

PROVING JESUS

Part 34 of Foundations 260. 1 John 1:1-3.

Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. October 19, 2025.

THE ELEVATOR PITCH FOR CHRISTIANITY

An elevator pitch is a brief and bold presentation of a business idea

- What would your elevator pitch for Christianity sound like?

1 JOHN 1:1-3: BACKGROUND AND TEXT

The background of 1 John is:

- The writer is the apostle John, a close friend of Jesus.
- The recipients are Christians in what is now Turkey, probably around Ephesus. False teaching about Jesus had infiltrated the churches there.

1 John 1:1-3 (CSB)

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life

— 2 that life was revealed, and we have seen it and we testify and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us —

3 what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may also have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

JESUS CHRIST IS GOD MADE MANIFEST

1 John 1:1-3 introduces us to “the Word.”

- The Word is the Son of God, the Word of Life, and eternal life.

- The word became flesh and lived among us (John 1:14) - physically present in the world

John 1:18 (CSB) No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side —he has revealed him.

John's elevator pitch for the Christian faith is ...

- Jesus Christ is God made manifest. God became one of us to die on the cross and atone for our sins (1 John 2:2).
- But the historicity of Jesus is attacked by skeptics. So ...

THE PROOF FOR JESUS IN 1 JOHN 1:1-3

John's proof for Jesus is based on his personal experience.

- John heard, saw, watched closely, and touched the Word of Life, Jesus.
- This is first-century apologetics, a reasonable defense of Christianity.
- John isn't presenting a philosophical concept, a theory, or even a religion. No, he is introducing a Person he knew very well.

THE PROOF FOR JESUS OUTSIDE THE BIBLE

1. Modern Academics.

- Bart Ehrman is the Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina. He writes: *"I don't think there's any serious historian who doubts the existence of Jesus. We have more evidence for Jesus than we have for almost anybody from his time period."*¹
- Robert Van Voorst, a retired Professor of New Testament Studies at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, writes, *"no pagans or*

¹ ¹ <https://www.is-there-a-god.info/blog/belief/what-do-the-leading-secular-historians-say-about-jesus-2/>

*Jews who opposed Christianity denied Jesus' historicity or even questioned it*² during the first several centuries of the Christian era.

2. Ancient Authors.

- The Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, mentions Jesus twice in his *Antiquities of the Jews* (circa 93-94 AD). He writes that Jesus existed as a wise teacher who performed surprising deeds, attracted followers among Jews and Gentiles, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and whose followers continued after his death. Josephus also describes the execution of James and identifies him as "*the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ.*"
- Cornelius Tacitus (56-120 CE), one of the most reliable Roman historians, wrote about Jesus in his *Annals* (116 AD): "*Christus, from whom the name (Christianity) had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus.*"

3. Archaeological Artifacts.

- The Megiddo Mosaic is part of the floor of an ancient church. It contains an inscription dedicated to "God Jesus Christ," and a fish icon, an early Christian symbol. The early Christians believed in the deity of Jesus.

SO WHAT?

For followers of Jesus ...

- Be confident. Your faith is rational and reasonable. The Bible is reliable.

For not-yet followers of Jesus ...

- Be open-minded. Explore more.
- www.famousgod.com/jesus
- The "Believe, Baptism, Belong" booklet is on the book table.

² <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/jesus-historical-jesus/did-jesus-exist/>

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review Peter's October 19th teaching and study guide. For more resources, visit www.famousgod.com/small-groups.
- What were the main insights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What were the main applications or takeaways for your life?

Discuss

- If you were to share an "elevator pitch" about Jesus with someone skeptical, what would you say in two minutes or less?
- What are the main objections to the Christian faith posed by your friends who are not yet believers? What questions do they ask? Are some not curious at all? How do you engage with them?
- How does the evidence presented in Pastor Peter's sermon impact your own faith or doubts regarding Jesus?
- How have you overcome your doubts about the Christian faith? What conversations, explorations, books, videos, or people have helped you find faith?

Prayer Focus

- Pray for opportunities to "defend" the Christian faith with not-yet-believers.
- Pray that Cornerstone Church may grow as a witnessing community and that many spiritual seekers would come to our services or groups and find answers.