

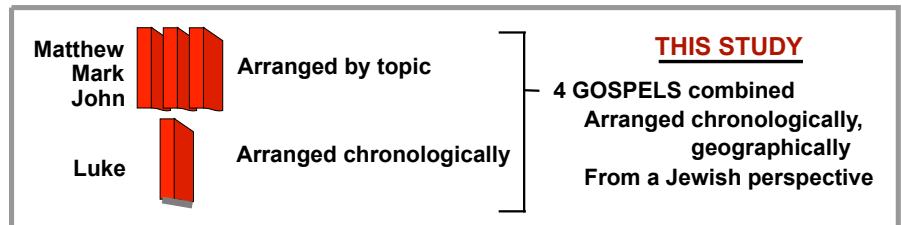
Lesson #1B LIFE OF JESUS

His Preparation – Part 1 2019

Before starting this lesson, read **Matthew 1, Luke 1 thru 2:20; chapter 3:23-37 and John 1:1-18**. Do not spend a lot of time on the list of family names, but notice which ones are familiar to you.

From our studies in the Old Testament, we learned that Jewish writers put things together by topic. So Matthew, Mark and John, being Jewish, arranged their gospels by topic. Luke, being a Greek with western thinking, arranged things in chronological order. However he does not include all the events the other writers mention.

Therefore, to get the full picture, we are going to combine all 4 gospels and study the life of Jesus from a chronological, geographical and Jewish perspective.



I originally wrote this course in Spanish, at a Bible school in Bolivia. When I returned to the United States, I translated it into English and taught it. Then I came across the studies of Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum and got so much more of the Jewish perspective. So this course is now a combination of the things I learned from Dr. Fruchtenbaum, plus my original studies.

Besides Dr. Fruchtenbaum, my other Jewish source is Dr. Alfred Edersheim. Both men grew up in very Jewish homes. Dr. Edersheim lived in Austria in the 1800's. Dr. Fruchtenbaum's family lived in Poland before WW II. His grandfather had memorized the entire Old Testament by the time he was 18. With extensive training he became the highest Jewish authority for the Hassidic or Ultra-orthodox Jews in Poland. His son received training to eventually take his place. It was into this kind of home that Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum was born. Both Drs. Edersheim and Fruchtenbaum became believers in Jesus as their Messiah. They decided to specialize in studying and teaching the life of Jesus within the Jewish culture of the 1st century.

Since there will be concepts you may have never heard before, I want to assure you, they are from the most qualified Jewish sources.

OUTLINE

The Life of Jesus

His Preparation - the first 33 years

His Ministry - 1st year

- 2nd year

- 3rd year

- Last 3 months

- Last week

His last 40 days on earth

Each of these lessons will focus on **where** Jesus was, what He **said** and what He **did**.

Historical and Jewish background will be added to help explain many of the events.

IMPORTANT:

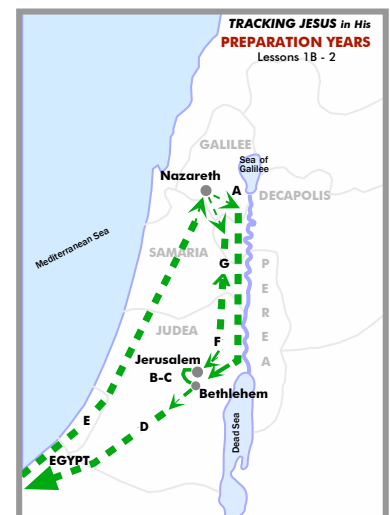
For each of the 7 periods in Jesus' life, there will be a **MAP OF ISRAEL** to track His steps as He goes from place to place. The letters on the map correspond to the letters of the outline which is either after the map or on the Summary page.

On the Home page, at the top, click on **Bible Lessons**.

Then click on **Life of Jesus**. Click on **Maps**.

Choose the map that corresponds to the lesson you are studying.

(There is also a completed map at the end of the Lessons)



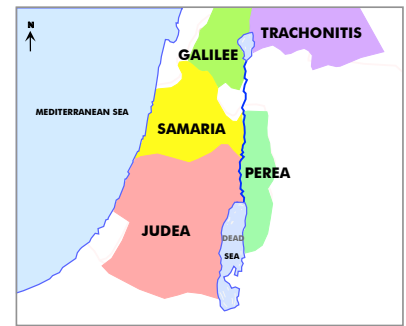
GEOGRAPHY

Because we will be focusing on Israel's geography, it is important to know something about it – especially during the time of the first century.

