

"Can Anything Good Come Out Of Nazareth?"

Prophecied:

MAT 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Nazareth was the typical small town of the province of Galilee. Almost the whole town was made up of neighbors who worked the soil. Joseph was pleased, since he and Mary would live in this familiar little town after their wedding. He would--not farm, like most of his neighbors--but have a carpenter shop. He had learned carpentry from his father--he could hold with his toes the longest beams to saw them for his father to nail, using the shiny brass nails from the keg in the corner. Here he and Mary would have their family, at least eight children, they planned.

He had known Mary since--well, since *she* was a child--but of course they did not get to know each other, since she *was* only a child. He had a few more years than this since he needed to be able to provide for a large family. By custom, the marriage was arranged by their parents much earlier than it would actually take place. But he had been happy with their selection, and looked forward to the marriage.

The houses in Nazareth had been placed close together, so that more land could be used for fields. So they saw one another often. Sometimes they would even share pomegranates or the raisins or dried figs Mary's mother gave them.

Joseph worked with the hammer, driving the bronze nails into the doorframe that he was making for the new mud-brick house that he and his new family would share. He was proud of the shinyness of the metal, the newly sawed sycamore wood, and of the bride he would begin this fresh stage of life with.

"When we live here in Nazareth", he planned to himself, "we'll be able to live alright, making yokes for oxen and plows for the farmers," not knowing what the future would hold for the members of his own family.

It was probably when Mary was about thirteen that plans for the wedding began in earnest; then after about a year of preparation by the couple, all was ready.

It was during this time that Mary came to him one day saying "Joseph, an angel came to me last night, telling me that I was to give birth to a son. And--oh, Joseph--I know it is difficult for you to believe--but the angel said this was to be the son of God!" Joseph, I haven't been unfaithful and even now, I think it's already begun. I have not been afraid because the angel was so reassuring.

Joseph felt that Mary was not intentionally deceiving him, but he wanted to think. He didn't want to make his fiancée an example of the law's treatment of unfaithful engaged girls, but--well--it wasn't his child! He'd have to divorce his betrothed privately.

Joseph slept fitfully that night. What was he to think? But the angel came to him in the midst of his misery: In Matt. 1:20 the Bible records: But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit." And it goes on in Matt. 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."

"Oh," he thought, "how could I have suspected dear little Mary!" he said, relieved. "I am so privileged to have them both in my care! What an honor!" not realizing all that was to come. He could hardly wait to see Mary!

Fulfilled:

Matt. 2:23 and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."