

Did Jesus Actually Exist?

How do we verify history? Take a second to think about how we approach historical information. We open a textbook, read a biography, or watch a documentary and trust these sources to accurately report information about what has happened in the past — especially past events we were not around to see with our own eyes.

There are ways of verifying history, especially history of the last 50 years. We have videos that document speeches and big moments in world history. We have print publications, newspapers, and photos. But how do we verify history that happened before we had the modern technology that exists today?

It is challenging, but we continue to trust the sources that passed along the information. There are plenty of sources we can turn to for historical information we trust. Some sources we trust because the events

they speak about are verified by multiple sources. We trust others because the people who recorded the events had no real interest in lying or reason to lie. But there are other historical accounts that get called into question. Sometimes we call the historical accuracy of something into question because the people who wrote the account had something to gain by writing it a certain way. Other times we question a historical account because the “winner” of a conflict wrote the history and removed any contrary accounts. In some instances, there is only one version of a historical account, casting doubt on whether it happened at all.

The further back in history we go, the more challenging this problem becomes. Sometimes we are left with a mystery that is fun to talk about but does not have a big impact on our lives. How the Egyptians built giant pyramids is fascinating and somewhat of a mystery, and it is made all the more interesting by the lack of historical evidence that demonstrates how they did it (maybe aliens?). But, at the end of the day, how the Egyptians built the pyramids does not really impact our daily lives — other than maybe keeping us awake at night, searching Google for possible answers.

But some history does have an impact on our lives.

This is most true when it comes to Jesus. The records we have of Jesus are almost 2,000 years old and were primarily written by His followers. There are some non-Christian accounts of the life of Christ that verify that He existed and was, in fact, crucified by the Roman government as a revolutionary.

Despite this, an increasing number of people claim that Jesus never existed. They say that He is simply a fictional character, made up of the characteristics of several other gods or mythical figures who were popular around the same time.

This leads us to a really important question: Did Jesus actually exist?

The implications of this question are huge. Jesus is the centerpiece of a religion that has influenced Western culture since His death on the cross. His teachings have directed the lives of billions of people and, not only that, but people have died defending their faith in Christ. Most importantly, Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that His death and Resurrection are necessary parts of our salvation. Without Jesus, humanity is doomed to eternal death and separation from God.