

Jesus of Nazareth: Jesus in historical context

—

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This presentation series is dedicated to the memory of **Jim Kettlewell**, a lifelong learner and an inspiring friend.

Jesus of Nazareth

Mark (5 times)

- 1:9 "That Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee"
- 1:24 Man with the "impure spirit": "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?"
- 10:47 Blind Bartimaeus "heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth" and began to shout to be healed
- **Trial**
- 14:67: "You too [Peter] were with Jesus of Nazareth"
- **Resurrection**
- 16:6: The "young man" seated in Jesus' tomb says, "You seek Jesus of Nazareth"

Matthew (four times)

- Jesus' home 2:23; 4:13
- **Trial:**
- 21:11 "Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee"
- 26: 71: "this fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth"

Luke (four times)

- Jesus home: 2:28
- Same two stories as Mark: Bartimaeus and the "impure spirit" 4:34; 18:37
- **Resurrection:**
- Road to Emmaus 24:19

John (four/five times)

- 1:45 "Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph"
- 1:46 "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"
- Guards who came to arrest Jesus in **John 18:**
- *"Who is it you want?"*
- ⁵ *"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.*
- *"I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.)* ⁶ *When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.*
- ⁷ *Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?"*
- *"Jesus of Nazareth," they said.*
- ⁸ *Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go."*
- **Crucifixion**
- John 19:19: ⁹ Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Jesus of Nazareth

- Acts (seven times)
- 2:22 Peter identifies "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God" as the sender of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost
- 3:6 Peter heals a man "lame from birth" "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth"
- 4:10 Peter tells a crowd how the healing was performed: "in the name of Jesus of Nazareth"
- 6:14 Stephen's speech: "This Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this temple"
- 10:38 Peter speaks to a group of Gentiles: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth"
- 22: 8 [Paul's vision] "I am Jesus of Nazareth"
- 26:9 Paul testifies that he was a persecutor of the followers of "Jesus of Nazareth"

- The Gospels and the Book of Acts make it clear that Jesus was referred to as "Jesus of Nazareth."
- However, references to Jesus of Nazareth stop with the book of Acts.
- None of the Epistles refer to him by that name.
- He became known as Jesus Christ.
- During his lifetime, however, Jesus avoided being called the Christ (messiah):

Who was Jesus of Nazareth?

Series:
 What can we learn about the historical Jesus from the period history and his use of rhetoric? How can this enhance our understanding of Jesus and the Early Church?

This Week:

- What does it mean that the early church referred to Jesus as Jesus of Nazareth?
- Why did he forbid others to call him "Messiah" or "King"?
- What did it mean in his time to call oneself "Messiah" or "King"?

Coming Weeks:

- Why did he refer to himself until his trial as "the Son of Man"?
- What was the role and function of his miracles?
- How were his words and actions related the powers of his day?
- How is this related to the Early Church leadership as focused in James, his brother?

The History

- All four gospels agree that Jesus was called "Jesus of Nazareth."
 - Nazareth** was not on any contemporary map, had a population of less than 500, had no synagogue, and offered little opportunity for a carpenter.
 - It is more likely that Jesus worked in nearby **Sepphoris**, where he would have been exposed to **Jewish teachings** in the synagogue, **Greek and Roman culture**, and the **political and social unrest** under Roman rule. ("Sepphoris" Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)
- Judea had been divided by the Roman rulers into **three kingdoms or tetrarchies** ruled by three sons of Herod the Great, son of an Edomite Jewish convert.
- The time before and after Jesus was a period of **revolt, rebellion, claims to kingship, and claims to be messiah**.
- Most revolts against Rome came from Galilee.

"Small family farms that for centuries has served as the basis of a rural economy were gradually swallowed up by large estates administered by landed aristocracies flush with freshly minted Roman coins. The agriculture that had once sustained the meager village populations was now almost wholly focused on feeding the engorged urban centers, leaving the rural peasants hungry and destitute. The peasantry were now forced to pay a heavy tribute to Rome. *For farmers, the total could amount to nearly half of their annual yield* [emphasis mine]."

(Reza Aslan *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* 16)

The Hasmoneans

Jewish Virtual Library "Ancient Jewish History: The Hasmonean Dynasty (142 - 63 BCE)"



Judas Maccabeus
Wiki

- As part of the ancient world conquered by Alexander the Great of Greece (332 BCE), the Land remained a Jewish theocracy under Syrian-based Seleucid rulers.
- When the **Jews were prohibited from practicing Judaism** and **their Temple was desecrated** as part of an effort to impose Greek-oriented culture and customs on the entire population, the Jews rose in revolt (166 BCE).
- First led by **Mattathias** of the priestly Hasmonean family and then by his son **Judah the Maccabee**, the Jews subsequently **entered Jerusalem and purified the Temple (164 BCE)**, events commemorated each year by the festival of **Hanukkah**.
- Following further Hasmonean victories (147 BCE), the **Seleucids restored autonomy to Judea**, as the Land of Israel was now called, and, with the collapse of the Seleucid kingdom (129 BCE), Jewish independence was again achieved.
- Under the Hasmonean dynasty, which lasted about 80 years, the kingdom regained **boundaries not far short of Solomon's realm**, political consolidation under Jewish rule was attained and **Jewish life flourished**.



