

= Jesus =

Jesus (/ ʒɛˈzʊz / JEE @-@ zuss Greek : Ἰησοῦς , translit . Iesous ; Hebrew : יֵשׁוּעַ , translit . Yēshuaʿ ? a? , lit . ' Yeshua ; " He saves " ' ; c . 4 BC ? c . AD 30) , also referred to as Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus Christ , was a Jewish preacher who became the central figure of Christianity . Christians believe him to be the Son of God and the awaited Jewish Messiah (Christ , the Anointed One) of the Old Testament .

Virtually all modern scholars of antiquity agree that Jesus existed historically , and they consider the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew , Mark , and Luke) to be the best sources for investigating the historical Jesus . Most scholars agree that Jesus was a Galilean Jewish rabbi who preached his message orally , was baptized by John the Baptist , and was crucified by the order of the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate . In the current mainstream view , Jesus was an apocalyptic preacher and the founder of a renewal movement within Judaism , although some prominent scholars argue that he was not apocalyptic . Jesus debated with Jewish authorities on the subject of God , performed some healings , taught in parables and gathered followers . After Jesus ' death , his followers believed he was resurrected , and the community they formed eventually became the Christian Church . His birth is celebrated annually on December 25 (or various dates in January for some eastern churches) as a holiday known as Christmas , and his resurrection is likewise celebrated as a holiday known as Easter . The widely used calendar era " AD " , from the Latin " Anno Domini " (" in the year of our Lord ") , and the alternative " CE " , are based on the birth of Jesus .

Christians believe that Jesus has a " unique significance " in the world . Christian doctrines include the beliefs that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit , was born of a virgin named Mary , performed miracles , founded the Church , died by crucifixion as a sacrifice to achieve atonement , rose from the dead , and ascended into Heaven , whence he will return . Most Christians believe Jesus enables humans to be reconciled to God . The Nicene Creed asserts that Jesus will judge the dead either before or after their bodily resurrection , an event tied to the Second Coming of Jesus in Christian eschatology ; though some believe Jesus 's role as savior has more existential or societal concerns than the afterlife , and a few notable theologians have suggested that Jesus will bring about a universal reconciliation . The great majority of Christians worship Jesus as the incarnation of God the Son , the second of three persons of a Divine Trinity . A minority of Christian denominations reject Trinitarianism , wholly or partly , as non @-@ scriptural .

In Islam , Jesus (commonly transliterated as Isa) is considered one of God 's important prophets and the Messiah . According to the Quran , Jesus was a bringer of scripture and was born of a virgin but was not the Son of God . The Quran says that Jesus himself never claimed divinity , and predicts that at the Last Judgment , Jesus will deny having ever made such a claim (Quran 5 : 116) . To most Muslims , Jesus was not crucified but was physically raised into Heaven by God . Judaism rejects the belief that Jesus was the awaited Messiah , arguing that his death on the cross signifies that he was rejected by God and that his resurrection is a Christian legend .

= = Etymology = =

A typical Jew in Jesus ' time had only one name , sometimes supplemented with the father 's name or the individual 's hometown . Thus , in the New Testament , Jesus is commonly referred to as " Jesus of Nazareth " (e.g. , Mark 10 : 47) . Jesus ' neighbors in Nazareth refer to him as " the carpenter , the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon " (Mark 6 : 3) , " the carpenter 's son " (Matthew 13 : 55) , or " Joseph 's son " (Luke 4 : 22) . In John , the disciple Philip refers to him as " Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth " (John 1 : 45) .

The name Jesus is derived from the Latin Iesus , a transliteration of the Greek Ἰησοῦς (Iesous) . The Greek form is a rendering of the Hebrew יֵשׁוּעַ (Yeshua) , a variant of the earlier name יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (Yehoshua) , in English " Joshua " . The name Yeshua appears to have been in use in Judea at the time of the birth of Jesus . The first century works of historian Flavius Josephus , who wrote in Koine Greek , the same language as that of the New Testament , refer to at least twenty different people with the name Jesus (i.e. Ἰησοῦς) . The etymology of Jesus ' name in the context of the New

Testament is generally given as " Yahweh is salvation " .

Since early Christianity , Christians have commonly referred to Jesus as " Jesus Christ " . The word Christ is derived from the Greek ??????? (Christos) , which is a translation of the Hebrew ????? (Meshiakh) , meaning the " anointed " and usually transliterated into English as " Messiah " . Christians designate Jesus as Christ because they believe he is the awaited Messiah prophesied in the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament . In postbiblical usage , Christ became viewed as a name ? one part of " Jesus Christ " ? but originally it was a title . The term " Christian " (meaning " one who owes allegiance to the person Christ " or simply " follower of Christ ") has been in use since the first century .

= = Canonical gospel accounts = =

The four canonical gospels (Mark , Matthew , Luke , and John) are the only substantial sources for the life and message of Jesus . Other parts of the New Testament , such as the Pauline epistles , which were probably written decades before the gospels , also include references to key episodes in his life , such as the Last Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 : 23 ? 26 . Acts of the Apostles (10 : 37 ? 38 and 19 : 4) refers to the early ministry of Jesus and its anticipation by John the Baptist . Acts 1 : 1 ? 11 says more about the Ascension of Jesus (also mentioned in 1 Timothy 3 : 16) than the canonical gospels do .

Some early Christian and Gnostic groups had separate descriptions of the life and teachings of Jesus that are not included in the New Testament . These include the Gospel of Thomas , the Gospel of Peter , and the Apocryphon of James , among many other apocryphal writings . Most scholars consider these much later and less reliable accounts than the canonical gospels .

= = Canonical gospels = =

The canonical gospels are four accounts , each written by a different author . According to the Marcan priority , the first to be written was the Gospel of Mark (written AD 60 ? 75) , followed by the Gospel of Matthew (AD 65 ? 85) , the Gospel of Luke (AD 65 ? 95) , and the Gospel of John (AD 75 ? 100) . They often differ in content and in the ordering of events .

Traditionally , the writing of the gospels has been attributed to four evangelists with close ties to Jesus : Mark was written by John Mark , an associate of Peter ; Matthew was written by one of Jesus ' disciples ; Luke was written by a companion of Paul , someone mentioned in a few epistles ; and John was written by another of Jesus ' disciples , in fact part of an inner group of disciples , along with Peter and John 's brother James .

Three of them , Matthew , Mark , and Luke , are known as the Synoptic Gospels , from the Greek ??? (syn " together ") and ????? (oopsis " view ") . They are similar in content , narrative arrangement , language and paragraph structure . Scholars generally agree that it is impossible to find any direct literary relationship between the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John . While the flow of some events (such as Jesus ' baptism , transfiguration , crucifixion and interactions with the apostles) are shared among the Synoptic Gospels , incidents such as the transfiguration do not appear in John , which also differs on other matters , such as the Cleansing of the Temple .

Most scholars agree , following what is known as the " Marcan hypothesis " , that the authors of Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source when writing their gospels . Matthew and Luke also share some content not found in Mark . To explain this , many scholars believe that in addition to Mark , another source (commonly called the " Q source ") was used by the two authors .

According to a broad scholarly consensus , the Synoptic Gospels , and not John , are the primary sources of historical information about Jesus . However , not everything contained in the New Testament gospels is considered to be historically reliable . Elements whose historical authenticity is disputed include the Nativity , the Massacre of the Innocents , the Resurrection , the Ascension , Jesus ' miracles , and the Sanhedrin trial , among others . Historians , according to Gerd Theissen , are right to be skeptical of miracles such as walking on water , but exorcisms and healings are well @-@ documented in many cultures and should be considered possible . Views on the gospels

range from their being inerrant descriptions of the life of Jesus to their providing little historical information about his life beyond the basics .

The Synoptics emphasize different aspects of Jesus . In Mark , Jesus is the Son of God whose mighty works demonstrate the presence of God 's Kingdom . He is a tireless wonder worker , the servant of both God and man . This short gospel records few of Jesus ' words or teachings . The Gospel of Matthew emphasizes that Jesus is the fulfillment of God 's will as revealed in the Old Testament , and he is the Lord of the Church . He is the kingly Messiah , referred to repeatedly as " king " and " Son of David . " A noteworthy feature of this gospel are the five discourses , collections of teachings on particular themes , including the Sermon on the Mount . Luke presents Jesus as the divine @-@ human savior who shows compassion to the needy . He is the friend of sinners and outcasts , come to seek and save the lost . This gospel includes Jesus ' most beloved parables , such as the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son .

