

salem still remained in the hearts of the Israelites. Prophets during and after the Exile proclaimed the hope of a Jerusalem restored. God would return and once more dwell in the Temple. The city would be the capital of the Messianic Kingdom, and all the nations would be drawn to God (Isa 2:1-5, 49:14-18, 52:1-10, chaps. 60-62, 65:17-25; Jer 31:38-40; Mic 4:1-4; Hag 2:7).

### *B. Jerusalem in the New Testament*

How important Jerusalem was to Jesus is apparent in the Gospels, and all four Evangelists record that Jesus' ministry moved toward the holy city as the phase of his Passion and Resurrection. Jesus announced his death in the city with the words, "It cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Luke 13:33-34; cf. Mark 10:32-34). Jesus noted the prophets who had been put to death in the city and envisioned the city surrounded by armies (Luke 21:20) and assaulted by enemy soldiers (Luke 19:41-44).

Jesus, however, entered Jerusalem in triumph as the Messiah, the son of David (Matt 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; cf. Zech 9:9), the promised King (Luke 19:38; John 12:13). The holy city was the heart from which the proclamation of the Gospel to the entire world began (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:18). It was the place where the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost and the site of the first Christian community (Acts 2:1-13).

The prophetic visions of a glorified Jerusalem in the OT far exceeded the reality of the restored Jerusalem after the Exile. Thus we are led to contemplate a greater reality: a heavenly Jerusalem—the true holy city and the capital of God's new creation—that is symbolized by the earthly city but not identified with it. The earthly Zion is the model of the celestial height on which the New Jerusalem is built (Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22), and together with the city it is a place of glory where the redeemed will gather before the Lord (Isa 4:2-6; Joel 3:17; Obad 21; Mic 4:1-7; Rev 14:1). The New Jerusalem is described in Rev 3:12 and 21:1-22:5. In Rev 3:12, the new city is promised to the faithful of the community of Philadelphia if they remain faithful to the word of Christ (cf. Rev 21:7). In Rev 21:1-22:5, Jerusalem represents the Church, the Bride of the Lamb, with whom Jesus unites himself (Rev 21:9-21; cf. Eph 5:25-26; Rev 19:7-9). The heavenly city, built by God (cf. Heb 11:10), permits the worshipping Church to join the heavenly liturgy in the praise of the Lord and the Lamb (CCC 757, 865).

**JERUSALEM, COUNCIL OF** The apostolic council that gathered in Jerusalem around A.D. 49 to discuss the status of Gentile converts. The question was whether Gentiles needed to follow the Jewish ceremonial law in order to be saved. The council was attended by representatives from the Church in Antioch, including **Paul** and **Barnabas**, as well as other apostles and the elders of the Church in Jerusalem. The account of the council is recorded in Acts 15:1-35.

"After there had been much debate," Peter rose to speak (Acts 15:7-11). He recalled his experience with Cornelius, a Gentile who was baptized with his household and received the Holy Spirit quite apart from circumcision (see Acts 10:1-11:18). This was enough to convince him that circumcision was no longer a badge of covenant membership for the people of God; it could be set aside with the whole "yoke" of liturgical rites as something no longer binding or operative in the Messianic Church (Acts 15:8-9). Paul then followed, giving testimony to the wonders he had seen achieved by God as the Gospel was preached among the Gentiles.

The apostles were convinced by their testimony, and James, the head of the Church in Jerusalem, followed Peter's doctrinal announcement with a pastoral directive. Gentiles were not to be asked to undergo circumcision to be saved; they were asked, however, to respect those aspects of Jewish custom necessary to maintain harmony within the congregation of Jews and Gentiles. The decision was embraced by the Antioch community (Acts 15:31). The decision of the council, after an invocation of the Holy Spirit, gave a strong push to the Church's Gentile mission.

### **JERUSALEM, NEW** See *Jerusalem*.

### **JESHUA** See *Joshua*.

**JESHURUN** (Hebrew *yəšūrān*) A poetic name for Israel in Deuteronomy (Deut 32:15; 33:5, 26) and Isaiah (Isa 44:2). The meaning of the name is uncertain, although it has been

suggested by scholars that the root *yšr* ("be straight right") may refer to being "upright." Another possibility is "bull" (Hebrew *šor*).

**JESSE** The father of David, a member of the tribe of Judah from Bethlehem (1 Sam 17:12). Jesse was the son of Obed and the grandson of Boaz (Ruth 4:17, 22; 1 Chr 2:12; Matt 1:5-6; Luke 3:32), so the family line was descended in part from Ruth the Moabite. Jesse had eight sons, of whom David was the youngest (1 Sam 16:1-13). In the rise of his son as king, Jesse is a largely passive figure. When David fled the wrath of Saul, Jesse and his family moved to Moab for safety (1 Sam 22:3). Isaiah called the Messiah "a shoot from the stump of Jesse" (Isa 11:1, 10), meaning that he would come from the family of David, even though the family's kingly rule had been cut off for a time. Jesus, as the Davidic Messiah, is thus the "root of Jesse" (Rom 15:12; cf. Rev 22:16).

**JESUS CHRIST** The divine Son of God who "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) as a man; "Jesus of Nazareth," the son of Mary (Mark 1:24, 6:3; Luke 24:19). The name "Jesus" is derived from the Greek version of the name Joshua (Hebrew *Yehōshā'a*; *Yēshua'*), which means "Yahweh saves;" "Christ" was not Jesus's second name but the Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Messiah" (Hebrew *māšīah*; Greek *christos*). Both Jesus's name and his title reveal his identity as the anointed Savior of the world and the long-awaited Redeemer who came to fulfill the prophecies of the Scriptures of Israel. As both Messiah and Savior, fully human and fully divine, Je-

sus Christ reveals the hidden face of the God of Israel (John 1:17–18; 14:9), redeems all of humanity from sin and death (Mark 10:45; Matt 26:28; John 3:16), and fulfills all of human history and creation in himself (Matt 5:17–18; Eph 1:7–10).

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#### I. JESUS AND HISTORY

##### A. *The Four Gospels*

The principal historical sources of the life of Jesus are the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, found in the New Testament. These four Gospels provide us with the most substantive and detailed ancient records of Jesus's birth, infancy, public ministry, Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension. Hence, they hold a unique preeminence in the NT and the life of the Church. Although the designation of these books as "Gospels" or "Good News" (Greek *euangelion*) is distinctive, their

literary genre is actually closest to ancient Greco-Roman biographies known as "lives" (Gk. *bios*), which recorded the personal histories of philosophers, kings, and other important public figures (e.g., Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*; Philo, *Life of Moses*). Because they are ancient biographies, the goal of the Gospels is different from that of the letters of the NT, which were often written to address specific issues in a local community. While the Gospels reflect to some extent the context in which the authors wrote them, their principal intention is historical and evangelical: to provide an "accurate" account of the "truth" regarding the words and deeds of Jesus (Luke 1:1–4), so that readers might come to faith in him as the Messiah, the Son of God (John 20:30–31). The fact that none of the Gospels is addressed to a particular community suggests that they were intended for widespread circulation and use in the early Church.

According to both internal evidence (the titles and manuscripts) and external evidence (the ancient Church Fathers), the Gospels of Matthew and John were written by members of the twelve apostles and eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus. By contrast, the Gospels of Mark and Luke were written by men who were probably not eyewitnesses but who knew and consulted eyewitnesses. Although modern scholars often claim that the original manuscripts of the Gospels did not include the titles that attribute them to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the manuscript evidence contradicts this theory. All existing manuscripts contain the titles that attribute the Gospels to these men. Moreover, the Gospel of John ex-

plicitly describes itself as the eyewitness testimony of the beloved disciple (John 21:23–24); the Gospel of Matthew highlights the conversation of Matthew himself (Matt 9:9); and the Gospel of Mark may contain a fleeting allusion to the author, John Mark of Jerusalem (cf. Mark 14:51; Acts 12:12). In addition, the apostolic Fathers—the disciples of the apostles themselves or of men who knew the apostles—unanimously attribute the Gospels to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (see Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3:24, 39; 6:14–5–7; Saint Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 103; Saint Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.1.1). There is no solid historical evidence that would suggest that the Gospels should be attributed to any other authors.

Although scholars continue to debate the exact dating of the individual Gospels, the actual evidence suggests that the Gospels were written close to the time of the events of Jesus's life, within the living memory of eyewitnesses.

##### B. *Other New Testament Writings*

Although the four Gospels are the principal sources of the life of Jesus, they are not the only ones. There are the other writings of the NT, some of which also contain pieces of biographical information about Jesus. Significantly, this information agrees with the outline of Jesus's life contained in the Gospels: he was of Davidic descent; born of a Jewish mother; lived under the Mosaic Law; performed miracles and wonders; preached the coming of the Kingdom of God to the people of Israel; taught against divorce and remarriage; celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples; was a man of prayer; suffered Cru-

cifixion, died, and was buried; and rose again on the third day (see Acts 10:38–43; Rom 1:3, 15:8; Gal 4:4; 1 Cor 7:10–11, 11:23–26, 15:3; Heb 5:7–8).

##### C. *Non-Christian Sources*

Jesus is also mentioned in several non-Christian historical sources. In the first century A.D., Jesus is mentioned twice by the Jewish historian Josephus, who tells us that Jesus worked wonders, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was believed to be the "Messiah" (*Ant.* 18.63–64; 20.200). Although many scholars question whether elements of one of these passages were added by a later Christian scribe, there is no doubt that Josephus knew and spoke of Jesus of Nazareth. In the second century A.D., Jesus is also mentioned by Pliny the Elder and the Roman historian Suetonius and Tacitus, the latter of whom records that Jesus suffered "the extreme penalty"—Crucifixion—at the hands of Pontius Pilate (*Tacitus, Ann.* 15.44). Thus, early non-Christian sources agree with the NT on the existence of Jesus as a historical figure and on details of his life and death.

##### D. *Apocryphal "Gospels"*

Finally, Jesus is also mentioned in the heretical writings of various Christian sects from the second century A.D. and later, writings often referred to as the "apocryphal" (or "hidden") gospels. The most famous of these is the so-called *Gospel of Thomas*, a collection of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus, written in Coptic sometime between the second and fourth centuries A.D. Another recent discovery is the so-called *Gospel of Judas*, which alleges that

Jesus collaborated with Judas to bring about the Crucifixion. Although such writings are frequently referred to as "gospels," they are very different from the four Gospels. Most important, none of them was written during the first century by eyewitnesses or disciples of the apostles. They were all composed much later, sometimes centuries after the time of Jesus. Moreover, none of the apocryphal "gospels" is a complete biography or "life" (Greek *bios*) like the four Gospels; most are brief accounts of visions, collections of random sayings, or are preserved only in fragments. Finally, many of these texts—such as the Gnostic account of the Crucifixion and Resurrection known as the *Gospel of Peter*—were quickly rejected by the orthodox Church Fathers, who identified them as the forgeries of heretics (Saint Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.20; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.12.3). Hence, from a historical perspective, the noncanonical gospels have no value as sources on the life and teaching of Jesus.

#### E. *The Quest for the "Historical Jesus"*

From the very beginnings of the Church, the Gospels have been the object of intense study and fruitful exegesis. One thinks here of the detailed textual criticism of Origen or the work of Saint Augustine in which the author analyzes and provides solutions to the apparent discrepancies between the Gospel records of various events in Jesus's life (see Saint Augustine, *Harmony of the Gospels*). During the patristic age and medieval periods, numerous commentaries were produced on the various Gospels, with the Gospels of Matthew and John being the perennial favorites.

However, for the last two hundred years

or more, since the time of the Enlightenment, Gospel study has intensified and focused in particular on understanding the life and teachings of Jesus in their historical context. Such research is commonly referred to as "the Quest for the Historical Jesus." Significantly, this quest had its original genesis among scholars who were either not Christians or who were outwardly opposed to Christianity. Historically, the quest has been largely dominated by secular scholars and Protestants, although in the twentieth century both Catholic and Jewish scholars have made significant contributions to the historical study of the life of Jesus. Scholars commonly divide the modern quest up into three phases of research:

1. *The First Quest (1770s–1900)*. This stage was highly influenced by English Deism and German Rationalism and was led by critics of Christianity such as Hermann Samuel Reimarus and David Friedrich Strauss. It came to an end with the famous work of Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1906), which depicted Jesus as a failed apocalyptic prophet. The results of the First Quest were largely negative, rejecting the miracles of Jesus and casting doubt upon his divinity and Messianic identity.

2. *The "New Quest" (1953–1980s)*. This stage of the quest was heavily influenced by the philosophy of existentialism and the skepticism of the German exegete Rudolf Bultmann. It sought primarily to adapt Jesus's message and mission to the modern world, in particular by distancing him from ancient Judaism. Its work is represented by figures such as Ernst Käsemann and Günther Bortkamm.

3. *The Third Quest (1970s–Present)*. This stage of the quest, which most regard as still ongoing, is characterized by the participation of a greater diversity of scholars, with major figures emerging from England and America, as well as Europe. One of its key characteristics is an emphasis on Jesus's Jewishness and an attempt to understand him in the historical context of ancient Judaism. Some of its prominent authors are E. P. Sanders, John P. Meier, and N. T. Wright. In general, this stage of the quest is less skeptical toward the historical reliability of the Synoptic Gospels, though it continues to treat the Gospel of John as basically unreliable.

In principle, Christian faith is in no way opposed to the historical investigation of the life of Jesus. Indeed, the reality of the Incarnation demands that Christian scholars devote as much energy as possible to understanding Jesus as a real figure of history. Unfortunately, however, because of its origins in the Enlightenment, the modern quest has been dominated by the philosophical outlook known as Rationalism, which denies a priori the possibility of miracles and divine revelation. Because the Gospels are filled with accounts of both Jesus's miracles and his message of divine revelation, Enlightenment scholars and their intellectual heirs have tended to approach the Gospels from the perspective of methodological skepticism. The Gospels are often treated as historically "guilty" until proven "innocent." This approach has led to a false dichotomy between what such scholars refer to as "the Jesus of history" and "the Christ of faith." According to this view, "the historical

Jesus" neither performed miracles nor claimed to be divine. This Jesus has supposedly been "obscured" behind the theological portraits of the Evangelists, who have altered history to suit their own ideological and theological interests. The Gospel of John in particular has been treated with skepticism by the quest because John emphasizes Jesus's explicit teaching about his messiahship and divinity. For many scholars of the quest, the "real Jesus" has been lost behind the haze of dogma and early Church belief in "the Christ of faith." Hence, these scholars believe that the historian's task is to recover or "reconstruct" Jesus's life by selecting certain pieces of the Gospel records and separating the historical words and deeds from those episodes that have supposedly been created or altered by the Church.

The inherent problems of such an approach from a Christian perspective should be obvious. Not only are the philosophical assumptions of rationalism contradicted by the omnipotence of God, but, as we have already seen, the historical evidence strongly supports the authenticity and reliability of the four Gospels. This evidence must be approached without prejudice against the possibility of miracles and divine revelation. In light of the historical evidence, a proper approach to the study of Jesus is to treat the Gospels as credible historical accounts of his words and deeds. This is particularly true for Catholics, who affirm that "the Gospels were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who preserved their authors from every error" (PBC, *The Historicity of the Gospels*, 12 [1964]). Indeed, the official teaching of the Catholic Church on the historicity of the

Gospels was promulgated at the Second Vatican Council, which unhesitatingly affirmed “the historicity” of all four Gospels and declared that they “faithfully hand on what Jesus, the Son of God, while he lived among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up” (see DV §19; CCC 126–27). The Council taught that although the Evangelists selected certain events from Jesus’s life and synthesized them with an eye toward their audiences, they did so “always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus” (ibid.). Hence, for Catholics there is no dichotomy between the “historical Jesus” and the “Christ of faith.” As Pope Benedict XVI has recently reaffirmed, the “real Jesus”—the Jesus of history—is the Jesus of the Gospels (see Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 2007).

## II. THE LIFE OF JESUS

### A. Birth, Infancy, and Hidden Years

Although the coming of Jesus is foretold in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament (see *Messiah*), his earthly life properly begins with the angel Gabriel’s Annunciation to Mary that she would bear a son, and that the child’s name would be “Jesus” (Luke 2:26–31; Matt 1:21). Through a miracle of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was virginally conceived in the womb of Mary (Matt 1:20; Luke 1:34–35); hence, he is the adopted (rather than biological) “son of Joseph” (Luke 4:22; John 1:45). After his humble birth in a stable in Bethlehem, Jesus was proclaimed Messiah by angelic messengers (Luke 2:8–15) and recognized as the long-awaited

king of Israel by pagan astrologers (Greek *nazgoi*) from the East (Matt 2:1–12). Nevertheless, from the beginning, Jesus’s life was filled with suffering and opposition, manifested very early on in King Herod’s massacre of the infants in Bethlehem in an effort to kill the Messiah, and Joseph and Mary’s being forced to flee to Egypt and remain there in exile until the death of Herod (Matt 2:13–23). All these events took place during the reigns of the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus and the tyrannical King Herod of Judea, probably around 4–6 B.C. (cf. Luke 2:1–20).

In contrast to the events surrounding his birth, not much is known about Jesus’s “hidden years,” the period between his infancy and the beginning of his public ministry, when he was growing up in the town of Nazareth, in Galilee (cf. Luke 2:51). We know that his family was apparently poor, as is indicated by Mary’s offering of two turtledoves at Jesus’s circumcision and dedication, instead of the more expensive sacrifices (Luke 2:22–24; Lev 12:2–8). We also know that Joseph was a “carpenter” or “builder” of some sort (Matt 13:55), and that Jesus learned his trade from him as a young man and continued in it into adulthood (cf. Mark 6:3). Finally, the Gospels make clear that Joseph and his family were practicing Jews who kept the Law of Moses and worshipped at the Jerusalem Temple (Luke 2:21, 41). The one window into Jesus’s youth is the account of his being found by Mary and Joseph in the Temple after having been missing for three days, which reveals that Jesus already knew at age twelve about his divine Sonship and filial mission (Luke 2:42–51).

### B. Public Ministry

Jesus’s public ministry began with his baptism by John in the river Jordan (Matt 3:1–16; Mark 1:2–11; Luke 3:21–22). John the Baptist called people to repentance from sin in order to “prepare the way” for the coming of the Messiah and the new Exodus spoken of by the prophet Isaiah (Isa 40:1–11). At his baptism, Jesus was revealed to be the one anointed with the Spirit of God, and God’s own “Beloved Son.” Though sinless himself (Heb 4:15), Jesus accepted John’s baptism in order to enter into solidarity with sinners, to “fulfill” in himself the whole history of salvation (Matt 3:15), and to point forward to the “baptism” of suffering he would undergo on the Cross (Mark 10:38–45; Luke 12:50).

Immediately after his baptism, Jesus was driven into the desert and tempted by the devil for forty days (Matt 4:1–17; Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–13). In these temptations, he began redeeming humanity from the Fall of Adam by resisting the threefold temptation to which Adam and Eve had succumbed in the Garden (Gen 3:6; cf. 1 John 2:16). He also recapitulated the forty-day fasts of Moses and Elijah (Exod 24:8; 1 Kgs 19:8), as well as Israel’s forty years of testing in the wilderness in the Exodus from Egypt (Ps 95:10–11), thus succeeding where both Adam and Israel had failed.

After passing the trial in the desert, Jesus began his ministry proper by beginning to preach about the coming of “the Kingdom of God” throughout the region of Galilee, the very place where the Exile and dispersion of the kingdom of Israel had begun (Matt 4:12–

17; Isa 9:1–2). His public ministry was distinctively marked by his frequent performance of “mighty works and wonders and signs” (Acts 2:22)—in particular his great miracles of healing and forgiveness, as well as his exorcisms. Early on in his ministry, Jesus changed water into wine at the Wedding at Cana, providing a sign of the eschatological banquet that the prophets had foretold would be celebrated during the Messianic age (John 2:1–12; Isa 25:6–8) and at the “hour” of the Last Supper (John 13:1–2). He performed a similar sign when he fed the crowds of five thousand and four thousand with just a few loaves and fishes, miracles revealing that he would gather to himself the tribes of Israel (the twelve baskets) and the Gentile nations (the seven baskets) (Mark 6:30–44; 8:1–10, 14–21). He was particularly well known for his “power” (Greek *exousia*) as an exorcist for casting out demons and unclean spirits (Mark 1:27; 5:1–20; 9:14–29). A large bulk of his ministry was spent giving sight to the blind, cleansing the lepers, causing the lame to walk, allowing the deaf to hear, and even raising the dead. The most famous of the latter miracles he performed for his own friend Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead four days after his burial (John 11:1–44). In addition to these wonders, some of Jesus’s most powerful miracles were not visible; these consisted of his healing of the souls of those whose sins he declared “forgiven” (Mark 2:1–12; Luke 7:36–50). Jesus himself declared that all of his miracles were indicators of his identity as Messiah (Matt 11:2–6; Luke 7:18–23; cf. Isa 35:5–6, 61:1–2). In particular, his exorcisms signaled the overthrow of the “kingdom” of

Satan (Matt 12:25–28), his true enemy, whom Jesus referred to as “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31). All of Jesus’s mighty works together functioned as “signs” of the coming Kingdom of God, in which all mankind will be delivered from the power of sin, Satan, and even death itself, and God’s creation will be renewed and restored through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In order to perpetuate his public ministry of preaching and healing, Jesus called to himself disciples who would carry on his work among Israel and the Gentiles. Chief among the various circles of disciples were the twelve apostles, who were a visible sign of the long-awaited restoration of the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt 10:1–4; 19:28; cf. Ezek 37). After receiving “authority” (Greek *exousia*) from him, the twelve were commissioned by Jesus to go out and proclaim the coming of the Kingdom, and to perform many of the same miracles and healings that Christ himself performed (Matt 10:5–23). In addition to the twelve, Jesus also called a wider circle of seventy disciples, modeled on the seventy elders of Israel and the seventy members of the Jewish Sanhedrin (Luke 10:1–20; cf. Exod 24:1). These disciples together represented the visible beginnings of the Kingdom of God present on earth in mystery. They were the firstlings of the “flock” of which Jesus is the “Good Shepherd” whose mission is to gather into his fold many sheep (John 10:1–16). One of the most important moments in the life of the disciples took place at Caesarea Philippi, when Jesus declared his intention to found his “Church” or “assembly” (Greek *ekklesia*) upon Simon Peter (Matt 16:13–18). This declaration flowed

from Peter’s profession of faith in Jesus as “the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matt 16:16). Immediately following this, Jesus began teaching the apostles that he would have to suffer and die, but that on the third day he would be raised from the dead (Matt 16:21–23). In order to prepare them for his Passion and death, he took Peter, James, and John up a mountain and revealed his glory to them in the Transfiguration (Matt 17:1–8). This mystery not only reaffirmed Jesus’s divine Sonship but also pointed forward to the new “Exodus” that he would accomplish in Jerusalem in his Passion, death, and Resurrection (Luke 9:31).

### C. Teaching

Jesus was not only a great healer and worker of miracles, he was also the greatest of teachers. He gathered around him “disciples” or “students” (Greek *mathitai*), who often referred to him as “Rabbi,” a Jewish title for teachers (Mark 9:5; John 1:49; Matt 23:7). The bulk of the Gospels consists of the teachings of Jesus.

The central theme of Jesus’s teaching was his proclamation of the coming of “the Kingdom of God,” or “the Kingdom of heaven.” There are over ninety references to the Kingdom in the Gospels. Based on OT prophecies of the Kingdom (Mic 4:1–8; Dan 2:44; 7:13–14), numerous Jews of Jesus’s day, such as Joseph of Arimathea, were waiting for the coming of the Messianic Kingdom of God (Mark 15:43). On the one hand, the Messianic Kingdom was modeled on the earthly kingdom of David, “the kingdom of the LORD” (1 Chr 28:5) that had existed under David and Solomon. On the other hand, the kingdom was essentially heavenly, like the “Kingdom of God,”

which was revealed to Jacob during his vision at Bethel (Wis 10:10; Gen 28:10–16). Jesus inaugurated his public ministry by proclaiming that “the Kingdom of God” was “at hand” and calling people to repent (Mark 1:14). He also explicitly connected the advent of the Kingdom to his own work of exorcisms and healings (Matt 4:23; 12:28). He taught his followers to pray for its coming (Matt 6:13; Luke 11:2), and warned that the impatient and those who rejected his message could expect eternal exclusion from the Kingdom (Matt 7:21–22; 21:31–32). He primarily taught about the Kingdom through his parables, which used the realities of this world as a window into the “mysteries” of the Kingdom (Matt 13; Luke 14:16). Jesus taught that the Kingdom was present in his own person and ministry (Matt 12:28; Luke 11:20), inaugurated on earth in his disciples and the Church (Matt 13:24–30, 36–43; 16:19), yet still awaiting its future consummation at the Parousia and Last Judgment (Matt 25:31–46). He celebrated the banquet of the Kingdom at the Last Supper (Luke 22:29–30). He made clear that the Kingdom is “not of this world” (John 18:36); it is first and foremost a heavenly reality, which one can either “enter” or be excluded from. The opposite of the Kingdom is the realm of fiery Gehenna (Mark 9:42–48). Humility, repentance, following Jesus, and being born of “water and spirit” are some of the essential prerequisites for entering the Kingdom (Matt 18:1–4; John 3:3–5), which is the ultimate end and beatitude of the children of God (Matt 5:3; 10; 6:33).

In addition to the Kingdom of God, in his teaching Jesus also emphasized the Fatherhood of God. Although there are a few ex-

ceptions, God is called “Father” relatively infrequently in the OT (Deut 32:6; Jer 3:4; Sir 23:1; Mal 2:10). By contrast, Jesus calls God “Father” seventeen times in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7), and addressed God as “Father” throughout his teaching ministry. Indeed, the revelation of God as Father and Jesus as his Son is a distinctive element of his message (Matt 11:25–27; Luke 10:21). He emphasized the love of God the Father for his children (Luke 12:22–32; Matt 10:29–31; John 16:27) and prayer to God as Father (Matt 6:8; 7:7–11; Luke 11:9–13). God is not simply “Lord” or “Master” or even “King”; he is the Father who sends his Son to seek and save the lost (Luke 15:11–32; 19:10). Jesus is the one who reveals “the bosom of the Father,” whom no one has seen (John 1:18). He himself prayed to God as “Abba, Father” (Mark 14:36).

Jesus also taught in lengthy discourses, like the prophets of the OT, on many other topics. Compendiums of his teaching can be found in his parables of the Kingdom (Matt 13) and his discourses on the mission of the disciples (Matt 10), the nature and mission of the Church (Matt 18), and the destruction of Jerusalem and the final coming of the Son of Man, known as the Olivet Discourse (Matt 24–25; Mark 13; Luke 21). The Olivet Discourse is particularly noteworthy because it contains Jesus’s teachings about the Great Tribulation, the destruction of Jerusalem, and his own final “coming” in glory (Greek *parousia*) at the time of the Last Judgment (Matt 24:3; 27). The Gospel of John is particularly full of lengthy teaching discourses, such as the Bread of Life Discourse (John 6), the Good Shepherd and his Flock (John 10), and Jesus’s extended dis-

courses at the Last Supper (John 13-17). The most famous of his discourses is the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus, like a new Moses, gave his disciples the New Law from atop a mountain (Matt 5-7). Just as God had called the people of Israel to be a "kingdom of priests" (Exod 19:6) by being "holy" as God is holy (Lev 11:44), so Jesus calls his audience to be "sons of God" who are "perfect" as God is perfect (Matt 5:48). This is the essence of Jesus's call: to repent and turn away from sin, and to seek that happiness ("beatitude") that can only be found in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 6:33). Although Jesus did not "abolish" the Decalogue or the Laws of Moses, he called his disciples to go beyond them and to write the twofold law of love of God and love of neighbor on their hearts (Matt 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:25-27; cf. Jer 31:31-33; Deut 6:4-9). Indeed, he called his disciples to a "righteousness" that surpasses that of even the most faithful of Law keepers, the Pharisees (Matt 5:20). For Jesus, sin has its origin in the human heart, not in the things "outside" of a person (Mark 7:18-23). These spiritual principles are embodied in the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (Matt 6:1-18).

time had arrived (Mark 1:24-25; 3:11-12), he never denied that their professions were true. In fact, on one occasion he explicitly identified himself as "the Messiah" while speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:25). As Messiah, he taught that belief in him, discipleship to him, and obedience to his teachings would serve as the criteria for one's eternal salvation (Matt 7:21-23; Mark 8:38; John 3:14-15, 8:24, 12:48). Over and over again he taught his disciples about and identified himself as the "Son of Man" who would bring about the redemption of the world (Mark 10:35-45) and who would usher in the glory of the Messianic Kingdom (Matt 10:23, 19:28; Mark 9:1, 13:24-27). Positively, these teachings culminated in Simon Peter's profession of faith in Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the Living God" at Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:13-18). Negatively, they led to his being put to death under the false charges of being a blasphemer and a Messianic pretender (Mark 14:53-64; John 19:7).

#### *D. Passion and Death*

Over the course of his public ministry, and especially during his last days in Jerusalem, Jesus encountered opposition from various groups (Matt 21:45-46). This opposition ultimately led to his being executed as a common criminal by means of crucifixion. After Peter's profession of faith at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus had begun predicting that he would suffer, die, and be resurrected on the third day (Matt 16:16-23). With these predictions, he revealed that the Messianic Son of Man would also become the Suffering Servant who would offer his life "as a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; cf. Isa 53).

Jesus was a Jew who kept the Torah of Moses faithfully. He was not executed because he sought to "abolish" the Law and the Prophets (cf. Matt 5:17), but because he came into conflict with Jewish leaders over at least three key issues of authority. First, he claimed authority over the Law by healing on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1-8). Second, he claimed authority over the Temple when he stopped its sacrificial services and prohibited anyone from buying or selling, thereby signaling the Temple's imminent destruction (John 2:13-22; Mark 11:15-17). Third and finally, Jesus was executed because of his self-claims. He was accused of sedition by those who saw his Messianic claim as a threat to the political power of Caesar and the Roman Empire (John 19:12-15). He was also accused of making himself "God" by those who rejected his claims of divine Sonship (John 10:30-33). This conflict came to a head at his trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin, at which he was accused of "blasphemy" and handed over to the Romans to be put to death (Mark 14:53-64).

Shortly before his death, Jesus celebrated a final Passover meal with his disciples and identified himself as the new Passover lamb whose blood would be shed "for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt 26:17-30; Luke 22:7-39; John 13-17). He spent his final evening before his arrest with Peter, James, and John in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying to the Father to take the "cup" of suffering from him if possible (Mark 14:32-42). After being put on trial before the Sanhedrin and Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, Jesus was scourged, mocked, and made to carry his Cross up the hill of Golgotha, where he was crucified. He died on a

Friday afternoon, during the Jewish feast of Passover. Over his head was hung a title written in three languages: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" (John 19:17-22). At the foot of the Cross were his mother, the disciple John, and several of his female followers (John 19:25-27). After his death, Jesus was buried by two members of the Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, one of whom was secretly his disciple (John 19:38-42). Despite his ignominious death, the Gospels make it clear that Jesus was "innocent" and condemned on false charges (Luke 23:13-16, 47).

#### *E. Descent, Resurrection, and Ascension*

The last stages of Jesus's earthly life consisted of the historical and transcendent events of his Descent into Hell, his Resurrection from the dead, and his Ascension into heaven. Although there is no record of the Descent in the Gospels, the NT bears witness to the fact that while Jesus was dead in the tomb, his soul descended into Hades, the realm of the dead, in order to deliver the spirits of the just (1 Pet 2:18-22, 4:6; Eph 4:9). After this, on the Sunday immediately following his Crucifixion, the four Gospels bear unanimous witness that his tomb was empty and that Jesus had risen from the dead (Matt 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21). With his Resurrection from the dead, Jesus inaugurated the beginning of the new creation that had been foretold by the prophets (Isa 65:17, 66:22) and which he himself had spoken of (Mat 19:28). Hence, his return to life was no mere bodily resurrection, nor was it the appearance of a "ghost" or "spirit" (Luke 24:36-39). Jesus's resurrected body was real and authentic, as re-



vealed by the presence of his wounds and his “flesh and bones”, yet it was now in a glorified state, and no longer limited by space and time (Luke 24:40–43; John 20:19). On the octave of Easter Sunday the fullness of Jesus’s divinity is revealed to his disciples, such that the apostle Thomas could say to him: “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). After his Resurrection, Jesus spent forty days with the disciples, instructing them about the Kingdom of God, before ascending into heaven and entering into the glory of his heavenly Kingdom (Acts 1:1–11).

### III. BIBLICAL CHRISTOLOGY

#### A. *The Humanity of Jesus*

According to the New Testament, Jesus was fully human, but “without sin” (Heb 4:15; 1 Pet 2:22; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 John 3:5).

Although the Latin term “Incarnation” does not occur in the NT (which was written in Greek), the Scripture nevertheless teaches that the central “mystery” of Christianity is that in Jesus, God was “manifested in the flesh” (1 Tim 3:16; the Latin word for “flesh” is *caro*). As John puts it, “the Word”—who “was God”—“became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Hence, he was able to be heard, seen, and touched, like any man (cf. 1 John 1:1–4). Likewise, Paul’s famous “christological hymn” proclaims that the divine Son of God “emptied himself” (Greek *kenosis*) and was born “in human form” (Phil 2:5–8). All these texts point to the true humanity of the “man Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:15; 1 Tim 2:5), who was “born of a woman” (Gal 3:16) and truly suffered and died on the Cross (1 Cor 15:1–3). Indeed, an

important litmus test for authentic Christianity in the early Church was whether someone affirmed that Christ had come “in the flesh” or, like the early heretics known as Docetists, denied that Jesus was truly human (1 John 4:2; 2 John 7).

The Gospels in particular are filled with testimony to the true humanity of Jesus. Not only was he born of a human mother, Mary (Matt 1:16; Luke 1:31; Gal 4:4), but his human lineage from David, Abraham, and Adam is emphasized (Matt 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–38; Rom 1:3). During his youth, he is said to have grown like any man “in wisdom and in stature” (Luke 2:52). During his public ministry, Jesus’s full humanity was repeatedly manifested: he was subject to human conditions such as hunger and thirst (Matt 4:2; John 19:28), weariness and sleep (John 4:6; Matt 8:24). He displayed human passions and emotions such as joy (Luke 10:21; John 11:15), anger (Mark 3:5), indignation (John 2:13–17), love (Mark 10:21; John 11:36), and sadness (Matt 26:37; John 11:36). He wept over the death of Lazarus and the coming destruction of Jerusalem (John 11:33–35; Luke 19:41). He also possessed a human will, which was distinct from God the Father’s will (John 6:38; Luke 22:42). In the face of his own death, he experienced “fear” (Mark 14:33), and was sorrowful and stricken to the heart (Matt 26:37–38). Finally, he suffered the agony of death itself (Matt 27:50; John 19:30; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46).

#### B. *The Divinity of Jesus*

According to the NT, Jesus Christ is truly the eternal and divine Son of God. Although some people apparently had difficulty understand-



ing that Jesus was greater than the highest created beings, the angels (Heb 1:5–2:9), Scripture clearly teaches that Jesus is the eternal Son of God. He is “the Word” (Greek *logos*), who existed before the world was made (John 1:1–3, something that theologians refer to as “pre-existence”). The ancient Jewish belief in the Messiah’s pre-existence appears to be rooted in prophecies that speak of his existing “from of old” and being “begotten” before creation (Mic 5:2; Ps 110:1–4; cf. 1 Enoch 62; *b. Pesachim* 54a). As the eternal Son of God, Jesus not only existed with the Father “before the world was made” (John 17:5; 24), but the entire universe was created through him and by means of his power (John 1:3; Heb 1:1–3; Col 1:15–16), and he was sent “from heaven” by God (John 3:13; 6:38). When John refers to Jesus as “the only-begotten [Greek *monogenēs*] Son of God” (John 3:16), he is asserting Jesus’s eternal origin and nature and implying that he was “begotten, not made,” as clarified later by the Nicene Creed. Outside the Gospels, the divinity of Jesus is indicated by the early Christian application of the title “Lord” (Greek *kyrios*) to him (1 Cor 8:6; cf. Deut 6:4). This title was used in the Greek translation of the OT for the sacred name, “the LORD” (Hebrew *YHWH*; Phil 2:10–11; cf. Isa 45:23). Paul explicitly affirms that “in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col 2:9). Even with regard to his death, Jesus was proclaimed as divine: it was “the Author of Life” and the “Lord of Glory” who was crucified on Golgotha (Acts 3:15; 1 Cor 2:8).

Through his public ministry, Jesus revealed his divinity through both implicit and explicit claims. He implied his divinity when

he declared himself “greater than” the greatest men of the Old Covenant, such as Jonah and Solomon (Matt 12:41), and even “greater than” the Temple, the dwelling place of God on earth (Matt 12:6). To his contemporary Jewish audience, the only thing that could be greater than the Temple would be God himself. Christ also used OT images of God to refer to himself, such as the “Bridegroom” of the covenant and the “Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:19–20; Matt 12:8; Isa 54:1–7; Exod 20:10). Moreover, he made demands that only God can make, such as calling his disciples to have “faith” in him (John 14:1; Mark 8:38) and demanding of them an absolute love that transcends all other relationships (Matt 10:37; Luke 14:25). In the Old Covenant, such love was given to God alone (Deut 6:4–8). In addition, Jesus allowed “worship” (Greek *proskynesis*) to be given him (Matt 14:33; John 9:35–39)—the same kind of worship that both Peter and an anonymous angel refused to be given as they believed such worship was due to God alone (Acts 10:25; Rev 19:10). It is hard to believe that Jesus would have accepted such worship if he knew himself to be merely a man. Moreover, Jesus’s many miracles reveal his omnipotence (Matt 11:4; John 10:37); through them he demonstrated his divine power over illness, demonic spirits, sin, the natural world, and death itself. Strikingly, Jesus also claimed the divine prerogative to forgive sins, something that “God alone” could accomplish (Mark 2:7), and that his death would have the power to redeem humanity (Matt 20:28; 26:26–28). Significantly, Jesus hinted at the fact that the Messiah was much more than David’s “son”; he was David’s “Lord” (Greek *kyrios*)—

again, an OT title for God (Mark 11:35–37). Finally, Jesus declared himself to be Judge of the world (John 5:22–25; Luke 12:1–9). Not only does this presuppose omniscience, but in the OT God alone is the universal “judge” (Ps 49:1–6).

In addition to these implicit claims, Jesus also made explicit claims to divinity. The latter are less frequently recorded, perhaps because he sought to gradually reveal himself to his disciples and quite probably because such claims would have led to his being imprisoned and put to death before his hour had come (cf. John 7:4–9). For example, when Jesus paralleled his knowledge as Son with the knowledge of the Father, he thereby equated his knowledge with that of God (Matt 11:25–27; Luke 10:21–22). Moreover, he identified himself with God the Father, claiming that anyone who had seen him had “seen the Father” (John 14:9). Remarkably, he declared, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). For this, he was almost stoned, because his Jewish listeners correctly interpreted him as declaring himself to be “God” (John 10:33). Perhaps most revealing of all, Jesus laid claim on several occasions to the divine name that God had revealed to Moses, “I AM” (Greek *egō eimi*; Exod 3:14; see Mark 6:50; John 8:24–38, 58). In a Jewish context, this assertion would have meant laying claim to the divine nature, since a person’s name was believed to reveal his or her nature and mission (cf. Matt 16:13–18). Shockingly, Jesus even made belief in his divinity necessary for salvation: “you will die in your sins, unless you believe that I AM” (John 8:24). Finally, at his trial before the Sanhedrin, Jesus

solemnly testified to his identity as the heavenly Son of Man (Dan 7:13–14), because of this, he was accused of blasphemy and sentenced to death (Mark 14:61–65; John 19:7). After the Resurrection, the most explicit testimony of Jesus’s divinity in all the Gospels occurred when the apostle Thomas, before the face of the Risen Christ, exclaimed “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28).

**C. Redemption**

In light of the fullness of Jesus’s humanity and divinity, the NT also teaches that Jesus’s entire life, and especially his death and Resurrection, are a mystery of “redemption”—that is, liberation or release from sin and death.

This redemptive work begins with the Incarnation, by which the divine Son “becomes poor” in order to bestow the riches of his heavenly inheritance upon humanity (2 Cor 8:9). He does this in order to save mankind from sin (1 Tim 1:15; 1 John 3:5), to reveal the love of God (John 3:15–16; 1 John 4:9–14), to show us the way of holiness and sacrificial love (John 14:6; Matt 11:29; John 15:12–13), and, ultimately, to enable humanity to become “partakers of the divine nature” (cf. 2 Pet 1:4). This redemptive work was being carried out during Jesus’s youth and hidden years, when he substituted his obedience for humanity’s disobedience (cf. Luke 2:51). He continued redeeming humanity during his temptation in the desert, when he overcame the threefold temptations of Adam, which hold power over fallen man (Luke 4:1–13; cf. Gen 3:6). He also redeemed mankind through his teaching, which liberates humanity by revealing “the truth” that frees us from

slavery to sin and falsehood (John 8:31–33; 14:6). Through his miracles of healing and deliverance, he delivered man from suffering, illness, and slavery to demonic spirits (Matt 8:16–17). This redemptive work reached its apex in the mystery of his Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension. By means of the Cross, humanity is set free from the power of sin and death, securing “redemption through his blood” (Eph 1:17) and the “forgiveness of sins” (Col 1:13), while the Resurrection ushers in the new life of “righteousness” or “justification” in the Spirit (Rom 4:25). These events signify not only the redemption of humanity from sin and death (Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:15), but the restoration of mankind’s communion with God (Rom 5:10; Col 1:20), that we might become a “new creation” in Christ (2 Cor 5:17–19).

Because of the unique nature of the work of redemption, the NT proclaims that Jesus alone is Savior: there is “no other name” by which men may be saved (Acts 4:12). Through his stoning death, God “reconciled” the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19). This act of redemption was also an act of divine love for every human being, such that every person can say, with Paul: “The Son of God . . . loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

**JESUS CHRIST, TITLES OF** See **Jesus Christ**; see also **King**; **Lamb**; **Messiah**; **Priest**; **priesthood**; **Servant of the Lord**; **Prophet**; **Son of God**; **Son of Man**.

**JETHER** The name of two men in the Old Testament.

1. The firstborn son of **Gideon**. Gideon asked Jether to execute the Midianite kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, after Gideon had captured them (Judg 8:20). Although the act was to be in revenge for the killing of Gideon’s brothers, Jether refused to perform the executions.

2. The Ishmaelite father of **Amasa**, commander of David’s army (2 Sam 19:13; 1 Chr 2:17).

**JETHRO** Priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses through his marriage with Zipporah (Exod 3:1; 4:18). Also called Reuel (Exod 2:18), he gave asylum to Moses after the flight from Egypt and consented to Moses’s marriage to his daughter (Exod 2:21). When Moses returned to Egypt, Zipporah and Moses’s sons remained with Jethro and then went with Moses and the Israelites after the departure from Egypt. He met Moses in the desert and offered sacrifices to God near Mount Sinai (Exod 18:1–12). Jethro advised Moses to organize a judicial system to handle domestic disputes among the people (Exod 18:13–27).

**JEW** The term “Jew” has had different meanings at different times. In early Israel, it meant a member of the tribe of Judah; later, after the division of the tribes, it meant someone from the southern kingdom of Judah (2 Kgs 16:6, translated “men of Judah”; 25:25; Neh 1:2; Jer 32:12, 38:19; 52:28–30). After the Exile, “Jew” was used in two ways, one geographic and the other religious: it could mean a resident of Judea, but it could also mean a follower of Judaism or one of those who remained dis-