

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE FOR JESUS'S RESURRECTION IN THE "THE CASE FOR CHRIST", THE BEST-SELLING BOOK BY LEE STROBEL

STROBEL'S LIE:

The book assumes that Jesus was telling the truth about being God because he rose again.

THE TRUTH:

Yet the Christians believe that there were many other miracles of healing carried out by doctrinal rivals. There is nothing special about a resurrection that would make it a proof for divine agency because if forces that are not from God can heal they can raise bodies from the dead or at least put them into miraculous suspended animation and snap them out of it. I mean which is more impressive: many miracles of healing and one resurrection? They amount to the same amount of miracle power. If Jesus claimed his resurrection was proof that he was the Son of God or God then he was lying. It is proof that he was definitely neither!

STROBEL'S LIE:

The Jesus Seminar is biased against miracle stories,

THE TRUTH:

Not true. John Dominic Crossan its leader believes in some of the healings at Lourdes.

STROBEL'S LIE:

The book says that the reason most of Jesus' life was left out of the gospels was because people in those days did not realize that to write biographies you needed to write about the whole life plus what Jesus did before his baptism was not relevant spiritually.

THE TRUTH:

That is only possible when you are writing about somebody unpopular. Jesus was popular with his fans who would have been desperate to know all about him.

STROBEL'S LIE:

The book says that the Jews had a physical idea of the resurrection therefore Jesus had to rise physically and leave the tomb empty.

THE TRUTH:

For heaven's sake the New Testament was not written by ordinary Jews! The Jewish Bible said that being crucified or hanged was proof that God cursed you. The New Testament was written by people who made what orthodox Jews consider the sign of a curse from God the means of salvation. They did not pander to Jewish taboos.

STROBEL'S LIE:

The women who saw the risen Jesus can be trusted for their testimony was considered worthless by society just because they were women.

THE TRUTH:

Only people who cannot be trusted ask for you to trust them when they know you believe that you shouldn't. Besides people testifying to the women testifying doesn't amount to the women testifying. Their testimony has been lost to us forever.

STROBEL'S LIE:

Jesus did not use hypnosis to heal people for hypnosis does not work on everybody for some just cannot be hypnotised and people who are doubters cannot be hypnotised. Yet he cured everybody and Thomas saw him after he rose despite doubting so the apparition was not down to hypnosis. And also he never spoke to the people at the wedding so we cannot say he hypnotised them to think that he turned water into wine.

THE TRUTH:

Jesus could not cure those of little faith (Mark 6:5,6) which would indicate that he was using hypnosis because anybody who does not believe in hypnosis and resists cannot be hypnotised. And Thomas could have been hypnotised to think he didn't believe. And the gospel never says that Jesus never addressed the wedding party. Jesus said that if Satan puts demons out his kingdom will collapse indicating that Satan needed to possess people. He spoke of Satan as very powerful so a lot of people must be possessed. He said that when a demon leaves a man it can return with its friends and that will happen to that evil generation. Getting people to believe things like that will ensure that they won't need hypnosis! If a man saw Jesus being stolen from the tomb, he could be persuaded that a demon tricked his sight. And there was the threat of a vengeful God and everlasting damnation too!

STROBEL'S LIE:

The miracle tales ring true because they are sober. They are not legends.

THE TRUTH:

Legends start off fairly sober so we might be getting the gospel legends in their embryonic stage. There are billions of supernatural "true" stories that ring true as well and which emerged even hours after the alleged event so are we to believe them all? The view given in The Case for Christ that the miracle stories appeared too soon after the event to be legend is simply obvious nonsense. Legend just needs a clever inventor to take off not time.

Ring true is a very subjective standard. The gospels ring untrue to the smartest people in the world.

STROBEL'S LIE:

The view that Jesus was immoral for not fighting slavery is wrong because many slaves had good lives and nice jobs and had to be enslaved to get out of debt. Jesus works from the inside to destroy the attitudes that lead to slavery so he did the best thing to stop it.

