

Jillian Michaels Shocked Jesus Was Real: Historian Sets the Record Straight

Fitness influencer Jillian Michaels sparked widespread reaction after admitting on her podcast that she was stunned to learn that Jesus Christ was not only a real historical figure but also whose life is documented outside of Scripture.

The moment occurred during an episode featuring historian and Hoover Institution senior fellow Victor Davis Hanson. As Hanson explained Rome's political struggles with Jesus, Michaels interrupted with her candid confession.

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"I thought we didn't even know this guy... I thought we weren't even really sure whether or not Jesus existed, and the apostles wrote this stuff hundreds of years ago," she said.

Her surprise reflects a growing trend in mainstream culture: many assume Jesus is a myth or a figure mostly invented by religious tradition. Hanson corrected that assumption immediately.

"We have Roman documents completely separate from religion," Hanson said, describing accounts that depict Jesus as "a magnetic... wonderful person to the people who knew Him" and someone the Romans viewed as leading a movement they considered destabilizing.

He also explained the political calculation behind Jesus' crucifixion. Pontius Pilate, he said, was focused on keeping Judea quiet. "They did not like Jesus and what He represented was anti-Roman," Hanson explained, adding that Rome used the

religious establishment's hostility as cover. "We can get rid of Him and then say the Pharisees basically did it."

Hanson also contrasted Jesus' teachings with Rome's worldview. "He's got a new religion and unfortunately it's turned the other cheek, brotherhood of man, blessed are the meek, blessed are the poor. That's not Roman," he said. "We have a Roman military ethos that the strong inherit the earth."

Michaels continued to express astonishment as she processed the information. "This is so wild... I genuinely thought, okay, the Jews had the Old Testament, the Torah, and then maybe there was this guy, Jesus," she said. "The apostles wrote stuff, but the first guy who wrote something was like 90 or so years later."

For Christians, her comments open a door—not for mockery, but for ministry. Michaels represents millions who have never heard what history, archaeology and scholarship affirm: Jesus of Nazareth lived, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and His followers wrote about Him within decades, not centuries, of His life.

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But more importantly, the historical record is only the beginning. Jesus is not simply real in the academic sense—He is exactly who He claimed to be: the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the One who conquered death and still transforms lives today. The Jesus documented by Rome is the same Jesus who heals, delivers, restores and calls every person to repentance and hope.

Michaels, who described herself in 2024 as “not a religious person” and “agnostic,” expressed genuine openness and curiosity in the exchange, as reported by The Daily Wire. That openness is an opportunity for believers.

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Now is a moment to pray—for her and for anyone who carries the same assumptions she once did. Pray that the veil of confusion lifts. Pray that the historical Jesus becomes the personal Savior. Pray that curiosity becomes conviction, and that conviction becomes salvation.

Because the question is no longer ‘Was Jesus real?’

The question is: What will each person do with that reality?

James Lasher, a seasoned writer and editor at Charisma Media, combines faith and storytelling with a background in journalism from Otterbein University and ministry experience in Guatemala and the LA Dream Center. A Marine Corps and Air Force veteran, he is the author of *The Revelation of Jesus: A Common Man's Commentary* and a contributor to Charisma magazine.