



## The Case for Christ Student Edition: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus (Case for ... Series for Students)

*By Lee Strobel*

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There's little question that he actually lived. But miracles? Rising from the dead? Some of the stories you hear about him sound like just that—stories. A reasonable person would never believe them, let alone the claim that he's the only way to God! But a reasonable person would also make sure that he or she understood the facts before jumping to conclusions. That's why Lee Strobel—an award-winning legal journalist with a knack for asking tough questions—decided to investigate Jesus for himself. An atheist, Strobel felt certain his findings would bring Christianity's claims about Jesus tumbling down like a house of cards. He was in for the surprise of his life. Join him as he retraces his journey from skepticism to faith. You'll consult expert testimony as you sift through the truths that history, science, psychiatry, literature, and religion reveal. Like Strobel, you'll be amazed at the evidence—how much there is, how strong it is, and what it says. The facts are in. What will your verdict be in *The Case for Christ*?

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### Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Who Was Jesus?

A good man? A lunatic? God?

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About the Author

Lee Strobel was the award-winning legal editor of the *Chicago Tribune* and is the bestselling author of *The Case for Christ*, *The Case for Faith*, *The Case for a Creator*, and *The Case for Grace*. With a journalism degree from the University of Missouri and a Master of Studies in Law degree from Yale, Lee has won four Gold Medallions for publishing excellence and coauthored the Christian Book of the Year. He serves as Professor of Christian Thought at Houston Baptist University. His story is now featured in the motion picture *The Case for Christ*. Visit Lee's website at: [leestrobel.com](http://leestrobel.com)

Jane Vogel, a writer who has been involved in youth ministry for twenty years, wrote *The Case for Christ - Student Edition* and *The Case for Faith - Student Edition* with Lee Strobel. She lives with her husband, Steve, and their two children in Winfield, Illinois.

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Chapter One What's Wrong with Me? I could take you back to the very place where I lost my faith in God. I was 14 years old. At Prospect High School in Mount Prospect, Illinois, the biology classroom was on the third floor in the northwest corner of the building. I was sitting in the second row from the windows, third chair from the front, when I first learned about Darwin's theory of evolution. Revolutionized by Evolution This was revolutionary to me! Our teacher explained that life originated millions of years ago when

chemicals randomly reacted with each other in a warm ocean on the primordial earth. Then, through a process of survival of the fittest and natural selection, life forms gained in complexity. Eventually, human beings emerged from the same family tree as apes. Although the teacher didn't address this aspect of evolution, its biggest implication was obvious to me: If evolution explains the origin and development of life, then God was out of a job! What did we need God for? Life was just the natural result of the random interaction of chemicals. To my mind, this was great news! Finally, here was a rational basis for atheism. If evolution explains life, then the first chapters of the Bible must be mythology or wishful thinking. And if that were true of the first chapters, why not the rest? Jesus could not have been God. Miracles aren't possible; they're just the attempts by pre-scientific people to make sense out of what they couldn't understand but which now science can explain. For the first time, I had a rational reason to abandon Christianity. Bored by Religion Not that I'd ever really been a Christian. My parents believed in God and had done their best to try to spark spiritual interest in me. When I was a kid, they brought me to a Protestant church, where I would struggle to stay awake during the 20-minute sermons. I didn't understand the rituals, I couldn't relate to the organ music, and I quickly concluded that religion was a waste of an otherwise perfectly good Sunday. When I was in junior high, my parents enrolled me in confirmation class. This meant that one day a week after school I was forced to sit in the church's airless basement and go through a series of classes. I can't recall learning much about the Bible—or about Jesus, for that matter. Mostly, I remember having to memorize things like the Ten Commandments and then stand and recite them. Nobody knew them well; we sort of bluffed our way through as the pastor would prompt us. It was mind-numbingly dull. I don't remember anything that I was forced to commit to memory back then, although I do have vivid memories of the pastor lecturing us and telling us sternly that we didn't have enough "diligence." I didn't even know what that was, but apparently we were bad for not having it. Graduating from Church When the time came to be formally confirmed and made a member of the church, we were told in advance the kind of questions we would be asked so that we'd know the answers. I didn't want to go through with this because, if I had any faith in God at the time, it was hanging by a slender thread. To me, God was irrelevant, mysterious, and a stern disciplinarian who, if he existed, was probably mad that I lacked "diligence." On the other hand, I wasn't too excited about the idea of standing up to my parents and saying, "No thanks, I'm not interested in being confirmed, because I think your God is probably just a fairy tale." My dad would have gone ballistic and my mom would have freaked out. I didn't need that. If there were no God, then what would be the harm in going through some meaningless ritual? So I went through the confirmation ceremony. Afterward, we got a stack of pre-printed envelopes so we could give money to the church. That, I figured, was probably what was really behind the whole confirmation scam—and probably behind all of organized religion. But confirmation had its advantages: I figured that my confirmation ceremony was actually my graduation ceremony—I had graduated from church. Now I was on my own. My parents stopped dragging me to church on Sundays, and I was happy to sleep late. I had done the religion drill. Time to party! Looking for Love After that day in biology class, I had even more reason to party. After all, I'd figured out that God did not exist. And that meant I was not accountable to him. I would not have to stand before him someday and be judged. I was free to live according to my rules, not his dusty commandments that I had been force-fed in confirmation class. To me, all of this meant that nobody else really mattered unless they made me happy. But there was someone who mattered—and who made me happy. Her name was Leslie, and we met when we were 14 years old. On the day we met, Leslie went home and told her mother, "I've met the boy I'm going to marry!" Her mother was condescending. "Sure, you did," she said. But Leslie didn't have any doubts, and neither did I. We dated on and off during high school, and after I left home to attend the University of Missouri, we maintained our relationship through the mail. We became convinced that there was nobody else we would ever be happy with. Within a year, Leslie moved down to Missouri, and we got engaged. We decided to get married in a church because ... well, that's where people get married, isn't it? Besides, Leslie wasn't hostile toward God, as I was. She wasn't opposed to religion, especially for other people. For herself, though, God was just another topic she had never taken the time to seriously explore.

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