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Is this the REAL face of Jesus? Forensic experts use ancient Semite skulls to reveal what Christ may have looked like

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- Retired medical artist recreated the face of a man, living at the same time and place as Jesus, using forensic techniques and passages from the Bible
- Portrait shows the Son of God with a wide face, hazel eyes and a beard
- He is also depicted as having short curly hair and a tanned complexion
- **The 'reconstruction' was based on three Semite skulls found in Israel**

By [SARAH GRIFFITHS FOR MAILONLINE](#)

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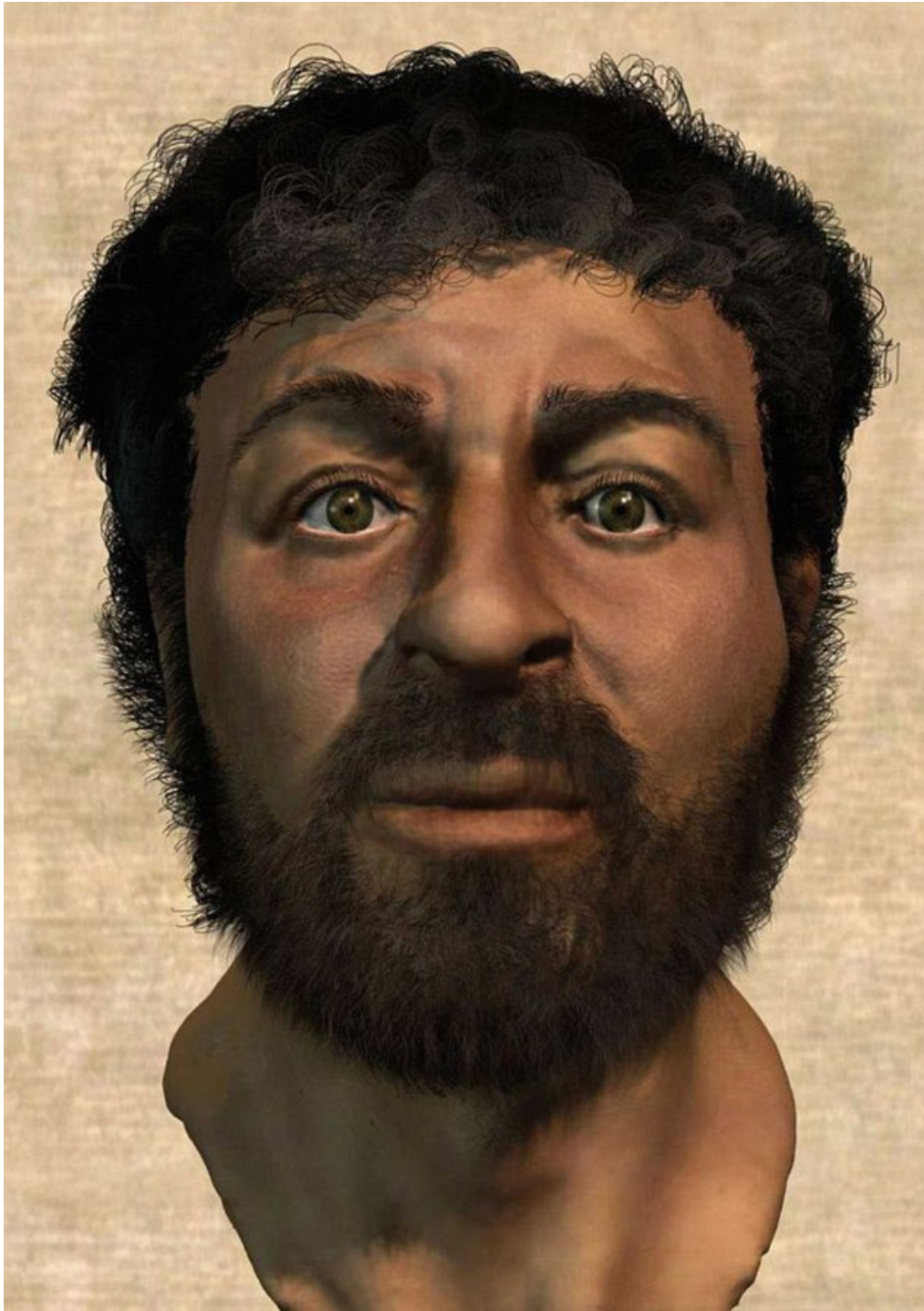


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He may be shown as a Caucasian man with long, flowing light brown hair in many religious artworks, but Jesus would have likely had a darker complexion and short, dark, curly hair, a forensic expert claims.