THE TRUTH:

But they were still slaves. Any messianic figure could do nothing for nobody or do very little and not as much as he could and say that he will change hearts by some mystical force. That way he still pretends to be good. Jesus did not put social concerns first. The Church says he could not be the allegedly prophesied Messiah and therefore a true prophet and consequentially a person doing wonders by the power of God unless he was sinless. If so, we know that his proving he was the best man ever by living long and hard to help others and feed the poor was the thing he needed to make his signs work as indications that he was the Messiah. We can be sure he was not the Messiah for he failed to be anything to beat Mother Teresa. All the miracle working in the universe could not help him. Besides a man who cures people miraculously is not as good as the man who helps people the hard way like the rest of us have to help the suffering.

Only evil hypocrites say that allowing or enabling slavery is fine as long as the slaves are fed and watered. They are still degraded by being treated like animals.

STROBEL'S LIE

The creed that Paul has in 1 Corinthians 15 indicates that the early Church had a creed saying that Jesus rose and appeared to five hundred which puts the testimony very close to Jesus' resurrection so it should be taken seriously.

THE TRUTH:

The creed could have been written the year previous to the epistle for all we know. Maybe its first appearance was in that epistle? And it is hard to imagine Christians reciting the evidence for the resurrection in detail all the time. So it wouldn't be much of a creed. If they were reciting all the time then why did Paul have to quote the creed? It might have been a creed one of Paul's disciples personally used and not a public creed. Plus it may not have been a creed at all. The Case for Christ

wastes ink on the “creed” when the fact is that it does not help reinforce the case for the resurrection and the historicity of the Christian story at all. Again speculation is put forward as evidence in this dishonest and twisted book.

STROBEL’S LIE:

Chapter 11 on the medical evidence for the death of Jesus concludes that Jesus’ crucifixion had to have been fatal. The book also says that soldiers were put to death if a criminal survived an execution attempt so Jesus must have died and they would have made sure of it.

THE TRUTH:

Pilate didn’t think so for he was reportedly shocked at Jesus dying so soon according to the gospel of Mark. So we are taken the word of Christians who were not acquainted with exactly how Jesus was nailed and how serious his injuries his were and who were not even there above the word of a man, Pilate, who would have been position to judge if Jesus should have died and who thought he shouldn’t have died! The arrogance is horrific especially when the book admits that Pilate thought Jesus died too fast (page 192). Rome did not execute soldiers who made a genuine mistake. And how do you know the soldiers weren’t executed anyway? Freak events were acknowledged meaning a person might not die though there is a 99 per cent chance that they should.

Strobel has a nerve to say that the soldiers would have made sure Jesus was dead in case they would be executed if they failed to kill him. He would say, “I agree with the gospel of Matthew that the soldiers at the tomb admitted to sceptics that the body miraculously disappeared knowing they could have been accused of lying and executed, the penalty for being careless on duty. They knew their hearers wouldn’t believe them. Despite the threat of death, they took money from the Jews to say that they slept on duty and the apostles stole the body.”

STROBEL’S LIE:

The whipping left Jesus very critically ill and his struggle on the cross led to cardiac arrest.

THE TRUTH:

The book resorts to speculation to prove that the crucifixion of Jesus was fatal. We don’t know for sure how bad the whipping Jesus got was. We don’t know exactly how he was crucified or if his death was due to a cardiac arrest. He could have revived after the gospels said he died for the time of death could have been misremembered.

STROBEL’S LIE:

John’s testimony that Jesus was pierced in the side proves that Jesus was dead.

THE TRUTH:

The gospeller thought by the Church to be John the Apostle talks as if he was the first to mention this piercing for he says he saw it and his testimony is true as if he is trying to convince the Church. Yet he was so dishonest he could not give his name – only false witnesses give testimony and never put their names to it. What had he to hide for had he really been at the cross everybody would have known about his being there anyway and who he was? The only thing he had to hide was his lack of integrity. The Case for Christ says the Bible needs two witnesses but there is only one for this stabbing.

Besides, it is the blood and the water coming from Jesus not the death that the witness seeks to verify by saying that Jesus was stabbed on the cross.

STROBEL’S LIE:

Joseph of Arimathea who buried Jesus was a real person for the Christians would have been unlikely to invent him for they would not have liked the Jewish leadership who had Jesus nailed to the cross for he was a member.

