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# Jesus *Indeed.*

Redefining  
Christianity  
According *to*  
*the* Words *of* Jesus  
*and the* Gospels

**Joseph L. Torie**

A life of dedication. A passion for the Truth.  
A highly controversial analysis.

# JESUS INDEED

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*Redefining Christianity according to  
the Words of Jesus and the Gospels*



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# JESUS INDEED

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*Redefining Christianity according to  
the Words of Jesus and the Gospels*

# Chapter One

## Jesus, The Foundation

*Note: When parentheses are included in the text of quoted scriptures, those are marking explanatory notes of the author, and shouldn't be understood as being part of Scripture, nor should they be quoted as part of the original text under any circumstance. The explanations are just a man's interpretations and views. Notice also that this study quotes the King James Version translation to English of the Bible, although there are other excellent translations also. Finally, notice that some scriptures have been quoted several times in this text, sometimes to address different aspects of the passage, and others due to the fact that such are key scriptures and concepts in this study.*

### **Commitments and Dedication**

This book is dedicated to the people that want to know Jesus, to those that already love and believe in Him, and to those that want to follow Him, by giving their lives to Him. The book doesn't mean to either attack or defend religious Christian organizations, orders, groups or denominations, or anybody else, although it speaks candidly on many subjects related to the central matter of this study. It only strives to uphold and promote Jesus and His words, as the main foundation of the Christian faith, regardless of which group or Christian branch believers may belong to. Therefore these pages focus on the Words and Life of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels and bases any claims on the authority of the words of Jesus. In that context, if any of the propositions of this book contradicts the Words of Jesus, the proposition should be considered invalid and nothing more than another guess or assumption. I apologize in advance if any such statements manage to creep into this text, due to my ignorance, or lack of understanding or perspective. In addition, if I present a personal opinion or interpretation of the words of Jesus, I am committed to make the fact plenty clear and to offer support and potential proofs of the assumptions based solely on the Words and deeds of Jesus, as recorded in the gospels.

However, this book is not meant to initiate long discussions about who is right and who is wrong, or to start more denominational or religious bellicose arguments. If you agree to check out this study, you do so at your own risk, it is offered as is, and without any guarantees of perfection. The author assumes you have the maturity of judgment to check out and read someone else's opinions and benefit from the good and discard the not-so-good, without starting any contentions and divisions. Enjoy!

## **Come to Jesus!**

Ultimately, the aim of this book is to point people to Jesus, not to the author of the book and not to any particular organization or association. If you are a member of one such organization, or if you are not, but you claim to believe in Jesus it is your individual responsibility to make sure you know Who you believe in. Jesus said to ‘come unto Me (Jesus)’. This study aims to bring people closer to Him, the Savior, and it doesn’t aim to replace the words of Jesus, or to defend any particularism or institution. “Come unto me, all you that toil and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my burden upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” [Matthew 11:28 to 30]. Jesus is the Savior and only He can save us. Let’s focus on His words and on His life as we grow closer to Him!

The comments in this book, sometimes controversial, don’t pretend to reform Christian institutions in any way, as those same institutions are responsible for their own affairs and decisions before the Lord, but the comments are offered to further assist those that may wonder how they could benefit from the experiences and successes of organized Christian institutions while minimizing their pitfalls and disadvantages. The study also may provide insight in how to navigate the fleeting, temporal kingdoms of humankind, while being loyal to the Kingdom of God and its eternal ways.

## **Build on The Rock Foundation**

As mentioned, the main focus of the study is on the Gospels, as they are the most authoritative Source and Foundation on which a wise believer or follower of Jesus could build. A word of advice on hearing Jesus’ Words, as recorded in the gospels: do what they say also, and not just hear them. As Jesus said, “...whoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a Rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a Rock. And every one that hears these sayings of mine, and does them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.” [Matthew 7:24 to 28]. Thus, read and do what Jesus said and you will do fine through the storms of life and in your voyage into life eternal.

