

January 15, 2023

# The View

*"Sirs, we wish to see Jesus." – John 12:21*

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## Welcome Visitors

Our goal at the Folsom church of Christ is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence.

We are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church; we have no earthly "headquarters."

The five elders oversee this church and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily for the benefit of our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask the preacher or one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate when is passed.  
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

## Schedule

### The Lord's Day

#### 9:30 AM Bible Classes

*Auditorium: "Love Your Bible"*

*Young Adult Class: "Love, Service & Culture"*

#### 10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

David Posey

***"Love the Word" John 1:1-18***

*Livestream at 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>*

#### 5:00 PM @ the Building

*Bible Class: "Praying the Psalms" (Auditorium)*

*High School Class @ 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey's home*

Middle school class: monthly (contact David Sanderson ([david.r.sanderson@intel.com](mailto:david.r.sanderson@intel.com)))

or Seth Reagan ([sethreagan@gmail.com](mailto:sethreagan@gmail.com))

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

### Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

*Auditorium: Love Your Bible*

*Room 12: Young Adults Class: "Love, Service & Culture"*

# WAS JESUS REAL?

EXCERPT FROM “WHO WAS JESUS? EXPLORING THE HISTORY OF JESUS’ LIFE”  
BIBLICAL ARCHEOLOGY SOCIETY, VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**W**e can learn quite a bit about Jesus from Tacitus and Josephus, two famous historians who were not Christian. Almost all the following statements about Jesus, which are asserted in the New Testament, are corroborated or confirmed by the relevant passages in Tacitus and Josephus. These independent historical sources — one a non-Christian Roman and the other Jewish — confirm what we are told in the Gospels:

**1. He existed as a man.** The historian Josephus grew up in a priestly family in first-century Palestine and wrote only decades after Jesus’ death. Jesus’ known associates, such as Jesus’ brother James, were his contemporaries. The historical

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and cultural context was second nature to Josephus. “If any Jewish writer were ever in a position to know about the non-existence of Jesus, it would have been Josephus. His implicit affirmation of the existence of Jesus has been, and still is, the most significant obstacle for those who argue that the extra-Biblical evidence is not probative on this point,” Robert Van Voorst observes. And Tacitus was careful enough not to report real executions of nonexistent people.

**2. His personal name was Jesus, as Josephus informs us.**

**3. He was called Christos in Greek,** which is a translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, both of which mean “anointed” or “(the) anointed one,” as Josephus states and Tacitus implies, unaware, by reporting, as Romans thought, that his name was Christus.

**4. He had a brother named James, as Josephus reports.**

**5. He won over both Jews and “Greeks”** (i.e., Gentiles of Hellenistic culture), according to Josephus, although it is anachronistic to say that they were “many” at the end of his life. Large growth in the number of Jesus’ actual followers came only after his death.

**6. Jewish leaders of the day expressed unfavorable opinions about him,** at least according to some versions of the *Testimonium Flavianum*.

**7. Pilate rendered the decision that he should be executed,** as both Tacitus and Josephus state.

**8. His execution was specifically by crucifixion,** according to Josephus.

**9. He was executed during Pontius Pilate’s governorship over Judea (26–36 C.E.),** as Josephus implies and Tacitus states, adding that it was during Tiberius’s reign.

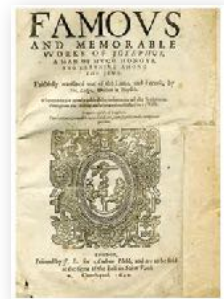
Some of Jesus’ followers did not abandon their personal loyalty to him even after his crucifixion but submitted to his teaching. They believed that Jesus later appeared to them alive in accordance with prophecies, most likely those found in the Hebrew Bible. A well-attested link between Jesus and Christians is that Christ, as a term used to identify Jesus, be-

came the basis of the term used to identify his followers: Christians. The Christian movement began in Judea, according to Tacitus. Josephus observes that it continued during the first century. Tacitus deplors the fact that during the second century it had spread as far as Rome. As far as we know, no ancient person ever seriously argued that Jesus did not exist. Referring to the first several centuries C.E., even a scholar as cautious and thorough as Robert Van Voorst freely observes, “... [N]o pagans and Jews who opposed Christianity denied Jesus’ historicity or even questioned it.”

## Josephus

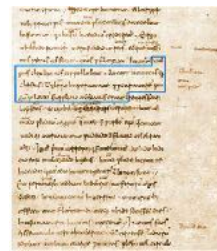
Famovs and Memorable Works of Josephvs, trans. by Thomas Lodge (London: J. L. for Andrew Hebb, 1640).

JAMES, BROTHER OF JESUS. In Jewish Antiquities, parts of which are included in this mid-17th-century book of translations, Josephus refers to a James, who is described as “the brother of Jesus-who-is-called-Messiah.” Josephus’s mention of Jesus to specify which James was being executed by the high priest Ananus in 62 C.E. affirms the existence of the historical Jesus.



