

Historic References To The Life Of Jesus

Part 1: Ancient Text And Secular History

Proof Beyond Proof Of The Life Of Jesus

Focus Verse: 1 Timothy 1:15 “The saying is faithful and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

It may be easy to say that you don't believe in the Bible and deny that Jesus ever lived. But it is very difficult to look past the historical references of the life of Jesus. It is even more impressive when you realize that not all of the quotes are from individuals that even liked the fact that He ever existed. Please consider the following evidence.

We must remember in these quotations that when talking about Jesus the Christ, they are being discussed as knowable facts, without little explanation of the legitimacy of His life. As these events are so close to the source event, it was very well known as fact. They often reference other materials for the reader to go and verify the events spoken of in official government writings and histories. It is the modern day equivalent of us saying, “Go ahead and Google it!”

Disclaimer: *Having worked on this on and off over many years, I have tried my best to find source material and reference material for your leisure. I feel confident that the historicity is valid and correct. Yet, don't just take my word or work for fact. Having gone over my own work multiple times, I have found and continue to refine and locate more accurate or clearer articles of reference and citation. So at the very least, this document is a well studied reference chart to facts. This should be a springboard for your own personal study.*

Also, 99% of this material is not mine. While I took the time to look it up, I tried to add as many references to all the information. I do not take credit for it and all credit should be applied to the original authors, which are vast and many. To add to this, I own most of these references through the E-sword.net software, with some in book form. One final note: I am going a butcher these names, so it is best to get the PDF from Brotherlance.com, and use the study page. This will be on to click the hyper links for reading the source materials. Thank You. B.L.

WE WILL NOW PROVE JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD AND LIVED AMONG US!

Historic References To Jesus Outside The Bible

As we read this, we are not looking for their alignment with scripture on every point. For example, many secular historians did not believe Jesus the Nazarene was the Messiah. So, they do not speak of Him as such. What we find is that they speak about Him at all. They clearly declare that Jesus lived and died, and that His life created the faith of Christianity. And that those who followed Him, continue to serve Him and obey His commands. In this, we can clearly and emphatically declare that Jesus was a noteworthy historical figure, which gained the attention of many government officials and their historians. Thus proving that Jesus is real and walked the earth.

Josephus

(AD 37 -100) a Roman–Jewish Historian & Military Leader.



Book 18, Ch. 3, part 3 (63-64), (Most Likely The Correct Version)

“Now there arose at this time a source of further trouble in one Jesus, a wise man who performed surprising works, a teacher of men who gladly welcome strange things. He led away many Jews, and also many of the Gentiles. He was the so-called Christ. When Pilate, acting on information supplied by the chief men around us, condemned him to the cross, those who had attached themselves to him at first did not cease to cause trouble, and the tribe of Christians, which has taken this name from him is not extinct even today.”



Book 18, Ch. 3, part 3 (63-64), (Most Likely The Doctored Version)

“Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man; if it be lawful to call him a man. For he was a doer of wonderful works; a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross;⁷ those that loved him at the first did not forsake him. For he appeared to them alive again, the third day: as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”

<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/ant-18.html>



Book 20, Ch. 9, part 1:

“So he assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned...”

https://www.sefaria.org/The_Antiquities_of_the_Jews.20.9.1?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en

Tiberius Caesar Roman emperor (A.D.14–37)

Tertullian:

(AD155/160- 220) Early Christian Theologian, Polemicist, & Moralist.

What is interesting is that these dare to declare against a hostile audience at times, that Pilate and Caesar, in the very least, respected Jesus, and in the greatest of hope were themselves secret believers. If not as the Son of God, but at the very least divine in personhood and should be added to the pantheon of gods in Rome itself.

➤ **Notes From Early Christian Writing Website**

“Tertullian refers twice to a report made by Pilate to Tiberius. According to him, Pontius Pilate informed the Emperor of the unjust sentence of death which he had pronounced against an innocent and divine person; the Emperor was so moved by his report of the miracles of Christ and his resurrection, that he proposed the reception of Christ among the gods of Rome. But the Senate refused (Apologeticum 5). In another place Tertullian says that the 'whole story of Christ was reported to Caesar—at that time it was Tiberius—by Pilate, himself in his secret heart already a Christian' (Apol. 21, 24).”

<https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/actspilate.html>



Apology Chapter 21

“All these things Pilate did to Christ; and now in fact a Christian in his own convictions, he sent word of Him to the reigning Caesar, who was at the time Tiberius. Yes, and the Caesars too would have believed on Christ, if either the Caesars had not been necessary for the world, or if Christians could have been Caesars.”

