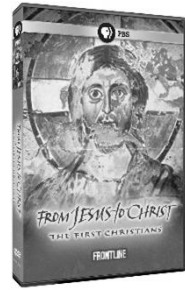


**PBS FRONTLINE**

# From Jesus to Christ

[Link to online PBS Frontline "From Jesus to Christ"](#)



## **Additional Resources**

(Underline indicates active link on PDF copy, available at [www.ReclaimingtheForgottenGospelofJesus.org/from-jesus-to-christ](http://www.ReclaimingtheForgottenGospelofJesus.org/from-jesus-to-christ))

## **A Chronology**

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/cron.html>

The history of Christianity from the birth of Jesus through the conversion of Constantine.

## **Synopsis of the Program (4 hours)**

"From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians" tells the epic story of the rise of Christianity. The four hours explore the life and death of Jesus, and the men and women whose belief, conviction, and martyrdom created the religion we now know as Christianity.

Drawing upon historical evidence, the series challenges familiar assumptions and conventional notions about Christian origins. Archaeological finds have yielded new understandings of Jesus' class and social status; fresh interpretations have transformed earlier ideas about the identity of the early Christians and their communities.

Through engaging on-camera interviews with twelve scholars--New Testament theologians, archaeologists, and historians--the series presents their contributions to this intellectual revolution. For example, they talk about the quest for the historical Jesus - what can we really know? And how do we know it?

The scholars together represent a range of viewpoints and diversity of faiths and a shared commitment to bring new ways of thinking about Christianity to a public audience.

# Reclaiming the *Forgotten* Gospel of Jesus

They discuss the value in a historical approach to Jesus and the Bible and whether Christian faith can be reconciled with such an approach.

**HOUR ONE** examines how Judaism and the Roman empire shaped Jesus' life. Jesus was an ordinary Jewish resident of his time, but new archaeological findings show that Jesus was probably not the humble class. Nazareth, where he grew up, was about four miles from the cosmopolitan urban center of Sepphoris, one of the Roman provincial cities.

While Rome defined one dimension of Jesus' world, the other was symbolized by the great Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus was born, lived, and died a Jew, and he was influenced by the diversity and tensions of Judaism at that time.

Jesus was most likely arrested and executed by Roman authorities whose principal concern was to keep peace in the empire Rome had little tolerance for those it judged disruptive of the Pax Romana (Roman peace), punishing them in many ways, including crucifixion.

The death of Jesus was a Roman act; there was little if any notice taken by Jewish people. Jesus was another victim of the Pax Romana.

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**HOUR TWO** explores the period after the crucifixion of Jesus and traces the beginnings of the Jesus Movement, in those early years before it was called Christianity:

The Jesus Movement began as a sect within Judaism. Along the way, the early Christians branched out and spread their message to non-Jews or gentiles (meaning "nations"). The Apostle Paul had a profound impact on this spread; around 50 C.E., Paul travelled away from the traditional centers of the Jesus Movement and began to found new churches in Greco-Roman cities. Paul's letters to these fledgling congregations mark the first writings of the New Testament.

Meanwhile, expectations about the coming of the Kingdom of God and spiraling tensions between Jews and Rome would culminate in a catastrophic Jewish revolt against Rome from 66-70 C.E., ending in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple--the center of Jewish spiritual life. The traumatic failure of this revolt would dramatically affect the future for Jews and Christians.

# Reclaiming the *Forgotten* Gospel of Jesus

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**HOUR THREE** follows the story of the first attempts to write the life of Jesus--the Gospels: The Gospels were products of social and religious reconstruction in the period after the war, ranging from roughly 70 to after 100 C.E. The program looks at how these stories were passed down before they were written. And how the writing of each Gospel reflects the experiences and circumstances of early Christians. They do not all tell the same story of Jesus because each one is responding to a different audience and circumstances. For example, Matthew's gospel is clearly written for a Jewish Christian audience; it is the most Jewish of all the gospels.

During this time, a growing tension appeared between the emergent Christian groups and their Jewish neighbors. The result was a process of debate, identity, and separation that shaped both religious traditions forever. And there were still other external forces, including a second, devastating Jewish war, the Bar Kochbah revolt, which erupted in 132 C.E.

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**HOUR FOUR** chronicles how the Christian movement - as it became separate from Judaism--would face new challenges--both internal and external.

In the period between 100 and 300 C.E., the Christian movement grew throughout the Roman empire. At times there were heated debates about beliefs, worship, and even about Jesus himself. The Christian movement also faced external threats; it became suspicious in the eyes of the Roman authorities and Christians were persecuted.

But the Christian movement pulled together and in the end, what started as a small sect of Judaism became a significant part of the population, enough so that the new Roman emperor Constantine decided that they should be part of the official religion of Rome. This was a momentous change for Christianity.

As the fourth century dawned, the cross was transformed into a symbol of triumph and Jesus of Nazareth became Jesus Christ. In only three hundred years, the empire that had sent Jesus to his death embraced Christianity as an official religion and worshipped him as divine.

