

NAXOS
AudioBooks

David Angus
THE STORY OF JESUS

Read by **Teresa Gallagher**

JUNIOR
CLASSICS



NA234812D

1	The Story of Jesus – Introduction	4:09
2	Isaiah had prophesied that there would be a man born...	3:17
3	Elizabeth had a cousin named Mary who lived in the village...	5:07
4	Mary was three months pregnant when she returned...	3:45
5	On the hillsides above the town were shepherds...	4:55
6	Joseph settled back into his old life as a carpenter...	4:28
7	The years passed and Jesus grew up to manhood...	4:16
8	When Jesus came out of the desert...	4:11
9	Once, as Jesus stood by the shore of Lake Gennesaret...	4:56
10	The crowd began to mutter and grow restless...	4:30
11	When he had finished praying...	4:51
12	After Jesus had come down from the hill...	4:19
13	Jesus and his companions set off in their boat down the coast...	3:20
14	Then, Jesus left Simon's house and walked beside the sea.	3:38
15	There were so many people wanting to hear him...	2:41
16	When they had gone, he began to speak...	3:09
17	Jesus went off throughout the country, preaching...	4:06

18	When Jesus wanted to explain his ideas...	4:16
19	The Apostles returned from their missions...	5:06
20	When they reached the other side...	4:00
21	As they climbed down, Jesus told them...	2:42
22	A short time afterwards, Jesus went with his closest...	3:07
23	Jesus thought for a moment, and then he went on...	5:05
24	When they reached the outskirts of Jerusalem...	4:33
25	Seeking to trap him, some of them asked him...	4:16
26	While they stayed on the Mount of Olives...	4:43
27	Jesus went back to where he had left his companions...	5:25
28	Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate...	2:48
29	Barrabas was released, then Jesus was flogged...	3:56
30	Many of the mob who had followed him up the hill...	4:00
31	The next day the priests went again to Pilate...	4:33
32	When they drew near to Emmaus...	4:33
33	In the Gospels, his followers end their story...	2:09

Total time: 2:14:09

David Angus

THE STORY OF JESUS

The story of the life of Jesus of Nazareth is told in the first four books of the New Testament of the Bible: the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The word 'gospel' comes from old English, and means the 'good story'.

There are many different theories about the origins of these Gospels, and some people suggest that there may exist other accounts of the life of Jesus that have been lost. Others maintain that the life of Jesus is a story, full of marvels, made up to give credibility to the ideas, which his followers preached to the world.

Most scholars today agree that the four Gospels of the New Testament were written quite a long time after Jesus died. The oldest known surviving account is a fragment of John's Gospel, which is thought to have been written around 130 AD, (about a hundred years after his death). Many people believe that this was the same John, son of Zebedee: the apostle who followed Jesus with such devotion during his life. Perhaps John wrote the Gospel himself and this

fragment was a copy, made later. Perhaps his followers wrote it after he died, so that his memories of Jesus would not be forgotten. Matthew is also thought to have been one of the apostles. Mark is believed to have written his account of Jesus's life from the words of his master: the apostle Peter. Luke, who also wrote 'The Acts of the Apostles', was the secretary of the great early Christian preacher Paul.

The Gospels portray Jesus as both a healer and a teacher. They describe him performing miracles and they tell his words. The men who wrote these books believed that Jesus was the Messiah: the great leader promised in the ancient Jewish prophesies of the Old Testament. They said that he was the Son of God, that he died on the cross to redeem the sins of mankind, and that he rose from the dead after his crucifixion.

Christianity, the religion that spread around the world after his death, was based on the faith that Jesus was divine. Jesus was, and is still known as the 'Christ', which is a Greek word, meaning the 'anointed one'. It

was the custom of the ancient Jews, to anoint the son of a king with precious oil, called Chrism.

All the Gospels were originally written in Greek, which was the language of educated people in the Middle East, and the Eastern Mediterranean, where Christianity first took hold. The Roman Empire at that time dominated both Europe and the Middle East but despite terrible persecution by the Romans, the Christian faith flourished. Nearly three hundred years after the death of Jesus, the emperor Constantine, himself became a Christian, and Christianity became the established religion of the Roman Empire. Constantine moved his centre of power from Rome to the East and made his new capital the city of Constantinople: modern day Istanbul.

