

Synchronizing the Nativity Accounts of Matthew and Luke

PART ONE: The Genealogy of Christ and
Gabriel's Visitations

The Gospel of Matthew begins with the chronicles of the Generation of Jesus Christ, a lineage that runs from Abraham to Jesus.



Those who are new to reading the Bible may find these passages tiresome, but they tell a very dramatic story of how God kept his promise to send his Son into the world.



ABRAHAM to DAVID

1. Abraham
2. Isaac
3. Jacob
4. Judas
5. Phares
6. Esrom
7. Aram
8. Aminadab
9. Naasson
10. Salmon
11. Booz
12. Obed
13. Jesse
14. David

Matthew 1:1-6a

- ¹ The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.
- ² Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;
- ³ And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;
- ⁴ And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;
- ⁵ And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;
- ^{6a} And Jesse begat David the king...

DAVID TO JOSIAS

1. David
2. Solomon
3. Roboam
4. Abia
5. Asa
6. Josaphat
7. Joram
8. Ozias
9. Joatham
10. Achaz
11. Ezekias
12. Manasses
13. Amon
14. Josias

Matthew 1:6b-10

- ^{6b} ... and David the king begat Solomon of her
that had been the wife of Urias;
- ⁷ And Solomon begat Roboam;
and Roboam begat Abia;
and Abia begat Asa;
- ⁸ And Asa begat Josaphat;
and Josaphat begat Joram;
and Joram begat Ozias;
- ⁹ And Ozias begat Joatham;
and Joatham begat Achaz;
and Achaz begat Ezekias;
- ¹⁰ And Ezekias begat Manasses;
and Manasses begat Amon;
and Amon begat Josias;

JECHONIAS to CHRIST

1. Jechonias
2. Salathiel
3. Zorobabel
4. Abiud
5. Eliakim
6. Azor
7. Sadoc
8. Achim
9. Eliud
10. Eleazar
11. Matthan
12. Jacob
13. Joseph
14. Christ

Matthew 1:11-16

- ¹¹ And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:
- ¹² And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;
- ¹³ And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;
- ¹⁴ And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;
- ¹⁵ And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;
- ¹⁶ And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Abraham | 1. David | 1. Jechonias |
| 2. Isaac | 2. Solomon | 2. Salathiel |
| 3. Jacob | 3. Roboam | 3. Zorobabel |
| 4. Judas | 4. Abia | 4. Abiud |
| 5. Phares | 5. Asa | 5. Eliakim |
| 6. Esrom | 6. Josaphat | 6. Azor |
| 7. Aram | 7. Joram | 7. Sadoc |
| 8. Aminadab | 8. Ozias | 8. Achim |
| 9. Naasson | 9. Joatham | 9. Eliud |
| 10. Salmon | 10. Achaz | 10. Eleazar |
| 11. Booz | 11. Ezekias | 11. Matthan |
| 12. Obed | 12. Manasses | 12. Jacob |
| 13. Jesse | 13. Amon | 13. Joseph |
| 14. David | 14. Josias | 14. Christ |

Matthew 1:17

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations;
and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations;
and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations.

Luke lists the ancestral line of **Mary**. Her line also ran through David, but through his son *Nathan*, not Solomon.

Luke 3:31

³¹ Which was *the son* of Melea, which was *the son* of Menan, which was *the son* of Mattatha, which was *the son* of **Nathan**, which was *the son* of David...

God decreed that the royal house of David would continue through **Solomon**. Therefore, it was through **Joseph** that Jesus was entitled to inherit the throne of King David.

1 Chronicle 22:9-10

- ⁹ Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.
- ¹⁰ He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I *will be* his father; and I **will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.**

All of the other genealogies named in the Bible speak of **generations**, in the plural form:

Genesis 5:1:

This is the book of the **generations** of Adam ...

Genesis 6:9:

These are the **generations** of Noah ...

Genesis 10:1:

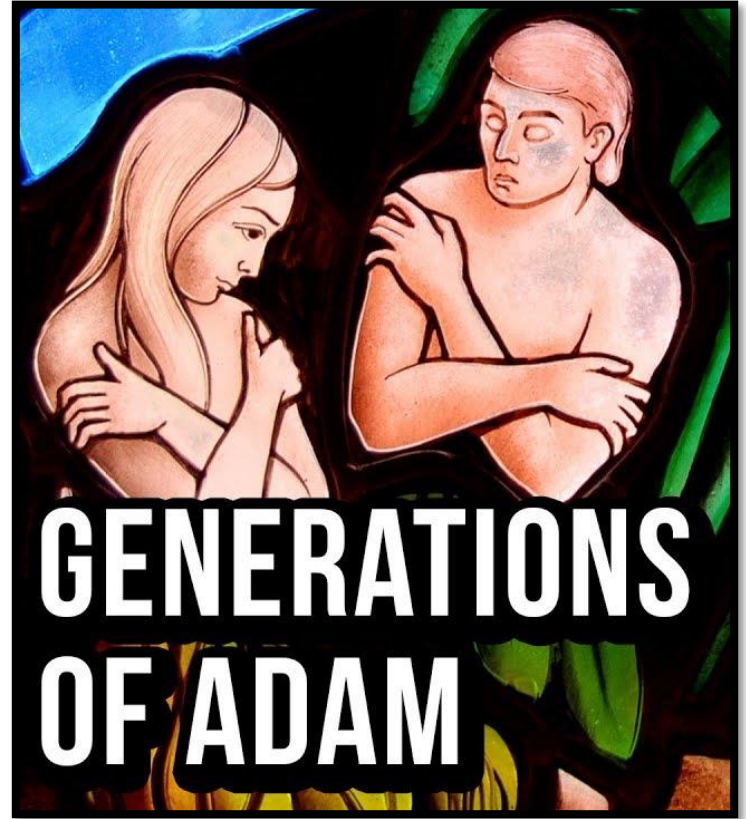
Now these are the **generations** of the sons of Noah ...