Herod “the Great”

Stewart Henry Perowne. “Herod King of Judea.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*

<http://galleryhip.com/herod-the-great.html>

- Latin Herodes Magnus (born 73 bce—died March/April, 4 bce, Jericho, Judaea) Roman-appointed king of Judaea (37–4 bce), who built many fortresses, aqueducts, theatres, and other public buildings and generally raised the prosperity of his land but who was the centre of political and family intrigues in his later years.
- Herod was born in southern Palestine. Herod was of Arab origin, although he was a practicing Jew.
- **Herod** made his political debut in [47 BCE] when his father appointed him governor of Galilee. Six years later Mark Antony made him tetrarch of Galilee.

Herod **overthrew the Hasmonean Antigonus** in a three-year-long war between 40 and 37 BCE, ruled under Roman overlordship until his death in 4 BCE, and passed on the throne to his sons, thus establishing his own, so-called Herodian dynasty.
Wiki “Herod the Great”



The Western Wall, in the Old City of Jerusalem, all that remains of the Second Temple.
AbleStock/Jupiterimages

Herod the Great

- Herod (the Great) made a reputation for himself by clearing Galilee of bandits. He beheaded one such leader, Hezekiah, whose son (Judas) would lead another rebellion in Jesus’ lifetime.
- In 37 BCE Herod “wiped out the remnants of the Hasmonean dynasty”
- Rome titled him King of Judea (“King of the Jews”)
- He “massacred nearly every member of the Sanhedrin and replaced the Temple priests with a clique of fawning

admirers

“Israel”

After Herod the Great's death in 4 BCE, the Romans intervened in order to split up the Herodian kingdom between three of Herod the Great's sons.

Philip the Tetrarch ruled Iturea and Trachonitis; and possibly Gaulanitis and Paneas.

Jesus is taken before Herod Antipas during his trial.

Herod Antipas (c. 20 BCE - c. 39 CE) ruled Galilee and Perea (4 BCE - 39 CE) Jesus would have been under his rule for his entire life.

Herod Archelaus ruled Samaria, Judea, and Idumea

Roman Province of Syria

Autonomous Cities

Ancient History Encyclopedia. Jesus Christ: Historical Context.

THE DECAPOLIS

- What we now call Israel was then known as Judea, Idumea, and Galilee, each ruled by different rulers and each with its own.
- The combination of killings, revolts, and social turbulence in **Archelaus'** realm was too much for the patience of Roman authorities:
- In 6 CE the **Emperor Augustus** deposed and exiled Archelaus, sending him to Gaul, and his domain became the Roman Province of Iudaea in 6 CE (sometimes spelled Judea, not to be confused with Judea proper, the region between Samaria and Idumea). Thus, Iudaea was under direct Roman administration and the province was governed by rulers directly appointed by the Roman Emperor.

Galilee

The center of rebellion, Galilee, paid most dearly: Emmaus and Sampo were laid waste; **Sepphoris** was leveled

Area Around the SEA OF GALILEE

0 Miles 8

Roman Roads Rivers Brooks

Galilee in the Time of Christ

Galilee

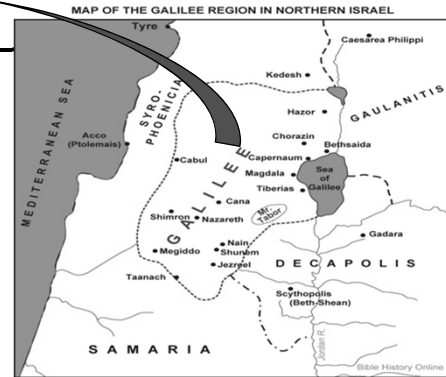
- “Galilee of Jesus’ time had undergone a profound psychic trauma, having felt the full force of Rome’s retribution for the revolts that erupted throughout the land after the death of Herod the Great” Aslan 90).
- Policy for insurrection:
 - Burn the villages
 - Raze the cities
 - Enslave the population

Nazareth

Bible History Online

Reza Aslan. *Zealot: the Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*. New York: Random House. 2013.

