

What is the Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus?

**Question: There is no evidence that Jesus ever even lived.
How do you know Jesus lived?**

Here is a list of sources that provide evidence for Jesus' existence, including both Christian and non-Christian sources, written within approximately 100 years after his resurrection:

Christian Sources

1. Early Christian creeds, hymns, sayings and preaching embedded in the gospels, Acts, and Paul that were circulating before the gospels were written

1 Corinthians 15:3–7; Philippians 2:6–11; Colossians 1:15–20; 1 Timothy 3:16; Ephesians 5:14; 2 Timothy 2:11–13; Romans 1:3–4; Romans 10:9 (1 Corinthians 12:3); 1 Corinthians 8:6; Romans 4:25; Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-15, Luke 11)

Preaching - Acts 2:22–36; Acts 10:36–43; Acts 13:26–41; Acts 20:35;

2. Paul's Epistles

3. Gospel of Mark

4. Gospel of Matthew

5. Gospel of Luke

6. Gospel of John

7. Acts of the Apostles

8. Epistle to the Hebrews

9. Epistle of James

10. First Epistle of Peter

11. First Epistle of John

12. Epistle of Jude

13. Book of Revelation

14. First Epistle of Clement (95-96 AD)

15. Epistle of Barnabas (80-120 AD)
16. Didache (50-120 AD)
17. Seven Epistles of Ignatius (107-110 AD)
18. Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians (110-140 AD)

Non-Christian Sources

19. Flavius Josephus (93-94 AD) - Jewish historian
20. Tacitus (116 AD) - Roman historian
21. Pliny the Younger (112 AD) - Roman governor
22. Suetonius (121 AD) - Roman historian
23. Thallus (52 AD) - Roman historian (fragmentary)
24. Mara Bar-Serapion (70+ AD) - Syrian philosopher
25. Lucian of Samosata (165 AD) - Greek satirist
26. Celsus (175 AD) - Greek philosopher (Surviving in Origen's writings)
27. Babylonian Talmud (70-200 AD) - Jewish rabbinical text

Additional Early Christian Writers

28. Quadratus of Athens (125 AD)
29. Aristides of Athens (126-137 AD)
30. Justin Martyr (150-160 AD)
31. Papias (95-120 AD)

Potential Additional Sources

32. Phlegon of Tralles (140 AD) - Greek historian (fragmentary)

This list includes over 30 sources that mention Jesus within approximately 100 years of his death, providing a diverse range of evidence from both Christian and non-Christian perspectives. Notice that some items contain multiple sources in them, like Paul's writings, or all the New Testament books. The Christian sources offer detailed accounts of Jesus' life and teachings, while the non-Christian sources corroborate his existence and some key events of his life.

The consensus of historians is that Jesus was a real person.

Objection: Oh, just 30 or 40 sources. Is that all? If Jesus existed, then you'd expect a whole lot more sources than that. Why isn't Jesus mentioned by more sources?

Tiberius Caesar was considered the most well-known person during the time Jesus was on earth. There are maybe 15 total known sources that mentioned Tiberius Caesar within 150 years of his death (AD 37).

There are more known sources that mention Jesus within 100 years of the resurrection, than the sources that mention Tiberius Caesar within 150 years. And the number of non-Christian sources that mention Jesus is close to the number that mention Tiberius Caesar. So, from a historical perspective of antiquity, the number of sources mentioning Jesus, a Jewish person who was not accepted by the Jewish or Roman powers, is a lot.

Question: The Gospels have lots of errors in them and we don't even know for sure who wrote them. Why should I believe anything they have to say?

First, if the Bible was not true it would not disprove the resurrection or Christianity. The apostles and thousands of other early believers became Christians before the gospels were even written. **The gospels don't make Christianity true; the resurrection makes Christianity true. The resurrection is a historical event. If it is true, then Christianity is true.**

Note: But know that the gospels are indeed considered reliable. Paul appears to quote Luke 10:7 as Scripture in 1 Timothy 5:18. Paul quotes "The laborer deserves his wages," which is found in **Luke 10:7**. This is significant because Paul refers to this quote as "Scripture," placing it on par with Old Testament writings. Paul may also have referenced Matthew and Mark.

