

Handout for “The Jewish Jesus Lesson Part 1”

Shalom! My name is Rabbi Leynor. Let me begin by pointing out that I am not a Messianic Jew, or more accurately a Christian. I am a Conservative Rabbi and the Jewish Jesus would be much more comfortable in my synagogue than a church.

We still do many of the same things he did when he regularly attended the synagogues during his life. The Gospel of Luke said that it was his custom to attend the synagogue. He never established or attended a church.

Jesus was a Jew. He was raised in a Jewish home by Jewish parents. He lived in the Jewish town of Nazareth. He was born into the Jewish culture, accepted Jewish ways, learned the Jewish tradition, and kept the Jewish Torah laws. He was circumcised and named on the eighth day, he regularly kept the Shabbat, Pesach (Passover), Shavu'ot (Pentecost), Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Hanukkah.

Jesus was taken to the Jerusalem Temple as an infant, returned with his parents for certain festivals, was taught the Torah there, and as an adult, taught there. Only a Jew would be allowed to enter the areas of the Temple that he would have visited and have been able to do what he did. The leaders of his movement after he was executed by the Roman army continued to attend and be involved in Temple activities. Even Paul went to the Temple to make sacrifices after his Damascus Road experience.

The point is that Jesus was a Jew, his parents were Jews, and his followers were Jews. The Jewish Jesus discussed and taught about Jewish subjects that were important to Jews living at that time. He taught his followers to keep the laws of the Torah according to his interpretation of them – just like other rabbis taught their followers.

The one thing the Jewish Jesus didn't do was create a new religion. He didn't create the first Christian church of Galilee or Jerusalem. He did not require his followers to abandon Judaism. He didn't require his followers to believe any doctrines about who he was so they could go to heaven when they died. He didn't ordain any preachers or found a seminary.

The Romans were not known as the “good guys” to Jews living in the world in which the Jewish Jesus lived. The Romans regularly executed Jews and displayed their dead bodies in public. They could be seen hanging from crosses set up along major roads. The Romans were the oppressors who

placed heavy taxes on the Jewish people. Roman soldiers were visible on major festival days and were quick to respond to anything they deemed to be a threat. But, interestingly, it would be the Roman Church, under the power and authority of Roman Emperor Constantine, which would create the "Roman Christ." Christians today know a lot about the "Roman Christ," but very little about the "Jewish Jesus."

Visit my webpage at the BHC website – biblicalheritage.org – you will find more information and links to my videos. Learn how the Jewish Jesus became the Roman Christ.