

# **Five Historical Facts About Jesus That Will Never Change... Whether You Believe Them or Not!**

## **1. Jesus existed—He was a real person who actually lived in history. No one doubts that.**

a. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15<sup>th</sup> edition, devotes 20,000 words to the person of Jesus Christ and never once hints that He didn't exist.

b. Non-Christian sources mention Jesus:

- Tacitus, a Roman historian (55-120 A.D.): "Christus (Christ),... suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate." (*Annals* 15:44)
- Josephus (38-97 A.D.) wrote, "Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die.... His disciples... reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive." (James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1988), p. 95)

**Therefore, you can't discount Jesus!**

## **2. We have reliable eyewitness testimony to Jesus' life in the New Testament documents.**

a. There are 8 writers who claimed to be either eyewitnesses or to have had contact with eyewitnesses of Jesus' life: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James and the writer of Hebrews.

b. These men claim to have written carefully researched accounts of their testimony:

- Luke 1:1-4— Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. There-

fore, since **I myself have carefully investigated everything** from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

- 2 Peter 1:16—For **we were not making up clever stories** when we told you about the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and his coming again. We have seen his majestic splendor with our own eyes.

c. These accounts were written in the 1<sup>st</sup> century—well within the lifetime of eyewitnesses:

- “In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the 40’s and the 80’s of the first century A.D. (very probably sometime between about A.D. 50 and 75.)” (Dr. William F. Albright, *Christianity Today*, January 18, 1963)

If Jesus died in 30 A.D., then some of these books were in circulation 7 years later, all within 45 years.

d. Four things missing from the book of Acts prove it was written prior to 70 A.D.:

- The destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) is not mentioned.
- The death of Paul (c. 64 A.D.) is not mentioned.
- The persecutions by Nero (64 A.D., 68 A.D.) are not mentioned
- The deaths of other key leaders (i.e., Peter (65 A.D.), James (62 A.D.)) are not mentioned

Why didn’t Luke (the author) say anything about these major events and leaders? Because these events happened **after** he wrote his book. That’s why many scholars date Acts around 64 A.D. If Acts was Luke’s second book (Acts 1:1), then Luke was written before that. Matthew came before Luke, and almost all believe Mark came before either Luke or Matthew.

**Therefore, you can’t dismiss Jesus!**

### **3. There can be no doubt that Jesus claimed to be God.**

a. Mark 14:61-62—But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

b. Jesus said:

- To know Him was to know God (Jn 8:19)
- To see Him was to see God (Jn 14:9)
- To believe in Him was to believe in God (Jn 14:1)
- To receive Him was to receive God (Mt 10:40)
- To hate Him was to hate God (Jn 15:23)
- To honor Him was to honor God (Jn 5:23)

**Therefore, you can't disregard Jesus!**

#### **4. Jesus said He was the ONLY way to God:**

- John 14:6—I am the way, the truth and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me.
- John 10:9—I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.
- Acts 4:12—Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.
- 1 Tim 2:5—For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus.
- John 3:14-18—And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so I, the Son of Man, must be lifted up on a pole, **so that everyone who believes in me will have eternal life.** For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it. There is no judgment awaiting those who trust him. But those who do not trust him have already been judged for not believing in the only Son of God.

There are not 5 or 6 different ways to God. In fact, there are not even 2 different ways. Jesus says He is it! You won't get there without Him.

**Therefore, you can't bypass Jesus!**

#### **5. Jesus proved WHAT and WHO He was by rising from the dead. No other religious leader pulled that off.**

a. There are 4 facts that have forced even skeptics to accept that Jesus rose from the dead:

- Jesus was buried in a tomb—both His friends and His enemies knew

where it was (Matt. 27:62-66)

- The tomb was found empty early Sunday morning. (Want proof? Look at Matthew 28:11-15 where Jesus' enemies cook up a story to explain why it was empty!)
- Jesus' disciples and a lot of other people saw Him ALIVE after they had seen him killed and buried (1 Cor. 15:3-9).
- Jesus' disciples believed that He had risen. So much so that they were willing to die for their belief. (Which is amazing when you consider that Peter had already proved he could crack under very little pressure—see Matthew 26:69-75)

Paul said, in 55 A.D.:

- 1 Corinthians 15:3-4—I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me—that **Christ died for our sins**, just as the Scriptures said. **He was buried**, and **he was raised from the dead on the third day**, as the Scriptures said.
- Romans 1:4—And Jesus Christ our Lord was shown to be the Son of God when **God powerfully raised him from the dead** by means of the Holy Spirit.
- Ephesians 1:19-20—I pray that you will begin to understand the incredible greatness of his power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that **raised Christ from the dead** and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.
- 1 Peter 1:3—...**Now we live with a wonderful expectation because Jesus Christ rose again from the dead.**
- 1 Peter 3:18—Christ also suffered when he died for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners that he might bring us safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.

**Jesus is alive. All other religious leaders are dead. Which would you rather trust—a living Lord or a dead guru?**

- Say the welcoming word to God—"Jesus is my Master"—embracing, body and soul, God's work of doing in us what he did in raising Jesus from the dead. That's it. You're not "doing" anything; you're simply calling out to God, trusting him to do it for you. That's salvation. (Romans 10:9, *The Message*)

**Therefore, you can believe—with confidence—that Jesus is the only TRUTH that really matters!**

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