

Lesson 6

Historical Evidence

Objective

Students will learn that we can prove the Bible is from God by looking at Historical Evidence.

Supplies

Teachers and/or Coordinators ensure supplies are ready prior to each class.

Print From the Site:

- Historical Evidence - Student Activity Sheet - one per student
- Historical Evidence - Grade 5-6 Student Booklet - for each Gr. 5-6 student to take home or to read during the class time.
- Historical Evidence - Visual Aids for Lesson - one for teacher to show
- Bible
- Pens/Pencils/Pencil Crayons
- Attendance Chart
- Stickers (for attendance)

Optional Supplies

- Snack: Your Choice - Crackers, Fruit etc.
- Large Paper and Marker or Easel and Marker - for teacher

Teacher Tips

- ★ See Lesson 1

1) Introduction to Lesson

As students enter, welcome them and help them find a chair to sit at. Thank them for coming. Take attendance.

Say: **Over the weeks we have talked about different kinds of evidence and prophecies. Today's lesson will be proving the Bible through historical evidence. What does history say about Jesus? Is the Bible God's Word? In order to know we would need to show evidence that the Bible is beyond human ability. The Bible contains things that people on their own could simply not have known.**

So far we have looked at four lines of evidence:

The Bible is Scientifically Accurate – for example: paths of the sea, quarantine, soap, handling the dead, food safety requirements and more.

The Bible is Historically Accurate – it is 100% perfectly accurate. Remember archeological evidence such as the proof of David's existence, Hezekiah's tunnel, the Taylor prism, and Pilate's existence? All archeological evidence has only continued to prove the Bible is true.

The Bible has Perfect Prophecies – Humans could not come up with such accurate, detailed, correct prophecies on their own. These include prophecies written and fulfilled in the Old and New Testament. Prophecies such as the fall of Tyre, the fall of Babylon, and we saw just a few of the 300 prophecies concerning Jesus. All of which came true exactly as stated.

There are also other evidences such as:

The Bible is Perfectly United – Written over 1600 years. Forty writers from kings, priests, farmers, scribes, a soldier, doctor, shepherd, etc. Would we expect forty different men spread out over 1600 years, written in three different languages – Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, to agree on everything?

They were discussing important questions that have been debated for thousands of years: the meaning of life, what the afterlife is like, politics, psychology, science, the future, and they were always perfectly united. That is not human. We wouldn't expect even forty people today with the same language and background to be united on every topic without disagreements. That is supernatural.

The Bible is Short – What does this mean? The Bible was written in a way that huge ideas and topics were discussed but still the entire Bible can fit in a purse. Would people be able to do that without divine help? See a library to know that people are known for their many, many words, and books upon books that stack shelves, with each and every topic imaginable. Some books on a single topic are longer than the entire Bible.

The Bible has Godly qualities which are beyond the ability of humans to make. Today we are going to look at the historical accuracy of Jesus.

Questions: Has anyone you know ever said they don't believe Jesus was a real person? Let students answer.

What evidence did they give, if any? Let students answer. (There is no evidence Jesus did not exist - even experts say he truly did live on earth and they can prove it easily.)

We are going to look at outside sources and what they say about Jesus and Christians. Even non-Christian writers said Jesus was real. There were many that wrote about Jesus.

2) Class Time - Historical Evidence

15 minutes

*Have visual aid printed and ready to show the class during this section. There is a picture for point 1 and point 2.

Today we are going to prove Jesus was a real person who lived on earth and did amazing things by looking at historical evidence. We will look at enemies of Jesus who wrote about Him and what He did. If people who didn't believe the Christian faith but still wrote about Jesus being a real person said He was real as well as talk about the things He did, that proves Jesus really existed.

Evidence from Early Jewish Sources

1. Talmud – Written around 70 to 200 AD

We looked at Roman witnesses, now let's look at Jewish witnesses. Jewish rabbis wrote about Jesus in the Talmud. If a person as important as Jesus had existed in Jerusalem, surely the Jews would have had something to say about him. As F.F. Bruce a well-known scholar said:

According to the earlier Rabbis whose opinions are recorded in these writings, Jesus of Nazareth...who practiced magic...was hanged on

Passover Eve for heresy and misleading the people. His disciples, of whom five are named, healed the sick in his name (1953, p. 102).

Even though most of the Jewish leaders refused to accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God, they did say he was a historical man from a literal city known as Nazareth. They also wrote important facts about his life and death. Even that he could do “magic” and his followers could heal people.

2. Josephus – (Sometime after 70 AD) a former Jewish general who was captured by the Romans and wrote history for them.

Josephus writes about many of the people we read of in the New Testament: Pilate, Quirinius of Syria, the Caesars, the Herods, the Pharisees, Sadducees, Annas, Caiaphas, Felix, Festus, Jesus’ brother James, and the death of John the Baptist.