<http://www.logoslibrary.org/tertullian/apology/21.html>



Apology Chapter 5

“To say a word about the origin of laws of the kind to which we now refer, there was an old decree that no god should be consecrated by the emperor till first approved by the senate. Marcus Aemilius had experience of this in reference to his god Alburnus. And this, too, makes for our case, that among you divinity is allotted at the judgment of human beings. Unless gods give satisfaction to men, there will be no deification for them: the god will have to propitiate the man.”

“Tiberius [see Elucidation IV] accordingly, in whose days the Christian name made its entry into the world, having himself received intelligence from Palestine of events which had clearly shown the truth of Christ’s divinity, brought the matter before the senate, with his own decision in favour of Christ. The senate, because it had not given the approval itself, rejected his proposal. Caesar held to his opinion, threatening wrath against all accusers of the Christians. Consult your histories;”

<http://www.logoslibrary.org/tertullian/apology/05.html>

Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus (Pliny The Younger) **(AD 61- 113) Roman Statesman & Historian**



Epistles X96 10.96-97

A letter written by Pliny the Younger to Roman Emperor Trajan around 112 AD.

"These accusations spread (as is usually the case) from the mere fact of the matter being investigated and several forms of the mischief came to light. A placard was put up, without any signature, accusing a large number of persons by name. Those who denied they were, or had ever been, Christians, who repeated after me an invocation to the Gods, and offered adoration, with wine and frankincense, to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for that purpose, together with those of the Gods, and who finally cursed Christ one of which acts, it is said, those who are really Christians can be forced into performing these I thought it proper to discharge. Others who were named by that informer at first confessed themselves Christians, and then denied it; true, they had been of that persuasion but they had quitted it, some three years, others many years, and a few as much as twenty-five years ago. They all worshipped your statue and the images of the Gods, and cursed Christ."

"They affirmed, however, the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that 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 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; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food but food of an ordinary and innocent kind. Even this practice, however, they had abandoned after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your orders, I had forbidden political associations. I judged it so much the more necessary to extract the real truth, with the assistance of torture, from two female slaves, who were styled deaconesses: but I could discover nothing more than depraved and excessive superstition."

<https://www.vroma.org/vromans/hwalker/Pliny/Pliny10-096-E.html>

Gaius Suetonius Tranquilla **(AD 117-138) Roman Historian**



The Life of Claudius 25.4

"Because the Jews at Rome caused constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus [Christ], he [Claudius] expelled them from the city [Rome]."



Nero's Persecution 16.2

"Punishment by Nero was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition."

<https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/suetonius.html>

Clement Of Rome **(AD 95-97) A Bishop of Rome. Was Born 35 AD.**

On this next one, please remember that the 27 books of the New Testament were not considered cannon of books until 367 AD. Clement was alive during the time of the writing of the Book of Revelation. So, he was alive during the time of John the Apostle.



THE FIRST EPISTLE OF CLEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER 42:1-3

“42:1 The Apostles received for us the gospel from our Lord Jesus Christ; our Lord Jesus Christ received it from God.

42:2 Christ, therefore, was sent out from God, and the Apostles from Christ; and both these things were done in good order, according to the will of God.

42:3 They, therefore, having received the promises, having been fully persuaded by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and having been confirmed by the word of God, with the full persuasion of the Holy Spirit, went forth preaching the good tidings that the kingdom of God was at hand.”

CHAPTER 64:1

“64:1 Finally, my God, who overlooketh all things, who is the Master of spirits and Lord of all flesh, who hath chosen our Lord Jesus Christ, and us through him to be a peculiar people, give unto every soul that is called after his glorious and holy name, faith, fear, peace, patience, long-suffering, continence, purity, sobriety, to the well-pleasing of his name, through our high priest and protector, Jesus Christ, through whom be ascribed unto him glory and greatness, strength and honour, both now and world without end. Amen”

<https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/1clement-hoole.html>

For a more in-depth comparison of his writing concerning the source material of the letters of the Apostles, please see the following link.

<https://etimasthe.com/2018/02/14/clement-of-romes-new-testament/>

References to Jesus' Death & Resurrection

Lucian of Samosata

(A.D. 120-180) Greek educated Syrian rhetorician and satirist.



Writing about Peregrinus of Parium: 2nd-century philosopher from the Cynic school of thought.



The Passing Of Peregrinus

11. "It was then that he learned the wondrous lore of the Christians, by associating with their priests and scribes in Palestine. And—how else could it be?—in a trice he made them all look like children, for he was prophet, cult-leader, head of the synagogue, and everything, all by himself. He interpreted and explained some of their books and even composed many, and they revered him as a god, made use of him as a lawgiver, and set him down as a protector, next after that other, to be sure, whom they still worship, the man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world.

