

Now that I have posted a couple of my earlier published reflections on Christmas, I can make some comments in a series of posts, going into a bit more detail. This first post more or less states some of the basic information that most readers know, but that it's worth while stressing as a kind of ground clearing exercise.

To begin with, we are extremely limited in our sources when it comes to knowing anything at all about the birth of Jesus. In fact, at the end of the day, I think we can't really know much at all. Just to cut to the chase, I think that it is most probable that he was born in Nazareth in the northern part of what we today think of as Israel (back then, in Galilee), where he was certainly raised from the time he was a child. His parents were Jewish by birth, religion, culture. I'd assume their names were really Joseph and Mary. We don't know anything about them other than the fact that Joseph may have been a TEKTON, which means that he worked with his hands, maybe with wood, or with stone, or with metal. Jesus also had brothers (four are named in one of our sources) and sisters, so it would have been a relatively large family and presumably living at or near the poverty line. Nazareth was an impoverished little hamlet.

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