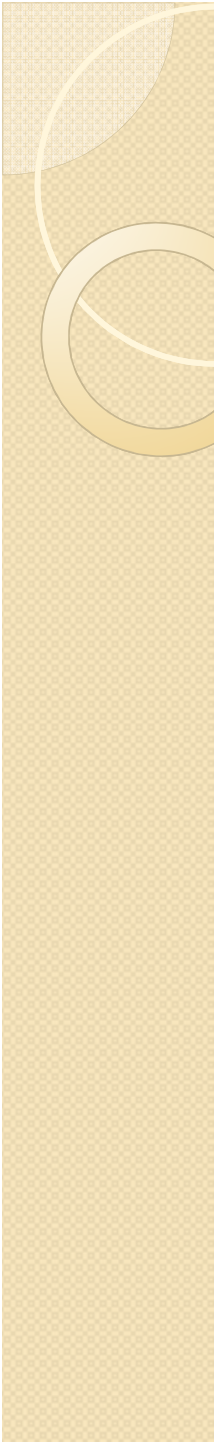




The Case for Christianity

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts,
and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to
everyone who asks you a reason for the
hope that is in you, with meekness and
fear;” (1Peter 3:15)**



Outline

- Objectives
- Sources & References
- The Natural Law
- The authenticity of the Gospels
- Christ's death, resurrection, and appearances
- Circumstantial Evidence
- Other well-established proofs



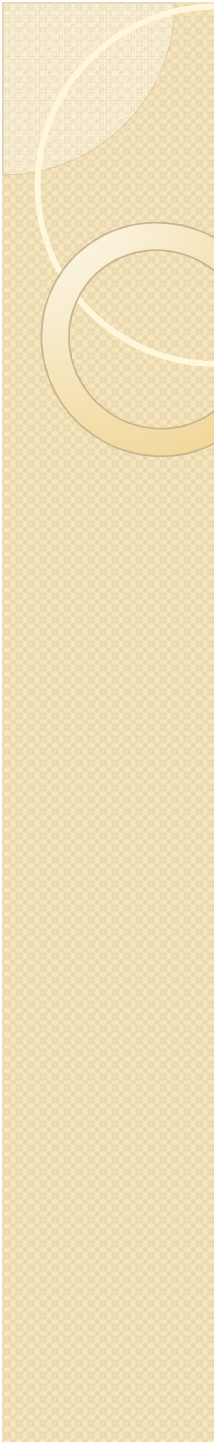
Objectives

- Equip ourselves to explain our faith to others
- Confidently answer the questions that our children have about the authenticity of our faith
- Prepare our children to respond to critics and sceptics



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Sources and References

- Lewis, C.S. (2001). *Mere Christianity*. New York, NY: Harper One.
- Strobil, L. (1998). *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Sources and References

