

Week 6: June 15

The Resurrection

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I. How we know that Jesus died on the cross

A. Tacitus

1. The Roman historian **Tacitus**, writing in the early 2nd century CE (around 116 CE), made one of the earliest non-Christian references to the crucifixion of Jesus in his work *Annals* (Book 15, Chapter 44). Here's the key passage, translated from Latin:

"Christus, from whom the name [Christian] 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..."

2. Key Points Tacitus Makes:

- **Jesus was crucified** – Referred to indirectly as "suffered the extreme penalty" (a common euphemism for crucifixion).
- **Under Pontius Pilate** – Identifies the Roman official responsible.
- **During the reign of Emperor Tiberius** – Places the crucifixion within a specific historical timeframe (Tiberius reigned 14–37 CE).
- **Early Christianity was spreading** – Tacitus views the movement negatively, calling it a "mischievous superstition."
- **Rome was affected** – He notes that Christianity had reached Rome by the time he was writing.

3. Historical Importance:

- Tacitus' account is significant because it is a **hostile, non-Christian source** confirming basic details of the crucifixion.
- He likely used **official Roman records or common knowledge** in elite Roman circles as his source.

- It confirms that **Jesus existed**, was **executed under Roman authority**, and that his followers became numerous despite persecution.

B. Josephus

1. The Jewish historian Josephus who was an eye-witness to the sacking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, in book 18 of the Antiquities of the Jews:

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works— a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ.

And when **Pilate**, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, **had condemned him to the cross**, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; **for he appeared to them alive again the third day**, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him.

And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

2. In book 20:

"...so he [the high priest Ananus] assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called **Christ**, whose name was **James**, and some others. When he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned."

3. 39 ancient sources, 22 relate this fact, often very detailed, 11 are non-Christian sources

C. What are the details?

1. It was a public execution, John 19:18
2. 4 soldiers were guarding the tomb, Matt 27:26, 27:54
3. Jesus' friends and enemies watched him die
4. Crucifixion on Friday but couldn't leave the body on the cross on the Sabbath. Legs not broken, John 19:31-32

5. Soldiers knew Jesus was dead, John 19:33
6. Soldier pierced Jesus' side, John 19:34
7. Soldiers confirmed to Pilate that Jesus was dead, Mark 15:43-45
8. Apostle John was an eyewitness and detailed it
9. "Christ died", repeated a dozen times in Acts & the epistles
10. The disciples quickly prepared the body for burial:
 - Wrapped in linen clothes
 - 100 pounds of spices, Jewish custom
 - Encased like a mummy
 - Tomb secured because it was a well-known location, Matt 27:61-66
 - Tomb sealed; guards posted
 - Stone between 1 - 2 tons (2000 - 4000 pounds)
 - Stone "extremely large", Mark 16:4

D. How bad were the wounds?

1. He was scourged. What was the process?
2. He was crucified. Details from the Mayo Clinic.

II. How we know that Jesus was resurrected

A. The prophetic word

1. Old Testament:

Prophecy	Theme	Interpretation
Isaiah 53	Suffering Servant	Messiah dies for sins
Psalms 22	Forsaken, pierced	Crucifixion details
Zechariah 12:10	Piercing & mourning	Messiah's death
Daniel 9:26	"Cut off" Anointed One	Messiah's death
Psalms 16:10	Not see decay	Resurrection
Hosea 6:2	Revived on third day	Resurrection typology
Jonah 1:17	3 days in fish	Prefigures resurrection

2. New Testament

Gospel	Key Prediction	Phrase
Matthew 16:21	First Prediction	"Killed, on the third day raised"
Mark 8:31	First Prediction	"After three days rise again"
Luke 9:22	First Prediction	"On the third day be raised"
Matthew 17:22-23	Second Prediction	"About to be betrayed"
Mark 9:31	Second Prediction	"Son of Man, being betrayed"
Luke 9:44-45	Second Prediction	"Son of Man, betrayed"
Matthew 20:18-19	Third Prediction	"Crucified... raised to life"
Mark 10:33-34	Third Prediction	"Mocked, scourge, spit upon"
Luke 18:31-33	Third Prediction	"Delivered to the gentiles..."
Matthew 12:40	Jonah Typology	"Three days and three nights"

III. The resurrection hoax theories

A. Jesus swooned on the cross

1. He was given a drug to appear that He died
2. He was revived by the cool air, damp air in the tomb.
3. With so much blood loss, external injuries, a ruptured heart, onset of shock; how would have moved the stone from the inside?

B. Pilate was bribed

1. He was bribed to have Jesus taken down from the cross before death
2. Would have no motive to help perpetuate this hoax
3. He confirmed with the soldier that Jesus was truly dead

B. The disciples stole the body

1. They would have had to move the stone while the guards slept
2. They would have had to also break the Roman seal on the tomb, which would have most likely ended in a death sentence
3. The disciples were in hiding during this time and feared retaliation and no motive to risk their lives
4. They would have died for a lie, which no one does

C. The Romans stole the body

1. There is no motive
2. Had a stronger motive NOT to steal the body
3. Like Pilate, would have helped perpetuate the hoax

D. The Jews stole the body

1. Like the Romans, no motive
2. They would have done anything to keep the body in the tomb

E. Joseph of Arimathea stole the body

1. There is no motive
2. If not a true believer, he could have easily produced the body

F. The tomb wasn't empty

1. The Jews or Romans would have just produced the body
2. The guards would not have been bribed to lie about the tomb

G. The disciples went to the wrong tomb

1. Jesus was buried in a private tomb which would not have been confused with a public cemetery
2. Both the women and the disciples would have made the same mistake
3. John and Peter both saw the grave clothes in the tomb

4. The Jews would have gone to the correct tomb and produced the body

H. Mass hallucination of the risen Lord

1. There are too many separate appearances to hundreds of people
2. Sightings over 40 days and a wide geographic area
3. Hallucinations are a personal nature and never on a mass level
4. People hallucinate when they are expecting to see something; the disciples were not expecting to see Jesus risen