



Is the Jesus of History Your Jesus?

By Jim Myers

Who is the “*Jesus of history*”? He is the Jesus we read about in *Matthew, Mark and Luke that lived in Nazareth most of his life*. He was born around 6 BCE and was executed by the Romans around 27 CE. He wrote nothing and there is no physical evidence that he ever existed. Yet, today, over two billion people “believe in” Jesus and that makes him one of the most important figures in the history of the world. But along with “believing in” Jesus, people also have “beliefs about him” – *and those beliefs affect how they view life, behave and relate.*

I was raised in a Christian family in a small town where everyone I knew was a Christian, too. Jesus was a regular part of conversations in everyday life. He was also part of all of the institutions that were part of my life, especially my church and school. Every Sunday we went to church and listened to the preacher read Bible stories and talked about Jesus. He didn’t talk about *theologies, doctrines, morals, ethics, etc.* – *he talked about how important it was to “believe in Jesus.”* The Devil (Satan) was also a central character in those stories. But, regardless of whatever the Devil did – *or even what we did (“the saved ones”) – we knew that someday we were all going to spend eternity in Heaven with Jesus and other “saved” people.*

*We not only we “believed in” Jesus –
we also believed “once you are saved you are always saved”!*

I thought those beliefs came directly from “*my Jesus.*” I lived in a religious reality which was confirmed regularly by the people I associated with. More than anything else though, my religion centered on “*Jesus and me!*”

Jesus loves “me.”

Jesus saved “me.”

Jesus is watching over “me.”

Religion was a “*personal*” thing for about everyone around me. It was something that was “*between and an individual and God.*” That was my reality! It was the reality of most of the people I interacted with too. *It wasn’t a belief system to us.* We knew *God wanted us to go into all of the world and save as many people as we could.* Since “*everyone we saved*” would go to Heaven and spend eternity, *instead of spending it Hell -- what could be more noble and important than saving as many people as we could?* The thought that “*my Jesus*” might not be who I believed he was never entered my mind. *Is “your Jesus” like “my Jesus,” or different?*

My Jesus was “Jesus Christ.”

My Jesus was Jesus **Christ** and I was a **Christian**. Obviously the word “**Christ**” was very important because it connected me with him – *however I had never considered what it meant*. As a matter of fact, I viewed as being something like a “last name” – he was Jesus **Christ**. But I didn’t know the *New Testament was not written in English; it was written in Greek*.

Χριστός

That is the word in ancient Greek manuscripts of the *New Testament* books. Bible translators have four options for working with those Greek words:

1. **translate** – carry the meaning from Greek into English.
2. **transliterate** – replace the Greek letters with their equivalent English letters.
3. **omit** – ignore the Greek word and write nothing in their translation.
4. **insert** – add a word into the translation for which there is no Greek word.

“Christ” is #2 -- a transliteration instead of a translation.

Χριστός
↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
C H R I S T O S

The English letter beneath each Greek letter is its English equivalent. The last two letters were dropped by translators thus giving leaving the transliteration “**Christ**.” The translation of this word is “**anointed**.” In the Jewish culture of Jesus, *people were anointed to hold certain offices and do specific things*. So, what was Jesus anointed to do? He revealed the answer on a Shabbat morning at his hometown synagogue in Nazareth after reading some verses from Isaiah 61:1-2a.

*“The Spirit of God is upon me, because He has **anointed** me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the year of acceptance of God. (Isaiah 61:1-2a)*

When he finished reading he said – “*Today these words are fulfilled.*” What the Jewish audience heard was this:

“I am the Anointed One in the passage from Isaiah.

Below is what anointed meant in the words of Isaiah that Jesus read.

Preach the gospel to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, set at liberty those who are oppressed and proclaim the year of acceptance of God.

The Anointing of Jesus

The prophesy in Isaiah said “the Spirit would come upon the one anointed.” For Jesus the anointing took place during an encounter with John the Baptist before Jesus announced who he was at the synagogue.

John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins . . . And he preached, saying, “There comes one after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”
(Mark 1:4, 7-8)

It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, he saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”
(Mark 1:9-11)

From that moment forward Jesus was the “Anointed One.” We now know this:

*Jesus the Anointed One is the correct translation –
not Jesus Christ.*

Jesus Becomes the “Son of God”

At his baptism, when Jesus was anointed, he also became the “Son of God,” according to “*the voice from heaven.*” As I pointed out above, in the Jewish culture of Jesus kings, priests and prophets were also “anointed” – *but only one office holder had the title “Son of God.”* Psalm 2 tells us which office that was.

