

Goal: use maps to follow Jesus' earthly path from the time of his conception through his ascension.

I. Lesson 1

- A. The human Jesus, like most Jews of his day, was not well travelled. He went as far south as Egypt fleeing Bethlehem as a child and as far north as Tyre, Sidon and possibly Mt. Hermon.
- B. The Bible records that Jesus was born in Bethlehem but grew up in Nazareth in Galilee. Except for a brief descent down the Mt. of Olives on a donkey, he walked everywhere. No one knows for sure how many miles Jesus walked during His earthly ministry.
- C. Based on the Gospels, it's likely that Jesus walked at least 3,000 miles during the three years of his earthly ministry. The total number of miles he walked in his lifetime is probably about the same number of miles you drive your car in a couple of years. He walked in the heat of the summer and in the cold of winter. He may have spent many nights sleeping outdoors.
- D. Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee and around the Sea of Galilee. Jesus frequently traveled to Jerusalem to go to the feasts or holy days and to the temple. That's 120 miles round trip. It would take at least three days to get there traveling through many villages.

II. Luke

- A. Nazareth to Bethlehem
- B. Luke reports that Joseph was required to register for a census in his ancestral hometown... If Joseph is from Bethlehem, what was he doing living in Nazareth. The Romans were building a new city "Sepphoris". As a "tekton", he had probably relocated to gain employment.
- C. No room in the inn...
- D. Luke reports that there were shepherds...
- E. An angel appeared and told the shepherds, no singing reported only "saying"...
- F. Tradition says that Jesus was born in a cave inside what is now the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. There is a star in the basement of the church marking the spot...
- G. What does "no room in the inn" mean...
- H. When Jesus was about a month old, his parents took him to Jerusalem to make an offering for their first born...two pigeons...
- I. Then, Luke reports that they went back to Nazareth...

III. Matthew

- A. Matthew implies that Joseph and Mary were from Bethlehem. There is no report of traveling from Nazareth. There is no report of a census. There is no report of no room in the inn. There is no report of shepherds or angels saying anything to the shepherds.

- B. However, only Matthew reports the coming of the Wise Men. They follow a star (something) for a long as two years and find their way all the way to Jerusalem when they lose track of the star. They stop at Herod the Great's Jerusalem Palace (Herod has many palaces) to ask directions. They are directed to go to Bethlehem because that's where kings are born. Don't you know that Herod wasn't happy with that report for many reasons. He wasn't born in Bethlehem and in fact had no Jewish birthright to the Jewish throne. He was threatened by the report of a new King of the Jews.
- C. When the wise men are warned to return to their own country by another road (not back through Jerusalem), Herod sends his soldiers to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem who are two years old or under. Estimates range from 5 boys to thousands. Likely, Bethlehem was a small village and the number of infants was relatively small. However, if your child is killed, it doesn't really matter how many others are.
- D. Matthew reports that Joseph was warned in a dream to flee to Egypt. Matthew is keen to report this as he is writing to a Jewish audience who would be influenced by the fulfillment of "Out of Egypt I have called me son."
- E. When Joseph gets word that King Herod is dead, he takes his family to Nazareth.

IV. Let's go back to the annunciation.

- A. Matthew reports that Mary was engaged to Joseph when it was discovered that she was pregnant. Joseph decided to put her away quietly...In Matthew, the angel appears not to Mary but to Joseph and tells him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife because the child is "of the Holy Spirit."
- B. Luke reports that the angel appeared to Mary with the greeting, "Don't be afraid, you have found favor with God..." Let it be according to your word.