

# The Journey to the Promise

## I. Faith's Journey to Home

### A. Family Tree

[Matt 1:1–2 ESV](#)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac

### B. Abraham

#### 1. Promises and Containers

God promised Abraham land 5 times and descendants 5 times. The war continues.

Antisemitism is a symptom of a culture that is in danger of dying.

[Gen 12:2 \(ESV\)](#) And I will make of you a great nation, .....

[15:5](#) And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

[17:5](#) ... Your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

[22:17](#) I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies,

#### 2. Grief and Faith

[Gen 23:11](#) Sarah lived 127 years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.

[Gen 23:2 Tanakh](#) Sarah died in ... Hebron—in the land of Canaan; and Abraham proceeded to mourn for Sarah and to bewail her.

When **Sarah died** Abraham owns **no land** and has only **one son** (Ishmael was loved, but not counted in the covenant of PROMISE, which could only come by faith)

In the next verse we read

**Gen 23:3 Tanakh** Then Abraham rose from beside his dead, and spoke to the Hittites, saying,  
“I am a resident alien among you; sell me a burial site among you, that I may remove my dead for burial.”

### **Faith in Action**

**First thing** Abraham does: He **buys** a plot of **land** to bury Sarah. He pays an exorbitant price for a tiny piece of the promised land.

**Second thing:** He **finds Isaac a wife.**

**Gen 24:4 ESV** ...Go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”

**Abraham heard the future calling to him.**

Sarah had died. Isaac was unmarried.

**Abraham had neither land nor grandchildren.**

He did not cry out, in anger or anguish, to God.

Instead, he heard the still, small voice saying:

*The next step depends on you:*

Create a future that I will fill with My spirit. He survived the shock and grief.

**Faith** constructs a landing strip for the Promise to land.

**Faith** is able to live with delay without losing trust in the Promise;

to experience disappointment without losing hope;

to know that the road between the real and the ideal is long and yet be willing to undertake the journey.

That was Abraham’s and Sarah’s faith. It must be ours.

Land (Israel) and children (Jewish continuity) remain concerns to this day.

**Abraham to Joseph**, the PROMISE traveled almost 2000 years of narrow way through a wild history.

**Matt 1:16 (ESV)** and Jacob the father of **Joseph** the husband of **Mary**, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

## II. Not So Simple

God delivers all He promises, but not always when or how we expect.

### A. Mary's Unique Faith

#### 1. Unexpected!

[Luke 1:26–33 NIV84](#)

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,

to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

The **angel** went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

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

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

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

He will be **great** and will be called the **Son of the Most High**. 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.”

#### 2. How Can This BE? Is it Possible?

[34–35](#) And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

And the angel answered her, “The **Holy Spirit** will come upon you, and the **power** of the Most High will **overshadow** you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

### 3. Mary and Faith

#### a. Testimony

36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

#### a. Declaration

37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” [slide 1]

#### b. Response

38 And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

(NLT) May **everything** you have said about me **come true**.”

This was Mary’s faith...It must be ours

## B. Joseph’s Sterling Character

### 1. Impossible Situation — Mary returns from Elizabeth’s

Matt 1:18–19

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

### 2. Angel’s Message in a Dream

#### a. The Paternity is Unique

1:20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

#### b. Salvation Has a Name and a Gender

21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name **Jesus**, for he will **save his people** from their sins.”

### c. This was Prophesied

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

### 3. The Faith of Joseph

24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,

Abraham’s faith...Mary’s faith... Joseph’s faith...it must be ours...

*The divine promise is not what it first seemed: a **statement** that God will act. It is in fact a **request**, an invitation from God to Abraham and his children that they should act. **God will help** them. The outcome will be what God said it would be. But not without **total commitment** from Abraham’s family against what will sometimes seem to be insuperable obstacles.*

## III. The Faith of the Wise Men

Mt 2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east **came** to Jerusalem,

### A. Signs - Book of Creation

Mt 2:2 NIV **We saw** his star in the east and **have come to worship** him.”

God uses Earth and sky to get our attention.

Miraculous Star

They end up on Jerusalem

### B. Scripture - Book of Creator

**Faith brought them to Jerusalem**

**An emotional upheaval**

Mt 2:2 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;

## A theological response

**Mt 2:4-6 NLT** He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said, “for this is what the prophet wrote: ‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.’”

## C. Detour into Stuck Faith

Signs are all around us. Sunsets, birth of a baby, majestic mountains, migrating birds.. butterflies.. whales. Respond general or specific

1. **People upheaval but got over it**
2. **Priests & Scholars faith without action**
3. **Herod responded with treachery**

Somewhat like Laban

**Mt 2:7-8 NIV** Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared.

He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

## D. Faith Unstuck

**Mt 2:9-11 ESV** After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

They **went** on their way

Behold, the **star!** - Led them the to the Promise

*Supernatural Joy - a Confirmation*

**The Aim of all God's messages is to bring us to Jesus**

Fell down - Worship - Gifts

## IV. Dreams, Faith, and the PROMISE

### A. Warned in a Dream

**Mt 2:12** And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

### B. Joseph's Dream and Faith

**Mt 2:13** Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."

Back to Egypt

Avoiding Destruction

Remain Until I tell You

### C. Faith Kept the Promise Alive

**2:14-15** And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt

and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

## V. Our Journey

A. Christmas is an annual refresher course that God keeps His Promises

**All the Promises of God find their "Yes" in Jesus!**

### 2. The Only THING that counts

**Gal 5:6 NIV**... The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

**He is looking for Faith and for faithful friends**

**Faith is not passivity, but courage to act and not be deterred.**

**Faith in action creates a container for the future**

**Faith makes a landing strip for God's Promises.**

**Faith can live with delay without losing trust**

**Faith can experience disappointment without losing hope;**

**Faith knows that the road between the real and the ideal is long and  
yet**

**Faith is willing to undertake the journey.**

**3. He came. He died and rose again. He keeps His promise and will  
come again!**

**Holy Spirit COME**

*Let's Worship*

*JOY TO THE WORLD*