

Who Was Jesus? The View of Cosmological Neuroscience

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This paper presents the cosmological neuroscientific view that Jesus was probably an extraordinary human being blessed with a Soul able to not just understand the divine nature of the world but also to communicate in some ways with its ultimate essence, which he identified in public as Moses' God but seemed to feel in his deepest moments that God is Spirit permeating the universe with love and truth. His teaching turned out to be a revolutionary new worldview identifying love, forgiveness, magnanimity, service for others, respect for truth, resistance to evil, trust in God and pursuing primarily spiritual treasures instead of material ones—as the expressions of human life's true meaning. This necessarily led him to confrontations with his society's leaders, who, both unreceptive to his challenging worldview and fearful for losing their power over the people's minds, arrested him and arranged his death by crucifixion. Yet, by accepting this fate as unavoidable and going through his suffering with grace and understanding, he achieved the best's admiration that soon transformed into worshipping him and finally into the creation of Christianity: a new religion moving forward human evolution, however with the cycles of glory and corruption so characteristic to our species. The paper implies Jesus' system of thoughts as a unique sound in the great symphony of civilization on Earth while it also harmonizes with the sounds of the Ten Commandments, the Sermon at Benares, the Tao Te Ching, the Koran, as well as those of the philosophies of Alexander von Humboldt, Alfred Russel Wallace, Rabindranath Tagore, Kahlil Gibran, Albert Schweitzer, and their likes.

Keywords: cosmological neuroscience, Gospels, Koran, Sermon at Benares, Tao Te Ching, Jesus of Nazareth

Introduction

Most people probably agree that Bertrand Russell, Nobel laureate writer, mathematician, and philosopher, was one of the representatives of the highest sphere of human intelligence. In one of his main books, originally published in 1912, he shared this advice with us:

Philosophy is to be studied not for the sake of any definitive answers to its questions, since no definitive answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation; but above all because, through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind also is rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good. (Russell, 2023, p. 99)

It is this justification of philosophical questions without pretending to provide definite answers that inspired

Acknowledgements: The author gratefully remembers the hundreds of visitors who came to see with him Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* at the Film Club of the University of Pécs Medical School he organized in 1977 partly to see this movie unavailable to the general audience in the then-Communist Hungary.

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the present article asking and examining who Jesus was. True, Bertrand Russell was an atheist, a specifically strong critic of Christianity. But he did not fail to observe either that "...The teaching of Christ, as it appears in the Gospels, has had extraordinarily little to do with the ethics of Christians" (Russell, 1957, p. 25). Indeed, this paper is not about the religion of the Hypatia-killing, Inquisition-running, Africa-colonizing, Vietnam-bombing, Jew-hating Christians. It is about the Jesus they did not understand—though others did, like those who rather died in the Colosseum than saving themselves by denying him, who founded hospices and orphanages all over the world for the sickest and poorest, who carried the New Testament in their spacecraft.

Why Thinking About Jesus in 2026?

In the time of this writing, the hero of Michelangelo's *Pieta*, Bach's *St. John Passion*, and Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* was mocked in Paris (Figure 1), dirtied in the United States (Figure 2), and ignored by the Russians (Figure 3).

☰  YouTube



Paris Olympics MOCKS Jesus and the Last Supper with Drag Queens

Figure 1. Screenshot from the news reporting on the 2024 Parisian Olympics Opening Ceremony that included this mage of drag queens as Jesus and the apostles.



Figure 2. Poster for Robert Eggers' 2024 vampire movie "Nosferatu"—released for American theatres on Christmas Day, celebration of Jesus' birth, as advertised with this image.



Figure 3. One of the attacks of the Russian Armed Forces on the people of Ukraine that took place on Christmas, 2023.

There is nothing surprising in these Figures. The Parisians already mocked the hundreds of thousands of French soldiers perished in Napoleon’s Eastern European wars by building a dome for the general; the Americans already dirtied the memory of their Declaration of Independence by attacking one sovereign country after another in the 21st century; the Russians already ignored their Lomonosov’s, Pushkin’s, Mendeleev’s and Tolstoy’s faith by eliminating religious education in Soviet times.

