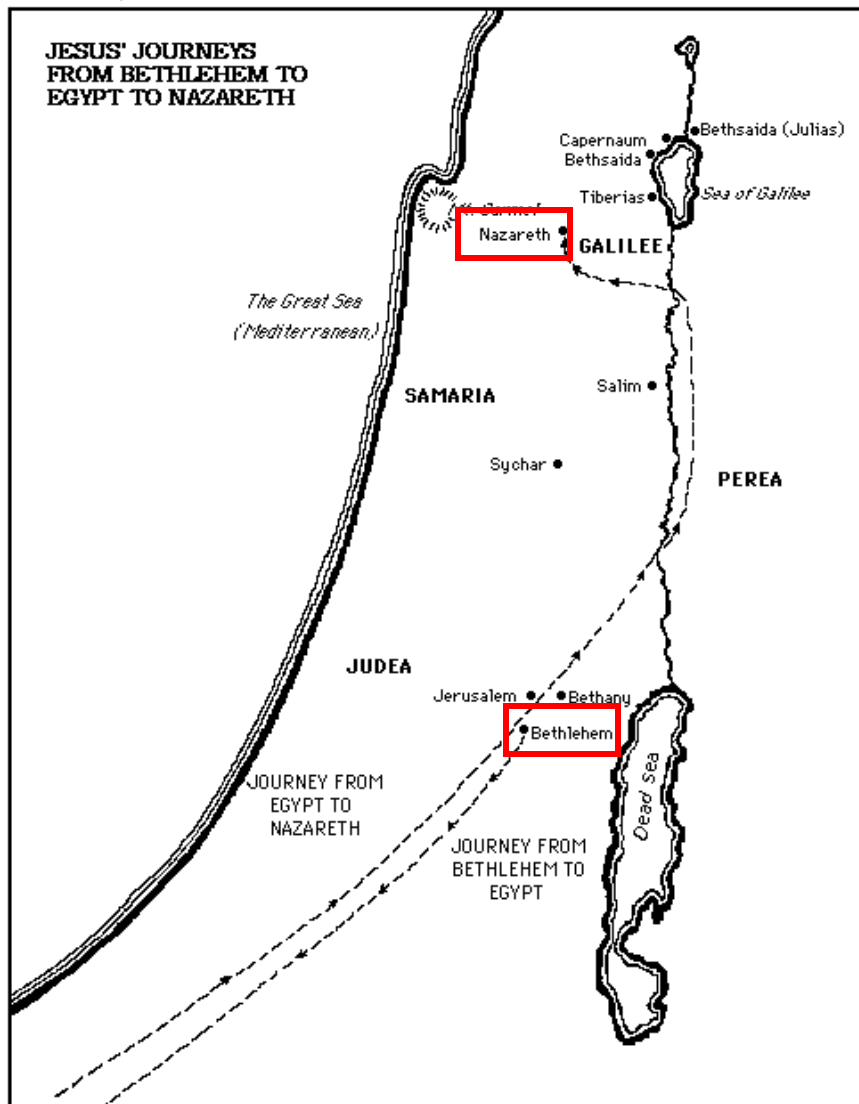
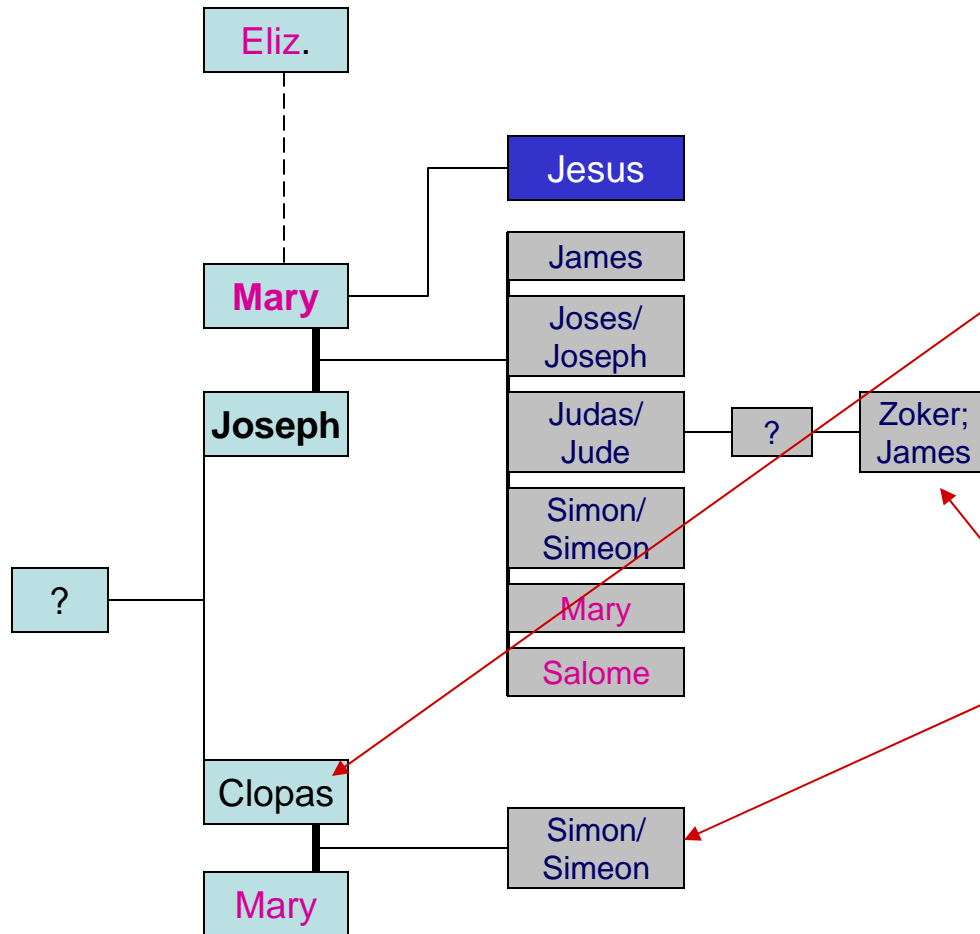