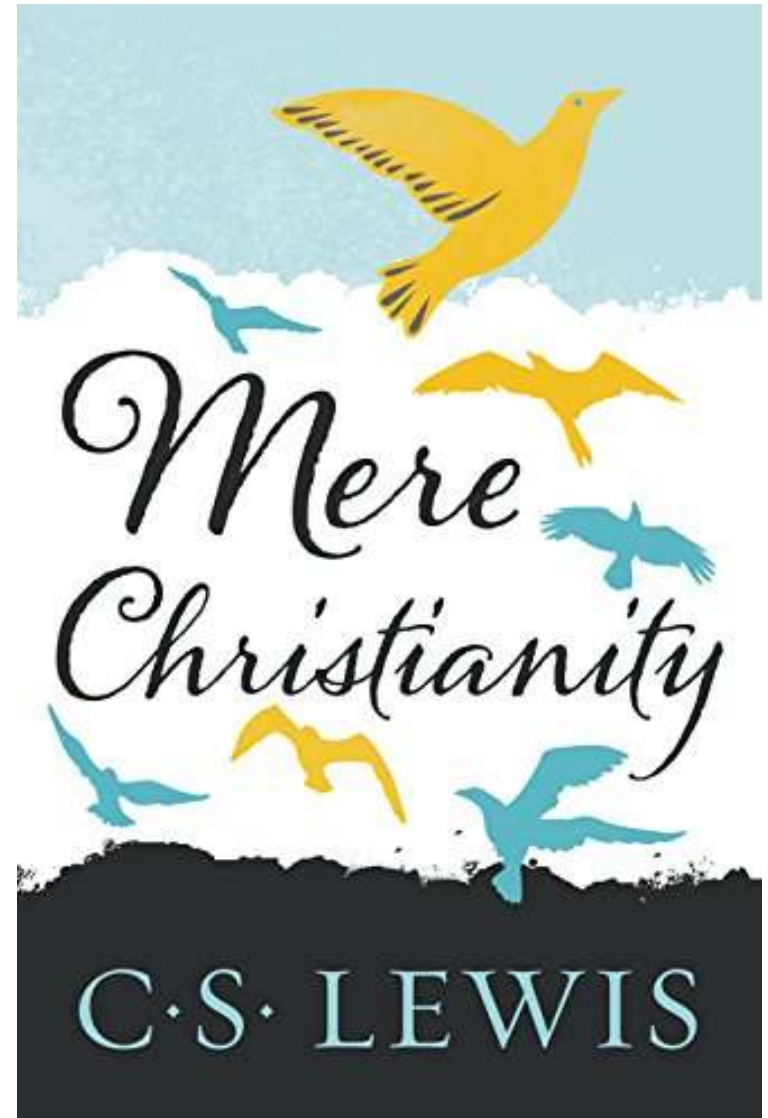
C.S. Lewis

- Born 1898
- Became atheist at age 12
- Joined British Army during WWI
- Converted to Christianity at 31 as a “reluctant convert”
- Professor at Oxford & Cambridge



Sources and References

- First published 1952
- Collection lectures during WWII
- Summarizes the beliefs common among Christians
- First part originally published in (1942): *“The Case for Christianity”*



