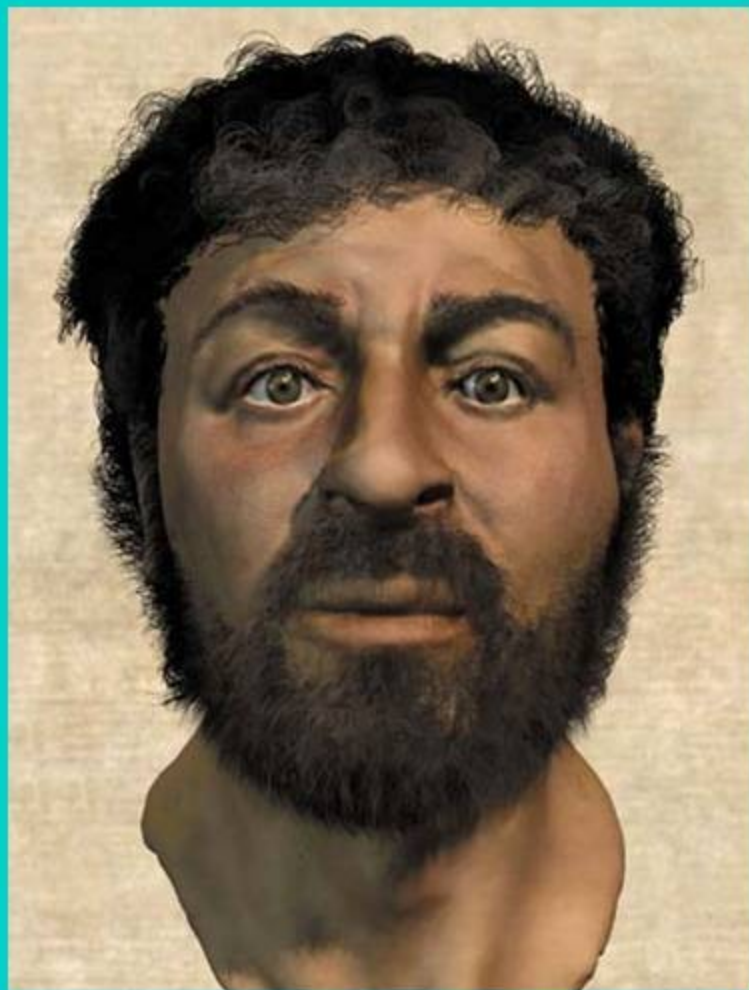


HiSTORiCAL JESUS PRiMER

****In search of the REAL JESUS****



By Cleveland Glass

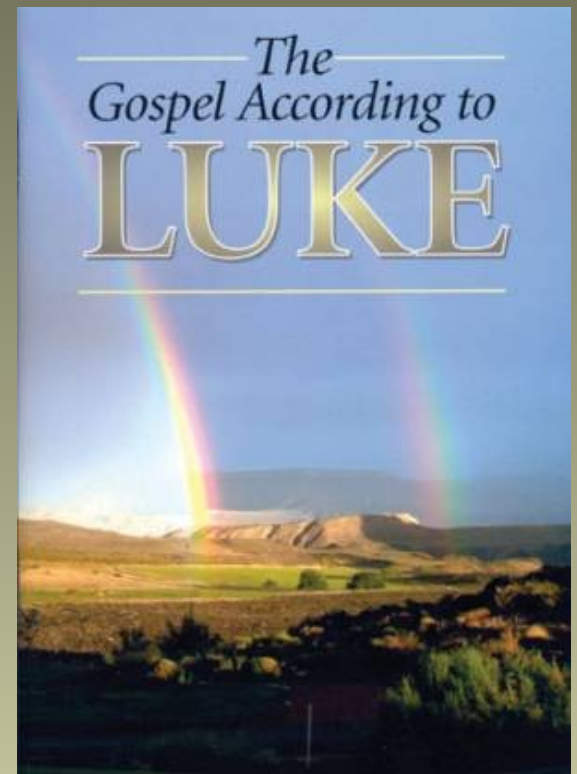
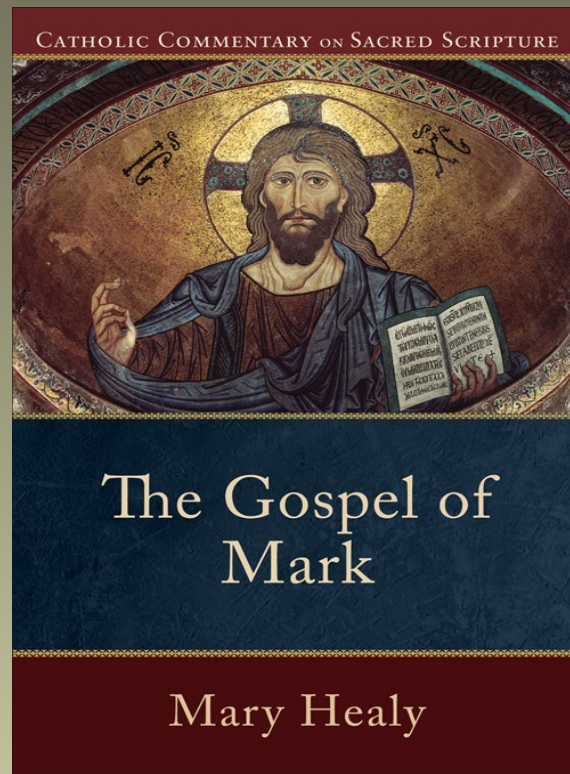
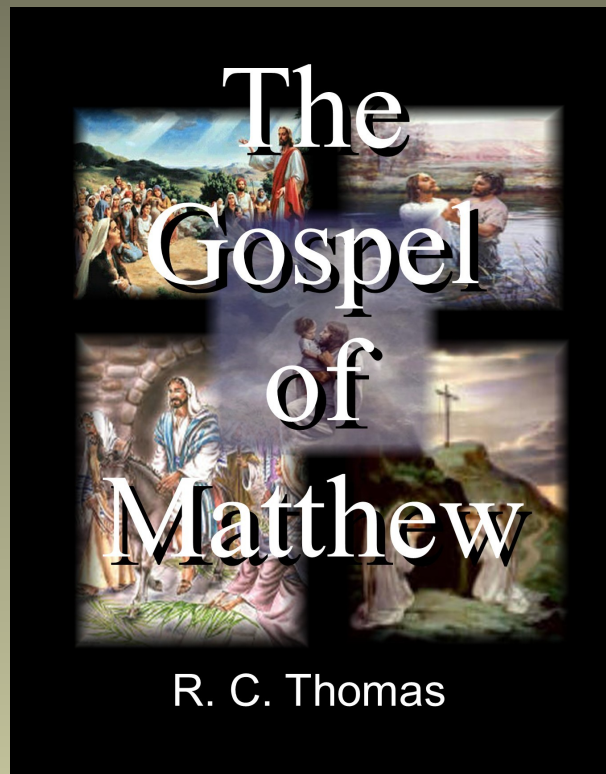


Dear friends,

My name is Cleveland Glass. I was converted to Evangelical Christianity at the age of 12 years old. Two years later I became a licensed minister in a black Pentecostal denomination called the "Church of God in Christ." As a Teen-aged Minister, I had a deep hunger to understand the Bible and the doctrines of my church. In my pursuit of the truth, I discovered information that has led me to modify my views on religion and spirituality over the years.

