

**Joseph and Mary's Engagement**

**A** young girl named Mary from the village of Nazareth in the county of Galilee was engaged to a man named Joseph from the town of Bethlehem. He belonged to the royal family of King David. At this time, King Herod's family was ruler of the Promised Land of Israel under the leadership of the Roman empire.

Matthew 01:01-18 Teaching Guide (Map 2)  
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**F**or nearly 60 years, the Roman Empire flourished and controlled the Promised Land of Canaan given by God to the Israelites. These foreign invaders worshiped Roman and Greek gods and were hated by the Jews. After defeating the Jewish people, the Romans appointed the house of “Herod” as ruler. At this time, a young girl named Mary lived in the hilltop village of Nazareth in the beautiful region of Galilee. She was engaged to a man named Joseph from the town of Bethlehem, who belonged to the royal family of King David.

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“Bible Notes” – A Summary Study Guide

**F**or nearly sixty years the mighty Roman Empire with its unbeatable legions controlled the Promised Land. [In 31 B.C. Octavian had defeated the forces of Marc Antony and Cleopatra to become sole emperor of Rome, and changed his name to Augustus.] The Jewish people deeply hated these foreign invaders, pagans who worshiped Roman and Greek gods. After smashing all Jewish resistance the Romans appointed the non-Jewish house of Herod as ruler. Herod the Great, like his father before him, served with harsh cruelty and total loyalty to Rome



The story of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ (or *Messiah* in Hebrew), according to the gospel of Matthew, began with a young girl named Mary, who lived in the hilltop community of Nazareth. The small village of Nazareth Fertile farmlands flourished in Galilee which was dominated by its huge crystal-blue freshwater lake called the Sea of Galilee. (This pear-shaped lake was thirteen miles long and 7 ½ miles wide, and supported a thriving fishing trade. Within this body of water some forty-two species of fish flourished and no less than nine very populated cities such as Bethsaida, Chorazin, Capernaum, Tabgha, Gennesaret, Magdala, Tiberias, Sennabris and finally Philoteria stood on or near its shore). Mary planned to marry an older man named Joseph, a carpenter from Bethlehem of Judea. Joseph's lineage was of the royal family of King David (1 Samuel 16:1-13).

The engagement period sometimes lasted for one year, and was usually arranged through the Hebrew matchmaker called a *shadchan*. Since people seldom left their communities, he traveled from town to town bringing together people who otherwise never would have met. According to the Gospel of Matthew, it was fourteen generations from Abraham to David, another fourteen to the captivity in Babylon, and still fourteen more generations to the arrival of the Christ.

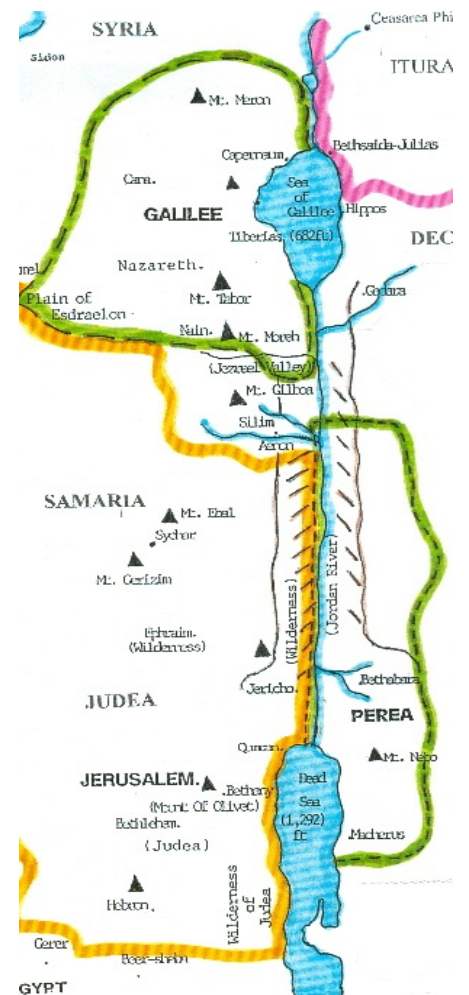
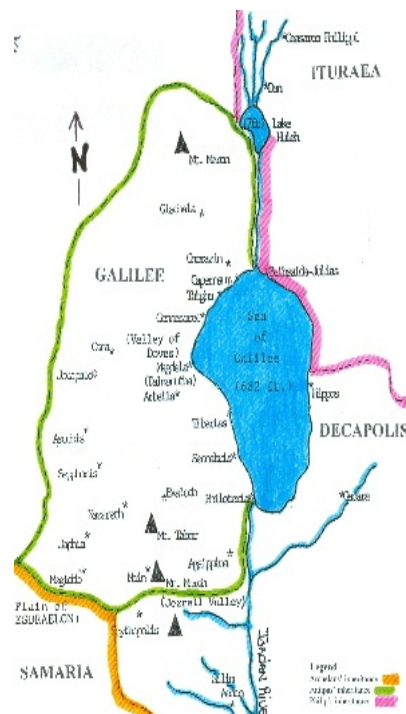
Jacob, the son of Matthan, begot Joseph. The birth of Jesus Christ occurred when His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph before they came together [sexually as man and wife], and she was found with child of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 1:1-18). [In these times, an engagement was as binding as marriage and held the same penalty of death if broken.]

