

The Eternal Kingdom “Historical Evidence Concerning The Life of Jesus”

Lesson #3
March 27, 2018

Introduction: Just as a brief review, the first chapter we looked “The Fullness of Time”. At just the right time, at the appointed place, and for the designated purpose, Jesus was came into this sinful world, finished the work His Father had given Him, He then ascended back to Heaven from whence He came.

The cultural was favorable for His arrival and ministry unto mankind. Rome ensured a common language, a common currency, easy modes of travel by which the gospel could readily be taken into all of the world.

But sadly, the culture was corrupt. Immorality was rampant in Rome. Both Jew and Gentiles needed Christ and the salvation He offered them. Lost souls who were searching for truth and a place to belong had joyously discovered and were added unto His eternal kingdom, the church when obeying the gospel.

Man was truly on a quest for something and someone. Mystery religions offered man a false sense of hope and happiness, only to learn that true salvation was found in none of them. Christ and Christianity offered them all things necessary for hope, happiness, and salvation.

Of course, opposition came Christ’s way by way of religious sects in Jesus day, such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, and Essenes. Those groups are listed in chapter one of your Eternal Kingdom book and I would encourage you to read up on them.

Tonight we are going to spend our time discussing historical authors who wrote about events that transpired during the Christian movement in the first century. The first individual is...

Josephus

- A Jew born around 37 or 38 A.D.
- At the age of 26 he visited Rome and vowed to bring about better relationships between Jew and Gentile.
- He was well respected by Titus, Roman General and Emperor.
- Josephus wrote *History of the Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities*

Josephus was born right in the middle of the Christian movement. Pentecost occurred approximately around 33 A.D.

At the age of 26 he visited Rome and vowed to bring about better relations between the Romans and Jews. This would have been about 60 A.D. So what in the world was going on in bible times around the early and mid 60's? Well, by this time, Paul is writing his prison epistles Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. This is also about the same time the Luke was finished writing the book of Acts and it was circulated among the churches in Palestine, Asia, Achaia, Macedonia, etc. Joseph, being the history buff he was, was very familiar with this man Christ and His church. So he had a great deal of credibility.

When Titus, the son of Vespasian, whom might I add was a Roman general and eventually a Roman emperor; he entrusted Josephus to record the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. We see this work in *History of the Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities*.

(read some of Josephus' works from eternal kingdom and notice who he references i.e. Jesus, James, and John the one who immersed).

Tacitus

- Born in 56 A.D.
- He was a Roman senator and historian.
- He was not a fan of Christianity.
- He wrote about the year 100 in his work *Annals*.
- In his work, we learn seven things that support Christ and Christianity: 1) Christ is the founder of Christianity. 2) Christ was put to death by Pilate. 3) Christ' death occurred while Tiberius was emperor. 4) Christianity began in Judea. 5) Christians were persecuted in Rome around 64 A.D. 6) Christians were crucified to appease Nero, and 7) Tacitus recognized and acknowledged Christians were innocent.

(Tell when he was born and his occupation, his dislike for Christians; then read about Tac).

Suetonius

- Born around 88 A.D. according T.E.K. However most cited works say he was born around 68 to 69 A.D. (typo?).
- He was a Roman biographer.
- He confirmed in his writings about Claudius and Nero that Christians were banished from Rome and persecuted.

(Read Eternal Kingdom and bring up bullets accordingly).

Pliny

- Born in 61 A.D.
- He served as a government official in many capacities and as an author.
- He carried out orders by the Emperor to squash opposition to Rome, in doing so, he persecuted Christians along the way.

(Read the first four paragraphs from the Encyclopedia Britannica, then read book).

(Discuss the persecution he and others leveled against the church).

How great is your love the Lord and His Church at this point? What a blessing to called a Christian in share the freedoms and blessings we do today in this nation that was established on Christian values and principals.