Sources and References

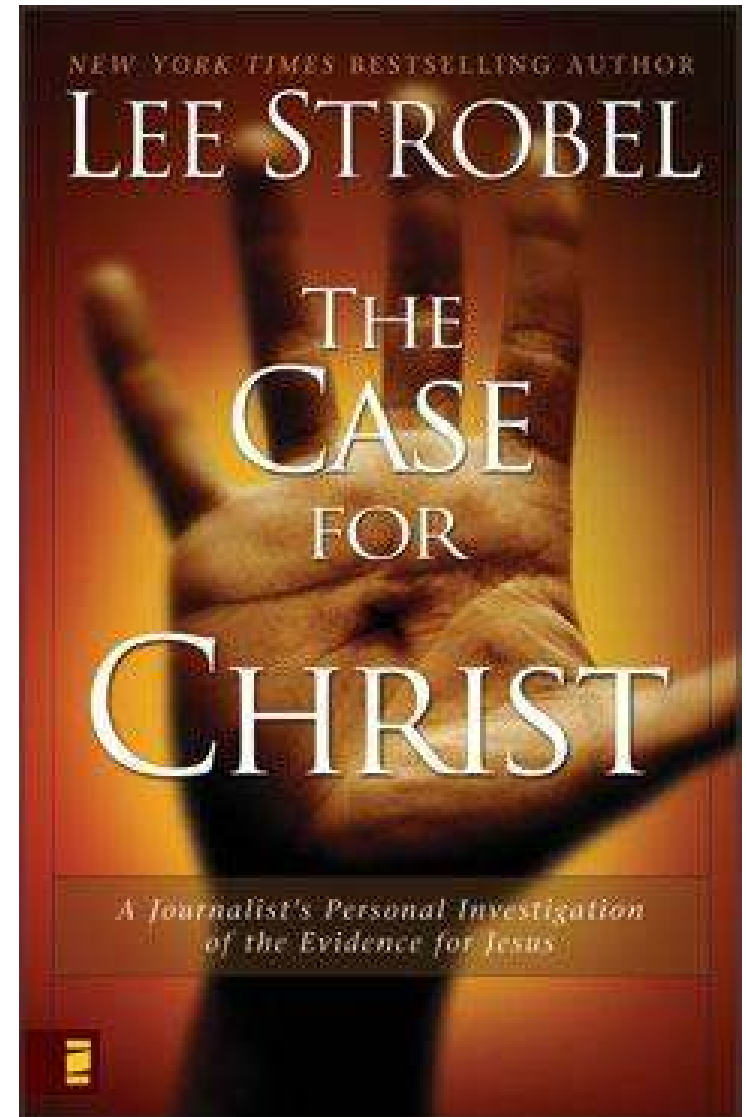
Lee Strobel

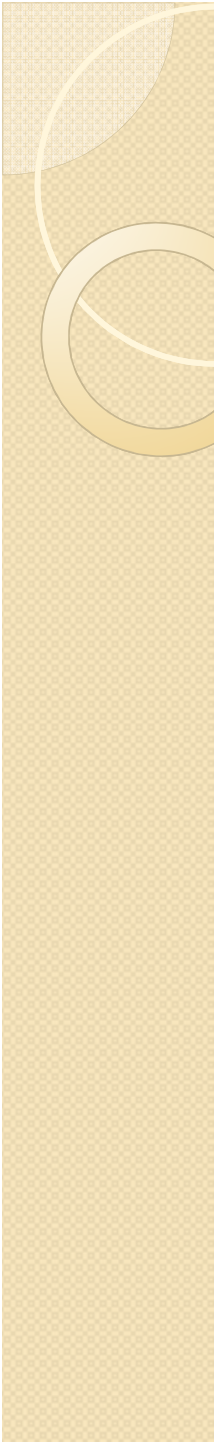
- Acclaimed court journalist
- Atheist who lived an admittedly immoral lifestyle
- Began to investigate Christianity after his wife's conversion
- Became Christian in 1981



Sources and References

- Interviewed 13 experts
- Cross-examined them using main arguments of atheists





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Natural Law

- There is a commonly accepted moral code
- *“That’s not FAIIIR!”*
- Some values “more good” than others
- Absolute good defines what we **should** do.
(rocks & gravity)



Natural Law

“if [an] ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death.”