**Sermon#2,  
Biblical Scriptures:**

*Gospel of Matthew* -Chapter 1.

1. THE BOOK of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the Son of Abraham, 2. Abraham begat [had] Isaac; and Isaac had Jacob; and Jacob had Judah and his brothers. 3. And Judah had Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares had Esrom; and Esrom had Aram, 4. And Aram had Aminadab, and Aminadab had Naasson, and Naasson had Salmon, 5. And Salmon had Booz of Rachab, and Booz had Obed of Ruth, and Obed had Jesse, 6. And Jesse had David the king; and David the king had Solomon of her [Bath-sheba] that had been the wife of Urias; 7. And Solomon had Roboam; and Roboam had Abia; and Abia had Asa; 8. And Asa had Josaphat; and Josaphat had Joram; and Joram had Ozias; 9. And Ozias had Joatham; and Joatham had Achaz; and Achaz had Ezekias; 10. And Ezekias had Manasses; and Manasses had Amon; and Amon had Josias; 11. And Josias had Jechonias and his brothers, about the time they were carried away to Babylon. 12. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias had Salathiel; and Salathiel had Zorobabel; 13. And Zorobabel had Abiud; and Abiud had Eliakim; and Eliakim had Azor; 14. And Azor had Sadoc; and Sadoc had Achim; and Achim had Eliud; 15. And Eliud had Eleazar; and Eleazar had

Matthan; and Matthan had Jacob; 16. And Jacob had Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. 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 to Christ are fourteen generations.



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## [Jesus, The Promised Messiah]

(Matthew’s Gospel Begins)

The gospel of Matthew begins with recording the family lineage of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. It begins with the patriarch Abraham and continued for 14 generations to King David. [In the near future, the Hebrew name “Yeshua ha-Notzri” would become the Greek interpretation “Jesus of Nazareth” with the worldwide mission of the apostles. This especially includes the apostle Paul with the acceptance of Simon-Peter. The name Jesus means Salvation.] Another 14 generations passed from King David until the captivity in Babylon of the Jews. Fourteen more generations passed from the Babylonian captivity to the arrival of the Christ. These are the 42 generations of Jesus according to Matthew’s version of the gospel.

Meanwhile in 7 B.C., within the small hilltop community called Nazareth in the region of Galilee, the engagement of a young virgin named Mary and a man named Joseph was arranged. Thick oak trees covered the village, which had a Jewish synagogue built near a steep cliff. Joseph was a carpenter from the city of Bethlehem and had descended from the royal family of King David.<sup>20</sup>



The small village of Nazareth stood on a steep hillside crowned by thick oak trees and was located in the very fertile and prosperous region of Galilee. Productive farmlands flourished in Galilee, which was dominated by its huge crystal-blue freshwater lake, called the Sea of Galilee.


After a formal marriage agreement between the two families, Joseph paid for his virgin bride. This payment consisted of 50 shekels of silver, about two pounds. [This was the same price to be paid a father by a man who raped his virgin daughter, and then married her with no possibility of divorce. (see Deut. 22:28-29)] Mary’s status was then changed to wife and an engagement period would be set. With the contract finalized, the families shared a great feast with the community to celebrate the event. According to Hebrew tradition, Mary would now be obligated to wear a blue veil to indicate her bridal status. This was symbolic of the holy “Veil of the Temple.”

The Jews wore a unisex garb that consisted of a linen undergarment and a woolen tunic that covered the body from the lower neck to well below the knees. Over this, the men draped a cloak that served multiple purposes: topcoat, blanket, bedroll, carpet, and sometimes security pouch for money. The women draped this same piece of clothing over their heads like a hooded cloak. This cumbersome tunic was belted with rope, leather, or cloth. Also, even the poorest Jew wore sandals made of camel hide or wood.

On the eve of the Christ’s arrival, the Promised Land of Israel was a melting pot of culture and people. Geography, religion and politics divided its 2,000,000 people, ruled by Rome’s iron fist. In a day’s journey a person could travel from rural villages where farmers still tilled their fields with primitive plows to bustling cities where men enjoyed the comforts of Greco-Roman civilization.

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<sup>20</sup> 1 Samuel 16:1-13.



At Jerusalem, Jewish priests offered holy sacrifices to Jehovah, while at Sebaste in Samaria, only 30 miles away, pagan priest held rites in honor of the Roman god Jupiter. Only half of the land's population was now Jewish. The remainder was a mixture of pagan Greeks and Romans, Syrians, Egyptians, Arabs, Persians and Babylonians. Even the Jews themselves were split into many rivals, and sometimes hostile, sects.

Most Jews despised their foreign overlords, especially the current Romans. They deeply resented the presence of a pagan culture in the ancient homeland. For many Jews, a time of hope and expectation was flourishing. They believed they were about to witness the dawn of a new age, the Christ's arrival.