The purpose of this presentation is not to convert you to a belief system, but to encourage you to have an open mind. Some of the information that you encounter during this presentation may contradict some of the things you were taught in Church about Jesus. I encourage you to open your mind and listen closely to the facts. The information is based on scholarly research that has been going on over the last 200 years.

This slideshow is referred to as a "Primer" because it is just a starting point. It's designed to provide the groundwork for beginners who are curious about the subject, and who may want to continue to investigate the topics that I introduce.



Our main source of historical information on the life of Jesus comes from the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). Gleaning historical facts from the Gospels is a big challenge, considering that they were written more for theological purposes than to preserve accurate historical details.



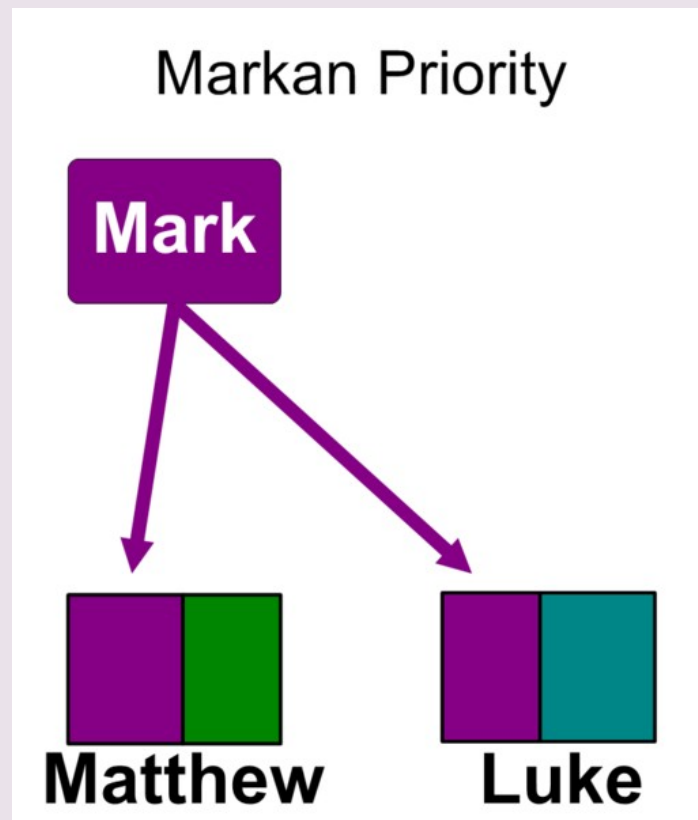
Unfortunately, neither Jesus, nor his original followers, wrote down any of his stories or teachings. For about 20 to 30 years, the Gospel was spread solely by oral transmission. This makes it quite challenging for the historian to know exactly what words and deeds, recorded in the Gospels, are authentic.



ANONYMOUS

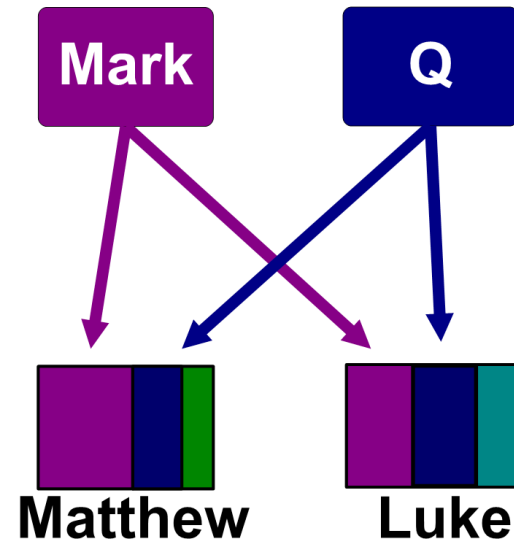
We are many. We are strong. We are Anonymous.

The Gospels were all written by anonymous authors, who didn't know Jesus personally, and who wrote their accounts 40-70 years after his death. They were all written in Greek rather than in Jesus' native tongue of Aramaic. The names on the Gospels were added by early Christians of the 2nd Century and are based on speculation.



The earliest Gospel that we have available to us today is believed to be Gospel of Mark, written 40 years after Jesus died, which was the primary source of information used by both Matthew and Luke to formulate their Gospels. All three gospels include similar events in a similar chronology, thus they are referred to as the "Synoptic Gospels."

Two-source Hypothesis



Biblical Source critics also theorize that Matthew and Luke drew information from an earlier gospel that is no longer available to us. It is the hypothetical "Q Document." "Q" was reconstructed from the sayings of Jesus that Matthew and Luke have in common, but that are absent from the Gospel of Mark. "Q" is said to be a "Sayings Gospel," because it contains only sayings of Jesus and no narrative. "Q" is believed to have been compiled about 10 years before the Gospel of Mark was written.

Matthew	Luke
δων δε πολλους των	ελεγεν ουν τοις
φαρισαιων και σαδδουκαιων	εκπορευομενοις οχλοις
ερχομενους επι το βαπτισμα	βαπτισθηναι υπ
αυτου ειπεν αυτοις	αυτου
γεννηματα εχιδωνν τις	γεννηματα εχιδωνν τις
υπεδειξεν υμιν φυγειν απο	υπεδειξεν υμιν φυγειν απο
της μελλουσης οργης	της μελλουσης οργης
ποιησατε ουν καρπους	ποιησατε ουν καρπους
αξιους της μετανοιας	αξιους της μετανοιας
και μη δοξητε λεγειν εν	και μη αρησθε λεγειν εν
εαυτοις πατερα εχομεν τον	εαυτοις πατερα εχομεν τον
αβρααμ λεγω γαρ υμιν οτι	αβρααμ λεγω γαρ υμιν οτι
δυναται ο θεος εκ των λιθων	δυναται ο θεος εκ των λιθων
τουτων εγειραι τεκνα τω	τουτων εγειραι τεκνα τω
αβρααμ ηδη δε και η αξινη	αβρααμ ηδη δε και η αξινη
προς την ριζαν των δενδρων	προς την ριζαν των δενδρων
κειται παν ουν δενδρον μη	κειται παν ουν δενδρον μη
ποιουν καρπον καλον	ποιουν καρπον καλον
εκκοπτεται και εις πυρ	εκκοπτεται και εις πυρ
βαλλεται	βαλλεται

