

## Has God Spoken?

Week 1

*Each of the core doctrines for him is like an individual brick that stacks on top of the others. If you pull one out, the whole wall starts to crumble. It appears quite strong and rigid, but if you begin to rethink or discuss even one brick, the whole thing is in danger. God is bigger than any wall. -Rob Bell, Velvet Elvis*

### Part 1 – Expectations

What this class is NOT:

This is not a class for debating Young Earth v. Old Earth Creationism, a global or local flood, or other \_\_\_\_\_ debates.

This class is not about causing you to \_\_\_\_\_ the Bible.

This class is not an \_\_\_\_\_ study.

What this class IS:

This class is for seekers of the \_\_\_\_\_ and those who call themselves \_\_\_\_\_.

This is a class where some of your closest held beliefs will be \_\_\_\_\_.

This class is focused on the \_\_\_\_\_ that there is a right way and a wrong way to interpret the Bible.

A little about ME:

I have a \_\_\_\_\_ degree from an AG (read: conservative theologically) School.

I believe that the Bible is the \_\_\_\_\_ Word of God.

My doctrinal beliefs closely mirror if not completely overlap everything that \_\_\_\_\_ believes and is consistent with historic creeds.

I have run much or most of what I'm about to tell you past \_\_\_\_\_ prior to teaching here.

### Part 2 – Why we need this class

*Pop quiz, hotshot. There's a bomb on a bus. Once the bus goes 50 miles an hour, the bomb is armed. If it drops below 50, it blows up. What do you do? What do you do? - SPEED*

We Christians are followers of \_\_\_\_\_, and any time that we get away from the \_\_\_\_\_ we put out the light we are here to shine in this dark world.

When it comes to the Bible we need to always be \_\_\_\_\_. Both about its strengths and its weaknesses.

Pop Quiz:

1. Do you believe the Bible should be read/ taken literally?

2. Is the Bible the "inerrant Word of God?"

3. Can you trust the Bible 100%

4. Is the Bible we have now the same as the autographs?

5. Are there additions or changes to the Bible?

6. Does the Bible have answers for all the questions of the world?

7. Were the Bible books selected 300 years after Christ's death?

8. Are there other books that should be in the Bible?

# 01 The Historicity of Jesus

Recommended Reading:

Heresy by Michael Koren

Has God Really Spoken? By Hank Hanegraaff

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth by Gordon D. Fee

### Part 3 – The Historicity of Jesus

*Exercise (not Exorcize) your Faith.*

*Fill in the blanks with events from Jesus' life and early church practices & doctrines, starting with his birth to his death and the first church. Stay topical when possible as opposed to detailed (like the two examples below). You do not need to have all the blanks filled in.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Jesus rose from the dead.
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Jesus is God and worshipped as God.
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_

*Draw a line from your answers to these quotes from non-Christian historians from the first and second centuries. Some quotes may be linked to several of the fill in the blanks.*

A. "It was by means of sorcery that [Jesus] was able to accomplish the wonders which he performed... It is by the names of certain demons, and by the use of incantations, that the Christians appear to be possessed of [miraculous] powers." Celsus, Greek

B. "Chrestus, the founder of the [Christian] name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius." – Tacitus, Roman

C. "Jesus had come from a village in Judea, and was the son of a poor Jewess... His mother had been turned out by her husband, who was a carpenter... she gave birth to Jesus, a bastard." – Celsus, Greek

D. "[Followers of Christ] were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god..." – Pliny the Younger, Roman

E. "Jesus had assembled 10 or 11... tax-collectors, sailors, and fishermen..." – Celsus, Greek

F. "Jesus, on account of his poverty, was hired out to go to Egypt. While there he acquired certain [magical] powers... he returned home highly elated at possessing these powers, and on the strength of them gave himself to be a god..." – Celsus, Greek

G. "Jesus, a wise man... was a doer of wonderful works... He was the Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross..." – Josephus, Jew

H. "Let us believe that these cures, or the resurrection, of the feeding of multitudes with a few loaves... these are nothing more than the tricks of jugglers..." – Celsus, Greek

I. "The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day – he distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account... it was impressed on them... [to] deny the gods of Greece and worship the crucified sage..." – Lucian, Greek

J. "For [Jesus] appeared to them alive again on the third day." – Josephus, Jew

K. "[Jesus] was deserted and delivered up by those who had been his associates, who had him for their teacher, and who believed he was the savior and the son of the greatest God..." – Celsus, Greek

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## Part 4 – It is finished!

*“That Jesus lived, and that in the first decades after his life and ministry people knew what he had said and what he demanded of us, is beyond intelligent dispute.” – Michael Koren, Heresy*

Bottom line is this: we would know about Jesus and what his disciples and followers believed even without using the Bible as a source.

We can show historical, extra-Biblical evidence of what his followers believed and testified to:

That Jesus was born in Judea, did miracles, claimed to be God, was killed by Romans at the request of Jews, was resurrected a short time afterward and his eye-witness followers believed this resurrection so fully that they gave their life rather than recant their beliefs.

Pliny the Younger, in his role as torturer of Christians would put them in front of a statue of Cesar and tell them to worship it. But they would not, “None of those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do.”

When someone says that the Biblical accounts of Jesus’ life can’t be trusted all you need to do is tell them of these authors, none of whom were followers of Jesus.

**Prayer:** *Lord, thank you for coming here and thank you for the life that you lived and for your willingness to die for my sins. Thank you for giving us so many evidences of your life and for building my faith. Help me to live like I believe them; like I believe you. Transform my life. I love you. Amen.*

## Notes for further reading (from Wikipedia):

**Publius (or Gaius) Cornelius Tacitus** (AD 56 – AD 117) was a senator and a historian of the Roman Empire. The surviving portions of his two major works—the *Annals* and the *Histories*—examine the reigns of the Roman Emperors Tiberius, Claudius, Nero and those who reigned in the Year of the Four Emperors.

**Titus Flavius Josephus** (37 – c. 100), <sup>[2]</sup> also called **Joseph ben Matityahu** (Biblical Hebrew: *Yosef ben Matityahu*), was a 1st-century Romano-Jewish historian and hagiographer of priestly and royal ancestry who recorded Jewish history, with special emphasis on the 1st century AD and the First Jewish–Roman War, which resulted in the Destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70.

**Celsus** (Greek: *Κέλσος*) was a 2nd century Greek philosopher and opponent of Early Christianity. He is known for his literary work, *The True Word* (Account, Doctrine or Discourse) (*Λόγος Ἀληθής*), written about by Origen. This work, c. 177 is the earliest known comprehensive attack on Christianity.

**Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus**, born **Gaius Caecilius** or **Gaius Caecilius Cilo** (61 AD – ca. 112 AD), better known as **Pliny the Younger**, was a lawyer, author, and magistrate of Ancient Rome. Pliny's uncle, Pliny the Elder, helped raise and educate him. They were both witnesses to the eruption of Vesuvius on 24 August 79 AD.

**Lucian of Samosata** (Ancient Greek: Λουκιανὸς ὁ Σαμοσατεύς, Latin: *Lucianus Samosatensis*; c. AD 125 – after AD 180) was a rhetorician and satirist who wrote in the Greek language. He is noted for his witty and scoffing nature. Although he wrote solely in Greek, he was ethnically Assyrian.

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