

Insights about Christ-mass

The season once freely called Christmas has slipped from its roots. The Holy Day celebration has become the holiday season. The Christ mass celebration has become simply Christmas.

The Nativity is seldom referred to as a Holy assemblage of remembering the coming into the world in its fallen darkness of the Light of the World. No now that word refers to some statues standing around a stable with a babe in a manger as the focal point.

One writer was fond of saying, "if you do not know what you are standing for, you will likely fall for any argument."

At the occasion of one of the most important celebrations of the Christian community, perhaps some clarity on the subject would effect change.

To this end, may I take you into a more comprehensive understanding of the things that are shaped and portrayed in the "story" of Christ-mass.

Truths about Christmas:

For a few hundred years, debate raged, as to the correct or exact date on which the church community should celebrate the Nativity.

The date of His actual birth was a cause of much discussion among the factions of the church communities.

Some placed the date in the fall, noting that the levy of taxes would be after the time of harvest.

Some stressed that since the Shepherds were still in the field with their flocks, winter was not an option. During the colder months the Shepherds would seek shelter in the caves, to protect their flocks.

The first official stating of a date, occurred around 200 A.D., when, according to St. Clement of Alexandria, a counsel of Theologians in Egypt settled on May 20th as the proper date to celebrate the birth of the Anointed Redeemer.

Still some factions wanted dates in April and in March for the Nativity remembrance.

The early church had not put a great deal of emphasis on the date of His birth, but rather on the date of His baptism, which was the start of His ministry and was the occasion of His being revealed as the Son of God.

The date of His baptism was celebrated on the 6th day of January, each year. This date, or celebration was called The Epiphany.

It was Pope Julius I, in the 4th century A.D. who designated December 25th as the official date the church of Rome would celebrate the Nativity.

The Roman church was attempting to "Christianize" pagan holidays as an attempt to bring pagans under the cover of the Roman Church.

The name selected for its members, Catholic, literally means, out of the many, one. They were in search of many, many more peoples for their order.

The pagans celebrated a ritual called the Winter Solstice each year on December 25th. This was a celebration of the return of the sun.

The pagans celebrated the return of the natural sun, and the Christians celebrated the coming of the Son of God, the Prince of Peace and the "Light of the World."

By combining the two celebrations, it was hoped that the pagans could be brought into the "church" if everyone celebrated on the same day.

The attempt to "Christianize" the day, meant moving Christ-mas to December 25th. The arrival of the Son of God would be celebrated with the return of the sun.

The time of celebration was increased by adding the four weeks leading up to Christmas as a part of the Christ-mas season. The four weeks leading up to December 25th was named Advent, meaning, the arrival. Four weeks to prepare for, reflect on and anticipate the arrival of the Anointed Redeemer of God.

The church world was divided into two camps. The Roman church was the western church and the eastern church was from Turkey eastward. To the western

church the four weeks preceding Christmas was called Advent. To the eastern church the four weeks was called Nativity Lent, a name which more accurately depicted by the season preceding Resurrection Sunday, from which the practice was copied (Lent).

Lent, a period of time set aside for prayer, fasting, reflection and preparation to participate in a High Holy Day.

There was a Resurrection lent (Easter) and now a Nativity lent.

This season was becoming the biggest party of Christendom. The season had grown to include:

Advent – 4 weeks preceding December 25th

Nativity – Christmas day

12 days of Christmas (Dec 24th sundown to January 5th sundown)

Epiphany – January 6th

A 42 day celebration cycle each year.

In 1752, the Julian date calendar was replaced by the Gregorian calendar. When this switch occurred 11 days were dropped from the measure of a year.

Effectively this meant that what was once December 25th, was now January 7th.

Some purist, called calendarists, still celebrate Nativity on January 7th, to commemorate the original date set by Papal authority.

Times change, terms change and dates change. For example, many people refer to Messiah as a Carpenter. By that they infer, (incorrectly) that He was a wood worker.

In the language of His day carpenter meant builder. Houses, Temples etc. were not made of wood, but of stone. Thus, carpenter would have meant stone mason.

Messiah was born a King. There is no record of Him ever engaging in a craft. He was wealthy from birth.