Genesis 11:27:

Now these are the **generations** of Terah ...

Genesis 25:19:

And these are the **generations** of Isaac ...



But the generation of Jesus Christ is one single generation.

Matthew 1:1

1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ...



Jesus died without an heir. Who would carry on his name? This was the question asked by Isaiah that puzzled the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:

Isaiah 53:8

- ⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment: **and who shall declare his generation?**
for he was cut off out of the land of the living:
for the transgression of my people was he stricken.



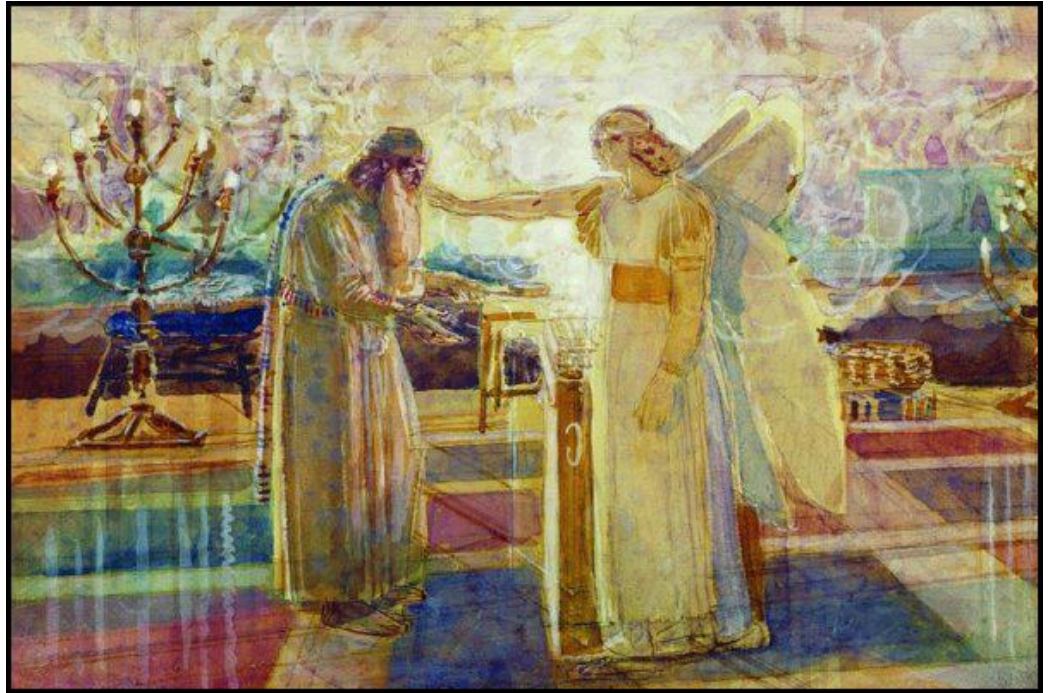
The generation of Jesus Christ is declared by those who are born of his incorruptible seed. In Christ we are ONE generation, brothers and sisters in Christ.

Psalm 22:30

- 30 A seed shall serve him;
it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.
- 31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.



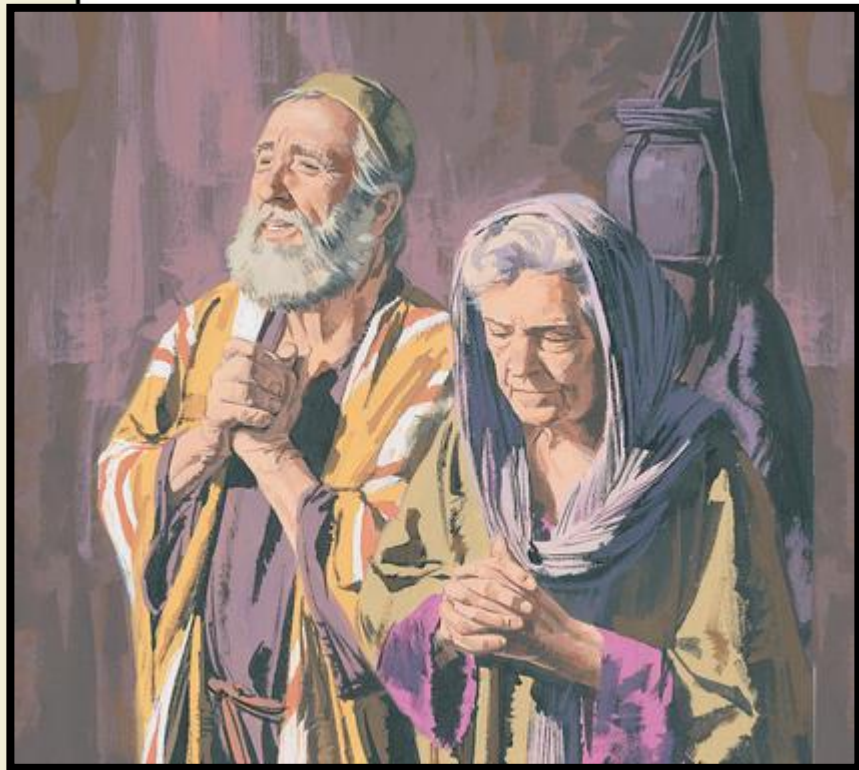
In Matthew, the nativity story begins with Joseph's reaction to Mary's pregnancy. Luke begins earlier in the story when the angel Gabriel appears to a priest named Zacharias at the temple in Jerusalem.



