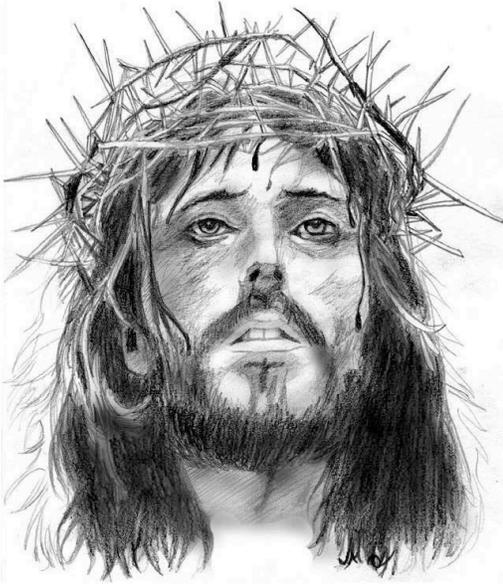


Jesus' Times



www.DrawingsOfJesus.com

artist: Julio Molina-Muscara

Each year brings us new information about the daily life in the time of the Master. Beginning in 1867, Charles Warren began the modern work of archeology in the land of Abraham. Excavations along the south and southwest walls of the Temple hill in Jerusalem were his focus. Since 1948 excavations of Qumran in the Judean desert helped us discover an Israelite cult colony village complete with a meeting hall, a scriptorium and a number of ritual bath sites. Caesarea Maritime, a city built by Herod the Great on the Mediterranean coast, with its aqueducts, open theater, temples and court, and the governor's home of Pontius Pilate, gave us a new insights and comprehensions. The Galilee of Herod Antipas, where Jesus lived as a child, taught and preached as a man, is now offering us many of its secrets. The cities of

Sepphoris, Magdala, Capernaum, and Nazareth as well as Cana, are almost "rising from their ruins" to bring us new visions. Now we can combine history and discovery with documents and knowledge former generations did not possess.

The Hellenistic period is the period of ancient Greek and Mediterranean history between the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC and the emergence of the Roman Empire as signified by the Battle of Actium in 31 BC⁽¹⁾ and the subsequent conquest of Ptolemaic Egypt in 30 BC. At this time, Greek cultural influence and power was at its peak in Europe, Africa and Asia, experiencing prosperity and progress in the arts, exploration, literature, theatre, architecture, music, mathematics, philosophy, and science. It is a period of transition, accompanied by decadence or degeneration - when compared to the brilliance of the Greek Classical era. Judah was part of this Greek world and culture - in English - Judea.

1. The fourth son of Jacob and Leah, and the founder of the Israelite Tribe of Judah.
2. The Tribe of Judah, whose members were sons of Judah - Jews
3. The Kingdom of Judah, the Biblical kingdom ruled by the royal line of David
4. Yehud Medinata, the Babylonian and Persian province organized around Jerusalem
5. Judea, the former territory of the Kingdom of Judah after its demise (c. 586 BC), being successively a Babylonian, a Persian, a Ptolemaic and a Seleucid province, an independent kingdom under the Hasmoneans and by permission of Rome under Herod the Great. Then a Roman dependent kingdom and a Roman province.
6. Jew, derived from Hebrew "Yehudi" יהודי (literally, "Yudean"); the derivation is more clear in German "Jude" and English - "Jew."

The decline of the Hasmoneans coincided with the rise of Rome, was not a coincidence, for the once great Jewish family had become a shell of its holy roots - and Rome was the world super-power. Conflicts between the Pharisees and the Sadducees took place in the context of much broader and longstanding social and religious conflicts among Jews dating back to the Babylonian captivity and exacerbated by the Roman conquest. One conflict was class, between the wealthy and the poor, as the Sadducees included mainly the priestly and aristocratic families. A conflict was cultural, between those who favored

hellenization and those who resisted it. A third was between those who emphasized the importance of the Temple, and those who emphasized the importance of holiness and the Law and prophets. They were involved different interpretations of the Bible (or Tanakh), and how to apply the Torah to Jewish life, with the Sadducees recognizing only the written letter of the Tanakh or Torah and rejecting life after death, while the Pharisees held to Rabbinic interpretations additional to the written texts. Josephus indicates that the Pharisees received the backing and goodwill of the common people, apparently in contrast to the more elite Sadducees. Pharisees claimed prophetic or Mosaic authority for their interpretation¹⁴ of Jewish laws, while the Sadducees represented the authority of the priestly privileges and prerogatives established since the days of Solomon, when Zadok, their ancestor, officiated as High Priest.

