

Bible Trek Ministries

www.bibletrek.com

DESCRIPTION OF JESUS

(From a letter written by Roman Fublius Lentullus to the Emperor, Tiberius)

There lives at this time in Judea a man of singular virtue, whose name is Jesus Christ, whom the barbarians esteem as a prophet, but his followers love and adore him as the offspring of the immortal God.

He calls back the dead from the graves and heals all sorts of diseases with a word or a touch. He is a tall man-well shaped and of an amiable and reverend aspect, his hair color can hardly be matched, falling into graceful curls, waving about and very agreeably couching upon his shoulders, parted on the crown of his head, running as a stream to the front after the fashion of the Nazarites: his forehead high, large and imposing; his cheeks without spot or wrinkle, beautiful with a lovely red; his nose and mouth formed with exquisite symmetry; his beard, and of a color suitable to his hair, reaching below his chin and parted in the middle like a fork; his eyes bright blue, clear and serene, look innocent.

In proportion of body most perfect and captivating; his arms and hands delectable to behold. He rebukes with majesty, counsels with mildness, his whole address, whether in word or deed, being eloquent and grave.

...He is temperate, modest and wise. A man for his extraordinary beauty and divine perfection, surpassing the children of men in every sense.

From JOSEPHUS THE JEWISH WAR

(Translated by and introduction by G. A, Williamson)

THE MINISTRY AND CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

It was at that time that a man appeared - "if" man" is the right word-who had all the attributes of a man but seemed to be something greater. His actions certainly, were superhuman, for he worked such wonderful and amazing miracles that I for one cannot regard him as a man; yet in view of his likeness to ourselves I cannot regard him as an angel either. Everything that some hidden power enabled him to do he did by an authoritative word. Some people said that their first Lawgiver had risen from the dead and had effected many marvelous cures; others thought he was a messenger from heaven. However, in many ways he broke the law - for instance, he did not observe the Sabbath in the traditional manner. At the same time his conduct was above reproach. He did not need to use his hands: a word sufficed to fulfill his every purpose.

Many of the common people flocked after him and followed his teaching. There was wave of excited expectation that he would enable the Jewish tribes to throw off the Roman yoke. As a rule he was to be found opposite the City on the Mount of Olives, where also he healed the sick. He gathered round him 150 assistants and masses of followers when they, saw his ability to do whatever he wished by a word, they told him that they wanted him to enter the City, destroy the Roman troops, and make himself king; but he took no notice.

When the suggestion came to the ears of the Jewish authorities, they met under the chairmanship of the high priest and exclaimed: "we are utterly incapable of resisting the Romans; but as the blow is about to fall we'd better go and tell Pilate what we've heard, and steer clear of trouble, in case he gets to know from someone else and confiscates our property, puts us to death, and turns our children adrift." So they went and told Pilate, who sent troops and butchered many of the common people. He then had the Miracle worker brought before him, held an inquiry, and expressed the opinion that he was a benefactor, not a

criminal or agitator or a would-be king. Then he let him go, as he had cured Pilate's wife when she was at the point of death.

Returning to his usual haunts he resumed his normal work. when the crowds grew bigger than ever, he earned by his actions an incomparable reputation. The exponents of the Law were mad with jealousy, and gave Pilate 30 talents to have him executed. Accepting the bribe, he gave them permission to carry out their wishes themselves. So they seized him and crucified him in defiance of all Jewish tradition.

THE RENDING OF THE VEIL AND THE RESURRECTION

In the days of our pious fathers this curtain was intact, but in our own generation it was a sorry sight for it had been suddenly rent from top to bottom at the time when by bribery they had secured the execution of the benefactor of men - the one who by his actions proved that he was no mere man. Many other awe-inspiring "signs" happened at the same moment. It is also stated that after his execution and entombment he disappeared entirely. Some people actually assert that he had risen; others retort that his friends stole him away. I for one cannot decide where the truth lies. A dead man cannot rise by his own power; but he might rise if aided by the prayers of another righteous man. Again, if an angel or other heavenly being, or God Himself, takes human form to fulfill his purpose, and after living among men dies and is buried, he can rise again at will. Moreover it is stated that he could not have been stolen away, as guards were posted round his tomb, 30 Romans and 1,000 Jews.

In addition the Talmud (Compilation of rabbinical tradition dating to about AD 200)...speaks of Christ, and several of the disciples by name...of his crucifixion...that he performed many and great miracles.

Tacitus (Roman historian and proconsul of Asia, c. AD 55-117) tells us that Christ was put to death by Pontius Pilate...under Tiberius, as a malefactor; that the people called Christians derived their name from him; that this superstition arose in Judea, and spread to Rome, where...only about thirty years after the death of Christ, the Christians were very numerous...(and) that the Christians were subjected to contempt and the most dreadful sufferings...some where crucified; while others, being daubed over with combustible materials, were set up as lights in the night time, and were burnt to death. this account is confirmed by Suetonius, and by Martial and Juvenal.

Pliny (the younger) was propraetor of Pontus and Bithynia (AD 112)...Many (Christians) were brought before him for their faith in Christ ...(and) he condemned them to death.

In addition the following:

Celsus Lucian Epictetus Emperor Marcus Antoninus Porphyry

.....specifically confirm the early history of Christianity and all confirm (so far as they go) the accounts in the New Testament..as do coins, medals and other inscriptions.

Excerpted from The Jewish Wars by Josephus and from " The Acts Of Pilate" © 1997, Impact Christian Books. Translated by Rev. W.D. Mahan - ancient records of Jesus recorded by contemporaries of Jesus. Available form Impact Christian Books 1-800-451-2708.

© 2,000 Bible Trek® Ministries www.bibletrek.com

[Back to Home](#)