Modern Israel and Galilee



Hebrew root *galil*, an ultimately unique word for "district", and usually "circle" Wiki "Galilee"

Chapter 9 of I Kings states that Solomon rewarded his Phoenician ally, King Hiram I of Sidon, with twenty cities in the land of Galilee, which would then have been either settled by foreigners during and after the reign of Hiram I, or by those who had been forcibly deported there by later conquerors such as the Assyrians. Hiram, to reciprocate previous gifts given to David, accepted the upland plain among the mountains of

Galilee

- Galileans considered themselves a **wholly different people** from the rest of the Jews in Palestine."
- The Jewish historian "**Josephus** explicitly refers to the people of Galilee as a **separate ethnoi**, or nation.
- The **Mishnah** (Jewish oral tradition) "claims that the Galileans had different rules and customs than the Judeans when it came to matters such as marriage or weights and measures."
- They were "pastoral people," "easily recognizable by their provincial customs and their distinctly **rustic accent**" [as when Peter is recognized by his accent after Jesus' arrest

- Galilee had a tradition of political autonomy. The northern traditions that go into the Hebrew Bible are informed by this political sensibility of autonomy.
- It's a kind of quasi-anarchistic ideal, that this **loose tribal confederacy is ruled directly by God**. And those ideas and that ideal continues to be alive and well in northern Palestine.
- ...we can trace a line from the historical moment that's depicted in the Book of

Reza Aslan. *Zealot: the Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*. New York: Random House. 2013.

Galilee

Galilee was named by the Israelites and was the tribal region of Naphthali and Dan, at times overlapping the Tribe of Asher's land. However, Dan was dispersed among the whole people rather than isolated to the lands of Dan, as the Tribe of Dan was the hereditary local law enforcement and judiciary for the whole nation. Normally, Galilee is just referred to as Nafthali.



Map Circa 50 CE Wiki

- A "hotbed of revolutionary activity for centuries," Rome considered the term "Galilean" synonymous with "rebel."
- Solomon could not tame them: they resisted heavy taxes and forced labor to build the temple.
- The Hasmoneans, "priest-kings who ruled the land from 140 BCE to 63 BCE" never quite managed to submit to the temple-state they created in Judea."
- King Herod (Antipas) was not recognized as king by Rome until he rid the area of rebels (Aslan 91).

Reza Aslan. *Zealot: the Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*. New York: Random House. 2013.

"Bandits"

- "Successive droughts had left large swaths of the countryside fallow and in ruin as much of the Jewish peasantry was reduced to slavery. Those who managed to remain on their wasted fields often had no choice but to borrow heavily from the landed aristocracy at exorbitant rates."
- Though Jewish law forbade lending to fellow Jews for interest, "massive fines" were levied for late payments.
- If loans were not repaid, the peasant's land was confiscated and they continued to work the land as tenants.
- Many immigrated to the cities to find work.

"But in Galilee, a handful of displaced farmers and landowners exchanged their plows for swords ..."

- They hid in caves and grottos
- They attacked Jewish and Roman aristocracy
- They roamed the countryside and gathered followers

The Romans called them *lestai*, "bandits."

(Reza Aslan . *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* 16-17)

Kings and Messiahs

- Simon of Peraea (c 4 BC) led uprising against the Herodians and the Romans, declared himself king
- Athronges (c. 4-2 BC) ... led uprising against the Herodians and the Romans; declared himself king
- Judas the Galilean (6 AD) led uprising against the Romans
- **Jesus** who never specifically claimed to be the messiah
- Theudas (c. 46 AD), who led a short-lived uprising against the Romans and may have claimed to be the Messiah.
- Lukuas (d. 115 AD) who led a short-lived Jewish uprising against the Romans in Egypt that took Alexandria before being defeated by Trajan. Eusebius claims he declared himself "king", though it's not certain this meant he claimed to be the Messiah.
- Simon bar Kokhba (d. 135 AD) who was proclaimed the Messiah by Rabbi Akiva and who then led the uprising against the Romans which became the Second Jewish War.

- **Judas of Galilee**, or **Judas of Gamala**, was a Jewish leader who led resistance to the census imposed for Roman tax purposes by Quirinius in Judaea Province around 6 AD.
- He encouraged Jews not to register and those that did had their houses burnt and their cattle stolen **by his followers.**
- He began the fourth Philosophy of the Jews [Zealots] which Josephus blames for the disastrous war with the Romans in 66 AD.
- These events are discussed by Josephus in *The Jewish War* and in *Antiquities of the Jews* and mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles 5:17

Wiki "Judas of Galilee"

"After Herod's death in 4 BCE, a certain Judas, son of a local bandit, Ezekias, attacked Sepphoris, then the administrative center of the Galilee, and, sacking its treasury and weapons, armed his followers in a revolt against Herodian rule."

— Josephus, Jewish Historian According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, Jesus would have been about ten when this happened.