*“And the rulers take counsel together, against Yahweh and against His Anointed . . .
“You are My Son, today I have begotten you.”* (Psalm 2:2, 7)

The title “Anointed One” is the king and he is the one called “My Son.” Notice that the Psalm says, “today I have begotten you.” On the day of the coronation he became “*the adopted Son of God.*” However, only descendants of David could be an “adopted Son of God” because of the covenant God made with David in 2 Kings 12-14a:

When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My Son.

Jesus was the Anointed One, King and the Son of God.

Proclaiming Liberty to the Captives and Setting at Liberty the Oppressed

According to the Isaiah prophesy Jesus read, he was anointed to set the captives and oppressed free. Therefore, we need to find the answers to these questions:

- *Who are “the captives and the oppressed”?*
- *Who is holding them captive and oppressing them”?*
- *How will he do it?*

The answers are also found in Isaiah (58:1-3a).

- *The oppressors sought God daily and desired to know God’s ways.*
- *The oppressors asked God for justice.*
- *The oppressors asked God righteousness.*
- *The oppressors desired to draw near to God.*
- *The oppressors fasted and afflicted their souls for God.*
- *The God of the oppressors was also the God of Isaiah and Jesus.*

They were religious and their focus was on doing religious rituals – *specifically prayer and fasting*. But while they were doing “religious things” they were also doing this (Isaiah 58:3a-4b):

- *Instead of experiencing sorry and regret for their sins they found pleasure.*
- *Instead of being shepherds they were exploiting their workers.*
- *Instead of fasting to heal relationships they were arguing and dividing people.*
- *Instead of comforting people they were striking them with fists of wickedness.*

So how does God want Jesus to “loose the bonds of wickedness, heavy burdens, let oppressed go free and break every yoke”? The answer is revealed in Isaiah 58:6-7. God told the people who were fasting that He would hear their prayers if they did these things instead:

- *Break **your** bread with the hungry.*
- *Bring the homeless to **your** house.*
- *Give **your** clothes to cover the naked.*
- *Seek out, instead of hiding from, **your** own flesh.*

Please pay very close attention to what Isaiah says next because these are the words Jesus based his life and message on (Isaiah 58:6-7):

1. Break **your** bread with the hungry, bring the homeless to **your** house, give **your** clothes to cover the naked, and seek out **your** own flesh.
2. Then, after you do those things, your light shall break forth like the dawn.
3. Then, after you do those things, your healing shall quickly spring up.
4. Then, after you do those things, your **righteousness** (**TDQ**) shall go before you.
5. Then, after you do those things, the glory of God shall gather you.

Until number one is done, the next four things will not happen! If you had been a follower of the Jesus of history you would have Jesus repeat those words continually in everything he taught. The five sentences above are all wrapped up in the meaning of one Hebrew word.

צדקה

TZEDAQAH

It is transliterated as “**tzedaqah**” and it was translated “**righteousness (TDQ)**” in Isaiah’s words above. Sometimes translators translate this Hebrew word by other English words, and there are other Hebrew and Greek words that are translated as “righteousness.” Therefore, when a Hebrew or Greek words reflects the five meanings above I add “(TDQ)” to it. “TDQ” are the three underlined letters in the transliteration above – **TZEDAQAH**. They are the *root word*.

Righteousness (TZDQ) describes actions
that provide basic requirements of life (physically and emotionally) –
protection, food, water, shelter, clothing, love, belonging, education, etc.

Righteousness (TZDQ) is related to the Hebrew word **TOV**. In the first chapter in Genesis the Creator of the Heavens and Earth used the TOV Standard to measure His acts of creation:

*Acts that are **TOV** protect lives, preserve lives,
make lives more functional and increase the quality of life.*

The Creator created humans “in His image” and “empowered them through His blessing” to “be His representatives on Earth” -- Co-Shepherds over all life on Earth – Shepherds that do acts of TOV like Him.

*The things listed in number 1 of five things
God told the oppressors to do acts of righteousness (TDQ).*

Now let’s go to the “**salvation message**” of the Jesus of history (Matthew 25:31-46).

When the **Son of Man** comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And he will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left . . . And the goats will go away into everlasting punishment, but the sheep will go into eternal life.”

The sheep are the ones that will be saved. Pay close attention to why they were chosen.

