

The Story of the Life of Christ – Lesson 3

5 B.C.

In the last lesson we saw the old priest Zechariah visited by the angel Gabriel inside the Holy Place of the Temple in Jerusalem. He was there at the Golden Altar of Incense because he had been chosen to make the morning offering of incense. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity. Gabriel told him that his wife Elizabeth would at long last conceive and bear a son. He was told to name the son John. He was also told that John would be the prophet who would herald the coming of the long-promised Messiah. Zechariah then went home to his village and his wife soon conceived. The narrative of Luke then shifted north to Nazareth which was just north of the Jezreel Valley in the fertile province of Galilee (see map on page 2).

The Conception by Mary of Jesus Christ as Recorded in the Gospel of Luke

Luke 1:26a In the sixth month,

This refers to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy as per Luke 1:36. It does not refer to the sixth month of the Jewish calendar year. Elizabeth's miraculous pregnancy was now clearly visible, and it could not be doubted. Her condition had evidently not yet been communicated to her sister's family in Nazareth. It would be communicated first to Mary by the angel Gabriel (see below in Luke 1:36).

Luke 1:26b God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,

Gabriel was the angel that God had sent to Daniel (Daniel 8:16, 9:21). He was the one who had delivered the prophecy of the seventy weeks of years, which had predicted the year when the Messiah would die or "be cut off". He was also the angel who had appeared six months earlier to Zechariah when he was in the Temple. The name Gabriel means "warrior of God," or alternately "man of God." The Gospel of Luke is said to be the testimony of eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1-3), so Luke's account must have been the testimony given to him by Mary herself when he visited Jerusalem with Paul in about 51 AD. In Luke's summary of Gabriel's conversation, given below, the archangel didn't tell Mary his name, yet she must have been the "eyewitness" (Luke 1:2) who related the angel's name to Luke. This tells us that part of Gabriel's conversation with Mary must have included what his name was. This illustrates the very important fact that often the testimony of the Gospels doesn't include all the fine details. Some of the details must be logically inferred.

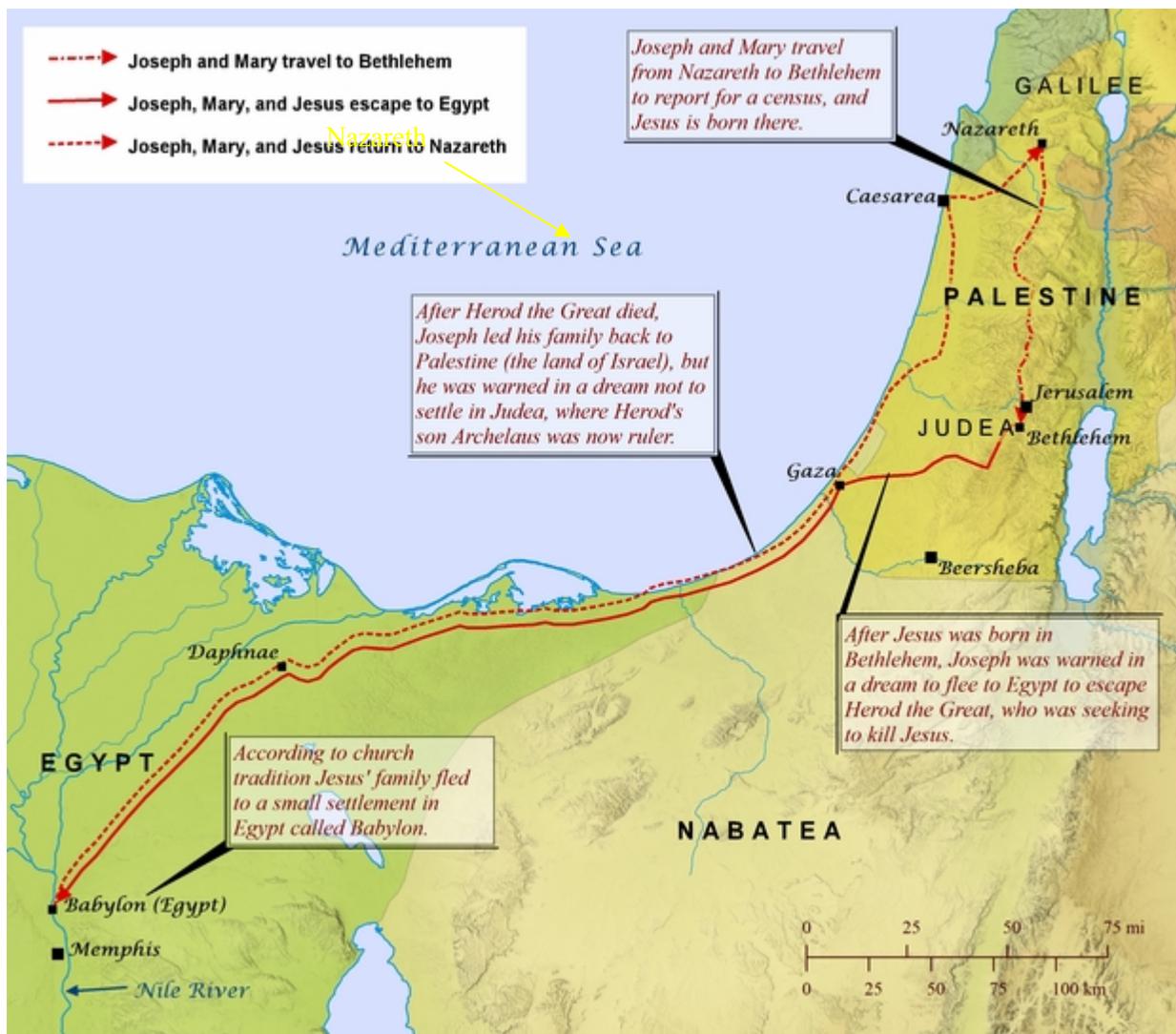
In those days Nazareth was just a small village. It was 65 miles north of Jerusalem and 15 miles west of the Sea of Galilee. It overlooked the Jezreel Valley from the north. *(See map on next page).*