The Synoptics and John agree on the main outline of Jesus ' life . John the Baptist precedes Jesus , their ministries overlap , and John witnesses to Jesus ' identity . Jesus teaches and performs miracles , at least partly in Galilee . He then visits Jerusalem , where the leaders have him crucified , and he is buried . After his tomb is found empty on Sunday , the risen Jesus presents himself to his followers .

The prologue to the Gospel of John identifies Jesus as an incarnation of the divine Word (Logos) . As the Word , Jesus was eternally present with God , active in all creation , and the source of humanity 's moral and spiritual nature . With this prologue , the evangelist establishes that Jesus is not only greater than any past human prophet but greater than any prophet could be . He not only speaks God 's Word ; he is God 's Word . In the Gospel of John , Jesus reveals his divine role publicly . Here he is the Bread of Life , the Light of the World , the True Vine and more .

In general , the authors of the New Testament showed little interest in an absolute chronology of Jesus or in synchronizing the episodes of his life with the secular history of the age . As stated in John 21 : 25 , the gospels do not claim to provide an exhaustive list of the events in the life of Jesus . The accounts were primarily written as theological documents in the context of early Christianity , with timelines as a secondary consideration . One manifestation of the gospels as theological documents rather than historical chronicles is that they devote about one third of their text to just seven days , namely the last week of the life of Jesus in Jerusalem , referred to as the Passion . Although the gospels do not provide enough details to satisfy the demands of modern historians regarding exact dates , it is possible to draw from them a general picture of the life story of Jesus .

== = Genealogy and nativity == =

Matthew and Luke each offer a genealogy of Jesus . Matthew traces Jesus ' ancestry to Abraham through David . Luke traces Jesus ' ancestry through Adam to God . The lists are identical between Abraham and David , but differ radically from that point . Traditional Christian scholars (starting with the historian Eusebius) have put forward various theories that seek to explain why the lineages are so different , such as that Matthew 's account follows the lineage of Joseph , while Luke 's follows the lineage of Mary . Modern biblical scholars such as Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan see both genealogies as inventions , conforming to Jewish literary convention .

Matthew and Luke each describe Jesus ' nativity (or birth) , especially that Jesus was born of a virgin in Bethlehem in fulfillment of prophecy . Luke 's account emphasizes events before the birth of Jesus and centers on Mary , while Matthew 's mostly covers those after the birth and centers on Joseph . Both accounts state that Jesus was born to Joseph and Mary , his betrothed , in Bethlehem , and both support the doctrine of the virgin birth , according to which Jesus was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary 's womb when she was still a virgin . The virgin birth has been a consistent tenet of orthodox Christian belief , although a number of liberal theologians have questioned it in the last 150 years . Matthew repeatedly cites the Old Testament to support the belief that Jesus is the Jews ' promised Messiah .

In Matthew , Joseph is troubled because Mary , his betrothed , is pregnant (Matthew 1 : 19 ? 20) , but in the first of Joseph 's three dreams an angel assures him not to be afraid to take Mary as his

wife , because her child was conceived by the Holy Spirit . In Matthew 2 : 1 ? 12 , wise men or Magi from the East bring gifts to the young Jesus as the King of the Jews . Herod hears of Jesus ' birth and , wanting him killed , orders the murders of male infants in Bethlehem . But an angel warns Joseph in his second dream , and the family flees to Egypt ? later to return and settle in Nazareth .

In Luke 1 : 31 ? 38 Mary learns from the angel Gabriel that she will conceive and bear a child called Jesus through the action of the Holy Spirit . When Mary is due to give birth , she and Joseph travel from Nazareth to Joseph 's ancestral home in Bethlehem to register in the census ordered by Caesar Augustus . While there Mary gives birth to Jesus , and as they have found no room in the inn , she places the newborn in a manger (Luke 2 : 1 ? 7) . An angel announces the birth to some shepherds , who go to Bethlehem to see Jesus , and subsequently spread the news abroad (Luke 2 : 8 ? 20) . After the presentation of Jesus at the Temple , Joseph , Mary and Jesus return to Nazareth .

= = = Early life , family , and profession = = =

Jesus ' childhood home is identified in the gospels of Luke and Matthew as the town of Nazareth in Galilee where he lived with his family . Although Joseph appears in descriptions of Jesus ' childhood , no mention is made of him thereafter . His other family members ? his mother , Mary , his brothers James , Joses (or Joseph) , Judas and Simon and his unnamed sisters ? are mentioned in the gospels and other sources .

According to Stephen L. Harris , Gospel of Mark says that Jesus comes into conflict with his neighbors and family . Jesus ' mother and brothers come to get him (3 : 31 ? 35) because people are saying that he is crazy (3 : 21) . Jesus responds that his followers are his true family . In John , Mary follows Jesus to his crucifixion , and he expresses concern over her well @-@ being (19 : 25 ? 27) .

Jesus is called a ?????? (tekton) in Mark 6 : 3 , traditionally understood as carpenter but could cover makers of objects in various materials , including builders . The gospels indicate that Jesus could read , paraphrase , and debate scripture , but this does not necessarily mean that he received formal scribal training . When Jesus is presented in the temple per Jewish Law , a man named Simeon says to Mary and Joseph that Jesus " shall stand as a sign of contradiction , while a sword will pierce your own soul . Then the secret thoughts of many will come to light . " (Luke 2 : 28 @-@ 35) When Jesus goes missing , they find him in the temple sitting among the teachers , listening to them and asking questions , and the people are amazed at his understanding and answers ; Mary scolds Jesus for going missing , to which Jesus replies that he must " be in his father 's house . " (Luke 2 : 41 @-@ 52)

= = = Baptism and temptation = = =

The Synoptic accounts of Jesus ' baptism are all preceded by information about John the Baptist . They show John preaching penance and repentance for the remission of sins and encouraging the giving of alms to the poor (Luke 3 : 11) as he baptizes people in the area of the River Jordan around Perea and foretells (Luke 3 : 16) the arrival of someone " more powerful " than he . Later , Jesus identifies John as " the Elijah who was to come " (Matthew 11 : 14 , Mark 9 : 13 @-@ 14) , the prophet who was expected to arrive before the " great and terrible day of the Lord " (Malachi 4 : 5) . Likewise , Luke says that John had the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1 : 17) .

In Mark , John baptizes Jesus , and as he comes out of the water he see the Holy Spirit descending to him like a dove and he hears a voice from heaven declaring him to be God 's son (Mark 1 : 9 ? 11) . This is one of two events described in the gospels where a voice from Heaven calls Jesus " Son " , the other being the Transfiguration . The spirit then drives him into the wilderness where he is tempted by Satan (Mark 1 : 12 ? 13) . Jesus then begins his ministry after John 's arrest (Mark 1 : 14) . Jesus ' baptism in Matthew is similar . Here , before Jesus ' baptism , John protests , saying , " I need to be baptized by you " (Matthew 3 : 14) . Jesus instructs him to carry on with the baptism " to fulfill all righteousness " (Matthew 3 : 15) . Matthew also details the three temptations that Satan

offers Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4 : 3 ? 11) . In Luke , the Holy Spirit descends as a dove after everyone has been baptized and Jesus is praying (Luke 3 : 21 @-@ 22) . John implicitly recognizes Jesus from prison after sending his followers to ask about him (Luke 7 : 18 ? 23) . Jesus ' baptism and temptation serve as preparation for his public ministry .

The Gospel of John leaves out Jesus ' baptism and temptation . Here , John the Baptist testifies that he saw the Spirit descend on Jesus (John 1 : 32) . John publicly proclaims Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb of God , and some of John 's followers become disciples of Jesus . In this Gospel , John denies that he is Elijah (John 1 : 21) . Before John is imprisoned , Jesus leads his followers to baptize disciples as well (John 3 : 22 @-@ 24) , and they baptize more people than John (John 4 : 1) .

= = = Public ministry = = =

The Synoptics depict two distinct geographical settings in Jesus ' ministry . The first takes place north of Judea in Galilee , where Jesus conducts a successful ministry ; and the second shows Jesus rejected and killed when he travels to Jerusalem . Notably , Jesus forbids those who recognize his identity to speak of it , including people he heals and demons he exorcises (see Messianic Secret) .

John depicts Jesus ' ministry as largely taking place in and around Jerusalem rather than in Galilee . In this Gospel , Jesus ' divine identity is publicly proclaimed and immediately recognized .

Scholars divide the ministry of Jesus into several stages . The Galilean ministry begins when Jesus returns to Galilee from the Judean Desert after rebuffing the temptation of Satan . Jesus preaches around Galilee , and in Matthew 4 : 18 ? 20 , his first disciples , who will eventually form the core of the early Church , encounter him and begin to travel with him . This period includes the Sermon on the Mount , one of Jesus ' major discourses , as well as the calming of the storm , the feeding of the 5 @,@ 000 , walking on water and a number of other miracles and parables . It ends with the Confession of Peter and the Transfiguration .

