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# THE JOURNEY BEGINS!

Stephen Valgos

## Student Text

An Introduction to Jesus the Christ according  
to Matthew and John, Third Edition Revised

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According to Matthew and John*

Third Edition Revised

**STUDENT TEXT**

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This book is dedicated to my wonderful wife, Jill, who so patiently waited for me to finally come to bed as I labored late into the night time and time again. And to my sons, Mark and Luke, that they may one day search the Scriptures for themselves and experience the excitement and joy of encountering God in its pages.

I want to offer my sincere appreciation to my beloved students at St. Stanislaus Parish School (Modesto, California), classes of 2003 and 2004, for your love, patience, enthusiasm, energy, and willingness

to celebrate and share with me the joy of studying the Sacred Scriptures as this work was created. May God bless you and make his presence known to you through them always.

I want to thank my student aides, Anthony Palermo and Kristin Garke, for their help in editing and formatting earlier editions of this work. Finally, my thanks to the Central Catholic High School English Department teaching staff for their willingness to edit this work in addition to the piles of student essays through which they courageously waded each quarter.

All scripture is inspired by God  
and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness,  
so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love  
and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great  
that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons,  
the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life.

*Dei Verbum* 21

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Dear Parents,

I owe a great deal of thanks to many parents who approached me with their concerns and who further helped me to think through the strengths and weaknesses of this Bible study program as it developed into its present form. I designed the program to supplement the regular school curriculum of Scripture study. While teaching religion curriculum, I recognized a true deficit in Biblical literacy among Catholic school children and, in truth, among many Catholic adults as well.

The Church affirmed her teachings at Vatican II, in the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)*: “Like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated by Sacred Scripture. For in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life” (paragraph 21). I have therefore dedicated time and energy to discerning how best to convey the accounts of the life, ministry, suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, as found in the Gospels of Matthew and John. There is no easy way around some of the more difficult stories of prejudice, adultery, violence, and conflict that one encounters in the Gospel accounts. It is our task not to sidestep these issues, but instead to address together many of these topics in a reflective, meaningful, and prayerful way.

Because parents are the primary educators in faith, I encourage you to work through these Bible studies with your children so that you can discuss and grow in understanding of and love for God while reading his Word together, as well as sort out some of the complexities of the text prior to your child’s coming to class. Your child’s teacher will undoubtedly do his or her best to explain the deeper spiritual richness that the Scripture intends to convey in telling the story, but no one teacher can address all of the questions that your child might have. It is paramount, therefore, that we work together to teach salvation history to your children.

I thank you in advance for your commitment to your child's Catholic education and hope that you take every opportunity to work with your child's teacher while searching the Scriptures. If you have comments, questions, or concerns either now or in the future, please do not hesitate to call your child's teacher. You may also e-mail me personally at [stephen@catholicevangelist.com](mailto:stephen@catholicevangelist.com). I will do my best to get back to you in a timely manner.

In God's grip,  
Stephen P. Valgos, M.T.S.  
Catholic Evangelist

Please sign here to show your willingness to grow and learn with your child this year.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## **Reflect Before Reading the Gospels**

In the space provided, write what you know about the Gospels: their main characters, events, or central story. Why do you think Christians concern themselves with reading the Gospels at all? What do you hope to learn by reading the Gospels according to Matthew and John? How do you think these two Gospels differ in their teaching about Jesus' life, teachings, and ministry? How might what you read change your life?



