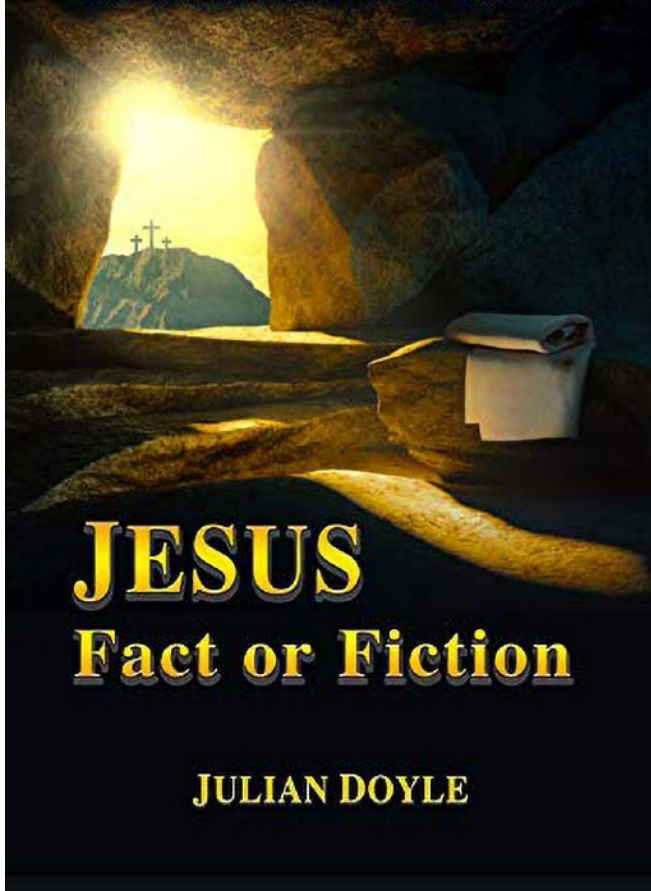


A FULL INVESTIGATION INTO THE  
STORY PRESENTED IN THE GOSPELS



# JESUS

## Fact or Fiction

JULIAN DOYLE

# SAMPLE CHAPTER

[www.juliandoyle.info](http://www.juliandoyle.info)

On location filming  
“MONTY PYTHON’S THE LIFE OF BRIAN”



The editor of the film sits on the sand in Tunisia watching the filming of Brian’s close ups for the famous crucifixion scene that ended the film. But at this very moment he realised there was something wrong with the infamous process.

And from that day he embarked on a thirty year quest to discover the truth about the story narrated to us every Easter.



# **JESUS**

# **Fact or Fiction**

Julian Doyle

London  
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*Chippenham Books US EDITION*

**ISBN: 9781652797890**

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# Acknowledgements

To the Monty Python comedy group who made a film that has since been recognized by Biblical experts to have opened up new and interesting research into the existence of Jesus that this astonishing book attempts to explore.



# Introduction

There are four positions taken towards the existence of a charismatic Jew called Jesus functioning in Israel at the time of the Roman emperor Tiberius.

a) Firstly that Jesus existed and had incredible powers and was the Son of God. And the Bible is an accurate representation of his story.

b) Secondly, that Jesus did not exist and was an invention of a person, or various people with various motives.

c) Thirdly that Jesus is a mythological character bringing together characteristics of all the Gods worshipped by the mystery religions, like Osiris and Mithras.

d) Fourthly that Jesus did exist but was just an ordinary person whose charismatic teachings, gained many followers.

We are not going to begin with the usual presentation of the facts for and against, but instead, to tease out the truth we are going to start by putting one question to each of the positions.

A question about massive contradictions in the Gospels.

a) If Jesus existed and was the Son of God as the Gospels say, *why are there such massive contradictions in the Gospels?*

b) If Jesus did not exist but was an invention of people for various motives then: *why are there such massive contradictions in the Gospels?* Could they not get their story straight?

c) If Jesus is a myth then: *why are there such massive contradictions in the Gospels?* Myths are usually logical within their own context but this supposed myth is not.



d) If Jesus did exist but was just an ordinary man who gained followers because of his ideas then: *why are there such massive contradictions in the Gospels?* His real life should be consistent even if the miracles are exaggerations and the deification a later invention. But the story told in the Gospels of Jesus' life is not.