Eventually, the Christian church itself split into two main groups – the Eastern, (known as the ‘Orthodox’ church), and the Western, or Roman Catholic Church. Since then, of course, there have been more splits and arguments within the churches, so that today there are many different types of Christianity, all of them stating that they are the true followers of Jesus Christ.

Over the centuries the Christian

churches became very rich and powerful. In the East, in the 7th century AD, the rise of a new faith, Islam, challenged and in most cases overcame the influence of Christianity. But kings in Europe were Christian kings and their right to be rulers was closely connected with the church.

Since Christian priests saw themselves as the direct followers of those who had heard the very words of Jesus Christ, Christian leaders believed that they were guardians of his message. So in Europe, the ideas central to Christianity became the basis of both education and the law.

The churches also became major patrons of the arts. In fact for centuries, almost all the art produced in Europe was of a Christian nature. Paintings, sculptures and songs celebrated the life of Jesus to whole generations, many of whom could not read or write. Christian worship inspired the building of fantastic churches, which still tower over our cities today.

The Medieval masterpiece of Notre Dame in Paris, the magnificent Renaissance St Peter’s in Rome, London’s 17th century St Paul’s Cathedral, and the (as yet unfinished) Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, all stand as monuments to the enduring power and

majesty of the Christian church.

In music, most of the great classical composers wrote religious pieces. In fact what we think of as classical music may well have its beginnings in the chanting of prayers by early Christian monks. Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Verdi all wrote music for Christian services, which have been recognised as some of the greatest works in musical history.

In painting and sculpture nearly all the great masters created works on a Christian theme: from Van Eyk, Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo to later artists such as Picasso and Salvador Dali. Today, the life of Jesus remains a strong theme for artists in every medium. *Jesus Christ Superstar* has been one of the most successful musicals ever, and time and again Hollywood has returned to the story with films such as *Ben Hur*, *The Greatest Story Ever Told* and most recently *The Passion of the Christ*.

Many people believe the Gospels to be the actual truth. Others argue that the life of Jesus is a story, written to answer the questions and needs of a developing church in the first century AD. Whatever the truth may be, the story of his life and teaching has

come to define much of what we now take for granted in the Western world. Even our calendar takes its start from the date of his birth: the letters AD are short for the Latin, Anno Domini, 'In the year of the Lord'.

Today Jesus's message of love and forgiveness, and the drama of his life, continues to inspire people to find new ways in which to tell the 'good story'.

Notes by David Angus

The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

- HANDEL** ODE FOR ST CECILIA'S DAY 8.554752
Dorothee Miels, soprano / Mark Wilde, tenor / Alsfelder Vokalensemble /
Concerto Polacco / Wolfgang Helbich , conductor
- HANDEL** MESSIAH 8.550667-8.550668
The Scholars Baroque Ensemble
- HANDEL** CONCERTI GROSSO OP 6 NO 4 8.550157
Capella Istropolitana / Jozef Kopelman
- HANDEL** CONCERTI GROSSO OP 6 NO 12 8.550158
Capella Istropolitana / Jozef Kopelman
- HANDEL** CONCERTI GROSSO OP 3 NOS 2 & 5 8.553457
Northern Sinfonia / Bradley Creswick, director

Music programmed by Sarah Butcher

Cover picture: *Palm Sunday – Jesus rides into Jerusalem*. William Hole,
'Life of Jesus' circa 1890. Courtesy Mary Evans Picture Library

David Angus

THE STORY OF JESUS

Read by **Teresa Gallagher**

The four Gospels are the source material for this sympathetic account of the life of Jesus, from the traditional story of his birth, to his death and resurrection. All the principal episodes are covered – the baptism, the Sermon on the Mount, the Last Supper, the trial, and the crucifixion – as well as portraits of the main characters in the story: Mary, Joseph, the Disciples, Mary Magdalene, Pontius Pilate and many others. With many famous parables also included, it is an invaluable introduction for younger listeners.

A companion disc to **Moses and other stories from the Old Testament**.



Teresa Gallagher has performed in many leading roles in both plays and musicals across the country, London's West End and off Broadway. In addition, she is a well-known voice to listeners of BBC Radio Drama. Her work on film includes *The Misadventures of Margaret* and Mike Leigh's *Topsy Turvy*. For Naxos AudioBooks she has recorded the *Biography of Jane Austen* and selections from *The Decameron* by Boccaccio. She has also read *Classic Women's Short Stories*, *Heidi*, *The Treasure Seekers* and *The Wouldbegoods* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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