1. *You gave food to the least of my brothers.*
2. *You gave drink to the thirsty.*
3. *You gave clothes to the naked.*
4. *You visited the ones that were sick.*
5. *You went to see those in prison.*

The things the people above did are “acts of righteousness (TDQ)” – Jesus called them “the righteous.” Everything Jesus taught above is based on what we read from Isaiah 58.

1. *Their light broke forth.*
2. *Their healing (salvation) came quickly.*
3. *Their acts of righteousness (TDQ) went before them.*
4. *God gathered them -- “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”*

The people in the other group did not do acts of tzedakah (TDQ) and they received the ultimate punishment – they ceased to exist. The Jesus of history did not send people to Heaven or Hell. I want to make sure you understand a very important point Jesus made in Matthew 25 before we move on:

*All the nations of the earth were gathered and judged –
not just Israelites, Judeans and Jewish people.
Righteousness (TDQ) was the universal requirement
for entrance into eternal life.*

Now take another look at some of very well-known teachings of Jesus and see if what you thought they meant before reading the information above has changed (Matthew 5).

*Let your light so shine before men
so **they may see your good works** (TDQ) (v. 16)*

*Blessed are those **who are pursue righteousness** (TDQ)
for they are the Kingdom of God. (v. 10)*

Blessed are those **who hunger and thirst for righteousness** (TZDQ) (v. 6)

Unless your **righteousness** (TZDQ) exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees,
you will by no means enter the Kingdom of God. (v. 20)

We can sum up what the Jesus of history taught in these words:

*No Acts of Righteousness (TDQ),
No Eternal Life!*

That is completely opposite of what my church taught me and what I preached to others! So where did my beliefs about salvation come from. The answer is Martin Luther, a man that lived over 1,500 years after the Jesus of history was born. His teachings were supposedly based on the words of Paul in the *New Testament*. His salvation message is summed up this way:

*People are saved by grace through faith alone –
without any need of doing good works (TDQ).*

Martin Luther was the founder of **Protestantism** and many Protestant preachers have gone to extremes to stress that “*good works (TDQ)*” are not needed – *they can also be bad*. After Luther some Protestant denominations emerged that added the words that I believed –

Once saved always saved!

*Without acts of righteousness (TDQ)
or with unforgiven acts that were evil (sins against other people) –
believers be saved on the Day of Judgment!*

This brings us to an old saying you should remember:

“A text out of context is just a pretext for making it say anything one wants.”

Paul also taught this in Galatians 5:19-21:

*Those **who do these things** will **not inherit the Kingdom of God**: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like.*

The Message and Movement of the Jesus of History

Now after John was put in prison, Yeshua came to Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled! The Kingdom of God is at hand! Repent! Believe in the Gospel.” (Mark 1:14-15)

This sums up the basic message Jesus:

The time is fulfilled! The Kingdom of God is at hand! Repent! Believe in the Gospel.”

1. "**The time is fulfilled**" meant "the Day of Judgment" will happen very soon make sure you are doing acts of righteousness (TDQ) now!"
2. "**The Kingdom of God is hand**" meant "when I was anointed at my baptism I became the king of the Kingdom of God. It is already here. Become part of it now. Do acts of righteousness (TDQ)!"
3. "**Repent**" meant "make restitution to those you have sinned against, repair any damages that the sin caused, restore the person's life to what it was before the sin, ask for the person's forgiveness, and ask God for forgiveness. Do acts of righteousness (TDQ)!"
4. "**Believe the Gospel**" meant "people are preaching other gospels. Correct them." Notice that Jesus did not say "believe in me" or "believe the right things about me."

Peter understood the message above. In Acts 10:34-35 Peter said:

*"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons;
but in every nation he that fears him and
does works of righteousness (TZDQ) is acceptable to him."*

In the Gospel of John (5:29-30) we see Jesus' message again:

*Do not be surprised at this, for the time is coming when
all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and they
that **have done good things** (TZDQ) shall come forth unto the resurrection of life;
but they that have done evil (things), unto the resurrection of judgment.*

Jacob (called "**James?**" in our New Testament) the brother of Jesus wrote (1:26-27; 2:14-17):

If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.



On page 1 I asked you this question -- Is "your Jesus" like "my Jesus," or is he different? "My Jesus" on page 1 was not "the Jesus of history." "My gospel" was not "his gospel."

*If only the "anointed ones" ("Christ" + ians) in our towns
just began "doing what the Jesus of history taught –
how big of an impact would it make in just our lives?"*

By the way, Luther also introduced *individualism* and *protesting*. Maybe it's time reexamine our beliefs about those things as well. *I was wrong about Jesus. Were you? We can change! BHC*