This was the situation:

Luke 1:5-7

- ⁵ There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth.
- ⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.
- ⁷ And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.



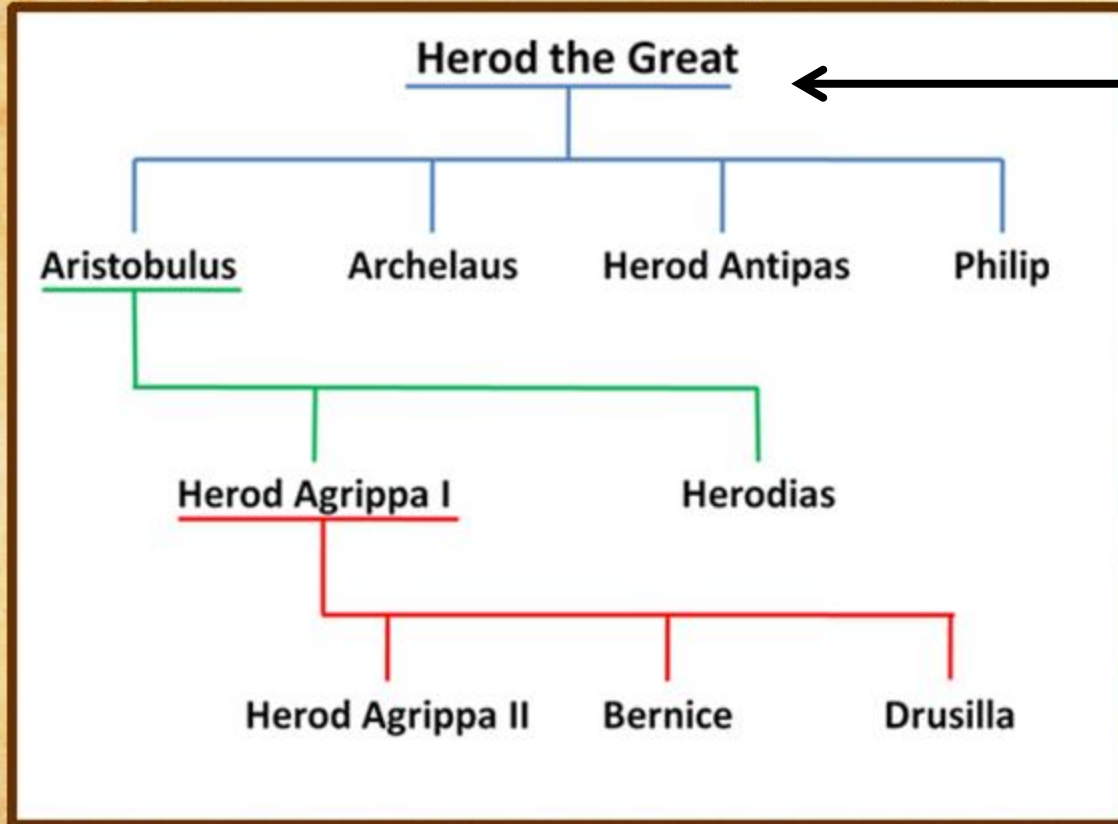
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Herod the Great was appointed by the Roman Senate to rule over Judaea.

