

## Who is Jesus, An Overview

Any one desiring to know the details of who Jesus was as well as what He represents would no doubt find themselves in a life-long study of the Biblical references alone, not to mention the extra-Biblical sources. Indeed, many a learned scholar throughout history, secular and religious, has sought to understand the fascinating array of historical and symbolic information describing this absolutely righteous man (a man in pure, right-relationship with God). This introductory article provides an overview of the most spiritually important aspects of Jesus, His Life, His Ministry and Calling, as well as His Mission, past and present. It provides “links” to other more-detailed articles, for the more inquisitive reader to “drill-down” and explore, when and if they are so inclined. There is no way to fully describe the awesome and loving characteristics (past, present and future) of this phenomenal Biblical character in a single setting, so I hope this article will serve as a starting-point for the reader to begin their journey to understand Jesus (Yeshua or Y’Hoshua in Hebrew).

To begin our overview, there is no doubt that Jesus did indeed exist as a historical figure<sup>123456</sup>, although there is division among “history-critical” analysts regarding the degree of acceptance of certain events portrayed in the Biblical Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles (Letters) of Paul, and Revelation of Jesus. The controversial points are related to the historical and scientifically unprovable, yet deeply spiritual symbolism of many of the reported “signs, wonders and miracles” performed by Jesus. Which brings me to the point of this overview article – while not discounting any of these secular (historical and scientific) opinions, I will focus on the Biblical account of Jesus and the Biblically-reported (or indicated) spiritual significance demonstrated in the Life and Work of Jesus. As overarching context, I will exclude any secular opinions and defer those details to the secular experts. I will continually ask the reader to consider the following point... **“Is Faith really faith, if it requires unequivocal, scientific proof?”**

### **Point 1: Jesus was of virgin birth**

There are 3 Biblical references to the virgin birth of the Messiah (meaning “Anointed Deliverer/Savior”):

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<sup>1</sup> Fox, Robin Lane (2005). *The Classical World: An Epic History from Homer to Hadrian*. Basic Books. p. 48. [ISBN 978-0465024971](#)

<sup>2</sup> Dickson, John. [“Best of 2012: The irreligious assault on the historicity of Jesus”](#). *Abc.net.au*. Retrieved 17 June 2014.

<sup>3</sup> James Douglas Grant Dunn (1 February 2010). *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*. SPCK Publishing. p. 61. ISBN 978-0-281-06329-1 - While discussing the “striking” fact that “we don’t have any Roman records, of any kind, that attest to the existence of Jesus,” Ehrman dismisses claims that this means Jesus never existed, saying, “He certainly existed, as virtually every competent scholar of antiquity, Christian or non-Christian, agrees, based on clear and certain evidence.”

<sup>4</sup> James Douglas Grant Dunn (1 February 2010). *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*. SPCK Publishing. p. 61. ISBN 978-0-281-06329-1 - Robert M. Price (a former fundamentalist apologist turned atheist who says the existence of Jesus cannot be ruled out, but is less probable than non-existence) agrees that this perspective runs against the views of the majority of scholars

<sup>5</sup> Michael Grant (a classicist) states that “In recent years, ‘no serious scholar has ventured to postulate the non historicity of Jesus’ or at any rate very few, and they have not succeeded in disposing of the much stronger, indeed very abundant, evidence to the contrary.” Michael Grant (January 2004). *Jesus*. Orion. p. 200. ISBN 978-1-898799-88-7.

<sup>6</sup> “There are those who argue that Jesus is a figment of the Church’s imagination, that there never was a Jesus at all. I have to say that I do not know any respectable critical scholar who says that any more.” Richard A. Burridge; Graham Gould (2004). *Jesus Now and Then*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 34. ISBN 978-0-8028-0977-3.

1. Firstly, a prophetic foretelling of Messiah (who will be called “Immanuw ‘ el” (Hebrew for “with us (is) God”), or “Immanuel” in English<sup>7</sup>), in the book of Issaiah.
2. In the gospel of Matthew 1:18-25, which also references the above prophetic reference .
3. In the gospel of Luke 1:26-38.

