

# Did Jesus Really Exist?

## GraspingGod.com's Lesson # 1.01

The most basic of questions regarding God is: **Did Jesus really live on Earth?** There's a great deal of evidence concerning this subject and we have a huge surprise joining us on the witness stand!

**Please read [John 1:1-14](#)** before starting the lesson.

### **Preliminary Bible Study Questions:**

- 1) Who is Jesus Christ?
- 2) Is there historical evidence for Jesus Christ?
- 3) Does Jesus still exist today?

*Thanks for coming by our Bible study today!*

Grab yourself a cup of coffee and we'll get started!

## **Who Is Jesus Christ?**

**Jesus is known by people all around the world.** He isn't confined to certain continents or countries. So, wherever you are in this great big world, know that you probably have someone close by you who personally knows Jesus.

Before discussing the question, "*Did Jesus really exist?*" let's ask, "**Who is Jesus Christ?**"

People who love Jesus Christ learn about him by reading the Bible. The Bible tells us all about him and the great things he did for us. I've studied the Bible for a long time and I can help you learn about him. GraspingGod.com is devoted entirely to learning about Jesus Christ and how you can know him.

The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. As the Son of God he was given the privilege of creating all things - including you and me! He loves his creation very much, and Jesus longs for the day when we can all be together in one wonderful place.

We can't see or touch Jesus yet, but we will soon. He is with us in Spirit, though.

## **Did Jesus Really Exist?**

**Did Jesus really exist?** You may need some proof that Jesus lived and that's perfectly understandable.

Let's start the evidence with our greatest source of information - the largest selling book in history, the Holy Bible.

Is the Bible true? The Bible proves itself an accurate account of the history of Jesus Christ in at least three ways:

- The Bible contains many fulfilled prophecies. A Bible prophecy is a prediction about Jesus Christ. Hundreds and sometimes thousands of years before Jesus was born Bible writers were predicting that he was coming. They were right - He did come!
- The cohesive message of the Bible is an amazing testament for its truthfulness. From the Bible's first book, Genesis, to its last book, Revelation, it tells us about God and his Son, Jesus Christ. Many people wrote the Bible over hundreds of years, but God is the true Author, because he breathed the words that the men wrote (2 Peter 1:20-21).
- The many scientific claims the Bible presents have been proven with modern science. For instance, Christopher Columbus had to sail the ocean to prove the world was round. Many people before that time thought the world was flat. However, God, through his prophet Isaiah wrote that the earth was circular 700 years before Jesus was born (Isaiah 40:22).

**The Bible is perfectly truthful in all it speaks to, including the life of Jesus Christ.**

## **Eyewitness Accounts**

**Did Jesus really exist?** The Bible contains records which give direct evidence of Jesus Christ. Luke wrote, "*Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples. Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write a careful account for you,...so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught.*" (Luke 1:1-3).

Paul, another writer of the Bible, stated in 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 that the risen Jesus Christ was seen by all the disciples, as well as more than 500 people! **Paul directly met the risen Jesus, and then later sought to record other eyewitnesses who had previously met Jesus Christ.** Both of these men were very thorough in their investigations.

The books of the New Testament are the written accounts of Jesus' life. Jesus' apostles, God-fearing and noble men themselves, wrote the letters and books that form the New Testament. God used these men to speak his words of truth.

Eyewitnesses had ample opportunities to refute any part of these writings from the beginning. If errors were recorded the books would have been immediately deemed worthless by the testimonies of the witnesses.

## Non-Christian Historical Accounts

**Did Jesus really exist?** Non-Christians wrote of the life of Jesus Christ, as well. Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Suetonius, Thallus, and Flavius Josephus, and many more, wrote amazing accounts of the historical Christ. They could have easily dismissed the facts of Jesus Christ's existence, but they made a living by recording historical TRUTHS.

Anyone that has studied world history knows these famous historians, and have few problems with the veracity of their works.

**Was Jesus a real person?** Pliny the Younger wrote, "They [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" (Pliny, *Letters*, cited in: Habermas, Gary R., *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*, 1996).

Would people worship someone as God that lived mere years before them?

Did Jesus really exist? **Secular writers say he did in fact exist.**

Tacitus, in his last but most impressive history, *The Annals*, was writing about Emperor Nero and the burning of Rome. He wrote, "To suppress this rumour, Nero fabricated scapegoats - and punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were properly called). Their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilate" (Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, Penguin Classics, 1996, p.78). He then wrote about the despicable means by which Nero slaughtered the Christians, including Peter and St Paul the Apostle.

Did Jesus really exist? **The fearful and vengeful actions by the Romans indicate he existed.**

Flavius Josephus, in his *Antiquities* (Book 18, ch. 3, par. 3) wrote: "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day." He also discussed James the brother of Jesus (*Antiquities*, Book 20, ch. 9).