If any one of the four positions can answer this problem then maybe it will help us decide whether Jesus is fact or fiction. So we have to start by clarifying the story of Jesus, as told every Easter from the pulpit. The source for this is meant to be the four Gospels, but you may be surprised how much of this story is contradicted, one Gospel by another and these contradictions need to be explored and understood.

The story we know is such a pick and mix that a totally different story can be constructed from the same four Gospels, a story different from the one preached from the pulpit or presented in Easter films and kids picture books.

Let me show you.

Mary and Joseph live in Nazareth and travel to Bethlehem where they give birth to Jesus in a stable in 6 AD. (Luke)

But equally true is: -

Mary and Joseph actually live in Bethlehem and give birth to the baby in their house ten years earlier in 4 BC (Matthew)

Joseph is a carpenter and Jesus helps in his carpentry shop. (Not in any Gospel)

Or: -

Joseph is a, ho tekton, master of the craft (as in masonry whose rituals are called the 'craft') an initiate into the mysteries, and teaches Jesus these mysteries. (Mark 6:3)

When Jesus starts his mission he gets Andrew and Simon who are fishermen in Galilee to leave their employ and become his first disciples. (Mark)

Or: -

Andrew and Simon are followers of John the Baptist in Judea, not Galilean fishermen at all, who spend time with Jesus before they become his first disciples. (John 1:35)

Jesus preaches and performs miracles all over Galilee. (Luke)

Or: -

Jesus preaches and performs miracles in Judea and Jerusalem and has a base in Bethany a mile out of Jerusalem. (John)

Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey to be welcomed by cheering crowds. (Not in any Gospel - the Hosannas are when he gets on the donkey in Bethany)

Or: -

Jesus arrives in Jerusalem on his donkey but it is late and nobody is there so he returns to Bethany. (Mark 11:11)

Jesus is arrested in a garden by Temple guards and is betrayed with a kiss by Judas. (Matthew)

Or: -

Jesus is arrested by a cohort of Roman soldiers (800 plus 6 centurions) and when asked if he is Jesus, he replies "I am" and with that the 800 soldiers fall to the ground in surprise. (John 18:6)

Jesus is taken to High Priest Caiaphas. (Luke)

Or: -

Jesus is taken to High Priest Annas. (John)

Jesus is crucified in the place of the skull. (Mark)

Or: -

Jesus is crucified in Joseph of Arimathea's garden where he has a tomb and is mistaken for the gardener by the Magdalene. (John)

When the women arrive at the tomb the stone door is open and Jesus is missing but a shining man tells them he has gone to Galilee. (Luke)

Or: -

When the women arrive at the tomb the stone door is closed and an angel flies down, rolls away the stone, sits on it and invites the women to look inside. (Matthew)

I could introduce you to other contradictions or strange events that are so weird, like the angel flying down and opening the door of the tomb, that they are never mentioned. For instance, young Jesus is not alone in the carpenters shop; he has five brothers and at least two sisters.

*“Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?” (Mark 6:3)*

And another weird one is Jesus getting a fish to cough up his Temple Tax.

*“The collectors of the two-drachma temple tax asked Peter, “Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?”*

*“Yes, he does,” he replied.*

*When Peter came into the house, Jesus said, “So that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.” (Mat 17:24)*

Then there is the voice of God glorifying himself: -

*‘Jesus said, “Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came out of heaven: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” The crowd who heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, “An angel has spoken to Him.” (John 12:28)*

And weirdest of all is something that is never mentioned or shown in films, that when Jesus dies, what appears to be Zombies, arise from the graves and wander around Jerusalem.

*“The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.” (Matthew 27:51)*

So we have to get straight, what exactly is the story of Jesus as told in the Gospels. We have to accept that there are weird bits that are ignored by the Church like Jesus had brothers and sisters: we have to answer why there are these contradictions, can they both be true or is there a true story and a mythical one. Or is the whole thing a muddled myth?