Also of interest, the wooden structure, or barn which is usually a part of a Nativity scene is also incorrect. The manger, or feeding trough was in a cave, behind the Inn. Animals were sheltered there. A beautiful church now stands over the cave where His birth was marked.

The Name:

Christmas, began as Christ-mass. Mass a celebration of; (i.e. – candle mass, bread mass, Christ mass) Christ meaning Anointing, would then be Christ-mass a celebration of the arrival of the Anointing of God.

Christmas should mean, a celebration of the Anointed One's arrival, and of His yoke destroying anointing being made manifest. Yshuwah, the Holy gift of grace, given by God to liberate man and earth.

The Anointing is God made manifest. The Anointed Messiah was God made manifest to creation. Christ-mas celebrates the truth that He came in fulfillment of the Father's promise.

Christ-mas says, the Redeemer has come, so those who receive Him, can become Him, and set the captive free.

God became man, so man could become God's sons. Celebrate the good news of liberation and engrafting.

Prophecy and Christmas:

Hundreds, even thousands of years before the coming of the Light of the world, Messiah was spoken of by the Holy Spirit, by Prophets of old.

Psalm 91:16

A prophetic promise for those who place faith in Jehovah.

:16 "with long life I will satisfy him, and show him my salvation

(Yshuwah)"

Isaiah 9:

:1 "...the people who walk in darkness (fallen world system) will see a great light (Messiah, the light of the world). Those who live in a dark land (under satan's rule), the light (of illuminating revelation) will shine on them.

:6 For a child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us, and the government will be upon His shoulders; and His name will be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

:7

There will be no end of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over His Kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with

justice and righteousness, from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will accomplish this.

The day Messiah entered the earth, was to be a Holy Day, a day dedicated to the introduction of divine change into the fallen world system.

Not only was the Messiah spoken of as one who would be the Light of the world, salvation, a Holy Sacrifice, a world ruler, the Son of God, but Micah presents another dimension of prophesy, relating to the coming King.

Micah 4:8; 5:2 And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

There are many who are not aware of the very deep significance of Bethlehem, Yshuwah's (Jesus') birthplace. Everyone knows that Bethlehem was a place where shepherds grazed their sheep, and where the Messiah was to be born, but do not realize that it was a town designated as the birthing place for lambs which were used for the Passover sacrifice. The Scriptures give significant details about this little town lying slightly south of Jerusalem.

In Micah 4:8 we read about the "watchtower of the flock", or in Hebrew, "Migdal Edar." According to the "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah", by Alfred Edersheim, a Jewish believer in the late 1800's, Migdal Edar was the location where the Messiah was to be revealed. This watchtower stood as a place of protection for the city from approaching enemies, but it was also utilized by shepherds to watch over the specific flocks from which sacrificial Passover lambs were taken.

The shepherds who were tending these particular flocks were no ordinary shepherds. They were specifically trained by the Rabbis for a holy task. They had to insure that, as much as possible, every lamb was free of any blemish or injury, in order to be used for the Passover sacrifice. Since they were instructed by the Rabbis, they almost certainly knew of those passages in the Targums (Aramaic translations) and the Mishna associating the birth of the Messiah with "Migdal Edar". For example, Migdal Edar is translated in one of the Targums as "The Anointed One of the Flock of Israel." It is also written in the Mishna that "He

spread his tent beyond Migdal Edar, the place where King Messiah will reveal Himself at the end of days."

Those shepherds had strong hints of Messiah's advent in the very town where they lived, so that when the angelic host appeared announcing his arrival, they responded immediately and went to worship Him.

To establish proper credentials as the sacrificial Lamb of God, the eternal sacrifice for all the sins of the world, he had to be born at Bethlehem, the lawful "lambing place" for Old Testament law-sacrificial lambs.

The day, the place, the process of Messiah's birth is so much more than just an occasion to shop and change gifts. The real meaning is eternal, and life changing for all who receive its message and truth.

Zacharias was a High Priest. He was one who burned the incense to produce an atmosphere for God to manifest.

He represented the Aaronic Priesthood

His name meant:

Zachar – ias God remembers

El – iza – beth God's promise (God makes promise)

John – yohanan Grace

Both Zacharias and Elizabeth were descendants of Aaron – part of the Aaronic priesthood of law.

John – grace – would become the bridge to the New Covenant Priesthood of grace or the order of Melchezidek.