The Herodian Dynasty

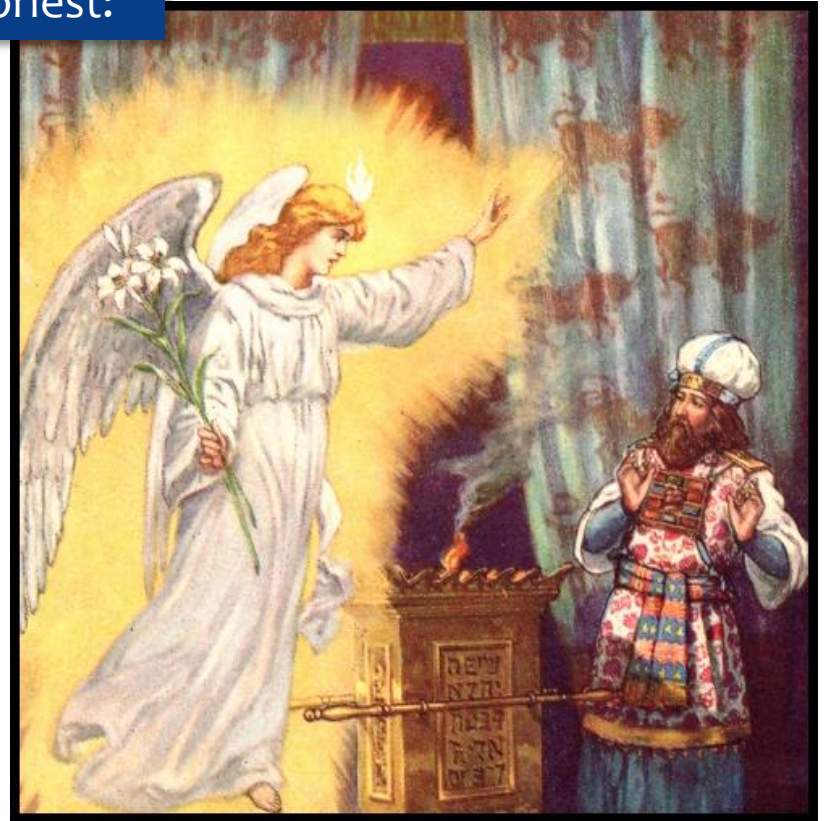


Herod the Great was the first in a family of rulers who governed Judaea in part or whole during the time of the Gospels and the Book of Acts.

The sudden appearance of the angel startled the priest:

Luke 1:8-12

- ⁸ And it came to pass,
that while he executed the priest's office
before God in the order of his course,
⁹ According to the custom of the priest's
office, his lot was to burn incense when he
went into the temple of the Lord.
¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people
were praying without at the time of incense.
¹¹ And there appeared unto him an angel of
the Lord standing on the right side of the
altar of incense.
¹² And when Zacharias saw *him*,
he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.



The angel brought wonderful news:

Luke 1:13

¹³ But the angel said unto him,
Fear not, Zacharias:
for thy prayer is heard;
and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son,
and thou shalt call his name John.



But Zacharias doubted his words:

Luke 1:18-20

- ¹⁸ And Zacharias said unto the angel,
Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old
man, and my wife well stricken in years.
- ¹⁹ And the angel answering said unto him,
I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of
God; and am sent to speak unto thee,
and to shew thee these glad tidings.
- ²⁰ And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not
able to speak, until the day that these things
shall be performed, because thou believest
not my words, which shall be fulfilled in
their season.



Gabriel's words immediately came to pass.

Luke 1:21-22

²¹ And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

²² And when he came out, **he could not speak unto them:**

and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.



Zacharias stayed at the temple until his days of service were complete, and then he rushed home to his wife.

Luke 1:23

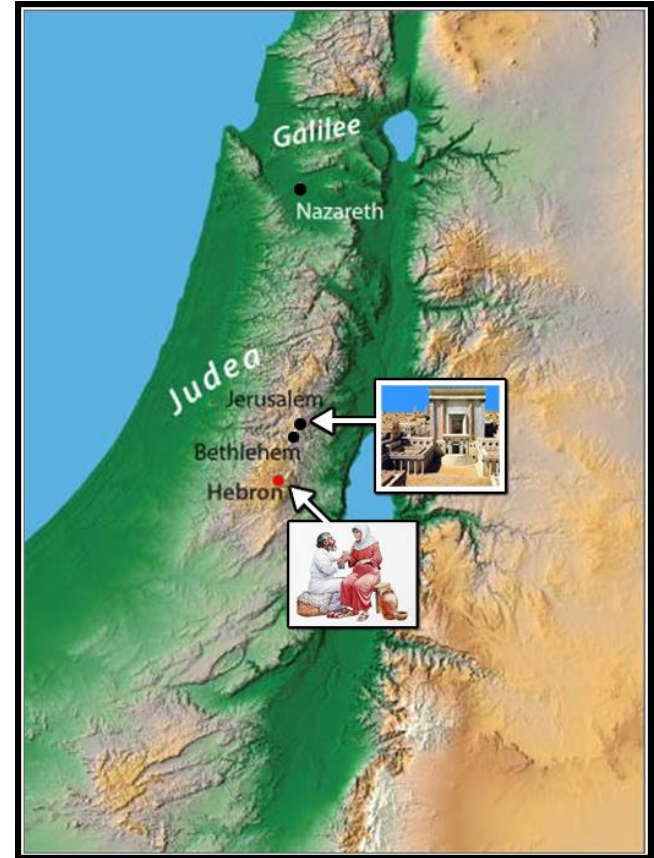
²³ And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.



Later, we learn that Zacharias and Elizabeth lived in “the hill country” in “a city of Juda.” Most likely, their home was in Hebron, one of the places that Joshua appointed for priests when he divided up the Promised Land.

Joshua 21:11

¹¹ And they gave them [the children of Aaron] the city of Arba the father of Anak, which *city is* Hebron, in the *hill country* of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it.