Though the Figures’ images are all products of the 2023rd and 2024th years after Jesus’ birth, the mind behind them had centuries of growth, acquiring sophistication, gaining authority. The famous author of the book titled *The Christ Myth* wrote that the accounts of Jesus life were “...for the propaganda of the Church... without any claim for historical significance” (Drews, 1909, p. 286); Professor Price characterized Jesus as “The Incredible Shrinking Son of Man” (Price, 2003).

But cosmological neuroscience (Ludvig, 2022a; 2022b; 2023), independent of political, academic, and marketing pressures, is on a different track. Here is Gemini AI’s response to the question of how Jesus is mirrored in this philosophy: “... cosmological neuroscience views Jesus not merely as a historical figure, but as a peak expression of the universe’s evolutionary direction toward beauty, morals, and divine intelligence”.

This expression may still be needed in 2026. Then let’s see the credible records on Jesus’ life.

Historical Facts on Jesus

In Jesus’ time, 2000 years ago, the science of history was not—and due to the time’s limited communication system it could not be—as extensive as today. But at least three scientifically acceptable historic documents did survive the centuries and let us know that Jesus existed and worked. This is not a big number, but if neuroscience can accept the consistent results of three experiments in a particularly difficult study as proof of discovery (e.g., Musallam et al., 2004; Madhavan et al., 2008; Mao et al., 2021), the consistent references to Jesus in the following three books (Figure 4) must convince us about his existence in the Roman world of Augustus and Tiberius.

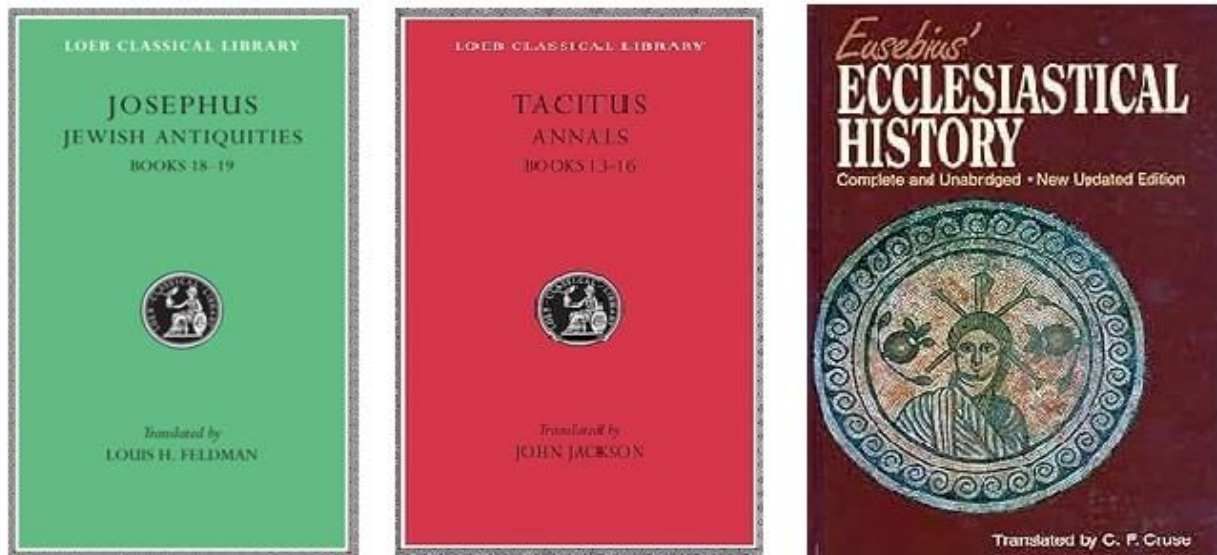


Figure 4. Modern editions of the most credible ancient records on Jesus: the book of Flavius Josephus, written in 93-94 AD; the book of Tacitus, written in the early 2nd century; and Eusebius' account of the first three hundred years of Christianity, published in 313 AD (see Louth, 1990).

The Antiquities of the Jews, Book XVIII, Chapter 3, includes this passage:

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

Tacitus' *Annals* recorded the following in Book 15, Chapter 44:

Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most pernicious superstition, thus checked for the moment.

And Eusebius' Book 1, Chapter 5 of *Ecclesiastical History* informed us that:

It was the forty-second year of the reign of Augustus but the twenty-eight from the subjugation of Egypt and the death of Antony and Cleopatra which terminated the dynasty of the Ptolemies, when, according to prophetic prediction, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea, the same year when the first census was taken and Quirinius was governor of Syria... This census was mentioned by Flavius Josephus, the distinguished historian among the Hebrews...