Paul said this about how important the resurrection is to Christianity:

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 **And if**

Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for **we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead.** But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 **And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.** 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. 20 **But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead,** the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. – 1 Corinthians 15:13-20 (NIV)

If the resurrection is fake, then Christianity is fake. **But, if that historical event is true, then Christianity is true.**

Second, **while there are differences in the gospels, a difference is not the same thing as a contradiction.** In much the same way as if a police officer interviewed a group of witnesses to a robbery that happened in front of them, there would be differences in what the various witnesses said. Some would omit some details; some would include details that others would not. Having interviewed many witnesses before, the officer understands that this is normal. In fact, some variation is expected. If all the witnesses said the exact same thing in the exact same way, the officer would suspect that the witnesses had talked with one another and had agreed upon a certain story of events, rather than the truth. After meeting with the witnesses, even though there are differences, he harmonizes the events into a report that will reflect what happened.

Finally, the gospels, along with other early Christian and non-Christian sources, consistently detail the key events of Jesus' death and resurrection, so much so, that the many historians, even atheistic ones, agree on these points (often referred to as the minimal facts of the Resurrection):

- 1) Jesus died by crucifixion on orders from Pontus Pilate.
- 2) Jesus was buried in a tomb.
- 3) Jesus' tomb was found empty shortly after his burial. (Habermas observes that empty-tomb acceptance is around 75% of scholars – below the other items)
- 4) The disciples sincerely believed that a resurrected Jesus appeared to them in the flesh.
- 5) The experience had a profound impact on the disciples.

- 6) James, the brother of Jesus, who was a skeptic before, became a follower of Jesus.
- 7) Paul, formerly Saul, had been a persecutor of Christians, experienced a sudden change and became a follower of Jesus, preaching that Jesus had risen from the dead.

These minimal facts have a consensus among historians, Christian and non-Christian alike.

Third, every surviving early Christian writer who discusses the authorship of the four Gospels attributes them to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Papias (c. 60-130 AD) attributed the Gospel of Matthew to Matthew. Justin Martyr (c. 100-165 AD) referred to the "memoirs of the apostles" as gospels, implying the four gospels have an apostolic authorship connection. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215 AD), Irenaeus (c. 130-200 AD), Tertullian (c. 155-240 AD), and Origen (c. 185-254 AD) affirmed the traditional authorship of the gospels.

Question: So, what's the evidence for the resurrection?

Objection: I heard that the gospels were all written like 500 years or so after Jesus lived. There is no early evidence Jesus rose from the dead.

That is not true. There is incredibly early evidence for the resurrection. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, there is an early Christian creed. **Most scholars date this creed to within a few years of the crucifixion, often between AD 30–35.** James D.G. Dunn states that "this tradition, we can be entirely confident, was formulated as tradition within months of Jesus' death" (*Jesus Remembered*, Eerdmans, 2003, pp. 854–55). Other scholars agree on a similarly early window: Gerd Lüdemann (an atheist NT scholar) dates the tradition to within two to three years of the crucifixion; Michael Goulder (also non-Christian) to "a couple of years after the crucifixion"; and the *Oxford Companion to the Bible* places it no later than Paul's Jerusalem visit in AD 35 (Gal 1:18–19). It says:

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still

living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, - **1 Corinthians 15:3-7 (NIV)**

The early date suggests it is too early for legend to have entered the account. Several key details are mentioned:

- 1) Christ (Jesus) died, was buried, and was raised on the 3rd day.
- 2) Peter (Cephas) saw the resurrected Jesus.
- 3) The apostles (the twelve) saw the resurrected Jesus.
- 4) 500 other disciples saw Jesus.
- 5) James was a witness of the resurrection.

Such an early date of confirmation for a historical event is rare in antiquity. For comparison:

- Plutarch's "Life of Caesar": **Written about 150 years after Caesar's death.**
- Suetonius' "The Twelve Caesars": **Composed about 160 years after Caesar's assassination.**
- Appian's "Civil Wars": **Written approximately 195–210 years after the events it describes.**
- Cassius Dio's "Roman History": **Compiled about 250 years after Caesar's time.**

All these sources are considered generally reliable - but notice how much closer to the event the evidence for Jesus' resurrection is.

