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Four Reasons that the Bible is a Trustworthy Source

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Jesus is Referenced Broadly in Ancient Writings

❖ Pagan Writings

- *Tactius* (AD 56-12) Rome's greatest historian.

- Wrote *Histories* and *Annals*, which you have probably seen references in history class.

"Christians derived their name from a man called Christ, who, during the reign of Emperor Tiberius had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate. The deadly superstition, this checked for the moment, broke out a fresh not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but also in the City of Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world meet and become popular."

- *Thallos* (AD 55) a historian.

- In his writings mentions a darkness coinciding with the crucifixion of Jesus.
- Mark 15:33, "At the sixth hour [during Jesus' crucifixion] darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour

- *Lucian* (AD 115-200) a Greek lecturer.

- Refers to the founder of the Christian movement in the following way.

"...the one whom they still worship, the man in Palestine who was crucified because he brought this new form of initiation into the world... Moreover, that first lawgiver of theirs persuaded them that they are all brothers the moment they transgress and deny the Greek gods and begin worshipping that crucified sophist and living by his laws."

❖ Jewish Writings

- *Josephus* (AD 37-100) the first century Jewish aristocrat, military general and historian.

- Wrote the following in his *Jewish Antiquities* that provided an entire history of the Jewish people up to his day.

"At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a teacher of people who received the truth with pleasure. And he gained a following both among many Jews and among many of Greek origin. And when Pilate, because of an accusation made by the leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians, named after him, has not died out."

The Written Documents from the Early Centuries are Numerous

- ❖ Greek Manuscripts
 - There are over 5,000 manuscripts of the New Testament in part of whole.
 - Best copies going back to 350AD

- ❖ Caesar's Gallic War
 - Composed between 58 and 50 BC.
 - There are only 9-10 good copies.
 - Best copies are about 900 years later than Caesar's day.

- ❖ Homer's Iliad
 - Dates back to 800BC
 - There are 650 copies available.

- ❖ Ignatius
 - Early Church leader who died in 115AD
 - Quoted a number of NT books in his many letters. (Matthew, John, Romans...)

The Events of Jesus Life were Recorded within an Acceptable Time Period

- ❖ The Gospels were in written form within 60 years of Jesus death.
 - Gospel Documents
 - Matthew (70ADish)
 - Mark (65ADish)
 - Luke (70ADish)
 - John (90ADish)

 - Muhammad, the founder of Islam
 - Lived between 570-632AD
 - Biography was composed around 760AD
 - 125 years after his death and continued to be edited for 50 years.

 - Buddha, the founder of Buddhism
 - Lived between 448-386BC
 - First records of life and sermons appeared 350 years after his death.

The Main Elements in the Gospels that Carry Along the Storyline would have been Culturally Rejected

❖ Women

- Were the first witnesses of the resurrections
 - This is in a society where women were assigned such low status that their testimony was not admissible evidence in court.

❖ Apostles

- The eventual leaders of the early church
 - Are often described as petty, jealous, almost impossible slowwitted and in the end cowards who failed their master.

❖ Crucifixion

- Any listener in Greek or Jewish culture would have been supremely suspect of anyone who was crucified
 - Only criminals are crucified