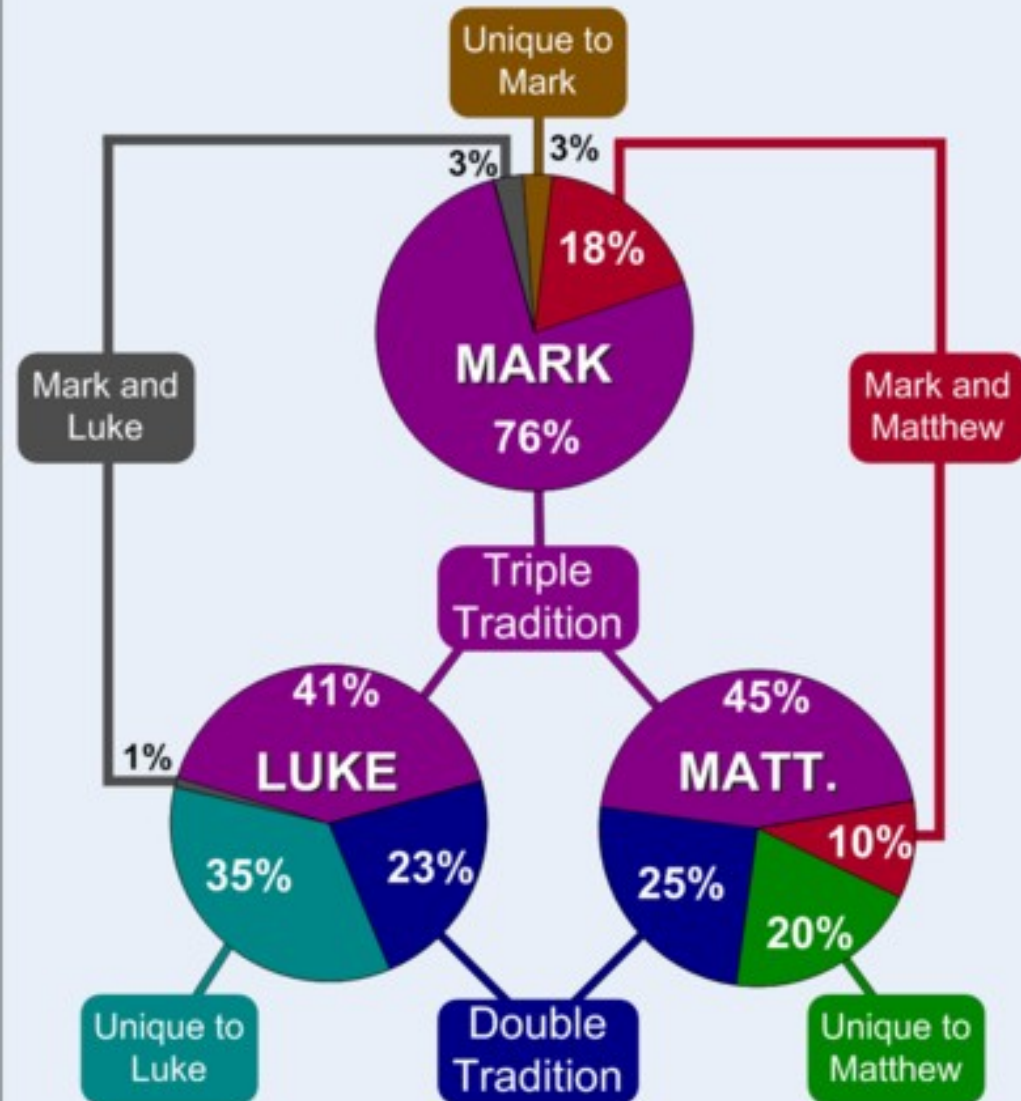
If you look closely at the Greek text in red print, you will notice that the words and letters are exactly identical, which is a strong indicator that Matthew and Luke shared the same source. This forms the basis for belief in a Q document.

Unfortunately, Q has never been found. But scholars believe that the discovery of the Gospel of Thomas, in 1945, which is a "sayings gospel," like Q, gives strong support to the theory that a Q document once existed.

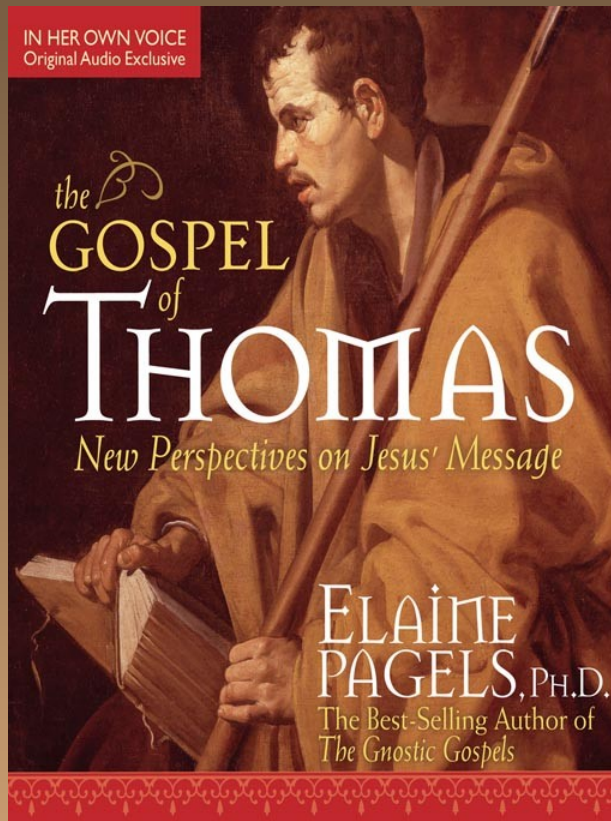
Some of the parable and sayings in the Q document includes:

The Beatitudes, Love your enemies, The Golden Rule, Judge not, lest ye be judged, The Test of a Good Person, The Parable of the Wise and the Foolish Builders, The Parable of the Lost Sheep, The Parable of the Wedding Feast, The Parable of the Talents, The Parable of the Leaven, The Parable of the blind leading the blind, The Lord's Prayer, The Birds of Heaven and The Lilies in the Field.

Relationships between the Synoptic Gospels



The chart gives a detailed breakdown of the source relationships between the Gospels. Notice how 42% of Luke's material comes from Mark, and about 55% of Matthew's material comes from Mark. This demonstrates how heavily the other Synoptic Gospels depended on Mark. This also proves that none of the Synoptic Gospel writers were eyewitnesses.

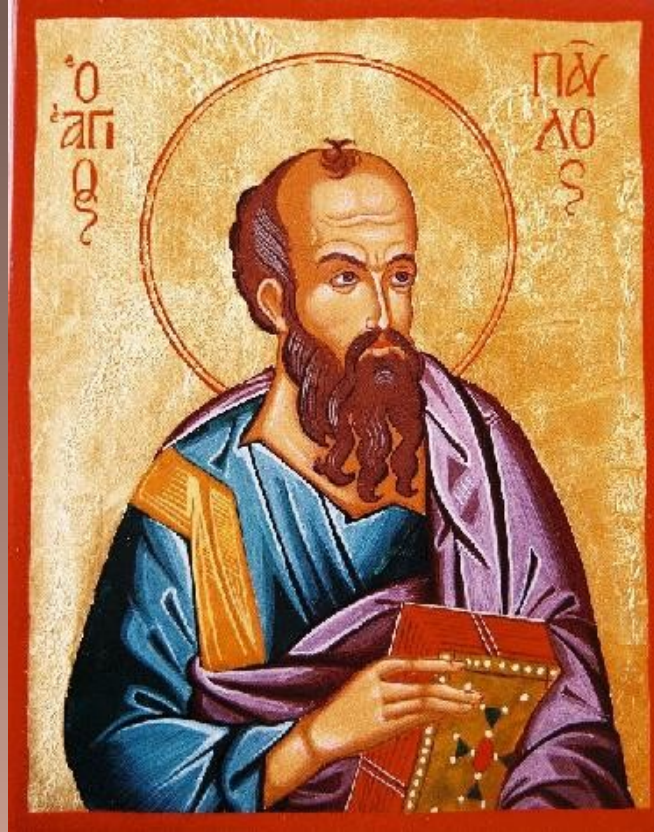


The “Gospel of Thomas” is also considered as an important source of early information regarding the historical Jesus. Some scholars dismiss it as a late document which adds little value to the discussion. However, a good number of reputable scholars believe that it contains recorded sayings of Jesus in a form that predates those written in the Synoptic Gospels.