Retired medical artist Richard Neave has recreated the face of 'Jesus' by studying Semite skulls using modern-day forensic techniques.

His portrait shows the Son of God may have had a wide face, dark eyes, a bushy beard and short curly hair, as well as a tanned complexion.



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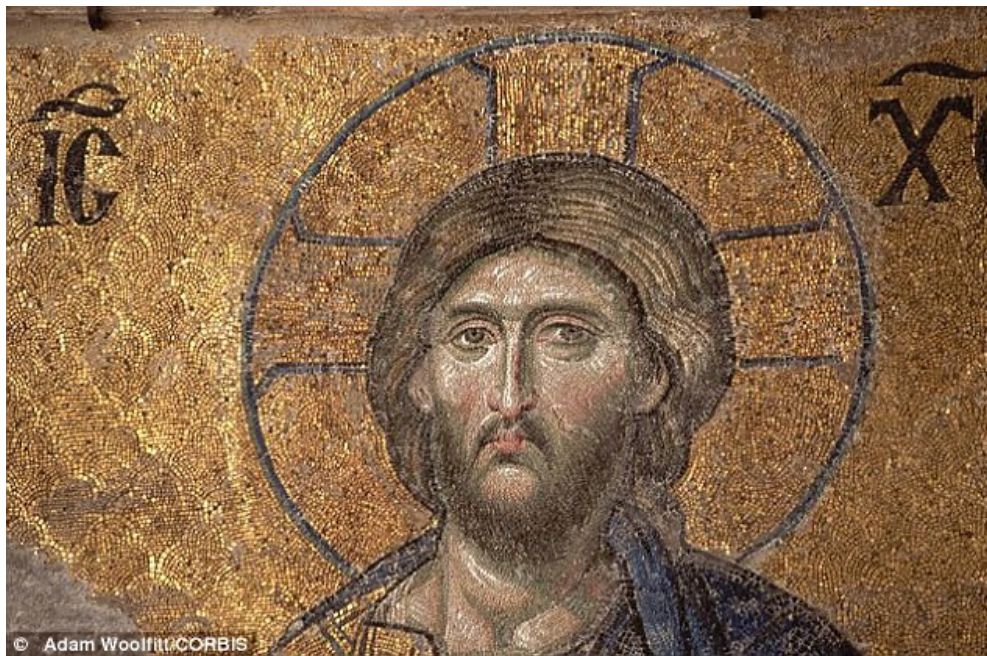
Retired medical artist Richard Neave has recreated the face of Jesus (pictured), using forensic techniques. The portrait shows the Son of God with a wide face, hazel eyes, a bushy beard and short curly hair, as well as a tanned complexion. This is in contrast to the typical blonde and blue-eyed images seen in the West

These features would likely have been typical of Middle Eastern Jews in the Galilee area of northern Israel.

Dr Neave stressed the portrait is that of an adult man living at the same time and place as Jesus, but some experts say his depiction is still likely far more accurate than paintings by the great masters.

Without a skeleton or remains that can be categorically confirmed as Jesus, and a lack of physical descriptions in the New Testament, many previous images have been based either on the society in which the painter or sculptor lived, or hearsay.

With this in mind, Dr Neave, formerly from the University of Manchester, used a technique called forensic anthropology as well as fragments of information from the Bible, to create the portrait that may resemble the religious figure, *Popular Mechanics* **reported**.



Jesus is traditionally shown as a Caucasian man with long, flowing brown or dark blonder hair in religious art, (a mosaic in Istanbul, Turkey is shown) but would have likely had a darker complexion



Dr Neave, formerly from the University of Manchester, used techniques typically used to solve crimes, to create the portrait as well as fragments of information, such as a Biblical account saying Jesus closely resembled his disciples. A side view of 'Jesus' is shown

The technique uses cultural and archaeological data, as well as techniques similar to those used to solve crimes to study different groups of people.