The Essence and Surface of the Gospels

The first Gospel written about 10 years after the crucifixion in Aramaic by one of Jesus' disciples, Matthew, just as the second one by Mark based on Matthew's and the third by Luke that utilized both, as well as the fourth Gospel authored independently by Jesus' other disciple John (*Ecclesiastical History*; Niswonger, 1988), all agreed about the following essence of the Jesus phenomenon.

A man named Jesus, son of simple Jewish parents in the undistinguished Galilean village of Nazareth, started to teach in synagogues and public places when he was about thirty years old. The striking feature of his teaching

was that while it was built on the messages of the Books of Moses, those messages did transcend in Jesus' sermons, parables, and acts into a revolutionary new worldview identifying love, forgiveness, magnanimity, service for others, respect for truth, resistance to evil, trust in God, and the primary pursuit of spiritual treasures instead of material ones—as the expressions of human life's true meaning. “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?”—he said (Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:36).

His words were confirmed by his actions. He loved the hated taxman Matthew, forgave the sinful life of the woman in Pharisee Simon's house, resisted to the temptations of evil in the desert, helped wherever he was asked to help, and drove out the merchants from Jerusalem's temple of God. Though he taught the rich as much as the poor, he accepted that “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head”—being he that Son of Man (Luke 9:58). And he just felt sorry for Judas for betraying him with a kiss, did not mind that his disciples fell asleep even when he prayed for the last time before his day of suffering, and understood that Pilate both agreed to crucify him and then washed his hands before the crowd saying: “I am innocent of this man's blood” (Matthew 27:24). For Jesus knew he brought a hard challenge to Earth.

“The greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matthew 23:11); “...all sins will be forgiven the children of man...”; (Mark 3:28); “Judge not, and you will not be judged” (Luke 6:37); “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17)—these were also his particularly memorable sentences, and others' characterization of him, for the millennia to come. Indeed, the spirit of each was captured by this sequence of Franco Zeffirelli's film *Jesus of Nazareth* (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Four screenshots from Zeffirelli's Jesus film. Top left: The adulteress (Claudia Cardinale) chased by a crowd to stone her to death. Top right: Jesus (Robert Powell) tells the crowd: “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her” (John 8:1-11). Bottom left: None of the men threw his stone: The woman was saved. Bottom right: Jesus lets the deeply touched woman leave with these words: “Go, and sin no more”.

But just as the essence of Earth, a planet of divine coordinates allowing to house life, is embraced by the surface of myriads of different astronomical, geological, and biological shapes and moves, the essence of Jesus' ministry was also embraced by the surface of hundreds of signs and events seen differently by Matthew, Mark,

Luke, and John. How could it be otherwise? They all came from different backgrounds, and had different minds with different sensitivities and different ways to separate the most significant events from the less significant ones. But aren't the biographies of even John F. Kennedy different? Theodore Sorensen's book does not mention Marilyn Monroe's relationship with Kennedy (Sorensen, 1965). Richard Reeves writes about the Kennedy—Marilyn Monroe relationship, yet mentions Kennedy's assassination only in two sentences (Reeves, 1993). Chris Matthews' book failed to include Jerome Wiesner in the Subject Index, although he was the President's scientific advisor opposing his plan to send astronauts to the Moon (Matthews, 2011).

At the same time, Jesus' betrayal, arrest, torture, and killing belonged more to the essence of the human race he encountered. To the *Homo sapiens* already intelligent, but not yet able to accept and honor the ones guided by divine Missions with never-before-seen Identity, superior Conscience and incorruptible Will. Like Jesus—or the philosopher Giordano Bruno they burned, the physician Ignaz Semmelweis they beat to death, the politician Mohandas Gandhi they assassinated or the engineer Edward Snowden they forced to flee from the very country his ancestors founded.

The View of Cosmological Neuroscience on Jesus

To cosmological neuroscience, Jesus was a human being just like you, distant reader, though blessed with the exceptional brain able to not just understand the coherent whole of world's "profoundest reason and most radiant beauty" (Einstein, 1935), the "divine mystery of existence" (Tagore, 1931) and the "unseen universe of Spirit" (Wallace, 1889), but also to communicate with their ultimate origin, which Spinoza called in Chapter 1 of his anonymously published masterpiece, *Theologico—Political Treatise*, as "God's wisdom, that is, the Wisdom surpassing human wisdom". Indeed, Jesus did not use to identify himself more than the "Son of Man"—knowing perfectly that a son of man is not less than a child of God, though only if he or she aspires to be one by supporting, standing by, complementing the divine: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God..." (Matthew 5:9).