The land was divided into 5 **PROVINCES**, similar to the states in the United States.

On the west side of the Jordan River were Judea, Samaria and Galilee.

On the east side of the Jordan River were Perea and Trachonitis.



There were also 5 distinct **AREAS** running north to south

The Coastal **plain** which was at sea level

The **Foothills**

The west side **Mountain** Range at 2-3000 feet elevation

The east side **Mountain** Range at 6,000 feet elevation

In between the ranges was the gorge with the **Jordan River**

The river is 156 miles long in a straight line

It is 60-180 feet wide and 5-17 feet deep

It is 600 feet below sea level at the Sea of Galilee

It is 1400 feet below sea level at the Dead Sea

Because Jerusalem is at 3,000 feet, on top of the mountain range, the Bible always talks about going **up** to Jerusalem and **down** from Jerusalem



Because Israel is a nation, we automatically think of it as big like our nation. In reality, it is very small.

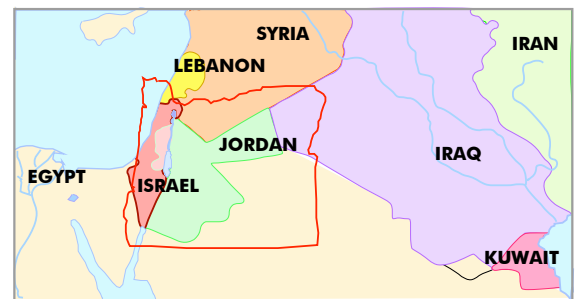
It is approximately the size of the state of New Jersey.

In comparison to the state of Oregon, it takes up only a small part of it.

From the sea of Galilee west to the coast is 36 miles

All of Israel is 275 miles long by 80 miles at its widest

The usable land of Israel is 150 miles long by 80 miles wide.



2 Basics About the Gospels

1. The Gospels are the historical record about Jesus and the Jews.

When we read the Gospels it is easy to think it is *about* the Church and *for* the Church - that people are experiencing a relationship with God as we do today.

But in the Gospels, Jesus' ministry is for the Jews, the lost sheep of Israel. Almost always He is talking to Jews. This means we need to learn about Jewish beliefs and culture. We need to understand their way of speaking. Some things are meant literally. Other times they are using picture language, idioms or extreme words with non-extreme meaning. In other words, to understand the Gospels, we need to think Jewish.

2. The Jews at the time of Jesus' ministry, are under Old Testament laws and teaching.

Being right with God and forgiveness of sin is still thru animal sacrifices. The Church, the Body of Christ, will not be developed until after Jesus' death, resurrection and Ascension into heaven. We can think of the Gospels as being the last part of the Old Testament, transitioning us into the time of the Church.

BACKGROUND

In the previous lesson, we saw that from the 500's to the 100's BC, God had worked thru godly Jewish leaders.

He had used men like Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and the Maccabee family to influence the Babylonian, Persian and Greek empires.

However, by the 1st century AD, Jewish leaders and people have drifted far from God's ways.

There is rampant immorality, ego and a desire for power and control. Leadership is more interested in pushing man-made laws than obeying God's laws.

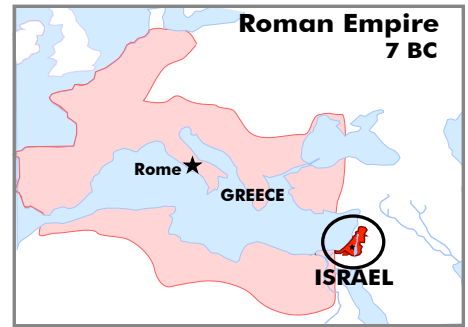
But there is still a Jewish minority that has remained faithful to God, generation after generation.

They are the **believing remnant**. These are the ones who will respond to Jesus and be used by Him in His 3 ½ year ministry.

Most historians of the 1st century live either in Rome or Greece, some 900-1500 miles to the west of Israel.

They either do not know about Jesus; do not care or do not see Him as relevant. As a result, they do not mention Him in their history of the first century. The only exception is the Roman historian, Tacitus.

Because of this, God chooses one Gentile and 3 Jewish writers to give us this history. As the New Testament opens, the Jews have been under Rome for some 50 years. It is about 7 BC.