As a starting reference, much controversy over the proper interpretation of the **Isaiah prophecy** focuses on the use of the Hebrew word, “Almah”, commonly translated as “virgin”, as well as the context of the sentence in general; is the passage in question talking about a present virgin, familiar to the author and his contemporaries, or to a future virgin. Many a translator has taken the word, “almah”, to mean “young woman of marriage age / maiden”, yet not necessarily a virgin. Suffice it to say that modern literary criticism concludes, in the majority, that this word is used consistently 7 times in the Hebrew Bible as “virgin”, a woman of marrying age that has not had sexual intercourse” Further, similar analysis indicates with the majority interpretation that sentence context (the major determining factor in *tense of verbs* and the associated participles) **indicates a “future virgin” is in view.**<sup>8</sup>

Also, in passing, we are not ignorant of the many claims by other religions of heroic virgin birth. However, three points must be considered, which are detailed in a different study, but I mention briefly here:

1. The Isaiah account says the virgin birth is a sign of a future event (relative to its giving)<sup>9</sup>
2. The Biblical account of a Messianic virgin birth has far more restrictions as context for that very event to be considered “miraculous” as reported in the Isaiah 7:14 passage, than the comparable competing religious heroic virgin births.
3. The very laws by which people were judged in Isaiah’s time demanded death for claiming such miraculous impregnation (apart from normal, human intercourse), a significant deterrent to false claims by any writer, popular or unpopular in their day.

It is therefore our opinion that these three conditions, in combination with the Matthew and Luke accounts, stand as witness to both the Prophecy and Realization that Jesus was of virgin birth.

However, God in His infinite wisdom does leave the reader to their own decision (an aspect of “Free Will”, which He, God, totally respects) as an exercise of faith; or not.

## **Point 2: Jesus was a Descendant of Abraham, King David, and Adam**

According to the 2 separate genealogies of Matthew and Luke, Jesus was in the biological lineage (from His adoptive father, Joseph) that traced back through King David and then further to the Spiritual Father of both Judaism and Christianity, Abraham. His mother’s lineage also traces back through David and Abraham, yet goes further back to Adam.

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<sup>7</sup> Is. 7:14

<sup>8</sup> See the Article, “Where does the Bible foretell of a Virgin Birth of Messiah”, Dr. Rick Gibson, {Link goes here...}

<sup>9</sup> Article by James D. Price, PhD, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament, 5/15/97 URL: <http://www.answering-islam.org/BibleCom/is7-14.html>

Since Jesus was the adoptive son of Joseph, he was entitled to the “inheritance” that was associated with Joseph’s ancestral history, namely the right to “Hebrew Kingship” via the Davidic lineage, as well as the Abrahamic inheritance, which is the right to claim and live in close relationship with the God (a spiritual Inheritance). So Jesus inherited both the right to Israeli Kingship and the right to claim close and mature relationship with God from his adoptive, earthly father. While we are examining this point, many critics rightly observe that Joseph (Jesus’ adoptive father) was a poor laborer and not wealthy nor privileged. If Jesus lineage through his adoptive father, Joseph, was one of “royalty”, why then, did Jesus and His family not live in the traditional riches of a King of Israel? The answer is explained in two separate, but very much related points:

- 1) Firstly, the “Royal Lineage” of King David became “cursed”, but God Himself, 14 generations from the historic David; namely the evil king Jehoniah ( H:3659, Konyahuw (kon-yaw'-hoo) in Hebrew, or “Coniah” in English), where by God said that from Coniah onward, none of his offspring would prosper as a king of Israel. All of Jesus’ Hebrew contemporaries new of this curse, and therefore had so long ignored the lineage below King David, that they considered any claim to “Kingship via David’s line” to be unprovable.
- 2) The actual “Kings” of Israel in Jesus time, were the Herodians (Herod the Great and his ancestors) of Idumaeen lineage that had “purchased” the monarchy by ingratiating themselves to the current rulers of the entire Palestinian area, the Romans. Any “claimant” would have to first overthrow both the Herodian monarchs and the Roman backers.

