

The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel (Reflection)

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Bi 111 Life of Christ

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In my opinion the “Case for Christ by Lee Strobel” (DVD), was his attempt to “expose the fallacious thinking behind Christianity”. Lee is a journalist that describes himself as an atheist and a skeptic. His wife began attending church and he noticed her positive changes in behavior and was prompted to check if she’d joined a cult. He begins his efforts by investigating the validity of Jesus as the Son of God, examining oral transmissions, and reviewing the claims of Jesus’ Resurrection by examining the facts.

The DVD, begins with the people speaking doubt, unbelief and skepticism towards Jesus and Christianity. The DVD states that Jesus was born between 7 and 4 BC and died in AD33. His biography begins with his choosing the disciples and his ministry of three years. This makes Jesus a valid man but Lee needed to know if he was indeed the Son of God. I’ve discovered that many religions believe Jesus was only a mere man, perhaps a prophet in history. Many religions deny Jesus as being the Son of God and his divine nature.

Lee begins his investigating with the Gospel accounts. He did not accept the New Testament as the inspired word of God. Instead he researched ancient historians and believed they were more trustworthy than eyewitness. Josephus was Jewish historian in the 1st century, that recorded Jesus’s existence. In “the Testimonium Flavianum” he writes that Jesus performed surprising deeds and was a teacher to those that gladly accepted the truth. He also records Jesus as being the Messiah. Many scholars dispute this information but cannot deny that these acts were written by a historian. Lee

discovered that the historians record of events and the ancient scrolls written on animal skins lined up with the Gospels. He also learned that oral accounts were a very reliable means of preserving stories before they were written and could be passed on without changing. It is stated that the apparent contradictions are easily resolved and are needed to avoid collusion. If the stories had been told exactly alike that would have been very suspicious and deemed untrue. Unlike the example given about whispering a story to someone and have them continue the story to others and the story becomes totally different at the end of the experiment. Even the Rabbi had to learn scripture exactly how it was written before they were allowed to quote them. I learned that was the reason the Pharisees were perplexed when they asked Jesus on whose authority was he speaking on and he said himself. Jesus overruled and fulfilled the law. (Luke 1-26). This was very significant because they spoke in the name of a Rabbi and Jesus spoke with the authority of the Son of God. I often meet people who would rather debate on the Gospels rather than examine the evidence of Christ's existence. I believe that sharing your personal testimony about Jesus is a means to express your belief and a way to share the gospel. I am very pleased to have this documentary as a learning tool and something I can share with unbelievers as well as believers. The investigative work has been done and I am very grateful.

The investigation of the Resurrection starts with Lee going to the "best" scholars in search of evidence and credentials. He describes the Resurrection as a pivotal point in history and if proven would be excellent

evidence. Some skeptics believe Jesus fainted, was drugged or escaped as a part of a conspiracy. However, the Narratives record Jesus' public beatings, death by crucifixion and burial. The scholar described crucifixion as beatings, torture and impalement with a bleak survival outcome. He also pointed out that the word "excruciating" is a Latin term meaning "out of the Cross". That was a serious acknowledgement for me and I won't use that term again, lightly. I was taught in church that sometimes during the crucifixion the soldiers would break the legs of the "criminals" on the cross to speed death but Jesus was found to be dead and his side was pierced instead. (John 1:29) I was also taught he was the lamb of God and the Passover Lamb had to be without spot, blemish and no broken legs. This reminds of 2 Corinthians 5:21, For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God. Ultimately, Jesus died from suffocation and a ruptured heart. I was saddened to discover the actual cause of death and I became more grateful.

Further evidence of the Resurrection, brings us to the burial and empty tomb of Jesus. Joseph a Sanhedrin, wealthy man from Arimathea that condemned Jesus bought his tomb. He wrapped Jesus in a clean linen and placed him in the tomb bought for himself. These accounts were historically recorded and proves the burial of Jesus. Lee found this information to be sufficient and next sought evidence of the empty tomb. As recorded in the Bible, on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb and found the tomb empty. Lee's DVD doesn't mention the angel accounts

but mentions the women brought spices for his burial and found the tomb empty. Palestinian women in that day were considered second class citizens and of low social status so by keeping them in the story further proves these accounts. Especially, Mary Magdalene a woman known for her checkered past. The fact that the tomb was empty posed a problem for the Chief Priest and a “cover up” plan was derived by bribing the soldiers to spread the story that the disciples stole Jesus’ body while the leaders were asleep. This cover up is historically recorded and proves that the tomb was empty. In John 20:29 Jesus says “Because you have seen me you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul records the appearance of Jesus to Peter first then the Twelve, later to over five hundred people and then himself. Paul was on the road of Damascus in route to persecute Christians. After the appearance of Jesus to Paul, he was transformed into a great follower and teacher of the Word. This was strong evidence being that Paul was an eyewitness of the resurrected Jesus and knew of many others that witnessed the account. Paul speaks in a traditional language method saying “He passed on what he received.” Paul also mentions many times that he counted it an honor to be beaten and thought it gain to die for the cause.

The disciples became bold, fearless and suffered persecution without fear of sharing the gospel and the eyewitness account of Jesus’ appearance. They eventually died for something they saw and experienced with their own eyes. The DVD, states the apostles truly believed that Jesus was The Son of God”

and that's why they were willing to die for him. I was astonished to learn that Jesus' half brother James did not believe he was the Messiah until he later appeared to him.

The risen Jesus appearances was responsible for the rapid growth of the Christian church in the face of persecution. Skepticism began to fade and a confident faith began to rise among the people. The scared bewildered disciples became bold and fearless in their proclamation as Jesus as the Messiah.

In conclusion, The Case for Christ is an excellent source of investigative materials and a learning source for all people searching for the truth. Lee gathered evidence from scholars, historians, the Gospel accounts, oral transmissions and traditions to prove the validity of the existence of Christ. Proof of Jesus' resurrection and the combination of all evidence presented, convinced Lee that Jesus is the Son of God. Hopefully, skeptics, naysayers, atheists and even believers will have a better understanding of the existence of Christ. My only regret is that I'd watched it at the beginning of this course. I would have had a better understanding of The Life for Christ.

