

## The Path - Christian Apologetics

# Day 19: The Testimony of History and Philology

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Jesus Christ was a man of history. He lived and died during a definite period of time and affected mankind as no other. There are those who question whether he lived or not. It is not the historian who does so, Otto Betz, in "What do we know about Jesus? F.F. Bruce, Rayland's Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the university of Manchester historical evidence. The historicity of Christ is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar. It is not historians who propagate a Christ Myth."

There are various secular historical references which verify the accuracy of Biblical text in one way or another. For example, Thallus, a Samaritan-born historian who wrote in 52 A.D., tried to explain away the darkness which fell upon the land during Jesus' crucifixion. Thallus said he believed that the darkness was an eclipse of the sun. This interpretation of the darkness has been disputed, however, because it is impossible for a solar eclipse to take place during a full moon. The Passover occurs during a full moon, and Jesus was crucified at that time. Thallus, by trying to explain away this event that the Bible reports occurred, inadvertently confirmed its historicity.

Robert Wilson, in a scientific investigation of the Old Testament, reports that in translating 184 names from various languages, all were translated, "...with the most minute accuracy...there are about 40 of these kings living from 2000 B.C. to 400 B.C. Each appears in chronological order...with reference to the kings of other countries...no stronger argument for the substantial accuracy of the Old Testament records could possibly be imagined than this collection of kings. Mathematically is one chance in 750,000,000,000,000,000,000 that this accuracy is mere circumstance... The proof that the copies of the original documents have been handed down with substantial correctness for more than 2000 years cannot be denied."

Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian who was a contemporary of Jesus wrote: "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call Him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men that receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ, and when Pilate, at the



suggestion of principle men among us, had condemned Him to the cross, those that loved Him at the first did not forsake Him; for He appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning Him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from Him, are not extinct to this day.”

The Old Testaments relates in Genesis 11:1, and 9:

“And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech...therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”

The Bible records here that in the beginning there was only one language, and that the language was confounded at a later time (at the tower of Babel).

Many Modern day philologists attest to the likelihood that all languages came from one language. Philologist Alfredo Trombetti says that he can prove the common origin of all languages. Philologist Max Mueller also attests to the common origin and Otto Jespersen goes so far as to say that language was directly given to the first man by God.

While studying Latin at Michigan State University, a language professor once stated that all languages appear to have originated from one very complex language. The conclusion to be drawn from this information are obvious. 1) Man must have been very intelligent to have spoken and understand a complex language 2) This information would agree perfectly with the biblical narrative which describes only one language in the beginning.

Again, history and philology cannot prove the entire Bible to be true; however, they tend to verify the historicity of various Bible texts.



**Discussion:**

- 1. What would you say to someone who says he questions whether or not Jesus ever lived?**
- 2. How did the historian Thallus inadvertently confirm the Biblical account of darkness that covered the land during Jesus' crucifixion?**
- 3. How does the Biblical reporting of 40 kings in proper historical order give credibility to the accuracy of the Biblical text?**
- 4. How does the statement by philologists that all the language originated from one complex language say regarding the Biblical record? What does this say about the early intelligence of man?**