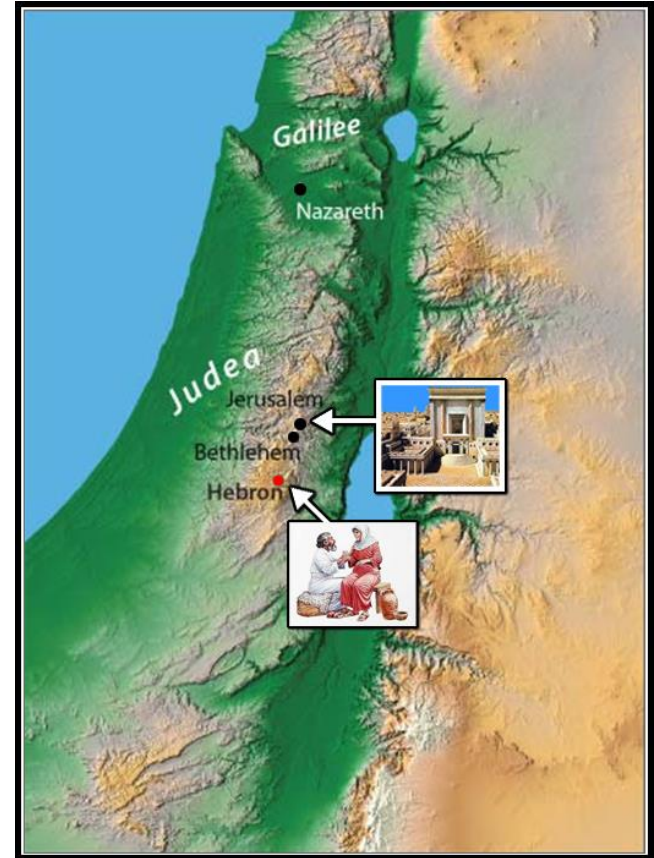


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Joshua 21:11

¹¹ And they gave them [the children of Aaron] the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it.

From Jerusalem to Hebron is about 18 miles.



Soon after Zacharias' return home, his wife Elisabeth conceived.

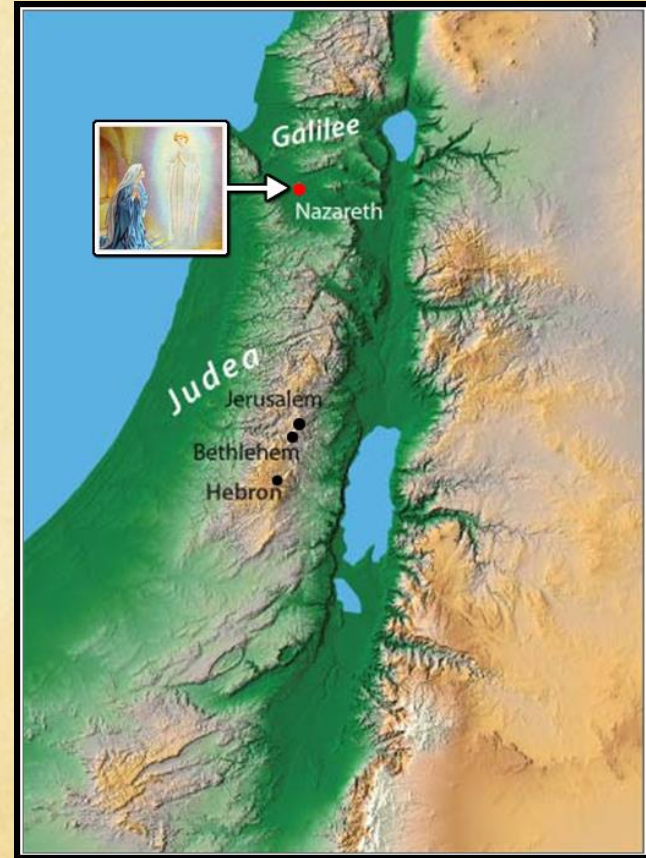
Luke 1:24-25

²⁴ And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

²⁵ Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

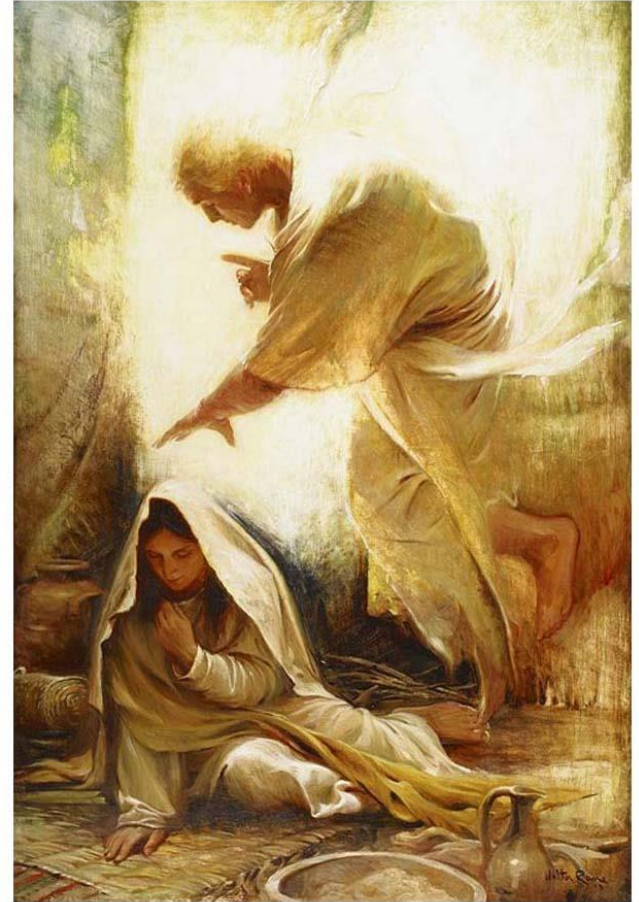


The Gospel of Luke now turns to the story of the mother of our Lord. In the same month that Elisabeth reached her sixth month of pregnancy, Gabriel appeared to Mary in Nazareth of Galilee.



