

# **Jesus**

(Rev. 05/25)

### **Did Jesus die on the cross naked?**

Actually, this is a great question. Unfortunately, the answer is: we're not sure. Most pictures show Jesus with cloth wrapped around His waist. Is this possible? Yes. However, in my opinion, it's not very probable.

Crucifixion was meant to be the most horrific way to die possible, and if the Romans could embarrass you while they tortured you to death, I have no doubt they would have done so. Even more to the point, from their view, it would be a waste of a good piece of fabric since it would end up covered in blood and gore.

In my opinion – and the opinion of others I've read – it seems likely that Jesus was crucified naked.

### **Did Jesus ever get married and have children?**

This has been a “hot topic” in the world recently. To answer it, there are three sources we need to look at to answer this: the Bible, extra-Biblical books, and the “news”.

First, the Bible, especially for Jews, was big on genealogy! (Check out Matthew 1:1-17 if you don't believe me!) So, if they were big on reporting children, grandchildren, etc., wouldn't someone, somewhere in the Bible, have mentioned that Jesus got married and had children? So, the fact that we don't find it tells us that its likely Jesus wasn't married.

Second, we need to look at extra-Biblical books – these are officially called the “extra-cannonical” texts. These are books that talk about Jesus and claim to be written by important people, but most of them were written hundreds of years after Jesus rose again; and most are “Gnostic”, meaning that someone took Christianity and tried to convert it into a secret religion with secret messages.

Unfortunately, even here, the best you find is that in the “Gospel of Phillip” (written about 250 years AFTER Phillip died) Mary Magdalene is called Jesus' companion. The drawback? The disciples get mad about Jesus' relationship with Mary in the “gospel”; which would make no sense if Jesus had actually married her. So, strike two...

Third, we have books like Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code and Michael Baigent's (and other's) Holy Blood, Holy Grail. The problem with these books is that they're fictional books...that means “fake”. (Almost every scholar on earth think the “history” in these are wrong!) They claim that they're based on history and secret documents, but unfortunately the rest of the world has never been able to see these documents! (Makes it kind of hard to believe in, doesn't it?)

Brown and Baigent also look at books like the “Gospel of Phillip” and claim that it should be equal to the Bible, even though it was written hundreds of years later! Why? Because they need it to be able to read into it what they want. (Conveniently they ignore the fact that, according to Phillip, the Disciples didn't even know Jesus was married!)

Finally, you have “The Lost Tomb Of Jesus”, as presented on the Discovery Channel. This “tomb” - also called the Talpiot Tomb – was supposedly the family burial ground for Jesus, Mary Magdalene and their children. James Cameron – of Titanic, Avatar, and other movie fame – was the Executive Producer, by the way.

There are a few problems with this video:

- First, the tomb was discovered in 1996 and all of the experts agreed that it didn't belong to Jesus. (Strangely enough, when they wanted to make a movie about it in 2007, it was “discovered” that every expert before that time was wrong!)
- One of the ossuaries (bone boxes) that they conveniently couldn't find but KNEW existed was Jesus' brother James! (Unfortunately, that was proven through other documents that the ossuary labeled “James” came from another tomb altogether! Whoops!)
- The name “Mary” was so common that 1-out-of-5 women in Jerusalem would have been named that; “Joseph” was 1-out-of-7 men; and “Jesus” was 1-out-of-11 men. So, the odds on finding a tomb with those three names? Pretty good, actually! (One expert calculated the odds that there were 11 men in Jerusalem who would have matched that description!)
- Finally, “Mariamne is what is carved on the ossuary, but Mary Magdalene is NEVER called by that name! (Whoops!)

So, the odds are pretty good this is not real, at least according to the experts who study this sort of thing... (Didn't stop James Cameron from making money off it, though!)

### Did Jesus have a pet?

It's rare when I get a question that is *totally* new to me, but this is one of them! I've never stopped to think about Jesus, as a young boy, with a pet! So I did some digging and it turned out that people in Israel DID have pets!

One example of it is found in a weird place. In 2 Samuel, King David, the rule of Israel, has an affair with a married woman, she gets pregnant, and he kills her husband to cover it all up. Nathan, a prophet from God, is sent to confront David with his sin, and he describes a situation:

*So the LORD sent Nathan the prophet to tell David this story: “There were two men in a certain town. One was rich, and one was poor. The rich man owned a great many sheep and cattle. The poor man owned nothing but one little lamb he had bought. He raised that little lamb, and it grew up with his children. It ate from the man's own plate and drank from his cup. He cuddled it in his arms like a baby daughter. One day a guest arrived at the home of the rich man. But instead of killing an animal from his own flock or herd, he took the poor man's lamb and killed it and prepared it for his guest.”*

*David was furious. “As surely as the LORD lives,” he vowed, “any man who would do such a thing deserves to die! He must repay four lambs to the poor man for the one he stole and for having no pity.” - 2 Samuel 12:1-6 (NLT)*

Notice that David is more upset over someone killing a lamb than he is over the man he just had murdered! Also notice that he isn't surprised by the description of a man who let's a lamb drink from his cup, eat from his plate, and snuggle in his bed.