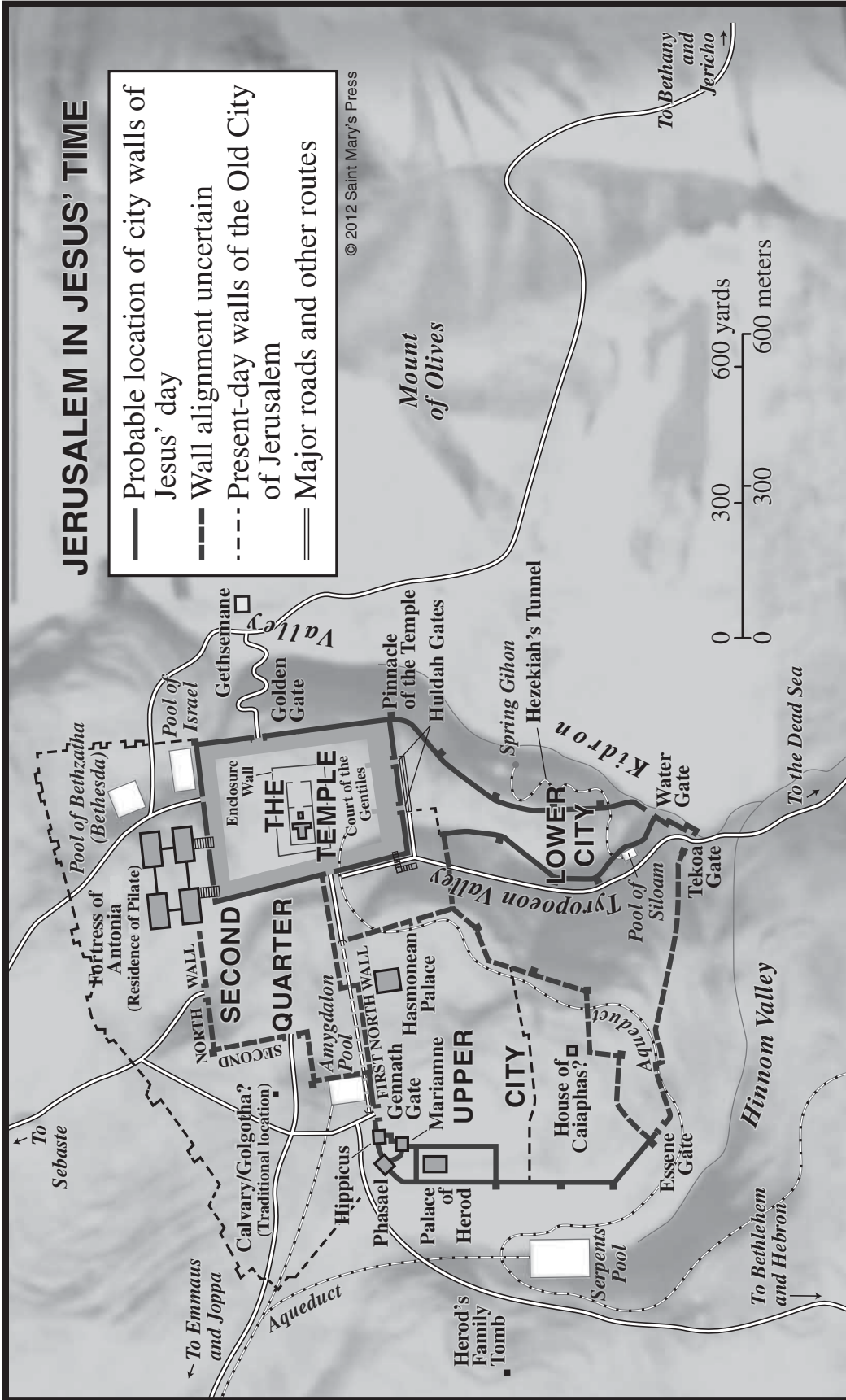




# JERUSALEM IN JESUS' TIME

- Probable location of city walls of Jesus' day
- - - Wall alignment uncertain
- · · Present-day walls of the Old City of Jerusalem
- == Major roads and other routes