The Gospel of Thomas papyrus manuscript was discovered at Nag Hammadi, Egypt in 1945. It contains 114 sayings attributed to Jesus - some of which, resemble closely the sayings that are in the four canonical Gospels. It also contains sayings that are totally unfamiliar to the Bible reader.

The Gospel of Thomas is not considered as canonical by any major Christian group today. This is probably because some of its teachings are considered unorthodox. Nevertheless, scholars consider it as a valuable source of information for researching the historical Jesus, because it was written independently of the New Testament.



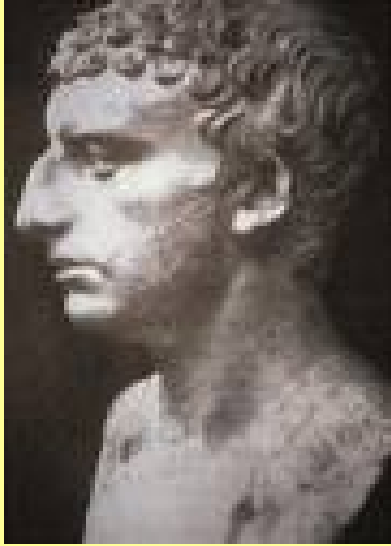
What did the Apostle Paul know about the historical Jesus? Surprisingly, his letters, which are the earliest Christian writings available, say very little about the historical Jesus! In his epistles, Paul mentions the following:

- 1) Jesus was a Jew of the line of David (Romans 1:3)**
- 2) Jesus was betrayed (1 Cor. 11:23)**
- 3) The Last Supper (1 Cor. 11:23)**
- 4) His death by Crucifixion (1 Cor. 2:2)**
- 5) His Resurrection (Phil. 2:9)**
- 6) He knows James (the Lord's brother - Gal. 1:19), and Peter (Gal.1:18).**

Ironically, although the Gospel writers claimed that Jesus was a very popular figure who attracted many followers and large crowds throughout Palestine, no historian of his day ever mentioned him; neither is there much historical information about Jesus in any of the New Testament epistles.

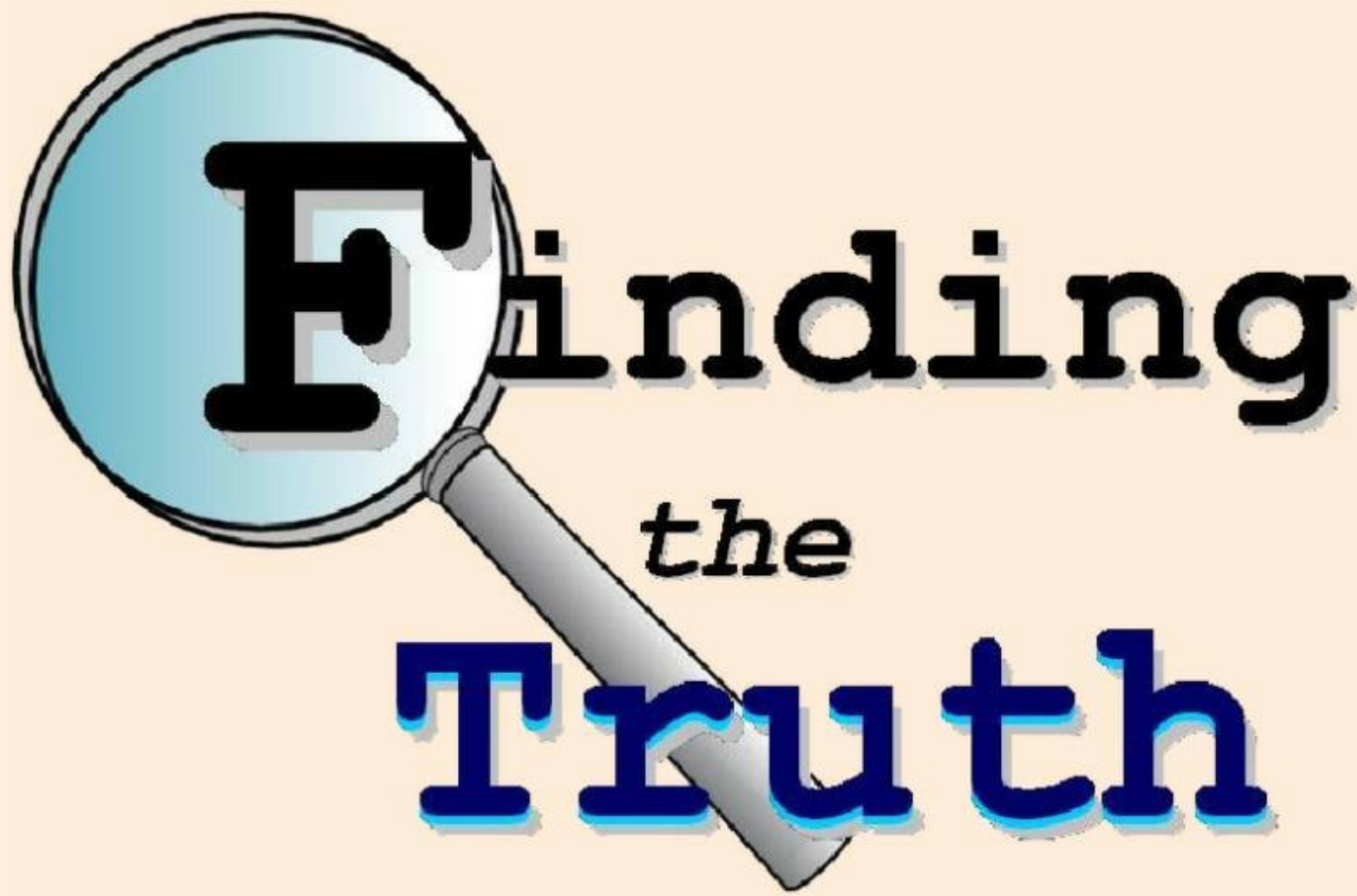
The best historical evidence for Jesus, outside of Christianity, comes from a Jewish Historian, named Flavius Josephus. Josephus was not a contemporary of Jesus, but he lived in the 1st century and wrote about historical events that occurred during the period in which Jesus lived.

His testimony regarding Jesus is very brief and its authenticity has been hotly debated for many years. There is no doubt, even among conservative Christian scholars, that parts of the passage that speaks of Jesus has been forged by Christians to make Josephus appear to confess Jesus as "The Christ."



