

**Non-Christian Sources for New Testament:
Records Confirming Reliability of New Testament**

I. Josephus (Jewish Historian, AD 37/38 to after AD 100)

A. *Jewish Antiquities: 20.9.1 § 200 (AD 93-94)*

<p>“Being therefore this kind of person [i.e., a heartless Sadducee], Ananus, thinking that he had a favorable opportunity because Festus had died and Albinus was still on his way, called a meeting [literally, ‘sanhedrin’] of judges and brought into it the brother of Jesus who is called Messiah, James by name, and some others. He made the accusation that they had transgressed the law and he handed them over to be stoned.”¹</p>	<p>Key Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James • Jesus’ brother • Persecution • Martyrdom
---	--

B. *Jewish Antiquities: 18.3.3 § 63-64 (AD 93-94)*

<p>“At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a teacher of people who receive the truth with pleasure. And he gained a following both among many Jews and among many of Greek origin. And when Pilate, because of an accusation made by the leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians (named after him) has not died out.”²</p>	<p>Greek Text (minus late Christian additions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus • “startling deeds” • Disciples • Crucified • Pilate • Christians
---	--

<p>“At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. His conduct was good, and (he) was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.”³</p>	<p>Arabic/Coptic Text (corroborating text)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above
---	---

¹ John Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, Vol. 1, p. 1:57 (1991) (brackets in original); see also Robert Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, p. 83 (2000)(translating “Messiah” as “Christ” and including Greek text).

² John Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, Vol. 1, p. 1:61 (1991) (revised text deleting likely Christian additions: (1) “if indeed one should call him a man,” (2) “He was the Messiah,” and (3) “For he appeared to them on the third day, living again, just as the divine prophets had spoken of these and countless other wondrous things about him”); see also Robert Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, p. 83 (2000) (with Greek text and revised translation).

³ James Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism*, p. 95 (1988) citing translation by Shlomo Pines, *An Arabic Version of Testimonium Flavianum and Its Implications* (1971).

II. **Tacitus (Roman historian, about AD 56 - 120)**

A. **Background**

Tacitus “is generally considered the greatest Roman historian.”⁴ He served in a “series of important administrative posts, including procounsul of Asia in 112-113” and wrote a multi-volume set of *Histories* covering the reign of Roman emperors, including his last (and unfinished work), “*Annals*.”⁵

B. ***Annals* 15:44 (around AD 116 covering years of AD 14-68)**

<p>“But neither human effort nor the emperor’s generosity nor the placating of the gods ended the scandalous belief that the fire had been ordered. Therefore, to put down the rumor, Nero substituted as culprits and punished in the most unusual ways those hated for their shameful acts [<i>flagitia</i>], whom the crowd called ‘Chrestians.’ The founder of this name, Christ, had been executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate [Greek text omitted]. Suppressed for a time, the deadly superstition erupted again not only in Judea, the origin of this evil, but also in the city [Rome], where all things horrible and shameful from everywhere come together and become popular. Therefore, first those who admitted to it were arrested, then on their information a very large multitude was convicted, not so much for the crime of arson as for hatred of the human race [Greek text omitted]. Derision was added to their end: they were covered with the skins of wild animals and torn to death by dogs; or they were crucified and when the day ended they were burned as torches.”⁶</p>	<p>Key Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ as founder • Crucified • By Pontius Pilate • Reign of Tiberius • Christians in Rome • Large Multitude • Persecution • Brutal Death <p>Hostile to Christians</p>
---	---

⁴ Robert Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, p. 39 (2000).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*, pp. 41-42; see also John Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, Vol. 1, p. 1:89-90 (1991) (“passage is obviously genuine” as “the very anti-Christian tone of the text makes Christian origin almost impossible”).