As Jesus travels towards Jerusalem , in the Perean ministry , he returns to the area where he was baptized , about a third of the way down from the Sea of Galilee along the Jordan (John 10 : 40 ? 42) . The final ministry in Jerusalem begins with Jesus ' triumphal entry into the city on Palm Sunday . In the Synoptic Gospels , during that week Jesus drives the money changers from the Temple and Judas bargains to betray him . This period culminates in the Last Supper and the Farewell Discourse .

= = = = Disciples and followers = = = =

Near the beginning of his ministry , Jesus appoints twelve apostles . In Matthew and Mark , despite Jesus only briefly requesting that they join him , Jesus ' first four apostles , who were fishermen , are described as immediately consenting , and abandoning their nets and boats to do so (Matthew 4 : 18 ? 22 , Mark 1 : 16 ? 20) . In John , Jesus ' first two apostles were disciples of John the Baptist . The Baptist sees Jesus and calls him the Lamb of God ; the two hear this and follow Jesus . In addition to the Twelve Apostles , the opening of the passage of the Sermon on the Plain identifies a much larger group of people as disciples (Luke 6 : 17) . Also , in Luke 10 : 1 ? 16 Jesus sends seventy or seventy @-@ two of his followers in pairs to prepare towns for his prospective visit . They are instructed to accept hospitality , heal the sick and spread the word that the Kingdom of God is coming .

In Mark , the disciples are notably obtuse . They fail to understand Jesus ' miracles (Mark 4 : 35 ? 41 , 6 : 52) , his parables (Mark 4 : 13) , or what " rising from the dead " would mean (Mark 9 : 9 ? 10) . When Jesus is later arrested , they desert him (see below) .

= = = = Teaching , preaching , and miracles = = = =

In the Synoptics , Jesus teaches extensively , often in parables , about the Kingdom of God (or , in

Matthew , the Kingdom of Heaven) . The Kingdom is described as both imminent (Mark 1 : 15) and already present in the ministry of Jesus (Luke 17 : 21) . Jesus promises inclusion in the Kingdom for those who accept his message (Mark 10 : 13 ? 27) . Jesus talks of the " Son of Man , " an apocalyptic figure who would come to gather the chosen .

Jesus calls people to repent their sins and to devote themselves completely to God . Jesus tells his followers to adhere to Jewish law , although he is perceived by some to have broken the law himself , for example regarding the Sabbath . When asked what the greatest commandment is , Jesus replies : " You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart , and with all your soul , and with all your mind ... And a second is like it : ? You shall love your neighbor as yourself " (Matthew 22 : 37 ? 39) . Other ethical teachings of Jesus include loving one 's enemies , refraining from hatred and lust , and turning the other cheek (Matthew 5 : 21 ? 44) . In the Gospel of John , when an adulteress is about to be stoned to death in accordance with Moses ' Law , the Pharisees ask Jesus what he will say in this situation , to which Jesus replied " Let anyone among you who has no sin be the first to throw a stone at her " , causing the accusers to go away , and Jesus says to the woman that he does not condemn her for no one has , and tells her to not sin again (John 8 : 1 @-@ 11) .

John 's Gospel presents the teachings of Jesus not merely as his own preaching , but as divine revelation . John the Baptist , for example , states in John 3 : 34 : " He whom God has sent speaks the words of God , for he gives the Spirit without measure . " In John 7 : 16 Jesus says , " My teaching is not mine but his who sent me . " He asserts the same thing in John 14 : 10 : " Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me ? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own ; but the Father who dwells in me does his works . "

In the gospels , the approximately thirty parables form about one third of Jesus ' recorded teachings . The parables appear within longer sermons and at other places in the narrative . They often contain symbolism , and usually relate the physical world to the spiritual . Common themes in these tales include the kindness and generosity of God and the perils of transgression . Some of his parables , such as the Prodigal Son (Luke 15 : 11 ? 32) , are relatively simple , while others , such as the Growing Seed (Mark 4 : 26 ? 29) , are sophisticated , profound and abstruse . When asked by his disciples about why he speaks in parables to the people , Jesus replies that the chosen disciples have been given to " know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven " , unlike the rest of their people , " For the one who has will be given more and he will have in abundance . But the one who does not have will be deprived even more . " , going on to say that the majority of their generation have grown " dull hearts " and thus are unable to understand (Matthew 13 : 10 @-@ 17) .

In the gospel accounts , Jesus devotes a large portion of his ministry performing miracles , especially healings . The miracles can be classified into two main categories : healing miracles and nature miracles . The healing miracles include cures for physical ailments , exorcisms , and resurrections of the dead . The nature miracles show Jesus ' power over nature , and include turning water into wine , walking on water , and calming a storm , among others . Jesus states that his miracles are from a divine source . When Jesus ' opponents suddenly accuse him of performing exorcisms by the power of Beelzebub , the prince of demons , Jesus counters that he performs them by the " Spirit of God " (Matthew 12 : 28) or " finger of God " , arguing that all logic suggests that Satan would not let his demons assist the Children of God because it would divide Satan 's house and bring his kingdom to desolation ; furthermore , he asks his opponents that if he exorcises by Beel 'zebub , " by whom do your sons cast them out ? " (Luke 11 : 20) . In Matthew 12 : 31 @-@ 32 , he goes on to say that while all manner of sin , " even insults against God " or " insults against the son of man " , shall be forgiven , whoever insults goodness (or " The Holy Spirit ") shall never be forgiven ; he / she carries the guilt of his / her sin forever .

In John , Jesus ' miracles are described as " signs " , performed to prove his mission and divinity . However , in the Synoptics , when asked by some teachers of the Law and some Pharisees to give miraculous signs to prove his authority , Jesus refuses , saying that no sign shall come to corrupt and evil people except the sign of the prophet Jonah . Also , in the Synoptic Gospels , the crowds regularly respond to Jesus ' miracles with awe and press on him to heal their sick . In John 's Gospel , Jesus is presented as unpressured by the crowds , who often respond to his miracles with trust and faith . One characteristic shared among all miracles of Jesus in the gospel accounts is that he

performed them freely and never requested or accepted any form of payment . The gospel episodes that include descriptions of the miracles of Jesus also often include teachings , and the miracles themselves involve an element of teaching . Many of the miracles teach the importance of faith . In the cleansing of ten lepers and the raising of Jairus ' daughter , for instance , the beneficiaries are told that their healing was due to their faith .

= = = Proclamation as Christ and Transfiguration = = =

At about the middle of each of the three Synoptic Gospels , two related episodes mark a turning point in the narrative : the Confession of Peter and the Transfiguration of Jesus . These events mark the beginnings of the gradual disclosure of the identity of Jesus to his disciples and his prediction of his own suffering and death . These two events are omitted in the Gospel of John .

In his Confession , Peter tells Jesus , " You are the Messiah , the Son of the living God . " Jesus affirms that Peter 's confession is divinely revealed truth .

In the Transfiguration (Matthew 17 : 1 ? 9 , Mark 9 : 2 ? 8 , and Luke 9 : 28 ? 36) , Jesus takes Peter and two other apostles up an unnamed mountain , where " he was transfigured before them , and his face shone like the sun , and his clothes became dazzling white . " A bright cloud appears around them , and a voice from the cloud says , " This is my Son , the Beloved ; with him I am well pleased ; listen to him " (Matthew 17 : 1 ? 9) . In 2 Peter 1 : 16 @-@ 18 , Peter himself affirms that he witnessed Jesus ' Transfiguration , stating that the apostolic tradition is based on eyewitness testimony .

= = = Passion Week = = =

The description of the last week of the life of Jesus (often called Passion Week) occupies about one third of the narrative in the canonical gospels , starting with Jesus ' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and ending with his Crucifixion .

= = = Activities in Jerusalem = = =

In the Synoptics , the last week in Jerusalem is the conclusion of the journey through Perea and Judea that Jesus began in Galilee . Jesus rides a young donkey into Jerusalem , reflecting an oracle from the Book of Zechariah in which the Jews ' humble king enters Jerusalem this way (Zechariah 9 : 9) . People along the way lay cloaks and small branches of trees (known as palm fronds) in front of him and sing part of Psalm 118 : 25 ? 26 .

