

# ROSE CHRONOLOGICAL GUIDE TO THE BIBLE



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CHAPTER 9

# The Son of God

From Bethlehem to Jerusalem  
AD 1–30

Life and Ministry of Jesus

Genealogy of Jesus

Harmony of the Gospels

The first four books of the New Testament—the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—tell the story of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ the Son of God. These books show in stunning detail how Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled Old Testament prophecies about the long-awaited Messiah—the anointed one sent by God to save his people.

## Birth of Christ

### Matthew 1–2; Luke 1–2

One would expect the arrival of the Messiah to have been a major, national event for the Jewish people, right?

It was anything but.

Of the four gospels, only Luke and Matthew say anything about the birth of Jesus. Both gospel writers describe angelic visits to Joseph and Mary—a kind of heavenly heads-up to a humble, unsuspecting couple. The angelic message was straightforward, yet astounding: Mary, a betrothed virgin, would give birth to the Messiah (*Christ* in Greek). He would be called Jesus—a variant of the

name Joshua, which means “salvation”—because he would “save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). He would also be called Son of the Most High and *Immanuel*, meaning “God with us” (Matt. 1:23). He would establish a kingdom that would never end (Luke 1:32–33).

On the night of Jesus’ birth in the town of Bethlehem, the city of David, only a small band of stunned shepherds came to see the newborn baby—and this was only because they’d just heard about the event from an enthusiastic multitude of angels. Some days (possibly weeks) later, magi or “wise men” from the east showed up at the house where Jesus was. They worshiped him, showered him with gifts, and left. Had it not been for these two groups, it’s doubtful that anyone but a handful of people would have been aware that the Messiah had just been born. In fact, it was only when the magi stopped first in Jerusalem asking questions about a “newborn king” that King Herod the Great became paranoid and concocted a murderous plot to eliminate all young boys in and around Bethlehem. Warned in a dream about Herod’s intentions, Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt with Jesus. After Herod died, they settled in Nazareth of Galilee.

The gospels tell us very little about Jesus’ childhood. What we do know from some statements made in the gospels is that Jesus had siblings and that he probably learned the business of carpentry from Joseph (Mark 6:3). There is, however, one intriguing story about a Passover visit to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve years old. When his parents realized that they had started home without Jesus (after wrongly assuming he was traveling back home with other relatives), they backtracked and searched



frantically for him. They located Jesus three days later at the temple in Jerusalem where he had astonished the teachers of the law with his spiritual insights. Luke explains that Jesus “grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him” (Luke 2:40).

## Early Ministry

### Matthew 3–4; Mark 1; Luke 3–4; John 1–4

When Jesus was about the age of thirty, many people were streaming into the wilderness northeast of Jerusalem to listen to a fiery, mesmerizing prophet named John. (Jesus was actually a relative of John; see Luke 1:36.) John was calling people to repent and prepare for the Messiah’s coming. John was baptizing in the Jordan River all those who were receptive to his message. When some people began asking if he was the promised Messiah, John quickly insisted that he was only a lowly servant preparing the way for God’s anointed: “One who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie” (Luke 3:16).

Shortly after this, Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth, stepped out of the crowd. John pointed at him and declared that he was “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John

1:29). Jesus was baptized by John to identify with John and his message and the sinners Jesus had come to save. At Jesus’ baptism, he was anointed by the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven in the form of a dove and affirmed as the Son of God by an audible voice from heaven. Then, immediately, he was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to overcome the temptations of the devil (Mark 1:12–13).

After these events, Jesus began a three-year public ministry. He gathered a few disciples and quickly began to shock them with his words and works.

At a wedding in Cana of Galilee, Jesus miraculously changed water into wine, his first recorded miracle (John 2:1–11). Not only did this miracle reveal that Jesus was no mere man, but it also suggested that he had come to bring ultimate joy. Wine in the Bible is a symbol of gladness and blessing: “The LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine” (Isa. 25:6).



He Wept over It by Enrique Simonet, 1892

## Harmony of the Gospels

Over the centuries, people have created many different harmonies to bring together all the events and teachings of the life of Jesus in the four gospels. The earliest harmonies date all the way back to Justin Martyr and Tatian in the second century AD.

