

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God.

That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell.

You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

“The Bible was written over a span of 1500 years by forty different human authors in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), on hundreds of subjects. And yet there is one consistent, non-contradictory theme that runs through it all: *God’s redemption of humankind.*”

Hank Hanegraaff in “Bible Reliability”

<http://www.equip.org/articles/bible-reliability-m-a-p-s-to-guide-you-through-bible-reliability/>

Is Jesus Really God’s Son?

Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit. (Proverbs 12:17 ESV)

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Corinthians 15:19 ESV)

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, (1 Peter 3:15 ESV)

1. Baptism – Mark 1:9-11
2. I AM Statements – Mark 14:62, John 4:26, 8:58, 18:6, Exodus 3:14, Isaiah 4:45
3. Immanuel – Matthew 1:23
4. See God – Matthew 5:8
5. Seen Me, Seen Father – John 14:7
6. Image of the Invisible God – John 1, Col 1:15-16
7. Father and I Are One – John 10:30
8. Alpha and Omega, Beginning and the End – Revelation 1:8, 22:20
9. Making Self Equal with God – John 5:18
10. Shares God’s Glory – John 17:5-6
11. He Is the New Temple – John 2:18-19
12. He Is the Law Giver – Matthew 5-7
13. Great High Priest – Hebrews 4:14

Was Jesus More Than Just a Good Man?

1. Virgin Birth – Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:26-35
2. Fulfillment of Prophecies – Ps 22, Isaiah 53:1-12
3. Angels Worship Him – Hebrews 1:6
4. Reception of Worship – John 9:38, 20:28
5. Transfiguration – Matthew 17:1-13
6. Claim of Disciples – John 20:28-29 – Thomas
7. Without Sin – Hebrews 4:15
8. Forgives Sin – John 9:2-6
9. Raising Others from the Dead – John 11:1-46
10. Resurrection and Ascension – Mt 28:1-15, Acts 1:4-11, Luke 23 & 24

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE (outside the Bible) Attests to Jesus' Deity, Existence & Death

Manuscript & Bibliographical Evidence, Eyewitness Accounts, Corroborating & Circumstantial Evidence,
Archaeological Evidence, & Scientific Evidence
Below quotes from: Paul Maier in *Did Jesus Really Exist?* & *Joseph and Josephus* www.4truth.net ,also: *The Case for the Real Jesus* by: Lee Strobel

“there is more evidence that Jesus of Nazareth certainly lived than for most famous figures of the ancient past” Paul L. Maier, The Russell H. Seibert Professor of Ancient History, Western Michigan University

The Manuscript & Bibliographical Evidence: Ancient Works vs. Bible

Author	Work	Date Written	Earliest Manuscripts	Time Gap	Number of Manuscripts
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	800 BC	c. 400 BC	400	1,757
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480–425 BC	10th C	1,350	109
Sophocles	Plays	496–406 BC	3rd C BC	100-200	193
Plato	Tetralogies	400 BC	895	1,300	210
Caesar	<i>Gallic Wars</i>	100-44 BC	9th C	950	251
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59 BC–AD 17	Early 5th C	400	150
Tacitus	<i>Annals</i>	AD 100	1st half:850, 2nd: 1050 (AD 1100)	750–950	2 + 31 15 th C
Pliny, the Elder	<i>Natural History</i>	AD 49–79	5th C fragment: 1; Rem. 14–15th C	400 (750)	200
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460–400 BC	3rd C BC (AD 900)	200 (1,350)	96
Demosthenes	Speeches	300 BC	Some fragments from 1 C. BC. (AD 1100)	1,100+ (1,400)	340
New Testament		AD 50–100	AD 130 (or less)	40	5,795

NOTE: This does not even show the Old Testament manuscript evidence (Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Massoretic, etc) or the thousands of other New Testament manuscripts available in other languages and ancient time periods (24,000+ total NT manuscripts, 5795 Greek mss, 8,000-10,000 Latin mss, 8,000 Ethiopic, Slavic & Armenian).
www.equip.org/articles/the-bibliographical-test-updated/#christian-books-2
www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/bib-docu.html