Oneill, Tim. Were there other Messiah stories similar to Jesus' near the time of his death? Quora. Nov. 4, 2011. <https://www.quora.com/Were-there-other-Messiah-stories-similar-to-Jesus-near-the-time-of-his-death-1>

"The bandits claimed to be agents of God's retribution. They cloaked their leaders in the emblems of biblical kings and heroes and presented their actions as a prelude to the restoration of God's kingdom on earth"
(Aslan 19)

Two rebellions noted in Acts 5

... Because of its position away from Jerusalem, Galilee may have become a center of, not only social dissent, but economic protest. There seems to be a rise of what we might describe as social banditry. -- "From Jesus to the Christ." PBS

Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while.
³⁵ Then he addressed the Sanhedrin:

"Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. ³⁶ Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. ³⁷ After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. ³⁸ Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹ But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

Nazareth

Nazareth was not on any map before the second century:

- James F. Strange, an American archaeologist, notes: "Nazareth is not mentioned in ancient Jewish sources earlier than the third century CE. Population: "a maximum of about 480."^[40]

Jesus was known as Jesus of Nazareth:

- In English translations of the New Testament, the phrase "Jesus of Nazareth" appears seventeen times whereas the Greek has the form "Jesus the *Nazarēnos*" or "Jesus the *Nazōraios*."

Early Christians were called "Nazarenes"

- Around 331, Eusebius records that from the name Nazareth Christ was called a Nazoraean, and that in earlier centuries Christians, were once called Nazarenes to evangelistic activity of Thomas the Apostle in the 1st century, are known by the name Nasranis even today.¹ WIKI

- **Tertullian** (Against Marcion 4:8) records that "for this reason the Jews call us 'Nazarenes'.
- In the New Testament Christians are called "Christians" three times by **Paul** in Romans, and "Nazarenes" once by Tertullus, a Jewish lawyer.
- The Rabbinic and modern Hebrew name for Christians, *notzrim*, is also thought to derive from Nazareth, and be connected with Tertullus' charge against Paul of being a member of the sect of the Nazarenes, *Nazoraioi*, "men of Nazareth" in Acts.
- Against this some medieval Jewish polemical texts connect *notzrim* with the *netsarim* "watchmen" of Ephraim in Jeremiah 31:6.
- In Syriac Aramaic *Nasrath* (ܢܫܪܬܐ) is used for Nazareth, while "Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5) and "of Nazareth" are both *Nasrani* or *Nasraya* (ܢܫܪܝܢܐ) an adjectival form.
- **Saint Thomas Christians**, an ancient community of Jewish Christians in India who trace their origins to evangelistic activity of Thomas the Apostle in the 1st century, are known by the name Nasranis even today

Sepphoris wiki source



- In 104 BCE, the Judean priestly dynasty of the **Hasmoneans** conquered **Galilee** under the leadership of either Alexander Jannaeus or Aristobulus I and at this time the town may have been **administered by a quarter-master, probably Jewish ...**
- by the middle of the 1st century BCE, after the campaigns of Pompey, it fell under **Roman rule in 63 BCE** became one of the five synods of Roman influence in the Near East.
- The Roman client king, **Herod the Great recaptured the city in 37 BCE** after it had been garrisoned by the Parthian proxy, the Hasmonean Antigonus II Mattathias.
- The city was called Sepphoris from the word *tzippori*, a variant of the Hebrew word for *bird*, *tzippor*, perhaps, as a Talmudic gloss suggests, because it is "perched on the top of a mountain, like a bird".

Sepphoris. BiblePlaces.com
<http://www.bibleplaces.com/sepphoris/>

Sepphoris wiki source



It has been suggested that Jesus, while living in Nazareth, may have worked as a craftsman at Sepphoris, where, during his youth 'the largest restoration project' of his time took place.

In Late Antiquity, it was believed to be the birthplace of Mary, mother of Jesus, and the village where Saints Anna and Joachim are often said to have resided. wiki

After Herod's son, **Herod Antipas** was made tetrarch, or governor, he proclaimed the city's new name to be *Autocratoris*, and rebuilt it as the "Ornament of the Galilee" (Josephus, Ant. 18.27).¹

At the time of Jesus, Sepphoris was a large, Roman-influenced city. Reza Aslan describes it at the time of Jesus's growing into maturity one mile away in the following terms:

*"Rich, cosmopolitan, deeply influenced by Greek culture, and surrounded by a panoply of races and religions, the Jews of Sepphoris were the product of the Herodian social revolution - the nouveaux riches who rose to prominence after Herod's massacre of the old priestly aristocracy."*⁵

Sepphoris. BiblePlaces.com
<http://www.bibleplaces.com/sepphoris/>

Rebellion in Sepphoris



Judas the Galilean image from Universität Wien www.outpatientmonk.com

- "In 4 BCE, king **Herod the Great** died. Immediately, there were several revolts against the rule of his son and successor, **Herod Archelaus**."
- Josephus says, Judas, the **son of that Hezekiah whom Herod had executed**, gathered a band of **patriots**, armed them with weapons from the royal arsenal at **Sepphoris**, and **operated throughout Galilee**. Varus came down with two legions and with the help of Arab auxiliaries dispersed the Galilean rebels. Sepphoris burned to the ground and the population sold as slaves. Varus then marched into Judea, caught up the groups of patriots and had **as many as 2000 of them nailed to the cross**. . . many of the patriots **branched off the Pharisees and organized the Zealots**."
- "Josephus does not tell what happened to Judas, but he was probably caught by the Roman governor of Syria, Publius Quinctilius Varus, who marched into Archelaus' realm to restore order. . . . Although Judas had 'an ambitious desire of the royal dignity', there are **no indications in this story that his aspirations were messianic in nature**."