(Exodus 21:28-29)
c. 1500 BC



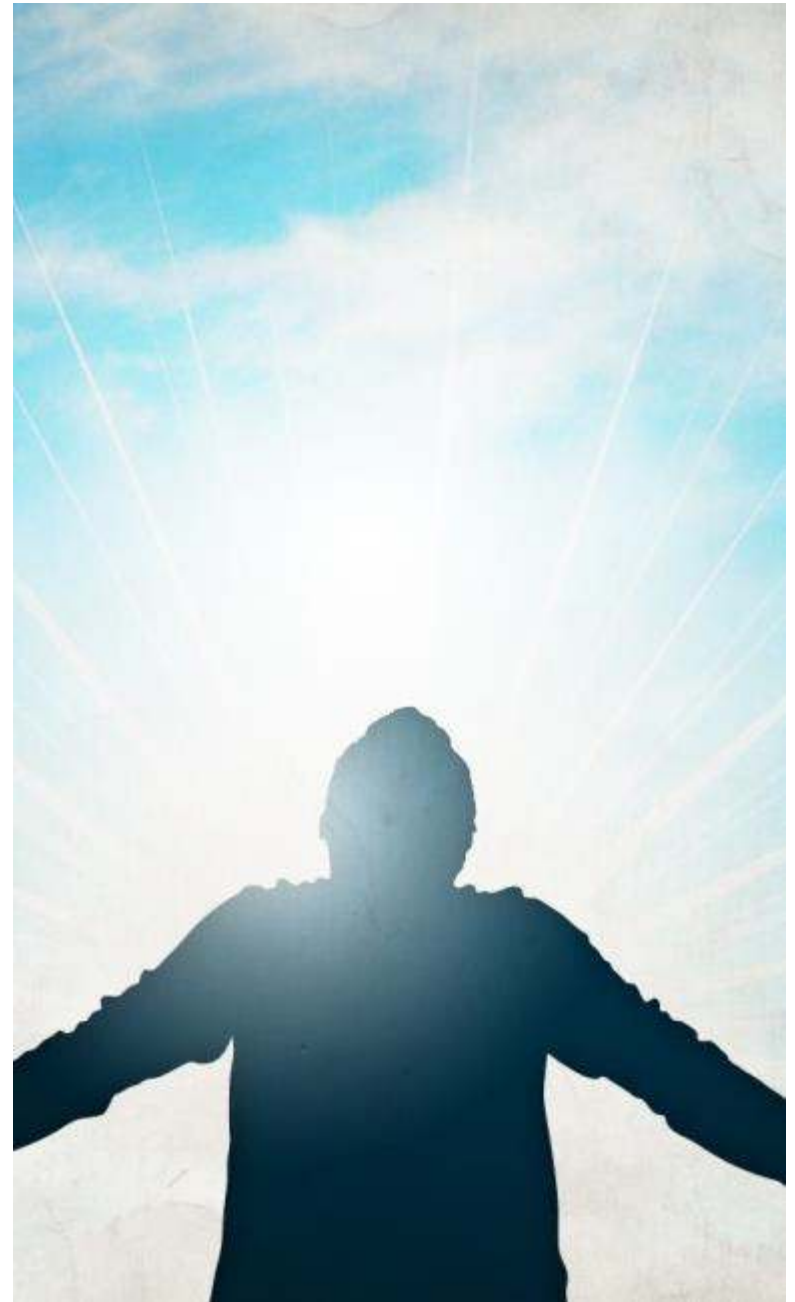
Natural Law

- Hammurabi's code
- c. 1750 BC
- Babylonian code of law
- *“If a builder builds a house for someone, and does not construct it properly, and the house which he built falls in and kills its owner, then that builder shall be put to death.”*



Natural Law

- Natural law has supernatural source.
- People violate the natural law.
- Must be reconciled with the law-giver.



Natural Law

- God defined the means of reconciliation
- **Christ came forgiving sins**
- Christ reconciled man to God.





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Authenticity of the Gospels

1. Intention Test

Did the evangelists intend to write a reliable account?

2. Ability Test

Wrote while memories were fresh

3. Character Test

Evangelists were people of integrity

4. Consistency Test

Gospels are consistent on key facts

5. Bias Test

Social pressure to keep quiet not speak up



Authenticity of the Gospels

6. Cover-up Test

Recorded lots of demanding and embarrassing details

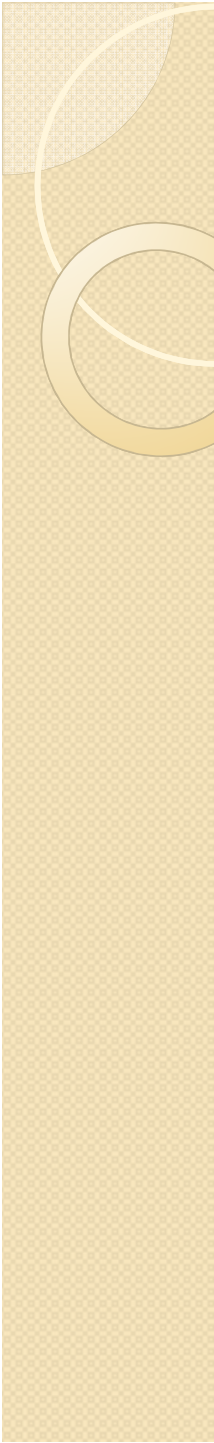
7. Corroboration Test

Can be corroborated by historical & archeological evidence

8. Adverse Witness Test

No reliable testimony against the evangelists' claims





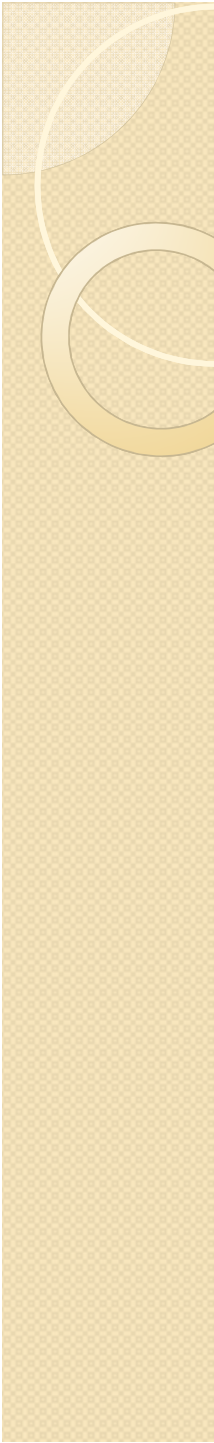
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Empty tomb + appearances = Resurrection

- Jesus could NOT have survived crucifixion
- Jewish leaders could not produce a body
- Reliable accounts of Jesus appearing afterwards