(BKC [NT] p. 21)



## The Early Family of Jesus



From the NT and other reliable early sources, especially the second-century writer Hegesippus, who preserves Palestinian Jewish Christian traditions, the following relatives from the generation of Jesus' parents onward are known:

Jesus' mother Mary and adoptive father Joseph.

Joseph's brother **Clopas** (Hegesippus, quoted in Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 3.11; 3.32.6; 4.22.4). "Mary of Clopas" (Jn 19:25) is probably his wife. He may well be the same person as Cleopas (Lk 24:18). Clopas is a Semitic name and Cleopas is a Greek name; Jews of this period frequently used both a Semitic name and a Greek name that sounded similar.

Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, was a relative of Jesus' mother, Mary, according to Luke 1:36 (the precise relationship is not specified).

**Jesus' four brothers: James, Joses** (or Joseph; Joses is an abbreviated form), **Judas** (or Jude, an English variant of the name that is sometimes used for this brother of Jesus) and **Simon** (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3).

**Jesus' sisters** (at least two: Mt 13:56; Mk 6:3). Later sources, perhaps correctly, name them **Mary** and **Salome** (Protev. James 19.3—20.4; Gos. Phil. 59.6-11; Epiphanius Haer. 78.8.1; 78.9.6).

**Simeon** (Simon) son of Clopas (Hegesippus, quoted in Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 3.11; 3.32.6; 4.22.4).

**Zoker and James, two grandsons of Jesus' brother Jude** (Hegesippus, quoted in Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 3.19.1-3.20.7; 3.32.5-6; and in Paris MS 1555A; Bodleian MS Barocc. 142).

Abris, Abraham and his son James, three descendants of the family of Jesus. They are named in medieval chronicles, which may preserve early sources, as bishops of Ctesiphon-Seleucia in central Mesopotamia in the second century.

Conon of Magydos, martyred in 250-51, was probably a descendant of the family of Jesus (Martyrdom of Conon 4.2).

Among those who were prominent in the leadership of the Christian movement at the end of the first century were the two **grandsons of Jude**. This at least must be a reliable inference from the somewhat legendary account that Hegesippus gives about them. He says that, **like Simeon son of Clopas, they came under suspicion, since they were descendants of David, and were brought before the emperor Domitian himself**. As evidence that they were not politically dangerous, they pointed out that they were merely hard-working peasant farmers, farming only 39 plethra of land (quoted in Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 3.19.1—3.20.7; 3.32.5-6). The precise figure suggests an accurate knowledge of the size of the family's small holding in Nazareth, which had passed down to Zoker and James and would have been well known to Palestinian Jewish Christians.