Just in case you think this is an unproductive way to proceed, let me give you an example to prove how important it is to explain why there are these glaring contradictions in the Gospels. Take Matthew 26:57

*“Those who had seized Jesus led him away to Caiaphas, the High Priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.” (Matthew 26:57)*

Peter follows and then warming his hands in the courtyard of High Priest Caiaphas, he denies Jesus three times. But after the arrest in John's Gospel, Jesus is taken to the house of High Priest Annas where Peter, warming his hands by this courtyard fire, denies Jesus three times there. (John 18:12-25)

Perhaps you think this is a minor mistake as there have never been two High Priests functioning at the same time in Israel, except that there has been a concerted attempt to enforce this position by a statement in Luke's Gospel.

*'During the High-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah.'* (Luke 3:2)

This quite clearly states there are two High Priests. As this is quite absurd the church has had to give an explanation for this odd state of affairs. So they suggest Annas was the High Priest from 6 to 15 AD, which is true, but he was so influential, that he was still called High Priest even after his son-in-law, Caiaphas became High Priest in 18 AD. This is nowhere in the Bible but the claim is, that there is an official High Priest, Caiaphas and the other Annas, is an old man who was so influential, that he was still called High Priest even after he left office. Clearly not only is this nonsense because, Annas had five sons who were High Priests before and after Caiaphas, but low and behold, they are never, ever said to be functioning with Annas as High Priest at the same time, only with this son-in-law, Caiaphas!

But even more astonishing is that there has never been a High Priest of Israel called Caiaphas. A Caiaphas did have a son called Joseph who was High Priest during the time of Pilate. But every High Priest is called by his given name, Joshua, Simon, Jonathan, but Joseph is not! He is the only High Priest, and I mean the only one in the history of Israel, who is called by his father's name. He should be called High Priest Joseph as is normal, not High Priest Caiaphas, otherwise Jesus would be called Joseph! And John the Baptist would be called Zechariah the Baptist! It is clearly nonsense. Even more significantly, all mention of High Priest Joseph in the Jewish historian, Josephus' books, has also been changed to Caiaphas.

*'Caiaphas became a high priest during a turbulent period.'* (Josephus Antiquities)

Josephus would never ever write something like that; he would know that Caiaphas was never High Priest of Israel as Caiaphas

was High Priest Joseph's father. And clearly Caiaphas was not Annas's son-in-law, that was his son.

Not one of the four positions taken about the existence of Jesus answers, why it was so important to claim there were two High Priests functioning at the same time, and why it was necessary to change High Priest Joseph, to High Priest Caiaphas even in the books of the historian Josephus.

But there is not even any attempt in the history of Biblical research to fathom out this conundrum even though the answer to this puzzle reveals without question whether Jesus is fact or fiction.

Before we begin just a small note: the first three chapters are about what is written in the Bible and so a sentence like, '*Jesus entered the Temple at Passover*' should actually be written '*According to the Bible, Jesus entered the Temple at Passover.*' But I am not going to write '*according to the Bible*' all the time, as it will drive you mad. So please take it for granted that it precedes all definitive statements in these opening chapters, so don't assume I believe these without question.

# Chapter One

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The name given, in our Bible, to this charismatic Jew is Jesus. But you will never locate a Jew in Israel called Jesus since this is the Latin translation of the Hebrew name, Yeshua, which when correctly translated into English would be Josua, and that is how it is translated into English in the Old Testament Book of Joshua. So why are we using the Latin word? Could it be that the Christian message was spread from Rome not Israel? And could that also mean that the story we know is not just the Jewish story but a Roman version created thousands of miles from its origin? The Bible tells us Paul arrived in Rome in 62 AD with his own brand of Christianity, never having met Jesus and actually having fallen out with Jesus' brother, James calling his group, the 'circumcision' party! (Galatians 2:12) So what might the difference be between the Roman Christians and the Jerusalem ones? Well the first thing that is different is that, Church Father Eusebius writes that all the early Bishops of Jerusalem, starting with James, called the Bishops of Bishops, were Jews and were therefore following Jewish rules, worshipping at the Temple and were circumcised. Could this be why there are contradictory stories in the Gospels, some written in Israel and others from memories of Jews in Rome? Probably not, but it is something to bear in mind.