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“We have more than 14,000 manuscripts and fragments of the Old Testament of three main types: (a) approximately 10,000 from the Cairo Geniza (storeroom) find of 1897, dating back as far as about AD. 800; (b) about 190 from the Dead Sea Scrolls find of 1947-1955, the oldest dating back to 250-200 B.C.; and (c) at least 4,314 assorted other copies. The short time between the original Old Testament manuscripts (completed around 400 B.C.) and the first extensive copies (about 250 B.C.) — coupled with the more than 14,000 copies that have been discovered — ensures the trustworthiness of the Old Testament text. The earliest quoted verses (Num. 6:24-26) date from 800-700 B.C.”
www.equip.org/articles/bible-reliability-m-a-p-s-to-guide-you-through-bible-reliability

"The interval, then, between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established." -

Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Bible and Archaeology*,
former director and principal librarian of the British Museum

CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Early Church Fathers (ccel.org) all of the early church pastors and leaders establish consistency of the message and personal testimony and witness of the apostles and disciples of Christ

Justin Martyr (early Christian convert): “Born of pagan parents around A.D. 100 in Nablus (between Judea and Galilee), Justin tried and abandoned various philosophical schools until he found in Christianity the one true teaching. As a native of the Holy Land, Justin mentions sites associated with Jesus, such as the Bethlehem grotto in which he was born, and even such details as Jesus working as an apprentice carpenter in the shop of his foster father Joseph, where they specialized in producing such agricultural implements as yokes for oxen and plows.” (Paul Maier in <http://www.4truth.net/fourtruthpbjesus.aspx?pageid=8589952895>)

JEWISH HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Sacred Jewish Writings spell Jesus’ name accurately in Amaraic (the spoken language of the day, “Yeshua Hannotzri”—Joshua (Jesus) of Nazareth), writing of his arrest warrant in the *Mishna* (earliest collection of writings in the *Talmud*) “He shall be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and lured Israel to apostasy. Anyone who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf. Anyone who knows where he is, let him declare it to the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.”

The Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 43a) “confirms Jesus’ crucifixion on the eve of Passover and the accusations against Christ of practicing sorcery and encouraging Jewish apostasy.”

Jewish History: Flavius Josephus a famous Jewish historian mentions “Jesus who is called the Christ” twice in his *Jewish Antiquities*. In the second of these, he tells of the death of Jesus’ half-brother James the Just of Jerusalem (20:200). In the longest first-century non-biblical reference to Christ, **Josephus writes**: “At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day.” (18:63)

SECULAR HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Cornelius Tacitus, “one of the most reliable source historians of first-century Rome, wrote in his *Annals* a year-by-year account of events in the Roman Empire under the early Caesars. Among the highlights that he reports for the year A.D. 64 was the great fire of Rome. People blamed the emperor Nero for this conflagration since it happened ‘on his watch,’ but in order to save himself, Nero switched the blame to ‘the Christians,’ which is the first time they appear in secular history. Careful historian that he was, Tacitus then explains who ‘the Christians’ were: ‘Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus’ (15:44). He then goes on to report the horrors that were inflicted on the Christians in what became their first Roman persecution.”

“Tacitus, it should be emphasized, was not some Christian historian who was trying to prove that Jesus Christ really lived, but a pagan who despised Christians as a ‘disease,’ a term he uses later in the passage. Had Jesus never even existed, he would have been the first to expose that pathetic phantom on whom such cultists placed their trust. Were no other references to Jesus available, this passage alone would have been sufficient to establish his historicity. Skeptics realize this, and so have tried every imaginable means to discredit this passage—but to no avail. Manuscript analysis and computer studies have never found any reason to call this sentence into question, nor its context.”

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus also recorded events of the first century in his famous Lives of the Twelve Caesars. He, too, regarded the Christians as a sect "professing a new and mischievous religious belief" (Nero 16) and doubtless cited "Chrestus" (Claudius 25).

Pliny the Younger “was the Roman governor of Bithynia—today, the northwestern corner of Turkey—and about the year 110 he wrote the emperor Trajan (98-117 A.D.), asking what to do about the Christians, a ‘wretched cult’ whom he mentions eight times in his letter. Christ himself is cited three times, the most famous instance referring to Christians ‘...who met on a fixed day to chant verses alternately among themselves in honor of Christ, as if to a god...’ (Letter No. 96). Trajan's response, interestingly enough, suggests that Christians not be hunted out. (Ibid., No. 97). But again, if Christ were only a mythical character, these hostile sources would have been the first to emblazon that fact in derision.”

Below references are from: www.gotquestions.org/did-Jesus-exist.html

Julius Africanus “quotes the historian **Thallus** in a discussion of the darkness which followed the crucifixion of Christ (Extant Writings, 18).”