Now to address the point of King David’s line being cursed from the time of Coniah (which was via Joseph’s lineage), there is the other lineage recorded by Luke. In Luke’s account, Jesus is also in the lineage of King David, but via Mary’s Father, Eli, who was (of course) the Father-in-law of Joseph. It was customary for the father-in-law to view the husbands of their daughters as their own legal sons, which is why the Luke account has been commonly taken as Mary’s lineage (a common practice in the times of the writing of the Gospels). Along with that custom, the lineage was reported for the males not females, so the “commonly-presumed lineage” of Mary (mother of Jesus) was “written down” as though it were Joseph’s biological lineage, through his Father-In-Law, Eli. This is why Luke’s account declares that the father of Joseph was Eli (which meant father-in-law) which was in keeping with traditions of Jesus day.<sup>10</sup> Clearly, from His mother’s lineage, Jesus is from the Tribe of Judah, and this lineage (the one through Eli, Mary’s father) is not subject to the “Curse of Coniah”. To further clarify Jesus origin, Luke 1:30-34 states...

30 The angel said to her, " Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

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Therefore, by the Angel’s own statement to Mary regarding her son, God Himself:

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<sup>10</sup> Luke 3:23

1. Declared that Jesus was the “Son of God”, and although Jesus had both earthly mother and father, there was no inheritance from the Father’s side, which would have incurred the cursed pronounced on all earthly fathers; mainly, that all humans are willfully aggressive to the instructions of God. Since Jesus is the “Son of God”, he does not naturally inherit the nature of his ultimate, earthly ancestor, Adam (neither from his mother nor father).
2. Would give the Throne of Jesus’ ancestor to Jesus forever (King David, clearly identified in both Jesus’ adoptive father’s lineage and his natural mother’s lineage), thereby bypassing any natural lineage issues, including the curse of the evil king, Coniah (14 generations after King David).

It can be further said that since Jesus was a descendant of Adam (traced in Luke’s account), He had a further right to the claim that He was the “Son of God”.

Therefore, the claims by Jesus Himself which aroused the ire of the Sanhedrin (Jewish religious ruling Council) are to be considered “accurate claims”, both biologically (on His Mother’s side) and Spiritually (via adoption in His earthly father’s lineage). These are:

1. He is **the direct descendant of Adam (from His mother’s lineage)** and therefore can claim the biological title, Son of Adam, the man created to have close relationship with God (remember, until the fall of Adam and Eve, God Himself came down to the Garden and walked with them in the cool of the day<sup>11</sup>).
2. He is the offspring of the Great Patriarch of Faith, Abraham, that “walked before God” in a mature spiritual relationship. (the use of the word “before” denotes a more mature relationship view from Abraham to God, which is apparently very pleasing to God).
3. From His mother’s lineage, He is a direct descendant of King David, God’ appointed ancestor of Israel’s Royal Line of Kingship, and therefore qualifies as the “shoot (that) will spring forth from the stem of Jesse<sup>12</sup>”, and therefore the King of all (some –day-re-united) Israel.
4. From the Angel that announced Jesus birth to his mother, God Himself establishes two permanent Titles and positions for Jesus to “perpetually” fill:
  - a. Son of God
  - b. King of all Jacob forever.

### Point 3: Jesus is Lord (Benevolent Master) of Creation

To properly establish the context for this section, it must be noted that the English word “Lord” has been consistently translated from both the Original & the Revealed Covenants (popularly termed, “Old & New Testaments”, respectively) to represent a close-knit variety of meanings. We will simply use the most common English meaning, “someone I subject my self unto / someone I obey”. I personally prefer the definition, “My Loving and Benevolent Master”.

In the Genesis account of creation, in verse 3 of Chapter 1, God reportedly “spoke” the first named - constituent of His new Creation into existence, namely “Light”, which God declared, “good”.