Here's the Josephus quote, with the forged portions in red capital letters:

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man **IF IT BE LAWFUL TO CALL HIM A MAN**, for he was a doer of wonders, **A TEACHER OF SUCH MEN AS RECEIVE THE TRUTH WITH PLEASURE**. He drew many after him **BOTH OF THE JEWS AND THE GENTILES. HE WAS THE CHRIST**. When Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, **FOR HE APPEARED TO THEM ALIVE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY, AS THE DIVINE PROPHETS HAD FORETOLD THESE AND THEN THOUSAND OTHER WONDERFUL THINGS ABOUT HIM**, and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day (*Antiquities* 18:63-64).



Finding *the* **Truth**

Even among the synoptic Gospels, the truth is not always easy to come by. Some of the actions and sayings of Jesus are reflective of the authors own theological biases, and are used to promote the writer's personal agenda. The historian must thus attempt to distinguish fact from fiction in an unbiased fashion.

Gospel writers used myths and symbols, liberally, to display certain characteristics of Jesus, and to reflect the feelings of awe and transcendence that his followers had for him.

In addition, they would sometimes interject stories and sayings, into their gospels, that described what their own communities were experiencing, at the time of the writing, rather than what actually happened during the lifetime of Jesus.



In fact, the scholars of the “Jesus Seminar” (founded in 1985), believe that only about 18% of the saying attributed to Jesus, in the Gospels, are authentic. Of course, many conservative scholars strongly disagree with this figure. And the methods and conclusions of the Jesus Seminar has been called into question by liberal scholars as well.



Often, discrepancies and contradictions in the Gospel story stem from the fact that each writer portrays Jesus in a fashion that best suits his own purposes. For instance, In John's Gospel, the crucifixion of Jesus occurs on the eve of the Passover, whereas in the Synoptic Gospels he dies on the 1st day of Passover. What accounts for this blatant contradiction? Well, John portrays Jesus as the Passover Lamb in his gospel, therefore, he has Jesus dying at the same time that the Passover lambs are being slain during the Jewish Holiday of Passover.

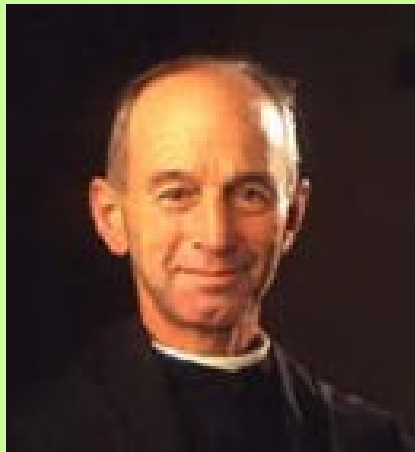
Historians are a little more suspicious of John's Gospel, than they are of the Synoptics, when it comes to providing accurate historical detail. Why? Because John's Gospel is quite different and it tends to contradict the others. Consider the following:

- John was the last Gospel written (Written about 70 yrs after the death of Jesus).
 - John omits about 90% of the material in the other Gospels.
 - In John's Gospel, the ministry of Jesus last 3 years; in the Synoptic Gospels it lasts for about one year.
 - In John's Gospel, Jesus claims divinity, speaks of himself in the 1st person (using "I am" statements), and his teaching style is marked by long philosophical discourses, rather than parables and aphorisms.
- 5) In John's Gospel, the Destruction of the Temple occurs at the beginning of Jesus' ministry rather than at the end.



The scholars of the Jesus Seminar concluded, “The Gospel of John represents a religious tradition that is independent of the Synoptic Gospels (Mark, Matthew, and Luke).

They differ so much that either John or the Synoptic Gospels must be largely abandoned in the quest for an understanding of Jesus' actual sayings and acts. “



Henry Wansbrough

In defense of the Gospel of John, there are some scholars who would take issue with the Seminar's conclusion. Here's a quotation taken from Wikipedia's article on The Gospel of John:

Henry Wansbrough says: "Gone are the days when it was scholarly orthodoxy to maintain that John was the least reliable of the gospels historically." " It has become generally accepted that certain sayings in John are as old or older than their synoptic counterparts, that John's knowledge of things around Jerusalem is often superior to the synoptics, and that his presentation of Jesus' agony in the garden and the prior meeting held by the Jewish authorities are possibly more historically accurate than their synoptic parallels. And Marianne Meye Thompson writes: 'There are items only in John that are likely to be historical and ought to be given due weight.'" (Wikipedia)

Criteria of Authenticity

To distinguish the actual words and actions of Jesus from those that were added by early Church tradition, the following criteria is employed by modern Jesus Scholars.

- 1) The Criterion of Embarrassment**
- 2) The Criterion of Discontinuity**
- 3) The Criterion of Multiple Attestation**
- 4) The Criterion of Coherence**
- 5) The Criterion of Rejection & Execution**

Let's examine each of these individually

- **Criterion of Embarrassment:** Gospel writers would not invent words and deeds of Jesus that would cause embarrassment to the Church. (Example: Jesus' Baptism by John. Why would the Son of God submit to John's baptism of repentance? Later Gospel writers reworked the story to make John acknowledge Jesus' superiority to him.)
- **Criterion of Discontinuity:** The saying or deed is more likely to be authentic if it's a variation on, or dissimilar to the teachings of 1st century Judaism or Christianity. Such as: prohibition of oaths, prohibition of divorce, or rejection of voluntary fasting.
- **Criterion of Multiple Attestation:** A saying or deed is more likely to be authentic if it is attested in multiple independent sources (Mark, Q, Paul, John, etc.) and/or in multiple literary forms (Parable, aphorism, prayer, beatitude, etc.).
- **Criterion of Coherence:** A saying /deed is more likely to be authentic if it coheres with other sayings and deeds identified as authentic.
- **Criterion of Rejection & Execution:** The crucifixion of Jesus, by the Romans, is one of the most well attested facts in his life, therefore the historical Jesus must have spoken and acted in a way that caught the attention of and alienated him from powerful people.

