.



# Astrology versus Astronomy

- One researcher put together what he called a “test of destinies.” He gave astrologers 40 birthdates (half to known criminals and half to peace-loving citizens).
- He asked them to separate the birthdates into the two categories.
- None of the astrologers separated them correctly.



# Astrology versus Astronomy

- In Deuteronomy 18:9-12, God lists five categories of detestable practices.
- These range from witchcraft to child sacrifice. They also include divination, which is the attempt to predict the future through such methods as reading the stars.
- All of these are listed as detestable practices.



# Biblical Meditation versus Eastern Meditation

- The Bible in at least 20 places talks about meditation.
- Is there a difference between biblical meditation and Eastern meditation?
- Examples: Isaac (Genesis 24:63), Joshua (Joshua 1:8), David (Psalm 19), and Paul (Philippians 4:8-9)



# Biblical Meditation versus Eastern Meditation

- Here are three differences:
- First, the focus in biblical meditation is on the God of the universe and on God's Word.
- We are blessed if we meditate on God's law (Psalm 1).
- Eastern meditation clears the mind and opens you up to spiritual influences.



# Biblical Meditation versus Eastern Meditation

- Second, the posture is different in biblical meditation versus Eastern meditation.
- Eastern - sitting cross-legged on a cushion, or seated.
- Biblical meditation isn't about the posture of the body but instead on the posture of the heart (Psalm 46:10) and is usually done in private (Luke 5:16).



# Biblical Meditation versus Eastern Meditation

- Third, the worldview is different in biblical meditation versus Eastern meditation.
- The goal of Eastern meditation is enlightenment or nirvana in order to connect to the godhead.
- Biblical meditation acknowledges that God is Creator and Savior. We let the Word of God fill our heart and mind.



# Yoga versus Exercises

- For many in the West, yoga is simply a system of physical exercise, a means of strengthening the body, improving flexibility, and even healing variety of bodily ailments.
- For Eastern religions, “yoga is an ancient path to spiritual growth.” It is a path enshrined in much of the sacred literature of India.



# Yoga versus Exercises

- In the Eastern view, yoga means the union of the finite “jiva” (the transitory self) with the infinite or Brahman’ (the eternal Self).”
- Brahman - is a term often used for the Hindu concept of “God,” or Ultimate Reality. “It is an impersonal, divine substance that “pervades, envelops, and underlies everything.”



# Yoga versus Exercises

- Can philosophy and practice be separated?
- Yoga is a spiritual discipline whose central doctrines are incompatible with those of Christianity.
- But can we do the exercises themselves without involvement in the paranormal?
- One example is: <https://praisemoves.com>.



# Yoga versus Exercises

- What Scriptural principles might apply to this?
- Romans 14 - When dealing with an issue not addressed in the Bible, Paul says we should not pass judgment.
- One person might believe he may eat anything, while the weak person will not.
- “Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.”



# Yoga versus Exercises



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## OPINION: Yoga and a Christianity for the body


**NEWS** JIM WHITE | MARCH 10, 2013

I'm no yoga apologist. In fact, my wife Miska does Bikram Yoga where they heat the room to 105 degrees and then strain, contort, sweat great drops of blood and try not to collapse on the floor for one and half hours. If anything is of the devil — that has to be.



So as a yoga neophyte who possesses all the flexibility of a cast iron skillet, I have little vested interest in squabbles over whether Christianity is incompatible with yoga. However, part of the arc of the argument sometimes made — that Christian spirituality does not promote the human body as a means for connecting with God — gives me pause.




[www.probe.org](http://www.probe.org)




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Dr. Michael Gleghorn, May 27, 2002



# Resources