## **The Writers of the four Gospels, and the particular Focus of their Accounts**

The gospels writers, in the order their books appear in the New Testament are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The gospel writers did a very good job of recording the different types of answers and comments Jesus made, often by simply recording verbatim what they heard and what they experienced while being with the Lord. They simply recorded the things they witnessed, whether they were able to grasp the real meaning of what Jesus was saying and doing or not. They did that because their faith in Jesus was greater than even their understanding of what He was saying or doing. In other words, they recorded the message He gave whether they could understand what the Master was taking about or couldn't, or even when Jesus' message contradicted their deeply held traditions and views of God, His ways, and His Kingdom. An example of this is when Jesus stated to a multitude of people and sympathizers that "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood; you have no life in you. Who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" [John 6:53 and 54].

## **The objective and unprejudiced Records of the Gospels**

This saying of Jesus was extremely offensive and almost repugnant to the Jews and even to many of His "followers", as the Mosaic Laws forbade eating any blood of any creature and those that did were cut off from the people of Israel, and needlessly to say, the Law opposed any form of cannibalism or eating of human flesh. It is stated in the Law of Moses, "And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel... that eats any manner of blood... I will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul" [Leviticus 17:10 to 12]. So according to the Hebrew traditions what Jesus was saying was a total heresy. Notice, that the Law in that passage stated that "it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul", meaning that it pays the price for the forgiveness of the sins of the people. That was a clear reference to Jesus' blood, the Lamb of God, which was going to be offered many centuries later, for the salvation of all humankind, and for our atonement. Obviously, the blood of any animal couldn't cleanse from sins and God knew that all along; otherwise there wouldn't have been any need to send the Savior and "the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world" [John 1:29].

However, when Jesus' said that people should drink His blood and eat His flesh, "many of His disciples went back and walked no more with him" [John 6:66]. Afterward, Jesus asked the twelve disciples whether they "Will also go away?" [John

6:67], but they stayed with Him, proving that they believed that Jesus was right even when it looked like His words and actions contradicted their most venerated traditions and religious beliefs. It is that faith they had in Him that made them into such true witnesses and keepers of the Words. Their accounts, especially those of John and Matthew who were among those twelve disciples, record what Jesus said and did ‘no matter what’ and offer an unfiltered and unbiased record of Who He is. The gospels of John and Matthew offer the perfect environment for the readers to “come and see” for themselves [John 1:46].

By the way, we don’t have to drink any ‘physical’ blood or eat any ‘physical’ flesh, as Jesus clarified to the remaining disciples after His shocking “eat my flesh and drink my blood” message that, “It is the spirit that quickens (that gives life); the flesh (His flesh or the blood of His flesh) profits nothing: the ‘Words that I speak unto you,’ they are Spirit (Jesus’ Spirit), and they are Life (Jesus’ Life)” [John 6:63]. That’s precisely what the gospels give us, Jesus’ words unadulterated, and as they were delivered by the Lord.

### **The existing minor Discrepancies between the Gospels show that the Records have not been tampered with, but that the Originals have been preserved faithfully**

Some critics of the accuracy of the gospels have claimed and pointed to the minor discrepancies found in the records of the four gospels as a ‘proof’ that it is not possible to trust in their reliability. They claim that if there is a ‘mistake’ or discrepancy found, that’s a proof that the testimony is not valid. However, that’s exactly the same that happens in the great majority of the records of history, and it is often taken as a mark of their authenticity, as records are written by different individuals, often separated by distance, time lapses and viewpoints. In the case of the gospels, the minor discrepancies are also a proof that they were written by different witnesses and recorders at different locations and that their testimony is not ‘exactly’ the same, and that therefore there has not been a ‘doctoring’ of the original texts to try to make them jive, or to make them picture perfect, or politically correct.

