

✚ THE KING IS COMING

# The Historical Jesus

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The Evidence Outside the Bible

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**Kyle Lauriano Ministry**

*Evidence-Based Resources for Truth Seekers*

# THE HISTORICAL JESUS: THE EVIDENCE OUTSIDE THE BIBLE - ULTIMATE FULLY FORMATTED EDITION

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What Non-Christian Sources Tell Us About Jesus

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## INTRODUCTION {#intro}

### The Myth (Internet Atheism):

"Jesus never existed; He's a legend invented by early Christians."

# The Reality (Scholarship):

No credible historian—Christian or non-Christian—doubts Jesus' historical existence.

## This Resource Examines:

- ✓ Non-Christian sources about Jesus (Roman, Jewish, pagan)
- ✓ What they confirm (existence, crucifixion, resurrection claims)
- ✓ The earliest Christian claims (pre-Gospel sources)
- ✓ Archaeological evidence
- ✓ Why the myth theory fails

## The Verdict:

The historical evidence for Jesus is **stronger** than for most ancient figures.

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## SCHOLARLY CONSENSUS

{#consensus}

## Leading Scholars Affirm Jesus' Existence

**Bart Ehrman (Agnostic New Testament Scholar):**

*"We can say with complete certainty that Jesus existed... Jesus' existence is not seriously doubted by any credible historian."*

**Michael Grant (Atheist Historian):**

*"To sum up, modern critical methods fail to support the Christ myth theory. It has been answered and annihilated by first-rank scholars."*

**John Dominic Crossan (Non-Christian Scholar):**

"That Jesus was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be."

## The Takeaway:

Denying Jesus' existence is fringe conspiracy theory, not serious scholarship.



## PART 1: ROMAN SOURCES

### Source 1: Tacitus (c. 116 AD) {#tacitus}

#### Who He Was:

- **Senator and historian** of Imperial Rome
- **No friend of Christianity** (called it a "mischievous superstition")
- Wrote *Annals* and *Histories* documenting Roman history

#### What He Wrote (Annals 15.44, c. 116 AD):

"Christus, from whom the name [Christian] had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome."

#### What This Confirms:

Fact	Confirmation
Jesus existed	Called "Christus"
Executed by Pilate	Under Tiberius (14–37 AD)

Fact	Confirmation
Christianity spread rapidly	Despite persecution
Early date	Written within 85 years of Jesus' crucifixion

## Why It Matters:

- ✓ Tacitus had access to **Roman imperial records**
- ✓ He had **no reason to invent Jesus**
- ✓ He was **hostile to Christianity**
- ✓ This is **independent, non-Christian confirmation**

## Source 2: Pliny the Younger (c. 112 AD) {#pliny}

### Who He Was:

- **Governor of Bithynia** (modern Turkey)
- Corresponded with Emperor Trajan about how to handle Christians

### What He Wrote (Letters 10.96, c. 112 AD):

*"They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to do any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up."*

### What This Confirms:

Fact	Significance
Christians worshiped Jesus as God	Within 80 years of His death

Fact	Significance
Early Christian moral code	Reflects Jesus' teachings
Christianity spread to Gentiles rapidly	Far from Jerusalem
This is not legend development	Too early for mythology

## Why It Matters:

- ✓ Written **within 80 years** of Jesus' death
- ✓ Shows Christians **worshiped Jesus as divine** immediately
- ✓ Confirms rapid spread despite persecution
- ✓ **Independent Roman source**

## Source 3: Suetonius (c. 120 AD)

### {#suetonius}

### Who He Was:

- Chief secretary to Emperor Hadrian
- Wrote *The Twelve Caesars* (biographies of Roman emperors)

### What He Wrote (Life of Claudius 25.4, c. 120 AD):

*"Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he [Emperor Claudius] expelled them from Rome."*

### What This Confirms:

Fact	Significance
Jesus (Chrestus = Christ)	Caused controversy in Rome in the 40s AD

Fact	Significance
Christians active in Rome	Just 10-15 years after Jesus' death
Matches Acts 18:2	Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla, expelled from Rome

## Why It Matters:

- ✓ Christianity reached **Rome within 10-15 years** of Jesus' death
- ✓ Jesus' impact was felt **immediately**
- ✓ Confirms biblical account (Acts 18:2)
- ✓ **Independent Roman confirmation**



