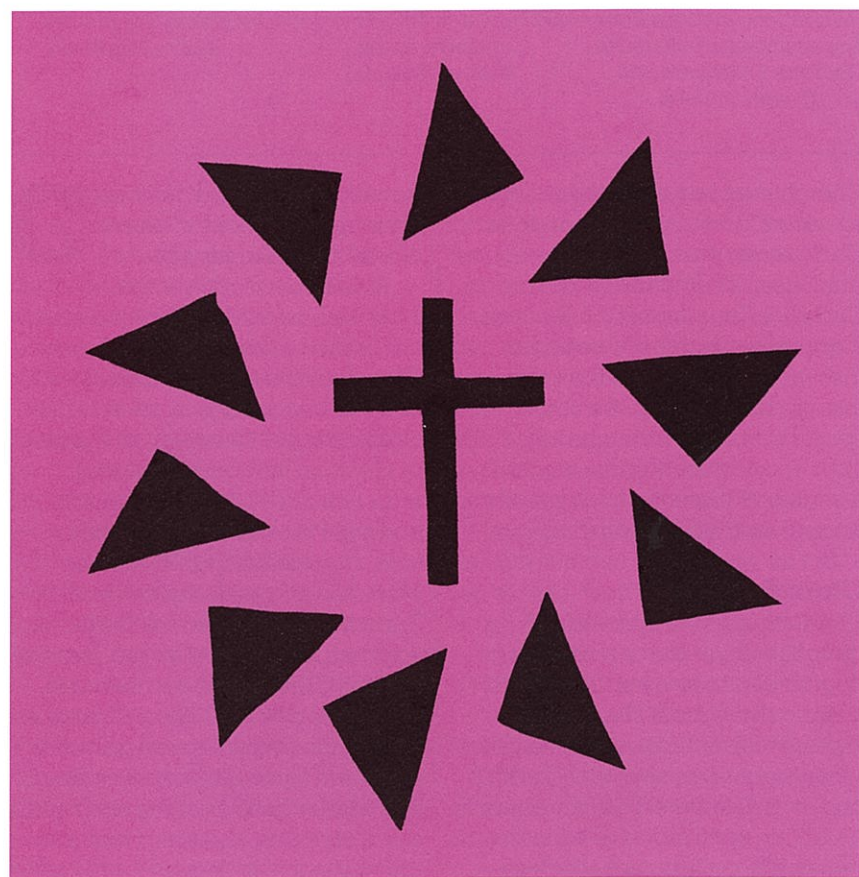


JESUS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE END

JESUS'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD



IN CONTEXT

KEY FIGURE
Jesus of Nazareth

WHEN AND WHERE
4 BCE–30 CE, Judea

BEFORE
c.700 BCE The Jewish prophet Isaiah foretells the coming rule of God.

6th century BCE During the exile of the Israelites in Babylon, the prophet Daniel has a vision of the end of oppressive earthly kingdoms.

c.450 BCE The arrival of the “day of the Lord” is a key theme for Jewish prophets.

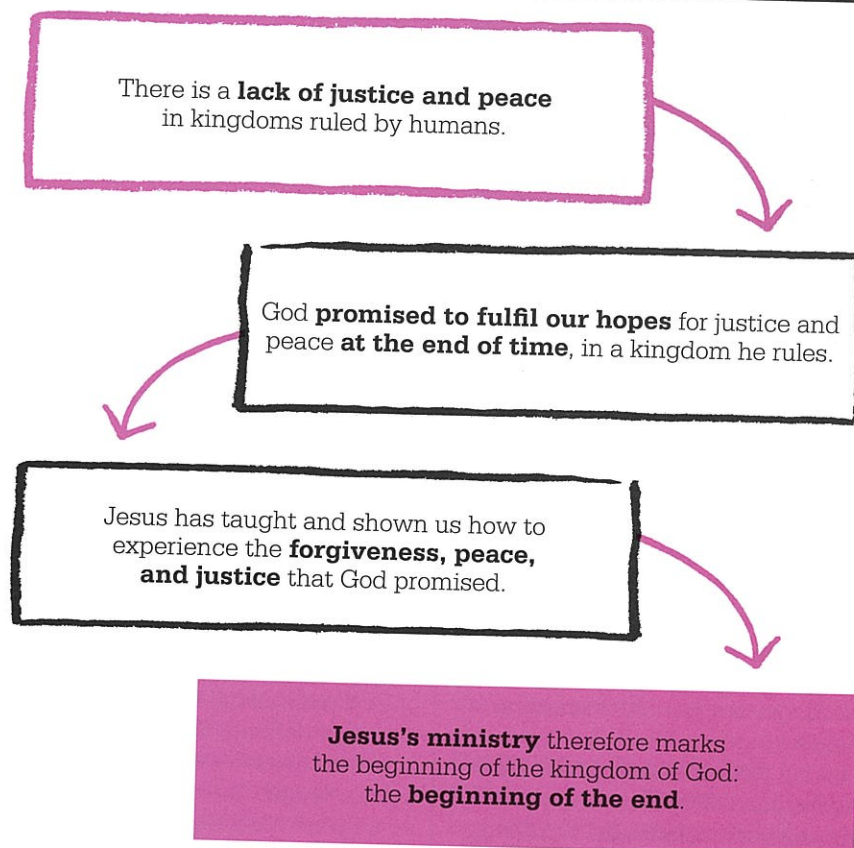
AFTER
1st century CE The first Christians take Jesus's message throughout the Roman Empire.