Jesus' Years of Preparation

His **GENEALOGY** - His family tree is in two of the gospels.

Matthew 1.

Verse 1 says that Jesus was the son of **David** and the son of **Abraham**.

Matthew is connecting Jesus to royalty and the Jewish race.

Verse 2 begins with Abraham and works its way thru the family line down to Joseph.

Verse 16 says the name of Joseph's father is **Jacob**.

Matthew is giving us Joseph's family tree because the Jewish royal line comes thru the father.

Joseph is not the **biological** father, but he becomes Jesus' father thru adoption.

This gives Jesus a **legal** right to David's throne, to be the Messiah, king of the Jews.

Luke 3.

Verse 23 *Now Jesus Himself was about 30 years old when He began His ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of **Heli**.*

At first glance, it appears this also is the genealogy of Joseph.

But Luke says the name of Joseph's father is **Heli**.

Matthew said his father's name was **Jacob**.

Bible critics love to point this out as a contradiction, so let me explain and give the answer.

The problem is the difference in language and grammar.

To give a genealogy in **English**, we say,

John, the son of Harold, the son of Walter, etc.

Koine or common **Greek** would say,

John, of **the** Harold, of **the** Walter.

The word *son* is not used. The word **the** in front of a name shows it is linked to the previous name.

Matthew's genealogy says,

Matthan the father of **the** Jacob and Jacob **the** father of the Joseph

The word *the* is in front of them, to show they were linked to each other.

However, **Luke's** genealogy in Luke 3 says,

*And Jesus... being son (as was supposed of Joseph) of **the** Heli, of **the** Matthat...*

Notice, there is no word **the** in front of Joseph. But it **is** in front of Heli. This means Luke is connecting Jesus to Heli, Mary's father, and not to Joseph. In Greek and Hebrew, the word *son* can also mean *grandson*. So Luke uses grammar that will tell the Greek readers of that day, *Everyone assumes Jesus was the son of Joseph, but biologically, He was from Heli's family. He was his grandson.*

To put it simply, Matthew gives the family tree of Joseph, whose father's name was Jacob.

Luke gives the family tree of Mary, whose father's name was Heli.

Church tradition says the name of Mary's father was Jóachim. This comes from tradition and legend started in 200 AD, but is not considered to be factual nor historical. (see endnote)

To see the reason for these genealogies, look at Luke 1.

Starting with verse 27, Luke begins writing about Mary. After he explains what she thinks, what she experiences and what she says, people would want to know more about this woman. What is her background, her family tree? So in chapter 3 Luke gives the family line of Mary. Luke puts the focus on **Mary**.

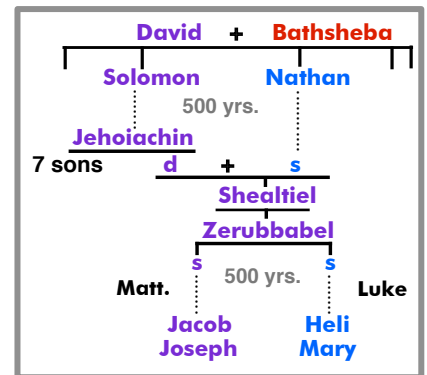
To see the contrast, let's go back to Matthew chapter 1. After giving the family tree of Joseph, starting with verse 19, Matthew then puts the focus on **Joseph** and what **he** is thinking.

In summary then,

Matthew gives us Joseph's line from David's son Solomon.

Luke gives us Mary's line from David's son, Nathan.

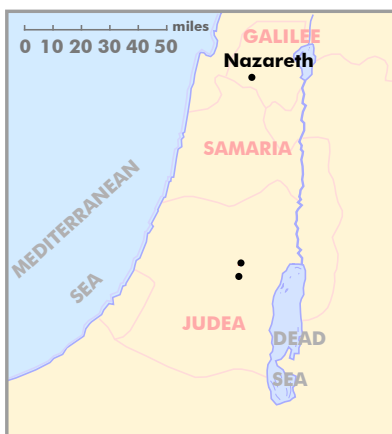
This is why there are 2 genealogies and why they are different.



Jesus' **MOTHER, MARY**

Luke, as a Gentile historian, wants to start his biography of Jesus at the beginning. This means telling about Mary.

In Luke 1:26-38, he explains that Mary lives in Nazareth, a little town in the northern province of Galilee.