The Priest had to be silenced, so God's plan could be brought to pass.

Luke 1: silence – no blessing from law

Luke 24: the Anointed Redeemer blesses the people of all ages.

Luke 1:5-80

⁵ In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. ⁷ But they

had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years.

⁸ Now it happened *that* while he was performing his priestly service before God in the *appointed* order of his division, ⁹ according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. ¹¹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. ¹² Zacharias was troubled when he saw *the angel*, and fear gripped him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. ¹⁴ You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ It is he who will go *as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

¹⁸ Zacharias said to the angel, "How will I know this *for certain*? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹ The angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time."

²¹ The people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²² But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute. ²³ When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home.

²⁴ After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, ²⁵ "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked *with favor* upon *me*, to take away my disgrace among men."

²⁶ Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you." ²⁹ But she was very perplexed at *this* statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall

name Him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, the bonds slave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. ³⁹ Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And how has it *happened* to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed *is* she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord." ⁴⁶ And Mary said:

"My soul exalts the Lord,
⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
⁴⁸ "For He has had regard for the humble state of His bonds slave;
For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.
⁴⁹ "For the Mighty One has done great things for me;
And holy is His name.
⁵⁰ "AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION
TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.
⁵¹ "He has done mighty deeds with His arm;
He has scattered *those who were* proud in the thoughts of their heart.
⁵² "He has brought down rulers from *their* thrones,
And has exalted those who were humble.
⁵³ "HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS;
And sent away the rich empty-handed.
⁵⁴ "He has given help to Israel His servant,
In remembrance of His mercy,
⁵⁵ As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and his descendants forever."
⁵⁶ And Mary stayed with her about three months, and *then* returned to her home.

⁵⁷ Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her.

⁵⁹ And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father. ⁶⁰ But his mother answered and said, "No indeed; but he shall be called John." ⁶¹ And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name." ⁶² And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called. ⁶³ And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, "His name is John." And they were all astonished. ⁶⁴ And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue *loosed*, and he *began* to speak in praise of God. ⁶⁵ Fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, "What then will this child *turn out to be*?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

⁶⁷ And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

⁶⁸ "Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel,

For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,

⁶⁹ And has raised up a horn of salvation for us

In the house of David His servant—

⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—

⁷¹ Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES,

And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US;

⁷² To show mercy toward our fathers,

And to remember His holy covenant,

⁷³ The oath which He swore to Abraham our father,

⁷⁴ To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies,

Might serve Him without fear,

⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

⁷⁶ "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS;

⁷⁷ To give to His people *the* knowledge of salvation

By the forgiveness of their sins,

⁷⁸ Because of the tender mercy of our God,

With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,

⁷⁹ TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH,

To guide our feet into the way of peace."

⁸⁰ And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

Luke 2:1-7

¹ Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. ² This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. ⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, ⁵ in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. ⁶ While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. ²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." ²² Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." ²⁴ And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife, ²⁵ but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Luke 2:8-20

⁸ In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² This *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

¹⁵ When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds *began* saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

Matthew 2:1-12

¹ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, ² "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." ³ When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

⁶ 'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH,
ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH;
FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER
WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.'"

⁷ Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found *Him*, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him." ⁹ After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over *the place* where the Child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned *by God* in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.

Luke 2:21-38

²¹ And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was *then* called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

²² And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY *firstborn* MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to

what was said in the Law of the Lord, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS."

²⁵ And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, ²⁸ then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

²⁹ "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;

³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

³¹ Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel."

³³ And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. ³⁴ And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed— ³⁵ and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with *her* husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. ³⁸ At that very moment she came up and *began* giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Matthew 2:13-23

¹³ Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord *appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him."

¹⁴ So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. ¹⁵ He remained there until the death of Herod. *This was* to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."

¹⁶ Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH,
WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING,
RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN;
AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED,
BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE."

¹⁹ But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord *appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead." ²¹ So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned *by God* in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee, ²³ and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. *This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene."*

Luke 2:39-52

³⁹ When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

⁴¹ Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when He became twelve, they went up *there* according to the custom of the Feast; ⁴³ and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, ⁴⁴ but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they *began* looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. ⁴⁶ Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. ⁴⁸ When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You." ⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's *house*?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. ⁵¹ And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all *these* things in her heart.

⁵² And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.