

# WAS JESUS A REAL PERSON?

# Topic: Was Jesus a Real Person?

## Discuss and Summarize the Secular Worldview:

Sample Summary: Jesus was a real, ordinary person, but was only a prophet or wise teacher. He is not God and didn't rise from the dead.

## Discuss and Summarize the Christian Worldview:

Sample Summary: Yes. Jesus is all God and all man. He came down from heaven and humbled himself to be born in Bethlehem to a virgin, lived a perfect life, suffered and died on the cross, was buried, rose again on Easter morning, was seen by thousands of people, ascended into heaven, and now sits at the right hand of the Father. He's the Savior of our world for anyone who believes in Him.

## Why This is Important:

Our faith in Jesus as the Son of God, our Savior and Redeemer, depend on the events of His life, death, burial, and resurrection being true. Or as Paul said, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins," 1 Corinthians 15:17.

## Scripture Says:

Matthew 16:13-20, Matthew 28:11-15, 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 2 Corinthians 5:21

## Worth Considering:

- Jesus' corpse has never been located.
- Wikipedia says (12/23): 'Besides the gospels and the letters of Paul, works that are considered sources for the historicity of Jesus include *Antiquities of the Jews* by Jewish historian Josephus (dated circa 93–94 CE) and *Annals* by Roman historian Tacitus (circa 116 CE).' The "Christ is a Myth" theory is considered fringe by scholars.'
- Paul was writing about Jesus as early as 15 years after the cross. The four gospel books indicate they were all written within 40 years of the cross. The writers were eyewitnesses and/or researched carefully eyewitness accounts. Many other witnesses of those events were alive when the texts were written and could have spoken up if they considered the content to be in error.

- Jewish scribes meticulously copied the Old Testament books and counted letters, words, and lines to confirm errors had not been introduced. There are over 5,000 manuscripts and manuscript fragments of the New Testament. The Bible overwhelmingly has more evidence for its authenticity than any other ancient text.
- The disciples fled as Jesus was crucified, but within weeks were boldly proclaiming Jesus had risen from the dead, unfazed by threats to their lives. Stephen and James were martyred in the first few years after the cross. The other disciples boldly proclaimed the gospel as they traveled. Martyrdom of nearly all the disciples, Paul, and Roman Christians under Nero are not in dispute.
- In Matthew 28, the chief priests respond to the report of Jesus having risen by the Roman guards. The story was Jesus' body was stolen by his disciples, not that Jesus had never existed.
- There are writings and eyewitness accounts of Jesus being a historical figure. Some artifacts of dubious authenticity include fragments of the cross, crown of thorns, and burial clothes, which are dispersed throughout many Middle Eastern and European churches. Scholars don't doubt that Jesus was a historical figure, but His claims of deity will always be under debate.
- Archeological evidence has been found for crucifixion as a brutal means of execution by the Roman empire.
- Jesus' impact on the world is inarguable for a man who didn't conquer nations, write a book, or travel outside his country.

## Questions to Consider:

- If the Gospel writers and other New Testament writers made the story of Jesus up, it was a very elaborate invention in a place and time when Rome was extremely suspicious of Judaism. The resulting penalties would be harsh. Is this theory plausible?
- If the historical evidences for Jesus as a real person are true, the next step is to decide what to do with that knowledge. The three possibilities are Jesus was a lunatic, a liar, or Lord. If Jesus is truly our Lord, what changes are expected of me? Is that the real roadblock for accepting Jesus as our own Lord and Savior?
- Why do you think so many people ignore Jesus while latching onto every new trend and popular voice that comes around?
- When faith and secular viewpoints conflict, there seems to be a big push for the Bible to be reinterpreted. The power of the Gospel is often neutralized, even by those inside the church. Meanwhile, science or current secular thought is rarely challenged. Do you think this is the case? Why or why not?
- Has today's discussion made you reconsider any of your views?