Jesus next expels the money changers from the Temple , accusing them of turning it into a den of thieves through their commercial activities . Jesus then prophesies about the coming destruction , including false prophets , wars , earthquakes , celestial disorders , persecution of the faithful , the appearance of an " abomination of desolation , " and unendurable tribulations (Mark 13 : 1 ? 23) . The mysterious " Son of Man , " he says , will dispatch angels to gather the faithful from all parts of the earth (Mark 13 : 24 ? 27) . According to Stephen L. Harris , Jesus warns that these wonders will occur in the lifetimes of the hearers (Mark 13 : 28 ? 32) . In John , the Cleansing of the Temple occurs at the beginning of Jesus ' ministry instead of the end John 2 : 13 ? 16 .

Also in the Synoptics , Jesus comes into conflict with the Jewish elders , such as when they question his authority and when he criticizes them and calls them hypocrites . Judas Iscariot , one of the twelve apostles , secretly strikes a bargain with the Jewish elder , agreeing to betray Jesus to them for 30 silver coins .

The Gospel of John recounts of two other feasts in which Jesus taught in Jerusalem before the Passion Week (John 7 : 1 ? 10 : 42) . He returns near Jerusalem , in Bethany , when he raises Lazarus from the dead , which increases the tension between him and the authorities . The authorities then conspire to kill him (John 11) . Raising Lazarus is Jesus ' most potent sign yet . In Bethany , Mary of Bethany anoints Jesus ' feet , foreshadowing his entombment . Jesus then makes his Messianic entry into Jerusalem . The cheering crowds greeting Jesus as he enters Jerusalem

add to the animosity between him and the establishment . In John , Jesus has already cleansed the Temple during an earlier Passover visit to Jerusalem . John next recounts Jesus ' Last Supper with his disciples .

= = = = Last Supper = = = =

The Last Supper is the final meal that Jesus shares with his 12 apostles in Jerusalem before his crucifixion . The Last Supper is mentioned in all four canonical gospels ; Paul 's First Epistle to the Corinthians (11 : 23 ? 26) also refers to it . During the meal , Jesus predicts that one of his apostles will betray him . Despite each Apostle 's assertion that he would not betray him , Jesus reiterates that the betrayer would be one of those present . Matthew 26 : 23 ? 25 and John 13 : 26 ? 27 specifically identify Judas as the traitor .

In the Synoptics , Jesus takes bread , breaks it , and gives it to the disciples , saying , " This is my body , which is given for you " . He then has them all drink from a cup , saying , " This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood " (Luke 22 : 19 ? 20) . The Christian sacrament or ordinance of the Eucharist is based on these events . Although the Gospel of John does not include a description of the bread @-@ and @-@ wine ritual during the Last Supper , most scholars agree that John 6 : 22 ? 59 (the Bread of Life Discourse) has a eucharistic character and resonates with the institution narratives in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Pauline writings on the Last Supper .

In all four gospels , Jesus predicts that Peter will deny knowledge of him three times before the rooster crows the next morning . In Luke and John , the prediction is made during the Supper (Luke 22 : 34 , John 22 : 34) . In Matthew and Mark , the prediction is made after the Supper ; Jesus also predicts that all his disciples will desert him (Matthew 26 : 31 ? 34 , Mark 14 : 27 ? 30) . The Gospel of John provides the only account of Jesus washing his disciples ' feet after the meal . John also includes a long sermon by Jesus , preparing his disciples (now without Judas) for his departure . Chapters 14 ? 17 of the Gospel of John are known as the Farewell Discourse and are a significant source of Christological content .

= = = = Agony in the Garden , betrayal , and arrest = = = =

After the Last Supper , Jesus takes a walk to pray , and then Judas and the authorities come and arrest him .

In Mark , they go to the garden of Gethsemane , where Jesus prays to be spared his coming ordeal . His disciples fall asleep while they should be watching (Mark 37 ? 41) . Then Judas comes with an armed mob , sent by the chief priests , scribes and elders . He kisses Jesus to identify him to the crowd , which then arrests Jesus . In an attempt to stop them , one of Jesus ' disciples uses a sword to cut off the ear of a man in the crowd . After Jesus ' arrest , his disciples go into hiding , and Peter , when questioned , thrice denies knowing Jesus . After the third denial , he hears the rooster crow and recalls the prediction as Jesus turns to look at him . Peter then weeps bitterly .

In Matthew , Jesus criticizes the disciple 's attack with the sword , enjoining his disciples not to resist his arrest . He says , " All who take the sword will perish by the sword " (Matthew 26 : 52) .

In Luke , Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives to pray , and Jesus miraculously heals the ear that a disciple severed (Luke 22 : 51) .

In John , Jesus does not pray to be spared his crucifixion , as the gospel portrays him as scarcely touched by such human weakness . The people who arrest him are soldiers and Jewish officers (John 18 : 3) . Instead of being betrayed by a kiss , Jesus proclaims his identity , and when he does , the soldiers and officers fall to the ground (John 18 : 4 ? 7) . The gospel identifies Peter as the disciple who used the sword , and Jesus rebukes him for it (John 18 : 10 ? 11) .

= = = = Trials by the Sanhedrin , Herod , and Pilate = = = =

After his arrest , Jesus is taken to the Sanhedrin , a Jewish judicial body . The gospel accounts

differ on the details of the trials . In Matthew 26 : 57 , Mark 14 : 53 and Luke 22 : 54 , Jesus is taken to the house of the high priest , Caiaphas , where he is mocked and beaten that night . Early the next morning , the chief priests and scribes lead Jesus away into their council . John 18 : 12 ? 14 states that Jesus is first taken to Annas , Caiaphas ' father @-@ in @-@ law , and then to the high priest .

During the trials Jesus speaks very little , mounts no defense , and gives very infrequent and indirect answers to the priests ' questions , prompting an officer to slap him . In Matthew 26 : 62 Jesus ' unresponsiveness leads Caiaphas to ask him , " Have you no answer ? " In Mark 14 : 61 the high priest then asks Jesus , " Are you the Messiah , the Son of the Blessed One ? " Jesus replies , " I am " , and then predicts the coming of the Son of Man . This provokes Caiaphas to tear his own robe in anger and to accuse Jesus of blasphemy . In Matthew and Luke , Jesus ' answer is more ambiguous : in Matthew 26 : 64 he responds , " You have said so " , and in Luke 22 : 70 he says , " You say that I am " .

They take Jesus to Pilate 's Court , but Pilate proves extremely reluctant to condemn Jesus ; according to Robert W. Funk , it is the Jewish elders who are to blame for Jesus ' crucifixion . Augustine of Hippo says that Pilate was not free from blame , since he exercised his power to execute Jesus . The Jewish elders ask the Roman governor Pontius Pilate to judge and condemn Jesus , accusing him of claiming to be the King of the Jews . The use of the word " king " is central to the discussion between Jesus and Pilate . In John 18 : 36 Jesus states , " My kingdom is not from this world " , but he does not unequivocally deny being the King of the Jews . In Luke 23 : 7 ? 15 Pilate realizes that Jesus is a Galilean , and thus comes under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas . Pilate sends Jesus to Herod to be tried , but Jesus says almost nothing in response to Herod 's questions . Herod and his soldiers mock Jesus , put an expensive robe on him to make him look like a king , and return him to Pilate , who then calls together the Jewish elders and announces that he has " not found this man guilty " .

Observing a Passover custom of the time , Pilate allows one prisoner chosen by the crowd to be released . He gives the people a choice between Jesus and a murderer called Barabbas . Persuaded by the elders (Matthew 27 : 20) , the mob chooses to release Barabbas and crucify Jesus . Pilate writes a sign in Hebrew , Latin , and Greek that reads " Jesus of Nazareth , the King of the Jews " (abbreviated as INRI in depictions) to be affixed to Jesus ' cross (John 19 : 19 ? 20) , then scourges Jesus and sends him to be crucified . The soldiers place a Crown of Thorns on Jesus ' head and ridicule him as the King of the Jews . They beat and taunt him before taking him to Calvary , also called Golgotha , for crucifixion .

= = = = Crucifixion and entombment = = = =

Jesus ' crucifixion is described in all four canonical gospels . After the trials , Jesus is led to Calvary carrying his cross ; the route traditionally thought to have been taken is known as the Via Dolorosa . The three Synoptic Gospels indicate that Simon of Cyrene assists him , having been compelled by the Romans to do so . In Luke 23 : 27 ? 28 Jesus tells the women in the multitude of people following him not to weep for him but for themselves and their children . At Calvary , Jesus is offered a concoction usually offered as a painkiller . According to Matthew and Mark , he refuses it .