In fact, lambs were often pets for children in Israel. As one of my books put it:

*The poorest families of all would try to buy two lambs at Passover. One would be eaten according to the law, but the other would be kept to be fattened up throughout the summer. It became a family pet... Often it would sleep with the children and even share the same drinking vessels. It was a tragic day for the children when the sheep was killed... (Source: The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times)*

In other words, the lamb was a pet...until it was eaten...

So, did Jesus have a pet? We actually don't know, but it's certainly possible!

### **Did Jesus rise a third time?**

Actually, I'm not sure what this means. To be honest, though, the main time Jesus "rose" is the first time. Let me show you what Paul says about that in 1 Corinthians 15:

*I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him. - 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NLT)*

Paul wrote this sometime around 50 AD. That means it's around 20 years after Jesus died and rose again from the dead. Paul says, "Hey! I told you the story about Jesus, right? Jesus died for our sins, our mistakes. He was buried. And this guy who was killed and buried...rose from the dead!"

Paul then goes on to list a bunch of people who his readers could go and interview. He says, "If you doubt my word, go check it out! You can talk to Peter and the Disciples and they'll tell you they saw Jesus rise from the dead! There was a crowd of over 500 people who also saw Jesus after He rose from the dead! And, if you want to know, I saw Jesus on the road to Damascus!" (Read Acts 9:1-9 for this part of the story!)

Basically, this part of the Bible means that we don't have to accept on faith alone that Jesus rose from the dead. Instead, we can feel confident that there were a lot of eyewitnesses, people who saw Jesus, and who were around at this time to tell everyone what they saw!

So, that's the first "rise" that I know of.

I suppose the second one might be referring to something we call "The Ascension". After Jesus rose from the dead, He was seen by a bunch of people, He fixed some relationship issues with Peter, and then He rose up into Heaven. Let me show you what it says in Acts 1:

*After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will*

*return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!” - Acts 1:9-11 (NLT)*

If you read this, Jesus did “rise” into Heaven. Would this be the second one you mean?

Finally, there IS one other mention of Jesus “rising” that we could talk about. This one is also recorded in the Book of Acts. In Acts 7, Stephen is arrested and the religious leaders are furious that he keeps talking about Jesus. Then Stephen sees a vision of Heaven. Let me show you starting in verse 55:

*But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand. And he told them, “Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand!” - Acts 7:55-56 (NLT)*

What is Jesus doing? He’s “standing”. Why does that matter? Well, everywhere else in the Bible, we’re told that Jesus is “seated” at the right-hand of God; not standing.

Why is Jesus rising to His feet? An old song I once heard said it best:

*But someone stood up for Stephen  
He wasn't standing alone  
Someone stood up for Stephen  
At the Father's throne  
The sky opened up  
And the clouds rolled away  
Stephen saw Jesus and then  
Someone stood up for Stephen  
When Stephen stood up for Him  
- “Someone Stood Up For Stephen”, by Ray Boltz*

If we take a stand for Jesus, we’re NEVER standing alone!

### **Did Jesus wear the same clothes all the time?**

That’s actually an interesting question. Let me show you two verses that explain this:

*But Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head.” - Matthew 8:20 (NLT)*

Jesus doesn’t have a house, a car, or an RV. Everything He has He has to carry with Him.

*Don’t carry a traveler’s bag with a change of clothes and sandals or even a walking stick. Don’t hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve to be fed. - Matthew 10:10 (NLT)*

When Jesus sends out His disciples on a “trial run”, they’re told to bring nothing with them.

So, does this mean Jesus had nothing but the clothes on His back? Yes. Might He have had a small

bag with a change of clothes? Yes. Do we know for certain? No. What we do know is that if Jesus DID have extra clothing, it probably wasn't very much...

### **Do people put too much emphasis on the name Jesus?**

Note: The rest of the question included: **If I'm correct, which I quite possibly am not. The Lord and Savior's name while on earth was Yeshua? And my understanding is direct translation from Hebrew to English would more closely align with Joshua? And we get Jesus from Yeshua in Hebrew to Greek to English? Or does any of it matter as long as you know who you are addressing? Again my reference may not be 100%.**

This is actually a very good question. There is NO "J" sound in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, etc. It's not until the Germanic tribes get going much later that we get a "J". (The idea that God's true name is "Jehovah" is a few thousand years too late!) That "J" sound, though, is carried over to our time and that's how we get the name "J"esus.

The catch is, the Holy Spirit isn't "Holy Spirit". (In Greek, it's "Pneumatou Tou Hagiou".) God isn't "God". (In Greek it's "Theos" and in Hebrew, most likely you're using "Elohim" or "Adonai".)