"Judas, son of Hezekiah (4 BCE)" at Livius.org, citing Flavius Josephus, Jewish War 2.56 and Jewish Antiquities 17.271-272. Accessed Feb. 15, 2013. <http://www.livius.org/men-mh/messiah/messianic_claimants01.html>
Judas "the Zealot" of Gamala. Geni. <https://www.geni.com/people/Judas-the-Zealot-of-Gamala/600000005747693711>

And, "There was Judas, the son of that Hezekiah who had been head of the robbers. (This Hezekiah had been a very strong man, and had with great difficulty been caught by Herod.) Judas, having gotten together a multitude of men of a profligate character about Sepphoris in Galilee, made an assault upon the palace there, and seized upon all the weapons that were laid up in it, and with them armed every one of those that were with him, and carried away what money was left there. He became terrible to all men, by tearing and rending those that came near him; and all this in order to raise himself, and out of an ambitious desire of the royal dignity, for he hoped to obtain that as the reward not of his virtuous skill in war, but of his extravagance in doing injuries. (Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities 17.271-272)

Judas' rebellion Jewish Encyclopedia version

- Leader of a popular revolt against the Romans at the time when the first census was taken in Judea, in which revolt he perished and his followers were dispersed (Acts v. 37); born at Gamala in Gaulonitis (Josephus, "Ant." xviii. 1, § 1). In the year 6 or 7 C.E., when Quirinus came into Judea to take an account of the substance of the Jews, Judas, together with Zadok, a Pharisee, headed a large number of Zealots and offered strenuous resistance (ib. xviii. 1, § 6; xx. 5, § 2; idem, "B. J." ii. 8, § 1).
- **Judas proclaimed the Jewish state as a republic recognizing God alone as king and ruler and His laws as supreme.** The revolt continued to spread, and in some places serious conflicts ensued.
- Even after Judas had perished, his spirit continued to animate his followers. Two of **his sons, Jacob and Simon**, were **crucified** by Tiberius Alexander ("Ant." xx. 5, § 2); another son, **Menahem**, became the leader of the **Sicarii** and for a time had much power; he was finally slain by the high-priestly party ("B. J." ii. 17, §§ 8-9).
- Grätz ("Gesch." iii. 251) and Schürer ("Gesch." i. 486) identify Judas the Galilean with Judas, son of Hezekiah the Zealot, who, according to Josephus ("Ant." xvii. 10, § 5; "B. J." ii. 4, § 1), led a revolt in the time of Quintilius Varus. He took possession of the arsenal of Sepphoris, armed his followers, who were in great numbers, and soon became the terror of the Romans.
- Bibliography: Grätz, Gesch. 3d ed., iii. 260, 364; Schürer, Gesch. 3d ed., i. 420, passim.
- Jewish Encyclopedia, Judas the Galilean <https://www.geni.com/people/Judas-the-Zealot-of-Gamala/600000005747693711>

"The Egyptian"



<http://coastdaylight.com/thenowgetsemene.html>

- "We hear of a number of other characters during this period who reflect this growing **social banditry** and political protest.
- One of the most interesting, and famous cases is a character known as **The Egyptian**. We don't know his real name. He seems just to have come from Egypt. But according to Josephus, he's someone who had **magical powers** and garnered an enormous following among the popular folk.
- It seems that at one point he led a mass of people up on the **Mount of Olives**, literally looking down into the Temple from across the way. And Josephus says that as a kind of false prophet ... this Egyptian promised them that he *would lead these common people into Jerusalem, to take the Temple*. They would make him their **King**, and **King**, and they would, in turn, become his royal honor guard."

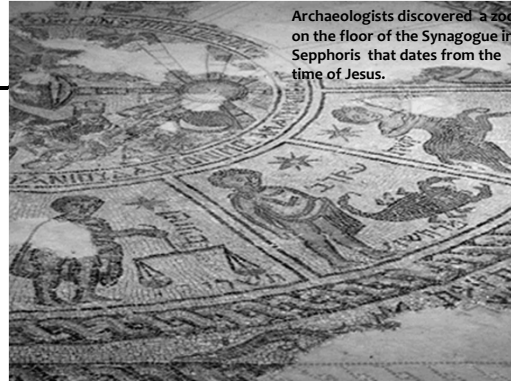
"the Romans have a fairly standard response ... **Go first for the leader, and disperse the rest.** The leader is usually arrested, or executed on the spot. The rest of the mob, as they appeared to be to the Romans, would have been dispersed, in some cases with a great deal of brutality."

This happened, but the Egyptian escaped.

Acts 21: 37 As they were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander. "May I say something to you?" "Do you speak Greek?" he replied. **38** "Aren't you the Egyptian who incited a rebellion some time ago and led four thousand members of the 'Assassins'" into the wilderness?" **39** But Paul answered, "I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Now I beg you to allow me to speak to you."

