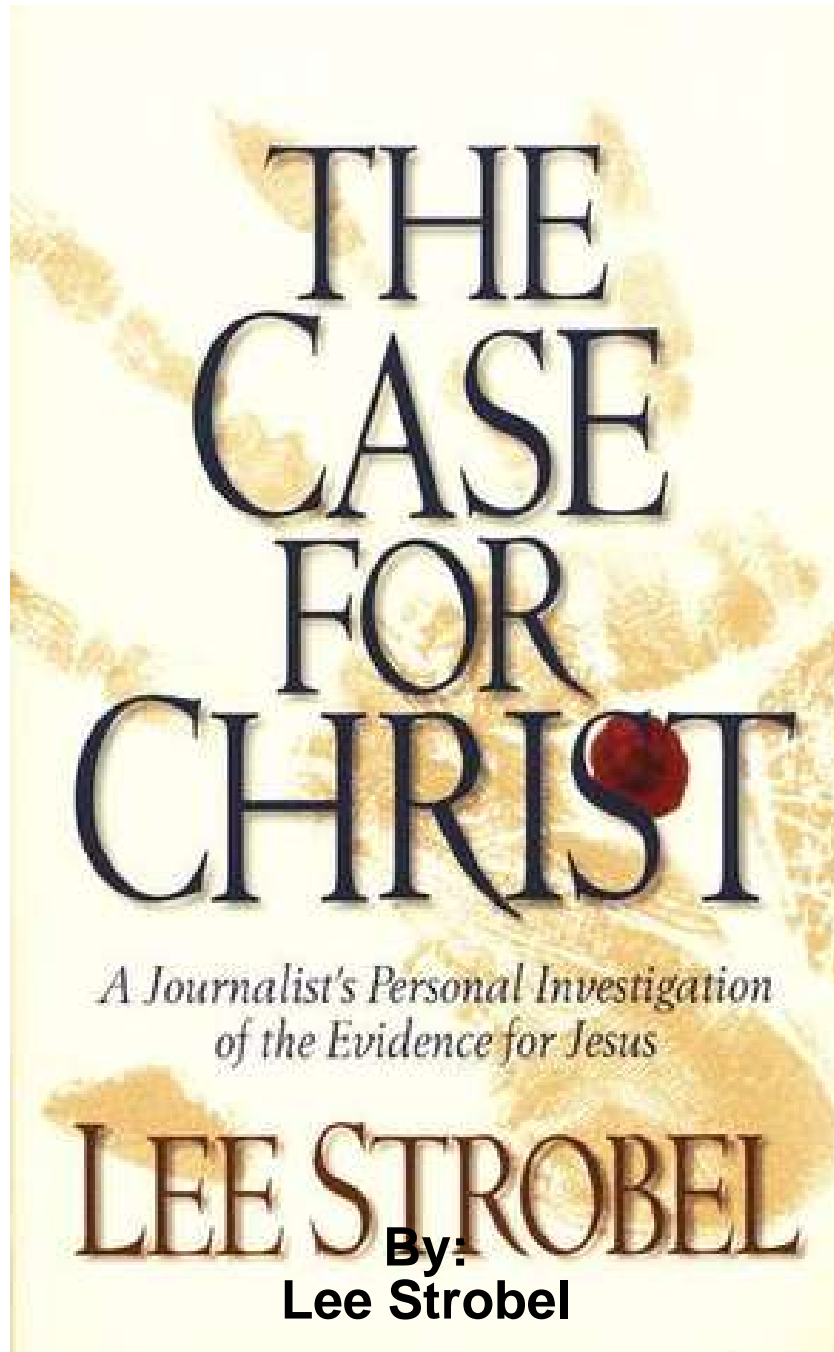


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Rated 1 star for false advertising, poor journalism, poor investigation, poor argumentation, and poor scholarship.

There's not enough room here to critique all the specifics of this book, so I'll get right to the heart of things (if you're interested in a more detailed critique, check out Robert M. Price's excellent

. Or check out

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At the beginning of

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Malcolm

As with any religious book, objectivity is impossible (since religion, by loose definition, is subjective experience of that which is unproven); so here's my subjective opinion as a Christian.

If you are a

, you're going to fall into one of three general groups:

(and that fourth most special group made up of all the people who just refuse to be grouped by a small-minded Christian, dammit :)).

If you are actually a member of that fourth g

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Brooke

My review for this book and

are the same, since I read them at the same time five years ago and can't remember which topics were in which books. I managed to forget I ever read them, and only when I saw them on this site did remember.

These books were given to me by a guy I was dating at the time who decided I'd only be an acceptable wife if I converted to Christianity (I'm currently single, if you're wondering how well that went over). It's a shame he chose these books as hi

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These books were given to me by a guy I was dating at the time who decided I'd only be an acceptable wife if I converted to Christianity (I'm currently single, if you're wondering how well that went over). It's a shame he chose these books as his main plan of attack, because they're terrible.

Lee Strobel's first mistake is that he tries to answer everything with a pat, definitive response. The tone he uses is one that says, "AH! This is so simple, now that you've explained it! How does anyone not understand?" As most people realize, religion is complicated and often requires you to just believe in things that you take on faith, rather than because it's been proven by evidence. Trying to argue for faith makes faith a moot point.