She and her family are part of the believing remnant.

They have remained faithful in what they believe and how they live.

They are waiting for the promised Messiah and are expecting Him to come.

Mary is engaged to a man named Joseph.

Based on the culture of that time, it means she is a teenager, somewhere between 13 and 16 years old. One day God sends the angel Gabriel to tell her she will have a son. He will be miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit. He will be the Messiah they have waited for.

He is to be named *Yeshúa* - meaning *the One who Saves*. The name is Aramaic - the language spoken in Jewish homes. In Hebrew, His name would have been *Joshua*. In English, after 4 language changes, we have the name *Jesus*.

For centuries, the dream of all Jewish women was to be the mother of the promised Messiah. It would be the greatest honor and privilege a Jewish woman could ever have. As Mary hears she is the one who has been chosen, she is thrilled. But then she wonders how it can happen - she is not yet married.

The angel tells her it will be a virgin birth. In other words, it will be a special act of creation.

If you remember, in the beginning of time, God took dust of the earth, created **Adam's** body and gave him life. Later He took a rib from Adam, created **Eve's** body and gave her life.

Now the Holy Spirit creates the beginning of a special body and puts it within Mary's egg and womb.

The author of Hebrews talks about this in Hebrews 10:5 *When Christ came into this world, He said Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You prepared for Me; ...then I, (Jesus), said, Here I am...I have come to do Your will, O God.*

To better understand this verse, I'm going to paraphrase it. In His humanity, as Jesus matured and understood His ministry, there was a point when He said to God the Father,

*I know the bodies of animal sacrifices have never been able to forgive sin and remove it. But You have prepared a body for Me so that I **can** take away sin. I will do what You, O God, have sent me to accomplish.*

How amazing that Jesus, Creator of the world, allows His beginning humanity to **be** created by the Holy Spirit. It is an example of how He humbled Himself.

As Mary hears she will be the mother of the Messiah, she knows she has been honored and blessed. When she hears it will be a virgin birth, she knows there will be problems. As soon as her pregnancy is obvious, she will be accused of immorality. She will be the center of town gossip. Worse yet, Joseph will think she has been unfaithful to him. He will not be able to marry her.

In the 1st century, Jewish engagement lasted at least one year, after which the couple was married. The time of engagement was considered as binding as marriage itself. So according to Jewish law, if an engaged girl was found guilty of immorality, she was punished for adultery the way a married woman was punished - put to death by stoning along with the guilty man.

Mary has every reason to question God's wisdom. After all, it is not just her reputation, but her life that is in danger. She has every reason to ask God to do this a different way. But she does not. She says to the angel Gabriel,

I am the Lord's servant; may it be to me as you have said. Luke 1:38

What faith of this teenage girl - around 15 years old. She accepts God's way, believing God will handle the problems.

The angel has said her relative Elizabeth is expecting and in fact is 6 months along. Early writings have suggested that Mary's mother was the sister of Elizabeth. This would make Elizabeth, Mary's aunt. Both Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah are from the tribe of Levi. They also are part of the believing remnant. They are known for their spiritual understanding and godliness.

Mary leaves Nazareth, traveling with other women, who along with their families are going south. Altho we do not know the name of the town where Mary goes, we know it is in the province of Judea, south of Jerusalem. This would be a 4-5 day journey, some 75 to 85 miles.

When Mary gets to the home of Elizabeth, before she has a chance to say anything, Elizabeth speaks up and confirms everything the angel Gabriel had said. Mary is blessed more than any other woman who has ever lived or ever will live. She is enriched by the Holy Spirit in a special way. Her son will bring blessing to the entire world.

Mary stays with Elizabeth and Zechariah for 3 months, waiting until their son John is born. When she finds other family groups heading north, Mary joins them and returns to Nazareth. Soon it becomes obvious she is expecting. Joseph hears about it.

Within the culture of that day, Mary and Joseph would not be spending time together or talking with each other. Generally, communication would be thru their fathers. They are the ones who arranged the marriage. She is living in the home of her parents while Joseph lives with or near his parents. Joseph is using the year of engagement to prepare a home for his bride.



Jesus' **ADOPTED FATHER, JOSEPH**

Matthew says that when Joseph learns of Mary's pregnancy, he assumes she has been unfaithful. Since the year of engagement is now up and it is time for their marriage, he has to make a decision. This decision will be influenced by the fact he is part of the believing remnant.

