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Was Jesus Christ Black?

Stephen Cotterell, whom this year has become Archbishop of York, is quoted by the media as suggesting that Jesus was black.

What is certainly true is that Jesus Christ was Jewish. Our Lord Jesus Christ was a real person and there is clear evidence for his existence. What is also true is that he was Jewish. Our Lord Jesus Christ was not of any modern nationality. Jesus Christ was not British or any nationality like that. Our Lord Jesus Christ in AD30 was Jewish.



Jesus Christ healing a paralytic (Mark chapter 2) painting in an ancient Syrian Church. This might be one of the earliest pictures

To Our Lord Jesus Christ skin colour is completely and totally irrelevant.

What is today Turkey and Syria was then part of Greece and connected later to Byzantium. The Jewish people, living in what is now Israel, had Greek people to the North, Persians to the East, and Egyptians to the South, and Carthaginian people in North Africa and Roman people around the Mediterranean, none of whom were “black”, but nor were they “white”. They were simply dark-skinned as Middle-Eastern people often are today.

In truth, we don’t actually know in detail what Jesus looked like. The Bible doesn’t give any detailed description, and the earliest images of Jesus that we have today come from around the 3rd century. They vary fairly widely in how they depict Jesus, so they can’t necessarily be taken to be accurate. However, iconography was trying to be close to the truth, even though we acknowledge it’s short-comings. Icons are not, after all, a photograph.

To Our Lord Jesus Christ skin colour is completely and totally irrelevant. It remains irrelevant to Christians everywhere.

Early icons of Jesus show him as dark-skinned and non-White, and equally non-Black: not one or the other, however Our Lord Jesus Christ is there to be for, and with, everyone.

In the Christian view we are all created equal and we care for others and welcome others including strangers and foreigners. Christians do, however, expect people to become better (to constantly change for the better).

Right at the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis chapter 1 at verse 27 we are told:

*So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God He created them;
male and female He created them.*

That fundamental concept, is that we are all (every one of us) created in God's image. That concept is then used throughout the Bible. If we are all created in God's image then we are all equal and all equally valuable regardless of skin colour.



An ancient Image of Jesus Christ, from the Coptic Museum in Cairo, Egypt



In the catacomb of Commodilla this ancient mural painting is of Jesus Christ.

To be a Christian means that we believe in Jesus Christ and so that is what the word "CHRISTian" means. So any Christian needs to see what Jesus Christ says.

Jesus Christ tells all Christians in the Gospels to NOT judge others.

In the Gospel according to St Luke chapter 6 it says at verse 37:

³⁷ "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

So Christians are commanded by Jesus Christ himself not to judge others. We are told clearly by our Lord Jesus Christ not to judge others. The colour of your skin is completely irrelevant and we should not judge people according to the colour of their skin.

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