So, the upshot is, are we using the "right" words? No. But does God understand us? Yes. I don't think God is offended by the conversion of His name into our language. In fact, Revelation 5 tells us:

*And they sang a new song with these words: "You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation..." - Revelation 5:9 (NLT)*

I think God is fine with EVERY language, so long as our praise and prayers go back to Him!

### **Does Jesus have a brother? If yes, who?**

Um...yep! And He has some sisters, too! Go check out: Matthew 12:46, Matthew 13:55, Mark 3:31, Mark 6:3-4, Luke 8:19, and John 7:1-10. Jesus' brother, James, wrote the Book of James that we find in our New Testament; and His brother, Jude (or Judah), wrote the book of Jude.

### **How is Jesus and God one?**

One of the main differences that we need to keep in mind when we talk about God is that He isn't just one person; He's three people in one. When we talk about God, we talk about The Father, the Son, and The Holy Spirit, right?

So God the Father is God. God the Son is God. God the Holy Spirit is God. But, at the same time, The Father is NOT the same person as the Son who is NOT the same person as the Holy Spirit. Having a hard time with this idea? Most people do. Why? Because what we're trying to wrap our heads around the idea of "The Trinity".

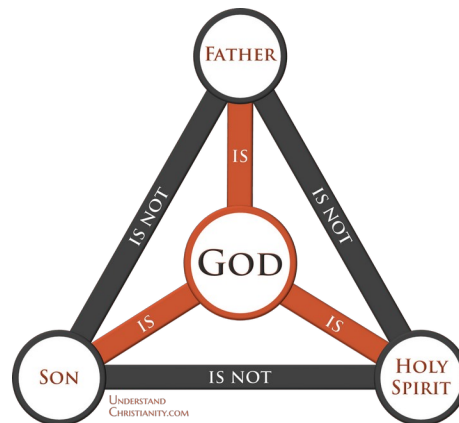
If you don't understand that, let me draw you a picture...literally.

- Imagine I drew a circle on a piece of paper in green ink. Do you see it? (Here's where your imagination kicks in!) Good. That green circle represents God the Father. Now you need to understand this: there IS actually a layer of ink on the paper, right? That circle exists on its own.
- Now, let me draw another circle right on top of it, but this time with a red marker. This red circle actually is a layer of ink that's on the paper. Is it the same as the green circle? No, it's different right? One is green and one is red. But are they both part of the circle? Yes.
- Now let me draw one more circle in blue. The blue circle is a different layer of ink from both the red and the green, right? But all three of them are the circle.

With this drawing, are all of the colors distinct? Do they all have their own characteristics? Certainly. But are they all part of the same circle? Yes. More importantly, can you separate the three circles from each other? No.

And that's kind of the way that God is. He's three distinct, unique people – just like the three colors are separate and distinct; but, at the same time, He's one being that we call “God” – just like the three colors are one circle.

By the way, there's another image I can give you that may or may not help:



So this is how Jesus and God can be the same...but different. If you need more, please ask!

### **If Jesus was crucified differently, would we still have a cross?**

Short answer: no. (You probably want more than that, right?) In the beginning of the church, there were a lot of symbols used to show that you were a Christian. These included anchors, crosses, crowns and fish. (Source: christianitytoday.com)

Ichthus, the Greek word for “fish”, is an acronym that stands for the Greek words, “Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior.” (That's why they're on bumperstickers nowadays.) In fact, the Ichthus was a very popular way to identify who was a Christian and who was trying to kill you! In Rome, where Christianity was outlawed, you didn't know who to trust. As you stood there talking to someone, you

would trace the arc of the top of the fish in the dust with your toe. If they were a Christian, they would complete the drawing of the fish with their toe. At that point, you knew you were safe to talk! (Well, reasonably safe, that is!)

However, by the 150s, a Christian writer named Justin Martyr preached about how common the image of the cross was – you see it in the masts of ships, on tools like the ax, and more – and how Christians could use that image to talk about Jesus. In fact, when the Roman Emperor Constantine came to power, he made the cross the symbol of his conversion to Christianity.

So, what's the upshot of all of this? It just means that there are a LOT of symbols for Christianity out there that have been used over the years. I tend to think that if Jesus was crucified differently, you would definitely see a different shape on the jewelry we wear.

With that, it's not the shape of the cross that is important; it's the state of our heart that is. If you wear a cross, what does it mean to you? Is it a symbol of God's love toward you or just some bling?

### **In 2 Corinthians 5:21, when it said, “He became sin who knew no sin.” How could he become sin if he can’t sin?**

The passage referred to here is translated in some different ways:

*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. - 2 Corinthians 5:21 (KJV)*

*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. - 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)*

*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. - 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)*

From these three verses, we see pretty much the same wording. Why? Because it's pretty much exactly what the Greek says:

*The [One] not having known sin, for us sin He made, so that we might become [the] righteousness of God in Him. - 2 Corinthians 5:21 (Greek)*

Based on this, it sounds like God made Jesus be sin, right? Unfortunately, translating the Greek directly into English without running it through filters may NOT be the best way to do it! (Remember, when you translate from one language to another, you get the choice of either translating exactly what the words SAY; or, you can translate what the words MEAN.)