Luke 1:26-29

- ²⁶ And in the sixth month [of Elizabeth's pregnancy] the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,
- ²⁷ To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.
- ²⁸ And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.
- ²⁹ And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.



Luke 1:30-33

- ³⁰ And the angel said unto her,
Fear not, Mary:
for thou hast found favour with God.
- ³¹ And, behold,
thou shalt conceive in thy womb,
and bring forth a son,
and shalt call his name JESUS.
- ³² He shall be great,
and shall be called the Son of the Highest:
and the Lord God shall give unto him the
throne of his father David:
- ³³ And he shall reign over the house of Jacob
for ever;
and of his kingdom there shall be no end.



Luke 1:34-35

- ³⁴ Then said Mary unto the angel,
How shall this be,
seeing I know not a man?
- ³⁵ And the angel answered and
said unto her,
The Holy Ghost shall come upon
thee, and the power of the
Highest shall overshadow thee:
therefore also that holy thing
which shall be born of thee shall
be called the Son of God.



In verse 18, Zacharias asked Gabriel, “Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.” In verse 34, Mary asked the angel, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?”

Their questions were the same – how was such a thing possible? It would break the laws of nature for such a thing to happen!

So why was only Zacharias chastised?

The first thing Gabriel said to him was “thy prayer is heard.” Why pray at all if you don’t believe God hears you? But Mary had never prayed to be the virgin mother of the Son of God! She was preparing to be wed to Joseph and start a family with him.

Mary's faith was undoubtedly boosted when Gabriel told her about the miracle Elisabeth had received:

Luke 1:36-38

³⁶ And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

³⁷ For with God nothing shall be impossible.

³⁸ And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.



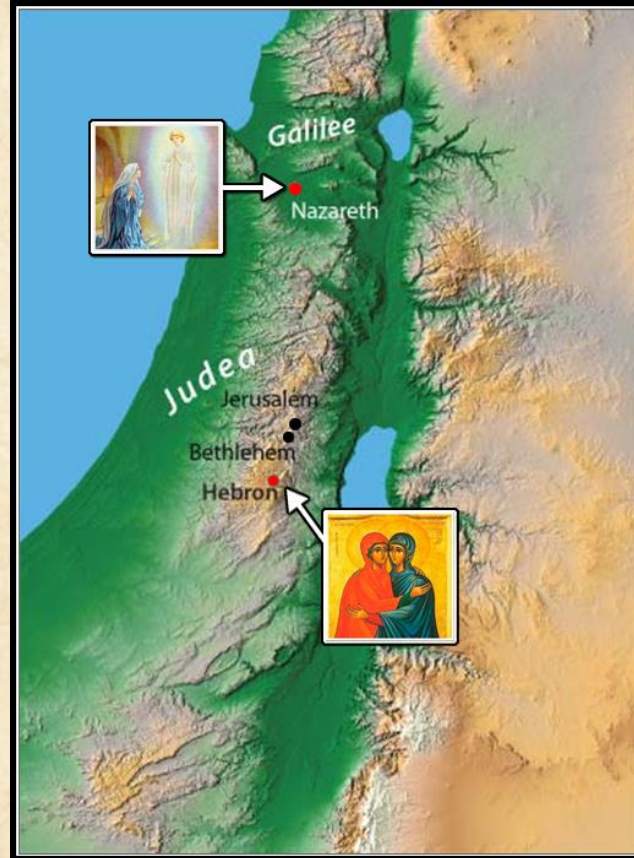
She decided to visit her cousin and see for herself:

Luke 1:39-40

- ³⁹ And Mary arose in those days,
and went into the hill country with haste,
into a city of Juda;
⁴⁰ And entered into the house of Zacharias,
and saluted Elisabeth.



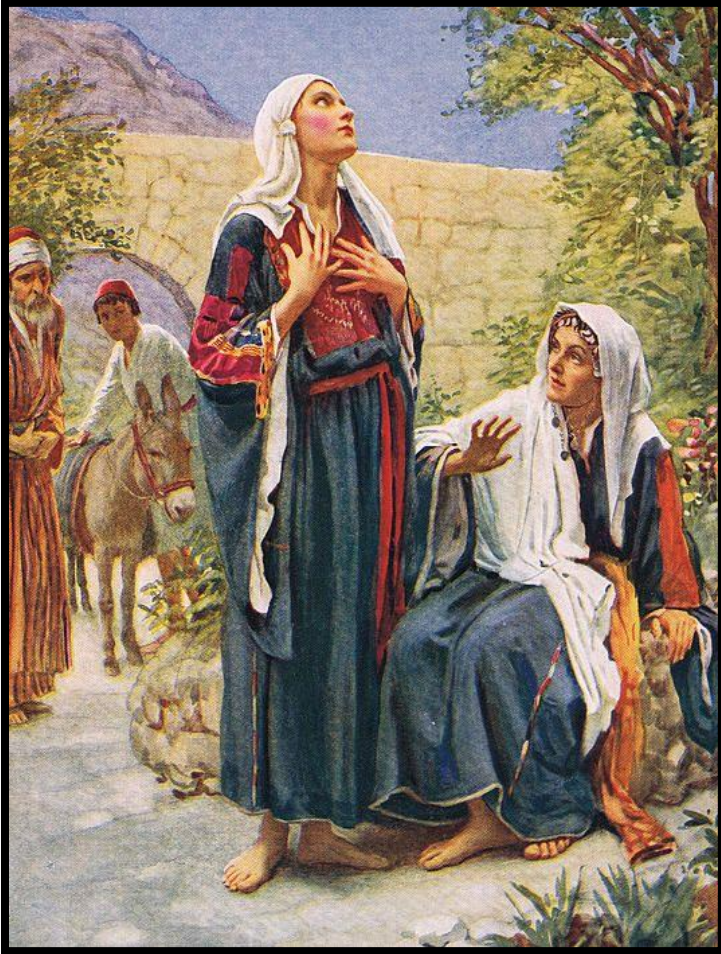
The journey from Nazareth to Hebron is between 80 and 100 miles.