Luke 1:27a to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David.

This established that Jesus' legal line was from David through his legal father Joseph. We studied that line in detail from Matthew 1:1-17 in Lesson 2. In Luke 3 we will see the biological human line through Mary and Mary's father as also going back to David.¹ As we see here, Mary was already engaged to the carpenter Joseph.

Luke 1:27b **The virgin's name was Mary.**

The name in the Greek text is Μαριάμ {mä-rē'-ä} which is the Grecianized form of the Hebrew name מִרְיָם {mēr-yām'} which means "rebellion." It was famously the name of both Jesus' mother and Moses' sister. Perhaps the significance of this name is that from this Mary, at long last, came the promised "seed of the woman" who was promised to Eve who was the original "rebel" in the human race.



¹ In Matthew we saw the **legal** line of the Kings. From Solomon through Jehoiachin they were not biologically related to Jesus. Jesus' **bloodline** went through Solomon's brother Nathan.

Luke 1:28a **The angel went to her and said,**

Although many dramatizations have Gabriel represented by a voice from the shadows, I must believe that Mary clearly saw the impressive figure of the angel Gabriel who had frightened Zechariah and Daniel before her. Gabriel would therefore tell her in verse 30, “Do not be afraid.”

Luke 1:28b **“Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!”**
NKJV

Mary was to be the “daughter” of Judah and Israel who had been prophesied from the beginning. She would be the culminating mother of all Jewish mothers. She was the one who would give birth to the Messiah. That promise had been represented in the Old Testament by speaking of the Jewish people as that daughter. The Jews had been called by the names “the Daughter of Zion,” “the Daughter of Judah,” “the Daughter of Jerusalem,” “the Virgin Daughter of Zion,” and “the Virgin Daughter of Jerusalem.” The connection of the great destiny of the LORD’s people to the “daughter” to come was made clear by the LORD in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 14:17 “Speak this word to them: ““Let my (*the LORD’s*) eyes overflow with tears night and day without ceasing; for my virgin daughter--my people-- has suffered a grievous wound, a crushing blow.”

The virgin birth in which Mary was to participate would be a Levirate birth. In this case God Himself would serve as the “kinsman redeemer” who would raise up a son for the dead. By Mary, God would father a Son. That Son would be able to restore the line of Adam, which was spiritually dead, to a relationship with God. That living child (Christ) would be able to raise up Adam’s dead race in His own body. Thus, Mary was truly blessed.

That last phrase, “blessed are you among women!” is not in the faulty Codex Sinaiticus text on which the NIV relies. It is in the dependable Textus Receptus.

Luke 1:29 **Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.**

Mary hadn’t heard enough to be able to begin to understand why an angel would visit a simple Jewish peasant girl like herself. She probably didn’t fully understand it all until after the Resurrection of her yet-to-be-born Son.

Luke 1:30 **But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.**

In fact, Mary had been chosen by the foresight of God from eternity past. Her Son would be the “Seed of the Woman” promised to Adam and Eve who would crush the serpent’s head.

Luke 1:31 **You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.**

The name we call “Jesus” in English is rendered here in the Greek form Ἰησοῦς {ē-ā-sū's}. The Greek “Jesus” and the Hebrew “Joshua” in our English Bibles are actually the same name. The Hebrew means “The LORD is salvation.” Jesus would fulfill the meaning of the name in Himself. He would be the embodiment of the LORD giving salvation. The Greek Ἰησοῦς {ē-ā-sū's} is also the same word used to translate the name of Joshua, the associate of Moses who was described as leading the Israelites into the land in Acts 7:45.²

The original Hebrew name Joshua יהושוע {yeh-hō-shū'ah} was given to two major Old Testament characters who both foreshadowed Christ. The first was Joshua who led the people into the Promised Land, and the second was Joshua the high priest, who helped lead the Jews back from the Babylonian exile. That second Joshua was shown as a type of the Messiah in visions as a King-High Priest in Zechariah 3:8-9 and Zechariah 6:11.