Let me show you what one commentary says about the meaning of the words:

*“Not a sin offering, which would destroy the antithesis to “righteousness” and would make “sin” be used in different senses in the same sentence: not a sinful person, which would be untrue, and would require in the antithesis “righteous men,” not “righteousness”; but “sin,” that is, the representative Sin-bearer (vicariously) of the*



*aggregate sin* of all men past, present, and future. The sin of the world is one, therefore, the *singular*, not the *plural*, is used; though its *manifestations* are manifold...” - Commentary Critical And Explanatory On The Whole Bible

In other words, if we compare the verbs, the tenses, the plurals and the singulars, we actually get a clearer understanding of the message – one that isn’t as obvious if we simply take the words and convert them from Greek into English. And what’s that message?

Jesus becomes the “sin-bearer”, the one who carries the sins of the whole world. It’s not that Jesus becomes sin, it’s not that there’s a change in Jesus’ nature; this is a job description, the reason that He came. And, while I know this commentator disagrees with the phrase “sin offering”, in this case I don’t feel it’s inappropriate. And coincidentally, that’s close to what the NLT says:

*For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. - 2 Corinthians 5:12 (NLT)*

So, this passage is NOT saying that Jesus becomes “sin” or a “sinner”; instead, Jesus is described as “carrying” or “paying” for the sins of the world. (This was a GREAT question, by the way!)

**In the verse, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” It says the Word WAS God. Does that mean the Word isn’t with God anymore or isn’t God anymore? If not, what does it mean?**

Okay, the verse in question is John 1:1:

*In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. - John 1:1 (NLT)*

Here’s where I LOVE being an English Major! (Yay!) The word “was” is the Greek word “eimi”. Like our language, the Greek verbs have different tenses. You can have basic ones like past, present, and future. You can have weird ones like aorist and pluperfect. Or you can have just some in-right, out-right, up-right, down-right weird ones. (Greek gives you a LOT of options!)

In this case, “eimi” is an imperfect, active, indicative, third-person, singular version. (In the Greek, it’s actually written as “an”.) To help you to understand what that means, maybe this will be of some use:

*The difference in meaning between the imperfect and the aorist is the difference between perfective verbal aspect (action seen as complete: aorist) and progressive verbal aspect (action viewed as being in progress: imperfect). - Hellenistic Greek (2015)*

(Or, maybe this won’t be helpful...) In this case, the verb “was” means that it STARTED in the past, but that it isn’t FINISHED yet. In other words, “The Word” WAS with God...and still IS with God! And “The Word” WAS God...and still IS God!

**Is Jesus still alive on earth?**

This is a GREAT question that I’ve never been asked before! To answer this, I need to go a couple of

different ways. First, let's deal with what the Bible says:

*[Jesus] replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

*After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!" - Acts 1:7-11 (NLT)*

So, Jesus goes into Heaven after the resurrection, with a promise that He will return some day! (I like the fact that He's coming back for us at some point!)

After this time, there are other Biblical references to Jesus being in Heaven. These include: Acts 2:34, Acts 7:55, etc.

So, from the Christian viewpoint, Jesus ascended into Heaven and will remain there until the End Times, as described in the Book of Revelation.

There IS a religious group, however, that claims that Jesus HAS come back to earth. The Jehovah's Witnesses have a radically different viewpoint:

- 1799 - The End Times / Last Days begin. (The Harp of God, 1928, pgs. 235-36, 239)
- 1874 - Jesus comes to earth to be with His people. (The Harp of God, 1928, pgs. 236, 239-40)
- 1878 - Jesus starts ruling in Heaven. (The Harp of God, 1928, pgs. 236, 239-40)
- 1914 - Armageddon takes place. (Watchtower, July 15, 1894, pgs. 226)

The problem is...they missed the date. Since the world didn't end in 1914, they argued that Jesus did...other stuff. (Mostly that Jesus came into His power and received authority...which they can't prove and which seems weird when Jesus rose in power around 2,000 years ago!)

In 1961, they decided that those alive in 1914 were the generation that wouldn't pass away until Jesus comes. Unfortunately, it's still wrong because those people died and Jesus still didn't come.

So, there ARE other theories out there saying that Jesus is on earth and hiding, waiting for the right moment to reveal himself. The Bible says differently...and, unfortunately for the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Bible hasn't had to correct its story repeatedly, so it's probably more reliable.

### **Jesus says that God is His Father, but Mary had a husband. So, how is God His Father, but not Mary's husband?**

This is a great question, because it shows that you've been thinking about some pretty tough stuff! To answer this, let's look at two different parts of the Bible.

First, let's take a look at where the Bible tells us that God made Mary pregnant:

*This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. - Matthew 1:18 (NLT)*

Okay, this may be kind of confusing, but Joseph and Mary are NOT married at this time. They are promised to each other – the closest thing we have in the modern world is that they're "engaged". When Mary becomes pregnant, Joseph thinks about leaving her quietly, but God tells Joseph to marry her, instead; and that's what he does!