And, as he said to the particularly intelligent woman from Samaria at nowhere else than Jacob's well where she drew water, he viewed the very essence of God as Spirit—just as Wallace would suggest it 1850 years later. Specifically, this is what Jesus said to her: "God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

Further, cosmological neuroscience interprets the entire ministry of Jesus as a blueprint for a just society for all of humankind. He called this society as Kingdom of God—as this name was the most understandable for the people of his space-time. Crucially, this Kingdom of God was not for any chosen people, but for all men and women on Earth. This is why Jesus' last words to the most devoted to him were: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Not to deal or occupy—just to let his truth, the direction of living up to the divine potential of human existence, be heard. For he already knew, without seeing more in his life than modern-day Israel, Egypt, and Lebanon, what 1800 years later the scientist and philosopher Alexander von Humboldt—whose "primary purpose was to show that *one spirit animates the whole of Nature*" (see Bennett, 2020, p. 312)—articulated this way to his different audience:

If we would indicate an idea which, throughout the whole course of history has even more and more widely extended its territory... it is that of establishing our common humanity...and to treat all mankind... as one fraternity, one great community... This is the ultimate and highest aim of society identical with the direction implanted by nature in the mind of man toward the infinite extension of his existence. (Humboldt, 1997, p. 358 [originally published in German in 1845])

Jesus did leave for us a vision of the Kingdom of God—though with the implicit challenge of working out the details by ourselves. A key help for responding to this challenge was conveyed in his refusal to engage evil in the symbolic scene of him and Satan in the desert—whether or not the Evangelists could recreate this event accurately. The cosmological neuroscientist’s translation is: Don’t engage with evil—as it just depletes your energy, and forces you to cause all kinds of collateral damage with your fight, confusing the difference between evil and divine: The very result evil wants from you. Instead, let new education and new uses of new technologies defend your world. And trust in the cosmic Law of Divine—Evil Asymmetry, let it win, however it takes time. Just as it won against the anti-Christ Roman emperors, the practice of Inquisition, the commerce of slavery, the terror of fascism, the Gulags of communism. Jesus knew that Judas acted in the sick way he did because “evil entered in his heart” (John 13:2). Then the decent and free of our times should also know that the evildoers of the world are just sick people as well, with deformed conscience, as described (Ludvig, 2025), to be treated as such by never trusting their kind with social leadership. This author even hopes that such leadership positions will be democratically given, sooner than later, to those who are not just both intellectually and morally up to that task, but also understand the ultimate need of a Government of Earth for global peace and social justice (Ludvig, 2024).

Cosmological neuroscience is not naïve to imagine the living Jesus less than a very attractive man of charisma with superhuman sensitivity and intelligence equipped with the highest creativity. That he was an attractive man with charisma was proved by the many women worshipping him from the one “poring her expensive ointment on his head” (Matthew 26:7) through the “many other women who came with him to Jerusalem” (Mark 15:41) to Mary Magdalene—imagined unforgettably in the rock opera “Jesus Christ Superstar”—and even Pilate’s wife who “suffered much because of him [Jesus] in dream” on the night before his crucifixion (Matthew 27:19). In fact, males admired him equally, including the twelve apostles each of whom dropped everything when Jesus asked him to be his disciple and followed him everywhere, or Joseph of Arimathea who was in Caiaphas’ council that condemned Jesus yet asked Pilate to let him take the crucified body to bury the Christ with honor. Charisma? His Sermon on the Mount was listened to by hundreds, spellbound.

And what could prove more Jesus’ superhuman sensitivity than his blessing of the most exploited, the weakest and the poorest, the ones mocked by everyone, the lost, the hopeless, the innocent. Unable to ignore this magic even two thousand years later, I let this episode come to my mind (Ludvig, 2017, pp. 35-36):

... Born into the country once Moses promised to his people, Jesus was known to remember everything he had ever seen or heard, spoke only when asked but then as the wisest, yet in a tone of kindness and modesty that made everybody listen, dealt with his daily toil in his family’s carpenter shop as if he were blessed, while lying or even deviating from truth in the slightest way was unknown to his tongue.

