

QUESTIONS ABOUT JESUS

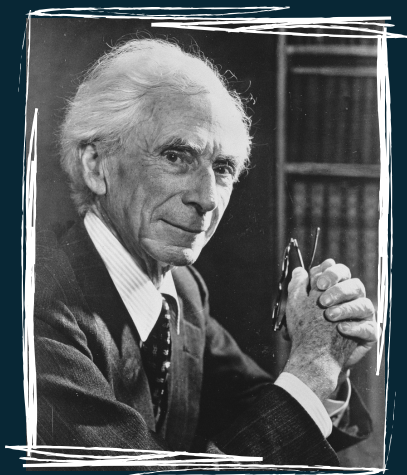
DID JESUS ACTUALLY EXIST?



QUESTION

DID JESUS ACTUALLY EXIST?

Many people today and throughout history have denied that Jesus of Nazareth was a historical figure who actually existed. For example, Bertrand Russell, one of the most famous atheists of the 20th century, once said, *"Historically, it is quite doubtful whether Christ existed at all, and if he did we do not know anything about him, so I am not concerned with the historical question, which is a very difficult one."*

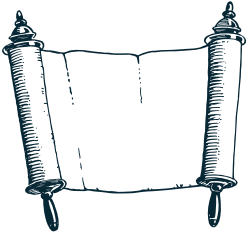


Bertrand Russell
Philosopher
1872 - 1970

Is this a fair and reasonable position? Is it truly "quite doubtful" whether Jesus actually existed? To answer these questions we need to have a look at the historical record and investigate the evidence for the existence of Jesus.



THE HISTORICAL WRITINGS ABOUT JESUS - OR THAT REFERENCE HIM - CAN BE GROUPED INTO 3 MAIN CATEGORIES.



1. Opposition sources
2. Neutral sources
3. Affiliated sources



1 OPPOSITION SOURCES

**Historical writings authored by opponents or enemies of Jesus.*

Some opposition sources that record the existence of Jesus include: Roman historian, *Tacitus* in *Annals*; Greek physician, *Galen* in various writings; *Rabbinic writers* in the *Talmud*; and Greek philosopher, *Celsus* in *True Doctrine*.



TACITUS 56AD - 120AD

ROMAN HISTORIAN

Tacitus records that Jesus existed and had followers in Rome.



GALEN 129AD - 210AD

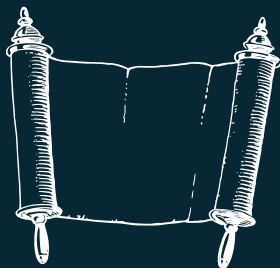
GREEK PHYSICIAN

Galen recorded that Jesus existed, was a teacher like Moses, and taught in parables.

RABBINIC WRITERS

JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS

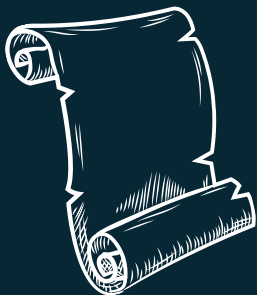
The Talmud records the existence of Jesus, the fact he was from Nazareth, and that he was executed publicly.



CELSUS 2ND CENTURY AD

GREEK PHILOSOPHER

In *True Doctrine* Celsus records the existence of Jesus, claiming that he was the illegitimate child of adultery and was taught by Egyptian magicians.

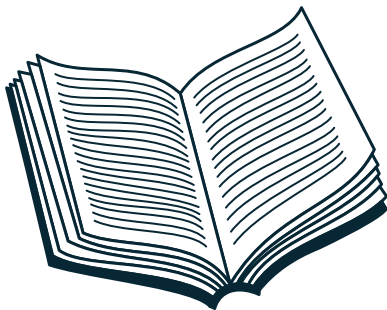


2

NEUTRAL SOURCES

**Historical writings that are neither for nor against Jesus but record his existence for the purpose of documenting historical figures and events*

Some examples include: Jewish historian, *Josephus* in *Antiquities of the Jews*; Greek writer, *Phlegon* in *Chronicles*; Roman historian, *Suetonius* in *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*; and a letter written by the stoic philosopher *Mara Bar Serapion*.