Matthew 1:19 says that because Joseph is righteous, he does not want to expose her to public disgrace. This means he does not want to accuse her of infidelity, have a public trial and then a public stoning. He would have to be the one to cast the first stone. But to obey God's law, he cannot marry her. Dt. 22:20-21

The time of engagement is as binding as marriage itself so there are only 2 ways to break an engagement - either by death or divorce. Joseph decides to *quietly* divorce her. This means that on the divorce paper, he does not plan to state the reason.

Because Joseph makes his decision in obedience to **God's** law, **God** sends an angel to give him the explanation. Mary is not guilty of immorality. She is still a virgin. The Baby she is carrying has been specially created by the Holy Spirit. Joseph is to marry her and believe everything that she tells him. Joseph obeys and they get married.

Jesus' **BIRTH**

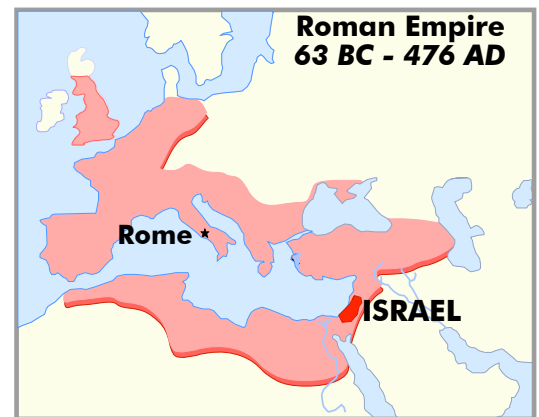
During this time, Augustus is Caesar of the Roman empire. The empire has a problem - it is running out of money. Augustus decides the best way to solve the problem is to raise taxes. This would only apply to the people conquered by Rome. Roman citizens did not have to pay taxes. To know how much money he can raise, he commands a census of all the conquered people within the empire. Notices are sent to the various countries and rulers. Each ruler can get a count of his people in his own way.

This includes Herod, governor or *king* of the Jews in Israel. The Roman way of taking a census was to count the people in the town where they lived, like we do. But Herod knows the Jews. With their hatred of the Romans, they will either refuse to do it, give false numbers, or start a riot. But if Herod does not get the numbers, he will lose his power and position. The best way is to appeal to Jewish pride.

He knows all Jews are proud of their lineage and family origin. So in 7 or 6 BC, he commands everyone in Israel to register in the place connected with their family origin. The Jews are happy to co-operate, just to show Herod how Jewish and how connected to the land, they are.

Since Joseph is from the line of David, it means he must go to David's home town to register - to Bethlehem. Joseph could also register for Mary. Considering she is 9 months pregnant, she ordinarily would not consider making the trip. But this is not an ordinary situation. Nazareth is a small town. Everyone had heard she was pregnant before marriage. When the baby is born, there will be even more talk and speculation. *I wonder who the father is?* To protect her from gossip and criticism, Joseph decides to take her with him.

They leave Nazareth, heading for Bethlehem, 68 miles to the south. After 4-5 days, they arrive, only to find everyone else got there first. All available rooms are taken. According to Dr. Fruchtenbaum, around the area are hundreds of natural caves. Those furthest from town are used for burial. The caves closer to town are used as stables or shelters for protecting animals in bad weather. It is in one of these stable caves that Mary and Joseph find shelter for the night.



And it is in this stable cave that Jesus is born and laid in a manger. Babies were usually dressed in baby clothes. The custom of some Jews was to wrap the baby in long narrow strips of cloth to straighten the baby's body from the fetal position. This is evidently what Mary did for we are told she wrapped Him in wrapping cloths.

That same night, angels are sent to a group of Jewish shepherds who are part of the believing remnant. Jewish writings of that time said sheep that were pastured in these fields were ones set aside for Temple sacrifices in Jerusalem. The angel tells the shepherds, the Messiah they have been waiting for has just been born. A sign to help them know it is the right baby is that He is wrapped in wrapping cloths and that He will be lying in a manger. The Greek word was also translated as "stable or cave".

With this, the shepherds understand they are to look inside a cave used as a stable. They already know the locations of these stable caves, because they have used them in the past to protect their flocks. They immediately go to see Jesus to worship Him. The moment they see him wrapped in strips of cloths, they are reminded of the long wide strips of cloth that were used to wrap around a dead body to prepare it for burial. Jesus is wrapped in what appears to be burial cloth.

