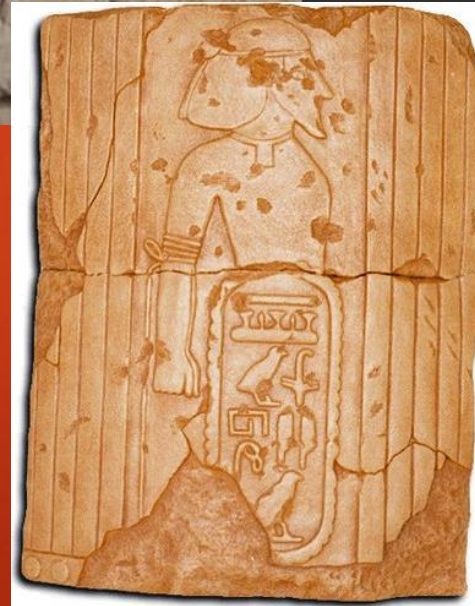


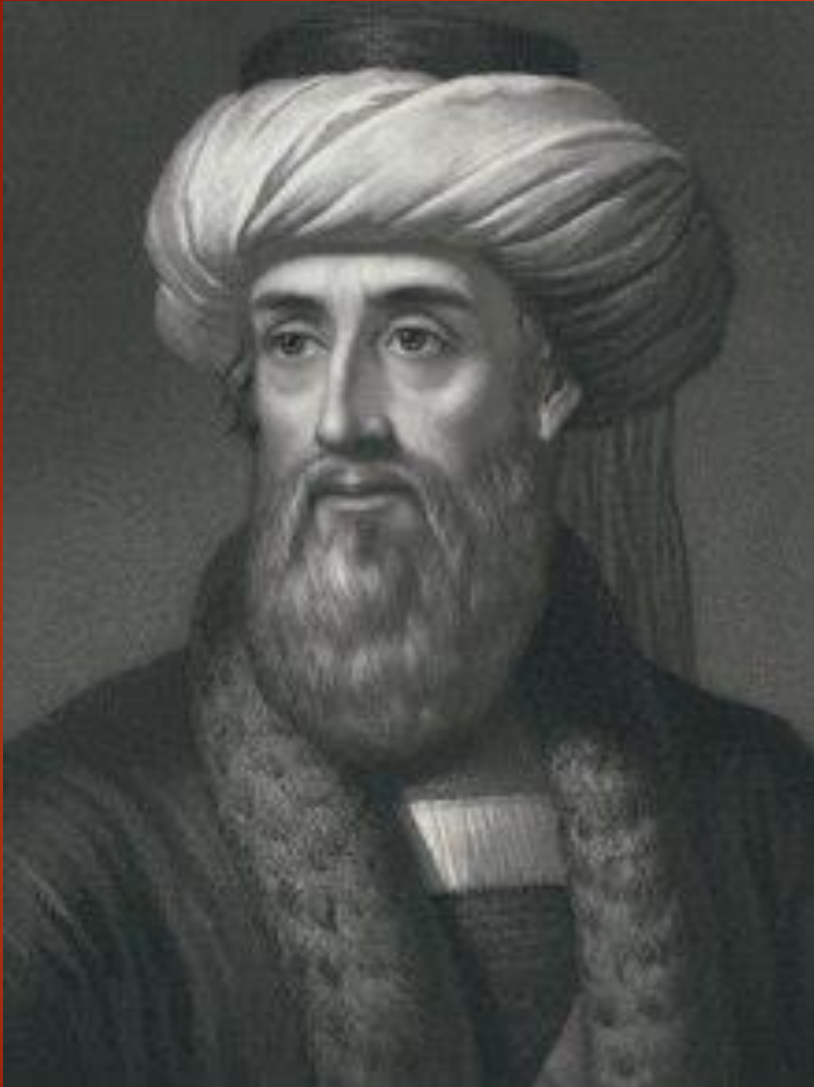
# early non-Biblical evidence of Jesus Christ

RICH SEWELL





- ▶ **Soleb, Northern Sudan**
- ▶ c1400 BC [time of Moses]
- ▶ List of pharaoh Amenhotep III's enemies listed on stele in hieroglyphics
- ▶ Foreigners/nomads, identified by the name of their god
- ▶ Carving shows prisoner bound with inscription – clearly Semitic not Arab
- ▶ YHWH – tetragrammaton = Yahweh; triune-God of the Bible
- ▶ Oldest reference to God, was a name clearly known to pharaoh at that time, 4,000 years ago!



- ▶ **Flavius Josephus**
- ▶ AD37 – cAD100
- ▶ Fought against Rome under emperor Vespasian but surrendered in AD67
- ▶ Taken into slavery, used as historian & translator for the emperor
- ▶ Josephus recorded siege of Jerusalem in AD70 and of Masada
- ▶ His works are the chief source of extra-biblical references to Pontius Pilate, Herod the Great, John the Baptist, James the brother of Jesus and Jesus of Nazareth
- ▶ Testimonium Flavianum – "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James."





