

RE-24 THE BIBLE

Jesus of Nazareth

Jesus, according to the NT Gospels



- Born 7-4 BCE
- Baptized by John the Baptist
- Itinerate teacher (for 3 years?)
 - Training disciples
 - Symbolic group of 12
- Miracle worker, especially healings
 - Signs of “Kingdom of God”
 - Compassion on marginalized people



Teachings

- *Kingdom of God* is coming/is here
 - Rejected political activity
 - Call for repentance
 - Inclusive of all Jews (later Gentiles)
- *Parables* = extended similes or metaphors
- *Discipleship* = imitation of Jesus
 - Including persecution & death (Cross)

Titles

- Rabbi “master” = teacher
- Messiah / Christ
 - “anointed” = king
 - *Secret* in Mark
- “Son of man”
 - Self-reference or apocalyptic allusion?
- “Son of God”
 - Used in Mark only by God, demons and executioner

Conflict

- Issues:
 - Law/Oral Law
 - Temple
 - The Messianic Kingdom
- Executed by Romans for *treason*, a political charge
 - Why?



Crucifixion

- Method of torture & execution
- Roman goal:
 - Humiliate & discourage enemies
- NT Gospels: God & Jesus *intended* this to happen



“Crucifixion”, Rico Lebrun (1950)
Syracuse University art collection

Resurrection

- Resurrection not narrated in NT
- Empty tomb discovered by women disciples
- Christian claim: Jesus rose from the dead



1st cent tomb, Jerusalem

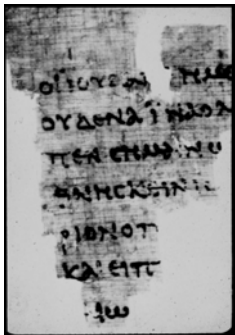
Search for the Historical Jesus

- History = ?
 1. What happened
 2. Factual accounts of what happened
- Many difficulties for factual accounts of Jesus' life



Ivo Dulcic, "Dinner at Emmaus" 1971

No eyewitness accounts



- No records from Jesus or from his disciples at that time
 - Earliest: Paul's letters (20-30 years after crucifixion)
- Gospels written 40-70 years after crucifixion
- Contain later Christian thinking about Jesus

Gospels ≠ histories or biographies

- Selective organization for preaching & religious teaching
- Not chronological
- Large gaps, e.g.
 - physical appearance
 - family
 - education
 - religious influences



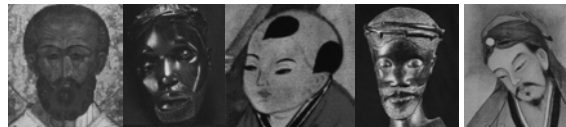
Caravaggio, "Inspiration of St. Matthew" 1602

Historically probable minimum

- Jesus was Jewish, from Nazareth
- Baptized by John the Baptist
- Reputation for parables & miracles
- Critical of Temple priests
- Crucified by Romans for treason



"White Crucifixion" by Marc Chagall (1938)



Christian Interpretation

Not: who *was* Jesus?
But: who *is* Jesus?

