

JOSEPHUS

In *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus writes about trial of James and refers to him as "...the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ." Another reference to Jesus is found, of which the text has come under considerable scrutiny. While most scholars believe the majority of the text is genuine, there are good reasons to believe that early Christian copyists took liberties to edit it.

About this time arose Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it be right to call him a man. For he was a doer of marvelous deeds, a teacher of men who gladly receive the truth. He drew to himself many persons, both of the Jews and also of the Gentiles.

He was the Christ. And when Pilate, upon the indictment of the leading men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him at the first did not cease to do so, for he appeared to them alive on the third day – the godly prophets having foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things about him. And even to this day the race of Christians, who are named from him, has not died out.

In 1972 a non-Christian Jewish professor of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Schlomo Pines, did an extensive study on Josephus. Using a text from the Arabic, he released what he believed were the original words of this passage:

At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after the crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.

The 19th century Church historian, Philip Schaff, said

"A character so original, so complete, so uniformly consistent, so perfect, so human and yet so high above all human greatness, can neither be a fraud nor a fiction. The poet, as has been well said, would in this case be greater than the hero. It would take more than a Jesus to invent a Jesus."