

# Jesus: Fully Man

A person once said,

“It’s not even obvious that Jesus was a historical figure. If he was, the legends around him—a Son of God who was born of a virgin, worked miracles, and rose from the dead—were common stories in the ancient Near East. The myths about Jesus are not even original.”<sup>1</sup>

Where is this coming from?

“According to a landmark 2006 study by professors from Harvard and George Mason universities, the percentage of atheists and agnostics teaching at U.S. colleges is three times greater than in the population as a whole. More than half of college professors believe the Bible is “an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts,” compared to less than one-fifth of the general population.”<sup>2</sup>

***Although people today have made many claims or beliefs about Jesus, there is only one true Jesus. Today we will take a look at Jesus being fully man; a person that existed in history.***

## 1) Historical Evidence

### a) Hostile Non-Biblical Pagan Accounts

There are a number of ancient classical accounts of Jesus from pagan, non-Christian sources. These accounts are generally hostile to Christianity; some ancient authors denied the miraculous nature of Jesus and the events surrounding His life. One of these accounts is Cornelius Tacitus.

*Tacitus (56-120AD)*

*Bio:* Cornelius Tacitus was known for his analysis and examination of historical documents and is among the most trusted of ancient historians. He was a senator under Emperor Vespasian and was also proconsul of Asia. In his “Annals” of 116AD, he describes Emperor Nero’s response to the great fire in Rome and Nero’s claim that the Christians were to blame:

“Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.” (Annals of 116 AD)

In this account, Tacitus confirms several historical elements of the Biblical narrative: Jesus lived in Judea, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and had followers who were persecuted for their faith in Christ.

### b) Hostile Non-Biblical Jewish Accounts

In addition to classical pagan sources chronicling the life of Jesus and His followers, there are also a number of ancient hostile Jewish sources describing Jesus. These are written by Jewish theologians, historians and leaders who were definitely not sympathetic to the Christian cause. Their writings are often very harsh, critical and even demeaning to Jesus. But there is still much these writings confirm. One example of these accounts is Josephus.

<sup>1</sup> Lee Strobel, *The Case For The Real Jesus*, pg 14.

<sup>2</sup> (See Neil Gross and Solon Simmons, “How Religious Are America’s College and University Professors?” available at: [www.wjh.harvard.edu/soc/faculty/gross/religions.pdf](http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/soc/faculty/gross/religions.pdf) (Oct. 22, 2006).)

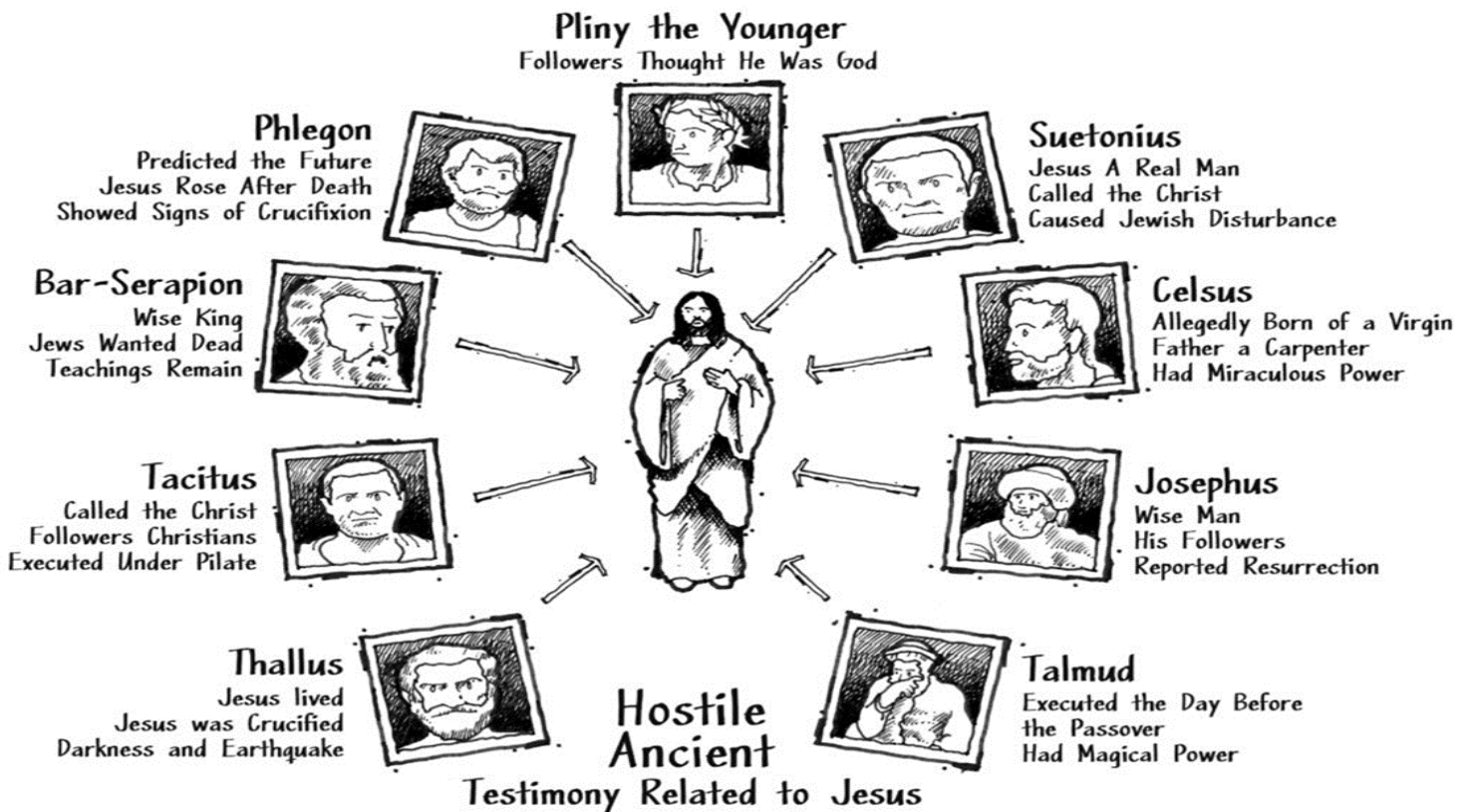
Josephus (37-101AD)

In more detail than any other non-biblical historian, Josephus writes about Jesus in his “the Antiquities of the Jews” in 93AD.