JOSEPHUS

 37AD - 100AD

JEWISH HISTORIAN

Josephus records that Jesus existed, had a brother named James, was a teacher, did many wonderful works, was executed under pilate, and had many followers.

PHLEGON 2ND CENTURY AD

GREEK WRITER

Phlegon records that Jesus existed, had disciples, and predicted the future.



SUETONIUS 69AD - 122AD

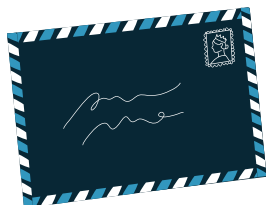
ROMAN HISTORIAN

Suetonius records that Jesus existed, was called Christ, and had followers in Rome.

MARA BAR SERAPION

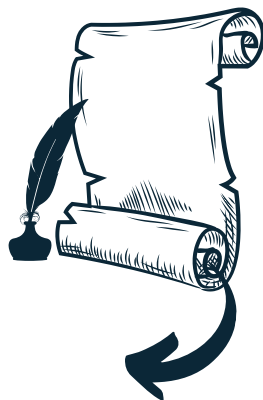
STOIC PHILOSOPHER

In a letter to his son, Mara Bar Serapion records the existence of Jesus, that he was called a wise king, and was executed unjustly.



JOSEPHUS WRITES OF JESUS...

"He was the Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those who loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again on the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."



- Antiquities of the Jews, XVIII, III

3

AFFILIATED SOURCES

**Historical writings authored by the friends and other followers of Jesus.*

The central affiliated sources are the 27 books of the New Testament. Most importantly for our investigation are the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.



MATTHEW

MARK

LUKE

JOHN

**THESE WRITINGS ARE HISTORICAL RECORDS
CONTAINING EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY OF THE LIFE,
DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF JESUS.**



We've looked at the historical record and briefly examined some of the evidence for the existence of Jesus. While these various historical writings don't unanimously agree on everything in regards to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, there is at least one fact they all have in common - Jesus existed!.

HISTORICAL FACT



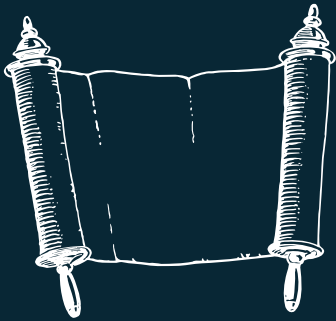
JESUS EXISTED.





Josh McDowell
Christian apologist

Christian apologist, Josh McDowell notes that, "We know more about the life of Jesus than just about any other figure from the ancient world. His birth, life, and death are revealed in much more detail than most ancient figures whose existence is taken for granted by historians."



OPPOSITION SOURCES
NEUTRAL SOURCES
AFFILIATED SOURCES



BASED ON THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE IT IS CLEAR THAT JESUS EXISTED. WE MUST NOW ASK, WHO IS THIS HISTORICAL FIGURE NAMED JESUS AND WHAT IMPACT DOES HIS LIFE HAVE ON OURS TODAY?

QUESTIONS:



WHAT ARE OPPOSITION SOURCES?

LIST 3 EXAMPLES OF OPPOSITION SOURCES?

1.

2.

3.

WHAT ARE NEUTRAL SOURCES?

LIST 3 EXAMPLES OF NEUTRAL SOURCES?

1.

2.

3.

WHAT ARE AFFILIATED SOURCES?

LIST 5 EXAMPLES OF AFFILIATED SOURCES?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



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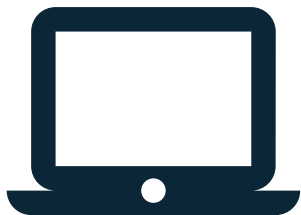




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