Zechariah 3:8-9 “Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come:³ I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone,⁴ and I will engrave an inscription on it,⁵ says the LORD Almighty, ‘and I will remove the sin of *the earth* in a single day.’”

Zechariah 6:11-13 “Take the silver and gold and make *crowns*,⁶ and set *them* on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak. Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Here is the man whose name is the Branch,⁷ and he will branch out from his place and build the temple

² Acts 7:45 “Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua (Ἰησοῦς {ē-ā-sū's}) brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them.”

³ Zerubbabel and Mordecai were among those “associates” of Joshua (Nehemiah 7:7) who were “symbolic of things to come” Zechariah 3:8. Both were used in symbols of Christ’s coming.

⁴ Revelation 5:6 “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living things and the elders. He had seven horns and **seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.**”

⁵ Revelation 2:17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.”

Revelation 3:12 “Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.”

⁶ The word here is in the plural and should be translated “crowns.”

⁷ Jesus is called “the branch” in Zechariah 3:8, Isaiah 4:2, 11:1, and Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15.

of the LORD. It is he who will build the temple of the LORD,⁸ and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.’

Luke 1:32a He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

“The Most High” was a name for the LORD used 36 times in the Old Testament. An example is below:

Psalms 97:9 “For you, O LORD, are the Most High over all the earth.”

Luke 1:32b-33 The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”

He would be the child prophesied by Isaiah:

Isaiah 9:6-7 “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,⁹ Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom,¹⁰ establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.”

Luke 1:34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

Mary didn’t understand. Did this mean she should get married and conceive the child through the conventional means?

Luke 1:35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Gabriel told her that the conception would not require a human father. The Holy Spirit would miraculously provide the sperm for her egg. She would miraculously give birth while remaining a virgin.

⁸ *It should be clear that this is speaking about the prophetic Joshua (Jesus) who would build the true temple with His own body. This Joshua, who was the ancestor of Jesus Christ through Mary’s mother, never did, and never will rule on his Throne. He was the “type” of the King-High Priest which Jesus became.*

⁹ *John 14:9b-10 “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.”*

¹⁰ *This is speaking of the Second Advent.*

Luke 1:36 Even Elizabeth your relative (*aunt*) is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.

The Greek word translated “relative” here is συγγενής {sün-ge-nā's} in the feminine. It literally means “close kin.” It could also be translated “cousin,” “niece,” or “aunt.” It is used elsewhere in scripture in each of those cases. However, there is no other word for “aunt” or “uncle” in scripture. Given the differences in their ages, and their apparent closeness, Elizabeth was most likely Mary’s aunt. We know that Elizabeth was descended from Levi and Aaron. Since we know that any sister on Mary’s father’s side was descended from Judah and David (Luke 3:23-33), Elizabeth must have been the sister of Mary’s mother, and thus was Mary’s aunt.

Luke 1:37 For nothing is impossible with God.”

Even though God created the universe at a word, and the biology of this virgin birth was no problem with God, the fact that God would take on humanity was a much greater miracle. The angels would stand amazed when it happened.

Luke 1:38a “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.”

Mary’s immediate response was that of humility before the Lord’s will. However, she couldn’t have begun to comprehend all that giving birth to the Messiah entailed.

Luke 1:38b Then the angel left her.

As with Gabriel’s earlier conversation with Zechariah at the Temple, all that is recorded here, which can be read aloud in less than a minute, is a short sketch of what must have been a much longer conversation.