Josephus stated Jesus was the Chosen One of God, appeared alive on the third day, and was predicted about, to name a few. Josephus never claimed to be a believer but wrote this as historical truth while in Rome.

No true scholar denies that Jesus was a real person. Even experts that don’t believe in Jesus as the Son of God admit that Jesus was in fact a real person. Anyone who denies Jesus existed, denies reality and historical evidence.

Many writers who were either against Christians, or at the very least disliked them show us beyond what I have given you here that:

Jesus’ enemies agreed he did miracles, he was a good man, a Jewish teacher, was rejected by Jewish leaders, was crucified under Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius, that Christianity spread beyond Jerusalem to the point that the emperor blamed them when he burned Rome, and that they worshiped Jesus as God.

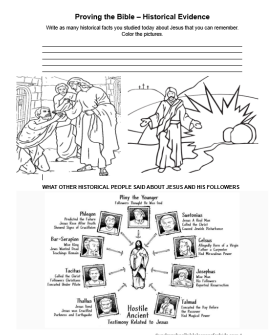
This evidence is enough to prove that Jesus was a real person. We accept he existed as historical fact!

Any thoughts or questions?

3) Activity Time - Student Booklet Activity Sheet

10-15 minutes

Hand out an activity sheet to each student. Have them look at the bottom and as class go through and read the other things the Romans and Jews said about Jesus and the Christians. Remember these are enemies of



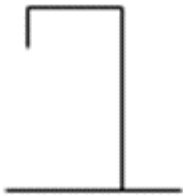
Christians so if they said it, it wasn't because they liked them and wanted to say nice things.

After everyone reads through the evidence of different writers. Ask if there are any questions and then let them color the pictures, all the pictures. As well, have the older students who are able write down as many facts as they can that show Jesus really existed and lived on earth and did amazing things, including rise from the dead.

4) Optional Hangman Game

5-10 minutes

Have a blank sheet of large paper or an easel with marker and while asking questions play hangman.



We're going to play hangman. I am going to draw a gallow (see image above). I am going to ask you questions about those who wrote about Jesus. Raise your hand, if you think you know the answer. If you get the question right, I don't draw any part of the hangman, but if you don't get the question right, I will draw a part of the hangman. If I draw the head, body, arms and legs I win, but if you can answer more questions correctly – you win!

- 1) **Did people see Jesus rise after death?** (Yes)
- 2) **Did Jesus really live on earth?** (Yes)
- 3) **What was one fact the Jews said about Jesus?** (Did miracles, had followers, was crucified (or hanged))
- 4) **What is one thing Josephus, the Jewish writer, said of Jesus?** (Said he was wise, had disciples, reported about Jesus' resurrection)
- 5) **Do you believe Jesus was a real person?** (Yes) (If no, ask for their evidence - there is no evidence, even experts who aren't Christians say Jesus was a real person.)
- 6) **What is the book that the Jews wrote about Jesus?** (The Talmud)
- 7) **What was the favorite thing you learned in today's lesson?** (Any response that is related)

- 8) **Give an example of Scientific Accuracy found in the Bible we studied already?**
(Soap recipe, importance of washing hands, how to quarantine, food regulations, etc.)
- 9) **Give an example of Archeological Evidence found about the Bible being real and accurate?** (King David's inscription, Pilate's Inscription, Hezekiah's Tunnel, Jericho's walls, etc.)
- 10) Any other questions you might want to ask them...

5) Optional Activity - Snack (Your Choice)

5 minutes

Hand out a few snacks to each student. Say, **Today I want you to enjoy a snack while we remember all the fun facts we learned. The Bible is full of facts that are proven including historical evidence. What was your favorite historical fact you learned today and why? Let's go around the room and share.**

This is more evidence that the Bible is accurate, which we would expect if it came from God.

6) Optional Activity - Memory Verse

2-5 minutes

For the next few weeks, have the students go to **John 8:32** in their Bibles and read the verse aloud as a class 2 times.

John 8:32 “ *and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*”

Other options include:

- You saying a word and having them repeat it as you go through the verse
- Have students repeat a small phrase ex: “and you will know...” a few times before working on the next phrase.
- Have students repeat after each other
- Ask students to think of hand gestures. Ex: Point to themselves “AND YOU”, point to their heads when they say “WILL KNOW”, etc. and then go through verses as a class with gestures.

Jesus is speaking about us having the ability to know what is true from the Bible. Everything in the Bible is true and we need to follow it to live good, pleasing lives.

7) Closing Prayer

Ask if there are any prayers the students want to share. Say closing prayer remembering to thank God for His Son and giving us the complete Word of God.