In Mary's day, a person traveling by foot could cover about 20 miles per day. If Mary walked to Elizabeth's home, it would have taken her four to five days. If she accompanied a caravan, she would have arrived in about three days.

(Source: Logos.com)





Luke 1:41-45

- 41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:
- 42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.
- 43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
- 44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.
- 45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

Elizabeth did not know that Mary was pregnant with the Son of God, or that Gabriel had visited her. These statements made no sense to her. But to Mary, these were blessed words of confirmation.



Mary praised God for what this meant for her and for her people.

Luke 1:48-55

46 And Mary said,

My soul doth magnify the Lord,

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden:

for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy *is* his name.

50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to generation.

51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy;

55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

Mary stayed with her cousin until Elizabeth's ninth month.

Luke 1:56

⁵⁶ And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.



It is likely that Joseph did not know that Mary was pregnant until she returned from Hebron. We turn to Matthew's gospel to read of his response.



Gabriel and Joseph

Matthew 1:18-19

- ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:
When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.
- ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.



Gabriel and Joseph

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¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

Joseph knew he was not the father of Mary's child. God's law gave him no choice about what he must do:

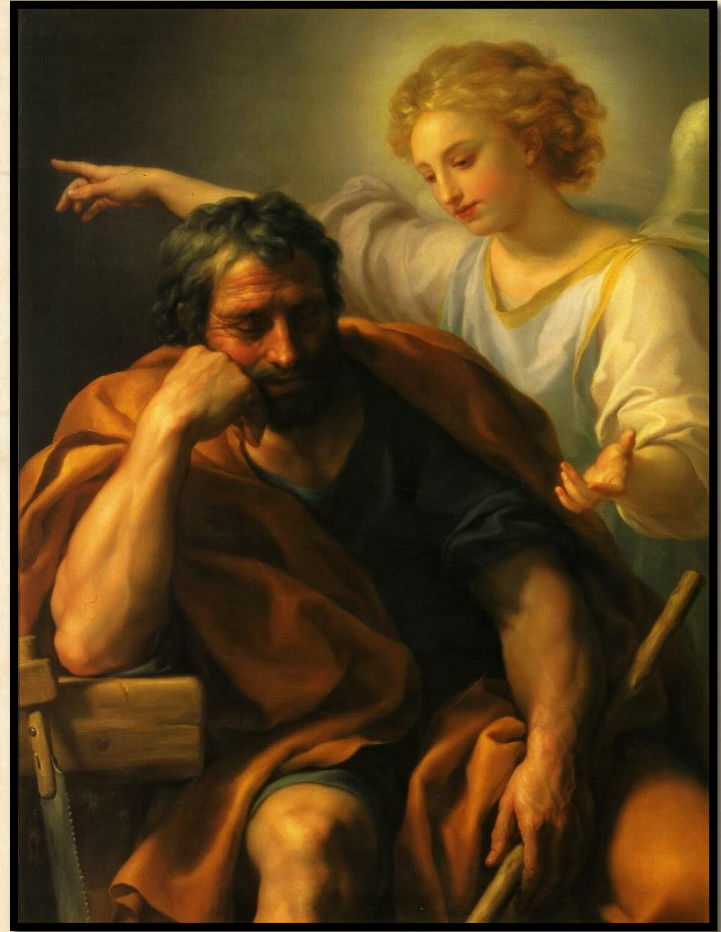
Leviticus 20:10

¹⁰ And the man that committeth adultery with *another* man's wife, *even he* that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Gabriel and Joseph

Matthew 1:20-21

- ²⁰ But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.
- ²¹ And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.



Gabriel and Joseph

Matthew 1:22-23

- ²² Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,
- ²³ Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.