## Roman historian Tacitus

Tacitus’s last major work, titled *Annals*, written c. 116–117 C.E., includes a biography of Nero. In 64 C.E., during a fire in Rome, Nero was suspected of secretly ordering the burning of a part of town where he wanted to carry out a building project, so he tried to shift the blame to Christians. This was the occasion for Tacitus to mention Christians, whom he despised. This is what he wrote—the following excerpt is translated from Latin by Robert Van Voorst:



[N]either human effort nor the emperor’s generosity nor the placating of the gods ended the scandalous belief that the fire had been ordered [by Nero]. Therefore, to put down the rumor, Nero substituted as culprits and punished in the most unusual ways those hated for

their shameful acts ... whom the crowd called “Chrestians.” The founder of this name, Christ [Christus in Latin], had been executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate ... 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. Tacitus’s terse statement about “Christus” clearly corroborates the New Testament on certain historical details of Jesus’ death. Tacitus presents four pieces of accurate knowledge about Jesus:

- (1) Christus, used by Tacitus to refer to Jesus, was one distinctive way by which some referred to him, even though Tacitus mistakenly took it for a personal name rather than an epithet or title;
- (2) this Christus was associated with the beginning of the movement of Christians, whose name originated from his;
- (3) he was executed by the Roman governor of Judea; and,
- (4) the time of his death was during Pontius Pilate’s governorship of Judea, during the reign of Tiberius. (Many New Testament scholars date Jesus’ death to c. 29 C.E.; Pilate governed Judea in 26–36 C.E., while Tiberius was emperor 14–37 C.E.).

## The Master's Touch

The poem on the right, one of my all-time favorites, never fails to move me. I first heard it from a surprising source. I was attending a sales convention and one of the speakers was an NFL Line Judge. His speech was full of truly hilarious anecdotes and stories, mostly from his experience in the NFL. But then, at the conclusion, he quietly began reciting this poem. The roomful of fun-loving sales people, suddenly got silent.

I was impressed with his "performance" — I gathered that the comedic ref was a God-fearing man, and wanted

"I frequently find myself a bit dusty and with loose strings and need Jesus to "dust me off" and "tighten me up." I need the touch of the Master's hand every day — and that touch is only a prayer away."

to conclude his speech in a way that made that clear. He gave us copies of the poem afterwards and I posted it on my wall at home — and read and pondered it often.

The poem reminds me that no matter how far a person sinks into the mire of sin, as long as he or she is breathing there is hope. A life that appears to have ship-wrecked is just a "Master's touch" away from recovery and repair. Paul put it this way:

...you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved... *Ephesians 2:1-5*

Sometimes it takes awhile to realize that there is no joy, no hope in a Godless world. After awhile, that "mess of pottage and glass of wine" lose their power to bring any joy into a life. Where do you go, then? What happens when your life gets "out of tune"? If we let him, God steps in, takes our worthless life and turns it into something special, almost magical.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. *Ephesians 2:10*

Some translate "workmanship" as "masterpiece." While the Greek word itself is simply "work," I like the idea of "masterpiece" because this is God's work and all of God's workmanship is a "masterpiece." As the indie rock band Halo Benders first album title proclaimed, "God don't make no junk!"

The poem makes that point so well. I frequently find myself a bit dusty and with loose strings and I need Jesus to "dust me off" and "tighten me up." I need the touch of the Master's hand every day — and that touch is only a prayer away.

God loves us. To him, our souls are precious and he "desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Our job is to turn our lives over to the "Master's Hand."

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## The Touch of the Master's Hand

**T**was battered and scarred, and the auctioneer  
Thought it scarcely worth his while  
To waste much time on the old violin,  
But held it up with a smile.

"What am I  
bidden, good  
folks," he cried,  
"Who'll start  
the bidding for  
me?"

"A dollar, a dollar.  
Then two! Only  
two?"

Two dollars,  
and who'll make it three?"

"Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;  
Going for three..." But no,  
From the room, far back, a grey-haired man  
Came forward and picked up the bow;  
Then wiping the dust from the old violin,  
And lightening the loosened strings,  
He played a melody pure and sweet,  
As a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,  
With a voice that was quiet and low,  
Said: "What am I bid for the old violin?"

And he held it up with the bow.  
"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two?  
Two thousand! And who'll make it three?  
Three thousand, once; three thousand, twice,  
And going and gone," said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried,  
"We do not quite understand.  
What changed its worth?" Swift came the reply:  
"The touch of the Master's hand."

And many a man with life out of tune,  
And battered and scarred with sin,  
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd  
Much like the old violin.

A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,  
A game and he travels on.  
He is "going once, and going twice,  
He's going and almost gone.  
But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd  
Never can quite understand  
The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought  
By the touch of the Master's hand.

Myra Welch

