# “Are There Non-Christian Sources Denying Jesus Lived?”

**I was just reading Michael Gleghorn’s article Ancient Evidence for Jesus from Non-Christian Sources. Are there any non-Christian sources saying Jesus didn’t live? How reliable are they?**

**Are there any non-Christian sources agreeing that Jesus did live, but making claims about Him which oppose or contradict what is said in the New Testament?**

Thanks for your letter. Yes, on both counts. But notice that my article is dealing with *ancient* evidence for Jesus. This is the best evidence available, for it is closest in time to the actual life of Jesus. Thus, concerning your first question, the non-Christian sources which say that Jesus didn’t live would all be very late. I’m not sure what the earliest such source is, but such sources would not be considered reliable. Such sources occasionally appear in our day, though this is very much a minority opinion among scholars. The fact is, the evidence for the life of Jesus is just too good to be competently denied. Those who deny that Jesus ever lived are really taking an extremely implausible (and even irrational) position.

Concerning your second question, there are a number of ancient sources along these lines. Such sources are not as ancient as the New Testament gospels or other New Testament documents (e.g. the letters of Paul, Peter, John, etc.). But such sources do exist. For one thing, some of the sources mentioned in my program would fall under this category. Think of some of the things said about Jesus in the Babylonian Talmud or in Lucian. But there would also be sources like the Gospels of Thomas, Peter, Mary Magdalene, Philip, etc, as well as other such ancient sources. Here it’s important to note that such

sources are not as old as the New Testament documents, which were written in the first century. These documents typically date to the third and fourth centuries—long after the New Testament was written (and long after the writings of Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, etc.). Also, these documents are typically characterized by a Gnostic theology, which presents an unbiblical view of Jesus. The church fathers (teachers and leaders in the early church) were wise to reject these books from the New Testament canon. Although they claim to be written by people like Mary Magdalene, Philip, Thomas, etc., they were not written by the early Christian disciples who bore these names. For more information on these subjects, please see my article Redeeming the Da Vinci Code for a much fuller explanation.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn
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