Another point often brought up by critics is that while the three synoptic gospels [Matthew, Mark and Luke] often refer to the same events and in a similar order, John includes passages that the others don’t, mentioning places and people that the other gospels don’t mention. To understand the reason for this, it is important to keep in mind that John, along with Peter and James, John’s older brother, were present in a number of events that the other disciples weren’t, as Jesus would ask the other disciples and many of His other followers not to come along, such as when Jesus resurrected the young daughter of “... a man named Jairus,... a ruler of the

synagogue” [Luke 8:41]. Jesus went to Jairus house, where the young girl lay dead “And when he came into the house, he suffered (allowed) no one to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden” [Luke 8:51]. Another example is when “Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them up into a high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him” [Matthew 17:1 to 3]. “And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead” [Matthew 17:9]. So, it is obvious that John reported a number of things and events that the other disciples didn’t witness, although they must have heard about them in due time. Peter never wrote a gospel, although he instructed Mark who did write a gospel; and James, John’s older brother, was martyred not long after Jesus’ resurrection, and never wrote a gospel either.

In addition, John didn’t write his gospel for the converted Hebrews and Jews, as for example Matthew did, who also wrote his gospel while in Palestine, but John wrote for all humankind and for the gentiles, and he boldly reported a number of Jesus’ visits to Jerusalem and to Judah that the other gospels didn’t record. John includes many heated and antagonistic encounters and exchanges Jesus had with the chief priests and Jewish rabbis there, as well as many of the miracles Jesus performed while in Jerusalem. Before meeting Jesus, John had been a close follower of John the Baptist, and also recorded John the Baptist’s dialogue with messengers of the priests from Jerusalem who wanted to inquiry about his work and his authority to baptize. John, the disciple, was quite young when he followed Jesus and decided to become His disciple, and he referred to himself sometimes, as the disciple that Jesus loved, as he was almost like ‘the baby disciple’. Moreover, John’s gospel is the only one to record Jesus’ meeting and conversation with Nicodemus, a ruler and master of Israel, who came to speak with Jesus and to ask Him questions, “during the night” [John 3:2] for fear of being seen by other Jews, who would have disapproved of the meeting. John was also “known of the Jewish high priest” in Jerusalem, which gave John a sort of an ‘insider’ status, when it came to knowing information about the society of Jerusalem and its reactions to the ‘New Prophet in Town’, Jesus. After Jesus was apprehended in Jerusalem by emissaries of the Jewish elders and while He was pending ‘judgment’ and condemnation by the elders and by the high priest, and was waiting for His eventual execution, John was instrumental in arranging that Peter could enter the house of the high priest with him, where Jesus was kept captive [John 18:15 and 16]. Also, His gospel has a number of other events that only John reported, including some of Jesus’ most controversial encounters with friends and enemies. Obviously, the views of some critics that the gospel of John is ‘differ-

ent' and therefore should be doubted is a very poor argument, as John no doubt recorded events that either the other gospel writers didn't witness first hand, or were not in a position to report about authoritatively.

### **The gospel Writers did exercise a measure of Self—censure in what they said plainly and what they only suggested, without giving too many Details**

In that sense, while the gospel writers didn't alter, added to, or change Jesus' words or actions, they did choose what to write about from among the innumerable things they have heard or have seen, as they directed their writing to specific audiences, and to highlight and focus on the major points of His teaching. By the same token, some of them omitted certain parts of His teachings or words while others didn't report them at all for different reasons, such as to avoid adding additional and unnecessary opposition to the already highly controversial message of Jesus. In a few instances they only suggested some facts, without giving too many details about it.

An example of the latter is found in the gospel of John chapter four, which records an occasion in which Jesus and His disciples spent two days in a Samaritan village, where the whole population readily accepted Him as the promised Messiah and Savior promised in Old Testament Scripture. It is important to keep in mind that Samaritans were highly disliked by the Hebrew and the Jewish people, and that religious Jews neither would have spent any time in Samaria, nor would have stayed in a Samaritan house, much less would have they eaten their food or eaten with them; as the Samaritans were virtual untouchables to the Jews. So, although John records that after the people of that village believed that Jesus is the Savior, they spent two full days and nights in their village, he doesn't record any of the things that Jesus taught, said or did among the Samaritans, after accepting their offer to stay for a while in their village. Jesus would most certainly have performed healings among people with such a strong faith and belief on Him, and would have taught remarkable lessons about God's love for the Gentiles and for all mankind; however, John didn't offer any insight into it.

