

a NAZARENE

Pg 1

"But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel: for those who sought the young Child's life are dead. And he arose, and took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judaea in the place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there: but, being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside to the region of Galilee. .And He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." (Matthew 2: 19-23)

Nazarene: from the greek word *Nazoraios* which means: a Nazarene, an inhabitant of Nazareth.

Nazareth: from the greek word *Nazaret* which means: Nazareth, a city of Galilee, where Jesus lived before His ministry. The meaning of the word Nazareth is uncertain.

The context of these verses makes it clear that Jesus was called "a Nazarene" after the name of the city where He lived for many years prior to His public ministry. Jesus is often called "Jesus of Nazareth" or more correctly "Jesus the Nazarene" within the New Testament: (see Matthew 26:27, Luke 18:37, John 18:5, 7, 19:19, Acts 2:22, 3:6, 4:10, 6:14, 22:8, 26:9).

In context, this title of Jesus is spoken of as fulfilling that *which was spoken through the prophets*; not 'of' or 'by' the prophets, but more distinctly 'through' the prophets; that is God speaking through various prophets about certain things that are fulfilled by the fact that the Father's promised Messiah, Jesus was associated with Nazareth, by growing up in that city.

Although there is not much known about the city of Nazareth in the days of Jesus, some facts may be gleaned from passages in the new Testament, and from archeology:

Nazareth is called a 'city' (Greek: *Polis*) (Matthew 2: 19-23), and not a 'village' (Greek: *Kome*). Cities had larger populations than villages. Cities were often, but not always walled; while villages usually were not walled. Nazareth, like other Cities, was probably the place of commerce for the surrounding smaller villages.

Joseph and Mary both lived in Nazareth prior to the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26-27...; and Luke 2:4-5..., 39). They left Nazareth prior to the birth of Jesus, to register for the census in Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. After a few years, including some exile time in Egypt, Joseph and Mary, returned to Nazareth with the child Jesus.

Nazareth was a city located in Lower Galilee, a region with a significant gentile population, and to the southwest of the Sea of Galilee. Nazareth, may also of had a mixed Jewish and Gentile population.

A very large ancient Roman bath house, recently discovered within the the modern city of Nazareth, may indicate that Nazareth was a garrison City for a large number of Roman soldiers, and possibly other non Jewish people. This would, perhaps, have given Jewish people in the surrounding regions, a generally negative opinion of Nazareth; as surmised by Nathaniel:

"Now ... Philip found Nathanael, and said unto him, 'We have found Him (the promised Messiah), of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, **Jesus the Nazarene**, the son of Joseph.' And Nathanael said unto him, '**Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?**' (John 1:44-46)

a NAZARENE

Pg 2

Nazareth did, however, have a Synagogue. (Mt 13:54) And from this Synagogue Jesus the Nazarene was removed with hostility., by His fellow Nazarenes:

And Jesus said, 'Truly I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in His own country. But I tell you a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elijah sent, except unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman who was a widow (and a Gentile). And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was healed, except Naaman the Syrian (a Gentile).' And all those in the Synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill upon which their city was built, so that they might cast Him down headlong." (Luke 4:16-30).

Concerning Jesus, Nazareth, His home city was one of unbelief! Jesus could not do many miracles in Nazareth because of this unbelief. This may be because the inhabitants of Nazareth knew Him well (see Matthew 13:53-58); and just could not accept one of their own as being the Messiah! Even His own brothers did not believe in Him! (John 7:5) This fulfills the prophecy spoken by Jesus Himself which says, "*A Prophet is not without honor except in His own home-region, and in His own household!*" (see Matthew 13:57, Mark 6:4, Luke 4:24, and John 4:44)

Jesus is also called 'the Nazarene' because that was His home city; and it helped people to distinguish Him from other persons who were also named Jesus. He was 'the Jesus' from Nazareth.'

In the Old Testament there are no specific verses that mention that Jesus "shall be called a Nazarene." Nor is there any mention of the city Nazareth. Apparently, Matthew is using the phrase 'He shall be called **a Nazarene** to summarize various prophecies spoken by God through various prophets. These prophecies would collectively reflect aspects associated with the reputation of Nazareth of Galilee, and the fact that Jesus grew up there. Consider the following:

The Rulers of the Jews did not believe that Jesus the Nazarene was the Messiah:

"Nicodemus, said unto them (the religious rulers of Israel), (he who came to Jesus by night, himself being one of them,) 'does our law judge any man before it hears from Him, and knows what He is doing?' They answered and said unto him, 'Are you also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee (and thus Nazareth) arises no prophet.' " (John 7:50-52)

But they were very wrong!! Jesus **was a Nazarene**, and a Prophet, and the Messiah, who moved from the tribal inheritance of Zebulun to the tribal inheritance of Naphtali; both locations within the borders of Galilee of the Gentiles:

"Now when Jesus had heard that John (the Baptist) was cast into prison, He departed into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the lake shore, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphthali, so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, '*The land of Zebulun (where Nazareth was located), and the land of Naphthali where (Capernaum was located), by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, **Galilee of the Gentiles**; The people who sat *in darkness* saw a **Great Light**; and to those who sat *in the region and shadow of death, light has sprung up.*' From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:12-17)(quotation is from Isaiah 9:1-2)*

a NAZARENE

Pg 3

Jesus **was a Nazarene** in whom all the rulers of the Jews and Gentiles were against:

“And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, 'Lord, You are God, who has made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; and who by the mouth of Your servant David has said, '***Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.***' For of a truth against Your Holy Child Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever Your hand and Your counsel determined beforehand to be done.” (Acts 4:23-28)(quotation is from Psalm 2:1-2)

“Then he (Pontius Pilate) delivered Him (Jesus) unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led Him away. And bearing His cross He went forth into a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the middle. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, ***Jesus the Nazarene the King of the Jews.*** This title then was read by many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was near to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.” (John 19:16-20)

“You men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus the Nazarene, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did through Him in the midst of you, as you yourselves also know; Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain Him: ... This Jesus God has raised up, of which we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has shown forth this, which you now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he himself said, 'The LORD (the Father) said unto my Lord (Jesus), sit on My Right Hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool.' Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made this same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ! (Acts 2:22-23, 32-36)

JESUS is ...

was a Nazarene

Called by many “Jesus the Nazarene”

**from a city of no good reputation called Nazareth,
located within Galilee of the Gentiles,
Thus fulfilling the prophetic word of God!**

**Rejected by His own city!
Rejected by His own nation!
Rejected by the rulers of His day!**

**Approved by the Father!
Accepted by us!**

**Thank You Lord Jesus for being our Great Light!
Thank you for being both our Lord and Christ!**