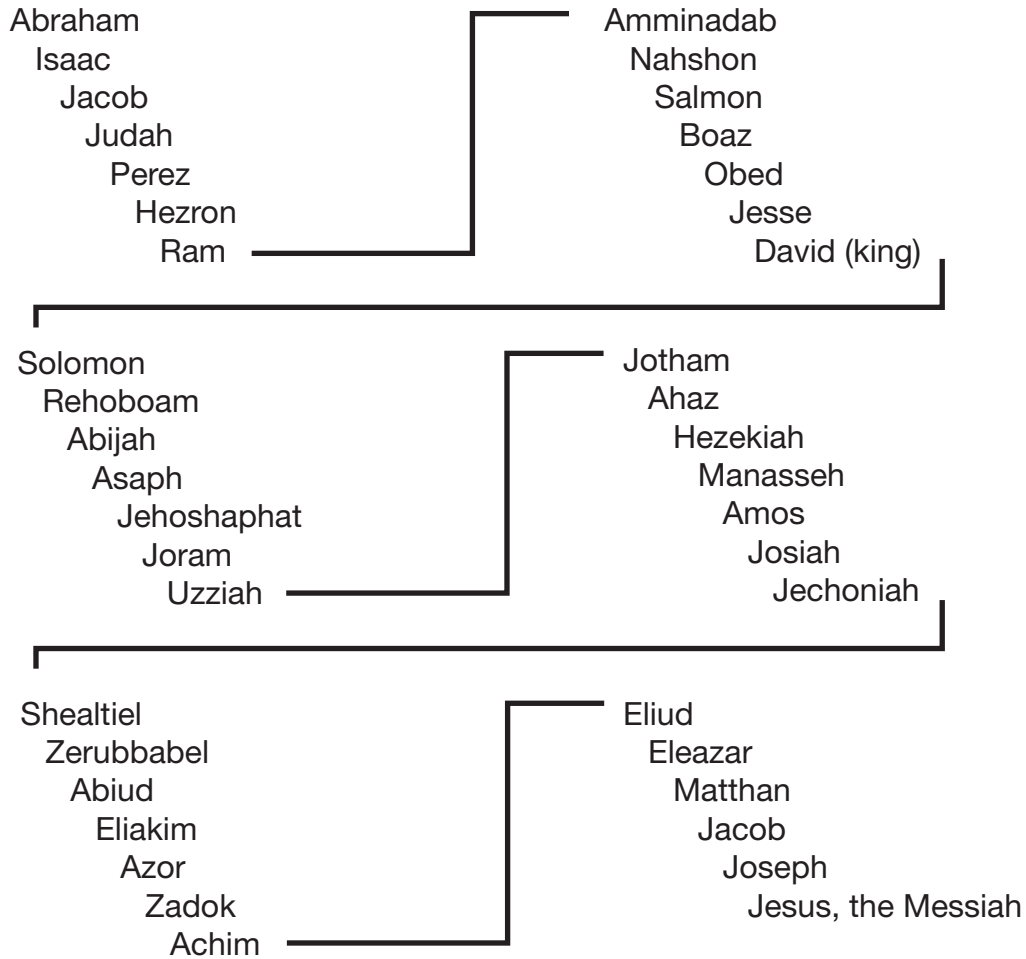
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# Matthew Chapter 1: Genealogy of Jesus

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Matthew, writing to a largely Jewish-Christian community, emphasizes Jesus' connection to the Father of the Hebrew people, Abraham, and to the great king of Israel, David.



Student Learning Objective:  
To appreciate the infancy narrative as a means  
by which Matthew roots Jesus within the  
Jewish culture and history.

## **The Gospel According to St. Matthew Chapters 1 and 2**

1. To whom, according to Matthew, does Jesus' genealogy lead back?
2. Matthew gives three sets of fourteen generations. Who or what is the first and last person or event in each generation?
3. Joseph intended to divorce Mary quietly because she was found with child. What does the Law of Moses prescribe for someone in Mary's situation? See Deuteronomy 22:20.
4. If you were Mary, knowing that you would be put to death as a result of your mysterious pregnancy, would you be able to trust in God? If you were Joseph, would you believe the angel? Explain.
5. Why does the angel tell Joseph to name the child Jesus?

6. What, according to the prophet Isaiah, will the child be called? What does it mean?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. How does King Herod feel when the magi from the east show up in Jerusalem looking for the newborn king of the Jews?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What do the magi offer to Jesus when they see the child with his mother, Mary?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What does Herod do when he finds out that the magi have deceived him?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. Jesus ends up back in the land of Israel. From what land did the holy family come?

**Reflection Question**

Matthew tells us quite a few different names for Jesus. What do you think is Matthew's reason for this? Do the names that Matthew uses for Jesus tell us something about him? Explain. What other names have you heard that describe the Son of God?

My verse to share is _____:_____ because . . .
--

Student Learning Objective:

To appreciate the message of John the Baptist and the Father in Heaven as an affirmation of Jesus' mission.

## **The Gospel According to St. Matthew Chapters 3 and 4**

1. What is John the Baptist's message?
2. Why were Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan going out to John?
3. What might the Pharisees and Sadducees say to show that they are saved, according to John?
4. What did Jesus see as he came up from the Jordan after being baptized?
5. What did the voice from the heavens say after Jesus' baptism?
6. When does "the tempter" approach Jesus?

7. On what does Jesus say that man lives?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. By the third temptation, the devil has offered Jesus the satisfaction of physical desires, power, and possessions. What is Jesus' final statement to the devil?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What do "the people who sit in darkness" see, according to Isaiah the prophet (quoted in Matthew chapter 4)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What exactly does Jesus do in Galilee?

**Reflection Question**

Satan tempted Jesus with desires of the flesh, power, and possessions. How does the devil tempt you with these same things? Give specific examples of things you want or feel that keep you from focusing on and following God.

My verse to share is _____:_____ because . . .
--