Jesus of Nazareth

- Nazareth at the time of Jesus could not have sustained a carpentry business.
- He would probably have worked at Sepphoris which also had a synagogue.
- This proximity explains how Jesus' working knowledge of the contemporary culture.
- Jesus would also have known about Judas the Galilean's, and "the Egyptian's ill-fated attempts at rebellion.
- And Jesus would also be a direct witness the social injustices under the Herod Antipas.



Archaeologists discovered a zodiac on the floor of the Synagogue in Sepphoris that dates from the time of Jesus.

LUKE 13
 31 At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you."
 32 He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.' In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!"

- Antipas killed John the Baptist
 - [Eliminated Jewish patriots]
 - Built the city Tiberius on a Jewish cemetery
 - Married a woman both his sister-in-law and niece.
- Why did Jesus refer to Herod as "That fox" in Luke 13:32?
 February 26, 2010 by richardfloyd <https://dhammadownload.com/2010/02/26/why-did-jesus-refer-to-herod-as>

Sepphoris. BiblePlaces.com
<http://www.bibleplaces.com/sepphoris/>

Jesus was crucified for being an insurrectionist

Rebellions in Jesus' Lifetime:
 Simon of Peraea (c 4 BC) led uprising against the Herodians and the Romans, declared himself king
 Athronges (c. 4-2 BC) ... led uprising against the Herodians and the Romans; declared himself king
 Judas the Galilean (6 AD) led uprising against the Romans

- John 14: 32 Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." - "the chief priests and the teachers of the law" at Jesus' trial.
- John 19:19: 9 Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE

INRI (Latin) *Jesus/Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Judaeorum* "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews"
INBIJETAΣ Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος ὁ Βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων "Jesus the Nazorean, King of the Judeans."

All four Gospels state that the title was used for Jesus when he was interviewed by Pilate and that his Crucifixion was based on that charge, as in Matthew 27:11, Mark 15:2, Luke 23:3 and John 18:33
 Wiki "King of the Jews"

Note: "Given the fact that Barabbas was in custody for his part in an insurrection, it seems likely that the two ληστές crucified with Jesus were also insurrectionists. If not, they were at least violent robbers - the meaning of ληστές does not allow for ordinary thieves."

"What crime was committed by the 'thieves' crucified with Jesus?"
 Christianity Stack Exchange. <http://christianity.stackexchange.com/questions/22775/what-crime-was-committed-by-the-thieves-crucified-with-jesus>

King of the Jews

Messiah literally means "anointed one". In Hebrew, the Messiah is often referred to as מלך המשיח (Meleḵ ha-Mašīaḥ in the Tiberian vocalization, pronounced, literally meaning "the Anointed King". The Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament renders all thirty-nine instances of the Hebrew word for "anointed" (Mašīaḥ) as Χριστός (Khristós).

Earliest Account: "Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate. "You have said so," Jesus replied. **Mark 15:2**

- The historical context reveals why Jesus is reluctant to declare himself messiah.
- Most aspirants to the title declared themselves the rightful king.
- To call oneself King was to claim Herod's title, given him by Rome, "King of Judea" (King of the Jews), and was thus both treason and insurrection.
- Three men in Jesus lifetime had claimed themselves to be the rightful king, and all had been executed. One actually rebelled in nearby Sepphoris.
- From the earliest account, Mark, Jesus avoided clear answers to the question of his kingship/messiahship.
- Jesus refused to be labeled king or messiah, and chose to redefine both as "the Son of Man." –which means simply, human.

The moshiah was to accomplish specific goals:

- unification of the tribes of Israel
- gathering in of all Jews to Eretz Israel
- rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem
- ushering in of a Messianic Age of global universal peace
- annunciation of the World to come

Messiah – Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messiah>

The Messiah The Earliest Account

The messiah isn't who you think it is ...

Who knows what messiah means?

Mark 12

- ³⁵ While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David?" ³⁶ David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared:
- "The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.'" ^[a]
- ³⁷ David himself calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"
- The large crowd listened to him with delight.

Anyone can call himself messiah...

Mark 13

- ²¹ At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. ²² For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²³ So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

Mark 8

- ^{8: 27} Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"
- ²⁸ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."
- ²⁹ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"
- Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."
- ³⁰ **Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.**
- ³¹ He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.
- ³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

The Messiah

Jesus won't
be defined

The expression "the Son of man" occurs **81 times in the Greek text of the four Canonical gospels, and is used only in the sayings of Jesus.** The singular Hebrew expression "son of man" (בן-אדם e. ben-'adam) also **appears in the Hebrew Bible over a hundred times.**

The use of the definite article in "**the Son of man**" in the Koine Greek of the Christian gospels is **novel**, and before its use there, no records of its use in any of the surviving Greek documents of antiquity exist.