Luke 1:39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea,¹¹

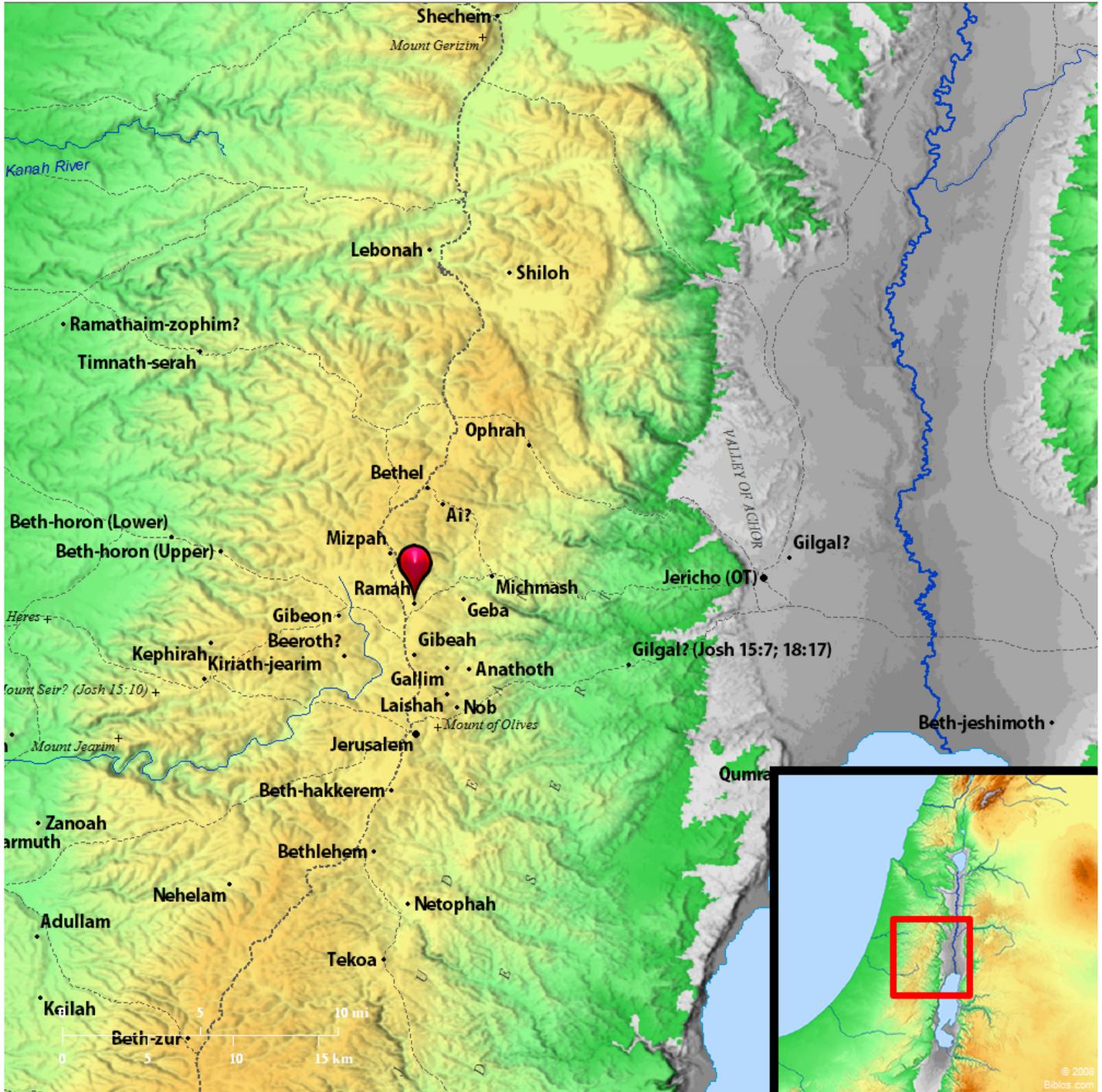
This raises the question, what was this town? As I will explain later in our study, I believe that prophecy tells us that this town in the hill country of Judea was Ramah. Ramah means “height” or “high place.” It was on the road from Galilee to Jerusalem and it was said that because of its height it was the first place from which you could see Jerusalem. See map on the next page:

The Bible does not tell us exactly why Mary hurried to Elizabeth, but it is easy to guess why. We can be sure that, as soon as possible, Zechariah had related to Elizabeth in writing the details of what Gabriel had told him in the Temple. If he had, I would be surprised if she hadn’t passed that on to her sister, Mary’s mother, in Nazareth. When the same angel Gabriel, who had spoken to Zechariah, spoke about the miracle that had happened to Elizabeth, Mary realized

¹¹ This tells us the worldly status of Zechariah, since all the important priests lived in Jerusalem or Jericho.

that, in Zechariah and Elizabeth, she would find two people who would believe her about her own miraculous pregnancy. She would have headed south to Judea on the road that ran from Galilee to Jerusalem. Even before she headed south, her miraculous pregnancy had begun.

Luke 1:40-41 **where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.**



Remember, this was during the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy. The sixth month would have begun after five months (22 weeks). In the first pregnancy the kicks of the fetus commonly begin to be felt at 25 weeks,¹² or during this period. This was probably the first time the baby in Elizabeth's womb had kicked.

Luke 1:42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear!"

Note that Elizabeth knew that Mary was to be the mother of the Lord. How? We are not told. Perhaps God had revealed to Elizabeth in a vision or a dream that the first time her child leaped in her womb it would be at the voice of the mother of the Messiah. Regardless, when Elizabeth and Mary spoke to each other, Elizabeth knew Mary's secret without a word being exchanged between them. Elizabeth's experience and faith undoubtedly gave Mary great assurance in the early days of her pregnancy. When she returned to Nazareth, and Joseph, her condition would already have been obvious, and she would need all the courage and faith she could muster to face the suspicion of her neighbors and family.