The team hypothesised Jesus would have had facial features typical of Galilean Semites of his era, based on a description of events in the Garden of Gethsemane, written in the New Testament in the Gospel of Matthew.

He wrote that Jesus closely resembled his disciples.

Dr Neave and his team X-rayed three Semite skulls from the time, previously found by Israeli archaeologists.

WHY IS JESUS DEPICTED IN DIFFERENT WAYS?

No physical description of Jesus is found in the Bible

But he's typically depicted as Caucasian in Western works of art, but has also been painted to look as if he was Latino or an Aboriginal.

It's thought this is so people in different parts of the world can more easily relate to the Biblical figure.

The earliest depictions shown him as a typical Roman man, with short hair and no beard, wearing a tunic.



Medieval art in Europe typically showed Jesus with brown hair and pale skin. This image was strengthened during the Italian Renaissance, with paintings such as The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci showing Christ with long, flowing hair (part of the famous painting shown above).

It's thought that it's not until 400AD that Jesus appears with a beard. This is perhaps to show he was a wise teacher, because philosophers at the time were typically depicted with facial hair.

The conventional image of a fully bearded Jesus with long hair did not become established until the 6th century in Eastern Christianity, and much later in the West

Medieval art in Europe typically showed him with brown hair and pale skin.

This image was strengthened during the Italian Renaissance, with famous paintings such as *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci showing Christ.

Modern depictions of Jesus in films tend to uphold the long-haired, bearded stereotype, while some abstract works show him as a spirit or light.



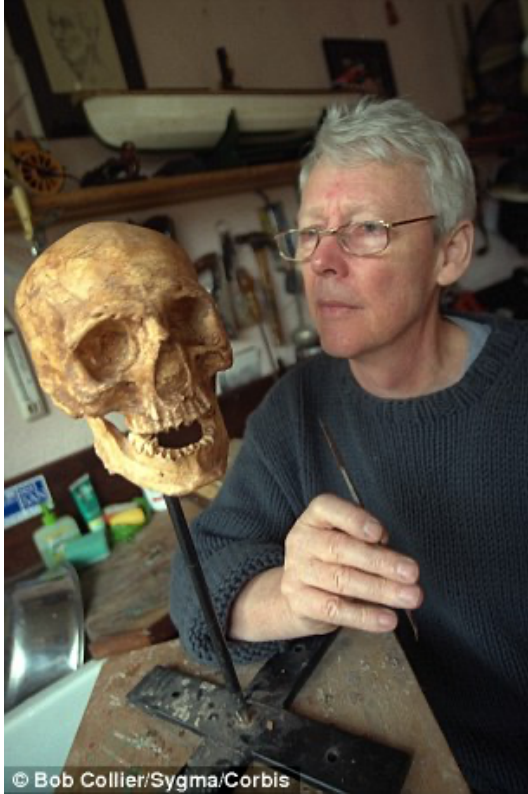
Dr Neave (pictured) and his team X-rayed three Semite skulls from the time, previously found by Israeli archaeologists. They used computer technology to work out how the muscles and skin should look, upon which they based a 3D model (seen on the computer screen) and a clay bust of Christ (right)



The experts built a digital 3D reconstruction of the face (shown) before creating a cast of the skull and adding layers of clay to match the thickness of facial tissues calculated by the program

They used computerised tomography to create 'slices' of the skulls to uncover details that make up their structure.

They then used specialist programs to calculate important measurements and work out how the muscles and skin should look.



Analysis of the skulls (cast shown) did not reveal the colour of Jesus' eyes or how his hair looked. This was instead taken from accounts in the book of Paul

From this data, the experts built a digital 3D reconstruction of a face, before creating a cast of the skull and adding layers of clay to match the thickness of facial tissues calculated by the program.

Features including the eyes, lips and nose were then estimated to follow the shape of the underlying muscles predicted by the shape of the skulls.

Of course, analysis of the skull did not reveal the colour of Jesus' eyes or how his hair looked.

So Dr Neave's team studied first century artwork from various archaeological sites, created before the Bible was written.

From these works, they hypothesised Jesus had dark eyes and likely had a beard, in keeping with Jewish traditions at the time.