[Objection: There is no actual eyewitness testimony, it is all hearsay.](#)

Traditional Eyewitness Testimony

1. Matthew

"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted." (Matthew 28:16-17 NIV)

2. John

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this,

he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. (John 20:19-20)

3. Peter

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1:3)

4. James

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings." (James 1:1)

"My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory." (James 2:1)

5. Jude

"Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:1)

keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. (Jude 1:21)

Indirect witnesses

Gospel of Mark – Early Church father Papias (wrote c. 110–140AD), said that Mark wrote what Peter told him and was careful to make an accurate record of events.

Luke – Luke, while not a personal eyewitness of the resurrection begins his Gospel by saying:

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. ³ With this in mind, since **I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,** ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. – **Luke 1:1-4 (NIV)**

Question: How do you know that's what they really said and believed?

Paul says he met with Peter, James, and John, and asked if the message he was preaching, was accurate and they affirmed it was.

Three years later I went to visit Pete in Jerusalem and stayed with him for 15 days. ¹⁹ The only other apostle I saw was James, the Lord's brother. –

Galatians 1:18-19 (CEV)

Fourteen years later I went to Jerusalem with Barnabas. I also took along Titus. ² But I went there because God had told me to go, **and I explained the good news I had been preaching to the Gentiles.** Then I met privately with the ones who seemed to be the most important leaders. I wanted to make sure my work in the past and my future work would not be for nothing... ⁶ Some of them were supposed to be important leaders, but I didn't care who they were. God doesn't have any favorites! **None of these so-called special leaders added anything to my message.** ⁷ **They realized God had sent me with the good news for Gentiles, and he had sent Peter with the same message for Jews.** ⁸ God, who had sent Peter on a mission to the Jews, was now using me to preach to the Gentiles. ⁹ **James, Peter, and John realized that God had given me the message about his gift of undeserved grace.** And these men are supposed to be the backbone of the church. They even gave Barnabas and me a friendly handshake. This was to show that we would work with Gentiles and that they would work with Jews. ¹⁰ They only asked us to remember the poor, and this was something I had always been eager to do. – **Galatians 2:1-10 (CEV)**

These passages confirm that Paul discussed with Peter, James, and John about the gospel message he was preaching, which included the resurrection of Jesus. They affirmed his message and encouraged him to continue. This is confirmation from Paul of James, Peter, and John's belief in the resurrection.

Polycarp, who was a disciple of John and knew him personally, said this of Paul and his writings:

"For neither I, nor any other such one, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and glorified Paul. He, when among you, accurately and steadfastly taught the word of truth in the presence of those who were then alive" -

Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, ch. 3

So, not only do we have Paul's word that he spoke what the apostles approved of about the resurrection. We have Polycarp, who heard John preach, affirming that Paul steadfastly taught the word truthfully.

Evidence from early Christians and Church Fathers supports the claim that the apostles witnessed the resurrected Jesus Christ. Below are several quotes and references from such sources written within 200 years after the resurrection, excluding the Gospels.

Acts of the Apostles

- Peter, in his sermon on Pentecost, states: "**This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses**" (Acts 2:32). This declaration emphasizes the collective testimony of the apostles regarding the resurrection.

Church Fathers

1. Ignatius of Antioch (c. 110 AD)

- In his letter to the Smyrnaeans, Ignatius states: "He was truly crucified and died under Pontius Pilate... **and was raised in power on the third day**" (Ignatius, Letter to the Smyrnaeans 1:1). His insistence on the physical resurrection aligns with the apostolic witness. He was, along with Polycarp, a disciple of John.

- "And I know that He was possessed of a body not only in His being born and crucified, **but I also know that He was so after His resurrection** and believe that He is so now." (Epistle to the Smyrnaeans, 3)

2. Polycarp (c. 110-140 AD)

"For they did not love the present world, but Him who died for us **and was raised by God for our sakes.**" (Epistle to the Philippians, 9:2)

Polycarp affirms that John spoke of Jesus' resurrection and miracles.