Luke 1:43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

However, although Elizabeth knew Mary's secret, she didn't understand the ministry that God was giving her in Mary's life. She probably thought someone with such a gift didn't need anything from anyone else.

Luke 1:44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

This only meant that the baby in the womb, leaped as if for joy. At that point the fetus that would become John the Baptist couldn't hear or understand anything. It was the Holy Spirit that had caused it to leap as if for joy even as the angel Gabriel had prophesied to his father Zechariah:

Luke 1:15 "He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb."

Luke 1:45 Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"

It is evident from this that the Lord had given Elizabeth some prior revelation about the one who would cause her baby to leap for joy. She also clearly knew that the Lord had already communicated with Mary and what it was that Mary had been told. This is another example of Biblical exegesis¹³ where there are details that must be inferred from other facts.

¹² www.webmd.com/...fetal-movement-feeling-baby-kick

¹³ *Exegesis definition- "critical explanation or interpretation of a text, especially of scripture."*

Luke 1:46-47 **And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,**

It has been said in defining the difference between the soul and the spirit that the soul relates to outward interaction with the physical world and the spirit relates to inward interaction with God. In Mary’s case, she was expressing her appreciation of the Lord’s glory outwardly, and inwardly she was rejoicing in her connection with God. Interestingly, the Lord’s Hebrew name **יְהוָה**; {yeh·hō·shū’·ah} which means “the LORD is salvation” is very close in meaning to the Greek of Mary’s expression here, “God my Savior.”

Luke 1:48 **for he has ~~been mindful of~~ looked with favor on the humble state of his servant.**

The New Revised Standard Version has translated the Greek word **ἐπιβλέπω** {e-pē-ble'-pō} as “looked with favor.” This seems to be a better translation considering how close that is to the other two times the word is used in the New Testament (Luke 9:38, James 2:3). Mary was very aware that she was not at all the type of grand personage that had been expected to fill the role of the mother of the Messiah.

Luke 1:48b-49 **From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.**

She knew that every generation of all humanity would recognize that she had been uniquely blessed. She had been the “woman” promised to Adam and Eve who would bear the “seed” that would crush the serpent’s head (skull) with His bruised heel.¹⁴

Luke 1:50 **His mercy extends to those who fear (*respect*) him, from generation to generation.**

She recognized that God’s mercy had been, and would always be, extended to those who believed in who God had revealed Himself to be.

Luke 1:51 **He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.**

The LORD had defeated the proud. Satan was the leader of the proud and his fate and that of those who followed him was described in Job:

Job 20:4-8 “Surely you know how it has been from of old, ever since man was placed on the earth, that the mirth of the wicked *ones* is brief, the joy of the godless *one* lasts but a moment.

¹⁴ Genesis 3:15 “And I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your seed (Satan’s original sin) and her Seed (Jesus Christ); He shall crush your head, And you shall crush His heel.”

Though his pride (*self elevation*) reaches to the heavens and his head touches the clouds,¹⁵ he will perish forever, like his own dung; those who have seen him will say, ‘Where is he?’ Like a dream he flies away, no more to be found, banished like a vision of the night.”

Luke 1:52-53 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.¹⁶

Mary realized that what God had done through her was how He had always operated. As Paul later put it in 1 Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 1:25-29 “For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength. Brothers, think of what you were when you were called.¹⁷ Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.”

Luke 1:54-55 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers.”

She realized that through her Son, God was going to fulfill all the promises He had made to the patriarchs and the true children of Israel through faith.

The Conception by Mary of Jesus Christ as Recorded in the Gospel of Matthew

The account of Jesus’ conception in the Gospel of Matthew is much shorter than Luke’s. The Gospels of John and Mark don’t even start their histories until the beginning of Jesus’ ministry thirty years later. Below is Matthew’s account.

Matthew 1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

Mary had already been pledged to Joseph before Gabriel had visited her and before she travelled to visit her aunt Elizabeth in Judea. When she returned from visiting Elizabeth, she

¹⁵ *The godless one is Satan who said: Isaiah 13:13-14 “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”*

¹⁶ *The prayer of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:2-8.*

¹⁷ *Note, their individual calling took place during their life, not at some time in eternity past.*

was already three months pregnant (Luke 1:56). Under the Mosaic Law, it wouldn't have been considered adultery for an engaged couple to have had sex since an engagement was as binding as marriage (Deuteronomy 22:23-27, Exodus 22:16-17), although under Jewish tradition it would have been considered bad form. Although it soon became apparent that Mary was pregnant, only Joseph knew that he couldn't be the father, and that Mary was liable under the law.

We might reflect on the fact that the Lord had arranged for Mary to be away in Judea for the previous three months. This meant that Joseph had no way of being sure that the father of Mary's unborn child wasn't some other man. He knew it wasn't his. He had no way of knowing for sure what might have happened to Mary during those three months. Mary's absence during those months meant a much more severe test of both Joseph's character and his faith. The trip, that the LORD had designed to strengthen and comfort Mary, was also designed to test the strength of Joseph's faith.