The Bible also offered a clue as to how Christ wore his hair - short, with tight curls, unlike many Renaissance depictions, for example.

This comes from a Bible passage by Paul, who wrote: 'If a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him,' suggesting Jesus did not have this hairstyle.

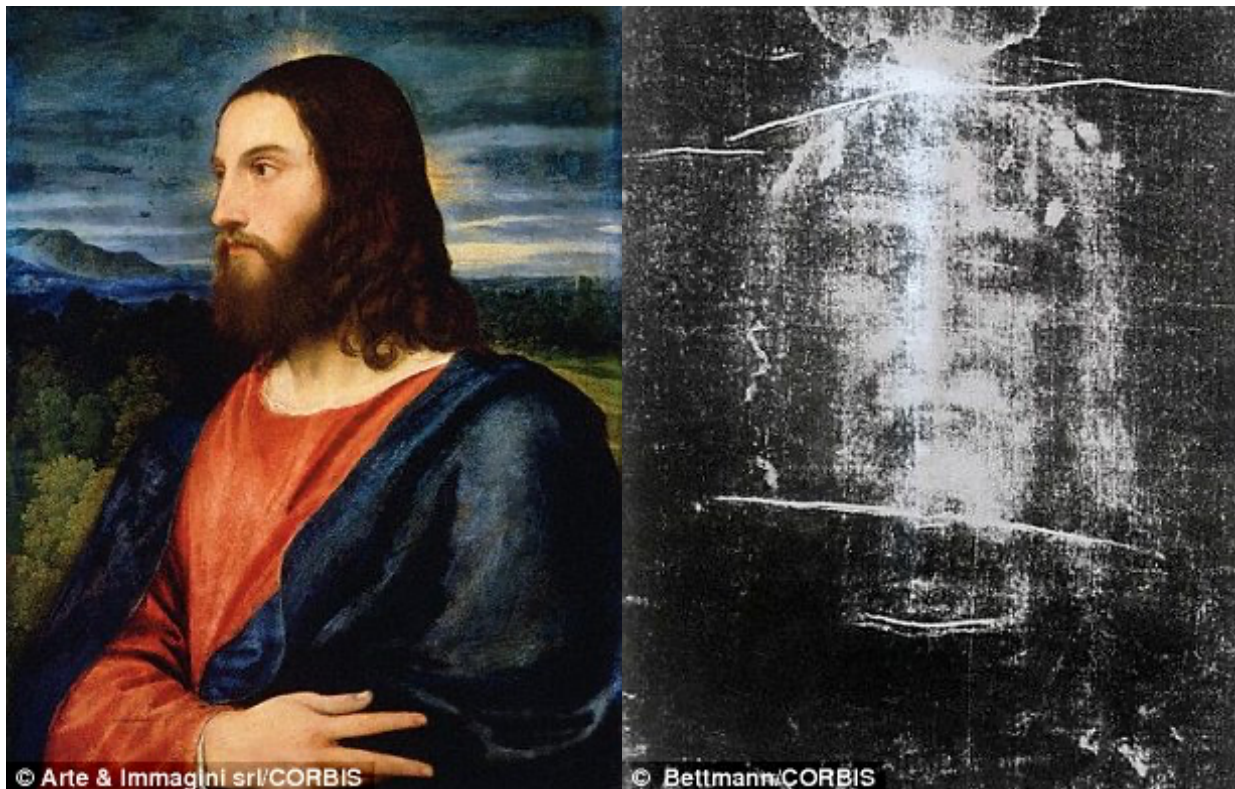
However, it contradicts the long-haired image seen in the Shroud of Turin, which is believed, by some, to bear the image of Christ when he was wrapped in a cloth after his death on the cross.

The team analysed skeletal remains of Semite men from the time of Jesus to come up with the average build of a Jewish man living in Galilee.

From this, they suggested Jesus was likely around 5ft 1inch tall (1.5 metres) and weighed around 110lbs (50kg).

They also theorised he would be more tanned and muscly than traditionally depicted in Western art, because he would have worked mostly outside as a carpenter until he was 30.

Dr Neave, the author of book of Making Faces: Using Forensic and Archaeological Evidence, has reconstructed many famous faces including Alexander the Great's father, King Phillip II of Macedonia.



