

Ancient Roman Records Confirm What Christians Have Proclaimed for 2,000 Years

For nearly 2,000 years, Christians have declared a simple truth: Jesus Christ is not a myth, legend or literary invention. He is the Son of God, the Word made flesh.

Now, as secular scholars continue examining ancient sources outside the Bible, renewed attention is being given to historical records that affirm the existence of Jesus from writers who were not Christians and had no interest in advancing the Gospel.

According to a recent review published by the Biblical Archaeology Society, the writings of the Roman historian Tacitus and the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus remain among the strongest non-Christian references to Jesus in the ancient world.

The report noted that “most historians already accept that Jesus was a real historical figure, with debate focusing less on whether he existed and more on the details of his life and teachings.”

That conclusion is not surprising. The Gospel accounts have always stood as eyewitness testimony to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What continues to draw attention is the fact that secular historians repeatedly arrive at the same foundational conclusion: Jesus was a real person who lived in first-century Judea and whose impact changed the world.



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A Roman Historian's Testimony

One of the most significant references comes from Tacitus, one of Rome's most respected historians.

Writing around A.D. 116 in his work *Annals*, Tacitus described Emperor Nero's persecution of Christians after the Great Fire of Rome. In doing so, he referred to "Christus," stating that He was executed during the reign of Emperor Tiberius by Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea.

The report emphasized that Tacitus was not sympathetic to Christianity.

"Far from promoting their beliefs, he described Christianity as a dangerous superstition and expressed contempt for its followers."

That hostility is precisely why historians regard the reference as important. Tacitus had no motive to support Christian claims. Yet his account confirms that Jesus was executed under Roman authority and that His followers continued spreading His teachings after His death.

Josephus Provides Another Independent Witness

A second major source comes from Josephus, a Jewish historian born only a few years after Jesus' crucifixion.

In *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus referred to James as "the brother of Jesus-who-is-called-Messiah."

A *Daily Mail* article noted that the reference appears naturally within a discussion about James.

"Jesus is not the focus of the passage, but is mentioned only to identify another person."

Historians view that detail as significant because Josephus wrote as though his readers already knew who Jesus was.

Josephus also included a longer passage describing Jesus as a wise teacher who attracted followers. While scholars continue debating portions of that section, the report stated that “the majority still conclude that the passage was based on an original reference to Jesus written by Josephus himself.”

The Historical Record Points to Jesus

Taken together, the writings of Tacitus and Josephus affirm several key facts. Jesus lived in Judea. He gathered followers. He was executed under Pontius Pilate. His followers continued proclaiming His message after His death. The Christian movement spread rapidly throughout the Roman Empire.

The report also highlighted a remarkable reality about the ancient world.

According to the historical record, opponents of Christianity accused Jesus of “false teaching, deception and even sorcery.”

Yet one charge is notably absent.

“Virtually none argued that he was entirely fictional.”

That reality remains true today. Serious historical scholarship no longer centers on whether Jesus existed. The evidence is overwhelming.

These records do not create faith. Our faith rests in Jesus Christ, the truth of Scripture and the power of His resurrection.

These ancient sources demonstrate that the historical record continues to align with what believers have proclaimed from the beginning. Long before modern historians debated the

evidence, the church was declaring the truth that still transforms lives today:

Jesus Christ entered human history, died for our sins, rose again and reigns as Lord.

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