# Reclaiming the *Forgotten* Gospel of Jesus

## The Testimony of New Testament Scholars

### ***Jesus' Many Faces***

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#### *What Can We Really Know About Jesus?*

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/reallyknow.html>

#### *The Historian's Task*

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/historians.html>

#### *The Tensions Between Faith and History*

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/tensions.html>

#### *He was born, lived and died a Jew*

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/bornliveddied.html>

#### *His Social Class*

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/socialclass.html>

#### *The Surprise of Sepphoris*

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/sepphoris.html>

#### *The Complexity of His Religious Identity*

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/complexity.html>

#### *Jesus' Ministry and Teaching*

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/ministry.html>

#### *Arrest and Execution*

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/arrest.html>

#### *Searching for Jesus*

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/searching.html>

# Reclaiming the *Forgotten* Gospel of Jesus

## A Portrait of Jesus' World

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### Josephus, Our Primary Source

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/josephus.html>

### Jews and the Roman Empire

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/jews.html>

### The Empire's Religions

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/empire.html>

### Temple Culture

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/temple.html>

### Apocalypticism

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/apocalypticism.html>

### Judaism's First Century Diversity

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/judaism.html>

### The Essenes and the Dead Sea Scrolls

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/essenese.html>

### Galilee

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/galilee.html>

### Portraits of Greco-Roman Cities

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/portraits.html>

### John the Baptist

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/john.html>

### The Jewish Diaspora

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/diaspora.html>

### Hellenistic Culture

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/hellenisticculture.html>

# Reclaiming the *Forgotten* Gospel of Jesus

## The Story of the Storytellers

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### Importance of the Oral Tradition

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/oral.html>

### Emergence of the Four Gospel Canon

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/emergence.html>

### What Are the Gospels?

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/gospels.html>

### Q - The Hypothetical Gospel

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/hypothetical.html>

## The Four Canonical Gospels

### The Gospel of Mark

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/mark.html>

### The Gospel of Matthew

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/matthew.html>

### The Gospel of Luke

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/luke.html>

### The Gospel of John

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/john.html>

### Death and Resurrection

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/death.html>

### Gnostics and Other Heretics

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/heretics.html>

### The Gospel of Thomas

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/thomas.html>

# Reclaiming the *Forgotten* Gospel of Jesus

## The First Christians

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### "The Jesus Movement"

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/themovement.html>

### Diversity of Early Christianity

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/diversity.html>

### Paul's Mission and Letters

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/missions.html>

### Paul's Congregations

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/congregations.html>

### The Roles for Women

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/roles.html>

### Wrestling with Their Jewish Heritage

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/wrestling.html>

### The Collision with Paganism

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/paganism.html>

### Kingdoms in Conflict

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/kingdoms.html>

### In the Catacombs

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/catacombs.html>

# Reclaiming the *Forgotten* Gospel of Jesus

## Why did Christianity Succeed?

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### Pliny's Policy: Execution

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/why/pliny.html>

*Marking the beginning of the Roman Empire's legal prosecution of Christians.*

### The Martyrs

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/why/martyrs.html>

*Treated as criminals in the second and third centuries, the early Christians were subject to empire-wide persecution.*

### Legitimization Under Constantine

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/why/legitimization.html>

*From persecuted minority to official imperial religion - what caused this extraordinary reversal for Christianity?*

### The Great Appeal

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/why/appeal.html>

*What did Christianity offer its believers that made it worth social estrangement, hostility from neighbors, and possible persecution?*



# Reclaiming the *Forgotten* Gospel of Jesus

## Scholars

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**Dr. Harold W. Attridge**

(PhD Harvard) Stirling Professor of Divinity  
Yale Divinity School

**Dr. Allen D. Callahan**

(PhD Harvard) Visiting Professor of Religion and Society  
Harvard Divinity School

**Dr. Elizabeth A. Clark**

(PhD Columbia) John Carlisle Kilgo Professor of Religion Emerita and  
Director of the Graduate Program in Religion  
Duke University

**Dr. Shaye I.D. Cohen**

(PhD Columbia) Nathan Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and  
Philosophy  
Brown University

**Dr. John Dominic Crossan**

(DDiv St. Patricks) Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies  
DePaul University

**Dr. Paula Fredriksen**

(PhD Princeton) Aurelio Professor of Scripture Emerita  
Boston University

**Dr. Holland Lee Hendrix (deceased)**

(ThD Harvard) President Emeritus of the Faculty  
Union Theological Seminary

**Dr. Helmut Koester (deceased)**

(ThD Marburg) John H. Morison Professor of New Testament Studies and  
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# Reclaiming the *Forgotten* Gospel of Jesus

**Dr. Wayne A. Meeks**

(PhD Yale) Woolsey Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies  
Yale University

**Dr. Eric Meyers**

(PhD Harvard) Bernice and Morton Lerner Distinguished Emeritus  
Professor in Judaic Studies  
Duke University

**Dr. Elaine H. Pagels**

(PhD Harvard) The Harrington Spear Paine Foundation Professor of  
Religion  
Princeton University

**Dr. L. Michael White**

(PhD Yale) holds the Ronald Nelson Smith Chair in Religious Studies and  
Classics at The University of Texas at Austin. He also serves as Director  
of the Institute for the Study of Antiquity and Christian Origins (ISAC),  
which he founded in 2001.

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