The Bible offered a clue as to how Christ wore his hair - short, with tight curls, unlike many Renaissance depictions, for example. A painting by Titian is shown left. But the description contradicts the image seen in the Shroud of Turin (right), which is believed, by some, to bear the image of Christ with longer hair

COULD WE SOON DRINK THE SAME WINE AS JESUS?

Researchers are using ancient grape seeds and genetic testing to recreate the ancient wines drunk by Jesus Christ, King David and their contemporaries.

They have found around 120 unique grape varieties that appear to be indigenous to Israel, 50 of which were domesticated and 20 are suitable for wine production.

Dr Elyashiv Drori, an oenologist at Ariel University who is leading the research, is also using seeds found at the ruins of Jewish temples alongside shards of clay marked in ancient Hebrew with the words 'smooth wine' to find out if these varieties were used to make wine.

His team is using these to identify rare grapes growing in isolated locations around Israel that may match these ancient varieties.



Jesus is depicted as drinking wine in the Bible (a picture of the Last Supper is shown) but scientists are now attempting to resurrect some of the grapes used at this time to make wines he may have consumed. They are using ancient DNA from seeds and comparing them to varieties in Israel before turning them into wine

They hope their work may eventually be possible to use the ancient fruit DNA to engineer vines that can produce these grapes again.

The research team have been given \$750,000 (£497,600) to identify ancient Israeli grape varieties.

Among the other grape seeds the researchers are looking into include those found in donkey droppings found in Timna.

This region is home to copper mines that date to the 10th century BC when King Solomon ruled.

Dr Drori believes the animals may have been fed pomace, the residue left after winemaking.

In total, the researchers are attempting to create wine from 30 different grape varieties found growing on the shores of the Sea of Galilee and in the foothills of Jerusalem.

His team are using DNA testing to match these existing grapes to those ancient remains thought to have been used in wine making in the past.

Among those are Dabouki, which might be one of the oldest of the Israeli varieties and could be a good candidate for one of the wines drunk by Jesus and his disciples.



<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/true-face-jesus-scientists-use-7008460>

This cracks me up. So many pet, half-baked, and silly illusions shattered. We never relent in trying to make God into our image (assimilation), when the imperative is to make us into God's image (accommodation). The introduction of "Christ" into the picture might bring God closer to humankind, and make this possible in greater mutual understanding and empathy, but the principles and process are unchanged.

Muslims refuse to let The Prophet be presented as an image: they know where this leads, though I think other lesser motives can be at play here too. Iconoclasts have always arisen in Christianity, but the impulse to make an image just won't go away.

The Passion of Christ gave us Jim Caviezel's "Jesus" which I think was better than most even when overrun by Mel Gibson's—and maybe Jim's—renegade, kinky, and dark Catholicism sold as "the real objective truth." I think it an impossible role too many people cannot resist. Money to be made too: Magazines splash "Jesus" on their covers every Christmas teasing readers suggesting answers to the perennial unanswerable questions. I'm pretty sure The Good Galileean would have declined Hollywood's best offer, and *Time* making him "Man of the Year."

This "Jesus" looks like Mel Brooks, which I find delightful, though I can no more imagine Mel credibly carrying on at the Temple as "the Messiah" than I can consider him "Moses" coming down from Sinai, hilarious as a bumbling Mel was proclaiming "I give you 20 commandments!" only to drop one tablet that crumbled, revising his claim to "OK, just 10 for now!" (or something like it.) in *History of the World*.

I believe the Gospel and Epistle writers deliberately refused to describe the bodily form of Yeshua/Iesous (*Ἰησοῦς*)/Jesus/Chrestos/Christ because little good, and more harm, comes from it—and detracts from "the message" in the first place. No human form could be equal to it, and every body collects the carnage from the experience required to gain wisdom; gain a lot of it, and what you see in the mirror some mornings might not be pretty. So much nonsense gets subsumed in this puzzle: What did He look like then? What would He look like now? We flounder equally in answering the last question. Ultimately we are now supposed to be able to recognize "Christ" in the companions met on the road to Emmaus, in the hungry souls knocking on our doors, in the battered people we meet lying in different ditches along every "Road to Jericho" we traffic. That "road" is a freeway now. Throwing a few dollars out the window racing by doesn't cut it.

TJB