Let us move on to the other name used, for our Charismatic Jew, namely Jesus of Nazareth. This is presenting us with the idea that Jesus lived in Nazareth in

Galilee. But even though, I have read this name in many academic papers, it is no use searching for such a person in history because it is easy to prove that Jesus never lived in Nazareth! You may think this is impossible to prove, but firstly Jesus was never originally called Jesus of Nazareth, but Jesus the Nazarene, and secondly we have very little evidence that Nazareth, as a village, even existed at the time; if it did then it was a very small village indeed. So why was this insignificant appellation added to Jesus' name. Thomas of York makes sense, as York is a well-known town; or Alfred of Wessex after a known region, but Erik of Ecclesfield makes no sense whatsoever, as nobody but the people of Ecclesfield (apologies to the villagers North of Sheffield) would have any idea what the hell we are talking about. So Jesus of Nazareth is not only very unlikely, it is silly! Jesus of Sepphoris is more likely, after the major town three miles from Nazareth; or Jesus the Galilean after the region. Unfortunately, we already have the important rebel, Judas the Galilean functioning at the time, so two Galileans at the same time would be a bit weird.

There is a document, alleged to have been written by a Roman official, Publius Lentulus, in Jerusalem during Jesus lifetime. You will probably see it is a flattering forgery but it has some interesting points:

*'There has appeared in our city a man of great power named Jesus. The people call him a prophet and his disciples the Son of God. He is in stature a man of middle height and well proportioned, with a venerable face. His hair is the color of ripe chestnuts smooth almost to the ears, but above them wavy and curly with a slight bluish radiancy. And it flows over his shoulders. It is parted in the middle after the fashion of the people of Nazareth.'*



Okay, the usual flattering description of Jesus except for one point, his hair is parted in the middle after the '*fashion of the people of Nazareth*'. What a crazy and extremely unlikely idea! I'm sure the nine or ten adult males of this village of Nazareth did not have a particularly distinctive well-known hairstyle. Matthew's Gospel does give us this:

*'Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: 'He will be called a Nazarene.'*" (Matthew 2:23)

There actually is no prophesy in the Old Testament that says, *he will be called a Nazarene*? The word only appears in the New Testament. But Nazarene must have some meaning other than a person from a tiny village in Galilee. The Old Testament tells us:

*'The Lord said, "If a man or woman wants to make a vow of separation to the Lord as a Nazirite, he must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine. During the entire period of his vow of separation no razor may be used on his head; he must let the hair of his head grow long."* (Numbers 6:5)

A Nazirite then is someone dedicated to God. Samson for instance says to Delilah:

*"No razor has ever been used on my head," said Samson, "because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man."* (Judges 16:17)

If Jesus was not dedicated to God; not a Nazirite; it would be a bit of a surprise and the very earliest images of Jesus show him with long hair, a distinct feature of a Nazirite and

possibly a Nazarene – not a villager from Nazareth! So Nazarenes are a group of people dedicated to God, a movement, perhaps started by Jesus or that Jesus belonged to because Paul is found guilty of being one:

*“We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect.” (Acts 24:5)*

Changing Jesus the Nazarene to Jesus of Nazareth appears to be part of a concerted effort to link Jesus with Galilee.

Biblical expert, Professor Robert Eisenman, writes:

*‘A great deal of trouble is taken by these writers to get Jesus to Galilee.’(Robert Eisenman: Jesus and Dead Sea Scrolls)*

Eisenman has no idea why; he is just stating a fact as he sees it with no particular conclusion. But he is right; look at the way Jesus collects his first disciples at the Sea of Galilee.

*‘As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Jesus said, “Come, follow me,”(Mark 1:16)*

And just like that they follow him. A lovely story we all marvel at. But just look at John’s version of the finding of these very same Disciples, Andrew and Simon.