Luke also includes a description of this story in Luke 1:26-38. What's kind of mind-blowing is that Luke is considered one of the greatest historians who has ever lived. By the way, that's not just me who says that. Sir William Ramsay, a man who did NOT believe in the Bible, said this:

*"(There are) reasons for placing the author of Acts among the historians of the first rank." - Sir William Ramsay, St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen (Page 4)*

If Luke is so detailed, if he spends his time making sure that EVERYTHING he writes about Jesus is correct, do you think he would mess up on this? (Probably not.) In fact, in Luke 3:23, Luke tells us this:

*Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his public ministry. Jesus was known as the son of Joseph. Joseph was the son of Heli. - Luke 3:23 (NLT) (Italics added.)*

In other words, Luke tells us that Jesus is NOT the son of Joseph; instead, Jesus is simply called "Joseph's son". Why? Because Jesus is really God's Son! (And He's also God, but that's another question!)

All right, one final point before we walk away from this. Joseph is a good, good guy. Joseph basically adopts the Son of God and raises Him as his own child.

### **What color was Jesus?**

Actually, this is a VERY good question, and one that I frequently encounter. To help you, let me share with you the answer from Gotquestions.org:

*Most of the images we have of Jesus today are probably not accurate. Jesus was a Jew, so He likely had dark skin, dark eyes, and dark hair. This is a far cry from the European/Caucasian Jesus in most modern portrayals. One thing is clear: if it were important for us to know what He really did look like, Matthew, Peter and John, who spent three years with Him, would certainly be able to give us an accurate description, as would His own brothers, James and Jude. Yet, these New Testament writers offer no details about His physical attributes. (Source: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-look-like.html>)*

Going further, we find this description:

*[Taylor's] findings suggest that Jesus Christ was probably about 5 ft 5 in tall and had brown eyes, black hair and olive-brown skin—the most common features of men from his time according to archaeological remains, historical texts and pictorial depictions of people from first-century Judaea. Contrary to the long-haired icon we all know, the “King of Kings” most likely had short hair and a trimmed beard—a popular grooming tactic that could prevent lice.*

*The way we came to picture his body-type is also most likely inaccurate. As Taylor notes, Jesus worked with his hands—he was a carpenter—and did a fair lot of walking around. If we combine that physically active lifestyle with what we know about the common diet of his times it's safe to imagine him as a skinny but muscular man. “In fact everyone had a physical active life at the time you can see from skeletal remains that people were fairly muscular.” Taylor says. “So I would say he was quite wiry.”*

*And when it comes to clothing, [Taylor] is pretty confident that Jesus Christ's outfit of choice was a simple one-piece tunic rather than a more elaborate robe or a mantle.*

*Archaeological evidence and artworks from the first century indicate that people from a higher social status would often wear a two-tunic piece made of a simple under-tunic and a more elaborate outer dress—often a long robe—while common people often had a one-piece tunic. And in the Gospels, Jesus gives pretty specific advice on which one he preferred. “He says to the apostles: ‘don't wear two tunics’” Taylor notes. “That's quite specific advice and it says a lot about how he wanted his ambassadors to be perceived. He didn't want them to enter Galilee's villages as well-dressed visitors but as simple men that looked like the have-nots of society.” (Source: “What did Jesus really look like?” by V.M. Traverso, May 2018)*

So, Jesus most likely had brown eyes, black – possibly curly – hair, a short beard, and darker skin. He was also muscular from growing up as a carpenter and from walking everywhere.

If that description bothers you, it may be because you want Jesus to look like you. We, as humans, are focused on the outside appearance. The one thing I do like about the Bible is that it really does NOT talk about skin color or looks. God, Himself, told us what He sees when He looks at us:

*But the LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." - 1 Samuel 16:7 (NLT)*

Please understand that Jesus, as the Son of God, could have appeared as...anything. Most likely He appeared as everyone else did at that time and in that place.

The better question – and something for you to ponder – is could you worship Jesus if He doesn't look like you?

## **What is Jesus' birthday?**

Honestly, we don't really know for sure! In those times, you didn't worry about the birth of someone, unless they were a King, Caesar, High Priest, etc. While that's the case, there are a few verses that we can look at to help narrow this down:

*Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod.- Matthew 2:1a (NLT)*

Herod dies in 4 B.C. (Since he's a king, we have good records of this.) Next:

*Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men's report of the star's first appearance. - Matthew 2:16 (NLT)*

So Herod, to try to stop someone from claiming his throne, orders all of the boys two and under killed. Next, we find another clue in Luke:

*At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) - Luke 2:1-2 (NLT)*

Okay, so Augustus is Caesar from 27 B.C. to 14 A.D. That's another key point. Next, while there IS some debate over the evidence, it appears that Quirinius is governor around 6 B.C., and there also is evidence that there is a census taken at this time.

So, all of the overlapping points seem to indicate that Jesus is born around 6 B.C.