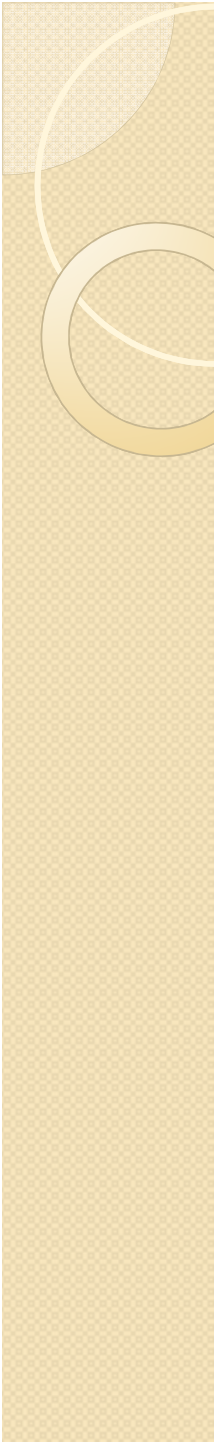
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Circumstantial Evidence

1. Disciples died for their beliefs
2. Skeptics were converted (St. Paul)
3. Jews changing key social structures
4. Communion and Baptism (why celebrate a death)?
5. Emergence of the Church



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Other well-established proofs

- Jesus fulfilled the prophecies
- Jesus exhibited the characteristics of God
 - Forgiving sins
 - Performing miracles
- Explicit statements in NT
- Jesus was of sound mind



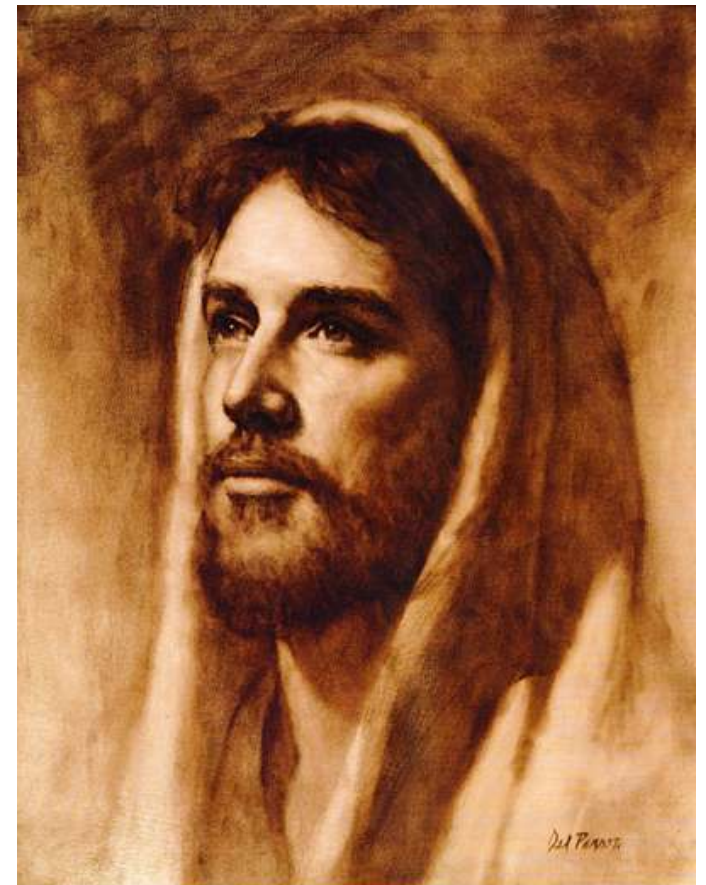
Fulfilling Prophecies

- Odds of 1 person randomly fulfilling 48 Messianic prophecies (Texas silver dollars)
- Jesus fulfilled 353 OT prophecies (1 in 10,000,000,000... 157 zeros)



Characteristics of God

- Forgiving sins
- Foreshadowing God's kingdom through His works & words
- Correct understanding of OT law
- “Abba, Father” not “*the Name*”
- Selecting God's people (12 tribes & 12 disciples)



Jesus of Nazareth by Del Parson



Explicit Biblical Statements

- **John 1**

“In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the word was God”

- **Matthew 16**

“He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”



Explicit Biblical Statements

John 14

“Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.”

(2 witnesses, agent/steward, nature of the Trinity)



Son of Man

“I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.
Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a
kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve
Him.
His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom *the one*
Which shall not be destroyed.
(Daniel 7:13-14)



Summary

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“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;” (1Peter 3:15)

Glory be to God, forever. Amen