Roman Presence In Judah

With victories by the Maccabees in 165 BC, Judah dispatched a delegation to form a treaty with Rome. As a result, the Hasmonean leaders continued to be friendly with Rome. In the year 67 BCE, Queen Salome Alexandra (also known as Queen Shelomtzion) died. With her death, the dynasty of the Hasmoneans began a steady decline. Over the next 20-25 years it would fall apart completely. Queen Salome left two sons: Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. Hyrcanus was weak, but as the older son had been appointed the High Priest during his mother's life and then became King after her death. Aristobulus had all of the charisma and fierce, leadership qualities of his father, Alexander Jannaeus. However, he also had a great deal of the negative qualities, including being very headstrong, opinionated, temper-prone and violent. And his attitudes were more in line with the Sadducees than the Pharisees.

The Romans invaded the East began under General Pompey in 63 BCE. The Jews, however, had already encountered the Romans as early as the 2nd century BC. Pompey's victory restricted Jewish autonomy. The cities along the coast as well as the Transjordanian area received their independence. But the Jews had to pay taxes. Hyrcanus II still remained the High Priest, but the Jewish leaders no longer had royal privileges. Centered at the Temple in Jerusalem, The Jewish Nation was led by its own group of priests.

In the year 50 BCE, an anti-Roman agitation filled the entire Jewish country. As a result the Jewish territory was divided into 5 districts with centers in Jericho, Jerusalem, Sepphoris, Amathus, and Gadara. Beginning around 40 BC, there was a new power structure in Rome under Julius Caesar. Grateful for Jewish and Egyptian help, Caesar accorded them new privileges. Jerusalem was now exempt from taxation. Joppa was restored to Jewish jurisdiction. And Hyrcanus II was recognized as the Jewish Ethnarch. Hyrcanus II had charge of Roman power on behalf of the Jews, while Antipater helped him in the role of Procurator of the Kingdom. Judea was re-established in its own glory.

Judea would only be fully restored by Herod, the son of Antipater. Faithful to Rome and to the interests of Mark Anthony (the "Master of the Orient"), Herod knew how to adapt to circumstances. After Octavius' victory over Mark Anthony at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE, Herod drew nearer to being the new "Master of the Orient". Cities rebuilt by Herod received names in honor of the Roman Emperor: Caesarea among the coast, Sebaste in Samaria, Jerusalem with her palaces, and the Antonia Fortress. In building, he used Roman architecture to create a "Roman" way of life. The Jews were offended, however, when he was finally promoted to the rank of King of Judah; he was an Idumaean, and not of Judah. The fact that Herod had actually "eliminated" all his political rivals did not bring him any closer to the Jewish people. He slaughtered the representatives of the Hasmonean House and transformed the Sanhedrin into a puppet institution. He brought pagans into his court as councilors, and as

members of his administrative department. Herod established a military contingent (the Bashan) in the Golan region to watch over the north-east portion of his empire.

“Since he spent far beyond his means, Herod was obliged to show himself more severe toward his subjects by imposing heavy taxes.” Taxes and services only partially covered the expenses of his government. The excessive taxation weighed heavily upon the people. Samaria was exempt one-fourth of the taxes (A.J. 17:319). Herod also had a considerable private fortune which he obtained in part by executing a number of important persons in his kingdom; in 12 BCE, Augustus gave him the copper mines of Soli, in Cyprus. At his death, Herod left the nation completely impoverished.

The Ethnarch Archelaus became Ruler of Judea. His removal from office and exile to Gaul in 6 AD marked the end of a period in which the Romans showed favor by giving Jews local autonomy. Rome also took over control of Palestinian business. They quickly sent prefect-procurators to administer the affairs of the new sub-province of Syria. These Roman administrators were invested with the powers of taxation, and judiciary and life and death. The Procurator or Prefect had the right to appoint the High Priests and control the duties of their office.

The province of Judah's taxes increased to 600 talents under these governors. In 66 BC, the Roman authorities in Jerusalem collected 40 talents of overdue taxes. Tacitus, the Roman Historian, agreed that there were many complaints concerning the tax burdens. In 17 AD, the Provinces of Syria and of Judah petitioned for a reduction. The refusal to lessen the tax burdens was the motive for the Jewish War, and the Siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD according to Josephus Flavius (B.J. 5:405). It was difficult to assess the gifts and bribes that were paid out to those in authority or administrative services. Corruption extended to the highest positions. Complaints relating to the abuses of the procurators - of Pilate in particular - were numerous. Thus, Galilee became part of the Tetrarchy of Herod Antipas who rebuilt and fortified Sepphoris, declaring it the Capital of Galilee.

