

# FIREWALL: An Apologetics Seminar

## 10 Amazing Evidences to Prove Christianity

Pastor Jason Dennett's Notes

### **JESUS IS THE LORD!** *3 Great Evidences*

#### ***The Historical Evidence for Christ - "Jesus truly existed!"***

***\*\*18 Ancient Non-Christian Sources for Jesus\*\****

#### ANCIENT HISTORIANS (4)

*FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS, Jewish Historian (37-97 AD)*

- *The first reference is to James, "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ."*
- *"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."*

*TACITUS, Roman Historian (55-120 AD)*

- *"Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at **the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed."***

SUETONIUS, Roman Historian (40-120 AD)

- "Because the Jews at Rome caused continuous disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from the city."
- "After the great fire at Rome...Punishments were also inflicted on the **Christians, a sect professing a new and mischievous religious belief.**"

THALLUS, Roman Historian (52 AD)

- Julius Africanus (221AD) quotes Thallus: "On the whole world there **pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun.**"

ANCIENT GOVERNMENT SOURCES (3)

PLINY THE YOUNGER, Government Official (112 AD)

- "They (the 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, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food - but food of an ordinary and innocent kind."

EMPEROR TRAJAN, Roman Emperor (98-117 AD)

- "The method you have pursued, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those denounced to you as Christians is extremely proper. It is not possible to lay down any general rule which can be applied as the fixed standard in all cases of this nature. No search should be made for these people; when they are denounced and found guilty they must be punished; with the restriction, however, that when the party denies himself to be a Christian, and shall give proof that he is not (that is, by adoring our Gods) he shall be pardoned on the ground of repentance, even though he may have formerly incurred suspicion. Informations without the accuser's name subscribed must not be admitted in evidence against anyone, as it is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and by no means agreeable to the spirit of the age."

EMPEROR HADRIAN, Roman Emperor (117-138AD)

- "I do not wish, therefore, that the matter should be passed by without examination, so that these men may neither be harassed, nor opportunity of malicious proceedings be offered to informers. If, therefore, the provincials can clearly evince their charges against the Christians, so as to answer before the tribunal, let them pursue this course only, but not by mere petitions, and mere outcries against the Christians. For it is far more proper, if any one would bring an accusation, that you should examine it."

## ANCIENT GNOSTIC SOURCES (6)

### THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH, Gentile source (3rd cent. AD)

- *"the Word came into the midst . . . it became a body."*
- *"For when they had seen him and had heard him, he granted them to taste him and to smell him and to touch the beloved Son. When he had appeared instructing them about the Father . . . . For he came by means of fleshly appearance."*
- *"Jesus was patient in accepting sufferings . . . since he knows that his death is life for many . . . he was nailed to a tree; he published the edict of the Father on the cross. . He draws himself down to death through life . . . eternity clothes him. Having stripped himself of the perishable rags, he put on imperishability, which no one can possibly take away from him."*

### THE APOCRYPHON OF JOHN, Gentile source (2nd cent. AD)

- *"It happened [one day]when Jo[h]n, the brother] of James,--who are the sons of Ze[bed]ee--went up and came to the temple, that a [Ph]arisee named Arimanius approached him and said to him, "[Where] is your master whom you followed?" And he [said] to him, "He has gone to the **place from which he came.**" The Pharisee said to him, "[This Nazarene] deceived you (pl.) with deception and filled [your ears with lies] and closed [your hearts and turned you] from the traditions [of your fathers]."*

### THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS, Gentile source (2nd cent. AD)

- *"..the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke."*
- *"Jesus said, **"It is I who am the light which is above them all. It is I who am the All. From Me did the All come forth, and unto Me did the All extend. Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find Me there."***
- *Jesus is identified as "living" or as the "Living One," a reference to his post resurrection life.*

### THE TREATISE OF THE RESURRECTION, Gentile source (2nd cent. AD)

- *"The Lord . . . existed in flesh and . . . revealed himself as Son of God . . . Now the Son of God, dear Rheginos, was also Son of Man. He embraced them both, possessing the humanity and the divinity, so that **on the one hand he might vanquish death through his being Son of God, and that on the other through the Son of Man the restoration to the Pleroma might occur; because he was originally from above, a seed of the Truth, before this structure (of the cosmos) had come into being.**"*
- *"For we have known the Son of Man, and we have believed that he rose from among the dead. This is he of whom we say, "He became the destruction of death, as he is a Great One in whom they believe." Great are those who believe."*

- *"The Savior swallowed up death... He transformed [himself] into an imperishable Aeon and raised himself up, having swallowed the visible by the invisible, and he gave us the way of our immortality... Do not think the resurrection is an illusion. It is no illusion, but it is truth. Indeed, it is more fitting to say that the world is an illusion, rather than the resurrection which has come into being through our Lord the Savior, Jesus Christ."*

#### ACTS OF PONTIUS PILATE, Gentile source (2nd cent. AD)

- Justin Martyr (150AD) wrote: *"And the expression, "They pierced my hands and my feet," was used in reference to the nails of the cross which were fixed in His hands and feet. And after he was crucified, they cast lots upon his vesture, and they that crucified Him parted it among them. And that these things did happen you can ascertain in the "Acts" of Pontius Pilate."*
- Justin lists healing miracles and asserts, *"And that He did those things, you can learn from the Acts of Pontius Pilate."*
- Tertullian (200AD) referenced this letter: *"Tiberius accordingly, in whose days the Christian name made its entry into the world, having himself received intelligence from Palestine of events which had clearly shown the truth of Christ's divinity, brought the matter before the senate, with his own decision in favour of Christ. The senate, because it had not given the approval itself, rejected his proposal. Caesar held to his opinion, threatening wrath against all accusers of the Christians."*