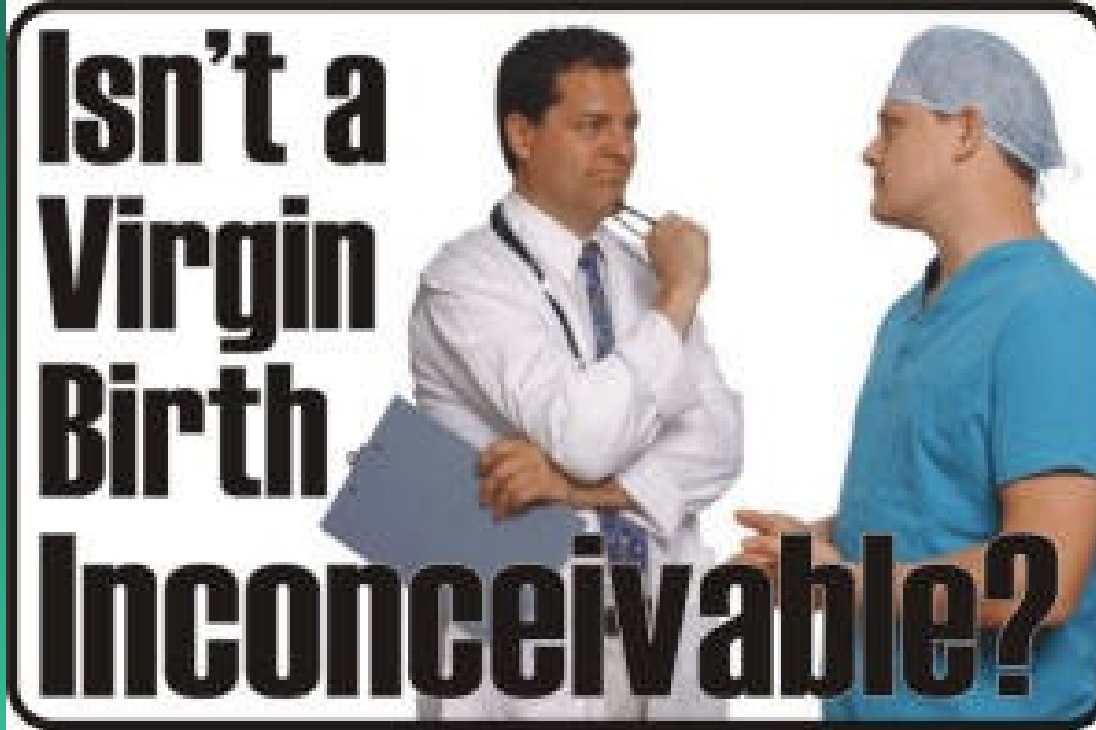
****Now, let's examine some of the details of the life of Jesus. ****



Where was Jesus born? Historical scholars place the birth of Jesus in Nazareth, rather than in Bethlehem of Judea, as described in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Gospel writers are believed to have created fictitious events which place the birth of Jesus, in Bethlehem, in order to fulfill Old Testament prophecies regarding the Jewish Messiah's birthplace.



In what year was Jesus born? There's a contradiction between Matthew and Luke's Gospel on the approximate year of Jesus' birth. Matthew places his birth during the time of King Herod's rule, who died in 4BC, while Luke states that Jesus was born during the first census of the Roman provinces of Syria and Iudaea, which was in 6AD. Both Gospels can't be right. Most scholars agree with Matthew's Timetable, they believe that Jesus was born between 6-4BC. This would place his birth under the rule of King Herod.



Both Matthew and Luke claim that Jesus was born of a virgin birth. Is this a historical fact or pious fiction?

Virgin birth myths were commonly used by Mystery Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean to describe the birth of divine personalities, such as Mithras; they were also used in popular culture to honor the birth of great men such as Emperor Augustus, and Romulus.

Interestingly, Mark, the oldest Gospel, doesn't mention the virgin birth of Jesus, neither does the Apostle Paul.



In fact, The writer of Matthew's Gospel makes a huge error, in Matt. 1:22-23, when he quotes Isaiah 7:14, from the Greek Septuagint Bible, and interprets it as being a prophecy of the Messiah being born of a virgin. The Septuagint translates the word "virgin" as "parthenos," which explicitly means virgin. However, in the Hebrew Manuscripts the term is "alma," which means "young woman" and has nothing to do with virgins. So, Matthew's attempt to connect the virgin birth story to Old Testament prophecy is based on a mistranslation of the Greek Bible.

According to
MATTHEW 1:6-16

According to
LUKE 3:23-31

DAVID



JESUS

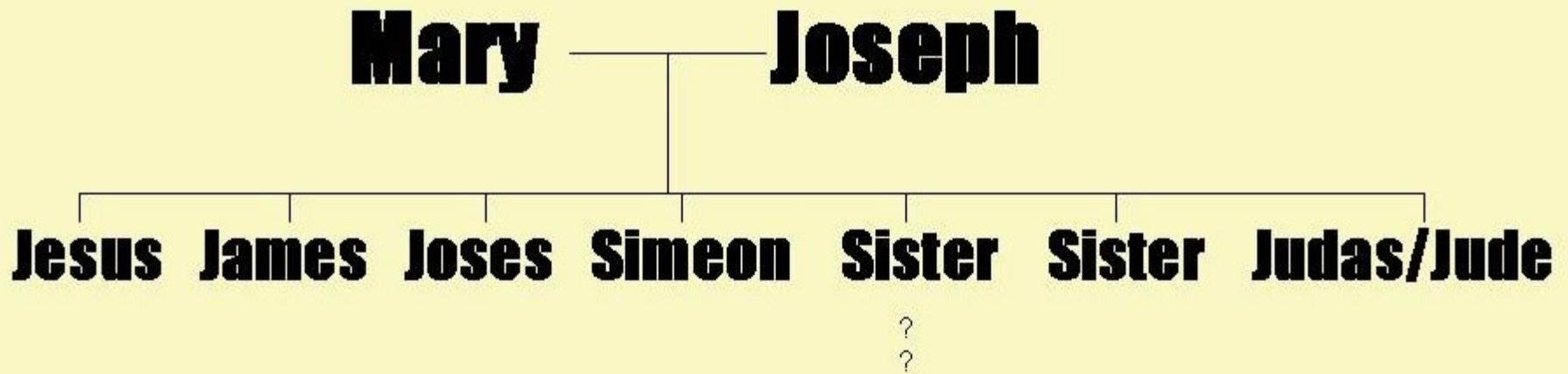
Unfortunately, this is not the only historical problem that we find with Matthew's nativity account. The genealogies ascribed to Jesus, in Matthew and Luke, contradict one another. If you examine the genealogical chart, you will find that the names simply don't match up. In fact, the writers don't even agree on who Joseph's father is. In Matthew's Gospel, Joseph's father was Jacob, but according to Luke he was Heli. Which is the correct genealogy? Scholars say neither. They were both invented to fulfill Messianic prophesy by connecting Jesus to the line of David.