Jewish Life: Circumcision and Childhood.

Eight days after the birth, all Jewish males were circumcised according to the Law. The father recited the prayer: *“Blessed by the One who made Abraham holy, as friend, from his mother's womb. He established a law within his flesh. He created this sign to be the mark of his Holy Covenant for all his seed. The Living God, our rock, has ordained in turn to save those he loves of our nation. Blessed be he who made this covenant.”* Abraham received circumcision when he was 99 years old; later tradition placed his circumcision on the Day of Yon Kippur - Atonement. This association brought a sense of expiation to the ritual of circumcision for Jews. The ceremony created an occasion for a family feast at which they drank and danced, clapping hands. It was on the eighth day that circumcision was practiced according to the “Mohel,” in the presence of the father of the family. If the eighth day was on a Sabbath, circumcision was permitted.

All Jewish boys learned to read and write in their own family. The only known book was the Bible. Parchments were very expensive. The child learned the history of his own people by hearing commentaries on the texts proclaimed each Sabbath in the synagogue. He learned how to sing the psalms, in particular the “Hallel”. Two times a day, he recited the “Shema Israel.” He wore “phylacteries” and did not shave the hair of his temples, as prescribed in the Bible. Jesus' childhood and youth developed within the framework of a small rural village - “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” (Jn.1:46).

Marriage

From the age of twelve, to twelve and one half years, a young Jewish girl was able to be promised in marriage. Her father still had rights over her: he was able to sell her as a slave to a Jew for seven years. After the age of twelve and one half, the young girl was able to be married. Only the husband could dismiss her, give her his "writ of renouncement". The contrary was impossible (Mark 10:12 was written in Rome and reflected the juridical situation of that village.) Adultery was punishable by death. When a woman went out she had to veil herself and she was banned from speaking to men. Marriage was arranged by her parents. Since the young girl worked at home, her departure from it demanded an economic compensation. The future husband had to pay the dowry, which consequently became the property of the woman in case of renouncement. The amount which the father of a girl from Jerusalem would receive, at the time of betrothal of a spouse who was not from the same town was especially high: An inhabitant of a small town who married a girl from Jerusalem must give her, as a dowry in marriage, her weight in gold; a girl of a small village who married a man from Jerusalem must bring as dowry his weight in gold. This shows us the importance that was attached to Jerusalem, and well as the fact that the cost of living was much higher in Jerusalem than elsewhere.

It was quite common to be engaged to a relative. Inter-marriage among Tribe members was common. The priests had the custom of choosing their wives from priestly families. The fiancé had to feed, lodge, and clothe his fiancée. If she was convicted of adultery, she was renounced by a Letter of Divorce. If the fiancé died, the fiancée was considered his widow. Certainly, during the time of engagement, no intimate relationship was permitted.

Generally, marriage was celebrated one year after the engagement. The celebration of the family lasted one week. Outside the family house, no religious ceremony took place. The morning of the wedding, the girl, dressed by her parents, was covered with a veil that hid her eyes. Her friends put a sash on her. That evening, the fiancé would remove the veil, and unfasten the sash. A procession left the man's home. It was preceded by musicians and participants carrying torches, among whom were the father of the groom, and friends of the spouse and bride. Most often the procession arrived late because they were haggling over last minute clauses in the contract of marriage, called the "Ketuba".

Before leaving the house of her father, the bride sang songs of lamentation. The maid of honor took care of attending to the beauty of the bride who was accompanied by virgins. The procession led to the house of the father of the groom. It was there that the marriage was celebrated. The father blessed the bride with seven blessings. Then the groom gave a gold or silver ring to his bride saying: "Behold, you are made holy for me according to the Religion of Moses and of Israel." He then proclaimed a blessing over a cup of wine meant for the couple. The banquet, accompanied by song and dance, followed. When the groom came in order to be one with his wife, his friends left and extinguished their torches. Only friends of the groom remained outside, waiting for the signs and sounds of virginity. The bride would keep the signs all of her life.

The marriage was celebrated for three days if she were a virgin, for the tribunal the next day. If the bride was not a virgin, she was denounced immediately. The woman was to look after her husband. The husband had to provide food, clothing and lodging and fulfill the conjugal duties. Besides this, he had to buy back his wife if she were ever captured. He had to get medicine if she fell sick and a tomb for her burial. Even the very poor was obliged to procure two flute players and one who wailed for the funeral.