Gabriel and Joseph

Matthew 1:22-23

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- ²³ Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Isaiah 7:14

- ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Gabriel and Joseph

Matthew 1:24-25

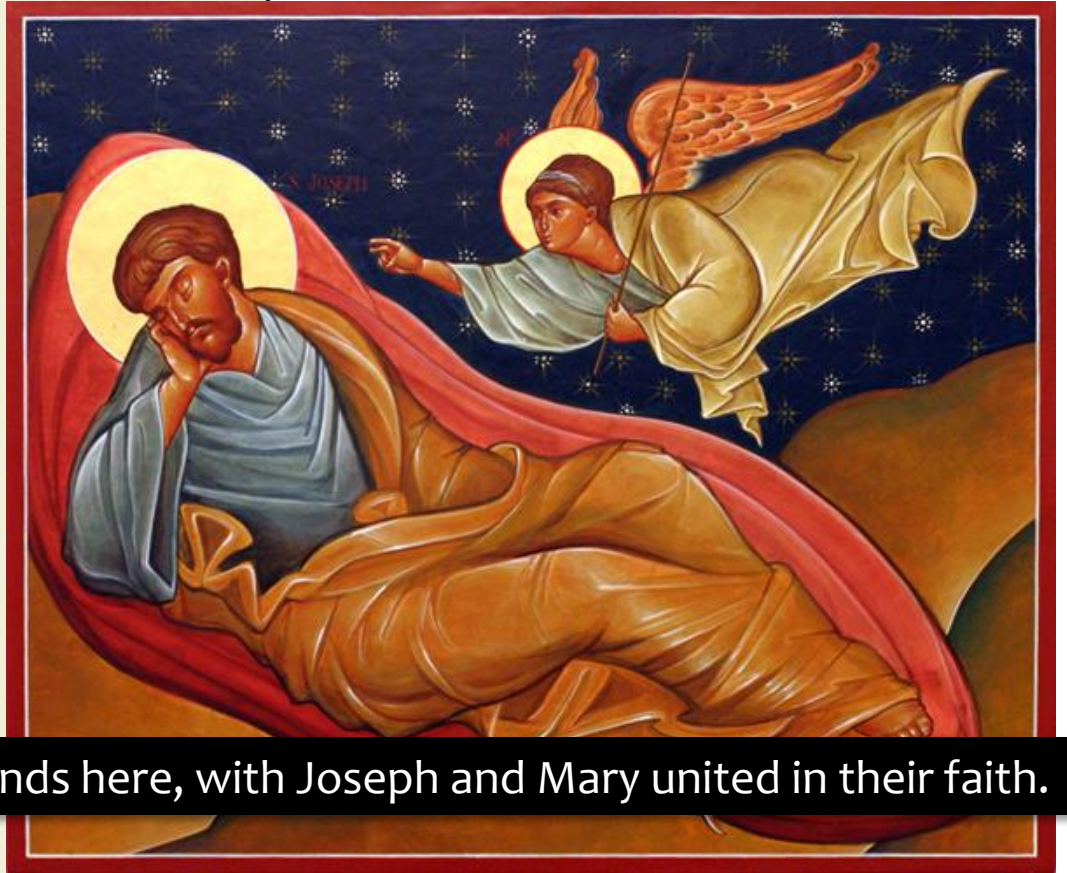
- ²⁴ Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:
- ²⁵ And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.



Gabriel and Joseph

Matthew 1:24-25

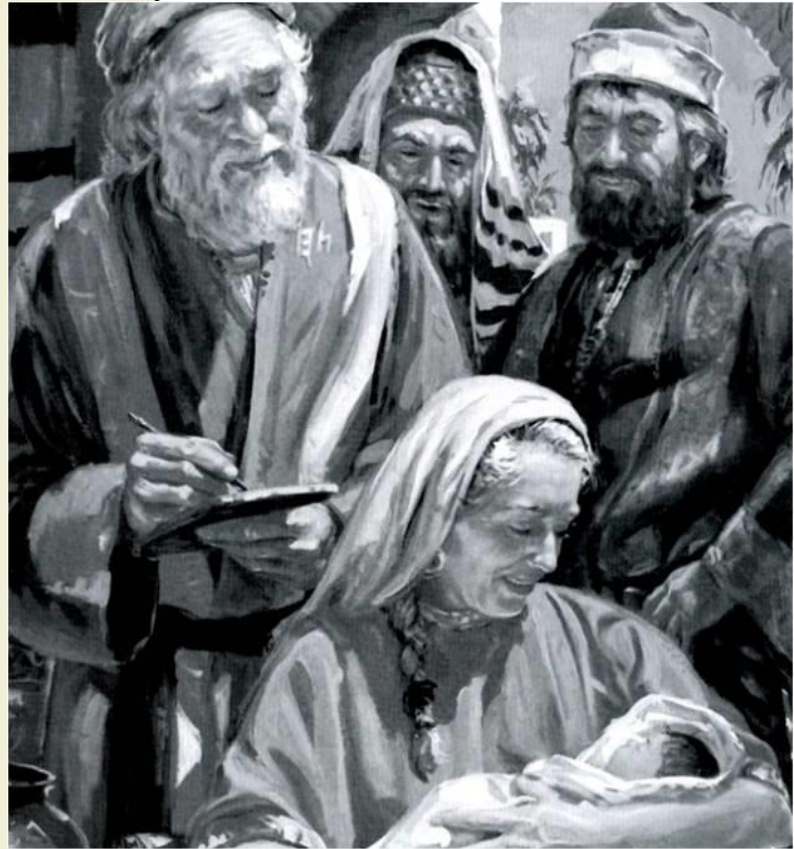
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- ²⁵ And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.



This lesson ends here, with Joseph and Mary united in their faith.

UP NEXT:

John the Baptist is born,
and Joseph and Mary travel to
Bethlehem to pay their taxes.





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