



In 2001 a team of British and Israeli forensic anthropologists reconstructed the face of Jesus using a sample skull of a first century Israeli male. The team used computer programs, clay, simulated skin and archeological evidence about the Jewish people of the time to determine face shape, eye and skin color.

The scientists consulted the Bible to determine the length of Jesus' hair. They surmised that Jesus had short hair. St. Paul would not have written "If a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him" if Jesus had long hair.

The result was a dark skinned man with a broad nose, weighing 55kg and with a height of 1.55 metres. Images based upon the shroud of Turin on the other hand, represent Jesus with long hair, straight nose and with a height of 1.88 metres.

The Gospel of Matthew was used to defend the scientific findings. According to Matthew, when Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane before the Crucifixion, Judas Iscariot had to indicate to the Roman soldiers who Jesus was because they could not tell him apart from his disciples. A light haired, clear eyed man at 1.88m would have been freakishly tall and easy to spot in a crowd.

Supporters said the image was probably a lot closer to the truth than the work of many great masters. Detractors said people were being "conned into believing that our Lord looked very much like a refugee Iranian cab driver from the Bronx."