When answering the question, "If there's a God, why does he allow such suffering in this world?" Strobel trots out the tired response, "Because God gave us free will." For a book that's supposed to help convert people, that answer isn't going to reassure someone who had strong objections in the

first place. It also fails to acknowledge that we really just don't know, and that we tell ourselves this to try to make sense of things, not because we know for sure.

Strobel also tried to address deep questions with anecdotes - one that sticks out in my mind to this day was a response to a question about how people who never heard of Jesus could be saved, and isn't it a flaw of the religion if it only applied to people who happened to live in a place where Jesus was brought to their attention? Strobel somehow thought that a story about a Muslim girl in a Muslim country who one day randomly thought "I need Jesus's help" and secretly became Christian answered it sufficiently and proved that we will just know Jesus in our hearts.

Other answers required a preexisting belief in order to make sense. They reminded me of the circular argument the aforementioned ex-boyfriend would give for Jesus's divinity - Jesus is God, so since he says he's God, if I don't believe he's God, I'm calling God a liar.

Michael

This book will not persuade anyone who doesn't believe in his heart already.

Strobel claims to have been a serious skeptic about Jesus and to have done these interviews in the style of a serious journalist in order to decide for himself whether Christians are right.

I don't believe him. As an actual skeptic who is very familiar with the Bible, I find that Strobel consistently avoids the obvious problems with the arguments put forward. He interviews only Christians and blindly accepts everything t

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I don't believe him. As an actual skeptic who is very familiar with the Bible, I find that Strobel consistently avoids the obvious problems with the arguments put forward. He interviews only Christians and blindly accepts everything they say. These are not the actions of a skeptic.

The fallacious logic at work here is shocking. At one point the reasoning goes exactly like this:

We know the New Testament is true because the early Christians who produced it were good people and so wouldn't have lied. We know the early Christians were good people because the New Testament says so.

I wish I were joking.

Christians: I am in some ways sympathetic to your cause, but you must understand that using the kind of reasoning that goes into this book or into the Intelligent Design nonsense only makes you look dumb to anyone who knows what he's talking about. Find a different angle. Alternatively, maybe you should think long and hard about the fact that people practicing apologetics for your faith consistently make errors in logic that an 8 year old could spot. Why exactly would that be?

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books)

This review is probably not as well-crafted as I would have hoped, since I am very swamped right now, and unable to do better. However, I wanted to write my thoughts on the book to the best of my ability as soon after I finished the audio version as possible so I wouldn't forget too much. I hope to reread it and analyze it more at a later date.

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When I finished this book, I felt that Mr. Strobel tackled the tough questions about Christ that one might ask if they were skeptical about the faith and the person of Jesus Christ. I grew up in a Christian home and I have been a personal confessor of faith in Jesus for well over twenty years. However, it was good to take a hard look at the questions I didn't have the answers for from a scholarly standpoint. And I believe that Jesus wants anyone who chooses to follow him to count the cost and look hard at who he is. He is honest and righteous and doesn't want anyone to be misled about who he is. So I would say that anyone of my bent is encouraged to do the same.

I felt that Mr. Strobel showed his investigative journalism chops in addressing those important aspects of Christ's identity and the reliability of the evidence of his claim as the Son of God who died for the sins of every person who ever lived, and rose again from the grave, and the areas that one might use to discount his message and the affirming power of faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Ultimately, those who choose not to believe will probably continue to not believe (and they have that choice), but those who want to take that step to believe in him and have some factual proof about him and what faith in him offers, they will find enough here to further confirm that faith in Jesus is not blind faith, but a reasonable, eyes open step of faith. What I do not propose here is that this book takes the place of the Holy Bible, but instead, Strobel's investigation shows that the Bible is a reputable historical document and what it says about God and Jesus Christ is historically accurate.

And for those who seek further inquiry, one will find a very good bibliographical source of reputable scholars who can offer even more sound information about Jesus Christ, the historicity of his persona, and the proven historical accuracy of the New Testament Gospels and how they relate to the Old Testament. In fact, this was one of the strongest elements of the book for me, since it gave me even more books to read as I get the opportunity.

While I have seen plenty of 1 star reviews for this book, I personally feel justified in giving it 5 stars. One might argue that I like it because it justifies what I believe. That's not completely untrue. It does justify what I believe. I'm glad that I walked into this book with my brain prepared to take a hard look at the evidence and that scholarship was rewarded in Strobel's methodical and thorough investigative process. Let me add that I would have believed what I did anyway based on the process of my individual faith walk. Instead, this book just provides more solid evidence to underpin what I already believe.

I am a rational person. Very analytical, and I have never felt that having faith in God requires throwing out the thought processes and rational inquiry. After all, God gave us brains and he expects us to use them. So for me, this book takes a thinking person who values factual evidence and solid inquiry on a logical investigation into the identity of Jesus of Nazareth, who has proven he is the Son of God in so many ways that those who believe in him will not find themselves disappointed with that decision in the long run.

I would recommend this book.