One day, while taking with his father the table they finished for the rabbi who had ordered it, they saw a little girl, hardly older than five, carrying a baby in her arms, clearly struggling. Jesus asked his father to have some rest and walked to the child. “I could help you with the baby—we’ll just give this table to the people in that house and come back to you.” But the little girl said, “He is not heavy, he is my brother.”

The next morning was the first time ever Jesus’ parents heard him saying he did not feel well and was too weak to work. But he was back in the carpenter shop by afternoon, and for a month he was his old self. Then he kissed his mother, embraced his father, and left to do what you learned from my longest reports...

As for the intelligence and creativity of Jesus, superhuman both, one should just think over the beautiful truths of his parables and sayings, the impacts of his exemplifying behavior, his perfect understanding of the fate of social pioneers like himself. He ran a pure life to give hope to billions for thousands of years; to change the hateful Pharisee Saul into his champion St. Paul with an illuminating vision through this man’s God-sensing

cognitive circuitry (see Ludvig, 2026); to inspire the legend of Grail with letting Joseph of Arimathea saving his blood in a Last Supper cup under the cross of Golgotha; to help Handel harmonize with his soul in the music of *Messiah*.

Addressing the Gospels' accounts on the miracles of Jesus, the field of cosmological neuroscience respectfully disagrees with our faithful friends who explain those events with his supernatural commands. For the field views the allness of cosmos as one Nature uniting the infinite diversity of matter-energy, including its such manifestations as Spirit and Life, in a coherent, divine coexistence. That said, considering the proven effects of the mind on the immune system (Davidson et al., 2003; Morgan, Irwin, Chung, & Wang, 2014; Shields, Spahr, & Slavich, 2020), Jesus might have cured sick people with his superhuman mental power able to amplify the efficacy of his subjects' immune system via their psyche so sensitive to his words and presence.

Regarding Jesus' resurrection, cosmological neuroscience just asks: Wasn't Jesus resurrected in Francis of Assisi's vision in 1224 to reward his exemplary life dedicated to charity, respect of nature and love of animals? Wasn't Jesus resurrected in space in 1969 when Buzz Aldrin took Holy Communion, commemorating Jesus' Last Supper, before stepping out from "Eagle" to the surface of the Moon? Wasn't Jesus resurrected in the Philippines in 2015 for the six million people who prayed with Pope Francis at his outdoor Papal Mass in Manila?

It cannot be overlooked that Jesus' martyrdom, predicting and accepting his suffering and death on the cross, added an extra dimension to his teaching. With going through his tragic Friday with the poise of a hero sanctified by the highest grace, Jesus taught that the people of Truth should undertake the consequences of their work and message even if it leads to hardships and sometimes horrible end. Like the life of the German Sophie Scholl who was executed by guillotine for her anti-Nazi activities; the life of the Hungarian Imre Nagy who was hanged for representing a government of humane communism; like the life of the American Martin Luther King Jr. who was assassinated for leading his Black people's civil rights movement, or the life of the Russian Alexei Navalny who was poisoned for standing up against his country's dictatorship. Their camaraderie with Jesus—crossing the time,—will be remembered as long as humanity exists. Just as the camaraderie of Jesus with Kahlil Gibran, the Lebanese-American polymath whose book on the Son of Man was covered with his own drawing on Jesus:

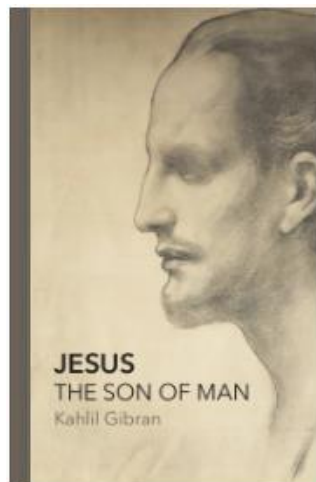


Figure 6. Front cover of Gibran's Jesus book. The face his illuminated mind created may well be the true one on Jesus.