The soldiers then crucify Jesus and cast lots for his clothes . Above Jesus ' head on the cross is Pilate 's inscription , " Jesus of Nazareth , the King of the Jews " ; soldiers and passersby mock him about it . Jesus is crucified between two convicted thieves , one of whom rebukes Jesus , while the other defends him . The Roman soldiers break the two thieves ' legs (a procedure designed to hasten death in a crucifixion) , but they do not break those of Jesus , as he is already dead . In John 19 : 34 , one soldier pierces Jesus ' side with a lance , and blood and water flow out . In Matthew 27 : 51 ? 54 , when Jesus dies , the heavy curtain at the Temple is torn and an earthquake breaks open tombs . Terrified by the events , a Roman centurion states that Jesus was the Son of God .

On the same day , Joseph of Arimathea , with Pilate 's permission and with Nicodemus ' help , removes Jesus ' body from the cross , wraps him in a clean cloth , and buries him in his new rock

@-@ hewn tomb . In Matthew 27 : 62 ? 66 , on the following day the chief Jewish priests ask Pilate for the tomb to be secured , and with Pilate 's permission the priests place seals on the large stone covering the entrance and post a guard .

= = = Resurrection and Ascension = = =

In all four gospels , Mary Magdalene goes to Jesus ' tomb on Sunday morning and is surprised to find it empty . Jesus , she learns , has risen from the dead . Despite Jesus ' teaching , the disciples had not understood that Jesus would rise again . After the discovery of the empty tomb , Jesus makes a series of appearances to the disciples .

In Mark , Salome and a second Mary are with her (Mark 16 : 1) . A young man in a white robe (an angel) tells them that Jesus will meet his disciples in Galilee , as he had told them (referring to Mark 14 : 28) . The gospel then ends abruptly .

In Matthew , there 's an earthquake when the women discover the tomb , and an angel of the Lord descends from heaven , terrifying the guards . Jesus appears to the eleven remaining disciples in Galilee and commissions them to baptize all nations in the name of the Father , Son and Holy Spirit .

In Luke , Mary and the other women meet two angels , and the eleven disciples do not believe their story (Luke 24 : 1 ? 12) . Jesus appears that same day to his disciples in Jerusalem (Luke 24 : 13 ? 43) . Although he appears and vanishes mysteriously , he also eats and lets them touch him to prove that he is not a spirit . He repeats his command to bring his teaching to all nations (Luke 24 : 47) .

In John , Mary is alone at first , but Peter and the beloved disciple come and see the tomb as well . Jesus then appears to Mary at the empty tomb . He later appears to the disciples , breathes on them , and gives them the power to forgive and retain sins . In a second visit , he proves to a doubting disciple (" Doubting Thomas ") that he is flesh and blood . The catch of 153 fish is a miracle by the Sea of Galilee , after which Jesus encourages Peter to serve his followers .

Jesus ' Ascension into Heaven is described in Luke 24 : 50 @-@ 53 , Acts 1 : 1 ? 11 and mentioned in 1 Timothy 3 : 16 . In Acts , forty days after the Resurrection , as the disciples look on , " he was lifted up , and a cloud took him out of their sight " . 1 Peter 3 : 22 states that Jesus has " gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God " .

The Acts of the Apostles describes several appearances of Jesus in visions after his Ascension . Acts 7 : 55 describes a vision experienced by Stephen just before his death . On the road to Damascus , the Apostle Paul is converted to Christianity after seeing a blinding light and hearing a voice saying , " I am Jesus , whom you are persecuting " (Acts 9 : 5) . In Acts 9 : 10 ? 18 , Jesus instructs Ananias of Damascus to heal Paul . It is the last conversation with Jesus reported in the Bible until the Book of Revelation , in which a man named John receives a revelation from Jesus concerning the last days , when Jesus is predicted to return victoriously (Revelation 19 : 11 ? 21) . In the closing lines of the New Testament , Jesus promises that he is coming soon (Revelation 22 : 12 @-@ 21) .

= = Historical views = =

Prior to the Enlightenment , the gospels were usually regarded as accurate historical accounts , but since then scholars have emerged who question the reliability of the gospels and draw a distinction between the Jesus described in the gospels and the Jesus of history . Since the 18th century , three separate scholarly quests for the historical Jesus have taken place , each with distinct characteristics and based on different research criteria , which were often developed during the quest that applied them . While there is widespread scholarly agreement on the existence of Jesus , and a basic consensus on the general outline of his life , the portraits of Jesus constructed in the quests have often differed from each other , and from the image portrayed in the gospel accounts .

Approaches to the historical reconstruction of the life of Jesus have varied from the " maximalist " approaches of the 19th century , in which the gospel accounts were accepted as reliable evidence

wherever it is possible , to the " minimalist " approaches of the early 20th century , where hardly anything about Jesus was accepted as historical . In the 1950s , as the second quest for the historical Jesus gathered pace , the minimalist approaches faded away , and in the 21st century , minimalists such as Price are a very small minority . Although a belief in the inerrancy of the gospels cannot be supported historically , many scholars since the 1980s have held that , beyond the few facts considered to be historically certain , certain other elements of Jesus ' life are " historically probable " . Modern scholarly research on the historical Jesus thus focuses on identifying the most probable elements .

= = = Judea and Galilee in the 1st century = = =

In AD 6 , Judea , Idumea , and Samaria were transformed from a client kingdom of the Roman Empire into an imperial province . A Roman prefect , rather than a client king , ruled the land . The prefect ruled from Caesarea , leaving Jerusalem to be run by the high priest . As an exception , the prefect came to Jerusalem during religious festivals , when religious and patriotic enthusiasm sometimes inspired unrest or uprisings . Gentile lands surrounded the Jewish territories of Judea and Galilee , but Roman law and practice allowed Jews to remain separate legally and culturally . Galilee was evidently prosperous , and poverty was limited enough that it did not threaten the social order . Jewish religion was unusual in that Jews acknowledged only one God , they considered themselves chosen by him , and they wanted Gentiles to accept their God as the only God . Jews based their faith and religious practice on the Torah , five books said to have been given by God to Moses . The three prominent religious parties were Pharisees , Essenes , and Sadducees . Together these parties represented only a small fraction of the population . Most Jews looked forward to a time that God would deliver them from their pagan rulers , possibly through war against the Romans .

= = = Chronology = = =

Most scholars agree that Jesus was a Galilean Jew , born around the beginning of the first century , who died between 30 and 33 AD in Judea . The general scholarly consensus is that Jesus was a contemporary of John the Baptist and was crucified by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate , who held office from 26 to 36 AD .

The gospels offer several clues concerning the year of Jesus ' birth . Matthew 2 : 1 associates the birth of Jesus with the reign of Herod the Great , who died around 4 BC , and Luke 1 : 5 mentions that Herod was on the throne shortly before the birth of Jesus , although this gospel also associates the birth with the Census of Quirinius which took place ten years later . Luke 3 : 23 states that Jesus was " about thirty years old " at the start of his ministry , which according to Acts 10 : 37 ? 38 was preceded by John 's ministry , itself recorded in Luke 3 : 1 ? 2 to have begun in the 15th year of Tiberius ' reign (28 or 29 AD) . By collating the gospel accounts with historical data and using various other methods , most scholars arrive at a date of birth between 6 and 4 BC for Jesus , but some propose estimates that lie in a wider range .

The years of Jesus ' ministry have been estimated using several different approaches . One of these applies the reference in Luke 3 : 1 ? 2 , Acts 10 : 37 ? 38 and the dates of Tiberius ' reign , which are well known , to give a date of around 28 ? 29 AD for the start of Jesus ' ministry . Another approach uses the statement about the temple in John 2 : 13 ? 20 , which asserts that the temple in Jerusalem was in its 46th year of construction at the start of Jesus ' ministry , together with Josephus ' statement that the temple 's reconstruction was started by Herod in the 18th year of his reign , to estimate a date around 27 ? 29 AD . A further method uses the date of the death of John the Baptist and the marriage of Herod Antipas to Herodias , based on the writings of Josephus , and correlates it with Matthew 14 : 4 and Mark 6 : 18 . Given that most scholars date the marriage of Herod and Herodias as AD 28 ? 35 , this yields a date about 28 ? 29 AD .

A number of approaches have been used to estimate the year of the crucifixion of Jesus . Most scholars agree that he died between 30 and 33 AD . The gospels state that the event occurred

during the prefecture of Pilate , the Roman governor of Judea from 26 to 36 AD . The date for the conversion of Paul (estimated to be 33 ? 36 AD) acts as an upper bound for the date of Crucifixion . The dates for Paul 's conversion and ministry can be determined by analyzing Paul 's epistles and the Book of Acts . Astronomers since Isaac Newton have tried to estimate the precise date of the Crucifixion by analyzing lunar motion and calculating historic dates of Passover , a festival based on the lunisolar Hebrew calendar . The most widely accepted dates derived from this method are April 7 , 30 AD , and April 3 , 33 AD (both Julian) .

