Mexican captive and Navajo interpreter, he was born in the state of Sonora, Mexico. About 1850, while yet a child, he was stolen by Apaches from Arizona and held captive for about 5 months. He was treated badly by them, but finally was exchanged for a black pony to a Navajo named B’ee Lizhini “Black Shirt”, at Dusty, New Mexico. Jesus was raised by the Navajo and lived with the band of the headman Tl’aii, “Lefty”.

During the Canby Campaign of 1860–1861, Arviso was sent by his Navajo masters on November 19, 1860, to ask for peace of troops operating near Oak Springs south of Fort Defiance. Approaching the troops on horseback he waved a piece of white sheepskin as a flag of truce, shouting in Spanish to the troops. Captain Lafayette McLaws, commanding, ordered the troops to hold their fire. Arviso approached and stated his message, but Captain McLaws, not being authorized to grant peace, offered him the choice of either returning to the Navaos or remaining with the troops to serve as guide. Jesus accepted the offer as guide and though yet quite youthful he proved very knowledgable with the country. McLaws later proposed paying him as the principal guide stating that he was the best to be had.

In 1863 Arviso served as Navajo interpreter at Fort Wingate. At this time he accompanied three Navajo headmen – Barboncito, Delgadito and Sarracino to that post from the area beyond Zuni to discuss Carleton’s surrender with colonel Chavez, Commander at Ft. Wingate. The 3 headmen declined to remove their people to Fort Sumner voluntarily. Jesus Arviso himself went to Fort Sumner where he served as interpreter. He spoke no English, but translated from Navajo to Spanish.

In March of 1865, Jesus accompanied a party of headmen from Fort Sumner to Santa Fe to interpret their report on efforts to convince Chief Manuelito and his band to surrender. He also was sent back to the Navajo country on more than one occasion with Navajo delegations for the
purpose of convincing the Navajos to surrender and go to Fort Sumner. At Fort Sumner, Jesus married a Navajo woman named Yohazbaa’, of the Namasht ézhii Clan and daughter of Asdzaa Sa’áltsisigii, “Small Old Lady,” and Tsii'wooli, “Shaved Head,” of the Ta’neszani Clan. This was Arviso’s first wife.

During treaty negotiations at Fort Sumner May 28-30, and at the conclusion of the Treaty of June I, 1868, Jesus played an active role as interpreter. The treaty permitted the Navajos to return to a portion of their old country, and his role no doubt greatly increased his prestige among the Navajos.

Returning from Fort Sumner, Jesus settled east of Tohatchi in the area of his first wife’s birth. He later took a second wife and raised a large family. He continued to play a liaison role between the Navajos and their successive agents, and to act as interpreter on occasion.

In 1872, Jesus accompanied Agent James H. Miller, Thomas Varner Kear and another individual on a trip to the San Juan Valley to explore a site for a new agency. Ute Indians attacked their camp at dawn, killed agent Miller, and ran off all but one of their horses, which the survivors despatched with a messenger to Fort Defiance for help.

In 1874, Jesus accompanied a delegation of Navajos to Washington D. C. When Dr. Washington Matthews, the famous early student of Navajo culture came to Navajo country, it was Jesus Arviso who arranged for him to learn about Navajo sandpainting.

In 1885-1886, Jesus served as interpreter at Fort Wingate when more than 150 Navajos enlisted as scouts in the campaign against the Apaches. He was stationed at Fort Wingate for more than ten years.

In May of 1919, he was invited, along with Henry Chee Dodge and other headmen, by Superintendent Peter Paquette to come to Fort Defiance to meet a visiting Congressional Delegation. In the mid-1920’s, he applied through Superintendent Samuel F. Stachler at Crownpoint for a scout’s pension, but, in spite of Stacher’s recommendation that, if necessary, “a special bill should be passed giving him a pension for the services he has rendered,” his application was denied.

In his declining years Jesus spent most of his time tending to his own affairs, and neither worked for the Navajo Agency nor became involved with it otherwise. He died about 1932 at Cubero, New Mexico, where he is buried. Well over 80 years of age, he left many descendants and the name Arviso is today well-known and respected throughout the tribe.