20th century The kingdom of God becomes a major theme in Christian theology and ethics.

In 63 BCE, the Roman general Pompey conquered Jerusalem, putting an end to a century of Judean self-rule and turning the region into a Roman client state. Rome was the last in a long line of invading forces, which stretched back over 500 years and included Babylon, Persia, Greece, Egypt, and Syria. This repeated loss of sovereignty had dented national pride and caused religious consternation, challenging the Jewish concept of themselves as God's chosen people.

Key Jewish religious texts from previous centuries (such as the prophetic work of Isaiah) had promised that a time would come

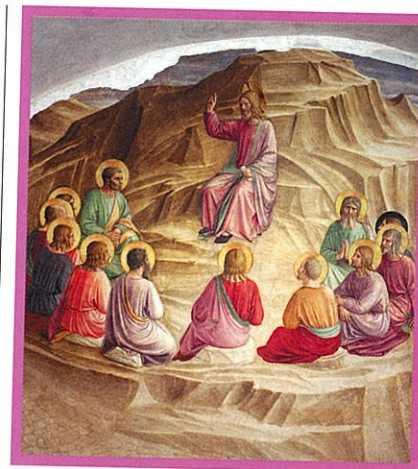
See also: The promise of a new age 178–81 ■ Jesus's divine identity 208 ■ Entering into the faith 224–27 ■ Awaiting the Day of Judgment 312–13



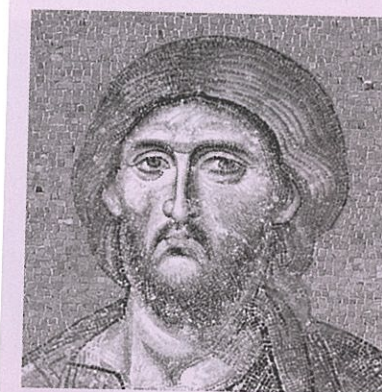
when Israel's God would be the acknowledged ruler of the whole world. He would bring in a system of justice and peace for all through his appointed representative, known as the Messiah (meaning “anointed one”). This would be the climax of world history, so the prophecy said: the end of the old, existing era and the beginning of God's era. However, given the new Roman occupation, this kingdom of God seemed a distant dream.

Announcing a new world

In around the late 20s CE, a Jewish rabbi called Jesus began a brief, but extraordinary, ministry throughout Roman-occupied Israel. »



Preaching to his band of disciples, Jesus gave the core message of his ministry: the awaited arrival of God's kingdom had become a reality.



Jesus of Nazareth

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in the Roman province of Judea, in around 4 BCE, with the extraordinary claim that his mother Mary was a virgin. Little is known about Jesus's early life, but it is most likely that he was schooled in the Jewish scriptures and religion. It is believed that he may have shared his father's occupation as a carpenter, and lived and worked in Nazareth.

When Jesus was around 30 years old, he embarked upon a ministry of teaching and healing across the area where he lived. According to the Gospels, he drew huge crowds with his engaging stories, radical teaching, and astonishing miracles, but paid special attention to 12 followers, or disciples. However, his message about God's kingdom soon attracted the censure of the authorities. He was betrayed by Judas, one of his disciples, and arrested and condemned to death on fabricated charges. Three days after Jesus had been crucified, reports were made that his tomb had been found empty and that he had appeared to his disciples, resurrected from the dead.