



A Palestinian Jesus Delegitimizes the Jewish State

FICTION vs. FACT Israel & its Arab Neighbors

FICTION: Jesus was Palestinian because He was born in the *land* of Palestine, inhabited by Palestinian *people*. Because Jews are not the indigenous people of the land, the modern Jewish State is illegitimate.

FACT: Jesus could not have been Palestinian because a *land* known as Palestine did not exist at the time of his birth.

- The Roman Empire occupied the land when Jesus was born and recognized the geopolitical identification of the land as Israel, Judea and Samaria.¹
- Jews are called Jews because they are from Judea, the ancient – and biblical – designation for the Jewish homeland.²
- Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea and ministered in Judea and Samaria, the heartland of the nation of Israel.³
- One hundred years *after* Jesus, the Romans changed the geo-political designation of the land to “Palestine” to erase the connection between the land and the Jewish people.⁴



The Roman Empire in the Middle East during Jesus' lifetime: Judea. 30 CE

FACT: Just as no land of Palestine existed when Jesus was born, no *people* known as Palestinians existed. The Jews are the indigenous people of the land.



The Israel Stele

- Ever since the return of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt almost 3,500 years ago, there has been a continuous Jewish presence in the land.⁵
- The Jewish people are the biological descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Jewish patriarchs.⁶
- Historic texts and inscriptions of ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians document the people, kings, and cities of Israel.⁷
- The people of Israel are included in the Merneptah Stele, also known as the Israel Stele, written by the Egyptian Pharaoh Merneptah (1213-1203 B.C.E.) to recount his military conquests.⁸
- At the time of Jesus' birth, the occupying Romans recognized the indigenous people as Jews.⁹

FACT: Jesus was Jewish by birth and was an observant Jew throughout His life..

- The Gospel of Matthew, Chapter One, provides a detailed account of Jesus' Jewish genealogy all the way back to Abraham.
- Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the birthplace of Israel's King David, from whom Jesus is descended.
- According to the Gospels, Jesus studied Torah, observed biblical holidays, preached in synagogues in the Galilee, and went to the Temple in Jerusalem.¹⁰
- Ancient historical sources such as Flavius Josephus, the Babylonian Talmud, Tacitus, and Ignatius of Antioch all testify to Jesus' Jewish identity.¹¹



FACT: Jesus' Jewish identity and the inherent relationship between the new Christian faith and Judaism were acknowledged by early church leaders for the sake of legitimacy with the Roman Empire.¹²

However, within the first two centuries after Jesus, the church began to separate itself from the Jewish roots of the faith.

- In its effort to establish an identity distinct from Judaism, early church leaders taught that Christianity was superior to, and had replaced, Jews and their faith.¹³
- The separation of Christianity from its Jewish roots was formalized by the Roman Emperor Constantine (305-327) through the state-run church.¹⁴
- By the Middle Ages, church doctrine ignored Jesus' Jewish identity and vilified Jews, leading to state-sanctioned pogroms such as the Crusades.¹⁵
- The anti-Jewish teachings of Martin Luther fueled Jew-hatred that was used in Nazi propaganda four centuries later.¹⁶
- Nazi German theologians identified Jesus as an Aryan and removed all Hebrew terms and references to the Jewish roots of Christianity from the Bible.¹⁷



A blonde-haired, blue-eyed Jesus. German Renaissance, Circa 1550

FACT: The historic church's denial of Jesus' Jewish identity laid the foundation for the identification of Jesus as Palestinian.

- Christ at the Checkpoint conferences, held biannually in Bethlehem, replace the Jewish Jesus with a Palestinian Jesus. According to NGO Monitor: "CATC seeks to advance the Palestinian nationalist agenda within Evangelical Christian churches while simultaneously reviving theological antisemitic themes such as replacement theology."¹⁸
- Speaking at the CATC conference in 2010, Rev. Mitri Raheb of Bethlehem Bible College and CATC said: "Israel represents Rome of the Bible, not the people of the land."¹⁹



December 2023: "Jesus in the Rubble," Bethlehem

- Just two months after Hamas' attack on Israel in 2023, Rev. Munther Isaac of CATC unveiled "Jesus in the Rubble," portraying Jesus as a Palestinian baby wrapped in a keffiyeh amid the rubble in Gaza.²⁰
- The Vatican Nativity display for Christmas 2024 featured a baby Jesus on a keffiyeh, the symbol of Palestinian resistance to the existence of Israel.²¹

December 2024: Pope Francis at the Vatican with Jesus on a keffiyeh



The claim that Jesus was Palestinian contradicts all biblical and extra-biblical evidence that identifies Him as a practicing Jew, born in the ancient Jewish homeland.

A Palestinian Jesus forms the foundation of propaganda that delegitimizes the Jewish State.

Sources used for this FACT Sheet:

1. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Judaism/The-Roman-period-63-bce-135-ce>
2. <https://aish.com/the-term-jew/>
3. [https://firmisrael.org/learn/what-bethlehem-means-to-israel-in-bible-and-today/#:~:text=The%20Meaning%20of%20the%20Word,\(John%206%3A51\)](https://firmisrael.org/learn/what-bethlehem-means-to-israel-in-bible-and-today/#:~:text=The%20Meaning%20of%20the%20Word,(John%206%3A51))
4. <https://www.hudson.org/node/44363>
5. <https://www.ajc.org/news/5-facts-about-the-jewish-peoples-ancestral-connection-to-the-land-of-israel>
6. <https://www.simpletoremember.com/articles/a/abraham-lineage/>
7. <https://www.hoover.org/research/jewish-roots-land-israel/palestine>
8. <https://armstronginstitute.org/122-merneptah-stele-proving-israels-3200-year-existence>
9. <https://www.bu.edu/mzank/Jerusalem/tx/romansources.htm>
10. <https://renew.org/was-jesus-jewish-a-summary-of-the-jewishness-of-jesus-life-and-ministry/>
11. <https://www.bethinking.org/jesus/ancient-evidence-for-jesus-from-non-christian-sources>
12. <https://classicalstudies.support/2017/09/12/roman-attitudes-to-jews-and-christians-in-the-1st-century-ad-by-david-coplowe/>
13. <https://biblesocietyinIsrael.com/replacing-the-jews-in-early-christian-theology/>
14. <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/jewish/jews-romanlaw.asp>
15. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-crusades>
16. <https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/martin-luther/judaism>
17. <https://creation.com/en-au/articles/hitler-bible>
18. <https://ngo-monitor.org/reports/christ-at-the-checkpoint/>
19. <https://www.jpost.com/blogs/enemies-of-zion/borrowing-jesus-364115>
20. <https://allisrael.com/blog/the-politics-of-the-nativity-when-the-birth-of-jesus-becomes-a-battlefield>
21. <https://militarybruce.com/the-keffiyeh-has-become-a-toxic-political-symbol/>

Images requiring attribution in order of appearance:

- https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/roman_empire_in_jesus_time_map.htm
<https://biblicalhistoricalcontext.com/israelite-origins/israelite-origins-the-merneptah-stele/>
<https://www.newsweek.com/bethlehem-cancels-christmas-show-support-palestinians-gaza-1855263>
<https://allisrael.com/history-revisionist-display-of-baby-jesus-in-keffiyeh-unveiled-in-vatican-nativity-scene>