= = = Historicity of events = = =

Historians have reached a limited consensus on the basics of Jesus ' life .

= = = = Family = = = =

Jesus was Jewish and born to Mary and Joseph . He grew up in Nazareth in Galilee . Leading scholars such as Bart Ehrman , E. P. Sanders , and Géza Vermes generally consider Joseph to be Jesus ' father . Jesus also had brothers and sisters . The natural assumption is these offspring resulted from Joseph and Mary having sex , contrary to Catholic tradition . It is unusual that in Mark 6 : 3 , Jesus ' neighbors refer to Jesus as Mary 's son , because sons were identified by their fathers . This reference has led some scholars to suggest that Jesus was illegitimate and that Joseph is a fictional character . Mary 's identity as a historical figure , however , is certain . Joseph may well have died by the time Jesus ' career began , but several of the earliest sources report that Mary outlived Jesus .

It is common for extraordinary charismatic leaders , such as Jesus , to come into conflict with their ordinary families . In Mark , Jesus ' family comes to get him , fearing that he is mad (Mark 3 : 20 ? 34) , and this account is likely historical because early Christians wouldn 't have invented it . John also reports that Jesus ' brothers did not believe him (John 7 : 5) . After Jesus ' death , many members of his family joined the Christian movement and enjoyed positions of respect within it . His brother James served as a leader in the Jerusalem . James may have had a change of heart after having a vision of the resurrected Jesus (1 Corinthians 15 : 7) .

Stories of Jesus ' birth , along with other key events , have so many mythic elements that some scholars have suggested that Jesus himself was a myth . Historians say that the doctrine of Jesus ' virgin birth arose from theological development rather than from historical events . Michael Coogan says that Paul considered Jesus to have been conceived by Joseph . Other scholars take it as significant that the virgin birth is attested by two separate gospels , Matthew and Luke , (see the criterion of multiple attestation) .

The two different genealogies in Matthew and Luke each show Jesus as a direct descendant of King David , one of Jesus ' main predecessors in salvation history . According to E. P. Sanders , both genealogies are based not on historical information but on the authors ' desire to show that Jesus was the universal Jewish savior . Jesus ' family may have considered themselves to be descended from the House of David , but it is impossible to say . In any event , once the doctrine of Jesus ' virgin birth became established , that tradition superseded the earlier tradition that he was descended from David through Joseph .

Luke reports that Jesus was related to John the Baptist , but scholars general consider this connection to be invented .

= = = = Baptism and John the Baptist = = = =

Most modern scholars consider Jesus ' baptism to be a definite historical fact , along with his crucifixion . James D.G. Dunn states that they " command almost universal assent " and " rank so high on the ' almost impossible to doubt or deny ' scale of historical facts " that they are often the starting points for the study of the historical Jesus . Scholars adduce the criterion of embarrassment , saying that early Christians would not have invented a baptism that might imply that Jesus

committed sins and wanted to repent .

John 's ministry was one of many renewal movements that sought to strengthen Judaism against the pressure of Hellenistic influence . His movement was unusual in that it opposed the Jewish leadership rather than the Roman occupiers . He was the first of many 1st @-@ century prophets who raised hopes for divine intervention . Jesus was inspired by John and took over from him many elements of his teaching . Jesus ' teaching , however , emphasized grace and forgiveness over judgment .

= = = Ministry in Galilee = = =

Most scholars hold that Jesus lived in Galilee and Judea and did not preach or study elsewhere . They agree that Jesus debated with Jewish authorities on the subject of God , performed some healings , taught in parables and gathered followers . According to E. P. Sanders , Jesus may well have debated other Jews about how to interpret the Law and the Sabbath , as recorded in the Synoptics . Sanders , however , concludes that it is not plausible that these disagreements would have led Jewish authorities to want Jesus killed , as the Synoptics report .

Jesus ' parables about the Kingdom of God used striking and original imagery , such as likening it to a tiny mustard seed or to leaven . Jesus ' Jewish critics considered his ministry to be scandalous because he feasted with sinners , fraternized with women , and allowed his followers to pluck grain on the Sabbath .

Jesus was an exorcist , as demonstrated by Graham H. Twelftree . The stories of Jesus exorcising demons occur only in the earliest traditions and were not added by later writers . While Jesus ' miracles fit within the social context of antiquity , he defined them differently . First , he attributed them to the faith of those healed . Second , he connected them to end times prophecy . Jesus ' healings were long considered literally true and sometimes dismissed as fraudulent , but today an understanding of psychosomatic therapy leads more people to believe that faith healing could be possible .

Historians say Jesus called disciples as part of his ministry . Jesus chose twelve disciples (the " Twelve ") , evidently as an apocalyptic message . All three Synoptics mention the Twelve , although the names on Luke 's list vary from those in Mark and Matthew , suggesting that Christians weren 't sure who all the disciples were . E. P. Sanders says that 12 may have been a symbolic number , and that the number of actual disciples might have varied . The twelve disciples represented the twelve original tribes of Israel , which would be restored once God 's rule was instituted . The disciples were reportedly meant to be the rulers of the tribes in the coming Kingdom (Matthew 19 : 28 , Luke 22 : 30) . According to Bart Ehrman , Jesus ' promise that the Twelve would rule is historical because the Twelve included Judas , and no Christians would have invented a line from Jesus promising rulership to the disciple who betrayed him . In Mark , the disciples play hardly any role other than a negative one . While other sometimes respond to Jesus with complete faith , his disciples are puzzled and doubtful . They serve as a foil to Jesus and to other characters . The failings of the disciples are probably exaggerated in Mark , and the disciples make a better showing in Matthew and Luke .

= = = Role = = =

Jesus taught that an apocalyptic figure , the " Son of Man , " would soon come on clouds of glory to gather the elect , or chosen ones (Mark 13 : 24 @-@ 27 , Matthew 24 : 29 @-@ 31 , Luke 21 : 25 @-@ 28) . He referred to himself as a " son of man " in the colloquial sense of " a person , " but historians don 't know whether he also meant himself when he referred to the heavenly " Son of Man " . Paul and other early Christians interpreted the " Son of Man " as the risen Jesus .

The title Christ , or Messiah , indicates that Jesus ' followers believed him to be the anointed heir of King David , whom some Jews expected to save Israel . The Gospels refer to him not only as a Messiah but in the absolute form as " the Messiah " or , equivalently , " the Christ . " In early Judaism , this absolute form of the title is not found , but only phrases such as " his Messiah " . The

tradition is ambiguous enough to leave room for debate as to whether Jesus defined his eschatological role as that of the Messiah . The Jewish messianic tradition included many different forms , some of them focused on a Messiah figure and others not . Based on the Christian tradition , Gerd Theissen advances the hypothesis that Jesus saw himself in messianic terms but did not claim the title " Messiah . " Bart Ehrman argues that Jesus did consider himself to be the Messiah , albeit in the sense that he would be the king of the new political order that God would usher in , not in the sense that most people today think of the term .

=== Crucifixion in Jerusalem ===

Around AD 30 , Jesus and his followers traveled from Galilee to Jerusalem to observe Passover .. While in Jerusalem , Jesus caused a disturbance in the Temple , which was the center of Jewish religious and civil authority . He evidently had a last meal with his disciples , and then he was arrested and tried by the Jewish authorities .. Jesus was executed on the orders of Pontius Pilate , the Roman prefect ..

Most scholars consider Jesus ' crucifixion to be factual because early Christians would not have invented the painful death of their leader . It is more likely that the Sadducean high @-@ priestly leaders of the Temple had Jesus executed for political reasons than for his teaching . They may have regarded him as a threat to stability , especially after he caused a disturbance at the Temple . Other factors , such as Jesus ' triumphal entry into Jerusalem , may have contributed to this decision . Pilate most likely saw Jesus ' reference to the Kingdom of God as a threat to Roman authority and worked with the Temple elites to have Jesus executed .

=== Post @-@ crucifixion ===

After Jesus ' death , his followers said he rose from the dead , although exact details of their experiences are unclear . Some of those who claimed to have witnessed Jesus ' resurrection later died for their belief , which indicates that their beliefs were likely genuine . According to E. P. Sanders , the Gospel reports contradict each other , which , according to him , suggests competition among those claiming to have seen him first rather than deliberate fraud . On the other hand , L. Michael White suggests that inconsistencies in the Gospels reflect differences in the agendas of their unknown authors . The followers of Jesus formed a community to wait for his return and the founding of his kingdom .

