A distinguished Civil War historian unravels the complex character of the Confederacy's greatest general. Drawing on previously untapped manuscript sources, the author refutes such long-standing myths as Stonewall Jackson's obsessive eating of lemons and gives a three-dimensional account of the profound religious faith frequently caricatured as grim Calvinism. Though the author capably covers the battles that made Jackson a legend—Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, etc.—he emphasizes the life story of an extraordinary man. The result is a biography that will fascinate even those allergic to military history.

**Personal Review: Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Soldier, the Legend by James Robertson**

If it were possible, I would give this wonderful book twelve stars. Not only is it the best book on the Civil War that I have ever read, but outside of the
Holy Scriptures it is the best biography I have ever read period. The work of writing a good biography requires an author of extraordinary gifts. He or she must not only be a painstaking researcher who does not mind wading through the minutia of an endless sea of details, but they must also be able to take those details and weave them into a fluid and interesting story that is vivid while not getting bogged down in the small stuff. To put it another way, the author must give enough detail to be clear and sharp, but he must not lose the forest for the trees. On all of these levels James I. Robertson's landmark work "Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend" triumphs and succeeds marvelously. But what makes this biography so astounding is that Robertson has given us far more than a narrative set of true facts about a heroic man named Thomas Jonathan Jackson, he has given us the man himself. I knew nothing about General Jackson until I saw the film "Gods and Generals", but after viewing that movie I knew I had a new hero (Robertson himself was a historical consultant on that film, by the way). When I read Robertson's biography I realized that, like the queen of Sheba when she met King Solomon, not the half had been told. Robertson hits the nail on the head by recognizing that if you would understand Stonewall Jackson, you must discern that he was first and foremost a soldier of the cross of Jesus Christ. Robertson himself is a professing Christian and so has unique insight into Jackson that many other biographers' lack. I will never have the privilege of meeting Jackson in this present age, but as I read this book I felt that I came as close to knowing Jackson personally as I ever can in this lifetime. I saw in him a kindred spirit. Having lost an infant of my own I could relate to his pain in the loss of two infants and his first wife, but I could also relate to the grace of God and the faith in Christ that sustained him through it all. Jackson and I share the same Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Stonewall is my brother in the Lord across the sands of time. We share the same Calvinism as well. I found myself relating to his sense of social awkwardness and wanting to emulate his devotion to duty in many ways. Like all of us Jackson was a sinner, a man with large warts and gaping flaws. Forgiveness of others did not come easy to him; he placed loyalty to state above loyalty to family, sometimes not allowing men under his command to go home to bury dead wives and children. You will not find near as much of the noble patience that Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain demonstrated towards his men residing in Jackson. Yet, under his tough and well-disciplined exterior beat the heart of a man who was tender and affectionate towards his wife and baby, who loved to play with children, and whose tender prayers to his God were not soon forgotten. When I came to the chapter that describes Jackson's death following on the heels of his victory at Chancellorsville, I literally began to weep with tears spilling down my cheeks. The image of all those Confederate soldiers pulling off their hats and holding them over their hearts in honor of Jackson's widow when she first stepped away from his death bed is indelibly stamped on my mind. Why did I weep? Because through Robertson's biography, I had found a dear friend and brother in Christ. And when I read of his death, I felt that I was losing a personal friend. Thank you, Professor Robertson, for your eight and a half years of research and for all of your labors. Thank
you for introducing me to a friend and hero, Thomas Jonathan Jackson. Our fourth son is named "Thomas Jackson", but we call him "Jackson". And in regards to General Jackson, we have never met, but we shall meet by and by when our Lord and Savior comes again to take His people home. Thomas Jackson, "Bud" Robertson, and myself shall spend eternity side by side with all of God's people throughout all of time worshiping our crucified and risen Savior.

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