

Session 2

Who is
Jesus



Did Jesus exist?

- Evidence outside the New Testament about Jesus includes:
 - Tacitus and Suetonius, Roman historians
 - Josephus, Jewish historian
- Evidence within the New Testament

How do we know that what was written down in the New Testament has not been changed over the years?

ANCIENT WRITINGS



Original work first written



30–310 years

NEW TESTAMENT

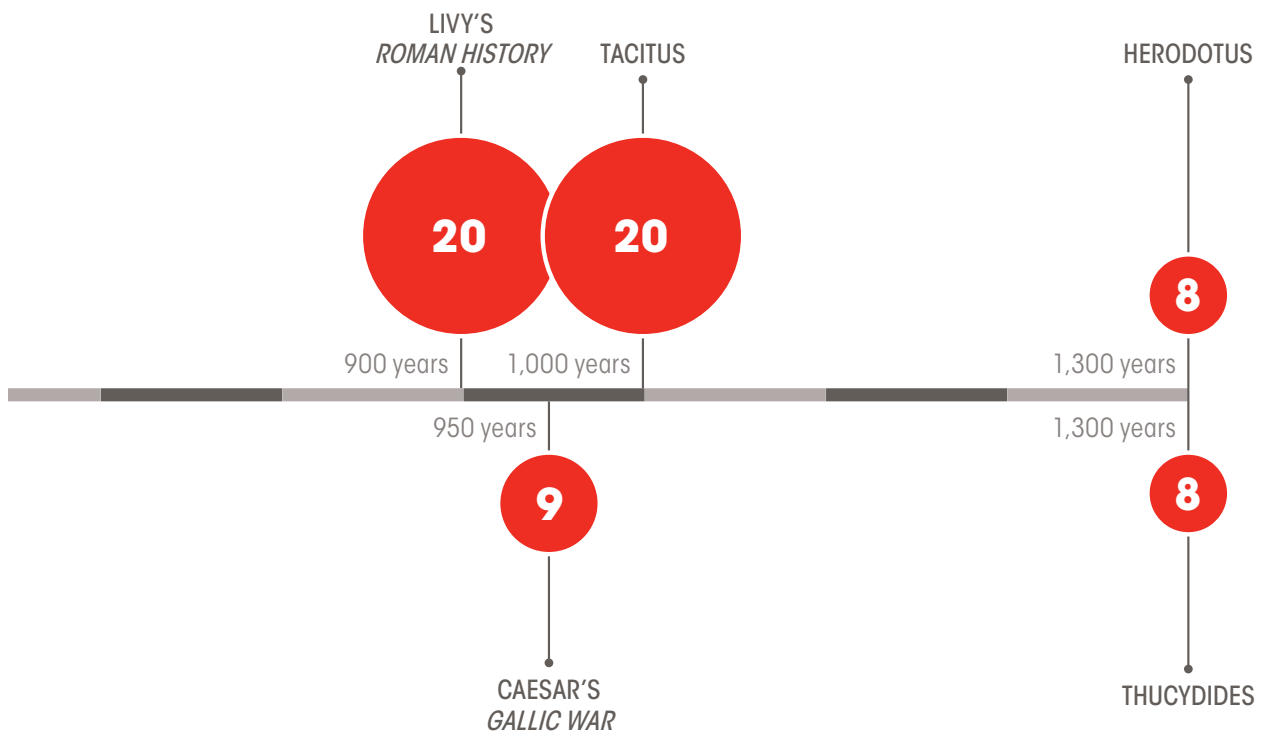
Copies found:

5,000+ Greek

10,000 Latin

9,300 Other languages

WORK	WHEN WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPY	TIME LAPSE	COPIES
HERODOTUS	488–428 BC	AD 900	1,300 years	8
THUCYDIDES	c. 460–400 BC	c. AD 900	1,300 years	8
TACITUS	AD 100	AD 1100	1,000 years	20
CAESAR'S <i>GALLIC WAR</i>	58–50 BC	AD 900	950 years	9–10
LIVY'S <i>ROMAN HISTORY</i>	59 BC – AD 17	AD 900	900 years	20
NEW TESTAMENT	AD 40–100	AD 130 (full manuscripts AD 350)	30–310 years	5,000+ Greek 10,000 Latin 9,300 others



Was Jesus fully human?

- He had a human body
 - Tired (John 4:6)
 - Hungry (Matthew 4:2)

- He had human emotions
 - Anger (Mark 11:15–17)
 - Love (Mark 10:21)
 - Sadness (John 11:32–36)

- He had human experiences
 - Temptation (Mark 1:13)
 - Learning (Luke 2:46–52)
 - Work (Mark 6:3)
 - Obedience (Luke 2:51)

Was he more than a man, a great human, a religious teacher?
(Matthew 16:13–16)

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1. WHAT DID HE SAY ABOUT HIMSELF?

- Teaching centred on himself
 - 'I am the bread of life' (John 6:35)
 - 'If the Son sets you free, you really will be free.'
(John 8:36, NLT)
 - 'I am the light of the world' (John 8:12)
 - 'I am the way and the truth and the life' (John 14:6)
 - 'Come to me...' (Matthew 11:28–29)
 - Receive me – receive God (Matthew 10:40)
 - Welcome me – welcome God (Mark 9:37)
 - If you have seen me you have seen God (John 14:9)

- His indirect claims
 - To forgive sins (Mark 2:5)
 - To judge the world (Matthew 25:31,32,40,45)

- His direct claims
 - Messiah (Mark 14:61–62)
 - Son of God (Mark 14:61)
 - God the Son (John 20:26–29)
 - 'I and the Father are one.' (John 10:30)

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Author of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Oxford historian C. S. Lewis wrote:

‘A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be (insane)... or else he would be “the Devil of Hell”. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else (insane) or something worse... but let us not come up with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.’³

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2. WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE TO SUPPORT HIS CLAIMS?

- His teaching (Mark 12:31; Luke 6:31; Matthew 5:44)
- His life/works (John 2:1–11; 10:37–38)
- His character (Luke 23:34)
- His fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy
- His conquest of death

Evidence for the resurrection:

- **His absence from the tomb**
 - Theories:
 - Jesus did not die (John 19:33–34)
 - disciples stole the body
 - authorities stole the body
 - robbers stole the body (John 20:1–9)
- **His presence with the disciples**
 - Did they hallucinate?
 - Number of appearances over a six-week period
 - 11+ appearances
 - 500+ people
 - Nature of appearances (Luke 24:36–43)
- **Immediate effect**
 - Birth and growth of Christian church
- **Effect down the ages**
 - Experience of Christians down the ages
 - Over 2,300 million Christians in the world today

RECOMMENDED READING

Mere Christianity

C. S. Lewis

Jesus is

Judah Smith

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