3. Justin Martyr (c. 150 AD)

-"And when He had thus shown them that there is **truly a resurrection of the flesh**, wishing to show them this also, that it is not impossible for flesh to ascend into heaven (as he had said that our dwelling-place is in heaven), 'He was taken up into heaven as they beheld,' as He was in the flesh." (**On the Resurrection, Fragments, 9**)

"We were well aware that the holy prophets foretold the coming of Christ, and that He was crucified... **after which he appeared in the flesh to His apostles** and those who had followed Him" (**Justin Martyr, First Apology 31**)

4. Irenaeus (c. 180 AD)

- In *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus affirms: "**For I could show you that the apostles are not only called but also that they are also witnesses of the resurrection...** and with their own eyes have seen the truth" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.12.12). He emphasizes the direct witnessing of the resurrection by the apostles.

- "For the Church, although dispersed throughout the whole world even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and from their disciples this faith: ... **in the visible ascension of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, in His flesh...**" (*Against Heresies*, 1.10.1)

5. Tertullian (155 – 220 AD)

- Tertullian mentions: "**The apostles were so convinced of His resurrection that they preached the truth of His resurrection even to their own grave**" (Tertullian, *Apology* 5). This highlights the apostles' unwavering conviction stemming from their experience of the risen Christ.

Objection: Well, I'm sure the non-Christian sources don't say anything that supports the resurrection. So, tell me what do the non-Christian sources say about Jesus that supports the resurrection.

Non-Christian Sources on Jesus

Thallus (52 to the 2nd century ADAD – depending on the scholar)

"On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his *History*, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun." (Julius Africanus, *Chronography*, 18:1) – mentions an Earthquake Matthew mentions occurring at the time of the Resurrection, Thallus' work survives only in later quotations, such as recorded by Julius Africanus

Tacitus (56-120AD)

“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.” – in his “Annals” of 116 AD

Mara Bar-Serapion (73AD)

“What benefit did the Athenians obtain by putting Socrates to death? Famine and plague came upon them as judgment for their crime. Or, the people of Samos for burning Pythagoras? In one moment their country was covered with sand. **Or the Jews by murdering their wise king?**...After that their kingdom was abolished. God rightly avenged these men...The wise king...Lived on in the teachings he enacted.”

Phlegon (137-140AD)

“Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth to the ninth hour.” (Africanus, Chronography, 18:1)

“Now Phlegon, in the thirteenth or fourteenth book, I think, of his Chronicles, not only **ascribed to Jesus a knowledge of future events . . . but also testified that the result corresponded to His predictions.**” (Origen Against Celsus, Book 2, Chapter 14)

“And with regard to the eclipse in the time of Tiberius Caesar, in whose reign Jesus appears to have been crucified, and the great earthquakes which then took place ... ” (Origen Against Celsus, Book 2, Chapter 33)

“Jesus, while alive, was of no assistance to himself, but that he arose after death, and exhibited the marks of his punishment, and showed how his hands had been pierced by nails.” (Origen Against Celsus, Book 2, Chapter 59)

These references survive through sources like Origen.

Note: Phlegon did not believe in Jesus resurrection. His comments support the idea that Jesus was known for the resurrection and miracles.

Pliny the Younger (61-113AD)

“They (the Christians) were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food—but food of an ordinary and innocent kind.”

Suetonius (69-140AD)

“Because the Jews at Rome caused constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus (Christ), he (Claudius) expelled them from the city (Rome).” (Life of Claudius, 25:4)

“Nero inflicted punishment on the Christians, a sect **given to a new and mischievous religious belief.**” (Lives of the Caesars, 26.2)

Lucian of Samosata: (115-200 A.D.)

“The Christians, you know, **worship a man to this day—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account....**You see, these misguided creatures **start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time,** which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and **worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws.** All this they take quite on faith, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property.” (Lucian, The Death of Peregrine. 11-13)

Celsus (175AD)

In Origen’s Against Celsum:

From Book 1, Chapter 28:

"Jesus had come from a village in Judea and was the son of a poor woman who gained her living by the work of her own hands."