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<sup>11</sup> See Genesis 3:8

<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 11:1

In the Gospel of John Chapter 1, where the author is describing Jesus in comparative, symbolic terms, he refers to Jesus in a three-fold, spiritually significant symbology:

- As “The **Word of God**”
- And as “**Life**”
- And finally, as “the Life that was the **Light** of men”.<sup>13</sup>

This linked, triple symbolism equates Jesus with God’s own logical plan for mankind (His Word and creative channel<sup>14</sup>) and with the Light that God “spoke” into existence in Genesis 1:3, forever indicating that Jesus was part of God’s plan from the foundation of Creation.

If we go back to Genesis 1:3, take the original Hebrew text of that verse, and literally translate the Hebrew gender used in the phrase context, we could make a valid case for the following replacement translation of the verse: “And said Elohim, ‘**Let Him be Light’ and He was Light**”, which I (personally) and fully believe to be a foretelling of Messiah.

Further, returning to John’s account of Chapter 1, it says that:

- The Word was with God
- And The Word was God

So, in a three-way linkage of Symbols (God’s Word, Life for mankind, and the Light of (or for) men), we see the spiritual indications that Jesus was both with God, and was God at the Creation. Further reading in Chapter 1 of John indicates that “*All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being*”.<sup>15</sup>

If Jesus was:

- WITH God from the beginning of time
- AND all things Created were done so through Him
- And he was the Light of men, providing spiritual life

then John is explaining the Divinity of Jesus, by properly correlating the Scriptural symbols of Light, Life and Word (or very “logical plan of God for mankind”). Further, if Jesus is this Word/Life/Light symbols, then He is, as Creator, the Master of His Creation. Again, God in His Wisdom has allowed each and every human throughout time, to exercise a degree of faith over absolute witness or proof on this point; consider this “faith point” carefully.

#### **Point 4: Jesus is the Son of God**

Although much proof of this claim was presented in the above explanation of the “lineage/origin” of Jesus, there exists some additional scriptural points that indicate Jesus fundamental relationship with

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<sup>13</sup> {Add John 1 Refs to Word, Life, Light}

<sup>14</sup> See the Article, “God’s Word Spoke Creation into existence”, Dr. Rick Gibson

<sup>15</sup> John 1:3, NASU

God. John goes on to expound not only on the relationship of the symbols (**Word, Light and Life**) for many more verses, then in verse 33 says, “I (John the Baptist) *did not recognize Him (Jesus) but He (God) who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit’.* I myself (John the Baptist) have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.”<sup>16</sup>

In the words of Jesus Himself, in John 8:42...

“42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.” NASU

In Matthew 26:63-64, Jesus says to the Sanhedrin’s High Priest...

63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, “I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.” 64 Jesus said to him, “ You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.” NASU

And again in Luke 22:70-71...

And they all said, “Are You the Son of God, then?” And He said to them, “ Yes, I am.” 71 Then they said, “What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.” NASU

At Jesus (Yeshua’s) conception, the Angel (Messenger) from God said of Him in Luke 1:35-36...

The angel answered and said to her, “ The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. NASU

In Matthew 27:54, during the crucifixion of Jesus (Yeshua), the Centurion (and those with him guarding the crucifixion site) said...

4 Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!” NASU

The Gospel writer, Mark, says of Jesus in Mark 1:1...

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. NASU

Evil Spirits that had plagued various individuals, when confronted by Jesus (Yeshua) called Him the “Son of God, in Mark 3:11-12 ...

1 Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, “You are the Son of God!” 12 And He earnestly warned them not to tell who He was. NASU

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<sup>16</sup> John 1:33-34, NASU

Nathaniel, one of the chosen Disciples of Jesus (Yeshua) said of Him in John 1:49-50...

9 Nathanael answered Him, " Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel." NASU

Peter, another of the Disciples of Jesus (Yeshua) answered Jesus' question as follows in Mark 8:29-30 ...

29 And He continued by questioning them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." NASU

And Jesus said of Himself, in John 3:16-18...