Matthew 1:19 **And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. NASB**

I have substituted the New American Standard Bible translation which is a more literal translation. The word "divorce" is not mentioned, although some translations (*the NIV*) seem to think it is implied and include it. Although, in most cases, divorce was not acceptable under the Law of Moses, in that day they usually found a way around that Law. Witness the divorce of Herod Antipas from his wife (Matthew 14:3-4). Witness also, Jesus' own preaching concerning the laxity of the divorce laws in his time.

Since the literal translation doesn't include "divorce" it allows for the possibility that Joseph might have found some other way to deal with the problem. I think this just means that he thought "to send her away" to live with relatives where she could have her illegitimate baby in secret. Such an action might even have allowed her to give the baby away and come back and marry Joseph later. It has been a common strategy for concealing illegitimate births from time immemorial. Joseph had a reputation as a righteous man, so for him to admit the child was his would have damaged his reputation in the synagogue if he admitted to premarital sex.

Matthew 1:20a **But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,**

It is interesting that all the LORD's communications with Joseph were in dreams.¹⁸ He had communicated with Zechariah and Mary with actual waking visitations. This tells us that God works in different ways with different people.

¹⁸ *The others are in Matthew 2:13, 19, and 22.*

Matthew 1:20b **“Joseph son of David, do not be afraid (*fear*) to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.**

The “fear” that the angel was talking about was probably Joseph’s fear that he might be breaking the Law of Moses in taking Mary as his wife.

Matthew 1:21 **She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”**

The instructions for giving the baby the name “Jesus,” which means “the LORD is salvation,” had also been given to Mary in Luke 1:31.

Matthew 1:22-23 **All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:¹⁹ “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us.”**

This was the comment of Matthew reminding his readers of the Old Testament passage in Isaiah 7:14 which had prophesied the virgin birth. We will look at that passage in detail later in this study.

Matthew 1:24 **When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.**

When Joseph awoke from his dream, he and Mary finalized the terms of their engagement. He took her home as his wife. This undoubtedly included a wedding ceremony of some kind, although it was probably restricted to a few to keep gossip to a minimum.

Matthew 1:25a **But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son.**

Notice this sentence. The Catholic Church teaches the perpetual virginity of Mary. If this was true, the Holy Spirit speaking through Matthew would not have included the qualifying phrase “until she gave birth to a son.” It would have just said “he had no union with her.” Of course, besides this, we also have the testimony of scripture that Jesus had four brothers and at least two sisters.²⁰

Matthew 1:25b **And he gave him the name Jesus.**

¹⁹ *Matthew was the first of the Gospel accounts written, and it was aimed primarily at the Jews, as is evidenced by the far greater numbers of Old Testament quotations than the other Gospels. There are 47 such quotes in Matthew as opposed to just 18 in Mark, 28 in Luke, and 18 in John.*

²⁰ *Matthew 13:55-56a “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren’t all his sisters with us?”*

When the time came to name the Child, which would be at the time of His circumcision in Bethlehem, Joseph named Him “Jesus” in accord with what both he and Mary had been commanded.

Notable Prophecies of the Virgin Birth

I think this is a good place to discuss in detail some of the Old Testament prophecies that the Messiah who would crush the Serpent’s skull would be born of a virgin. The first was given in the Garden after Adam had sinned:

Genesis 3:14-15 “So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.²¹ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring seed²² and hers; he will crush²³ your head,²⁴ and you will strike crush²⁵ his heel.”²⁶

When this passage speaks of the “seed” of the woman, we need to understand that this is unique in Scripture. In the Bible, genealogies are always run through the men. Yet here it spoke of the “seed” of the **woman** instead of the “seed” of the man, Adam. Why? Because Jesus Christ, who

²¹ This casting into the dust was a figure of Satan’s eventual judgment as in:

Isaiah 14:12 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have **been cast down** to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!

Ezekiel 28:17-18 Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So, I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade, you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So, I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and **I reduced you to ashes on the ground** in the sight of all who were watching.

²² Literally, this is the singular “seed” from the Hebrew word זֶרַע {zeh'-rah}. It can connote descendants, but only as coming from a singular “seed.” All the genealogies in the Bible focus on the descent from men so this descent from a woman was very unusual.

²³ The Hebrew word here רִשׁוֹן {shüf} is in the third person masculine singular indicating that “the seed” is not “the descendants” of the woman, but “the descendant” of the woman.

²⁴ Psalms 68:21 “Surely God will crush the heads of his enemies, the hairy crowns of those who go on in their sins.”

It was no coincidence that Jesus defeated Satan (crushed the head {skull} of the Serpent {Satan}) at a place called Golgotha which means “the place of the skull.”