From Book 1, Chapter 32:

"But let us now return to where the Jew is introduced, speaking of the mother of Jesus, and saying that 'when she was pregnant she was turned out of doors by the carpenter to whom she had been betrothed, as having been guilty of adultery, and that she bore a child to a certain soldier named Panthera.'"

From Book 1, Chapter 38:

"He [Celsus] asserts that 'Jesus, having been brought up as an illegitimate child, and having served for hire in Egypt, and **then coming to the knowledge of certain miraculous powers, returned from thence to his own country, and by means of those powers proclaimed himself a god.**'"

Josephus (c. 93-94 AD)

A later Arabic version preserves a more restrained form of Josephus' statement that many scholars consider closer to the original than the heavily Christianized Greek version. It reads:

"At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. **They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive.** Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders."

Babylonian Talmud (final written form 5th–7th century AD; contains earlier oral traditions, some plausibly reaching back to the 2nd–3rd century)

The Babylonian Talmud reached its final written form centuries later, but many scholars believe some traditions it contains are considerably earlier.:

"Jesus practiced magic and led Israel astray" (b. Sanhedrin 43a; cf. t. Shabbat 11.15; b. Shabbat 104b)

"Rabbi Hisda (d. 309) said that Rabbi Jeremiah bar Abba said, 'What is that which is written, 'No evil will befall you, nor shall any plague come near your house'?"

(Psalm 91:10)... ‘No evil will befall you’ (means) that evil dreams and evil thoughts will not tempt you; ‘nor shall any plague come near your house’ (means) that you will not have a son or a disciple who burns his food like Jesus of Nazareth.” (b. Sanhedrin 103a; cf. b. Berakhot 17b)

“Our rabbis have taught that Jesus had five disciples: Matthai, Nakai, Nezer, Buni and Todah. They brought Matthai to (to trial). He said, ‘Must Matthai be killed? For it is written, ‘When (mathai) shall I come and appear before God?’” (Psalm 92:2) They said to him, “Yes Matthai must be killed, for it is written, ‘When (mathai) he dies his name will perish’” (Psalm 41:5). They brought Nakai. He said to them, “Must Nakai be killed? For it is written, “The innocent (naqi) and the righteous will not slay”” (Exodus 23:7). They said to him, “Yes, Nakai must be killed, for it is written, ‘In secret places he slays the innocent (naqi)’” (Psalm 10:8). (b. Sanhedrin 43a; the passage continues in a similar way for Nezer, Buni and Todah)

And this, perhaps the most famous of Talmudic passages about Jesus:

“It was taught: **On the day before the Passover they hanged Jesus.** A herald went before him for forty days (proclaiming), “He will be stoned, because he practiced magic and enticed Israel to go astray. Let anyone who knows anything in his favor come forward and plead for him.” But nothing was found in his favor, and they hanged him on the day before the Passover. (b. Sanhedrin 43a)

The Toledot Yeshu (1000AD) – Not as strong non-Christian evidence as the above listed

While having a late final form, many sections contain earlier information. **The Toledot Yeshu contains a determined effort to explain away the miracles of Jesus and to deny the virgin birth. In some places, the text is quite vicious, but it does confirm many elements of the New Testament writings.** Let’s look at a portion of the text (Jesus is called ‘Yehoshua’):

“In the year 3671 (in Jewish reckoning, it being ca 90 B.C.) in the days of King Jannaeus, a great misfortune befell Israel, when there arose a certain disreputable man of the tribe of Judah, whose name was Joseph Pandera. He lived at Bethlehem, in Judah. Near his house dwelt a widow and her lovely and chaste daughter named Miriam. Miriam was betrothed to Yohanan, of the royal house of David, a man learned in the Torah and God-fearing. At the close of a certain Sabbath, Joseph Pandera, attractive and like a warrior in appearance, having gazed