=== Portraits of Jesus ===

Modern research on the historical Jesus has not led to a unified picture of the historical figure , partly because of the variety of academic traditions represented by the scholars . Given the scarcity of historical sources , it is generally difficult for any scholar to construct a portrait of Jesus that can be considered historically valid beyond the basic elements of his life . The portraits of Jesus constructed in these quests often differ from each other , and from the image portrayed in the gospels .

Contemporary scholarship , representing the " third quest , " places Jesus firmly in the Jewish tradition . Leading scholars in the " third quest " include E. P. Sanders , Geza Vermes , Gerd Theissen , Christoph Burchard , and John Dominic Crossan . Jesus is seen as the founder of , in the words of E. P. Sanders , a " renewal movement within Judaism . " This scholarship suggests a continuity between Jesus ' life as a wandering charismatic and the same lifestyle carried forward by followers after his death . The main criterion used to discern historical details in the " third quest " is the criterion of plausibility , relative to Jesus ' Jewish context and to his influence on Christianity . The main disagreement in contemporary research is whether Jesus was apocalyptic . Most scholars conclude that he was an apocalyptic preacher , like John the Baptist and the apostle Paul . In contrast , certain prominent North American scholars , such as Burton Mack and John Dominic Crossan , advocate for a non @-@ eschatological Jesus , one who is more of a Cynic sage than an

apocalyptic preacher . In addition to portraying Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet , a charismatic healer or a cynic philosopher , some scholars portray him as the true Messiah or an egalitarian prophet of social change . However , the attributes described in the portraits sometimes overlap , and scholars who differ on some attributes sometimes agree on others .

Since the 18th century , scholars have occasionally put forth that Jesus was a political national messiah , but the evidence for this portrait is negligible . Likewise , the proposal that Jesus was a Zealot does not fit with the earliest strata of the Synoptic tradition .

= = = Language , ethnicity , and appearance = = =

Jesus grew up in Galilee and much of his ministry took place there . The languages spoken in Galilee and Judea during the first century AD include Jewish Palestinian Aramaic , Hebrew , and Greek , with Aramaic being predominant . There is substantial consensus that Jesus gave most of his teachings in Aramaic .

Modern scholars agree that Jesus was a Jew of first @-@ century Palestine . Ioudaios in New Testament Greek is a term which in the contemporary context may refer to religion (Second Temple Judaism) , ethnicity (of Judea) , or both . In a review of the state of modern scholarship , Amy @-@ Jill Levine writes that the entire question of ethnicity is " fraught with difficulty , " and that " beyond recognizing that ' Jesus was Jewish ' , rarely does the scholarship address what being ' Jewish ' means " .

The New Testament gives no description of the physical appearance of Jesus before his death ? it is generally indifferent to racial appearances and does not refer to the features of the people it mentions . Jesus probably looked like a typical Jew of his time and according to some scholars was likely to have had a sinewy appearance due to his ascetic and itinerant lifestyle .

= = = Christ myth theory = = =

The Christ myth theory is the hypothesis that Jesus of Nazareth never existed ; or if he did , that he had virtually nothing to do with the founding of Christianity and the accounts in the gospels . Bruno Bauer (1809 ? 1882) taught that the first Gospel was a work of literature that produced history rather than described it . According to Albert Kalthoff (1850 ? 1906) a social movement produced Jesus when it encountered Jewish messianic expectations . Arthur Drews (1865 ? 1935) saw Jesus as the concrete form of a myth that predated Christianity . Despite arguments put forward by authors who have questioned the existence of a historical Jesus , there remains a strong consensus in historical @-@ critical biblical scholarship that a historical Jesus did live in that area and in that time period .

= = Perspectives = =

Apart from his own disciples and followers , the Jews of Jesus ' day generally rejected him as the Messiah , as do the great majority of Jews today . Christian theologians , ecumenical councils , reformers and others have written extensively about Jesus over the centuries . Christian sects and schisms have often been defined or characterized by their descriptions of Jesus . Meanwhile , Manichaeans , Gnostics , Muslims , Baha 'is , and others have found prominent places for Jesus in their religions . Jesus has also had detractors , both past and present .

= = = Christian = = =

Jesus is the central figure of Christianity . Although Christian views of Jesus vary , it is possible to summarize the key beliefs shared among major denominations , as stated in their catechetical or confessional texts . Christian views of Jesus are derived from various sources , including the canonical gospels and New Testament letters such as the Pauline epistles and the Johannine writings . These documents outline the key beliefs held by Christians about Jesus , including his

divinity , humanity , and earthly life , and that he is the Christ and the Son of God . Despite their many shared beliefs , not all Christian denominations agree on all doctrines , and both major and minor differences on teachings and beliefs have persisted throughout Christianity for centuries .

The New Testament states that the resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of the Christian faith (1 Corinthians 15 : 12 ? 20) . Christians believe that through his sacrificial death and resurrection , humans can be reconciled with God and are thereby offered salvation and the promise of eternal life . Recalling the words of John the Baptist on the day after Jesus ' baptism , these doctrines sometimes refer to Jesus as the Lamb of God , who was crucified to fulfill his role as the servant of God . Jesus is thus seen as the new and last Adam , whose obedience contrasts with Adam 's disobedience . Christians view Jesus as a role model , whose God @-@ focused life believers are encouraged to imitate .

Most Christians believe that Jesus was both human and the Son of God . While there has been theological debate over his nature , Some early Christians viewed Jesus as subordinate to the Father , and others considered him an aspect of the Father rather than a separate person . The Church resolved the issues in ancient councils , which established the Holy Trinity , with Jesus both fully human and fully God . Trinitarian Christians generally believe that Jesus is the Logos , God 's incarnation and God the Son , both fully divine and fully human . However , the doctrine of the Trinity is not universally accepted among Christians . With the Protestant Reformation , Christians such as Michael Servetus and the Socinians started questioning the ancient creeds that had established Jesus ' two natures . Nontrinitarian Christian groups include The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter @-@ day Saints , Unitarians and Jehovah 's Witnesses .

Christians revere not only Jesus himself , but also his name . Devotions to the Holy Name of Jesus go back to the earliest days of Christianity . These devotions and feasts exist in both Eastern and Western Christianity .

In the 20th century , Protestant groups became sharply divided in terms of how much they support historical and critical inquiry into the person of Jesus . Protestant denominations allow some such investigation but differ in how far the investigation may go . The Roman Catholic Church drew definite limits , and Catholic scholars have engaged in considerable critical study within those limits . Some liberal theologians have come to doubt miracles such as the virgin birth .

= = = Jewish = = =

Judaism rejects the idea of Jesus being God , or a mediator to God , or part of a Trinity . It holds that Jesus is not the Messiah , arguing that he neither fulfilled the Messianic prophecies in the Tanakh nor embodied the personal qualifications of the Messiah . According to Jewish tradition , there were no prophets after Malachi , who delivered his prophecies in the fifth century BC . Although currently disputed , David Flusser offers the Pharisee , Joshua b . Perahyah , as a possible rabbi of Jesus , but likens his social outlook to that of the Essenes and his prophetic stance to that of John the Baptist .

Judaic criticism of Jesus is long @-@ standing . The Talmud , written and compiled from the third to the fifth century AD , includes stories that since medieval times have been considered to be defamatory accounts of Jesus . In one such story , Yeshu ha @-@ nozri (" Jesus the Christian ") , a lewd apostate , is executed by the Jewish high court for spreading idolatry and practicing magic . The majority of contemporary historians consider that this material provides no information on the historical Jesus . The Mishneh Torah , a late 12th @-@ century work of Jewish law written by Moses Maimonides , states that Jesus is a " stumbling block " who makes " the majority of the world to err and serve a god other than the Lord " .

= = = Islamic = = =

A major figure in Islam , Jesus (commonly transliterated as ʿĪsā) is considered to be a messenger of God (Allah) and the Messiah (al @-@ Masih) who was sent to guide the Children of Israel (Bani Isra'il) with a new scripture , the Gospel (referred to in Islam as Injil) . Muslims regard the

gospels of the New Testament as inauthentic , and believe that Jesus ' original message was lost or altered and that Muhammad came later to restore it . Belief in Jesus (and all other messengers of God) is a requirement for being a Muslim . The Quran mentions Jesus by name 25 times ? more often than Muhammad ? and emphasizes that Jesus was a mortal human who , like all other prophets , had been divinely chosen to spread God 's message . While the Qur 'an acknowledges the Virgin birth of Jesus , He is considered to be neither the incarnation nor the son of God . Islamic texts emphasize a strict notion of monotheism (tawhid) and forbid the association of partners with God , which would be idolatry . Like all prophets in Islam , Jesus is considered a Muslim .