13. "Indeed, people came even from the cities in Asia, sent by the Christians at their common expense, to succour and defend and encourage the hero. They show incredible speed whenever any such public action is taken; for in no time they lavish their all. So it was then in the case of Peregrinus; much money came to him from them by reason of his imprisonment, and he procured not a little revenue from it. The poor wretches have convinced themselves, first and foremost, that they are going to be immortal and live for all time, in consequence of which they despise death and even willingly give themselves into custody; most of them. Furthermore, their first lawgiver persuaded them that they are all brothers of one another after they have transgressed once, for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws. Therefore they despise all things indiscriminately and consider them common property, receiving such doctrines traditionally without any definite evidence. So if any charlatan and trickster, able to profit by occasions, comes among them, he quickly acquires sudden wealth by imposing upon simple folk.

<https://www.tertullian.org/rpearse/lucian/peregrinus.htm>



For more on the adventurous and tragic life of Peregrinus of Parium.

<https://thehistorianshut.com/2023/10/24/the-burning-of-peregrinus-proteus/>

Pontius Pilate

Roman prefect (Governor- AD 26-36) of Judaea who presided at the final trial of Jesus and gave the order for His crucifixion.

Pontius Pilate As Referenced By

Justin Martyr (AD 100- 165) Greek Philosopher & Christian Apologist



Notes From Early Christian Writing Website

"About AD 150 Justin Martyr, addressing his Defence of Christianity to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, referred him to Pilate's report, which Justin supposed must be preserved in the imperial archives."

<https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/actspilate.html>

**Justin Martyr (110-165) First Apology 48**

“And that it was predicted that our Christ should heal all diseases and raise the dead, hear what was said. There are these words: “At His coming the lame shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the stammerer shall be clear speaking: the blind shall see, and the lepers shall be cleansed; and the dead shall rise, and walk about.” And that He did those things, you can learn from the Acts of Pontius Pilate.”

<http://www.logoslibrary.org/justin/apology1/48.html>

**Justin Martyr First Apology 35**

“And the expression, “They pierced my hands and my feet,” was used in reference to the nails of the cross which were fixed in His hands and feet. And after He was crucified they cast lots upon His vesture, and they that crucified Him parted it among them. And that these things did happen, you can ascertain from the Acts of Pontius Pilate.”

<https://www.logoslibrary.org/justin/apology1/35.html>

**Notes On The Acts Of Pontius Pilate**

Acts of Pilate It is considered an apocryphal work, which means it is not part of the New Testament canon.

**Notes From Early Christian Writing Website**

“Hundred on years “later pagan emperors, Maximin II, two years before the Edict of Milan, attempted to bring Christianity into disrepute by publishing what he alleged to be the true 'Acts of Pilate', representing the origins of Christianity in an unsavory guise. They were manifestly forged, as Eusebius historian pointed out at the time;’ among other things, their dating was quite wrong, as they placed the death of Jesus in the seventh year of Tiberius (AD 20), whereas the testimony of Josephus' is plain that Pilate not become procurator of Judaea till Tiberius' Twelfth year ”

<https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/actspilate.html>

Tacitus**(AD 55 - 117) Roman Historian & Politician****Annals, Book XV CH44:**

“Therefore, to scotch the rumour, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices,²⁷ whom the crowd styled Christians.²⁸ Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus,²⁹ and the pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not merely in Judaea, the home of the disease, but in the capital itself, where all things horrible or shameful in the world collect and find a vogue. First, then, the confessed members of the sect were arrested; next, on their disclosures, vast ^{p285} numbers³⁰ were convicted, not so much on the count of arson as for hatred of the human race.³¹ And derision accompanied their end: they were covered with wild beasts' skins and torn to death by dogs; or they were fastened on crosses, and, when daylight failed were burned to serve as lamps by night.”

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/e/roman/texts/tacitus/annals/15b*.html

Phlegon

(AD 80) Secular Historian with two books credited to his name: Chronicles and the Olympiads.

Julius Africanus

(AD 160 - 240) Sextus Julius Africanus was a Christian traveler and historian.

- Africanus wrote Chronographiai, a history of the world in five volumes. The work covers the period from Creation to the year 221 AD.



