

House in Nazareth offers hints about Jesus' time
Archaeologists unearth 'humble and modest' site
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By Emily Bazar
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Christians and history buffs can thank archaeologists for a Christmas-week gift: more clues about [life in the time of Jesus](#).

[Archaeologists](#) said Monday that they unearthed remains of the first dwelling in Nazareth that dates to Jesus' era, a simple structure of two rooms and a courtyard, said Yardenna Alexandre, excavations director at the Israel Antiquities Authority.

In Christian belief, [Nazareth is where Jesus grew up and where an angel told Mary she would bear the child of God](#).

At the time, previous discoveries suggest, it probably was a [hamlet of about 50 poor Jewish families](#). It is now the largest Arab city in northern Israel, with about 65,000 residents.

Archaeologists are not claiming it is the house where Jesus lived, Alexandre said, but a young Jesus may have played around the house with cousins and friends, she said. "It's a logical suggestion."

Alexandre's team found remains of a wall and a system that appeared to collect water from the roof.

Based on clay and chalk shards, the dwelling appeared to house a "simple Jewish family," she said. Jews used chalk vessels to ensure the ritual purity of the food and water kept in them.

[The finding isn't a groundbreaking archaeological discovery, but it adds context to Jesus' life](#), said Jodi Magness, professor of archaeology and early Judaism at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

"Like all of us, [Jesus was a product of his world](#)," she said. "That's important for people who want to better understand Jesus' teachings."

"It's good to remember that Jesus grew up as a poor Jew in a poor town," said Stephen Chapman, associate professor of the Old Testament at Duke Divinity School. "His life was not about having great material possessions, but about living for God in this humble and modest way."