

**What Think Ye of Christ?
Whose Son Is He?**
Matthew 22:42

The apostle John tells of certain Greeks who came to Philip and said, “Sir, we would see Jesus” (John 12:21). This is a very noble request and Christians throughout the world today desire that all men see Jesus and follow Him (I Corinthians 11:1) because he is the only way unto Jehovah God the Father. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

Even as Pilate asked, “What is truth?” (John 18:38), some today are asking, “Who is Jesus?” Jesus was a historical figure. From non-Biblical literature we learn:

❶ In A.D. 49 a wave of riots broke out in the very large Jewish community in the city of Rome. This trouble was so serious that the Emperor Claudius banished all Jews from the city. The Roman author **Suetonius** compiled biographies of the first twelve Roman emperors (from Julius Caesar onward) around A.D. 120. Writing about the emperor Claudius he states: “Because the Jews at Rome caused continuous disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, (Chrestus, a common slave-name, was a popular misspelling of the name of Christ) he expelled them from the city” (*Claudius* 25:4). A Biblical account of this event is recorded by the physician Luke, “...He found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome” (Acts 18:2).

❷ **Tacitus** in his Roman Annals (written between 115 and 117 A.D.) spoke of the Christians. “They

got their name from Christ, who was executed by sentence of the Procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius” (Tacitus, *Annals*, XV. 44).

❸ **Pliny** the younger, imperial legate of the Roman province of Bithynia located N.W. Asia Minor, wrote to the Emperor Trajan with a description of the worship of Christians. “They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before sunrise and reciting an antiphonal hymn to Christ as God, and binding themselves with an oath not to commit any crime, but to abstain from all acts of theft, robbery and adultery, from breaches of faith, from repudiating a trust when called upon to honor it. After this, it was their custom to separate, and then meet again to partake of food, but food of an ordinary and innocent kind” (From *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*, by F.F. Bruce, Eerdmans pub).

❹ About 52 A.D., **Thallus**, a freedman of Tiberius, wrote a history of the Eastern Mediterranean world from the Trojan War to his day. His history disappeared but was known by **Julius Africanus**. Julius Africanus describes the earthquake and the preternatural darkness which accompanied the crucifixion of Christ, and says that Thallus in Book three explains the darkness as an eclipse of the sun. (He also points out that this explanation was unacceptable because Jesus was crucified at full moon when no eclipse of the sun is possible) (*Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*, F.F. Bruce).

❺ **Josephus**, the Jewish historian, speaks of Jesus being condemned to the cross by Pilate and that “the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 18:3, 3). Joseph further speaks of James, the brother of Jesus, who is called the Christ (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 20:9, 1).

WHAT DID JEHOVAH GOD SAY OF JESUS?

At His baptism God acknowledged Jesus as His son. “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up

straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16-17). At the transfiguration of Jesus God spoke from heaven and said, “This is my beloved Son: hear ye him” (Mark 9:7).

WHAT DID JESUS SAY OF HIMSELF?

From the Bible we learn of Jesus through his own teachings. When answering the high priest’s question, “Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” Jesus replied, “I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14:61-62). In conversation with Philip Jesus stated, “Have I been so long time with you, and doest thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?” (John 14:9).

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT JESUS?

The Bible declares that Jesus was with Jehovah God in the beginning (John 1:1) and that all things were created through Him (John 1:2; Colossians 1:15-17). The word of God also points out that He was an apostle (one sent from God, Hebrews 3:1). He is declared to be the high priest (Hebrews 3:1) who offered His own blood for the sins of mankind (Hebrews 3:1; Hebrews 9:11-12; 10:12).

WHAT DID THE CONTEMPORARIES OF JESUS SAY ABOUT HIM?

When a pharisee by the name of Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night he stated, “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him” (John 3:2). When Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do men say that the Son of man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets” (Matthew 16:14). It is worthy to note that Jesus reminded the people of some of the most godly men who ever lived. When Jesus next asked his disciples, “But who say ye that I am, Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ,