

# JEWS AND CHRISTIANS: A TANGLED HISTORY

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## Session 2: Jesus - The Faith Picture

### THE STORY OF JESUS IN THE GOSPELS

#### A. Bridging the gap between the 'Old' and the 'New'

##### Matthew 1: 1-3, 16-17, 22-23

<sup>1</sup>The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. <sup>2</sup>Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, <sup>3</sup>and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram ... <sup>16</sup>and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. <sup>17</sup>So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. ... <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: <sup>23</sup>'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel' (which means, God with us).

##### Malachi 3: 23-24

See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.

##### Mark 1: 1-11

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. <sup>2</sup>As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, <sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight"', <sup>4</sup>John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>And he preached, saying, 'After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>9</sup>In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup>And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup>And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'

##### Luke 1: 5-25

<sup>5</sup> In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. <sup>6</sup>And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. <sup>7</sup>But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were

advanced in years. <sup>8</sup>Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, <sup>9</sup>according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. <sup>10</sup>And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. <sup>11</sup>And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup>And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. <sup>13</sup>But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. <sup>14</sup>And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup>for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. <sup>16</sup>And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, <sup>17</sup>and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.’ <sup>18</sup>And Zechariah said to the angel, ‘How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.’ <sup>19</sup>And the angel answered him, ‘I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. <sup>20</sup>And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.’ <sup>21</sup>And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. <sup>22</sup>And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. <sup>23</sup>And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home. <sup>24</sup>After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, <sup>25</sup>‘Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.’

#### John 1: 1-7, 14-18

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. <sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him... <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>John bore witness about him, and cried out, ‘This was he of whom I said, “He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.”’ <sup>16</sup>And from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

#### **B. Birth**

##### Luke 2: 1-21

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup>to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup>And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because

there was no place for them in the inn. <sup>8</sup>And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. <sup>10</sup>And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.' <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!' <sup>15</sup>When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.' <sup>16</sup>And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup>And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. <sup>21</sup>And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

### **C. Ministry**

#### Matthew 9: 35-10: 8

<sup>35</sup> And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. <sup>36</sup>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup>Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; <sup>38</sup>therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

<sup>1</sup>And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. <sup>2</sup>The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; <sup>3</sup>Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup>Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. <sup>5</sup>These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup>but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup>And proclaim as you go, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." <sup>8</sup>Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.'

#### Mark 8: 22-26

<sup>22</sup>And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. <sup>23</sup>And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spat on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, 'Do you see anything?' <sup>24</sup>And he looked up and said, 'I see men, but they look like trees, walking.' <sup>25</sup>Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. <sup>26</sup>And he sent him to his home, saying, 'Do not even enter the village.'

### Matthew 12: 4-8, 18-23

<sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in parables, saying: ‘A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup>Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, <sup>6</sup>but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>He who has ears, let him hear.’ ... <sup>18</sup>‘Hear then the parable of the sower: <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. <sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup>yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup>As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. <sup>23</sup>As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.’

### **D. Death and ‘Resurrection’**

#### Matthew 26: 26-29

<sup>26</sup>Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ <sup>27</sup>And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, <sup>28</sup>for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup>I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.’

#### Mark 15: 1-15

<sup>1</sup>Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, reached a decision. They bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate. <sup>2</sup>‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ asked Pilate. ‘Yes, it is as you say’, Jesus replied. <sup>3</sup>The chief priests accused him of many things. <sup>4</sup>So again Pilate asked him, ‘Aren’t you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of.’ <sup>5</sup>But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed. <sup>6</sup>Now it was the custom at the Feast to release a prisoner whom the people requested. <sup>7</sup>A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. <sup>8</sup>The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did. <sup>9</sup>‘Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?’ asked Pilate, <sup>10</sup>knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. <sup>11</sup>But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead. <sup>12</sup>‘What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?’ Pilate asked them. <sup>13</sup>‘Crucify him!’ they shouted. <sup>14</sup>‘Why? What crime has he committed?’ asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, ‘Crucify him!’ <sup>15</sup>Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

#### Matthew 27: 25

Then all the people answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’

Catholic Church, *Nostra aetate*, 1965

Even though the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ ... neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his passion.

Mark 15: 23-39

<sup>23</sup>Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. <sup>24</sup>And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. <sup>25</sup>It was the third hour when they crucified him. <sup>26</sup>The written notice of the charge against him read: The King of the Jews. <sup>27</sup>They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>29</sup>Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, 'So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, <sup>30</sup>come down from the cross and save yourself!' <sup>31</sup>In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. 'He saved others,' they said, 'but he cannot save himself! <sup>32</sup>Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.' Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him. <sup>33</sup>At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. <sup>34</sup>And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?'—which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' <sup>35</sup>When some of those standing near heard this, they said, 'Listen, he is calling Elijah.' <sup>36</sup>One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 'Now leave him alone. Let us see if Elijah comes to take him down,' he said. <sup>37</sup>With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. <sup>38</sup>The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup>And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, 'Surely this man was the Son of God!'

Matthew 28: 16-20

<sup>16</sup>Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

**Further Reading**

Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Z. Brettler (eds.), *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible*, HarperOne, 2009.

Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, Oxford University Press, 2000.