

- 1) Not including Bible sources, the following people wrote about Jesus:
  - \* The Jewish historian Josephus (A.D. 37-100). **The historian Josephus lived in Rome a while ( AD 63) and was Commander of Jewish forces in Galilee AD 66 at the outbreak of the Jewish/Roman war. He was also attached to the Roman general head-quarters during the siege of Jerusalem, even acting as interpreter for Titus, Vespasian's son and successor in the Palestinian command. He mentions Christ as well as His brother James.**
- 2) \*Pliny the Younger, imperial Roman Legate of Bythynia - in a letter to Emperor Trajan in A.D. 112. **AD 112 Pliny The Younger wrote a Letter to the Emperor Trajan asking his advice on how to deal with the troublesome sect of Christians, who were embarrassingly numerous in his province.**
- 3) \*Tacitus - the important Roman historian. **Cornelius Tacitus b. AD 52, the greatest Roman historian in the days of the Empire, in his "History of Rome" tells of the great fire that Nero was rumored to have set. He says, "Therefore, to scotch the rumor, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians. Christus, from whom they got their name, had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate when Tiberius was emperor."**
- 4) \*Suetonius - a Roman historian who compiled a biography of the first twelve Roman emperors in his "Life of Claudius". **Suetonius, Roman historian c. AD 120, wrote in his Lives of the First 12 Ceasars that "Punishment was inflicted on the Christians" and in his Life of Claudius that "the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Christus (Christians)."**
- 5) \*Thallus and Julius Africanus in A.D. 52. **A gentile writer by the name of Thallus (c. AD 52) wrote a work tracing the history of Greece and its relations with Asia from the Trojan War to his own day. One surviving quote from his third book of history pertains to his discussion of the darkness which fell upon the land during the crucifixion of Christ. He attempts to explain this darkness as an eclipse of the sun. From this we can infer that the gospel story (i.e the crucifixion and resurrection) was known in Rome in non-Christian circles toward the middle of the first century.**
- 6) \*Mara bar Serpion A Syrian, Mara Ben-Serapion, wrote a letter to his Son in AD 73 **encouraging the son in the pursuit of wisdom, and pointed out that those who persecuted wise men were overtaken by misfortune. He uses the examples of the deaths of Socrates, Pythagoras and Christ. This letter survives today and is preserved in the British Museum.**
- 7) **Codification of oral traditions completed by Rabbi Judah President of the Sanhedrin from 170 - 217 AD make sparse but hostile references to Jesus, calling Him the illegitimate son of Mary. In doing so, these references do at least show that there was not the slightest doubt of the historical character of Jesus. Read early writings of the Talmud.**
- 8) **In addition, you can check the period writings of Rabbi Yohanan ben-Zakkai, Rabbi Akiba, and Trabbi Meir.**

**We have 5 literary sources for the life of Alexander the Great (late 4th century bce):**

- 9) **Diodorus Siculus (1st century bce): 17th book of Universal History**
- 10) **Quintus Curtius Rufus (1st century ce): History of Alexander**
- 11) **Plutarch (2nd century ce): Life of Alexander**
- 12) **Flavius Arrianus Xenophon (Arrian) (2nd century ce): Campaigns of Alexander**
- 13) **M. Junianus Justinus (Justin) (3rd century ce): epitomized the work of Pompeius Trogus (Augustan age)**
- 14) **Is it fair to accept these as evidence for an historical Alexander while not accepting the canonical gospels as sources for an historical Jesus? Of course not, that is illogical and irrational.**
- 15) **The earliest biography of Alexander the Great was written 400 years after his death. The earliest account of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15) was believed by some historians to have been written within approximately 5 years of Jesus' death. The earliest gospel, Mark, was written about 30 years after Jesus' death . And the earliest non-Christian source, Josephus, wrote about Jesus about 70 years after his death.**
- 16) Wright, N.T. *The Challenge of Jesus, The New Testament and the People of God, Jesus and the Victory of God, and The Resurrection of the Son of God*
- 17) Blomberg, Craig *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*
- 18) Strobel, Lee *The Case for the Real Jesus and The Case for Christ*
- 19) Komoszewski, Sawyer, and Wallace *Reinventing Jesus*
- 20) Note that even accounts critical of Jesus do not deny his historicity, cf Crossan, John *Historical Jesus* or Borg, Marcus *Jesus*
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