In summary, Jesus was probably a superior human being born with a God-sensing cognitive circuitry so advanced that he not only understood the divine essence of the universe but could even communicate with it—

even if he visualized that essence without the sophistication of science he did not need. He was not alone with this extraordinary capability in history, though. Besides Zarathustra and Moses—Lao-Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama the Buddha, and Muhammad were also gifted with similar brain powers; however differently those powers shaped their fate. Nevertheless, they all taught the superiority of spiritual values over material ones, the importance of never giving up hope and decency, and the divinity of right behaviors (Table 1).

Table 1

Some Comparable Teachings of Jesus, Muhammad, Lao-Tzu and the Buddha

Sayings of Jesus	Relevant teachings of Islam, Taoism, and Buddhism
<p>“Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God,”</p> <p>-Matthew 19:24</p>	<p>“Woe betide every backbiting slanderer who amasses riches and sedulously hoards them, thinking his wealth will render him immortality.”</p> <p>-The Koran, Surah 104, The Slanderer</p> <p>“The wise man never try to hold on things. The more you do for others, the more you have. The more you give to others, the greater your abundance.”</p> <p>-Tao Te Ching, Verse 81</p> <p>“... the self-indulgent man is a slave to his passions, and pleasure-seeking is degrading and vulgar.”</p> <p>-Sermon at Benares</p>
<p>“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothes but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”</p> <p>-Matthew 7:15</p>	<p>“So who is more wicked than he who invents a falsehood about God and denies Truth when declared to him.”</p> <p>-The Koran, Surah 39, The Throngs</p> <p>“The wise student hears the Tao and practices it diligently. The average student hears the Tao and thinks about it now and then. The foolish student hears the Tao and laughs out loud.”</p> <p>-Tao Te Ching, Verse 41</p> <p>“Verily, it is this noble eightfold path; that is to say: Right views; right aspirations; right speech; right behavior; right livelihood; right effort; right thoughts; and right contemplation.”</p> <p>-Sermon at Benares</p>
<p>“... whoever humbles himself will be exalted...”</p> <p>-Matthew 23:12</p> <p>“... give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”</p> <p>-Matthew 5:42</p>	<p>“Successful are the believers, who are humble in their prayers, who avoid profane talk, and give alms in earnest.”</p> <p>-The Koran, Surah 23, The Believers</p> <p>“I have three treasures which I hold and keep. The first is mercy; The second is economy; The third is daring not to be ahead of others. From mercy comes courage; from economy comes generosity; From humility comes leadership.”</p> <p>-Tao Te Ching, Verse 67</p> <p>“Anger, drunkenness, obstinacy, bigotry, deception, envy, self-praise, disparaging others, superciliousness and evil intentions constitute uncleanness...”</p> <p>-Sermon at Benares</p>

Conclusions

According to cosmological neuroscience, Jesus was probably an extraordinary human being blessed with a Soul able to not just understand the divine nature of the world but also to communicate in some ways with its ultimate essence, which he identified in public as Moses’ God but seemed to feel in his deepest moments that God is spirit permeating the universe with love and truth.

When, around 30 years of age, he decided to teach his people about what his Soul revealed to him, that teaching turned out to be a revolutionary new worldview identifying love, forgiveness, magnanimity, service for others, respect for truth, resistance to evil, trust in God and the primary pursuit of spiritual treasures instead of material ones—as the expressions of human life’s true meaning, which necessarily led him to confrontations with his society’s leaders, who, both unreceptive to his challenging worldview and fearful for losing their power over the people’s minds, arrested him and arranged his death by crucifixion. Yet, by accepting this fate as unavoidable and going through his suffering with grace and understanding, he achieved—what no teaching can achieve alone—the best’s admiration, that soon transformed into worshipping him and finally into the creation of Christianity: a new religion moving forward human evolution, however with the cycles of glory and corruption so characteristic to our species.

All in all, the paper tried to expand on the polymath Albert Schweitzer’s thought on Jesus:

We of to-day do not, like those who were able to hear the preaching of Jesus, expect to see Kingdom of God realizing itself in supernatural events. Our conviction is that it can only come into existence by the power of the spirit of Jesus working in our hearts and in the world. (Schweitzer, 1933, p. 68)

Cosmological neuroscience couldn’t say it better.

AI use

This paper was conceived, structured, and its every sentence written up by this author except the included quotations by others indicated with quotation marks. Consistent with the digitally enhanced complex thinking of cosmological neuroscience, the paper’s database was compiled with the use of personal collections, physical library materials, and data accessed via both regular and AI-assisted Google searches.

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