

The Case for Christ (March 26, 2017)

Exploring the Evidence of Christ

Small Group Study Notes

Ice Breaker: Before you meet with your group, cut out some pictures from a magazine. Choose scenes, logos or buildings that are recognizable to most people. Cut out a significant portion of the picture so the image is barely identifiable. Save both parts of the image. Divide on teams, each team gets 5 to 7 incomplete pictures. Hand one set of partial images to each team. Set a timer for a couple minutes to see how many images each team can identify correctly.

- Which image was easiest to identify and why? Which was the hardest?
 - What were your clues and what through you off?
 - Put the partial images in a pile in the middle of the room and see if you can match things up.
- In the lesson today we will explore the evidence as to whether Jesus Christ lived and walked this earth and whether He died on the cross.
 - Do you every struggle with doubts about God, faith in Jesus or what happens after death? Would you be willing to share?
 - John the Baptist had doubts: read Matthew 11:2-6.
 - What did John ask his disciples to find out?
 - Why did John doubt after he had clearly pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God?
 - How did Jesus respond?
 - Tell about your faith journey – have you always believed that Jesus was the Christ? What convinced you?

A) Jesus was alive and walked on earth.

- A) Take a look at the Gospels...what do these eyewitness accounts reveal about Jesus?
 - Anything surprise you in the Gospels?
 - Are there differences (discrepancies) in the Gospel accounts that bother you?
 - What does knowing that the Gospel writers all agree on the core events of the life of Christ do for your faith?
 - What encourages you most about the Gospels?
- B) Historians of the 1st century.
 - Have you ever heard of Josephus, Tacitus or Thallus? Can you tell us anything about them? (have someone “google” them).
 - What other historical evidence do you know that proves Jesus lived on earth?
- C) Scientific evidence.
 - Do you know of any archeological digs that confirm the existence of Jesus Christ and the validity of Scripture?

B) Jesus died.

- What Muslims believe about the crucifixion of Christ?
- Some people hold to the swoon theory. What is that?
- Take a look at the evidence leading up to Jesus’ death:
 - Luke 22:44 what is hematidrosis?
 - Luke 23:22 – what did flogging or whipping include? Explain the process.
 - What is hypovolemic shock? What signs do we see in Christ that He was in hypovolemic shock?
 - Crucifixion...the pain was so great a new word was invented to describe it. Do you recall the word?
 - Luke 23:46 – how did Jesus know His death was eminent?
 - John 19:34-35 – what is significant about blood and water coming our when the spear was thrust in Jesus’ side?

Close: What we mean by: Faith is not a leap in the dark but a step in the light?

- How does knowing Jesus endured excruciating pain in order to pay our sin debt impact you?
- What are you encouraged or challenged by in this lesson?

Next week: Proof that He lived again.