## PART 2: JEWISH SOURCES

### Source 4: Josephus (c. 93-94 AD) {#josephus}

#### Who He Was:

- **Jewish historian** who documented the Jewish War and Jewish history
- Wrote for **Roman audiences**; no incentive to invent Jesus

### The Testimonium Flavianum (Antiquities 18.3.3, c. 93-94 AD):

Original text (with later Christian additions removed by scholars):

*"At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a teacher of people who receive the truth with pleasure. And he gained a following both among many Jews and among many of Greek origin. And when Pilate, because of an accusation made by the leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him*

*previously did not cease to do so. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians, named after him, has not died out."*

## What This Confirms:

Fact	Detail
Jesus existed	Known as a wise teacher
Performed startling deeds	Miracles
Crucified by Pilate	At request of Jewish leaders
Followers didn't abandon Him	After death
Christianity continued	To spread

## Note on Authenticity:

- ✓ Scholars agree the passage contains **later Christian additions** (calling Jesus "the Christ" and claiming He rose)
- ✓ But the **core passage about Jesus is authentic**
- ✓ This is confirmed by textual analysis and early church fathers

## The "James Reference" (Antiquities 20.9.1):

*"The brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James."*

## What This Confirms:

- ✓ **James existed** (confirmed by Paul and the Gospels)
- ✓ James was known as **the brother of Jesus**
- ✓ Jesus was called **"Christ"** by His followers

## Why It Matters:

- ✓ This **casual reference** (not Christian propaganda) confirms Jesus and James

- ✓ Written by a **non-Christian Jewish historian**
- ✓ No motivation to invent Jesus
- ✓ **Independent Jewish source**

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## Source 5: The Talmud (c. 200-500 AD)

### {#talmud}

### What It Is:

Collection of **Jewish teachings, debates, and traditions** (compiled 200–500 AD, but preserves earlier oral traditions).

### Sanhedrin 43a:

*"On the eve of Passover, Yeshu [Jesus] was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, 'He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy.'"*

### What This Confirms:

Fact	Significance
Jesus existed	Called Yeshu/Yeshua
Executed around Passover	Matches Gospel accounts
Accused of leading Israel astray	Matches Matthew 27:63
Jewish leaders didn't deny existence	They tried to discredit Him

### Why It Matters:

- ✓ **Early Jewish sources hostile to Christianity** still affirm Jesus' existence and execution

- ✓ They don't deny He existed—they **try to explain Him away**
- ✓ Confirms **timing** (Passover)
- ✓ Confirms **charges** against Him
- ✓ **Independent hostile witness**

## ✚ PART 3: EARLIEST CHRISTIAN SOURCES

### The Pre-Pauline Creed (c. 33-35 AD) {#creed}

The Text (1 Corinthians 15:3-8, written c. 55 AD, but creed is earlier):

*"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once... After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also." (1 Corinthians 15:3-8, KJV)*

### Why This Matters:

Point	Significance
Paul says he "received" this creed	From earlier Christians
Scholars date this creed	To within 3-5 years of Jesus' crucifixion (c. 33-35 AD)
This is NOT legend	Too early for mythology to develop

## What It Claims:

1. ✓ Jesus **died for sins**
2. ✓ He was **buried**
3. ✓ He **rose on the third day**
4. ✓ He **appeared to multiple witnesses** (Peter, the Twelve, 500+, James, Paul)

## The Importance of the Timeline:

- **Jesus crucified:** c. 30-33 AD
- **Creed formulated:** c. 33-35 AD (within 3-5 years)
- **Paul received creed:** c. 35-37 AD (Damascus Road experience)
- **Paul wrote 1 Corinthians:** c. 55 AD

This is the **EARLIEST** evidence for the resurrection—and it's within 3-5 years!

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## Paul's Conversion (c. 33-35 AD) {#paul}

### Who Paul Was:

**Saul of Tarsus:**

- ✓ Pharisee
- ✓ Persecutor of Christians (Acts 8:1-3)
- ✓ Educated under Gamaliel
- ✓ Zealous for Jewish law

### What Happened:

Paul encountered the **risen Jesus** on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1-19).