- ▶ **James Ossuary**
- ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> century
- ▶ Jews used this burial practice between 20BC – AD 70
- ▶ Inscription: יעקוב בר יוסף אחי דישוע
- ▶ Ya'akov son of Yosef, brother of Yeshua
- ▶ 50.5cm by 25cm by 30.5cm (19.9 in × 9.8 in × 12.0 in)
- ▶ Statistically – only c1.71 people at the time & place with these names
- ▶ affirming the existence of James, Joseph & Jesus





- ▶ **Ignatius of Antioch**
- ▶ AD30 – AD130
- ▶ Ignatius's letter to the Trallians, chapter 18:2
- ▶ "For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb by Mary, of the seed of David, but by the Holy Ghost". – affirming the deity of Jesus
- ▶ Disciple of the Apostle John, along with Polycarp



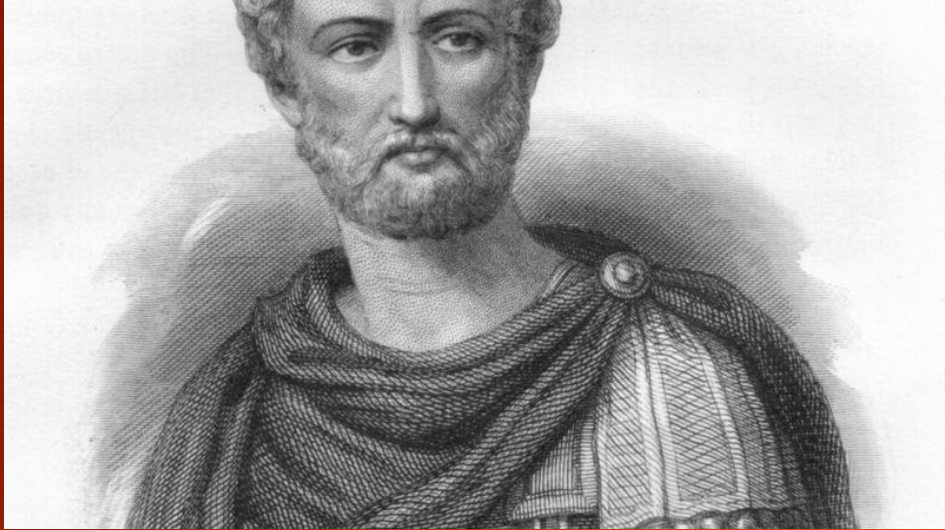


- ▶ **Clement of Rome**
- ▶ AD? – cAD100
- ▶ 3<sup>rd</sup> Bishop of Rome and first of the Apostolic Fathers, taught on the doctrine of the Trinity
- ▶ Apostolic Fathers were core Christian theologians among the Church Fathers, lived in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries and are believed to have personally known some of the Twelve Apostles or to have been significantly influenced by them
- ▶ Eusebius referred to Clement as a co-labourer of St Paul



- ▶ **Polycarp of Smyrna**
- ▶ AD69 – AD155
- ▶ Disciple of the Apostle John, along with Ignatius
- ▶ "How then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour? You threaten me with a fire that burns for a season, and after a little while is quenched; but you are ignorant of the fire of everlasting punishment that is prepared for the wicked."
- ▶ - died a martyr, bound and burned at the stake, then stabbed when the fire failed to consume his body