lustfully upon Miriam, knocked upon the door of her room and betrayed her by pretending that he was her betrothed husband, Yohanan. Even so, she was amazed at this improper conduct and submitted only against her will. Thereafter, when Yohanan came to her, Miriam expressed astonishment at behavior so foreign to his character. It was thus that they both came to know the crime of Joseph Pandera and the terrible mistake on the part of Miriam... Miriam gave birth to a son and named him Yehoshua, after her brother. This name later deteriorated to Yeshu ("Yeshu" is the Jewish "name" for Jesus. It means "May His Name Be Blotted Out"). **On the eighth day he was circumcised.** When he was old enough the lad was taken by Miriam to the house of study to be instructed in the Jewish tradition. One day Yeshu walked in front of the Sages with his head uncovered, showing shameful disrespect. At this, the discussion arose as to whether this behavior did not truly indicate that Yeshu was an illegitimate child and the son of a niddah. Moreover, the story tells that while the rabbis were discussing the Tractate Nezikin, he gave his own impudent interpretation of the law and in an ensuing debate he held that Moses could not be the greatest of the prophets if he had to receive counsel from Jethro. This led to further inquiry as to the antecedents of Yeshu, and it was discovered through Rabban Shimeon ben Shetah that he was the illegitimate son of Joseph Pandera. Miriam admitted it. After this became known, it was necessary for Yeshu to flee to Upper Galilee. After King Jannaeus, his wife Helene ruled over all Israel. In the Temple was to be found the Foundation Stone on which were engraven the letters of God's Ineffable Name. Whoever learned the secret of the Name and its use would be able to do whatever he wished. Therefore, the Sages took measures so that no one should gain this knowledge. Lions of brass were bound to two iron pillars at the gate of the place of burnt offerings. Should anyone enter and learn the Name, when he left the lions would roar at him and immediately the valuable secret would be forgotten. Yeshu came and learned the letters of the Name; he wrote them upon the parchment which he placed in an open cut on his thigh and then drew the flesh over the parchment. As he left, the lions roared and he forgot the secret. But when he came to his house he reopened the cut in his flesh with a knife and lifted out the writing. Then he remembered and obtained the use of the letters. He gathered about himself three hundred and ten young men of Israel and accused those who spoke ill of his birth of being people who desired greatness and power for themselves. **Yeshu proclaimed, "I am the Messiah; and concerning me Isaiah prophesied and said, 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.'" He quoted other messianic texts, insisting, "David my ancestor prophesied concerning me: 'The Lord said to me, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.'" The insurgents with him replied that if Yeshu was the Messiah he should give them a convincing sign. They therefore, brought to him a lame man, who had**

never walked. Yeshu spoke over the man the letters of the Ineffable Name, and the leper was healed. Thereupon, they worshipped him as the Messiah, Son of the Highest. When word of these happenings came to Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin decided to bring about the capture of Yeshu. They sent messengers, Annanui and Ahaziah, who, pretending to be his disciples, said that they brought him an invitation from the leaders of Jerusalem to visit them. Yeshu consented on condition the members of the Sanhedrin receive him as a lord. He started out toward Jerusalem and, arriving at Knob, **acquired an ass on which he rode into Jerusalem, as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah.** The Sages bound him and led him before Queen Helene, with the accusation: "This man is a sorcerer and entices everyone." Yeshu replied, "The prophets long ago prophesied my coming: 'And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse,' and I am he; but as for them, Scripture says 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.'" Queen Helene asked the Sages: "What he says, is it in your Torah?" They replied: "It is in our Torah, but it is not applicable to him, for it is in Scripture: 'And that prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.' He has not fulfilled the signs and conditions of the Messiah." Yeshu spoke up: "Madam, I am the Messiah and I revive the dead." **A dead body was brought in; he pronounced the letters of the Ineffable Name and the corpse came to life.** The Queen was greatly moved and said: "This is a true sign." She reprimanded the Sages and sent them humiliated from her presence. Yeshu's dissident followers increased and there was controversy in Israel. Yeshu went to Upper Galilee. the Sages came before the Queen, complaining that Yeshu practiced sorcery and was leading everyone astray. Therefore she sent Annanui and Ahaziah to fetch him. They found him in Upper Galilee, proclaiming himself the Son of God. When they tried to take him there was a struggle, but Yeshu said to the men of Upper Galilee: "Wage no battle." He would prove himself by the power which came to him from his Father in heaven. He spoke the Ineffable Name over the birds of clay and they flew into the air. He spoke the same letters over a millstone that had been placed upon the waters. He sat in it and it floated like a boat. When they saw this the people marveled. At the behest of Yeshu, the emissaries departed and reported these wonders to the Queen. She trembled with astonishment. Then the Sages **selected a man named Judah Iskarioto** and brought him to the Sanctuary where he learned the letters of the Ineffable Name as Yeshu had done. When Yeshu was summoned before the queen, this time there were present also the Sages and Judah Iskarioto. Yeshu said: "**It is spoken of me, 'I will ascend into heaven.'**" He lifted his arms like the wings of an eagle and he flew between heaven and earth, to the amazement of everyone... Yeshu was seized. His head was covered with a garment and he was smitten with pomegranate staves;