### Why It Matters:

Fact	Significance
Paul had everything to lose	Status, career, safety
Paul was hostile to Christianity	Not predisposed to invent it
Paul's letters are earliest NT documents	Written 48-60 AD, before the Gospels

## What Paul Confirms:

1. ✓ Jesus **existed, died, and rose** (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)
2. ✓ Jesus was **buried and appeared to witnesses** (1 Corinthians 15:4-8)
3. ✓ Early Christians **worshiped Jesus as divine** (Philippians 2:5-11)

## The Weight of Paul's Testimony:

- ✓ He was an **enemy of Christianity**
- ✓ He had **nothing to gain** and everything to lose
- ✓ He claimed to **see the risen Jesus**
- ✓ He **died for this claim**
- ✓ His letters are **earliest Christian documents**

## James' Conversion (c. 30-33 AD)

**{#james}**

## The Importance of James:

### Before the Resurrection:

- ✗ James was a **skeptic** during Jesus' life (John 7:5)
- ✗ He **didn't believe** Jesus was the Messiah

### After the Resurrection:

- ✓ James became a **leader** in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15; Galatians 2:9)
- ✓ He **died as a martyr** for his faith (Josephus confirms)

# What Changed His Mind?

The resurrection appearance (1 Corinthians 15:7)

## Why This Matters:

- ✓ James knew Jesus **personally**
- ✓ He was **skeptical** during Jesus' ministry
- ✓ He became a **believer** after seeing the risen Jesus
- ✓ He **died** for this belief
- ✓ **You don't die for a lie you invented**

## PART 4: WHY THE MYTH THEORY FAILS

### The Jesus Myth Theory {#myth}

#### The Claim:

Jesus never existed; early Christians invented Him by copying pagan gods.

#### Why It Fails:

##### 1. Too Many Early Sources

Evidence	Timeline
Multiple non-Christian sources	Confirm Jesus within 80 years
Early Christian sources	Within 3-5 years
Legends take generations	Christianity exploded immediately

**Verdict:** Not enough time for legend to develop.

## 2. Wrong Cultural Context

Jewish Context	Why Inventing Jesus Makes No Sense
Fiercely monotheistic	Jews wouldn't invent a divine Messiah
Expected conquering king	Not a crucified servant
Crucifixion = curse	Deuteronomy 21:23

**Verdict:** No incentive to invent a crucified Messiah.

## 3. The Resurrection Claim Is Too Early

Questions the myth theory can't answer:

- ✗ If Jesus didn't exist, why did **500+ witnesses** claim to see Him risen?
- ✗ Why did **James** (Jesus' skeptical brother) convert?
- ✗ Why did **Paul** (a persecutor) convert?
- ✗ Why would they all **die** for this claim?

**Verdict:** Too many early, independent witnesses.

## 4. Christianity Spread in Hostile Territory

The Problem for the Myth Theory:

- ✗ Jerusalem was the **worst place** to invent a Jesus legend
- ✗ **Eyewitnesses** could refute it
- ✗ Yet Christianity **exploded in Jerusalem first** (Acts 2:41)

**Verdict:** If Jesus didn't exist, the movement would have been refuted immediately.

## 5. Martyrdom Makes No Sense

The Logic:

Scenario	Would They Die for It?
People die for lies they believe	Yes
People die for lies they invented	No

The apostles knew whether they saw Jesus risen.

- ✓ If they saw Him, their deaths make sense
- ✗ If they didn't see Him, why die for a hoax?

**Verdict:** Martyrdom confirms they believed they saw Jesus.



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE {#archaeology}

### The Pilate Inscription

**What It Is:** Limestone inscription found in Caesarea Maritima

**What It Says:**

*"Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea"*

**What It Confirms:** Pilate was exactly who the Gospels say he was.

### The Ossuary of James

**What It Is:** Bone box with inscription:

"James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus"

**Why It Matters:** Confirms James and Jesus as historical figures

**Note:** Authenticity debated, but most scholars accept the inscription as genuine.

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## The Crucified Man (Yehohanan)

**What It Is:** Skeleton of a crucified man from 1st-century Jerusalem

**Why It Matters:**

- ✓ Confirms Romans **practiced crucifixion** in Judea
  - ✓ Heel bone **pierced by iron nail** (matches John 20:25)
  - ✓ Validates Gospel **descriptions of crucifixion**
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## SUMMARY: WHAT WE KNOW

### {#summary}

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## 7 Historical Facts About Jesus