Is Jesus real? Did Jesus *really* exist? **Based on these historical documents the evidence is mounting!**

## Supernatural Testimony

God used the Disciple John to explain an unusual, supernatural testimony for Jesus' life. 1 John 5:6-12 states that Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River, and Jesus' death on the cross in Jerusalem are evidence.

The Jordan River and Calvary are testimonies for the real Jesus Christ. Both acts of Jesus pleased his Father, who responded in kind. Verse 9 explicitly states that God testified for his Son at both places: the stream and the mount. Water and Blood are Jesus' witnesses.

The Holy Spirit testifies to all people that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The Father holds every person accountable for this supernatural testimony of his precious Son. You, me, and everyone who has ever lived has heard this witness from God. **There will be no exceptions and no excuses.**

A person must accept this testimony as true and believe it fully in their heart, so much so, that he/she devotes his or her life **in full** to God.

**Again, no exceptions and no excuses.**

To walk away from the evidence, or to deny the evidence, amounts to calling God the Father a liar (1 John 5:10). To deny the Spirit's testimony is blasphemy against the Spirit and an accusation of sin against God the Father.

Did Jesus really exist? **You better believe it!!** God witnesses to your heart, through the Bible, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Please listen to God's testimony for his Son.

### **Jesus Christ, A Surprise Witness**

God loves YOU and wants to know YOU! The reason I mention this biblical truth here is because Jesus Christ proves himself to a person. He says, "*Of course, I have no need of human witnesses, but I say these things so you might be saved*" (John 5:34).

Jesus doesn't need evidence from Josephus or Tacitus, or even the Bible writers, who he gave his words to, anyway! (2 Timothy 3:16). Jesus is alive, and working throughout our world introducing himself, by his Spirit and word, to many people. Jesus is his own witness and reveals himself to a person's heart.

Did Jesus really exist? **He says so and he proves it!!**

### **Did Jesus Really Exist? Faith Will Reveal Him**

Faith comes from hearing the words of God (Romans 10:17), which is why I carefully use many Bible passages in these lessons. The Bible is God's Word - his own *living word* to witness about his Son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 11:4).

Faith means that you believe in Jesus without seeing him (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is trusting in God's Word and in the reality of Jesus Christ. Expressing faith in him as your only Savior opens

up the door to your life (Revelation 3:20). Jesus' Spirit will enter your heart and you will personally come to know him. We have an amazing God!

Did this man Jesus of Nazareth really live? **Ask him yourself! He'll prove it - you'll see!**

### **Grasp This!**

Jesus Christ introduces himself to people. **He is ALIVE!** I personally met Jesus Christ in March of 1994. I always mentally believed he existed, but I had no idea that he would come into my life!

Jesus presented himself to me, and then immediately opened up the Bible to my understanding - like he did with Lydia (Acts 16:14). He was so real to me it was as if he was standing several feet from me.

Since that day, I follow Jesus (John 10:3-4) by believing him and obeying his word.

I can't be an eyewitness of Jesus, if that's what you need, but I can definitely be a heart-witness! He has changed my life! He'll change your life just the same.

There is more than enough evidence to confirm the existence of Jesus Christ. The final answer to the question "Did Jesus really exist?" is a resounding "**Yes, of course!**"

But, there is even greater news for you - Jesus Christ **STILL** exists and he wants to meet you! Tell him you want to believe in him and live with him forever.

Be sure to check out our next lesson: Is Jesus God? Lesson 1.02

### **Bible Study Questions:**

- 1) Why does the Bible's cohesive message prove God's word to be truthful?
- 2) Jesus says he builds a person's faith by hearing his word. Are there other ways he builds faith in people? (John 10:38; Romans 1:19-20)
- 3) What does "faith in God" mean? (Hebrews 11:1-3)

### **Inspirational Bible Verses:**

This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "*It is through faith that a righteous person has life*" Romans 1:17.

I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ. Galatians 3:5.

And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. Hebrews 11:6.

### **Faith Quotes!**

All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Sight, or objective proof, is not the proper ground of faith. - Geoffrey Lampe

When we have an atom of faith in our hearts, we can see God's face, gentle, serene and approving. - John Calvin

Faith is from God, not from man. Man can do nothing to earn or receive it. We are right with God by faith alone. - Martin Luther

### **Prayers of Thanksgiving:**

Thank you, God. I know with all my heart that Jesus lived and that he died for me. How can I say "Thank you!" and really prove that I mean it? Lord, I believe, but remove the unbelief that still lingers in my heart. Show me that you're alive and that you care for me. I'll keep trusting in you, and in your Bible. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

Read more: <http://www.graspinggod.com/did-jesus-really-exist.html#ixzz2gcgwMG1H>

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