How significant –

On the first day of His human life, He is wrapped with the same type of cloth He will be when He dies. It is God's picture language to tell us that Jesus was born to die. His purpose in coming to earth the first time, was not to be king with a kingdom. His purpose was to come as Savior, to make payment for disobedience.

When the shepherds leave, they begin to tell more of the believing remnant that the Messiah has come.

Mary and Joseph stay in Bethlehem and find lodging in the next day or two. Following Jewish law, they wait until the 8th day to circumcise their new born and name him - *Yeshúa, the One who Saves*.

Jesus' **DISTINCTIVENESS**

John begins his Gospel pointing to the **deity** of Jesus.

He says, *The Word, Jesus, was **with** God the Father from the beginning and **was** deity.* (John 1:1)

2 BASICS OF HISTORIC CHRISTIANITY

The Deity of Jesus
His Virgin Birth

Matthew and Luke begin their books emphasizing the **virgin birth** of Jesus.

These 2 beliefs are basic to historic Christianity and make it different from other faith systems.

The writers present these claims of Jesus and then tell the life story of Jesus to show why these concepts are important.

To follow the same pattern, the deity of Jesus and His virgin birth are mentioned in this lesson. The following lessons will continue to show who Jesus is and what He did. The final lesson will pull these facts together and explain why they define historic Christianity.

APPLICATION

When Mary was told she was going to be the mother of the promised Messiah, she was humbled and thrilled. When she was told it would be a *virgin birth*, she realized the problems, suffering and danger she would face. But in a faith far beyond her 15 years, she replies, *God, I am willing to do it Your way. And I will trust You to handle the problems.*

We are never going to face the problem Mary had. But when God wants to work in **our** lives, if we do it God's way, we may have to make decisions that will create problems. People may get mad at us, resent us, or even reject us. We may have to give up or let go of something that is important to us

Obedience **never** means everyone will love or accept us. Obedience to God never means things will be perfect in our life. But obedience does mean we will have God's blessings, His peace and the enjoyment of His presence.

Can we say with Mary,

God, I am willing to do things Your way. And I will trust You to handle the problems.

ENDNOTES

The name **Joachim**.

Roman Catholicism assigns the names Anne and Joachim to the mother and father, respectively, of Mary, but even a source such as the website Catholic Online says, “We have no historical evidence, however, of any elements of their lives, including their names. Any stories about Mary’s father and mother come to us thru legend and tradition. We get the oldest story from a document called the Gospel of James, tho in no way should this document be trusted to be factual, historical, or the Word of God....

Sts. **Joachim** and Anne - Saints & Angels - Catholic Online https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=62

