

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST PART 1

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Jesus Christ is the central figure in all human history. No other person has influenced and transformed civilization the way He did. Virtually all aspects of our lives have been touched by His life and the movement that He began through the Church.

PART 1A – HUMAN ORIGINS

A. JESUS – THE PERSON OF HISTORY

2 PETER 1: (NLT)

16 For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes.

“An inordinate number of websites and blogs make the wholly unjustified claim that Jesus never existed. Biblical scholars and historians who have investigated this issue in detail are virtually unanimous today in rejecting this view, regardless of their theological or ideological perspectives.” – Dr. Craig Blomberg, New Testament scholar

1. Tacitus

*“Tacitus is generally considered the greatest Roman historian...”
– Robert Van Voorst, Professor of New Testament Studies*

In AD 64, Nero blamed the Christians for a fire that many believe he was responsible for.

“Therefore, to squelch the rumor, Nero created scapegoats and subjected to the most refined tortures those whom the common people called “Christians,” hated for their abominable crimes. Their name comes from Christ, who, during the reign of Tiberius, had been executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate. Suppressed for the moment, the deadly superstition broke out again, not only in Judea, the land which originated this evil, but also in the city of Rome, where all sorts of horrendous and shameful practices from every part of the world converge and are fervently cultivated.” – Tacitus

2. Josephus

Flavius Josephus was a Jewish politician, soldier, and historian who lived around AD 37–100. He is the single most important Jewish historian of the ancient world. We owe much of what we know today about the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes to him.

In his work, Antiquities of the Jews, he made a very important reference on Jesus, as he indirectly mentions him when he wrote about the martyrdom of James...

“Ananus... thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority]. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others . . . he delivered them to be stoned.” – Josephus, Antiquity of the Jews



Professor Casey Elledge of Gustavus Adolphus College wraps up an analysis that includes Tacitus, who was Roman, and Josephus, who was Jewish, with a strong affirmation of the truth of the fact that Jesus was a real person:

“In contrast to those who have denied the historical existence of Jesus altogether, judging him merely to have been a mythological construct of early Christian thought, the testimonies of the ancient historians reveal how even those outside the early church regarded Jesus to have been a historical person. It remains difficult, therefore, if not impossible, to deny the historical existence of Jesus when the earliest Christian, Jewish, and pagan evidence mention him.”

– Professor Casey Elledge of Gustavus Adolphus College