THE TRUTH:

Why not when they said he was innocent of what the rest had done? He makes the rest of them look worse not better.

STROBEL’S LIE:

The apostles went to their deaths attesting to the resurrection.

THE TRUTH:

For all we know the Church could have got rid of them by accusing them of capital crimes so that their doubts about the resurrection would have been silenced. Christians manipulate minds to make them mistake assumptions for facts. The apostles could have died disbelieving in the resurrection. For the Christians to have the right to use the argument, they would have to establish that the apostles got a choice between execution if they kept true to Jesus and their lives if they renounced him. This they cannot do for the accounts of the apostles deaths are legendary .

STROBEL'S LIE:

Professor Flew's failure to impress people with his arguments against the resurrection in a public debate is evidence that the case for it is very strong.

THE TRUTH:

No. It only means that Flew hadn't the cleverness or the time to use the right arguments or was not prepared right or the audience was too biased against him. Refuting Flew does not amount providing evidence for the resurrection. We will not be taken for fools, Christians. It is totally dishonest for the wily Strobel to argue this way when he gives us no evidence that the people who were unimpressed were bright enough to understand what Flew was saying and were unbiased. He does not even tell us that there was no chance that Flew might not have got the chance to express himself fully and properly.

Flew should have dwelt more on the fact that even the gospels do not say why Jesus't tomb was empty. Jesus could have been stolen or removed in secret and still risen.

STROBEL'S LIE:

The seeming contradictions in the gospels make the story more believable not less for they show there is a historical core to what was said.

THE TRUTH:

You cannot take statements off the witnesses whose tales allegedly made up the gospels and have a later interview to get them to explain their contradictions so Christians who hold that there is no error in the Bible at all are only assuming that there are no conflicts and what use is that?

It is mistaken to say that contradictions or seeming contradictions demonstrate that there is a historical core when Luke says the women found the stone rolled back and Matthew says they came to the tomb before it was moved. That is a very serious conflict and means that the story fails to cohere at the main points – at the core. If the tomb was open and nobody about the body could have been stolen after the tomb was opened by people other than the ones who opened the tomb.

STROBEL'S LIE:

Jesus could not have escaped from the tomb or have been easily stolen for the tomb was very secure with a large stone that rolled into place through a groove.

THE TRUTH:

Despite the tombs in the Valley of Hinnom having small openings and stones sealing them this silly book tells lies in pretending that there was only one way Jesus' tomb could have been set out though there were as many variations as tombs and that though there is nothing in the gospels that tell us that the tomb was that secure. Some tombs had the design the Christians have in mind but not all.

STROBEL'S LIE:

Chapter 12 realising that there is no point in wondering if the body could have been taken from the tomb unless it is established that it was put in the tomb in the first place tries to show that he was really buried.

THE TRUTH:

The chapter never faces the possibility that Jesus could have been switched with a shroud filled with sand which was emptied out in the tomb so that just the cloths were left in the tomb and everybody else was certain the body was in the

tomb.

The book argues that the view that the first believers went to the wrong tomb in their distraught confused state is incorrect for the hostile Jewish authorities knew where the tomb was and would soon have fixed any mistake. And especially if the authorities got wind of a resurrection story. But why would they for the resurrection was not proclaimed to the public until 40 days after? And incompetence could have led to the Jewish authorities being wrong about the tomb.

Think about this. Some go to the wrong tomb and think Jesus has been taken away and they feel encouraged to claim that he rose for he appeared to them. It is not said that any of the witnesses visited the tomb after that fateful morning. One or two disciples could have removed the body from the real tomb to keep the hoax going. This prevented anybody realising that the people who found the tomb empty went to the wrong tomb. It is totally ridiculous that the gospels say the apostles at the time were in hiding and yet that they ran to the tomb when they heard it was empty!

STROBEL'S LIE:

It is argued that since the Jews never said that there were no guards at the tomb of Jesus that there were guards. This indicates that Jesus was not stolen for they were there to guard the tomb.