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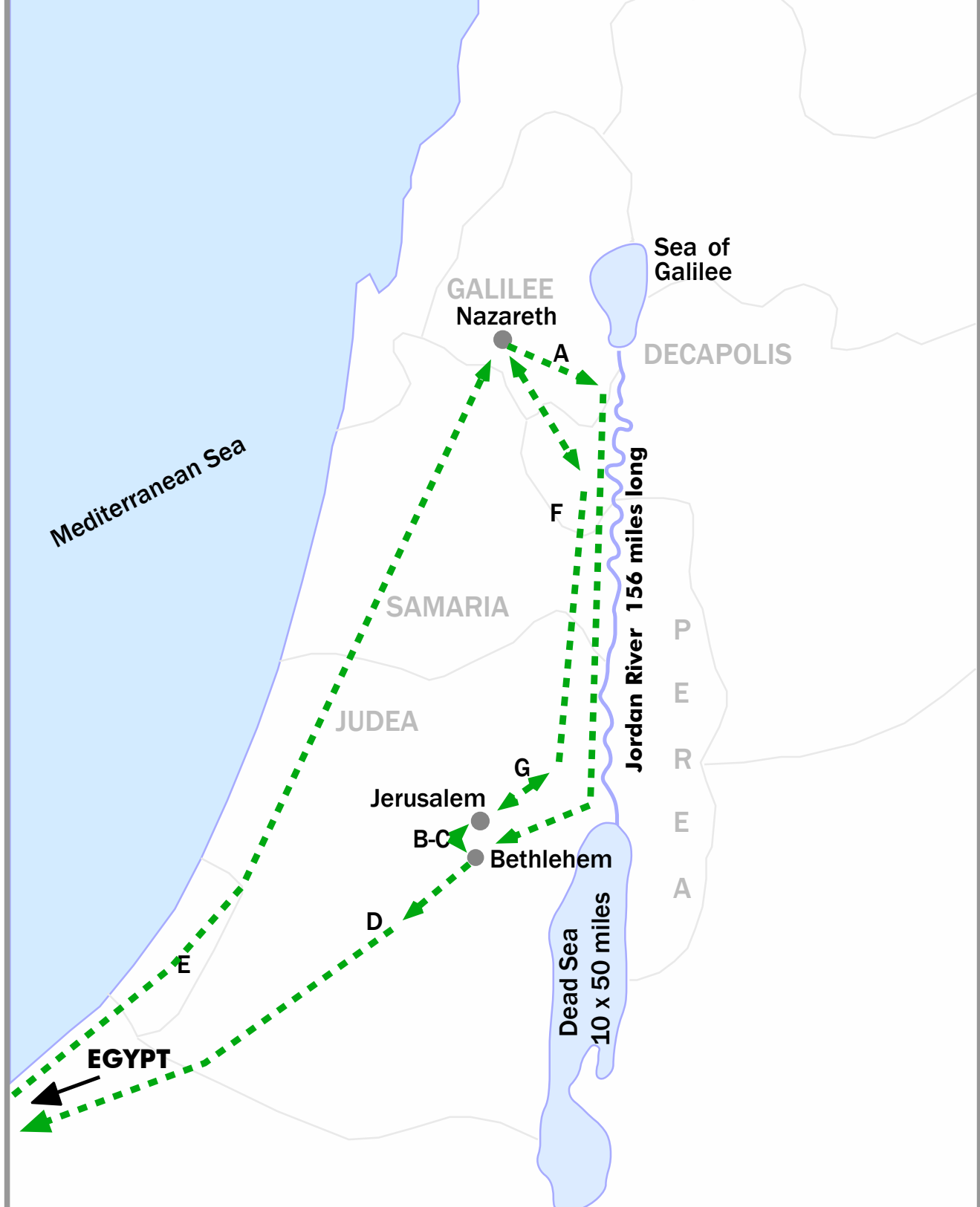
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See completed map on the following page

The letters A-G are from the Outline on the next page. Each letter gives you the geographical locations and what happened at those places.

TRACKING JESUS in His PREPARATION YEARS

Lessons 1B - 2



PREPARATION YEARS

DEVELOPED OUTLINE

- A. Nazareth to Bethlehem** 68 miles Luke 2:1-20
1. The angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary Luke 1:26-38
 2. An angel's announcement to Joseph Matt. 1:18-25
 3. Caesar's announcement of census c. 7 BC
 4. Joseph and Mary's trip to Bethlehem
 5. Jesus' birth and circumcision - named *Yeshúa* in Aramaic - *One who saves*
- B. Bethlehem to Jerusalem** 6 miles Luke 2:22-38
1. Joseph and Mary go to temple 40 days after Jesus' birth
 2. Simeon and Anna give praise to God for Jesus' birth
- C. Jerusalem to Bethlehem** 6 miles Matt. 2:1-12
1. Joseph and Mary return with Jesus and move into a house
 2. The Magi arrive in Jerusalem (Num. 24:17; Dan. 9:25-26)
 3. The Magi come to Bethlehem
 4. The Magi return home by another route
- D. Bethlehem to Egypt** 100 miles Matt. 2:13-18
1. An angel warns Joseph and Mary of danger
 2. They flee to Egypt
 3. Herod kills the babies in Bethlehem (approx. 20)
 4. Joseph, Mary and Jesus live in Egypt about one year
- E. Egypt to Nazareth** 200 miles Matt. 2:19-23; Luke 2:39
1. An angel tells Joseph that Herod is dead
 2. Joseph plans to stay in Bethlehem
 3. Joseph decides on Nazareth after a warning in a dream
- F. Nazareth to Jerusalem** 62 miles Luke 2:40-50
1. Jesus grows in wisdom and strength Isa. 50:4
 2. Jesus goes to the Temple in Jerusalem when 12 years old
- G. Jerusalem to Nazareth** 62 miles Luke 2:51-52
1. Jesus returns with His parents
 2. Jesus grows mentally, physically and spiritually
 3. Jesus works as a carpenter for 21 years Mark 6:3