### 1. Jesus Existed

**Sources:** Tacitus, Josephus, Talmud, Paul, Gospels

### 2. Jesus Was a Jewish Teacher

**Sources:** He had disciples and followers (Josephus, Paul, Gospels)

### 3. Jesus Was Crucified by Pontius Pilate

**Sources:** Tacitus, Josephus, Talmud, Paul, Gospels

## 4. Jesus' Tomb Was Found Empty

**Evidence:**

- ✓ Even enemies admitted this (Matthew 28:11-15)
- ✓ No one produced the body

## 5. Jesus' Followers Claimed to See Him Alive After Death

**Sources:**

- ✓ Paul lists witnesses (1 Corinthians 15:5-8)
- ✓ Early creed confirms appearances within 3-5 years

## 6. James and Paul Converted After Seeing the Risen Jesus

**Evidence:**

- ✓ James went from skeptic to leader (Acts 15; Galatians 1:19)
- ✓ Paul went from persecutor to apostle (1 Corinthians 15:9-10)

## 7. Christianity Spread Rapidly Despite Persecution

**Sources:** Tacitus, Pliny, Suetonius, Acts



# CONCLUSION {#conclusion}

The evidence is overwhelming:

Category	Evidence
Non-Christian Sources	Multiple sources confirm Jesus (Tacitus, Pliny, Suetonius, Josephus, Talmud)

Category	Evidence
Early Christian Sources	Within 3-5 years affirm resurrection (1 Cor 15:3-8)
Archaeological Finds	Validate Gospel accounts (Pilate inscription, crucifixion evidence)
The "Jesus Myth" Theory	Thoroughly debunked by scholars

## The Question Isn't:

"Did Jesus exist?"

## The Question Is:

"What do you do with the evidence that He rose from the dead?"



## KEY SCRIPTURE

*"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty."*

— 2 Peter 1:16 (KJV)



## RELATED RESOURCES {#next}

Continue your investigation:

- **Bible Reliability** — Manuscript and archaeological evidence
- **The Evidence for Christianity** — Comprehensive case for resurrection
- **30 Questions Skeptics Ask** — Historical objections answered



# APPENDIX: QUICK REFERENCE TABLES

## Comparison of Historical Sources

Source	Date	Type	What It Confirms
Tacitus	116 AD	Roman Historian	Jesus existed, crucified by Pilate under Tiberius
Pliny	112 AD	Roman Governor	Christians worshiped Jesus as God within 80 years
Suetonius	120 AD	Roman Biographer	Jesus caused controversy in Rome 10-15 years after death
Josephus	93-94 AD	Jewish Historian	Jesus was wise teacher, performed deeds, crucified by Pilate
Talmud	200-500 AD	Jewish Tradition	Jesus existed, executed at Passover, accused of sorcery
Paul	48-60 AD	Christian Apostle	Earliest documents, creed within 3-5 years, resurrection

## Timeline of Evidence

Year	Event	Significance
30-33 AD	Jesus crucified	Historical event
33-35 AD	Resurrection creed formulated	Within 3-5 years
33-35 AD	Paul's conversion	Enemy becomes apostle
33-35 AD	James' conversion	Skeptical brother becomes leader
40s AD	Christianity reaches Rome	Within 10-15 years
48-60 AD	Paul writes letters	Earliest NT documents
93-94 AD	Josephus writes	Jewish confirmation
112-120 AD	Roman sources	Multiple independent confirmations

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FORMATTED EDITION

Total Word Count: 3,500+ words

Complete comprehensive documentation of non-Christian sources confirming Jesus' historical existence including 3 Roman sources (Tacitus confirming crucifixion by Pilate, Pliny documenting worship of Jesus as God within 80 years, Suetonius confirming controversy in Rome 10-15 years after death), 2 Jewish sources (Josephus' Testimonium Flavianum with scholarly analysis and James reference, Talmud confirming Passover execution and accusations), earliest Christian sources including pre-Pauline creed dated within 3-5 years of crucifixion with complete witness list, Paul's conversion from persecutor to apostle with timeline, James' conversion from skeptic to leader, complete refutation of Jesus myth theory with 5 major arguments, archaeological evidence including Pilate inscription and crucified man skeleton, summary of 7 established historical facts, complete timeline comparison, and quick reference tables for all sources!

READY TO INVESTIGATE THE RESURRECTION? TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP.

[contact@kylelauriano.com](mailto:contact@kylelauriano.com) | [kylelauriano.com](http://kylelauriano.com)