

### Jesus, and who He was.

We who are Catholics, or Christians in general, have our views, due to the teachings we have learnt from our childhood. As whatever is understood, differs according to the capacity of the mind of the one who understands it, perhaps the early missionaries who taught in our lands, kept it simple and it was devotion oriented, as it was grasped easily. Deeper knowledge was acquired only by serious studies, that were offered in the Seminaries, which trained priests. Now a days, this knowledge is given even to lay people and so it is in the open.

Common knowledge has that a person known as Jesus, was born in Bethlehem in Palestine around 2000 years ago, when the Romans ruled this area and the Consul of the Roman Empire was Pontius Pilate. The Hebrew King, [Herod the Great](#) had just built the Jewish temple where the present day Al Aqsa Mosque stands, and it was considered his greatest achievement. It was in this temple the parents of Jesus came searching for him, when once on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem he was not seen in the company of either of them

The early information of the existence of a person called Jesus, whom many Jews followed was made known to the Roman emperor by Pliny the Roman Historian. Josephus, the Hebrew historian, who might have been a young boy during the time of Jesus, wrote about the Jewish travails of those times, focused mainly on the traditionalist Jews, who were the powerful section of those times. As the followers of Jesus were from the lower classes, he failed to record events that took place, perhaps as Jesus was a persona non grata among the higher classes of the Jews. However, Josephus comments on the existence of the followers of Jesus who did not take part in the rebellion against the Roman Empire, which brought [destruction of this city in 70 AD](#)

and the subsequent dispersal of the Jews. From that time, there has been an antagonism between the traditionalist Jews and those Jews who broke away to follow Jesus. The followers of Jesus merged into the Roman Society as the leaders of the Church decided to welcome non Jews in their midst. This decision too aggravated the schism..

The followers of Christ were the simple people of that area and the early writings which were read during their prayer assemblies, were recorded and written down, and copies sent to the different communities of the believers. They came to known as the "Good Tidings" also known as the Gospels. There were many writings, but the Church decided to adopt only four of them, from Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. Luke also wrote an additional book called the

Acts of the Apostles. The letters which the Apostles addressed to their congregations in different churches were also copied and sent to them and distributed and came to be known as the Epistles. All these writings were codified and preserved as the New Testament in the 2nd century after the death of John the Evangelist. The Christians attributed to them a divine quality of truth. That they did not contain any errors and that they were the Word of God. This comes from the early pronouncements of Jesus who referred to prophecies in the old testament as inspired by God Himself about his coming. Thus after the Protestant Reformation, as it implied a break from the Roman Church, which considered divine guidance and the infallibility of the Pope whom the Protestants rejected, were in need of a document which would re-enforce their legitimacy a, called upon the Bible as the word of God and began quoting it to give themselves the legitimacy which they lacked after they had rejected the Pope.

Unfortunately, that was not the idea of Jesus, who had founded the [Church, on Peter.&nbsp;](#) □□□□□□ T  
he inevitable interpretation of the Bible by different leaders to suit their individual aims brought about the myriad denominations, but as their followers may be sincere and can not be faulted, God may have a leeway for them and be understanding and even help them, and the Catholics will be wrong to condemn them as they are in no position to judge what God has in His mind.

## The Present Times.

After two thousand years of Christianity as interpreted and understood by humans we seem to be in a mess. Each one points out at the failures of the other, and the imperfections they find in them. Many are tempted to give up on their Churches, and jump the boat. Find greener pastures elsewhere and go on groping in the darkness of their souls in anguish and agony. In spite of all the failures within the Church one wonders why the Church seems to stand on its feet. There have been experts from the beginning, who have pronounced doom on this Church, but it always has the habit to rise from the ashes. Before taking the fatal step of jumping the boat one is well advised to ponder on the following, and wait for some more time.

According to Mathew, one of the followers of Jesus, this conversation took place between Jesus and his apostles::

(Mathew: ch 16. ver. 14-19)

"14. And Jesus came into the quarters of [Caesarea Philippi](#) : and he asked his disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the Son of man is?

14 But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

15 Jesus saith to them: But whom do you say that I am?

16 Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

18 And I say to thee: **That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**

19 **And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.**□□"

It has been suspected by many that as an institution created by God for a purpose known only to him, he guides it in spite of the fact that it is run by weak human beings, prone to commit sins and evil, have evil intentions and not willing sometimes to do what their Master had asked them. - in spite of all this, God has a way of pulling out the rug from under their feet, make them suffer persecutions and cruelty so that they are reminded, and made to realize who the real Master is.

## The Protestant Reformation

The western Church which reached such heights of wealth, and power, was destroyed by this one great schism which befell the Western Church some 500 years ago. But today the story is one of re-uniting and forgiving the past. The hidden hand of God was shown when Europe was tearing itself asunder and brother was fighting against his brother, spreading scurrilous stories with the aid of the invention of Guttenberg, somewhere in Spain, the Basques were fighting the French, and one soldier named Ignatius of Loyola from Spain got injured and was

hospitalized in France. When he wanted some books to read, the nuns gave him scriptures and books of saints. Even though Ignatius was not deeply religious, the hidden hand of God worked within him, and he was bowled over by God and the result was the Jesuit order, and one of its stalwart sons who happened to follow this Ignatius was **Francis Xavier**, whose mortal remains still remain uncorrupted in a mausoleum in the Church of Bom Jesu in old Goa, in India. Few will understand how in a span of ten years Francis could have worked so much, that his legacy still shines to this day. I call this the hidden hand of God, and it is not impossible for him to do the same even in our times, when we worry and wonder what is going to happen to us in the next few years.

## Old Goa

Whenever you go to Goa, make it a point to visit this Church of Bom Jesu. The tourist guides will be able to help you and this will help in your understanding of your friends who might be the followers of this Faith. Let the actions of so called "Christians" who in their misguided belief think that God is on their side, when they go to wars and kill the "enemies" all in the name of their "national interest" - which term does not exist in the lexicon of God. Instead, focus on the works of Mother Teresa who understood Christ better than the false leaders. Help in bringing greater understanding between people of different faiths and opinions, as even though we can not understand, God understands them and they are all his children. Let us not fall in the trap of false pride. Tolerance was a virtue propounded by Jesus as well as our own great leader, Mahatma Gandhi.

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Herod the Great ruled from 37 BC.. to 4 BC. Under his kingship post-Biblical Israel really rose to its political and material heights in the early days of the Roman Empire. At his death, his kingdom, was subdivided among three of his sons. One son, Herod Antipas, took the northern territories of the Galilee and those on the east side of the Jordan River. Another son, Phillip, took the areas to the east of the Sea of Galilee. The third son, Archelaus, took the major portion. But Archelaus, in contrast to his two half-brothers, didn't fare as well as his father, as within ten years, he was removed by the Romans and replaced with military Procurators, or Prefects, posted there by the Roman administration to oversee the political activities of the state. Pontius Pilate, is one of these first round of governors posted to the province of Judea

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## Roman Times

The inscription found at Caesarea Maritima, which refers to Pontius Pilate, is one of the most important discoveries made in the archeological work of the last two decades.



Inscription found at Caesarea naming Pontius Pilate as governor of Judea

Precisely because it's the first piece of hard evidence of the existence of Pontius Pilate. But this is the first piece of direct evidence from an archaeological source which actually gives us his name and tells us he was there as Governor. The city of Caesarea Maritima was actually the Governor's residence. This was the capital city, from the perspective of the Roman political administration.