As for the day, it probably was NOT December 25<sup>th</sup>; that was added later. Some people argue for December, others for September, and others for...pretty much any other day in the year. This is something that we'll probably never know...until we get to Heaven and get to ask Jesus, Himself! (Or Mary!)

### **What language did Jesus speak in?**

This question actually requires three different answers:

The language in Israel at the time was Aramaic. To live and work in Israel, Jesus would have had to speak Aramaic.

The language spoken in the temples and synagogues was Hebrew. To read from the scroll in Isaiah (Luke 4), Jesus would have had to know Hebrew.

Finally, Rome has conquered Israel and their languages were both Latin and Greek. Because of His interaction with the Romans (Matthew 8:5-9), it's likely that Jesus spoke at least Latin, and possibly Greek, as well.

There may be other languages thrown in, too, but these would be the ones that Jesus needed on a day-to-day basis while living in Israel.

### **Why did the disciples follow Jesus when they didn't know who He was?**

The calling of the disciples is found in Matthew 4:18-21, Mark 1:16-20, Luke 5:1-11, John 1:35-42 (Peter, Andrew, James and John); Matthew 9:9, Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27 (Matthew); Mark 3:13-19, Luke 6:13-16 (Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot); John 1:43-44 (Philip); John 1:45-50 (Bartholomew, also called Nathanael).

So, why did they follow Jesus?

- Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist and John tells him about Jesus.
- Philip was probably a follower of John the Baptist and was looking for the Messiah.
- Peter receives a miraculous catch of fish because of Jesus.
- James and John were Peter's partners and they see what Jesus does.
- Bartholomew (Nathanael) follows Jesus because Jesus describes him sitting under a tree.
- Levi (Matthew) follows Jesus because Jesus gives him a second chance.

We're not sure how the others came or why... The few things we do know are:

- They were looking for a Messiah. (For the wrong reasons, but they were looking!)
- The way had been prepared by John the Baptist so people were looking for Jesus.
- Because of the testimony of John the Baptist.
- Jesus accepts them, even if they were rejected by their society. (Thinking Matthew here...)
- Jesus performs miracles to prove who He is.

Based on all of that, there are some pretty good reasons why they followed Him!

### **Why does the Bible say Jesus is "Joseph's Son"? Shouldn't it say "God's Son"?**

Okay, to answer this, we need to dig into the genealogies for Jesus. A "genealogy" is simply a list of your family: father, mother, grandparents, great-grandfather, etc. On the bright side, the Bible has TWO genealogies for Jesus; one in Matthew 1 and the other in Luke 3:23-38. On the not-so-bright side, the two genealogies are COMPLETELY different!

Now the first reason they could be different is because the Bible screwed up. (Always something we have to consider.) But, there are a LOT of reasons as to why this is not likely:

- First, the Jewish people were incredibly detailed record-keepers! They also specialized in genealogies, because all Jews were proud of their family. (It helped them determine if they were descended from King David, etc.) Their pride in their genealogies comes out in the Bible, where they talk about being descended from "Moses", "Abraham", etc.
- Second, Luke is an INSANELY detailed historian! He points out a TON of small details in both Luke and Acts, and for years archaeologists thought he was wrong! And then Luke was proven correct. And proven correct again. And again. Now, even atheists regard Luke as an historian of the first-rank. Because of that, it's doubtful that he would have made a mistake in an area as important as this!

So, if the genealogies are correct, then what's going on? Well, there are two accepted answers, both of which COULD explain it:

First, the church historian, Eusebius, says that Matthew is tracing Jesus' biological heritage – based on the males which was the key to succession – and Luke is using something called “levirate marriage”. (If a man died without having sons, his brother would marry the widow to have a son who could carry on the deceased man's name.)

If this is correct, then two people could have been married to the same woman at different times, which means there IS a difference between a legal lineage (family tree) and the biological one. (This is VERY complicated, but it actually does seem to fit the facts, especially in light of the known Jewish traditions.)

The second view is one held by a lot of conservative Biblical scholars in modern times. This view says that Matthew is recording Jesus' genealogy on Joseph's side. This makes sense because, in Jewish society, the father's line is what matters from a legal standpoint. This genealogy proves that Joseph is a direct descendant of King David.

But the reason Luke's genealogy is different is because he's following the bloodline of Mary, Jesus' mother! (The Greek has no word for “son-in-law”, so when it refers to Joseph as the “son of Heli”, it means that Joseph married Heli's daughter, Mary. This would mean that Mary is ALSO descended from David! This means that on both sides of his family, Jesus is a descendant of King David, which makes Him eligible to be the Messiah!

Personally, I tend to view the second one as more probable, but I'm willing to accept either one. Again, the Jewish records would be complete enough to do either of these genealogy styles.

So, what does this have to do with the question that started all of this?