THE TRUTH:

Incredible. We don't have enough material available from the Jews of the period to know what they were saying. Even if there had been no guards there would have been some Jews who had not much interest in the affair who were inaccurately saying they were and the apostles tricked them and stole the body. So Matthew's saying the Jews saying this happened has no evidential value for we don't know why he said it. There is no doubt that the guards cannot help the Christian's case for this reason which makes their case considerably weaker than their conjuring tricks with facts and logic can make it look.

STROBEL'S LIE:

Curiously the book says that an empty grave itself does not prove a resurrection and brags that even the Jews and Romans never maintained that Jesus' body was still in the tomb which is impressive evidence that it was missing.

THE TRUTH:

Apparitions contradict one another which is why the Roman Catholic Church has selected only a handful out of thousands as real manifestations from Heaven. Strobel will deny these visions for they contradict his salvation by faith only philosophy which contradicts the Catholic gospel. So The Case for Christ is really just saying that Christianity is proven true by some apparitions which is a very weak and biased position – I mean why these apparitions and not others? Only Matthew says the Jews and the soldiers said the body was not in the tomb. That means nothing for him saying it doesn't amount to them saying it. If they Jews told the soldiers to say the body was stolen and this story was released, and it was then discovered that the body never left the tomb at all they would not be able to admit it. They would have to take the body away themselves rather than be seen as totally incompetent. There is no evidence that the Jews and the Romans could verify that the body had vanished.

STROBEL'S LIE:

The book says that the appearances of Jesus were real because they were not hallucinations.

THE TRUTH:

But what about what else they might have been? A look-alike could have masqueraded as Jesus. The excitement would have made them prone to believe that he ascended to Heaven. All deceptions like that depend on luck to succeed. The gospels say the apostles were hiding when Jesus died meaning they could have been deprived of food which the book admits can cause hallucinations and makes the mind more susceptible to illusions of other kinds.

STROBEL'S LIE:

Paul would not have lied about the 500+ seeing Jesus after his resurrection for he would not have said this unless he knew they would back him up.

THE TRUTH:

That is like saying the pope would not lie about Mary being conceived immaculate for the scholars would not back him up.

He has plenty that do despite the fact that scripture, history, logic and decency and THE Catholic theologian St Thomas Aquinas and Lee Strobel and Co contradict him.

STROBEL'S LIE:

The book says that the martyrdom of the apostles proves they were telling the truth about the resurrection because unlike religious fanatics they knew what they were dying for was undeniable.

THE TRUTH:

There is no evidence that the apostles died for the resurrection. There is no evidence that they were sure that it happened. We must remember too that with the threat of eternal punishment the apostles might have felt compelled to believe and suffer and blind themselves to the real facts. There is no reason to believe that because the apostles were the ones who would have known if Jesus rose that they did know. The Case for Christ states that belief in Christianity is best for us which means that people would not let its being false stop them believing in it and even cause them to imagine evidence for its being true even to the extent of convincing themselves that they had visions of Jesus. The apostles and the fanatics who died for their faith, both died because of their own interpretation of the evidence and not because of the evidence itself. If the apostles were martyrs, they testified to their faith not to the resurrection. In this they are exactly the same as the religious fanatics.

STROBEL'S LIE:

The apostles died for their faith in the resurrection of Christ for they saw him and touched him which is different from a Muslim dying for his belief that God spoke to Muhammad.

THE TRUTH:

If a Muslim would die for something he has not seen then there is no way that can mean the apostles' testimony in blood is more credible. The Muslim dies irrationally for he has no evidence and has not seen what he wants to die for so why can't the apostles die for a lie or irrationally believing that they witnessed a resurrection that never happened? In both cases reason has been perverted. The apostle might have believed they touched Jesus. They did not die because they touched him but because they believed they did.

STROBEL'S LIE:

The Case for Christ is a book recording the ways the intelligent academics prove that the gospel of Jesus is true.

THE TRUTH:

But it is still wrong and is full of fraud and twisted facts which ought to warn us about the gospels whose authors are enigmas to us. Many say they believe in The Case for Christ showing that the testimony of the Church to the gospels is not worth worrying about. Its not evidence that they are plausible. We refuse to be manipulated by Lee Strobel and the "experts" he has put on a pedestal either. Why listen to them and not the real experts who outnumber them by thousands and who know they talk rubbish?