

## Jesus

Jesus was born around 4 BCE. He grew up in the small village of Nazareth in Galilee (which was in the northern part of what had been the Jewish homeland). During the life of Jesus Galilee and all Judea was occupied and controlled by the Roman Empire.

Jesus' father, Joseph, was a carpenter. The Greek word used for carpenter could also mean 'stone-cutter'. He was a labourer, a builder. Most builders were people who once owned land and had lost it due to the heavy taxation system or debt. They now were basically day-labourers seeking work where they could. On the economic scale, they were poor, less secure than farmers and slightly more secure than beggars.

We know little about Jesus's life growing up. When he was about 30 years of age he was baptized in the river Jordan by John, a prophetic figure calling people to change their lives. John was executed for his criticism of Herod, one of the territorial rulers.

Jesus began to travel from village to village. He gathered about him a group of male and female followers, or students, called disciples. Jesus talked about the kingdom of God – what life could be like if God, rather than Caesar, was seen as king. He called people to begin to live as if this was God's kingdom, God's world, rather than Caesar's world.

Jesus lived by a vision of God's kingdom. He shared meals with people from all economic and social classes. In doing so, he was proclaiming that everyone is welcome at God's table; that God desires that God's blessings of grain, food, drink be shared and distributed to everyone.

Jesus healed people. The healings were both physical and societal, in that people who had been shunned by society were now welcomed back into the community.

Jesus told stories called parables. These stories were puzzling, and often would leave people wondering about their world and how they should act as God's children. The parables often challenged

prevailing prejudices and views. For example, in the story of the Good Samaritan, the 'hero' is a Samaritan. The Samaritans were generally despised and avoided by Jewish people, yet in Jesus' story it is a Samaritan who displays God's compassion.

When Jesus was questioned by Pilate he said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants, would fight to prevent my arrest..." These words suggest that Jesus saw non-violence as one of the fundamental differences between God's way and the way of those in power in the world. Jesus's followers would not use violence in their resistance.

Jesus told people to forgive others. He told his disciples to let go of their desire for prestige and praise and, instead, to serve others, to care for others.

During the week before he died, Jesus was in the city of Jerusalem. He staged an act of prophetic criticism in the temple courtyard, overturning tables. He called the temple a "den of thieves", perhaps criticizing religious leaders for cooperating with the ruling Roman regime.

Jesus was arrested and executed by the Roman government. The form of execution was crucifixion, being nailed to a cross and left to die.

Within days, Jesus' disciples claimed that God had raised Jesus from death. They told stories of having encountered Jesus, and spoke of experiencing his ongoing presence in their lives.

Jesus' disciples continued to live as a community of God's kingdom – healing and caring for others, sharing food and resources, forgiving debts and refusing to serve in the imperial army. They continued to experience Jesus as somehow present amongst them and within them.

Jesus is the revelation of God in human life. Born around 4 BCE crucified around 30 CE Jewish, grew up in Nazareth (peasant village in Galilee, the northern part of the Jewish homeland. – Roman Empire. John the Baptizer, own public activity, taught, healed, cast out demons, only city he went to was Jerusalem, therefore he spoke mainly to peasants, agricultural workers, manual labourers / parables and short aphorisms, associated with marginalized persons/ kingdom of God/ open table/ provocative actions in Jerusalem – arrested and crucified