



## ARE THERE HISTORICAL WRITERS WHO MENTION JESUS?

*Evidence for Jesus Outside the Bible.*

Based on *Written and Read – Season 1, Episode 7*

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### INTRODUCTION

When people begin studying the Bible, one question often comes up:

**Outside of the Bible, is there any historical evidence that Jesus actually lived?**

It's a fair question.

The New Testament gives us the primary record of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. But many wonder whether writers outside the Bible—especially those who were not Christians—also mention Him.

The answer is yes.

Several ancient historians from the first and second centuries refer to Jesus and the early Christian movement.

And what makes their testimony especially important is this:

**Many of them were not trying to defend Christianity. Some were openly opposed to it.**

Yet even their writings confirm key details found in Scripture.

### THE BIBLE AND HISTORY

Before looking at those writers, it is important to understand something about the Bible itself.

The Gospel accounts are not disconnected from history.

Luke begins his Gospel this way:

“Having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first... that thou mightest know the certainty...” (Luke 1:3–4)

The Bible presents real events, in real places, involving real people.

Christianity is not built on myth.

It is rooted in history.

### DID JESUS REALLY EXIST?

Some claim that Jesus never existed.

But that view is not taken seriously by the vast majority of historians.

Even secular scholars agree that Jesus of Nazareth was a real historical figure.

The real question is not whether He lived.

The real question is **who He is**.

The New Testament presents His life, death, and resurrection as historical events:

“Christ died for our sins... and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day...” (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)

Paul even points to eyewitnesses, including over five hundred people at once.

From the very beginning, Christianity was grounded in verifiable events.

### JOSEPHUS: A JEWISH HISTORIAN

One of the most important non-Christian sources is **Josephus**, a first-century Jewish historian.

In his writings, he refers to Jesus and to James, the brother of Jesus.

One of his clearest statements describes James as:

**“The brother of Jesus who is called Christ.”**

That alone confirms that:

- Jesus was a known historical figure
- He had followers
- He was recognized as the Christ by some

Josephus also records that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

While one passage in his writings has likely been edited slightly over time, scholars widely agree that Josephus did refer to Jesus.

And that is significant.

He was not a Christian. He was simply recording history.

## TACITUS: A ROMAN HISTORIAN

Another key figure is **Tacitus**, a Roman historian writing in the early second century.

He described the persecution of Christians under Emperor Nero and made this statement:

Christ, the founder of Christianity, was executed during the reign of Tiberius by Pontius Pilate.

This directly confirms what the Gospels record.

“They took Jesus... and led him away... where they crucified him...” (John 19:16–18)

Tacitus was not sympathetic to Christianity.

In fact, he viewed it negatively.

Yet even in opposition, he confirms the crucifixion of Jesus.

## PLINY THE YOUNGER AND OTHER WRITERS

Another important source is **Pliny the Younger**, a Roman governor.

In a letter to Emperor Trajan, he describes Christians gathering together and singing hymns to Christ “**as to a god.**”

This tells us something important:

**Very early on, Christians were already worshiping Jesus as divine.**

This aligns with what Scripture teaches:

“Declared to be the Son of God with power...” (Romans 1:4)

## Suetonius

Another Roman writer, **Suetonius**, refers to disturbances among the Jews connected to someone called “Chrestus,” which is widely understood to be a reference to Christ.

Together, these sources show that:

- Jesus was known in the ancient world
- His followers were widespread
- Christianity was growing rapidly

## WHAT DO THESE SOURCES PROVE?

When you put all of this together, a clear picture emerges.

Even outside the Bible, history confirms that:

- Jesus lived in the first century

- He was known as a teacher
- He was crucified under Pontius Pilate
- His followers spread rapidly
- Early Christians worshiped Him as Lord

These are not minor details.

They align directly with the New Testament.

## THE ROLE OF HISTORY AND SCRIPTURE

It is important to keep this in balance.

Historical writers confirm the setting and events.

But Scripture gives us the full meaning.

“He hath appointed a day... by that man whom he hath ordained... in that he hath raised him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31)

History can tell us that Jesus was crucified.

Scripture tells us **why it matters**.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

This question is not just academic.

It speaks to the foundation of your faith.

If Jesus were only mentioned in the Bible, some might claim the story was isolated or invented.

But that is not what we find.

The life of Jesus was known, discussed, and even opposed in the ancient world.

And yet, even those who opposed Christianity still confirmed that He existed.

That means:

*Your faith is not built on legend. It is rooted in real history.*

## CONCLUSION

So are there historical writers outside the Bible who mention Jesus?

Yes.

And their testimony confirms key facts about His life, His death, and the early Christian movement.

The Bible remains the primary and complete record.

But these outside sources provide additional confirmation that the story of Jesus is grounded in history.

When you open your Bible, you are not stepping into myth.

You are stepping into reality.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Next, we'll continue exploring the reliability of the Bible and the evidence that supports our confidence in it.