One common type of harmony is a chronological harmony, also called a sequential harmony. This kind of harmony attempts to arrange the events of Jesus' life in the order that they happened. Putting the gospel stories into precise chronological order is a challenging task, primarily because ancient biographies have important differences from biographies written today. One main difference is historical sequencing. Modern biographies place a premium on historical sequencing. This means that the events of a person's life are typically narrated in the order in which they occurred. The biography usually begins with the person's birth and ends with his or her death, with the events in between presented chronologically. Ancient biographers, however, had a general commitment to the historical sequence, but they didn't feel the need to place every event in their writings in chronological order. Much more emphasis was given to developing an accurate picture of the person's character. Actions, events, and sayings were placed in the biographical story line to illustrate the person's character, no matter when they occurred.

Let's look at an example from the gospels: the story of a woman anointing Jesus' feet.

◆ John identifies the woman as Mary (Martha's sister) and places this event just before Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (John 12:1–8).

◆ Matthew and Mark also describe the same anointing as John, but don't mention the name of the woman. They place the story later in their gospels after they've told the story of Jesus' triumphal entry (Matt. 26:6–13; Mark 14:3–9).

◆ In Luke's gospel, there is also a story about a "sinful" woman anointing Jesus' feet, but Luke places this event much earlier in his gospel (Luke 7:36–50).

Was the anointing in Luke's gospel the same one as in Matthew, Mark, and John? If it's not the same event, this means there were two times a woman anointed Jesus' feet. If this was, however, the same anointing, it's possible that Luke placed this event out of historical sequence to illustrate what kind of Messiah Jesus was—the kind who heals and forgives. The two stories Luke writes just before the anointing story are ones of healing (Luke 7:1–17), and the anointing story is one of forgiveness (Luke 7:36–50).

Though we might not know the exact chronology of all gospel events, looking at the stories of Jesus together in a harmony can give us a fresh new perspective on the four gospels and the life and ministry of our Savior.



Event	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John
Gospel prologue			1:1-4	1:1-18
Genealogy of Jesus	1:1-17		3:23-38	
<b>BIRTH and CHILDHOOD</b>				
<i>Key Places: Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Egypt, Nazareth</i>				
Angel tells Zechariah that his wife Elizabeth will bear a son.			1:5-25	
Angel tells Mary that she will bear a son through the Holy Spirit.			1:26-38	
Mary visits Elizabeth; Mary's song.			1:39-56	
John the Baptist is born to Elizabeth and Zechariah.			1:57-80	
Angel tells Joseph in a dream to take Mary as his wife.	1:18-25			
Jesus is born in Bethlehem.			2:1-7	
Shepherds visit Jesus after angels appear to them.			2:8-20	
As an infant, Jesus is brought to the temple for dedication.			2:21-38	
Magi from the east visit Jesus.	2:1-12			
Joseph, Mary, and Jesus flee to Egypt to escape King Herod.	2:13-18			
Joseph, Mary, and Jesus return to Nazareth.	2:19-23		2:39-40	
At age twelve, Jesus amazes teachers at the temple.			2:41-52	
<b>EARLY MINISTRY</b>				
<i>Key Places: Jordan River, Judea, Cana, Jerusalem, Samaria</i>				
John the Baptist preaches in the Judean wilderness.	3:1-12	1:1-8	3:1-18	1:19-34
John baptizes Jesus in the Jordan River.	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21-22	
Jesus resists Satan's temptations in the wilderness.	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13	
Jesus gathers his first disciples.				1:35-51
Jesus turns water into wine at a wedding in Cana.				2:1-12
Cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem at Passover.				2:13-25
Nicodemus and Jesus converse.				3:1-21
John the Baptist testifies about Jesus.				3:22-36
Herod Antipas imprisons John the Baptist.			3:19-20	
Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well.				4:1-42
<b>MINISTRY PRIMARILY in GALILEE</b>				
<i>Key Places: Capernaum, Caesarea Philippi, Tyre/Sidon, Cana, Nain, Bethsaida</i>				
Jesus preaches throughout Galilee.	4:12-17, 23-25	1:14-15	4:14-15	4:43-45
In Cana, Jesus heals an official's son who is in Capernaum.				4:46-54
Jesus calls disciples.	4:18-22	1:16-20	5:1-11	