### **Jesus spent two Days in a 'Samaritan' Town in which the whole population believed He is the Messiah, but there is little Record of what Jesus said and did during those two Days**

John's lack of offering more details is noteworthy, especially when that is the only town in which the whole population is recorded to have received the Savior as such [John 4:42], and to have believed in Him, even much earlier than what Jesus would



have agreed for His disciples to tell people in Israel that He was the Messiah. As it is recorded in Matthew, Jesus “charged... His disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ” [Matthew 16:20], and that was much later than the time when the whole Samaritan village had received Him and believed that He was the Messiah.

Considering that the Samaritans had a religion that the Hebrews considered a fake imitation of their Hebrew religion and a heresy, the omission of any additional facts about their stay at their town is no surprise. The Samaritan village where Jesus and His disciples stayed for two days was known to the Jews of that day as Sychar, but it was actually the ancient spot known as Shechem, which was the final burying place of the bones of the Patriarch Joseph and a place where Jacob (also known as the Patriarch Israel) had dug a well [John 4:5 and 12], still in use in Jesus’ days. Near the village there was a mountain that was the place where the Samaritans would perform their religious ceremonies, instead of going to the temple in Jerusalem. So, that particular town, Shechem, (also called, Sychar, in a derogatory way) although intimately related to the history of the Hebrews, it was by the time Jesus spent a couple days there a completely ‘heretical’ place for religious Jews, who wouldn’t have dared to go there or wouldn’t have approved of any self-respecting Jew of doing so.

## **Relevance of the Gospels of John and Matthew**

As mentioned, the gospels of Matthew and of John are given special relevance in this book as both of these men, as disciples of Jesus, were direct witnesses for the space of more than three years of the public and private life of Jesus, when He was among humans and in the flesh. John was present and close to the Lord from the beginning of His public life, and had been aware of the Messiah’s imminent arrival even before that, as John had been previously a follower of John the Baptist, as it was also mentioned. John the Baptist’s main message and mission as a prophet had been to announce the coming of the Messiah and to prepare the way for Him [John 1:19 to 23]. After leaving John the Baptist, to follow Jesus and become His disciple, John, the gospel writer, continued to be close to the Lord to the very end, and as mentioned, he was one of the three disciples closest to the Lord. John was even present at the crucifixion, close to the foot of the cross, at which time Jesus commended the future care of His mother, Mary, to John. As John recorded in his own gospel, “When Jesus (while hanging in the cross) therefore saw his mother, and the disciple (John) standing by, whom He loved, He said unto his mother, Woman, behold your son! Then said He to the disciple (to John), Behold your mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home” [John 19:26 and 27]. He was also one of the first witnesses, along with Peter, of His resurrection, although the

first person to meet and talk with Jesus after His resurrection was Mary Magdalene.

In contrast, Matthew joined and followed Jesus somewhat later [Matthew 9:9] and wasn't part of Jesus' inner circle of three disciples, which included Peter, James (the brother of John) and John. Notice that whenever the twelve disciples are named in the gospels their names are given in a certain order, and John is always mentioned with the first four leading disciples, but Matthew appears down the line in the seventh or eighth position [Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:17; Luke 6:14]. (Notice also that Judas Iscariot is always mentioned last, as the twelfth, with the added explanation that he was the traitor).

Matthew, however, was a Levite, and as such had been trained from an early age to be a recorder and transcriber of Scripture and he would have applied those skills passed from generation to generation of Levites, to record the words and deeds of Jesus, accurately and with remarkable insight. In addition, he would have also been very familiar with the writings of the prophets, as that was the Levites' profession, we could say, to transcribe Scripture. Matthew wrote his gospel to help the Hebrew people to understand that Jesus had fulfilled the Law of Moses and the prophecies about the Coming Messiah; while, as mentioned, the gospel of John is more universal and even have a more eternal focus, directed to all humankind and to people of all times, not only to the Jewish people. That's the reason why John often explains facts that any Hebrew or Jew would have known, such as the comment he wrote saying that "the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was approaching" [John 6:4]. The Passover is one of the most important celebrations in the Hebrew calendar and obviously John didn't have to inform any Jew or Hebrew that the Passover is one of their feasts. That would be the equivalent of writing a book for a Christian audience and state that, 'Christmas, a feast celebrated by Christians, was approaching.' More about these two gospels, Matthew's and John's, soon!