16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 18 " He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" NASU

There still remain numerous references to Jesus title of "Son of God", but for an introductory article, the above list should suffice.

## **Point 5: Jesus was the Prophesied Messiah**

For greater details on the Prophecies of Jesus, including those prophecies he fulfilled (completed) during His earthly ministry, see the Article, "Prophecies About Messiah".

It is very difficult to summarize *all* the prophecies related to Jesus and His ministry, but here is a brief list of some of the more important ones, that clearly identify who He is and what He did and continues to do from Heaven:

1. Messiah ("Moshiach" in Hebrew and "Christos" in Greek) will be the direct descendant of Eve.
2. He will be born of a virgin.
3. He will be a direct descendant of:
  - a. Abraham.
  - b. Judah.
  - c. King David.
4. He will be a Prophet, like Moses.
5. He will be the Son of God.
6. He will be born in Bethlehem.
7. Kings will honor and pay homage to Messiah.
8. He will be called the "chief cornerstone".
9. His first ministerial work will be in the Galilee region.
10. Messiah will have two missions:
  - a. To preach the Good News (Gospel) of the Everlasting Covenant between mankind and God.

- b. To rule and judge the world, when He returns to establish His earthly (millennial) Kingdom.
- 11. He will perform healing miracles
  - a. The blind will see.
  - b. The deaf will hear.
  - c. The lame will walk.
  - d. The dead shall be raised to life.
- 12. He will enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey.
- 13. He will enter the Temple with authority.
- 14. He will be accused by false witnesses.
- 15. He will suffer for the sins of mankind.
  - a. He will be mocked.
  - b. He will be beaten and spat upon.
  - c. He will be pierced through the hands and feet.
  - d. His bones will not be broken (to hasten death).
  - e. Men will gamble for His garments
  - f. He will be hated without a true cause.
  - g. He will be given vinegar to drink.
- 16. He will be betrayed by a friend.
  - a. The friend who betrays Messiah will receive 30 pieces of silver.
- 17. He will be abandoned by His disciples.
- 18. He will be silent before His accusers.
- 19. He will be killed.
  - a. He will be crucified with criminals.
- 20. He will be buried among the rich.
- 21. He will be raised from the dead.
- 22. He will ascend to the right-hand of God.
- 23. He will be widely rejected.
  - a. People will hear the message of Messiah (Gospel), but will not believe.
- 24. Messiah is part of an Everlasting Covenant.
- 25. Messiah will be our continual Intercessor before God.
- 26. Messiah will return to earth at a time determined by God, the Father.

## Point 6: Jesus is mankind's Spiritual Savior

At this point in our journey, it should be sufficient to list the more common scriptures explaining Jesus as the source of our spiritual salvation, given we (humans) are ever-inclined toward evil:

1. Matt 18:11 - 1 [" *For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.*"]
2. Luke 19:9-10 - *Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.*  
*10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*
3. John 12:47 - "*If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.*"



4. 1 Cor 1:21-25 - 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
5. 1 Tim 1:15 - It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.
6. Heb 7:23-25 - The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, 24 but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. 25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
7. John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

## Conclusion

To summarize all that has been presented in this "Overview" article, Jesus (Yeshua) is:

1. The Son of God, the Creator and Judge of all that exists, born of a virgin, so as not to "inherit" the curses of His human ancestors.
2. The promised Messiah, which means, He is "...the way (to God), the truth and the Life"<sup>i</sup>, and therefore the loving Savior of all souls, which are, by nature, inclined to disobey the beneficial teachings of God
3. The complete, inerrant representation of the "Radiance" (Glory) of God Himself in the form of a human man.
  - a. Heb 1:3-4 - And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. NASU
4. The perpetual intercessor with the Father on behalf of those who "faith" (a verb indicating a choice to believe and obey) in Him (Jesus)
  - a. Rom 8:34 - Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. NASU
5. The very heart and topic of the entire Bible (both Original Covenant and Revealed Covenants combined).
6. My God and my spiritual guide in this earthly life, as well as the spiritual life to come.

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<sup>i</sup> John 14:6