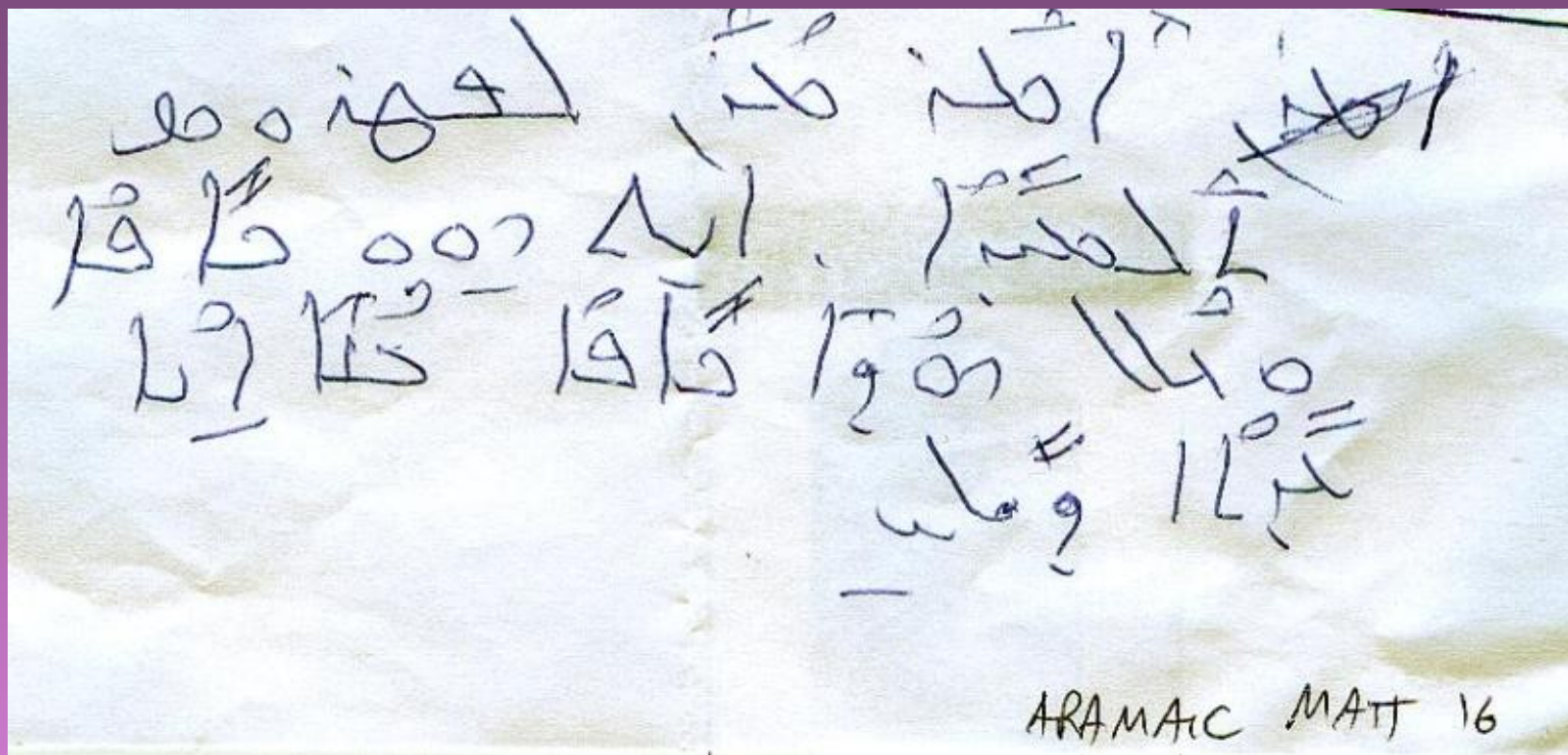
What are the true historical facts about Jesus that we can uncover by analyzing the Gospels? Well, we can begin by discovering his proper name. The Hebrew name for Jesus is "Yeshua," which is short for Yehoshua. Yehoshua is normally translated "Joshua" --meaning "YHWH rescues". **From this point on, we will refer to Jesus by his Hebrew name...."YESHUA"**



Yeshua was born, raised, and spent the majority of his life and in Galilee, which was in the northern region of Palestine. And this is the main province where he practiced his public ministry. Galileans were hated by the Judeans, of the south, because they were of mixed blood and open to the influence of foreigners. During the time of Yeshua, Galilee was semi-pagan town, ruled by Herod Antipas, The Tetrarch.



Yeshua's father was Joseph - - a Carpenter. And, contrary to Roman Catholic Church dogma, Yeshua's mother, Mary, was *not* a perpetual virgin. The Gospels mention that Yeshua had 4 brothers (James, Joses, Simon, and Judas) , and, at least, two unnamed sisters (Matt 13:55-56). Some traditions suggests that all of Yeshua's brothers had leadership roles in the early Christian Church.



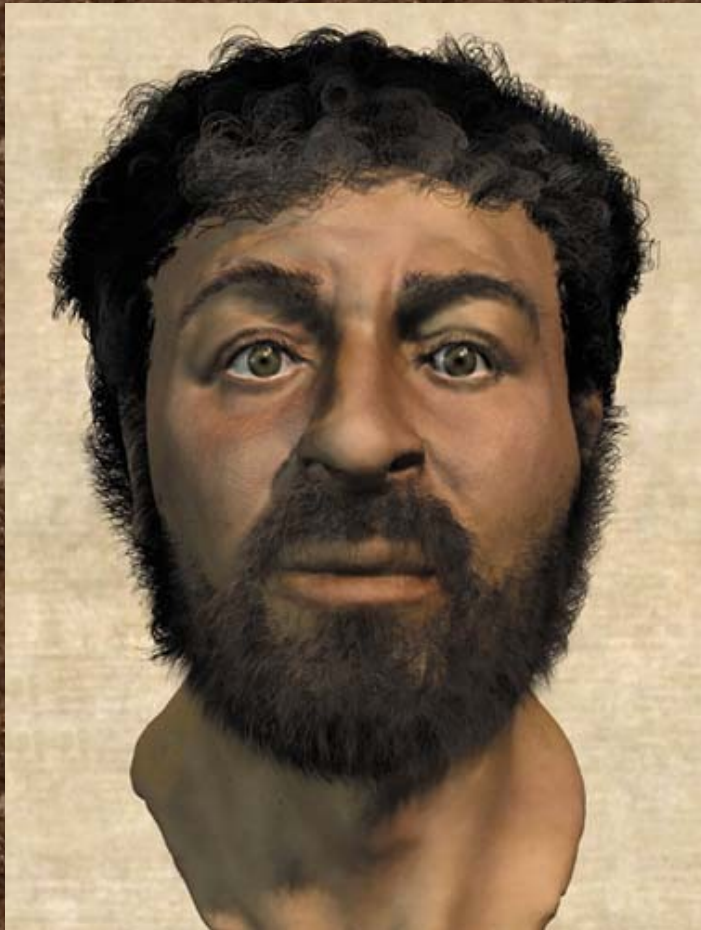
Yeshua's native tongue was Aramaic, which was the primary Galilean dialect, and he may have spoken Greek (the commercial language), and possibly Hebrew as well.