but he could do nothing, for he no longer had the Ineffable Name. Yeshu was taken prisoner to the synagogue of Tiberias, and they bound him to a pillar. **To allay his thirst they gave him vinegar to drink. On his head they set a crown of thorns.** There was strife and wrangling between the elders and the unrestrained followers of Yeshu, as a result of which the followers escaped with Yeshu to the region of Antioch; there Yeshu remained until the eve of the Passover. Yeshu then resolved to go the Temple to acquire again the secret of the Name. That year the Passover came on a Sabbath day. On the eve of the Passover, Yeshu, accompanied by his disciples, came to Jerusalem riding upon an ass. Many bowed down before him. He entered the Temple with his three hundred and ten followers. **One of them, Judah Iskarioto apprised the Sages that Yeshu was to be found** in the Temple, that the disciples had taken a vow by the Ten Commandments not to reveal his identity but that he would point him out by bowing to him. So it was done and Yeshu was seized. Asked his name, he replied to the question by several times giving the names Mattai, Nakki, Buni, Netzer, each time with a verse quoted by him and a counter-verse by the Sages. Yeshu was put to death on the sixth hour on the eve of the Passover and of the Sabbath. When they tried to hang him on a tree it broke, for when he had possessed the power he had pronounced by the Ineffable Name that no tree should hold him. He had failed to pronounce the prohibition over the carob-stalk, for it was a plant more than a tree, and on it he was hanged until the hour for afternoon prayer, for it is written in Scripture, "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree." **They buried him outside the city. On the first day of the week his bold followers came to Queen Helene with the report that he who was slain was truly the Messiah and that he was not in his grave; he had ascended to heaven as he prophesied.** Diligent search was made and he was not found in the grave where he had been buried. A gardener had taken him from the grave and had brought him into his garden and buried him in the sand over which the waters flowed into the garden. Queen Helene demanded, on threat of a severe penalty, that the body of Yeshu be shown to her within a period of three days. There was a great distress. When the keeper of the garden saw Rabbi Tanhuma walking in the field and lamenting over the ultimatum of the Queen, the gardener related what he had done, in order that Yeshu's followers should not steal the body and then claim that he had ascended into heaven. The Sages removed the body, tied it to the tail of a horse and transported it to the Queen, with the words, "This is Yeshu who is said to have ascended to heaven." Realizing that Yeshu was a false prophet who enticed the people and led them astray, she mocked the followers but praised the Sages.

Question: But those are all non-Christian sources, and many are bashing Jesus and accusing him of a lot of bad things! What can we learn from them?

Often even an enemy can substantiate certain facts. Here's what we can learn of Jesus from these non-Christian sources:

Jesus was born and lived in Palestine. He was born, supposedly, to a virgin and had an earthly father who was a carpenter. He was a teacher who taught that through repentance and belief, all followers would become brothers and sisters. He led the Jews away from their beliefs. He was a wise man who claimed to be God and the Messiah. He had unusual magical powers and performed miraculous deeds. He healed the lame. He accurately predicted the future. He was persecuted by the Jews for what He said, betrayed by Judah Iskarioto. He was beaten with rods, forced to drink vinegar and wear a crown of thorns. He was crucified on the eve of the Passover and this crucifixion occurred under the direction of Pontius Pilate, during the time of Tiberius. On the day of His crucifixion, the sky grew dark and there was an earthquake. Afterward, He was buried in a tomb and the tomb was later found to be empty. He appeared to His disciples resurrected from the grave and showed them His wounds. These disciples then told others Jesus was resurrected and ascended into heaven. Jesus' disciples and followers upheld a high moral code. One of them was named Matthai. The disciples were also persecuted for their faith but were martyred without changing their claims. They met regularly to worship Jesus, even after His death. – From coldcasechristianity.com

Question: Why should I think that the historical evidence about Jesus' resurrection is reliable?

