

The Reason For Our Hope

Jesus – Full of Grace and Truth

¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.** But do this with gentleness and respect

1 Peter 3:15

The 100 Most Significant Figures in History

1 Jesus

2 Napoleon

3 Muhammad

4 William Shakespeare

5 Abraham Lincoln

“ Moreover, the claim that Jesus was simply made up falters on every ground. ”

Bart D. Ehrman
DID JESUS EXIST?

“ When we have once made up our minds that we have not the materials for a complete Life of Jesus, but only for a picture of His public ministry, it must be admitted that there are few characters of antiquity about whom we possess so much indubitably historical information, of whom we have so many authentic discourses. ”

Albert Schweitzer
THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS

PLINY THE YOUNGER

GENRE: POLITICAL
DATES: 61-113 AD

Mentions that Christ's followers sing to Christ "as to a god."

TACITUS

GENRE: HISTORY
DATES: 61-116 AD
Discusses Jesus' crucifixion

THALLUS

GENRE: HISTORY
DATES: c. 52 AD
Describes strange phenomena in Judea on the day of Jesus' death.

LUCIAN

GENRE: ANCIENT SATIRE
DATES: 115-200 AD
Mentions Jesus' crucifixion and habits of his followers

CELCUS

GENRE: PHILOSOPHY
DATES: c. 175 AD
Says Jesus was born in Judea, lived part of his childhood in Egypt and was a miracle worker. Accuses Jesus of using "magic powers" he learned during his upbringing in Egypt.

GOSPELS

GENRE: BIOGRAPHIES
DATES: 50s - 90s AD
Includes at least 5 independent sources (Mark, Matthew, Luke, John, Q).

PAUL'S LETTERS

GENRE: EPISTLES
DATES: 40s - 60s AD
Paul cites sayings, notes Jesus' lineage, describes the Last Supper, lists witnesses to the resurrection.

IGNATIUS

GENRE: LETTERS
DATES: 33-103 AD

CLEMENT

GENRE: LETTERS
DATES: c. 95 AD

POLYCARP

GENRE: LETTERS
DATES: 69-150 AD



THE HISTORICAL JESUS



BIBLICAL



EARLY CHRISTIANS



ROMANS



GREEKS



EARLY JEWS

JOSEPHUS

GENRE: HISTORIES
DATES: c. 90s AD
Mentions Jesus, James the brother of Jesus, and John the Baptist





Αλεξαμιενος χεβετε
θεον

Alexamenos worships
his God.

“Christians derived their name from a man called Christ, who during the reign of Emperor Tiberius had been executed by sentence of the Roman Procurator Pontius Pilate.

The deadly superstition thus checked for the moment, broke out afresh not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but also in the city of Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world meet and become popular.”

- Tacitus, ~114AD



“The sum total of their guilt or error was no more than the following.

They met regularly before dawn on a determined day and sung a hymn to Christ as to a god.”

- Pliny the Younger, 110AD

Flavius Josephus
(37–100 CE)



“About this time lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher of those who accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. And when Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those who had first come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life, for the prophets of God had foretold these things and countless other marvelous things about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has still to this day not disappeared.”

- Josephus (Ant. 18.63-64)

“Convening the judges of the Sanhedrin, he [Ananus] brought before them **the brother of Jesus, who was called the Christ, whose name was James**, and certain others. He accused them of having transgressed the law and delivered them up to be stoned.”

- Josephus (Ant. 20.200)

Things we can say only going back so far as 75AD:

- He existed historically.
- We know his mothers and brothers names (Mary and James).
- Ambiguous nature of birth
- Pinpoint time and place of his work, Palestine 26-36AD.
- Fame as a teacher/miracle worker.
- Roman and Jewish trials as supposed King/Christ.
- Hailed by some as the Messiah
- He was executed by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate.
- Jews, Greeks and Romans were all worshipping him as divine.

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. ³ With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Luke 1:1-4

Einstein on Jesus - 1929 interview.

Q: To what extent are you influenced by Christianity?

A: "As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene in the gospels."

Q: Have you read Emil Ludwig's book on Jesus?

A: Emil Ludwig's Jesus is too shallow. Jesus is too colossal for the pen of phrase mongers, however artful. No one can dispose of Christianity with a bon mot [witty remark].

Q: You accept the historical existence of Jesus?

A: Unquestionably! No one can read the gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates on every page. **No myth is filled with such life.**

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 10:10

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well.

John 14:6-7a

³ Now **this is eternal life**: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

John 17:1-3

“Human history is the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God that will make him happy .”

- C.S. Lewis



18...the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. ¹⁹ For **out of the heart come evil thoughts**—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a person...

Matthew 15:18-20a

"The concept of substitution may be said to lie at the heart of both sin and salvation. For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man.

Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives that belong to God alone; God accepts penalties that belong to man alone."

John Stott

“That Jesus’ followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know.”

- E. P. Sanders

²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. **Stop doubting and believe.**”

²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; **blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**”

John 20:27-29

”Progressive Christianity is the kingdom without the king.

We want all of god’s blessings—without submitting to his loving rule and reign.

We want progress—without his presence.

We want justice—without his Justification.

We want the horizontal implications of the gospel for society - without the vertical reconciliation of sinners with God.

We want society to conform to our standard of moral purity - without God’s standard of personal holiness.”

Mark Sayers

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.

³¹ But these are written **that you may believe** that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that **by believing you may have life in his name**

John 20:30-31

⁶⁶ From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

⁶⁷ “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve.

⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “**Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.** ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

John 6:66-68



POLYCARP

69–156

“Eighty-six years I have served him [Jesus], and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?”

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, **full of grace and truth.**

John 1:14