From a legal standpoint, if Joseph declares Jesus as his son, legally Jesus is his son. (They had adoption in their age, just like we do.) Just because Jesus is called “Joseph's son”, it doesn't get rid of the idea of the “Immaculate Conception” and/or “The Virgin Birth”. Again, Matthew does NOT say that “Joseph is Jesus' biological father!”

But Luke throws in something that DOES hint to who Jesus' “dad” is. Go read Luke 3:23. In the original Greek, the verse reads:

*And Himself was Jesus beginning about years [old] thirty, being son, as was supposed of Joseph, of Heli.*

Luke, himself, says that people assumed that Joseph was Jesus' father. However, according to Luke, people knew that Joseph wasn't. By the way, even Jesus' enemies seemed to know that Joseph couldn't be Jesus' father. In John 9:29, to mock Jesus, they say this:

*“We know God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from.” - John 9:29 (NLT)*



So, the genealogies do NOT say, “Joseph was Jesus’ biological father!” Second, Luke pretty much flat-out tells us that Joseph is NOT Jesus’ biological father; a fact that seems verified by the comments that come from the religious leaders in John 9. (Again, Luke is too careful of an historian to make this simple of a mistake!)

Also, Matthew is following the “legal” line, through the male, back to King David; Luke is following the “biological” line, through the female, to King David. But both of these genealogies would be required to prove that they’re both direct descendants of King David, because the Messiah is supposed to come from the line of David.

Because of this, my conclusions would be:

1. Joseph is descended from David.
2. Mary is descended from David.
3. Jesus, to be the Messiah, would need the bloodline to go through David.
4. Joseph is Jesus’ “legal” father, not biological, as evidenced by Luke’s comment.
5. Even the religious leaders are convinced that Joseph couldn’t be Jesus’ father.

With all that, Jesus IS the Messiah AND the Son of God, just like the Bible says He is.

Sorry if that’s a long answer to a short question, but I wanted you to understand not only what is being said, but also how it applies to Jesus.

### **Why was Jesus here?**

To answer that, you need to look at how the system on earth was set up by God; so let’s jump right to the start of the Bible and look at Genesis:

*The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.” - Genesis 2:15-17 (NLT)*

So God says, “I’m Holy! In other words, I can’t sin, I can’t make mistakes, and I can’t fail. If you want a relationship with Me, you can’t fail, either, because perfection cannot put up with the imperfect. To make it easier to understand, Adam, I’m going to give you a simple test: if you don’t eat the fruit from this tree, you get to live forever in Eden with Me, face-to-face and heart-to-heart.”

Pretty good deal, right? Oh, and there’s a promise here:

#### **Promise #1: If we sin, we die.**

And, you know the story: Adam and Eve listen to Satan, they take their eyes off of God, and they disobey Him...they sin. In the first act of grace, they don’t die immediately; instead, God lets them live, but death is now a part of the human condition! We all, every one of us, WILL die!



Oh, and in case you were thinking this is an isolated happening, there are a few other promises that we need to look at:

*Godly people find life; evil people find death. - Proverbs 11:19 (NLT)*

**Promise #2: If we sin, we die.**

*For all people are mine to judge—both parents and children alike. And this is my rule: The person who sins is the one who will die. - Ezekiel 18:4 (NLT)*

**Promise #3: If we sin, we die. (Sensing a trend here?)**

*“And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.” - Matthew 25:46 (NLT)*

**Promise #4: If we sin, we die...for all eternity!**

*For the wages of sin is death... - Romans 3:23a (NLT)*

**Promise #5: If we sin, we die.**

What do all of these verses have in common? If we sin, if we go our own way, if we disobey God, if we treat another human as less than God made them to be, then we DESERVE death! God's standard is, simply put, perfection. Why? Because God is perfect! And it doesn't matter how "close" we get to perfection; it's either "pass" or "fail", either we're perfect...or we're not.

A great way to view this is in terms of a simple illustration:

I have a bunch of (sick) friends who are into eating healthy, working out, etc. (Again, "sick" people!) One day, they begin to brag about who is in the best physical shape, and so they decide to do a swimming race from California...to China!

They all jump in and set off. (I'm following in a boat, because I'm NOT stupid!) About half-a-mile offshore, one person begins to struggle. I offer to save them, but they refuse and, instead, they drown. They didn't make it very far and they're already dead! About ten miles out, the next person begins to struggle. Again, I offer to save them, but they refuse. Another one dead.

This pattern continues, with more and more people dying in the middle of the Pacific Ocean; each one refusing help, however, confident that they can make it on their own if they just keep trying!

Finally, there's one swimmer left...and the coast of China is coming close! But, just as we're a mile off shore, the last person begins to struggle. Again, I offer to help. In fact, I BEG to help them into the boat! They ignore me...and drown.

Which one of the swimmers is the best off? Answer: none. Whether they failed a half-mile into the race or within sight of the finish, they ALL failed! They ALL died! They couldn't do it on their own and, let's face it, there wasn't any doubt that this was going to be a disaster! The task was simply too

big for any human to accomplish...unless they had Someone to offer them a lifeline...