*‘The next day John the Baptist saw Jesus and said to two disciples, “Look, the Lamb of God!”*

*When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?”*

*They said, “Rabbi, where are you staying?”*

*“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”*

*So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.*

*Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him,*

*"We have found the Messiah." And he brought him to Jesus.'*

*(John 1:40)*

Suddenly these are not the romantic fishermen at all, they are just boring followers of John the Baptist who spend time with Jesus before becoming his disciples. And the event is not happening in Galilee at all but Judea, by the river Jordon about eighteen miles from Jerusalem.

Furthermore it says, Andrew immediately goes to find his brother Simon Peter who is living somewhere in Judea, not by the Sea of Galilee at all.

But even more to the point, in 'Acts of the Apostles', Simon Peter is actually reported as saying:

*'Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judea and in Jerusalem itself.'*  
*(Acts 10:39)*

So they are witnesses to everything he did in Judea but they are not witnesses of anything going on in Galilee. In fact, scholars have noticed that all the passages that mention Galilee are later additions, which are oddly incorrect. For instance, Mark says that Jesus went through Sidon on his way from Tyre to the Sea of Galilee. Problem is Sidon is in the opposite direction and there was no road anyway in the first century. And Mark writes:

*'And passing **along by the Sea of Galilee** he saw Simon and Andrew.'* *(Mark 1:16)*

In Greek the verb *passing along* is not used with the preposition *by*. So if one removed the bold part of this

sentence you would have the correct syntax. Furthermore in Mark 5 there is a story where Gerasa slopes down to the Sea of Galilee, but Gerasa (modern Jerash) is thirty miles away from the sea.

Although John's version of recruiting the disciples is less remarkable, it does seem the more likely, so why move all this to the Sea of Galilee and make these same disciples, fishermen who leave their employ on a whim? In fact John's Gospel places most of the Jesus story in Jerusalem.

*'Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie.'* (John 5:2)

By this pool, Jesus famously tells the lame man to pick up his mat and walk. Then on another day (John 9:7) he cures a blind man by the pool of Siloam. And in wintertime we get this:

*'At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.'* (John 10:22)

So Jesus is in and out of Jerusalem all the time not just at the end of his ministry.

John even contradicts the other Gospels about the overturning of the moneylenders outside the Temple. He places it right at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, while the other Gospels delay the event till they have Jesus arrive in Jerusalem at the end. This contradiction could well be the reason they are making a big deal of his grand entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, riding on the donkey; but then ignore the fact that he does this same journey at least four more times that week with no such fuss. Also a week before Palm Sunday we have the raising of Lazarus in Bethany, just

a mile and a half from Jerusalem, which makes it hard to imagine that he did not go to visit the Temple then.

We also have many references to Jesus' brother, James, in the works of the early church fathers and they all talk about James being in Jerusalem and spending a lot of time in the Temple, which suggests that his brother, Jesus was there or thereabouts too. And of course if Jesus was from the line of David then his homeland would be Judea. And so it seems, because Jesus appears to have a base two miles from Jerusalem in Bethany, where he and his disciples often go overnight. It is the most mentioned place in the Gospels and this house in Bethany is said in the Bible to have a garden. We are not in some London suburb here with little family gardens. Gardens in the Middle East are something you find in palaces or certainly in very posh dwellings. How big, perhaps can be signaled by the oath of the Knights Templar who were asked, '*to show obedience of Bethany, the castle of Mary and Martha.*' So now maybe we are talking about a castle, and of course Mary's name Magdalene derives from the word Magdala meaning 'tower'. So this is a big house owned presumably by a rich family, who were supporters of Jesus mission.

The evidence seems to point to the fact that Jesus spent most of his time in Judea not Galilee and even the name Jesus of Nazareth appears to be part of a deliberate ploy to link him to Galilee, or perhaps there is a logical explanation.

But what possible reason could there be for this desperate attempt to place Jesus in Galilee? It clearly was extremely important to someone for all the machinations that have been shown. But before we can reveal the astonishing answer to this we will have to unravel the four Gospels.