There are certain things that historians look for in sources. If these are present, then the source is generally considered reliable:

1) Early Attestation

The Early Christian Creed in 1 Corinthians 15 is dated to within a few years of Jesus' resurrection. That is considered very early attestation and too early for legend to have entered the event. Other early Christian hymns, creeds and sayings of Jesus predate any of the gospels and affirm his resurrection,

appearances after his resurrection, his divinity, and instituting things like communion. Many of these were in circulation within a decade of the resurrection or earlier.

The earliest known papyrus of the gospel that we have found is the John Ryland's Papyrus (P52). It is of John 18 (Jesus before Pilate) and is dated to about 125-150 AD.

2) Multiple Witnesses

There are several accounts of Jesus' resurrection. There are the gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). There are Epistles of Paul, James, Peter, Jude, and John.

3) Corroborating Secondary Evidence

Paul can affirm that he spoke with James, Peter, and John about the gospel message he preached. Early Christian believers confirm that the apostles spoke of the resurrection as a real event.

4) Enemy Attestation

While not expecting enemy sources to agree fully, many of the details of the resurrection account can be confirmed such as Jesus dying by crucifixion, being buried in a tomb, the tomb being empty, and that the apostles genuinely believed that Jesus rose from the dead.

5) Embarrassing Details

One thing that historians look for are embarrassing details. The thought is that if an account is made up that people would be less likely to mention things that would be embarrassing about themselves or about someone, they are showing adulation for. The gospel contains several embarrassing details. Dying by means of crucifixion was considered dishonorable and would not be mentioned if it did not happen. The first witnesses being women would not have been a detail that a first century Jewish person would make up. Men were considered more reliable witnesses. The gospels contain lots of embarrassing details about the Apostles such as Peter denying Jesus or Thomas insisting that he touch the hands and side of Jesus. The detail of all the disciples fleeing for their lives at the Garden of Gethsemane is another

example of an embarrassing detail. These details suggest that the gospel accounts are honest and accurate accounts.

6) The transformation of the eyewitnesses

James, a skeptic of Jesus, became the leader of the Jerusalem church after the resurrection and was martyred for his faith in Christ.

Many of apostles and disciples left family and religious traditions behind. Some suffered beatings, being imprisoned, and even martyrdom for their belief that Jesus was resurrected. While someone may be willing to die for something they believe to be true, no one would eagerly die for something they knew to be a lie.

Question: What are some resources where I can learn more about the resurrection of Jesus?

General

- The Case of the Resurrection of Jesus by Gary Habermas and Michael Licona
- The Case for Easter: A Journalist Investigates Evidence for the Resurrection by Lee Strobel
- I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek
- Cold-Case Christianity (Updated & Expanded Edition): A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels by J Warner Wallace
- Evidence That Demands a Verdict: Life-Changing Truth for a Skeptical World by Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell

- The Big Book of Christian Apologetics: An A to Z Guide (A to Z Guides)
by Norman Geisler

More In Depth Research

- On the Resurrection, Volume 1: Evidences (Volume 1) by Gary Habermas
- The Resurrection of the Son of God: By N. T. Wright
- The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach by Michael Licona
- Risen Indeed: A Historical Investigation into the Resurrection of Jesus by Gary Habermas

Web Podcasts and Articles

- <https://www.gotquestions.org/why-believe-resurrection.html>
- <https://coldcasechristianity.com/?s=Resurrection+of+Jesus>
- <https://youtu.be/hKRRLpuGiQg>
- <https://youtu.be/6SbJ4p6WiZE>
- <https://www.str.org/w/the-resurrection-was-a-real-event-in-history>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MW5_nJYSKyk – William Lane Craig
vs Bart Ehrman – Resurrection Debate