And to explain that, we have to go from the beginning of time...to it's end. In the Book of Revelation, we're told that there's going to be a confrontation between Satan and God. In the midst of this chaos, we find a definition of the teams:

*And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered before the world was made. - Revelation 13:8 (NLT)*

All right, so we had to go to the end of time to learn that Jesus was killed BEFORE the world even got going? What does THAT mean?

To put this all together, let me lay it out step-by-step:

1. Before God made the world, He knew we would screw up.
2. To cover the debt of sin, someone HAS to die.
3. Jesus, before the world was made, volunteers to be that person.
4. A human has to die, so Jesus becomes that human.

Now if Jesus just came down, died, and rose again...big deal! It's not enough to die for us; we still need to accept what Jesus DID for us! Like the swimmers who I begged to get into the boat, simply HAVING a boat isn't enough to save them! If they decide to reject the offer, to do it on their own, then they're going to die!

So Jesus is born. He is both God and human equally and at the same time. (If you struggle with the concept of the Incarnation, you're NOT alone!) At age 30 or so, Jesus begins to teach. And, what's His message?

*"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him."*

*"There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants." - John 3:16-21 (NLT)*

In other words, Jesus says, "Hey! God loves you so much, that He staged the greatest rescue mission in the history of history! He sent me! I'm going to live the life that you should have lived; I will never sin! Because of that, I don't have to die! But, I'm going to choose to die to take YOUR place! With my death, you can go back to the relationship that you threw away! Your choice!"

This message is backed up by many miracles: raising the dead, calming the storms, healing people of

leprosy, casting out demons, etc. As a magician, I can tell you that I COULD fake some of these! Some... Not all! Because of that, if they're true – and I think they are – then this would be proof that Jesus is who He says He is.

By the way, even Jesus' enemies understood what He was claiming:

*Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. Jesus said, "At my Father's direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?"*

*They replied, "We're stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God." - John 10:31-33 (NLT)*

Notice they don't argue with the miracles Jesus does! Instead, they're upset that Jesus claims to be God! You would think that miracles kind of prove that He IS God...but maybe that's just me...

So Jesus spends three years teaching about salvation; He does a number of miracles to prove that what He said was true; and He gathers a group of men to follow Him to spread His word. Pretty good, right? Unfortunately, there's something else needed: Jesus has to die to pay for our sins. And He does...

All right, this is a small encyclopedic answer. We can do a LOT more with the crucifixion, if you want. But if your question was specifically why Jesus came, this is it.

One last thought: Jesus died. The Jews knew it (read Josephus). The Romans knew it (read Tertullian, Lucian of Samosata, etc.) Even Jesus' followers knew it because they wrote about it.

But if Jesus JUST died, you and I would have no hope. Why? Because a lot of people claimed to be "god", a lot of them died, and we were still hopeless. To prove that Jesus DOES have the power to save us, though, He rose from the dead!

Jesus' death is the payment required for our salvation; His resurrection is proof that "the check cleared"!

Oh, and His followers? That's the message they preached to the entire world for over 2,000 years:

*So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense. But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength. - 1 Corinthians 1:23-25 (NLT)*

So, let me sum this all up:

1. Before God made the world, He knew we would screw up.
2. To cover the debt of sin, someone HAS to die.
3. Jesus, before the world was made, volunteers to be that person.
4. A human has to die, so Jesus becomes that human.
5. Before dying, Jesus teaches us about God.

6. Jesus uses miracles to prove that what He says is true.
7. Jesus dies, fulfilling the sacrifice for sin.
8. Jesus rises to prove that what He says is true.
9. The people Jesus taught write the Bible, share Jesus with others, and change the world.

Pretty good to accomplish all of that in about 33 years, right? If you need more than this, let me know! I'll be praying for you today.

### **Why was Jesus not immortal when He was crucified? Isn't Jesus the same as God?**

This is a continuation of a previous question, "Did Jesus Rise A Third Time", but I wanted to cover it separately. This is a question about something that we call "The Incarnation". Jesus, who IS God, put aside His glory and became a human being. Having trouble wrapping your head around that idea? So do most of us!

While living as a human, Jesus had many of the same limitations that we have. He could get tired, He could become exhausted, He could cry, He could grieve over the death of loved ones, He had to eat, and more. In every example you can think of, Jesus was FULLY human!

At the same time, Jesus was FULLY God! He knew the future, He could perform miracles, He had direct access to God, and the angels were at His command.

How was Jesus both? I really don't know. (I'm still looking for a good explanation myself, so if you hear one, let me know!) All I know is that the Bible says Jesus was both God and man at the same time! Because of that, when Jesus was crucified, He was killed. His body stopped working and His spirit left...just like ours does when we die.

But then, three days later, Jesus rises from the dead! The cool thing is that Jesus' new body is what the Bible calls a "resurrected body", which IS immortal! Even better is the promise that when we're resurrected, when we're living in Heaven, we will have an immortal body that doesn't fall apart, wear out, or die!

I hope that answers your question!

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