Lucian of Samosata “was a second-century Greek writer who admits that Jesus was worshiped by Christians, introduced new teachings, and was crucified for them. He said that Jesus' teachings included the brotherhood of believers, the importance of conversion, and the importance of denying other gods. Christians lived according to Jesus' laws, believed themselves to be immortal, and were characterized by contempt for death, voluntary self-devotion, and renunciation of material goods.”

Mara Bar-Serapion “confirms that Jesus was thought to be a wise and virtuous man, was considered by many to be the king of Israel, was put to death by the Jews, and lived on in the teachings of His followers.”

“Then we have all the **Gnostic writings** (The Gospel of Truth, The Apocryphon of John, The Gospel of Thomas, The Treatise on Resurrection, etc.) that all mention Jesus. ... In fact, **we can almost reconstruct the gospel just from early non-Christian sources:** Jesus was called the Christ (Josephus), did “magic,” led Israel into new teachings, and was hanged on Passover for them (Babylonian Talmud) in Judea (Tacitus), but claimed to be God and would return (Eliezar), which his followers believed, worshiping Him as God (Pliny the Younger).”

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

bibleplaces.com – photographs & descriptions of archaeological sites that evidence and corroborate the Bible
blog.bibleplaces.com – ongoing discoveries and archaeological updates

“TOP TEN BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY DISCOVERIES”

from the Biblical Archeology Society by James Brashler, Jane Cahill West, Ze'ev Meshel, John Monson, Hershel Shanks, Suzanne F. Singer, Lawrence E. Stager, James F. Strange
(Available from <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/free-ebooks/>)

1. The Nag Hammadi Library - Codices Shed New Light on Early Christian History
2. The New 'Ain Dara Temple: Closest Solomonic Parallel
3. The Tel Dan (“David”) Stela
4. Mona Lisa of the Galilee
5. “Yahweh and His Asherah” The Kuntillet ‘Ajrud Ostraca
6. St. Peter’s House: Has the House Where Jesus Stayed in Capernaum Been Found?
7. The Siloam Pool: Where Jesus Cured the Blind Man
8. Ashkelon’s Arched Gate: When Canaanites and Philistines Ruled Ashkelon
9. Jerusalem’s Stepped-Stone Structure: Jerusalem in David and Solomon’s Time
10. Jerusalem’s Babylonian Siege Tower: Remains of the Babylonian Siege

More Amazing Archaeological Discoveries

A Common Flood Story, The Code of Hammurabi, The Nuzi Tablets, The Existence of Hittites, The Merneptah Stele, Biblical Cities Attested Archaeologically, Shishak's Invasion of Judah, The Moabite Stone, Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, Burial Plaque of King Uzziah, Hezekiah's Siloam Tunnel Inscription, The Sennacherib Prism, The Cylinder of Cyrus the Great

(Available from: <http://www.equip.org/articles/biblical-archaeology-factual-evidence-to-support-the-historicity-of-the-bible/>)

RESOURCES FOR FUTURE STUDY

What does God say through the Bible?

www.gotquestions.org – almost 400,000 answers to life, spiritual, and Bible questions.

Is Christianity True?

- *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist* – by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, shows how there is more evidence for Christianity than evolution/naturalism
- *The Case for Christ* – by Lee Strobel – simply explains much of the evidence for Christianity
- *Scientific Facts in the Bible: 100 Reasons to Believe the Bible is Supernatural in Origin* by Ray Comfort
- *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell

Creation vs. Evolution

- www.evolutionvsgod.com – A 38-minute video, with over 1.7 million views, of interviews with atheist professors and scholars concerning their beliefs in evolution.
- answersingenesis.org - Provides answers to questions about the Bible regarding issues such as creation, evolution, science, and the age of the earth
- www.reasons.org - explains scientific discoveries and shows how they continue to evidence the truthfulness of Scripture
- *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion & Naturalism* by Alvin Plantinga

Archaeological Evidence

bibleplaces.com – blog.bibleplaces.com - www.biblicalarchaeology.org/free-ebooks

Comparison of Christianity with other World Religions

www.4truth.net – A reasoned approach to Christianity

Additional Resources

- *Life's Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy* by Ronald H. Nash
- *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics* by William Lane Craig
- *Who Made God? And Answers to Over 100 Other Tough Questions of Faith* by Ravi Zacharias and Norman Geisler
- *Reasons for Faith: Making a Case for the Christian Faith* Norman L. Geisler and Chad V. Meister