

Non-Christian, Collateral Evidence of Jesus

NOTE: The following authors were non-Christian Secularists, with more ties to the Roman Empire than to Israel and the Jewish culture, although some were Jewish. Not one was a sympathizer of Christianity or a follower of Christ. Most were historians, authors, or government officials. These people wrote prior to the existence of the NT. Historians find it amazing that any secular, collateral evidence of Jesus exists in that He was not considered an important person in those days, and any writing about Him or Christianity would have been unpopular and even dangerous.

1. **Tacitus:** First-century Roman historian (considered one of the more accurate historians of the ancient world. He wrote about:
 - a. The persecution of Christians by Emperor Nero;
 - b. Christ as the founder of the Christians;
 - c. The hatred of Christians;
 - d. Christ being put to death by Pontius Pilate; and
 - e. A “pernicious superstition” that persisted (surely the resurrection).
2. **Lucian of Samosata:** A satirist of the second century wrote:
 - a. Scornfully about Christ;
 - b. About how Christ brought a new cult into the world;
 - c. That Christ was crucified;
 - d. That Christians worshiped the crucified sage and lived after His laws.
3. **Suetonius (AD 120):** Chief secretary to Emperor Hadrian, and Roman historian wrote concerning:
 - a. How the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Christ;
 - b. How Christians were being severely punished; and
 - c. The novel superstition held by the Christians (the resurrection).
4. **Thallus (c. AD 52):** Historian, mentioned:
 - a. The darkness that followed the crucifixion of Christ;
 - b. That rocks were rent by earthquakes; and
 - c. That the reason for the darkness was unknown; perhaps an eclipse of the sun, but there was a full moon.
5. **Pliny the Younger (c. AD 112):** Roman author and administrator:
 - a. Described the Christian worship service; and
 - b. Provided evidence that early Christians worshiped Christ.
6. **Emperor Trajan (c. AD 112):** Emperor of the Roman Empire, in reply to Pliny’s letter:
 - a. Made clear that he was not a Christian; and
 - b. Gave orders that no Christian graves would be desecrated or robbed under penalty of death. He did not want any more resurrection rumors to start.
7. **The Jewish Talmud:** Told of the crucifixion of Jesus on the eve of the Passover.
8. **Mara Bar-Serapion:** A Syrian Historian who wrote sometime between the last first, and early third centuries, wrote:
 - a. What advantages did the Jews gain from executing their wise King;
 - b. That it was just after the execution that their kingdom was abolished; and
 - c. That the wise King lived on in the teachings he had given.
9. **Josephus (c. AD 37 – c. AD 100):** A traitor to the Jews, a former Pharisee of the priestly line and Jewish historian, who went over to the Roman authority. Major works: Jewish Wars, and Antiquities of the Jews.
 - a. Supported the 39 books – 24 for the Jews - of the OT canon (but not the Apocrypha);
 - b. Referenced Daniel as a 6th century BC prophet who made amazing predictions about the course of history;
 - c. Referred to Jesus as the brother of James, who was martyred;
 - d. Referred to Ananias, who brought James, the brother of Jesus, before the Sanhedrin;
 - e. Confirmed that Jesus was called Christ;
 - f. Confirmed the life of John the Baptist, and that John the Baptist was a good man who led his followers to righteousness; and
 - g. Wrote of Jesus, that He was wise, that he probably should not be called mere man, that He was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher, that He was Christ, the Messiah, that Pilate condemned Him to death on the cross, that He appeared to His disciples following His resurrection from the dead, and many other confirmations of the life of Jesus.
10. **An Arabic Manuscript entitled (roughly): Book of History Guided by All the Virtues of Wisdom, Crowned with Various Philosophies and Blessed by the Truth of Knowledge:**
 - a. Acknowledged a wise man named Jesus;
 - b. That He was a man of great virtue;
 - c. That Pilate condemned Him to be crucified;
 - d. That Jesus appeared to His disciples three days following His crucifixion; and
 - e. That He was, perhaps, the Messiah.