The woman had to obey her husband, mill the grain, cook, wash, make the meals, nurse the infants, work the wool, and, in some cases, wash the face and feet of her husband. Polygamy was permitted in early Israel. After 10 years of married life without child, the husband was permitted to take another woman. The right of divorce was exclusively on the side of the husband. The things that brought displeasure to the husband gave him the right to dismiss the woman. In case of a divorce, the husband had to return to the woman the dowry prescribed in the contract of marriage. Women worked in the fields, and sold olives by the door. However, a woman was never allowed to go to the fields alone.

To the young girls was given the duty of feeding and dressing their father, of helping him when going out or returning when they are old, of washing their face and feet. Nevertheless, from the point of view of succession, boys came before the girls. Near the age of 12 and one half, a girl did not have the right to refuse a marriage decided by her father. The father was also able to sell his daughter as a slave.

The Home

The archeological findings at Capernaum have allowed us to be more accurate about how village dwellings appeared. An oven situated in the inner courtyard permitted them to cook outside. Stairways went to the roof. Pebble streets made it easy to lose money.

A number of household objects were discovered: oil lamps, keys, pottery, glass dishes, sewing needles, dice, indeed toys. Mirrors, perfume bottles, glass bracelets, and jewels permitted a view into the world of woman.

Economic Life

The Temple and the Land are forever linked to Jewish tradition. The experience of the Covenant centers on the gift of the land. At Sinai, the Hebrews received as heritage the land of Canaan. A heritage of acquisition, conservation, and then loss of the land, were at the heart of biblical history.

The gift of the land centers in the daily bread. It was God who gave his people wheat, raisins, and oil (Os. 12:10). Rain and vegetation extended the first gift of the land. There existed a link between the fertility of the land, and the conquest of the land. Also one could find a plan to unite the national history with the Feasts of an agrarian lifestyle. The land and the gods which they produced reminded Israel of the gratuitous love of God.

The economy of the city and that of the country were different. Live-stock was more expensive in the city than in the country. The price of fruit was 3 to 6 times more expensive in Jerusalem than in the country. There was such a demand for doves for sacrifice, that speculators raised the price 100% above the normal price.

Beggars were/are never lacking in Jerusalem, in particular at the outer gates of the Temple. It is significant that in 66 BCE, the Zealots burned the archives of Jerusalem where certificates of debt were kept. The common professions of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were widely known. As found in rabbinical writings, they were: bakers, butchers, shoemakers, money changers, farmers, perfumers (there were gardens of roses), and artisans who sold souvenirs to pilgrims. Certain professions were held in contempt. The Mishna gave a list: the donkey driver, the camel driver, the sailor, the coachman, the shepherd, the shopkeeper, the doctor and the butcher, the collector of dog dung, specialists in copper or bronze, and tanners, the dice player, the usurers,

the organizers of pigeon contests, the dealer and the publicans. No father wanted to teach these trades to his son. The inclusion of doctors on this list might catch one by surprise. They gave preferential treatment to the rich and neglected the poor. It was difficult for shepherds, tax collectors and publicans to do penance recognized Baba Qama (94b), because they are not able to know all those whom they have wronged. The repugnant professions of garbage collector and tanner carried with them family difficulties. Spouses of those who did these jobs had the right to demand a divorce from the Tribunal for a payment. The woman had an equal right to demand divorce when her husband contracted leprosy.

Dating Jesus - When to Place Him in History

No individual in history is more controversial than Jesus Christ. This is true in spite of the fact his life, death and resurrection are among the best documented events in history prior to modern photography. Much is debated about Jesus, not the least of which are the dates of his birth and death. To determine the exact date of the birth of Christ we have to consider several things.

1. Caesar (Octavius) Augustus was emperor from 44 BCE. to 14 CE. Jesus is born in this reign.
2. Herod the Great died between March 29 and April 11, 4 BCE We know this because Josephus tells us there was an eclipse just before he died (March 12, 13), and there was a Passover just after his death (April 11). The point is that Jesus was born at least two years before this, because the wise men came to Herod to ask about the birth.
3. Josephus mentions a census in 6-7 CE under Quirinius. But that is not this one--that was the one referred to in Acts 5:37. Luke is a historian and knows full well that is not this decree. That seems to contradict Luke.
4. Matthew 2:16 records that Herod ordered the children under two years old to be slaughtered. Some have concluded that this meant Jesus was two when the Magi came to see him. But that would mean Jesus was born about 7/6 BCE.
5. Luke 3:23 tells us that Jesus was "about thirty" when he began his ministry. As we shall see, Luke tells us that was in the 15th year of the new emperor Tiberius, or, 29 CE. From 6 BCE. to 29 CE. is 35 years. But Luke said "about" thirty years, which allows some room. If Jesus died in 33 CE. He was about 38-39.
6. The birth took place in midwinter. This is the old tradition, sealed with the selection of December 25. That may not be far off. Shepherds then had their animals out in the fields all year round, so the presence of shepherds does not mean it was spring or summer. What shepherds do, though, is bring the sheep in closer in winter rather than out in the wild. Here the shepherds were in the fields near Bethlehem (within a mile). So the evidence adds up to a date of December, or January, 8-6 BCE. for the birth of the Messiah.

