Women of Africa Care Pty Ltd

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Episode 71

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Topic: The Case for Christ

John 14.6 – Jesus is the truth, the way, and the Light!
Spiritual Convictions – The investigative case for Christ

"So, I launched an all-out investigation into the facts surrounding the case for Christianity" (Strobel L 16).

The Case for Christ!
Lee Strobel author of "Case for Christ" is an investigative journalist with a legal editing background. Lee's sole purpose for investigating Christ's existence was motivated to prove to his born-again wife that her belief is false. Lee becomes overwhelmed by his wife's born again transformative lifestyle, her conversion and new way of life as a Christian concerned him, even though her personality etc was much better, his generalisation was his wife will soon have an appearance, dressing and lifestyle that is boring as associated to Christians, and this might cause him to lose attraction for her and they will no longer have a fun filled life. As an atheist, Lee notices changes in his wife's conduct and nature and it concerned him, how can God who does not exist transform his wife. In a quest to find out the real source of his wife's transformation He uses his investigative experience to track down the evidence for Christ. Lee interviews the best Scholars to confirm evidence of the existence of Christ. Using his legal affairs journalistic experience investigates circumstantial evidence, archaeological evidence, scientific evidence, rebuttal evidence to name a few investigative methods Lees applied to verify the case for Christ, he used evidence that one would apply in courtrooms. Leslie(wife) Stroebel's post conversion transformed life described by Lee:

I had married the one Leslie, the carefree Leslie, the risk taking Leslie - and now I feared she was going to turn into some sort of sexually repressed prude who would trade our upwardly mobile lifestyle for all-night prayer vigils and volunteer in grimy soup kitchens…Instead I was pleasantly surprised, even fascinated – by the fundamental changes in her character, her integrity, and her personal confidence (Stroebel L 16).

Circumstantial evidence!

Are there any supporting facts that point to the resurrection? 5 pieces of circumstantial evidence to convince that Jesus rose from the dead.

The disciple's response to the Jesus death "When Jesus died, the disciples were depressed and discouraged, and the Jesus movement stopped. After a short period, the disciples abandon their jobs, regathered and committed to spreading the news that Jesus is the resurrected Christ. They faced a life of hardship (imprisoned, ridiculed, beaten) and died in the name of representing Jesus Christ as the Saviour." Dying for their beliefs. They claimed that they ate with him, walked with him and touched him. Following Christ's death, the early church movement began. Something had to have happened after the death of Jesus for the disciples to respond in such a positive manner to His death, they were focussed, relentless, disciplined, and energetic, living and risking their lives for the crucified Jesus. Surely the death of Christ couldn't motivate these men to proclaim Christ as God. Lee states Muslims and Mormons risk their lives for their religion? Moreland responds "Muslims might be willing to die for their belief that Allah showed himself to Muhammad but this revelation was not done in a public observable way as was the disciples martyrdom who seen with their own eyes and touched with their own hands the Messiah in His resurrected form" (Stroebel L 346).

The conversion of sceptics - Paul thought the early Christian movement was heretic and in order to preserve the Jewish nation and teachings and beliefs He chose to stone the followers by beating and imprisoning the followers. On route on this mission, Paul has a supernatural encounter with Christ post the resurrection of Jesus, and this encounter radically changed Paul's life that he became one of the greatest disciples of Jesus to spread the Gospels to both Jews and Gentiles. James the brother of Jesus who did not believe Jesus was the messiah, following Jesus Death when the disciples regathered, James became part of the early church leadership and is martyred for proclaiming Jesus as the saviour (Josephus the historian writes about James the brother of Jesus being martyred- stoned by the Jewish Leaders). Changes to social structures – the Jewish nation preserved their laws, teachings and social practices to not distort the culture of Judaism. And suddenly the death of Jesus, five weeks later about 10000 Jewish people leave this much preserved culture into following and adopting this new Christian movement beliefs. The most fundamental change between Jewish belief and Christian belief was that Jews believed the Messiah would be a political leader that will destroy the Roman armies and cause them to have their land back, whereas the Christian belief was that Jesus died for the sins of the world. Following the death of Jesus no longer did the Jewish nation offer any blood sacrifices. The Jews kept the Sabbath day (Saturday). After the death of Jesus Christians used Sunday as their Sabbath day, because Jesus was resurrected on that day, the first day of the week, which is Sunday.