Yeshua was born, raised and died a JEW

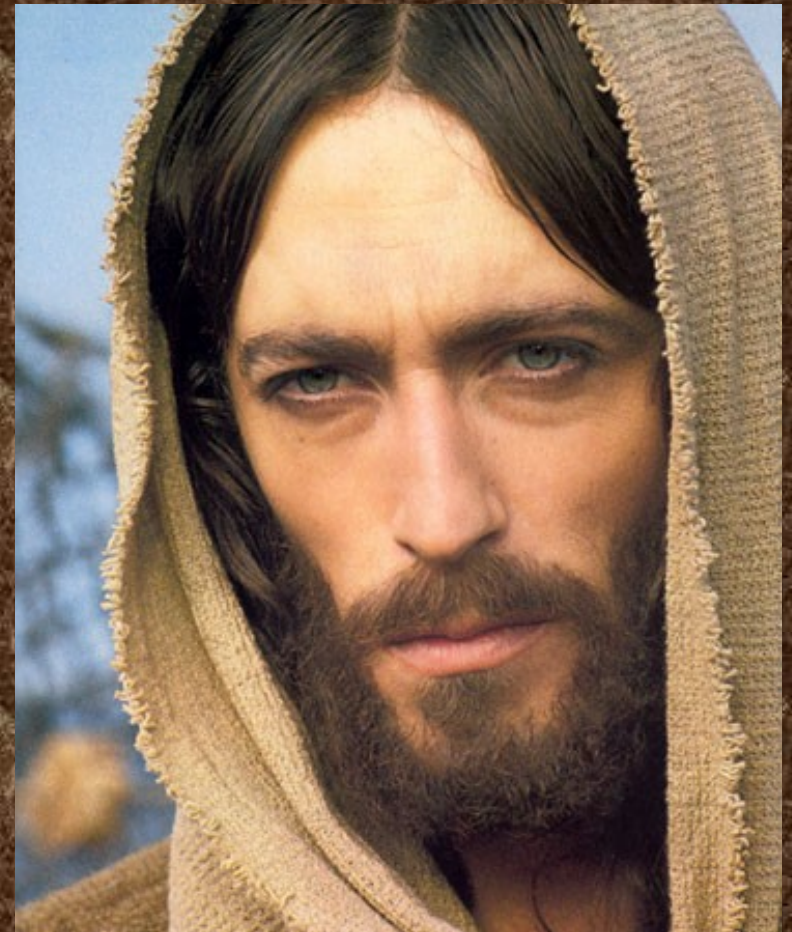
- **Yeshua was the 5th most common Jewish name.**
- **After his birth, he was presented to the Lord in the Temple.**
- **His parents made the round trip to Jerusalem every Passover.**
- **He attended synagogue every Sabbath and observed the festivals.**
- **He believed in one God, one Temple, and in the Torah as the cornerstone of faith.**
- **As a faithful Jew, Yeshua wore a “tassel” to remind himself to observe the Law.**
- **His Jewish followers referred to him as “Rabbi.”**
- **He encouraged his followers to DO what the Scribes and Pharisees taught.**

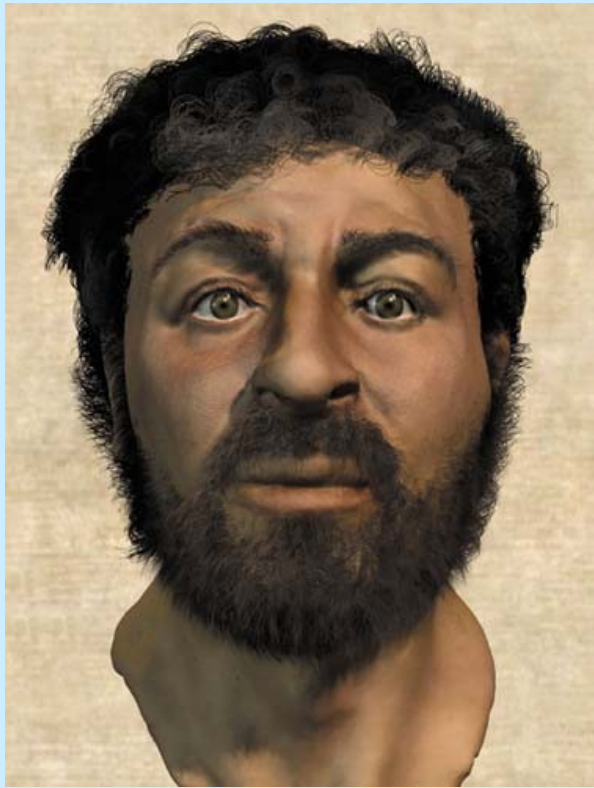
What did Yeshua look like?

Modern Biblical Scholars believe Yeshua looked
more like this



than this





“Starting with the assumption that Jesus resembled a typical peasant from 1st century CE Palestine, Richard Neave, a medical artist retired from the *University of Manchester* in England, and a team of researchers ‘started with an Israeli skull dating back to the 1st century. They then used computer programs, clay, simulated skin and their knowledge about the Jewish people of the time to determine the shape of the face, and color of eyes and skin.’” (ReligiousTolerance.org)

The average Palestinian peasant had:

- 3) Dark Olive Skin,
- 4) short curly hair
- 5) A Prominent nose Height about 5' 1“
- 6) Weight about 110 pounds. “

(ReligiousTolerance.org)

Historical Jesus Theories

Getting Jesus Researchers to agree on who Jesus was, and what was his central message and purpose has proved to be quite a challenge. Here are some of the current theories that are floating around and the writers that support them:

Jesus the Myth: Heavenly Christ - Earl Doherty, Timothy Freke, Peter Gandy

Jesus the Myth: Man of the Indefinite Past – Alvar Ellegard, G.A. Wells

Jesus the Hellenistic Hero - Gregory Riley

Jesus the Revolutionary – Robert Eisenman

Jesus the Wisdom Sage – John Crossan, Robert Funk, Burton Mack, Stephan Peterson

Jesus the Man of the Spirit – Marcus Borg, Stevan Davies

Jesus the Prophet of Social Change – Richard Horsley, Hyam Maccoby, G. Theissen

Jesus The Savior – Luke Timothy Johnson, Robert H. Stein, N.T. Wright

Jesus the Apocalyptic Prophet - Bart Ehrman, Paula Fredriksen, John Meier, Gerd Ludemann, E.P. Sanders

****This list was taken from:**

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/theories.html>

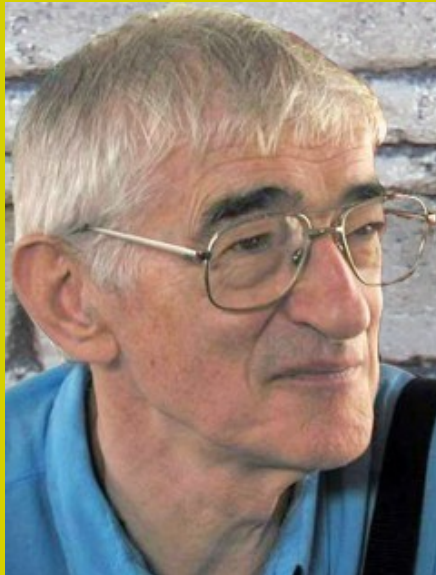
Among my favorite Jesus Scholars are:



John P. Meier



Bart Ehrman



John D. Crossan



Gerd Ludemann

Although Scholars disagree about Yeshua's central message and purpose, here are some of the basic facts that most of them will acknowledge:

- Yeshua was baptized by John the Baptist and began his own Galilean ministry shortly after John's death.**
- Yeshua was a Jewish Teacher/Healer who preached the Kingdom of God and attracted small crowds from Galilee for a period of about 3 years.**
- Yeshua taught using parables and aphorisms such as "turn the other cheek," "love your enemies," "go the extra mile."**
- In his preaching, Yeshua echoed the popular Apocalyptic views of his day (i.e. End of times scenarios).**

Cont.

- 5) A central part of Yeshua's ministry involved participating in open table fellowships with outsiders.**
- 6) Yeshua lived by and taught the importance of adhering to the Law of Moses.**
- 7) In his final days, Yeshua taught in Jerusalem and caused a disturbance in the Temple that eventually led to his arrest.**
- 8) Yeshua was crucified by the Romans under the governorship of Pontius Pilate.**

****To Be Continued****



Stay tuned, I will have more presentations on this subject coming up shortly. There's just too much material to cover in one session.

Please visit my Myspace page at:

<http://www.myspace.com/cleveglass>