#### PHLEGON, Gentile source (3rd cent. AD)

- Origen (200AD) wrote this of Phlegon: *"Now Phlegon, in the thirteenth or fourteenth book, I think, of his Chronicles, not only ascribed to Jesus a knowledge of future events (although falling into confusion about some things which refer to Peter, as if they referred to Jesus), but also testified that the result corresponded to His predictions...And with regard to the eclipse in the time of Tiberius Caesar, in whose reign Jesus appears to have been crucified, and the great earthquakes which then took place, Phlegon too, I think, has written in the thirteenth or fourteenth book of his Chronicles."*
- Origen directly quoted Phlegon: *"Jesus, while alive, was of no assistance to himself, but that he arose after death, and exhibited the marks of his punishment, and showed how his hands had been pierced by nails."*
- Julius Africanus (220AD) also quoted Phlegon: *"Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth to the ninth hour."*

#### ANCIENT JEWISH SOURCES (2)

##### TOLEDOTH JESU, Jewish Document (5th cent. AD)

- This anti Christian document not only refers to Jesus, but gives an interesting account of what happened to Jesus' body after his death. It relates that his disciples planned to steal his body. However, a

gardener named Juda discovered their plans and dug a new grave in **his garden. Then he removed Jesus' body from Joseph's tomb and placed it in his own newly dug grave.** The disciples came to the original tomb, found Jesus' body gone and proclaimed him risen. The Jewish leaders also proceeded to Joseph's tomb and found it empty. Juda then took them to his grave and dug up the body of Jesus. The Jewish leaders were greatly relieved and wanted to take the body. Juda replied that he would sell them the body of Jesus and did so for thirty pieces of silver. The Jewish priests then dragged Jesus' body through the streets of Jerusalem.

THE TALMUD, Jewish Document (1st-3rd cent. AD)

- **"On the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, "He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Any one who can say anything in his favour, let him come forward and plead on his behalf." But since nothing was brought forward in his favour he was hanged on the eve of the Passover!"**

ANCIENT GENTILE SOURCES (3)

LUCIAN, Greek satirist (2nd cent. AD)

- "The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day -- the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. . . . You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self devotion which are so common **among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on faith, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property.**"

MARA BAR SERAPION, imprisoned Syrian father (1st-3rd cent. AD)

- "What advantage did the Athenians gain from putting Socrates to death? Famine and plague came upon them as a judgment for their crime. What advantage did the men of Samos gain from burning Pythagoras? In a moment their land was covered with sand. What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their wise King? It was just after that that their kingdom was abolished. God justly avenged these three wise men: the Athenians died of hunger; the Samians were overwhelmed by the sea; the Jews, ruined and driven from their land, live in complete dispersion. But Socrates did not die for good; he lived on the statue of Hera. Nor did the wise King die for good; he lived on in the teaching which he had given."

THE KORAN 4:157 (7th cent. AD)

- "That they said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the **Messenger of Allah";- but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not.**"

THE KORAN 2:253 (7th cent. AD)

- "We have made some of these messengers to excel the others among them are they to whom Allah spoke, and some of them He exalted by (many degrees of) rank; and We gave clear miracles to Isa son of Marium, and strengthened him with the holy spirit. And if Allah had pleased, those after them would not have fought one with another after clear arguments had come to them, but they disagreed; so there were some of them who believed and others who denied; and if Allah had pleased they would not have fought one with another, but Allah brings about what He intends."

**The Prophetic Evidence for Christ - "Jesus truly is Messiah!"**

### **PROPHECIES ABOUT JESUS CHRIST?**

- Only the Bible has legitimate Prophecy.
- Only the Bible is 100% accurate in Prophecy.
- Only the Bible stakes it's claim to truth on Prophecy. (Isa 41:20-24)
- Over 27% of the Bible is Prophecy.
- There are over 1,800 specific predictions
- These focus on over 730 separate matters
- There are over 300 separate prophecies about "Messiah", a coming Deliverer.
- **HOW HARD WOULD IT BE FOR THESE 300 PROPHECIES TO BE FULFILLED BY ONE PERSON?**

### **CHANCES FOR 8 TO BE FULFILLED ACCIDENTALLY?**

- **Dr. Peter Stoner, was Chairman of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena City College until 1953; Chairman of the science division, Westmont College, 1953-57; Professor Emeritus of Science, Westmont College; Professor Emeritus of Mathematics and Astronomy, Pasadena City College.**
- Dr. Stoner, using the Laws of Probability, calculated the odds of one man fulfilling the major prophecies made concerning the Messiah. He submitted his figures for review to a committee of the American Scientific Affiliation. Upon examination, they verified that his calculations were dependable and accurate in regard to the scientific material presented. This research is published in his famous book "Science Speaks" by Moody Press.
- **Messianic Prophecy #1: Born in the town of Bethlehem - 1/100,000**
- **Messianic Prophecy #2: Presented as King on a donkey - 1/100**
- **Messianic Prophecy #3: Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver - 1/1,000**
- **Messianic Prophecy #4: Return refused; Temple; Field... - 1/100,000**
- **Messianic Prophecy #5: Wounds in hands by friends - 1/1,000**
- **Messianic Prophecy #6: No defense though innocent - 1/1,000**
- **Messianic Prophecy #7: Died w wicked; buried w rich - 1/1,000**
- **Messianic Prophecy #8: Death by means of Crucifixion - 1/10,000**

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· **Combined Probability: 1 x 10<sup>17</sup> or 1/100,000,000,000,000,000**