²⁵ Here we have the same Hebrew word רִשׁוֹן {shüf} and tense as earlier in the verse. Both should be translated the same way.

²⁶ Christ was nailed to the Cross through his heel, behind the Achilles tendon. His heel was crushed.

was the “seed,” would be born of a woman, without a human father by means of a unique virgin birth. He would be humanity’s advocate against our great adversary, Satan.

Another next great prophecy of the Virgin Birth was in Isaiah:

Isaiah 7:10-16 “Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz (*through Isaiah*), ‘Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.’ But Ahaz said, ‘I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.’”²⁷ Then Isaiah said, ‘Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.’²⁸ He will eat curds and honey²⁹ when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right.³⁰ But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste.’”³¹

Liberal theologians, trying to deny the virgin birth, make much of the fact that the word translated “virgin” here is the Hebrew עַלְמָה {al·mä’) which can be translated “maid” or “young woman.” However, it was implicit in a status of “maid” or “young woman” in the Hebrew culture that such a “maid” or “young woman” was a virgin. To be otherwise called for death by stoning. Furthermore, the Jewish translators of the Septuagint in the 3rd Century BC translated this word into the Greek using the Greek word παρθένος {pä-r-the'-nos} which can only mean “virgin.” They understood exactly what עַלְמָה {al·mä’) meant.

When Isaiah said, “the Lord himself will give **you** a sign” in the Hebrew, the “you” is the plural “you.” The sign to be given was for the people of Israel, and not only the people of Israel, but all people everywhere. It was not for that time alone, but for all time.

There is also a prophecy about the virgin birth in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 31:21-22 “Set up road signs; put up guideposts. Take note of the highway, the road that you take. Return, O Virgin Israel, return to your towns. How long will you wander, O

²⁷ Ahaz would not state his true motives. Perhaps he was hiding them even from himself. We know from his history that Ahaz was not saying this from any sense of false self-righteousness. He was, after all, a man who had sacrificed his own sons to idols, set up a heathen altar in the Temple, and then closed the Temple. No! Ahaz’s true motive for this statement was that He did not want God to give him a sign. He was determined to ignore the will of God anyway, and he did not want anything to shed light on his hard and unrepentant heart.

²⁸ Quoted as fulfilled by Christ’s birth in Matthew 1:23. Also see Isaiah 9:6.

²⁹ Curds and honey were the baby food of that day.

³⁰ In other words, he would be born in righteousness, the only man ever so born.

³¹ Long before the Messiah was born of a virgin, Ephraim and Syria would have been laid waste by the Assyrians.

unfaithful daughter? The LORD will create a new thing on earth-- a woman will surround a man.”

“The statement “return, O Virgin Israel, return to your towns” was prophetic of the fact that the Virgin Mary would return to Bethlehem, the home of her ancestors (Luke 2:4-5).

The Statement “the LORD will create a new thing on earth-- a woman will surround a man” is also prophetic of the virgin birth. Although the language and translation are somewhat uncertain clearly the “new thing on earth” must be the virgin birth. There have been given two possible translations:

1. “a woman shall encompass a man” by which it has been interpreted as far back as Augustine that this speaks of the Virgin Mary encompassing Christ in the womb without male impregnation.
2. “a woman shall protect or defend a man” by which it could mean that the defense of all men depended on the Virgin Birth.

Below is Quoted from the Elwell Evangelical Dictionary

Doctrinal Importance of the Virgin Birth. The consistency of this doctrine with other Christian truth is important to its usefulness and, indeed, to its credibility. For Matthew and Luke, the chief importance of the event seems to be that it calls to mind (as a “sign,” Isaiah 7:14) the great Old Testament promises of salvation through supernaturally born deliverers, while going far beyond them, showing that God’s final deliverance has come. But one can also go beyond the specific concerns of Matthew and Luke and see that the virgin birth is fully consistent with the whole range of Biblical doctrine. The virgin birth is important because of:

- (1) The doctrine of Scripture. If Scripture errs here, then why should we trust its claims about other supernatural events, such as the resurrection?
- (2) The deity of Christ. While we cannot say dogmatically that God could enter the world only through a virgin birth, surely the incarnation is a supernatural event if it is anything. To eliminate the supernatural from this event is inevitably to compromise the divine dimension of it.
- (3) The humanity of Christ. This was the important thing to Ignatius and the second century fathers. Jesus was really born; he really became one of us.
- (4) The sinlessness of Christ. If he were born of two human parents, it is very difficult to conceive how he could have been exempted from the guilt of Adam’s sin and become a new head to the human race. And it would seem only an arbitrary act of God that Jesus could be born without a sinful nature. Yet Jesus’ sinlessness as the new head of the human race and as the atoning lamb of God is absolutely vital to our salvation (II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:22-24; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; Rom. 5:18-19 see below).