# Holy Land in the Time of Jesus





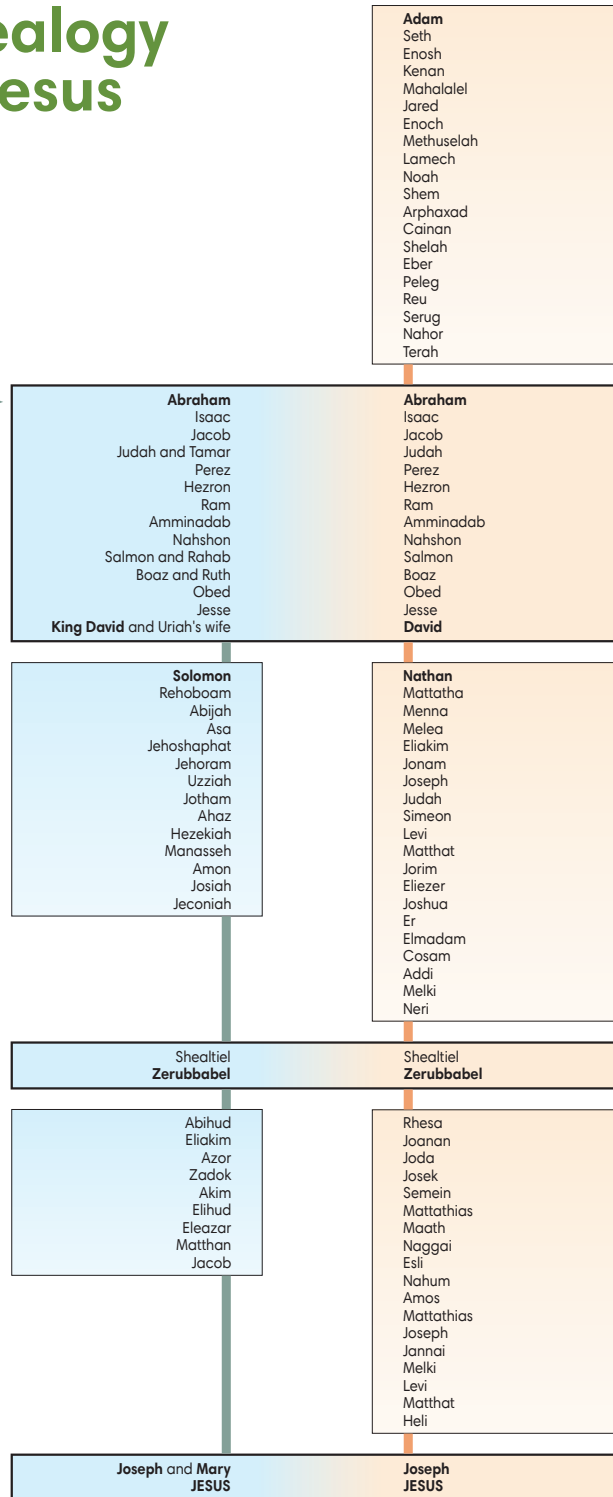
# Genealogy of Jesus

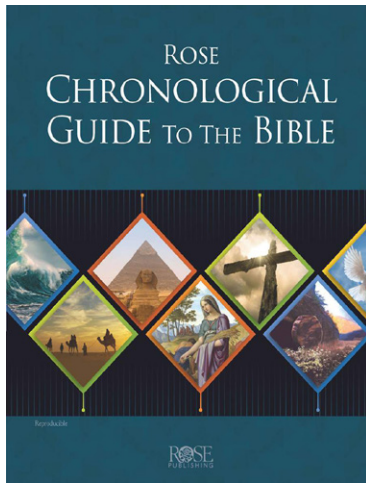
## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Matthew lists the genealogy from Abraham to Jesus.  
Matt. 1:1-16

## THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Luke lists the genealogy from Jesus to Adam.  
Luke 3:23-38



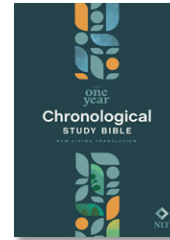


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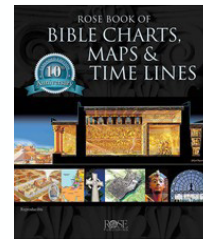


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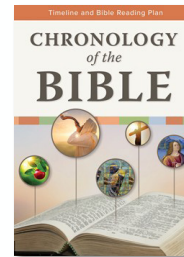


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