## Luke

Luke, the author of the third gospel included in the canon of the New Testament, was not a Jew or Hebrew at all and he dedicated his gospel to a certain Theophilus, apparently a high-ranking or influential Gentile (a non-Jew or non-Hebrew) whom Luke had been teaching about Jesus. Luke wrote his gospel and the accompanying Book of the Acts of the Apostles to provide an historical and chronological account of Jesus' life and of the beginning of the Christian faith throughout the Roman Empire to the said Theophilus. Still, although Luke wasn't one of Jesus' disciples and apostles, like Matthew and John have been, he got to travel and live with Paul in a number of occasions and for long periods of time, including traveling along with Paul in a fateful trip to Jerusalem, in which Paul compromised and reversed

the things he had been teaching about Jesus, just to please the Hebrew Christians. The Hebrew Christians mostly quartered in and around Jerusalem and were Jews who had converted to Christianity, and who had tried to preserve and import into the Christian faith the religious regulations and traditions of their former Jewish religion. More on this later!

As mentioned, in addition to Luke's gospel, you could read Luke's Book of Acts of the Apostle, which offers detailed accounts of those times he spent with Paul while they were traveling, establishing and visiting groups of Christians throughout Asia Minor and eastern and southern Europe, including during Paul's captivity under Rome. Luke was a physician and as such was quite educated and cultured, in contrast to many of the early disciples. As Luke wrote about Peter and John, "Now when they (the educated religious leaders) saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were 'unlearned and ignorant men,' they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" [Acts 4:13].

### **Luke quotes the great Rabbi Gamaliel, who was also mentioned in The Talmud**

However, although Luke was quite educated, being a Greek he wouldn't have been educated in the Hebrew Scriptures so much. Paul in the other hand, who as mentioned instructed Luke in the Christian faith, had a very strong background of the Hebrew culture, being a Jew and having been a zealous Pharisee, and having learned the scriptures at the "feet of Gamaliel". Gamaliel was a renowned Hebrew Rabbi and teacher mentioned in The Talmud, the body of Jewish civil and ceremonial law and traditions and who was also the grandson of the prominent Rabbi Hillel. Gamaliel was later considered to be one of the foremost authorities of all time in the Hebrew religion and Scriptures. Paul's background would have amply compensated for any lack in Luke's own knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, traditions and history. It is noteworthy, that Gamaliel is mentioned in Luke's Acts of the Apostles, as defending the disciples' right to believe and preach what they did, long before Paul switched from a being an enemy of the Christians to being one of its flaming apostles. In that instance, Luke wrote that the disciples, not long after Jesus' resurrection, were taken captive also and taken in front of the same council who had condemned Jesus to death. To say the least, they were in for trouble there, but "Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space... And said unto them (to the Council), Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do as touching these men... And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to



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# Jesus *Indeed.*

There are many shades and versions of Christianity, born of different interpretations by disciples, followers, and evangelists. One could argue endlessly about who is right or wrong, and which way believers should embrace.

A matter of fact is that even the most committed believers have made mistakes in following Jesus, undoubtedly because of the human factor involved. Therefore, one could ask what path should a Christian follow.

In this thoroughly documented book based on over 40 years of extensive and dedicated study of the Gospels, Joseph Torie claims the answer is in Jesus' own words as recorded in the Gospels. In *Jesus Indeed*, Torie:

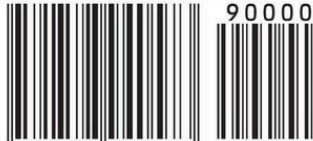
- Defines what a Christian is according to the words of Christ and points out where even some of the early 'followers' missed the path of Jesus' words;
- Places the Lord's words in the Gospels above the claims of the New and Old Testaments as well as above the teaching of the most ardent disciples, apostles, and followers;
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