Communism and Baptism!

The Christian movement regularly met and did communion. They acknowledged the communion and baptism as a means of celebrating the sacrifice Jesus slaughter fulfilled to redeem humanity from sin. Baptism "By going under the water we are celebrating His death and raising from the water is resurrection of new life in Him." They did not mourn in acknowledging the torture of the sacrifice they rejoiced and celebrated as if it was a redemptive act. The emergence of the Church – "When a major culture shift takes place, historians always look to events that can explain it." The fact that people name their children Peter and Paul and name their dogs Nero and Caesar indicates that the Christian empire survived through the centuries not the Roman Empire. "And lastly the ongoing encounter with the resurrected Christ that happens all over the world, in every culture, to people from all kinds of backgrounds and personalities, well-educated thinkers, the rich and the

poor, the feelers…where they state that Jesus Christ has changed them," commented Moreland (Stroebel L 346). Final Arguments of Jesus Death. "Appealing to history and medicine, to archaeology and even Roman military rules, Dr Alexander Metherell (medical doctor) had closed every loophole: Jesus could not have come down from the cross alive" (Stroebel L 269).

The evidence of the missing body – Lee interviews philosopher and theologian Dr Willian Lane Craig. Lee states "the possibility that the resurrection was only spiritual in nature and that Jesus body was still in the tomb?" Dr William responds:

> "You see, the Jews had a physical concept of resurrection…after the flesh rotted away, the Jews would gather the bones of their deceased and put them in boxes to be preserved until the resurrection at the end of the world, when God would raise the righteous dead of Israel and they would come together in the final kingdom of God in light of this, it would be a contradiction of terms for an early Jew to say that someone was raised from the dead, but his body still was left in the tomb, the creed is stating quite clearly an empty tomb was left behind" (Stroebel L, Case for Christ).

The Legendary Test!

The Literary dictionary defends legends as "serve a specific purpose and can be based on facts – but they are not completely true. People mentioned in a legend might not have really done what the story of the legend relates." Literary devices accessed on line (https://literarydevices.net/legend/). Dr Edwin Yamauchi a Christian apologist and professional responds to Lee"…We have better historical documentation for Jesus than for the founder of any other ancient religion…such as scriptures of Buddha who lived in the 6th century BC where not put into writing until after the Christian era, "we have sayings of Mohammed who lived from 570 AD to 632 in the Koran his biography was not written until 767, more than a full century after his death." Dr Edwin explains that the further the writing to the actual event presents room for Legends. However, the writings of Jesus biography (Gospels) all happened during his generation, where there were eyewitnesses. The entire New Testament was written within 50 years of Jesus resurrection. Dr Edwin defends that there is no room to argue that Jesus Christ in the Gospels is a story telling mystery because events, culture changes, lives risked and the introduction of the Christian and early church movement following the death of Christ is by far circumstantial evidence of the validity for the case for Christ.

The findings of history turns author Lee Strobel an atheist to Christianity. "After a personal investigation that spanned more than six hundred days and countless hours my own verdict in the case for Christ was clear. I realised I needed more than an intellectual decision, I wanted to take the experiential step." Lee recognised all evidence points to the validity of Jesus being who He said He was "the unique Son of God" and on that day November 8, 1981 Lee asked Jesus Christ to become Lord of His life in a personal prayer in His study. Since then Lee's inspiration has been about Christ, and he has written many other books relating to Christ such as "The case for a creator, the case for the real Jesus, the case for Faith."