Fragment 18. On the Circumstances Connected with Our Saviour's Passion and His Life-Giving Resurrection

“As to His works severally, and His cures effected upon body and soul, and the mysteries of His doctrine, and the resurrection from the dead, these have been most authoritatively set forth by His disciples and apostles before us. On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun. For the Hebrews celebrate the passover on the 14th day according to the moon, and the passion of our Saviour falls on the day before the passover; but an eclipse of the sun takes place only when the moon comes under the sun. And it cannot happen at any other time but in the interval between the first day of the new moon and the last of the old, that is, at their junction: how then should an eclipse be supposed to happen when the moon is almost diametrically opposite the sun? Let that opinion pass however; let it carry the majority with it; and let this portent of the world be deemed an eclipse of the sun, like others a portent only to the eye. Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth - manifestly that one of which we speak. But what has an eclipse in common with an earthquake, the rending rocks, and the resurrection of the dead, and so great a perturbation throughout the universe? Surely no such event as this is recorded for a long period. But it was a darkness induced by God, because the Lord happened then to suffer. And calculation makes out that the period of 70 weeks, as noted in Daniel, is completed at this time.”

<https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0614.htm>

Origen of Alexandria [Origen Adamantius] (AD 185 –253), Christian scholar, ascetic, and theologian



Against Celsus Book 2 Chapter 14

“Celsus, however, accepting or granting that Jesus foreknew what would befall Him, might think to make light of the admission, as he did in the case of the miracles, when he alleged that they were wrought by means of sorcery; for he might say that many persons by means of divination, either by auspices, or auguries, or sacrifices, or nativities, have come to the knowledge of what was to happen. But this concession he would not make, as being too great a one; and although he somehow granted that Jesus worked miracles, he thought to weaken the force of this by the charge of sorcery. **Now Phlegon, in the thirteenth or fourteenth book, I think, of his Chronicles**, not only ascribed to Jesus a knowledge of future events (although”

<https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04162.htm>

Jerome Copying The Writings Of Eusebius, Who Referenced Phlegon

Eusebius

(AD 260/265 –339) Eusebius of Caesarea was a bishop, exegete, polemicist, and historian.

Jerome

St. Jerome (AD 347 - 419/420) Priest And served as secretary to Pope Damasus I,

St. Jerome translated the tables from Eusebius' Chronicle into Latin
Eusebius, in book 2 of Chronicle (Chronicon, quoted by Jerome), refers to Phlegon's 13th book for confirmation of an eclipse and earthquakes in Bythinia and Nicaea.



Jerome, Chronicle (2005) pp.188-332 “202nd Olympiad”

“*d* Jesus Christ, according to the prophecies, which had been spoken about him beforehand, came to the Passion in the 18th year of Tiberius, at which time also we find these things written verbatim in other commentaries of the gentiles: an eclipse of the sun happened 1, Bithynia shaken by earthquake, and in the city of Nicaea many buildings collapsed: all of which agree with what occurred in the Passion of the Saviour. Indeed Phlegon, who is an excellent calculator of olympiads, also writes about this, in his 13th book writing thus:”

"However in the fourth year of the 202nd olympiad, an eclipse of the sun happened, greater and more excellent than any that had happened before it; at the sixth hour, day turned into dark night, so that the stars were seen in the sky, and an earthquake in Bithynia toppled many buildings of the city of Nicaea." These things the aforementioned man (says).”

“The proof however of this matter, that in this year the Saviour suffered, the gospel of John presents, in which it is written that after the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar, the Lord preached for three years. Also Josephus, a native writer of the Jews, attests that around that time on the day of Pentecost, the priests first perceived an earth tremor and certain (loud) sounds. Then, that an unexpected voice suddenly burst out from the innermost part of the Temple saying: "Let us flee from this abode." However the aforementioned man writes that in the same year Pilate the governor secretly in the night set up images of Caesar in the temple, and from this arose the first cause of the rebellion and turmoil of the Jews.”

https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/jerome_chronicle_03_part2.htm

Let Us Read The Original Account

Matthew 27:45-46

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. (46) About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lima sabachthani?” That is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Let Us Read The 2nd Earliest Account Of This Event

Luke 23:44-48

“It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. (45) The sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. (46) Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” Having said this, he breathed his last. (47) When the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, “Certainly this was a righteous man.” (48) All the multitudes that came together to see this, when they saw the things that were done, returned home beating their breasts.”

As we can see, there are irrefutable historical proofs and outside biblical accounts of the life of Jesus. Not just from believers in Jesus, but from secular historians. Jesus lived and died. It doesn't take faith to believe with this much proof. What does take faith is that Jesus rose again from the grave and lives forever before our Heavenly Father God. I hope this proof encourages us all to let Jesus live in their hearts, not just in their minds with historical facts. In our next study, we will look into historical accounts of Jesus in other religions such as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and the like.

1 John 4:9 “By this God's love was revealed in us, that God has **sent his one and only Son into the world** that we might live through him.”