Geza Vermes has stated that the use of "the Son of man" in the Christian gospels is unrelated to Hebrew Bible usages. Wiki

- 14: ⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" ⁶¹ But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.
- Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"
- ⁶² "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."
- ...
- 15: ³¹ In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! ³² Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe."

All four gospels agree

- Jesus was called "Jesus of Nazareth"
- Jesus resisted the titles "king" and "messiah" from the first Gospel on.
- Jesus preferred the title "THE Son of Man."
- Jesus' ministry shared similarities with the rebellions of **Judas the Galilean** (location, emphasis on Kingdom of God, attitudes toward taxation) and "**the Egyptian**" (miracles, entry into Jerusalem, speaking from Mount of Olives)
- Jesus ended his ministry with clear acts of rebellion:
 - the entry into Jerusalem
 - the cleansing of the temple
 - threatening to destroy the temple
- Jesus was killed for insurrection

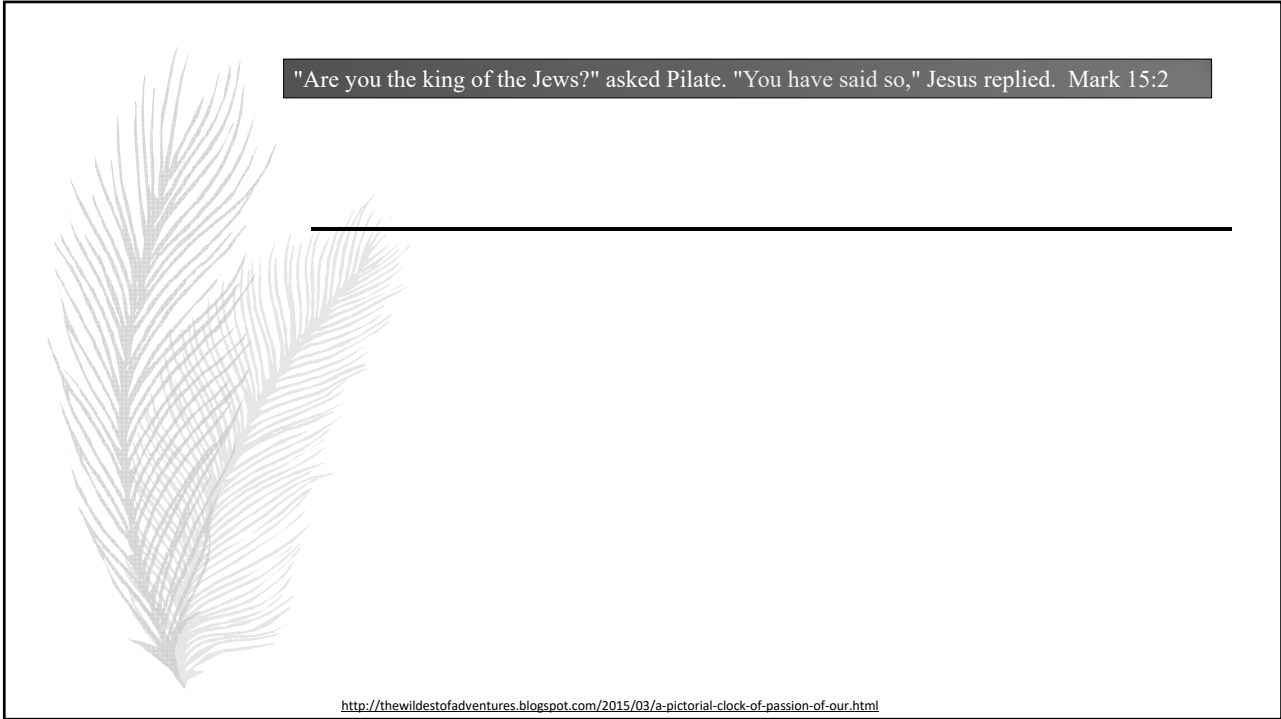
Who was Jesus of Nazareth?