Bio: Josephus was born just four years after the crucifixion. He was a consultant for Jewish rabbis at an early age, became a Galilean military commander by the age of sixteen, and he was an eyewitness to much of what he recorded in the first century A.D. Under the rule of Roman emperor Vespasian, Josephus was allowed to write a history of the Jews. This history includes three passages about Christians, one in which he describes the death of John the Baptist, one in which he mentions the execution of James (and describes him as the brother of Jesus the Christ), and a final passage which describes Jesus as a wise man and the messiah. There is much legitimate controversy about the writing of Josephus, because the first discoveries of his writings are late enough to have been re-written by Christians who were accused of making additions to the text. So to be fair, we’ll examine a scholarly reconstruction stripped of Christian embellishment:

“Now around this time lived Jesus, a wise man. For he was a worker of amazing deeds and was a teacher of people who gladly accept the truth. He won over both many Jews and many Greeks. Pilate, when he heard him accused by the leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, (but) those who had first loved him did not cease (doing so). To this day the tribe of Christians named after him has not disappeared”<sup>3</sup>

Now there are many other ancient versions of Josephus’ writing which are even more explicit about the nature of Jesus’ miracles, life and his status as the Christ, but let’s take this conservative version and see what we can learn. From this text, we can conclude: Jesus lived in Palestine, was a wise man and a teacher, worked amazing deeds, was accused by the Jews, crucified under Pilate and had followers called Christians.



Picture by [www.ColdCaseChristianity.com](http://www.ColdCaseChristianity.com)

<sup>3</sup> This neutral reconstruction follows closely the one proposed by John Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus: The Roots of the Problem and the Person*.

## 2) Scriptural Evidence

*The Scripture is evidence because the accounts of Jesus in the Bible can be trusted.*

“The gospel authors were present during the life of Jesus and wrote their accounts early enough to be cross-checked by those who knew Jesus. Their accounts can be sufficiently corroborated and have been accurately delivered to us through the centuries. The authors lacked motive to lie to us about their observations and died rather than recant their testimony. Is the Bible true? The case for the reliability of the Gospels is strong and substantive. We have good reason to trust what the eyewitnesses told us about Jesus of Nazareth.”<sup>4</sup>

### A) Jesus as Fully Man

#### i) The virgin birth of Jesus (Luke 1:34-35; 3:23....)

We can view Jesus as fully human because his ordinary human birth from a human mother, and as fully God because of his conception in Mary’s womb happened by the powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

#### ii) *Jesus had a human body just like ours*

Born as a baby (Luke 2:7), grew as a child into adulthood (Luke 2:40), and as he grew up he increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52).

Jesus became tired (John 4:6), thirsty (John 19:28), hungry (Matthew 4:2), at times physically weak when he was fasting for forty days (Matt. 4:11), and he died on the cross (emphasizing his limitations) (Luke 23:46). His human body ceased to have life, ceasing to function, just as ours does when we die.

#### iii) *Jesus had a human mind*

Increased in wisdom (Luke 2:52)- He went through a learning process just as all children do—he learned how to eat, talk, read and write, and how to be obedient to his parents (Heb. 5:8).

This ordinary learning process was part of the genuine humanity of Christ.

#### iv) *Jesus took on the human mind limitations.*

Ex: Mark 13:32- Jesus does not know the day or the hour when he will return... only Father God knows.

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<sup>4</sup> Is the Bible True? The Cumulative Case for the Reliability of the Gospels, J. Warner February 15, 2019, <https://coldcasechristianity.com/writings/is-the-bible-true-the-cumulative-case-for-the-reliability-of-the-gospels-free-bible-insert/>

v) *Jesus has a soul and emotions*

Before His crucifixion, Jesus said, “Now is my soul troubled” (John 12:27). The Greek word that they translate as “troubled” is usually used when people are anxious or suddenly very surprised by danger. He also said “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death” (Matt. 26:38)

Jesus had a full range of emotions- he marveled (Matt. 8:10), he wept (John 11:35), he prayed with a heart full of emotions. (Heb. 5:7)

### **3. Why was Jesus’ full humanity necessary?**

He needed to be fully man in order to be our Messiah, and effectively provide salvation for all.

- a) So he could be our substitute sacrifice- He would not be able to die in our place and pay for our penalty of sin unless he was fully man. (Heb. 2:16-17)
- b) So he can truly be mediator between God and men. (1 Tim. 2:5) Our high priest. (Heb. 2:18; 4:15-16)
- c) Jesus’ humanity also provides an example and pattern for our lives. (1 John 2:6; 1 Peter 2:21)
- d) Jesus had to be fully man in order to be our representative and obey in our place. (1 Cor. 15:45-47; Rom. 5:18-19)

The apostle John understood that to deny Jesus’ true humanity was to deny something at the very heart of Christianity.

*This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.*

1 John 4:2-3

