

The Jewish Jesus in the Light of New Archaeological Studies
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Notes and Resources

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What is the distinction between the Jesus of history and the “Christ of Faith” in terms of the academic study of religions?

What is “missing” in the basic confession about Jesus Christ in the Apostles’ Creed?

Dates:

5 BCE birth of Jesus

26 CE the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptizer around age 30 (Luke 3:23)

30 CE Crucifixion of Jesus

70 CE Romans destroyed Jerusalem in response to the Jewish Revolt (66-73 CE)

Jesus lived and died during the rule of the emperors Augustus (27 BCE-14 CE) and his adopted son Tiberius (14-17 CE)

Nazareth the village (pop. 200) and Sepphoris (pop 20,000+) the urban center of Galilee, capital of Herod Antipas (4 BCE to 39 CE), son of Herod the Great (d. 4 BCE). Sepphoris was destroyed in 4 BCE and was being rebuilt as Jesus was growing up.

Jesus the *tekton* (Mark 6:3): traditionally “carpenter” but generically “builder,” so possibly stone. Note references to building houses, foundations, in gospels (Luke 6:48; 14:29).

Rejection at Nazareth, move to Capernaum on the northwest of the Sea of Galilee, strategic port city at crossroads of Galilee (Mark 2:1)

Dead Sea Scrolls are the surviving library of the sect we know as the “Essenes,” they were an apocalyptic, messianic, “new covenant,” baptizing group with HQ at Qumran on the Dead Sea.

Last Winter of Jesus’ life: 29-30 CE: Up to Caesarea Philippi in the far north, confession as Messiah, “transfiguration” on a “high mountain,” then across the Jordan to the Wadi el-Yabis (Cherith) “hideout” of Elijah (John 10:40; 3:22-24; 1 Kings 17:1-7)

Jerusalem was the city of the *one* Temple to the *One God* of the Jews (Yahweh), operated by the wealthy priests, mostly Sadducees, many of whom lived in the Upper City of Mt

Zion in luxurious homes. Jesus called the Temple a “den of robbers” and directly confronted the “money changers” or commerce of the Passover festival (Mark 11:15-19). The Tyrian silver Shekel was the required currency for offerings in the Temple

Jesus ate his private “last supper” in the “upper room” of home of a wealthy unnamed patron on Mt Zion, and this house later became the HQ of the movement after Jesus’ death (Mark 14:12-16; Acts 1:12-14). The foundation ruins of this house can possibly be identified today under the Crusader structure known as the Cenacle or “Upper Room” of the Last Supper.

The UNC Charlotte excavations on Mt Zion are uncovering the lower levels of wealthy home just yards away from the Cenacle, so we are learning more of how the “rich and powerful” priestly class lived. Google: “priestly mansion jerusalem”

Jesus was arrested and his “trial” had three stages and thus three separate locations: the house of Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas who was High Priest that year; then to Caiaphas; then to Pontius Pilate the governor of Judea (John 18:12-40).

Pilate’s Judgment Seat or the “Praetorium” with the Pavement called Gabbatha has now been identified outside Herod’s Palace, not on the traditional Via Dolorosa (John 18:28-19:16). See Tabor’s blog post: <https://jamestabor.com/standing-again-with-jesus-ecce-homo-revisited/>

Three proposed locations for “Golgotha” the place of crucifixion: traditional Church of the Holy Sepulchre; Gordon’s Calvary or the “Garden Tomb,” north of the Old City; the Mount of Olives. See Tabor’s blog post: <https://jamestabor.com/locating-golgotha/>.

How did the Roman’s crucify? Archaeological findings have now shed light on this question. Nails through the heel bones, tacking the hands, naked, ropes to hold the body.

The body was wrapped in a linen shroud. The only 1st century burial shroud ever discovered in Jerusalem was quite by accident, in the year 2000 by Drs. Gibson and Tabor with UNC Charlotte students. It was a freshly robbed tomb in the Hinnom Valley just south of the Old City.

Burial was in a rock hewn “cave” tomb near the place of crucifixion (John 19:41-42). Corpses were laid out for a year to decompose, bones were then gathered and put into ossuaries, sometimes with names scratched on outside. Caiaphas the High Priest’s tomb has been discovered with his ossuary and other family members intact. Also Simon of Cyrene, who carried Jesus’ cross (Mark 15:21) and now James son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.