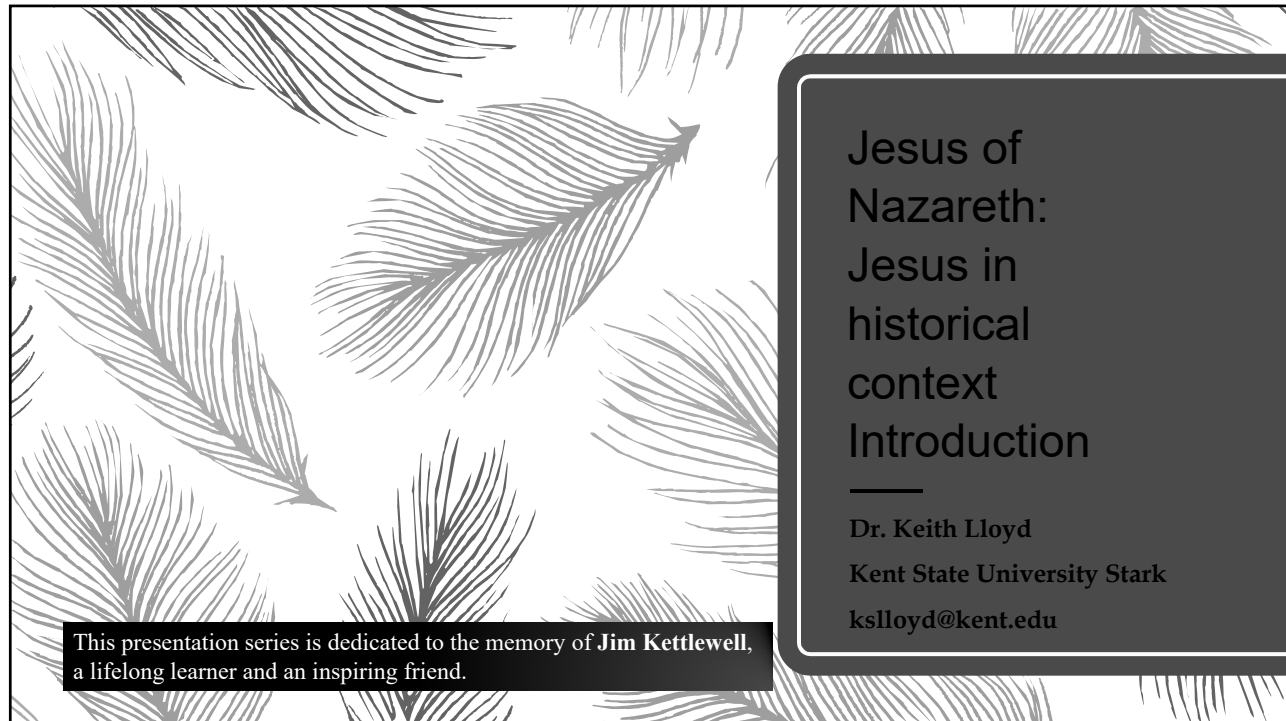
Jesus was a Galilean

- Spoke in the rustic Galilean Aramaic; his proximity to Sepphoris helps to explain his knowledge of politics, as well as Greek, Roman, and Jewish culture
- Focused most of his ministry in Galilee
- Believed in the rule of the "Kingdom of God"
- Questioned the centrality of the "temple"
- Questioned the rule of priests and scribes

Jesus' Rhetoric

- Jesus spoke to the issues of his time and the situation of his fellow Galileans, focusing on relevant issues:
 - poverty
 - taxation
 - economic rule by the elite
 - the urban shift
- Jesus used rhetoric to respond enigmatically to those in power.
- Jesus refused to be categorized and chose instead to define himself.





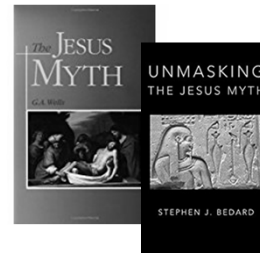
Jesus of Nazareth: Jesus in historical context

Introduction

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This presentation series is dedicated to the memory of **Jim Kettlewell**, a lifelong learner and an inspiring friend.

Historical approaches to scripture



- **Deep study of historical context to mentally recreate the world of the text through focusing on**
- Outside verification
 - Josephus; Roman records, etc.
- Number of sources
 - all four gospels = more evidenced
- Lack of fit with tradition or overall message
 - "I do not bring peace but a sword"
- Earliest documents
 - Mark, Q, Paul's letters

Mistakes from the past to avoid:

- Believing we can ever define "the historical Jesus"
- Discounting the miraculous entirely
- "Explaining" the miraculous in terms of science
- Imposing modern notions of history on ancient writings
- Using archaeological evidence as proof beyond what it merits

Issues

- **Anachronism**
 - Interpreting earlier work by later understandings
 - Interpreting ancient texts with modern understandings
 - Finding evidence for later interpretations in earlier work

- **Stakeholder Bias**
 - Stakeholders tend to harmonize accounts
 - Stakeholders tend to emphasize traditional interpretations
 - Stakeholders prefer interpretations that fit with sectarian beliefs



AnachronismTufts



Quick Answers to the Charge of Bible Contradictions | Come... Come Reason's Apologetics Notes

Advantages to Approaching Scripture Historically

- An historical approach **does not need to explain away problems in light of varied traditions.**
- An historical approach can **create a story that fits** what is historically known with the texts **without dismissing entirely supernatural or pan-historical elements.** Historians recognize the role of belief in shaping “reality.”
- An historical account relies on ‘facts,’ but **recognizes that “facts” range from established, to recognized, to plausible, to probable, to possible, to doubtful, to implausible, etc.** The history of the ancient world is not a google map.
- The historical approach **retains a sense of mystery**; things that don’t fit are just as valuable and intriguing as things that do.
- Historical accounts **do not need to be harmonized.** Several theories may be correct in various ways.
- An historical account reaches a **wider audience.**