The Quran describes the annunciation to Mary (Maryam) by an angel that she is to give birth to Jesus while remaining a virgin . It calls the virgin birth a miracle that occurred by the will of God . The Quran (21 : 91 and 66 : 12) states that God breathed his spirit into Mary while she was chaste . Jesus is called the " Spirit of God " because he was born through the action of the Spirit , but that belief does not imply his pre @-@ existence .

To aid in his ministry to the Jewish people , Jesus was given the ability to perform miracles , by permission of God rather than by his own power . Through his ministry , Jesus is seen as a precursor to Muhammad . According to the Quran , Jesus was not crucified but was merely made to appear that way to unbelievers by Allah , who physically raised Jesus into the heavens . To Muslims , it is the ascension rather than the crucifixion that constitutes a major event in the life of Jesus . Most Muslims believe that Jesus will return to earth at the end of time and defeat the Antichrist (ad @-@ Dajjal) by killing him in Lud .

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has several distinct teachings about Jesus . Ahmadis believe that he was a mortal man who survived his crucifixion and died a natural death at the age of 120 in Kashmir , India .

= = = Bahá 'í = = =

Bahá 'í teachings consider Jesus to be a manifestation of God , a Bahá 'í concept for prophets ? intermediaries between God and humanity , serving as messengers and reflecting God 's qualities and attributes . The Bahá 'í concept emphasizes the simultaneous qualities of humanity and divinity ; thus , it is similar to the Christian concept of incarnation . Bahá 'í thought accepts Jesus as the Son of God . In Bahá 'í thought , Jesus was a perfect incarnation of God 's attributes , but Bahá 'í teachings reject the idea that " ineffable essence " of the Divinity was contained within a single human body because of their beliefs regarding " omnipresence and transcendence of the essence of God " .

Bahá 'u'lláh , the founder of the Bahá 'í Faith , wrote that since each manifestation of God has the same divine attributes , they can be seen as the spiritual " return " of all previous manifestations of God , and the appearance of each new manifestation of God inaugurates a religion that supersedes the former ones , a concept known as progressive revelation . Bahá 'ís believe that God 's plan unfolds gradually through this process as mankind matures , and that some of the manifestations arrive in specific fulfillment of the missions of previous ones . Thus , Bahá 'ís believe that Bahá 'u'lláh is the promised return of Christ . Bahá 'í teachings confirm many , but not all , aspects of Jesus as portrayed in the gospels . Bahá 'ís believe in the virgin birth and in the Crucifixion , but see the Resurrection and the miracles of Jesus as symbolic .

= = = Other = = =

In Christian Gnosticism (now a largely extinct religious movement) , Jesus was sent from the divine realm and provided the secret knowledge (gnosis) necessary for salvation . Most Gnostics believed that Jesus was a human who became possessed by the spirit of " the Christ " at his baptism . This spirit left Jesus ' body during the crucifixion , but was rejoined to him when he was raised from the dead . Some Gnostics , however , were docetics , believed that Jesus did not have a physical body , but only appeared to possess one . Manichaeism , a Gnostic sect , accepted Jesus as a prophet , in addition to revering Gautama Buddha and Zoroaster .

Some Hindus consider Jesus to be an avatar or a sadhu and point out similarities between Krishna and Jesus' teachings. Paramahansa Yogananda, an Indian guru, taught that Jesus was the reincarnation of Elisha and a student of John the Baptist, the reincarnation of Elijah. Some Buddhists, including Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, regard Jesus as a bodhisattva who dedicated his life to the welfare of people. Disciples of the Cao ʻài religion worship Jesus Christ as a major religious teacher. He is revealed during communication with Divine Beings as the spirit of their Supreme Being (God the Father) together with other major religious teachers and founders like the Gautama Buddha, Laozi, and Confucius. The New Age movement entertains a wide variety of views on Jesus. Theosophists, from whom many New Age teachings originated, refer to Jesus as the Master Jesus and believe that Christ, after various incarnations, occupied the body of Jesus. Scientologists recognize Jesus (along with other religious figures such as Zoroaster, Muhammad, and Buddha) as part of their " religious heritage ". Atheists reject Jesus' divinity, but not all hold a negative estimation of him; Richard Dawkins, for instance, refers to Jesus as " a great moral teacher ", while stating in his book *The God Delusion* that Jesus is praiseworthy because he did not derive his ethics from biblical scripture.

Jesus had detractors, both past and present, as well. Early critics of Jesus and Christianity included Celsus in the second century and Porphyry in the third. In the 19th century, Nietzsche was highly critical of Jesus, whose teachings he considered to be " anti @-@ nature " in their treatment of topics such as sexuality. Other notable modern critics of Jesus include Sita Ram Goel, Christopher Hitchens, Bertrand Russell, and Dayananda Saraswati. In the 20th century, Russell wrote in *Why I Am Not a Christian* that Jesus was " not so wise as some other people have been, and He was certainly not superlatively wise ". Russell called Jesus' vindictive nature a defect in his moral character in that Jesus in the Gospels believed in the everlasting punishment of hell, which Russell felt that no one who is " really profoundly humane can believe in ". Russell also notes a repeated " vindictive fury against those people who would not listen to His preaching " which he felt " detract [s] from superlative excellence ".

= = Depictions = =

Some of the earliest depictions of Jesus at the Dura @-@ Europos church are firmly dated to before 256. Thereafter, despite the lack of biblical references or historical records, a wide range of depictions of Jesus appeared during the last two millennia, often influenced by cultural settings, political circumstances and theological contexts. As in other Early Christian art, the earliest depictions date to the late second or early third century, and surviving images are found especially in the Catacombs of Rome.

The depiction of Christ in pictorial form was highly controversial in the early church. From the 5th century onward, flat painted icons became popular in the Eastern Church. The Byzantine Iconoclasm acted as a barrier to developments in the East, but by the ninth century, art was permitted again. The Transfiguration was a major theme in Eastern Christian art, and every Eastern Orthodox monk who had trained in icon painting had to prove his craft by painting an icon depicting it. Icons receive the external marks of veneration, such as kisses and prostration, and they are thought to be powerful channels of divine grace.

Before the Protestant Reformation, the crucifix was common in Western Christianity. It is a model of the cross with Jesus crucified on it. The crucifix became the central ornament of the altar in the 13th century, a use that has been nearly universal in Roman Catholic churches until recent times.

Jesus appears as an infant in a manger (feed trough) in Christmas creches, which depict the Nativity scene. He is typically joined by Mary, Joseph, animals, shepherds, angels, and the Magi. Francis of Assisi (1181 / 82 ? 1226) is credited with popularizing the creche, although he probably did not initiate it. The creche reached its height of popularity in the 17th and 18th centuries in southern Europe.

The Renaissance brought forth a number of artists who focused on depictions of Jesus; Fra Angelico and others followed Giotto in the systematic development of uncluttered images.

The Protestant Reformation brought renewed resistance to imagery, but total prohibition was

atypical , and Protestant objections to images have tended to reduce since the 16th century . Although large images are generally avoided , few Protestants now object to book illustrations depicting Jesus . The use of depictions of Jesus is advocated by the leaders of denominations such as Anglicans and Catholics and is a key element of the Eastern Orthodox tradition .

= = Associated relics = =

The total destruction that ensued with the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70 made the survival of items from first century Judea very rare and almost no direct records survive about the history of Judaism from the last part of the first century through the second century . Margaret M. Mitchell writes that although Eusebius reports (Ecclesiastical History III 5 @. @ 3) that the early Christians left Jerusalem for Pella just before Jerusalem was subjected to the final lock down , we must accept that no first hand Christian items from the early Jerusalem Church have reached us . However , throughout the history of Christianity a number of relics attributed to Jesus have been claimed , although doubt has been cast on them . The 16th @-@ century Catholic theologian Erasmus wrote sarcastically about the proliferation of relics and the number of buildings that could have been constructed from the wood claimed to be from the cross used in the Crucifixion . Similarly , while experts debate whether Jesus was crucified with three nails or with four , at least thirty holy nails continue to be venerated as relics across Europe .

Some relics , such as purported remnants of the Crown of Thorns , receive only a modest number of pilgrims , while the Shroud of Turin (which is associated with an approved Catholic devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus) , have received millions , including popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI . There is no scholarly consensus in favor for the authenticity of any relic attributed to Jesus .

= = = Explanatory = = =