



THE CASE FOR EASTER

Evidence of the Most Pivotal Event In History

Program Guide
Sunday, April 6, 2014

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About The Speakers



Lee Strobel:

Atheist-turned-Christian Lee Strobel, the former award-winning legal editor of The Chicago Tribune, is a New York Times best-selling author of more than twenty books and has been interviewed on numerous national TV programs, including ABC, Fox, PBS, and CNN.

Described in the Washington Post as “one of the evangelical community’s most popular apologists,” Lee was educated at the University of Missouri (Bachelor of Journalism degree, 1974) and Yale Law School (Master of Studies in Law degree, 1979) and holds top honors for investigative reporting.

After a nearly two-year investigation of the evidence for Jesus, Lee became a Christian in 1981. He joined the staff of Willow Creek Community Church and later joined Saddleback Valley Community Church as a teaching pastor in 2000. In recognition of his extensive research for his books, Southern Evangelical Seminary honored Lee with the conferring of a Doctor of Divinity degree in 2007. For more information about Lee Strobel visit leestrobel.com

Follow Lee on twitter @LeeStrobel



Mark Mittelberg:

Mark Mittelberg is a best-selling author, sought-after speaker, and a leading strategist in evangelism and apologetics-oriented outreach. He is the primary author (with Lee Strobel and Bill Hybels) of the updated Becoming a Contagious Christian Training Course, through which more than a million people have learned to effectively and naturally communicate their faith to others.

Mark’s newest book, The Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask, is based on a survey of 1000 Christians commissioned through the Barna organization, and deals with the ten issues that believers most want to avoid – but must not!

Mark was the evangelism director at Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago for seven years and for the Willow Creek Association for a decade. He is a frequent contributor for Outreach magazine, and he was an editorial consultant and periodic guest for Lee Strobel’s Faith Under Fire television show. He and Strobel have been ministry partners for over twenty years, and today they co-direct The Institute at Cherry Hills in Highland Ranch, Colorado. Mark earned a Master’s Degree in Philosophy of Religion from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. In recognition of his achievements in the areas of evangelism and apologetics, he was recently honored by the conferring of a Doctor of Divinity degree from Southern Evangelical Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Follow Mark on twitter @MarkMittelberg



Dr. Michael Licona:

Born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1961, Mike became a Christian at the age of 10 and grew up in a Christian home. He attended Liberty University where he earned his Bachelor’s Degree in Music Performance (Saxophone). During his undergraduate studies, he had a strong desire to know God, devoting himself to studying the Bible daily. He decided to learn Koine Greek in order to read the New Testament in its original language and later completed a Master’s Degree in Religious Studies.

Toward the end of his graduate work in 1985, Mike began to question the veracity of his faith and wondered if there was any evidence to support it. He decided not to go into Christian ministry at that time. Finding answers to his questions consumed him and he almost jettisoned his faith. He investigated the evidence for Christianity and a number of other major world religions. He also considered the arguments for atheism. His investigation solidified his belief that God exists and that he has actually revealed himself to mankind in Jesus Christ and that the Christian view provides the most plausible and unified theory of reality.

Mike is the author, co-author or editor of six (6) books: The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach (IVP Academic, 2010), Evidence for God: 50 Arguments for Faith from the Bible, History, Philosophy and Science, with co-editor William Dembski (Baker 2010), Paul Meets Muhammad (Baker, 2006) which is a debate on the resurrection of Jesus between the apostle Paul and the prophet Muhammad, the award winning The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus with co-author Gary Habermas (Kregel, 2004) which is a comprehensive self-study course, Cross Examined, a legal novel defending the historicity of Jesus’ resurrection, and Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock which lays out in a concise manner what to say to Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses when they knock on your door.

Follow Mark on twitter @MichaelLicona

Scenes from the “Son of God” movie
Welcome from Mark Mittelberg

The Case for Easter

Message from Lee Strobel

Why is Jesus’ resurrection important?

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”
— 1 Corinthians 15:17

I. Jesus was _____ at Point A.

“The claim that Jesus was simply made up falters on every ground. The alleged parallels between Jesus and the ‘pagan’ savior-gods in most instances reside in the modern imagination: We do not have accounts of others who were born to virgin mothers and who died as an atonement for sin and then were raised from the dead (despite what the sensationalists claim *ad nauseum* in their propagandized versions).”

— Agnostic scholar Bart Ehrman in *The Huffington Post*, March 20, 2012

“The death and resurrection of Jesus retains its unique character in the history of religions.”

— T.N.D. Mettinger in *The Riddle of the Resurrection*, page 221

II. Jesus was _____ at Point B.

“I think we need have no doubt that given Jesus’ execution by Roman crucifixion he was truly *dead*.”

— agnostic New Testament scholar James Tabor
in *The Jesus Dynasty*, page 230, emphasis in original

“Jesus’ death by execution under Pontius Pilate is as sure as anything historical can ever be.”

— liberal scholar John Dominic Crossan
in *Who Killed Jesus?*, page 5

“Jesus’ death as a consequence of crucifixion is indisputable.”

