

MADRID CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 2017

2017 ANNUAL THEME:

PUTTING ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD



EPHESIANS 6:10-20

"PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL" (EPHESIANS 6:11).

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

9AM

11AM



"NO SOLDIER GETS ENTANGLED IN CIVILIAN PURSUITS, SINCE HIS AIM IS TO PLEASE THE ONE WHO ENLISTED HIM" (2 TIMOTHY 2:4).

THE HISTORICAL JESUS

BY JASON SMITH

There are many in this world that believe Jesus was a mythological figure who never existed in history. They say His existence is nothing more than a legend that a group of men in the first century made up to fool the world. But is this true? What does the evidence say? Do we see records of Jesus' existence (other than what we have recorded in the Bible) that show that Jesus is not a legend, but a true historical figure? Yes we do. First, Tacitus, one of the greatest historians of Rome wrote of how Christians were made scapegoats for the Great Fire of Rome in AD64 and he wrote concerning the death of Christ, "...Christus, from whom the name (Christians) had it's origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of procurators, Pontius Pilatus..." (Annals 15.44.2-4)

The Jewish Talmud, written between 70AD and 200AD speaks of Jesus Christ, although in hostile language. This proves that the enemies of Christ believed that he was a historical figure. "On the eve of the Passover Yeshu (Jesus) was hanged [on a cross]. 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. Anyone who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf.' But since nothing was brought forward in his favor he was hanged [on a cross] on the eve of the Passover." (The Babylonian Talmud, translated by I. Epstein (London: Soncino, 1935), vol. III, Sanhedrin 43a, p. 281)

The Jewish historian Josephus, writing for the Roman government in the 70's A.D, records some incidental things regarding Christ and the church. He confirms that John the Baptist died at the hand of Herod (this same incident is recorded in the gospels) as well as the death of James. He says, "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James. . . ." He also speaks of "marvelous deeds" that Jesus supposedly did (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book XVIII, ch. V, p. 20; Book XX, ch. IX, p. 140).

Julius Africanus quotes the historian Thallus in a discussion of the darkness which followed the crucifixion of Christ (Extant Writings, 18). Pliny the Younger, in *Letters 10:96*, recorded early Christian worship practices including the fact that Christians worshiped Jesus as God and were very ethical, and he includes a reference to the Lord's Supper.

Lucian of Samosata was a second-century Greek writer who admits that Jesus was worshiped by Christians, introduced new teachings, and was crucified for them. He said that Jesus' teachings included the brotherhood of believers, the importance of conversion, and the importance of denying other gods. Christians lived according to Jesus' laws, believed themselves to be immortal, and were characterized by contempt for death, voluntary self-devotion, and renunciation of material goods.

We have late first century and early second century writings of the "Early Church Fathers" which include many references to Jesus and His teachings. It has been said that most the New Testament could be reconstructed from their writings. They quoted them, showing that the writings were already in existence in the 2nd century and that they believed the Gospels were historical writings. We also have all the Gnostic writings (The Gospel of Truth, The Apocryphon of John, The Gospel of Thomas, The Treatise on Resurrection, etc.) that all mention Jesus as a historical figure.

The historian, Will Durant, certainly no friend of Christianity, wrote, "That a few simple men should in one generation have invented so powerful and appealing a personality, so lofty an ethic, and so inspiring a vision of human brotherhood would be a miracle far more incredible than any recorded in the gospel (1944, p. 557).

These are just a few of the historians that have mentioned Jesus Christ and His disciples. The question must be asked, "How many historical accounts of someone do we need to have to believe He is a real historical figure?" All of the documents outside of the New Testament that talk about Jesus, even if you take away all early "Christian" sources, are enough to show that Jesus Christ lived, did amazing things during His ministry, was crucified by Pontus Pilate, and was not found in His tomb 3 days after His death. The tomb was found empty.

The only reason to reject the existence of Jesus is not a rational one, but an emotional one. There is a lot at stake if the historical accounts of Jesus' life are true. If Jesus is who He claimed to be (God), there is only One God and One way to eternal life, there is an absolute standard of truth and morality that we all we be held accountable to, miracles are possible, and the heavens and earth were created by God (not be evolution).

"If the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt." -F. F. Bruce

VISITORS:

THANK YOU FOR COMING TODAY!

If you are visiting with us and have any questions about what you have seen or heard today, please fill out a visitor's card or contact us using the information below. We would be happy to schedule a time to sit down with you and to answer your questions from God's word. If there is anything we can do to help you spiritually, please let us know. We are here to serve!

Call or text Jason @ 412-999-4837 or email him @
preacher@madridchurch.com

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 02/05 - Song Service
- 02/05 - Super Bowl party @ Kokemiller's house
- 02/26 - Shed potluck after services @ Larry & Franki's
- 03/05 - Song Service
- 03/19-03/22 - Gospel Meeting w/ Mike Richardson (Resisting the Attractions of the World)
- 03/26 - Shed potluck after services @ Larry & Franki's

If there is an event you are planning that you want put in the bulletin, let Jason know!

DAILY READING:

- 01/30 – Lev 1-4; Psalm 30
- 01/31 – Lev 5-7; Psalm 31
- 02/01 – Lev 8-10; Psalm 32
- 02/02 – Lev 11-13; Psalm 33
- 02/03 – Lev 14-15; Psalm 34
- 02/04 – Lev 16-18; Psalm 35
- 02/05 – Lev 19-20; Psalm 36