The commonly accepted reading of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) indicates that the Crucifixion of Jesus occurred on Nisan 15. This is based on the assumption that the Last Supper was a Passover meal on the evening that began Nisan 15. In the Gospel of John, however, the Crucifixion seems to be on Nisan 14, the Day of Preparation, at the time of the offering of the Passover lambs. This is consistent with the Talmud, which records the Crucifixion of Yeshua was on the eve of Passover. All four Gospels agree that the event occurred on the day before the Jewish Sabbath, i.e., before nightfall on a Friday. None of the

sources specifies the year, though they agree that Pontius Pilate was prefect of Judaea. He governed Judea in the period 26-36 CE (on our calendar).

Passover moves with the full moon and therefore falls on different days each year. The problem seems simple: find a Nisan 14 that ended on a Friday evening during the period Of Pontius Pilate. Unfortunately, the Hebrew calendar of the first century is not adequately documented; it must be reconstructed from fragmentary evidence.

In the Hebrew calendar of that era, months began with the first sighting of the crescent Moon following astronomical New Moon, with the evening of the sighting beginning day 1 of the month. Sightings of the lunar crescent are subject to local weather conditions and the ability of the observer. Because of these problems, a special committee of the Sanhedrin made official decisions about when to begin each month. If there was a stretch of bad weather, they might have ordered the month to begin 30 days following the previous beginning of the month. From the scriptures and the Talmud we learn that the state of animal and plant life was considered, since lambs had to be mature enough for slaughter on the Day of Preparation (Nisan 14) and fruit had to be ripe enough for presentation on Nisan 16. We do not know how accurately the calendar was maintained in the first century. The two most commonly proposed dates for the Crucifixion are April 7, 30, or April 3, 33 CE, I now conclude that the latter date is correct.

- Jesus was born before 4 BCE (when Herod the Great died in March) He was about 2 years old when Joseph took his family to Egypt - born 6/7 BCE.
- Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist according to Luke 3:1-2 began in the "15th year of Tiberius" (28/29 CE) and was approximately 30 years old.
- Jesus' ministry lasted at least four years according to John's account of Passovers
- Jesus was executed by Pontius Pilate, before 36 CE - when Pilate was removed from office.
- Joseph Caiaphas was High Priest from 19-36 CE - Tiberius was emperor from 14 to 37

The use of astronomical evidence to estimate the year of the Crucifixion of Jesus has led to 33 CE by two different groups - Friday April 3, 33 CE using strict computations and computers. A third method, using a completely different astronomical approach based on a lunar Crucifixion darkness and eclipse model (consistent with Apostle Peter's reference to a "moon of blood" in Acts 2:20) arrives at the same date, namely Friday April 3, 33.

Scholars look to the Daniel's Prophecy of Seventy Weeks, (Daniel 9) to find the year of the crucifixion [a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem is in 457-9 BCE setting a date after of-33CE. An eclipse occurs on that Friday afternoon which fulfills the "Moon of Blood" prophecy but is scientifically impossible - the moon cannot eclipse in full moon position. - Joel 2:31



- *7 BCE (late in the year) or 6 B.C. (early in the year) = birth*
- *4 BCE (after Nisan 1 - March) = death of Herod the Great*
- *26 CE (early in the year) = beginning of John's ministry*
- *29 CE (Nisan 14) = first Passover in Christ's ministry - cleanses Temple*
- *30 CE (Nisan 14) = second Passover in Christ's ministry*
- *31 CE (Nisan 14) = third Passover in Christ's ministry - spent in Galilee - John 6 says that Jesus spent one Passover in Galilee*
- *33 CE (Nisan 14/Thursday evening, April 3, 33 A.D.) = fourth Passover*

- *So - 33 (Nisan 14/Friday afternoon, April 3, 33 A.D.) = crucifixion of Christ*