— atheist New Testament scholar Gerd Lüdemann
in *What Really Happened to Jesus?*, page 36

III. Jesus was _____ at Point C.

1. His _____ was _____

- The _____ Factor

- The criterion of _____

“In my view the tradition of the women as first discoverers...is a strong piece of evidence in favor of the historicity of the empty tomb, if not the reality of the resurrection also.”

— New Testament scholar Craig A. Evans in *How God Became Jesus*, 90

- _____ attestation

See: Matthew 28:11-15

“It was the knowledge of the tomb and the discovery that it was empty, in addition to the appearances of Jesus, that led the followers of Jesus to speak in terms of resurrection...”

— New Testament scholar Craig A. Evans in *How God Became Jesus*, 93

“...if we apply the same sort of criteria that we would apply to any other ancient literary sources, then the evidence is firm and plausible enough to necessitate the conclusion that the tomb was, indeed, found empty.”

— critical historian Michael Grant
in *Jesus: An Historian's Review of the Gospels*, page 176

“All the strictly historical evidence we have is in favor of [the empty tomb], and those scholars who reject it ought to recognize that they do so on some other ground than that of scientific history.”

— historian William Ward of Oxford
in *Christianity: A Historical Religion*, pages 93-94

2. Jesus' disciples were convinced that he _____ and _____ to them.

- _____ creed

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas [Peter] and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles....” — 1 Corinthians 15:3-7

“This tradition, we can be entirely confident, was formulated as tradition within months of Jesus' death.”

— New Testament scholar James D. G. Dunn
in *Jesus Remembered*, page 825, emphasis in original

“...Paul is citing the *eyewitness testimony* of those who were recipients of resurrection appearances, including the most prominent in the Jerusalem church....”

— New Testament scholar Richard Bauckham
in *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, page 308, emphasis in original

- Paul's _____ about the disciples.

"Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed." — 1 Corinthians 15:11

- _____ summaries in Acts

"God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it." — Peter in Acts 2:32

- The _____

"There's every reason to conclude that the Gospels have fairly and accurately reported the essential elements of Jesus' teachings, life, death and resurrection. They're early enough, they're rooted into the right streams that go back to Jesus and the original people, there's continuity, there's proximity, there's verification of certain distinct points with archaeology and other documents, and then there's the inner logic."

— New Testament scholar Craig A. Evans in *The Case for the Real Jesus*, page 58.

- _____

"[The disciples had] complete certainty caused by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ." — letter to Corinthians

- _____

"For they did not love the present age, but him who died for our benefit and for our sake was raised by God." — letter to Philipians

“The disciples’ conviction that they had seen the risen Christ...is [part of] historical bedrock, facts known past doubting.”

— Liberal scholar Paula Fredriksen in *Jesus of Nazareth*, page 264

“It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus’ death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ.”

— atheist scholar Gerd Lüdemann in *What Really Happened to Jesus?*, page 80

Stretch Break

Doug Lhotka’s story and interview with Mark Mittelberg

**Dealing with objections to the resurrection
Dr. Michael Licona with Lee and Mark**

Conclusion

Recommended Resources

- ***The Case for Easter***, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan)
A short but fact-packed book featuring interviews with scholars on the evidence that Jesus rose from the dead. It's inexpensive enough to give away to friends and neighbors during Easter season.
- ***The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus***, by Gary Habermas and Michael Licona (Kregel)
Two scholars put the facts concerning the resurrection into everyday language in this award-winning volume. Addresses common objections by skeptics.
- ***The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach***, by Michael Licona (IVP Academic)
A technical and in-depth treatment of the historical evidence for the resurrection, based on Licona's doctoral research on the topic.
- ***The Final Days of Jesus***, Andreas Köstenberger and Justin Taylor (Crossway)
Helpful guide to what happened during Passion Week, featuring chronological account, insightful commentary, charts and maps.
- ***The Resurrection of the Son of God***, by N.T. Wright (Fortress Press)
Popular scholar examines why Christianity began and how it took shape the way it did, focusing on the empty tomb of Jesus and his post-resurrection appearances.
- ***The Case for the Real Jesus***, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan)
Chapters deal with the "minimal facts approach" to the resurrection as well as why the resurrection wasn't an idea copied from pagan religions. Includes interview with resurrection scholar Michael Licona.
- ***Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Figment?*** Edited by Paul Copan and Ronald K. Tacelli (IVP Academic)
Here's a lively and provocative debate between Christian philosopher William Lane Craig and atheist New Testament scholar Gerd Lüdemann.
- ***Confident Faith: Building a Firm Foundation for Your Beliefs***, by Mark Mittelberg (Tyndale)
A popular-level book that presents wide-ranging evidence for the Christian faith, drawing from science, history, philosophy, archaeology, information related to the Bible, and religious experience.

For information on how your church can run a four-week campaign related to the "**Son of God**" movie (from which we saw a clip at the outset of the simulcast), go to: www.outreach.com/sonofgod

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Up Coming Events:



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Join
LEE STROBEL
MARK MITTELBERG
DR. MICHAEL LICONA

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 Evidence of the most pivotal event in history

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FEATURING:
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ERIC METAXAS

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