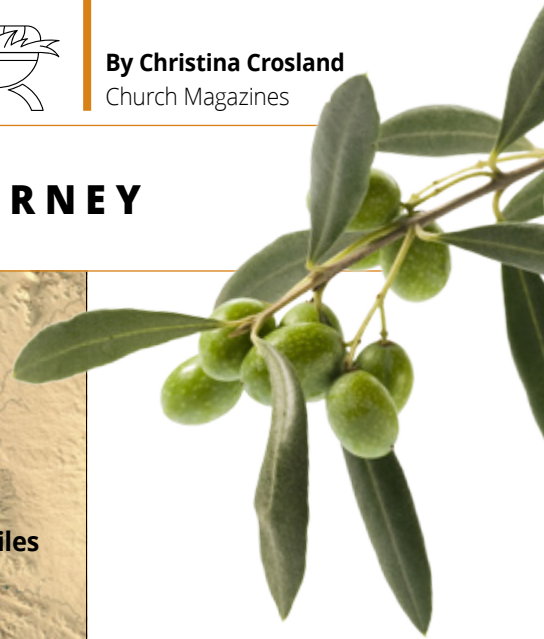




THE FIRST CHRISTMAS JOURNEY



W

e tell the Christmas story every year, but how often do we picture the journey that Mary and Joseph took? Their faith and sacrifices are significant parts of the story.



1. Luke 1:26-27, 30-31

Mary was from Nazareth, a village of 400-500 people.¹ To the world, she was a simple peasant girl. And yet she and Joseph accepted their calling to raise the Son of God.

2. Luke 2:4-5

Traveling to Bethlehem would have taken at least four to five days,² and the scriptures give no hint of a donkey accompanying them through the rocky hills. Even "great with child," Mary made the journey with Joseph that fulfilled prophecy: the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (see Micah 5:2).

3. Luke 2:7-11

In Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary were without their own home or crib to place the King of kings. They must have felt great humility as they witnessed, amidst an otherwise



Nazareth

About 92 miles
(148 km)

Jerusalem
Bethlehem

Egypt At least 150 miles (240 km)



humble birth, the clear signs that this babe was the Son of God.

4. Matthew 2:13-14

Without warning, the small family had to leave their city and country behind.

Before the Christ child was even two years old, His life was being threatened (see Matthew 2:16). But dedication to and love for their Savior motivated Mary and Joseph to take the long trip to Egypt.

5. Matthew 2:19-23

After some time in an unfamiliar land, Joseph and Mary made their longest trip yet. But the miles must have seemed shorter, because this time, they were returning home. Once there, they put their faith in God and raised He who would "be called a Nazarene" (Matthew 2:23).



Like Mary and Joseph, **WE TOO ARE TRAVELING ON OUR OWN JOURNEY WITH JESUS CHRIST.**

While the going may be long and difficult, every footstep of faith leads us closer to eternal life—a gift provided by our loving Savior, whose own journey made salvation possible. ■

NOTES

- 1. See James E. Strange, "Nazareth," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*.
- 2. See D. Kelly Ogden, "The Road to Bethlehem," *Tarnbuli*, Dec. 1993, 41.