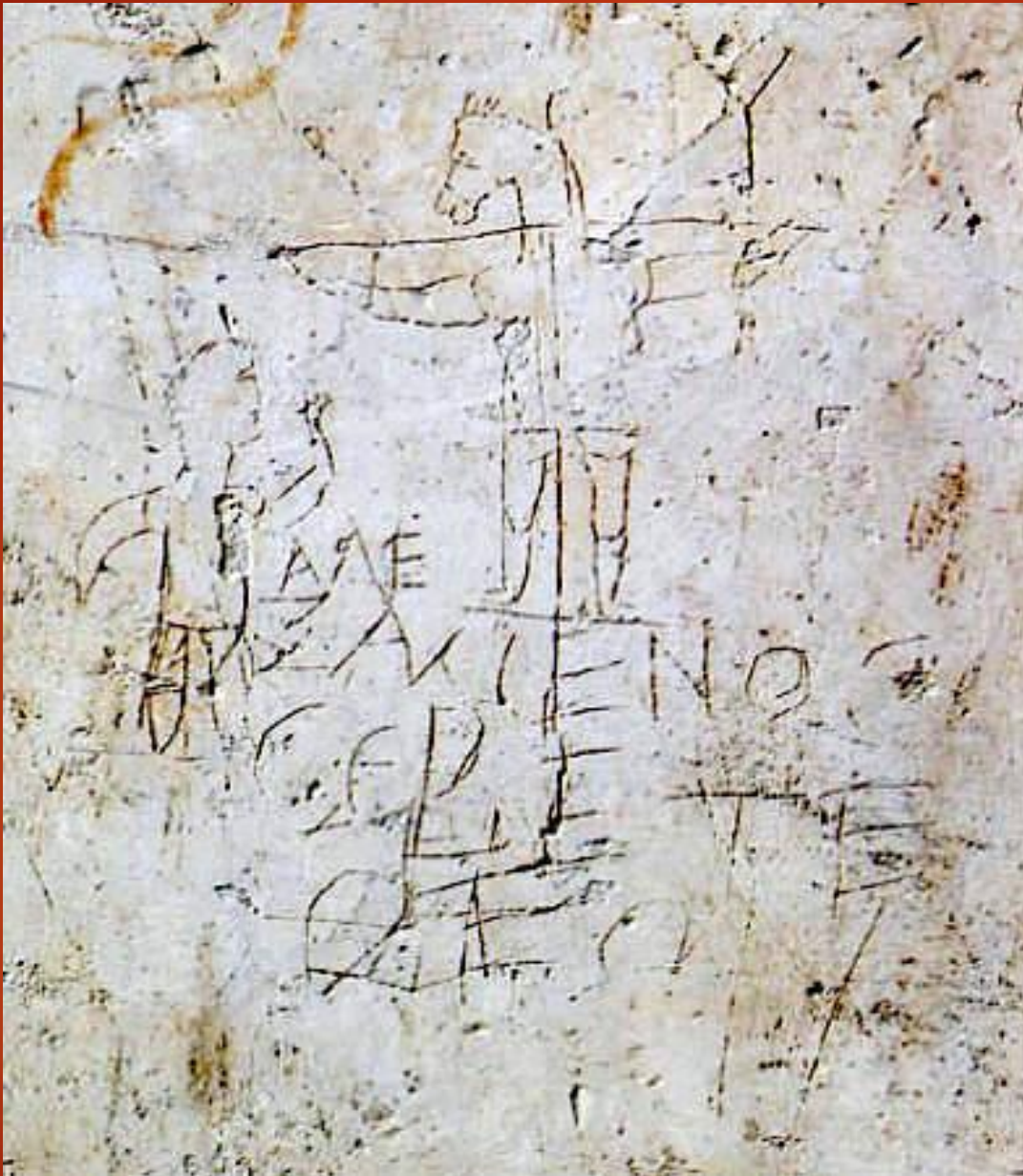


- ▶ **Pliny the Younger**
- ▶ AD61 – AD113
- ▶ Pliny & Trajan executed Christians but never mention any crime – other than being a Christian which was sufficient for judicial action
- ▶ Pliny gave Christians multiple chances to affirm innocence by making a sacrifice to a Roman god, if they refused 3x they were executed



- ▶ **Diocletian**
- ▶ AD240 – AD311
- ▶ Roman emperor, religious conservative, faithful to traditional Roman cult
- ▶ Worst persecutor of Christians, strived to remove all worship – seen as anti-Roman





- ▶ **The Alexamenos graffito**
- ▶ Est. date c200 AD
- ▶ Originally scratched into plaster of Roman/Palatine building.
- ▶ Graffiti translates to "Alexamenos worships [his] god,"
- ▶ Ridicule of Alex evidences the already well-known circumstances about Christ and the worship of Him.



- ▶ **Megiddo mosaic**
- ▶ AD 230
- ▶ Greatest archaeological find since the Dead Sea Scrolls
- ▶ Oldest site of Christian worship ever found – Jezreel Valley
- ▶ 16ft x 32ft floor - stone table to commemorate the Lord's supper
- ▶ Inscriptions include mention of centurion benefactor, women and "nomina sacra" - standard abbreviations for names of deity, like "Lord" (Κύριος) or "God" (Θεός) and "Jesus" (Ἰησοῦς)





- ▶ **ΙΧΘΥΣ (ICHTHYS)**
- ▶ Overtly Christian symbol, used before 'popularisation' of the crucifix
- ▶
  - I = Iesous = Jesus
  - CH = Christos = Christ
  - TH = Theou = God's
  - Y = Yios = Son
  - S = Soter = Savior



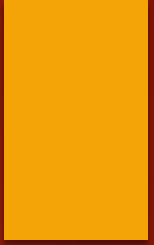


- ▶ **Inscriptions -**
- ▶ “The god-loving Akeptous...”
- ▶ “... has offered the table to...”
- ▶ “...God Jesus Christ...”
- ▶ “... as a memorial.”





- ▶ **Constantine the Great**
- ▶ AD272 – AD337
- ▶ first Roman emperor to convert to Christianity
- ▶ He played a pivotal role in elevating the status of Christianity in Rome, decriminalizing Christian practice and ceasing Christian persecution
- ▶ Convened the Council of Nicaea from May to July in AD 325, 1,700<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- ▶ The first effort to attain consensus in the church, the main accomplishment - settling the Christological issue of the divine nature of God the Son to God the Father
- ▶ Dispelling heresies by people such as Arius
- ▶ Construction of the Nicene Creed and the uniform observance of the date of Easter



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**QUESTIONS?**