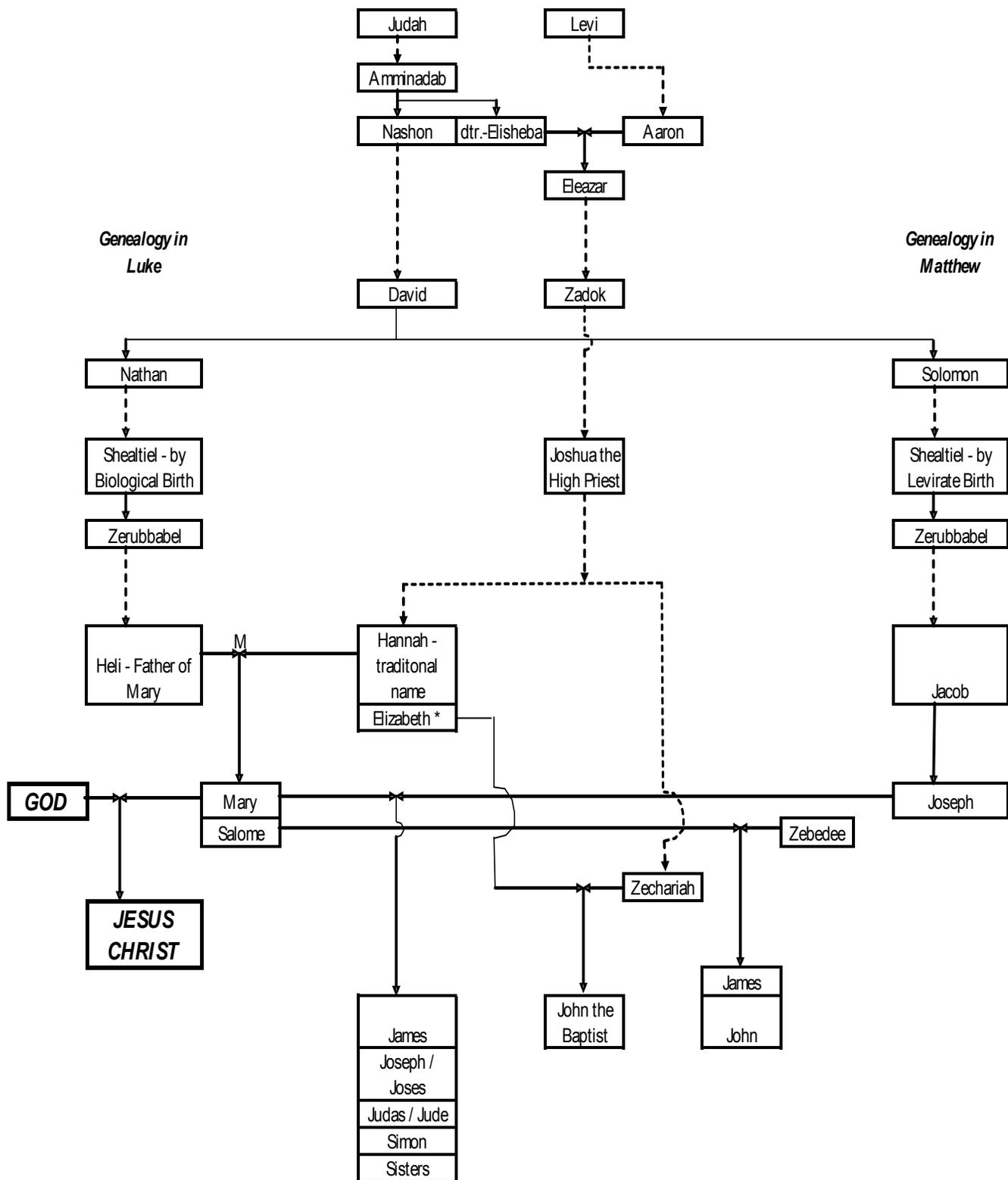
(5) The nature of grace. The birth of Christ, in which the initiative and power are all of God, is an apt picture of God's saving grace in general of which it is a part. It teaches us that salvation is by God's act, not our human effort. The birth of Jesus is like our new birth, which is also by the Holy Spirit; it is a new creation (II Cor. 5:17).

Is belief in the virgin birth "necessary"? It is possible to be saved without believing it; saved people aren't perfect people. But to reject the virgin birth is to reject God's Word, and disobedience is always serious. Further, disbelief in the virgin birth may lead to compromise in those other areas of doctrine with which it is vitally connected.

Elwell Evangelical Dictionary, topic 1733 – "Virgin Birth of Jesus."

On the next page I have inserted a condensed family tree of Jesus. In it you can see how from Mary, Jesus was descended biologically from both the line of High Priests (Levi and Aaron) and the line of Kings (Judah and David). He was also descended legally though not biologically through Joseph from the line of Kings (Judah and David).

Family of Jesus Christ



* Elizabeth could be Hannah's niece or sister according to the Greek