

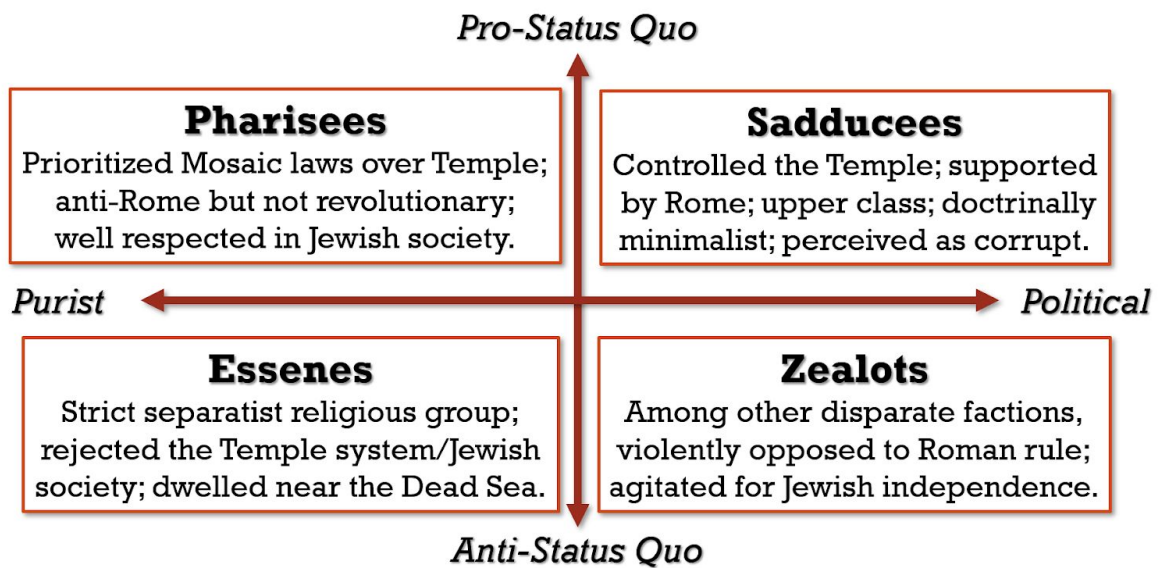
The Historical Jesus: Failed Political Revolutionary?

The Theory: Jesus wasn't trying to start a new religion. He was trying to start a Jewish revolt against the Romans, similar to the 1st-century Zealot movement. He ended up getting crucified for treason against Rome, but it was never his intention to die.

Where did this theory come from?

- **H.S. Reimarus** (1694-1768): First modern Jesus quester
- **S.G.F. Brandon** (1907-1971): Jesus was influenced by the first-century Zealot movement.
- **Reza Aslan** (1972-): Wrote the 2013 book *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*.

1ST-CENTURY JEWISH ATTITUDES TOWARD ROME



WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS THEORY?

Jesus' teachings	Jesus' actions	Jesus' disciples
"Turn the other cheek." (Matt. 5:39-41; Luke 6:29)	Entered Jerusalem on a donkey (Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19)	Included a tax collector (Matthew); Simon the Zealot wasn't actually a (political) Zealot
"Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and render to God what is God's." (Mark 12:17)	Temple cleansing (Mark 11:15-19; Matt. 21:12-13; Luke:45-46)	None were arrested or executed along with Jesus.
"Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matt. 26:52)	The Last Supper (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-23; John 13:1-11; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)	None promoted insurrection against Rome after Jesus' death.

The Historical Jesus: Social Reformer/Cynic Philosopher?

The Theory: Jesus wasn't concerned about religion or eschatology (end times). His view of the kingdom was more "here and now" and emphasized the peaceful promotion of an egalitarian society that balanced the scales between peasants and aristocrats. His teachings were influenced by ancient Greek Cynic philosophy.

Where did this theory come from?

- **The Jesus Seminar**
 - John Dominic Crossan
 - Burton Mack
 - Robert Funk
- Voted on authenticity of Gospel stories using color-coded bead system.
- Prioritized Q and Thomas.
- Theory peaked in the 1980s-1990s, but no one really promotes it anymore.

Who were the Cynics?

- Movement began with Greek philosophers Antisthenes and Diogenes (5th-4th c. BC)
- Live a simple life in harmony with nature
- Don't rely on worldly possessions
- Very rude. Often performed bodily functions in public
- Pejoratively called "dogmen" (Greek *kynikoi*)

What's wrong with this theory?

- **Comprehensible:** Jesus must have made sense within 1st-century Judaism...
 - ...But early 1st-century Galilee was VERY resistant to pagan Greek influence.
- **Crucifiable:** Jesus must have been offensive enough to make the Jewish leaders want to kill him...
 - ...If Jesus was just roaming around promoting kindness, that wouldn't offend anybody!
- **Consequential:** there must have been something about Jesus that made the early Christians devote their lives to him...
 - ...But Platonists didn't worship Plato. Why did Christians worship Christ?