

We just finished a wonderful study on the first advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, the beginning of His humanity, in His conception and birth:

An initial first thought: Frequently, people will make excuses for how they behave today, because of the difficulties of their past or their childhood.

Jesus was born in the worst conditions, in a barn, His parents were very poor, He was then wrapped/swaddled in whatever cloth they had, and then laid in a manger, which was a feeding trough or box that food was put into for cattle or horses to eat.

Ladies, can you imagine birthing your child in a barn, and then laying your baby in a feeding trough used by farm animals? But this was no normal baby, this was God's own Son, The King of Glory! Next time you think you're too good to suffer less than you think you deserve, consider the birth of the Lord Jesus!

If you think you had a rough childhood... consider that when Jesus was a helpless baby and a young boy, His parents had to constantly be on the move, running for their lives, (they had to flee from Bethlehem to Egypt), because a wicked king sought to kill their child. This happened from His birth to (at least) His 2nd birthday.

You can imagine Mary's care for this special Son of hers, who was the Son of God...and Joseph, who knew that Jesus was from God and that He had entrusted His Son to him and Mary to raise!

Coming forward in time, the next record of His life was when He was 12 years old when He went up to Jerusalem with His mother Mary, and Joseph to keep the Passover feast. Luke 2:39-52

Keep in mind that the wicked one had consistently tried to kill the righteous seed and STOP God's Promised Man from being born.....having failed again, NOW, Satan's mission was to kill THIS "Holy Child" before He came to age... before His life and ministry began, TO STOP HIM from saving, rescuing, and reclaiming fallen sinners! 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

You must know that Satan's primary mission TODAY is to STOP the work of Christ here in the church and IN YOU, Christian!

Satan hasn't rested since he influenced Cain to kill righteous Abel! He moved Pharaoh to kill all the male children when Israel was enslaved in Egypt to prevent this "Holy Child" from being born; he influenced Saul to kill David, for it was prophesied, that "The Christ" would be David's Son!

When the Kings of Israel and Judah had grievously sinned and lost the kingdom, wicked Haman did Satan's work when he had the King of Persia sign a decree to kill every Jew in his vast Kingdom! 127 provinces!

Little did Satan know that before that wicked decree was signed, God had already appointed a Jewess to be Ahasuerus' Queen in the Kingdom of Persia, she would intervene on behalf of God's people!

When Jesus was born, Herod did Satan's work for him in trying to kill "The Christ Child". Herod was full of rage because the wise men did not return and tell him where he might find this child, that is when he gave the order to kill all the male children (2 years old and under) in Bethlehem and all the surrounding coasts.

Child of God, Satan in his rage wants to kill Christ in you! But God has promised to equip you (in your faith) so that you "are able" to resist the wicked one by the strength of God (IN YOU)!

In our text, 12-year-old Jesus went up with Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem, to keep the Passover in obedience to the law. Exodus 12:40-42, 23:14-17

First, I want you to see that Jesus willingly "went up to Jerusalem" with His parents, He is an example to parents and children, even as a 12-year-old boy. When it was time to "GO UP" to the House of the Lord, to ascend the Holy Hill of Jerusalem, He went up as well!

Psalm 122:1: I'm sure they were singing the Psalms of Ascent!

Luke 2:40: "And the child grew, (in both in His human body and spirit), and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him".

Luke 2:43 tells us that when they had fulfilled the appointed days after keeping the Passover Feast, they started back to Nazareth.

In all probability, they traveled in caravans or groups of several families, fathers and mothers and children, as we read in Exodus 23, it was only the males who were commanded to this feast, yet the women were allowed to go and not forbidden. But now, here they were, returning:

"But the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it."

Joseph and Mary had turned themselves and were heading back to Nazareth, BUT NOT young 12-year-old Jesus, He still had business to tend to in Jerusalem, specifically, in His Father's house. I believe in these days of His young life; He was learning more and more about Himself!

Most 12-year-old boys would have been getting into mischief, but not this 12-year-old!

Here He was, in Jerusalem, in the temple, after Passover was finished, the One who was sent by God to be Israel's Messiah among those who prayed for Israel's salvation to come! Psalm 14:7, Matthew 13:17

By this time, Joseph and Mary were a whole day's journey from Jerusalem, it was probably evening, and NOW they couldn't find their 12-year-old Son!

Just so you know, the distance between Nazareth and Jerusalem is about 70 miles.

Luke 2:43: "Jesus had tarried behind", but Joseph and His mother Mary knew not of it. "But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey" before they realized it!

You can imagine the panic that ensued in the hearts of Mary and Joseph, (of any mother and father) they couldn't find their 12-year-old son! But this was not just any 12-year-old boy! This was God's own Son! How could they have forgotten God's Son, and left Him behind???

Mary was no doubt terror-stricken, filled with grief especially because of who her Son was, hearing the prophecy of Simeon, and knowing that so many sons died to find and kill her Son!

Joseph and Mary did the only thing they could do, "they turned back", their hearts full of sorrow and fear as they retraced their steps, no doubt praying unto God, that He would help them find His beloved Son...

Song 3:1-4, 5:6-9, 1:8-9, Revelation 2:4.

How often are we going about our busy lives... and we thoughtlessly "leave Christ behind", we get busy with other things, and instead of remembering Christ and looking to Him, we forget Christ and think nothing of Him.

Young Jesus was not lost! He was right where they should have expected to find Him, in His Father's house, after all, He was God's own Son!

When you wander from Christ, (get lost), do you know where to find Him? He will never leave or forsake you child of God, but when you realize that you have wandered "a distance" from Him, REMEMBER, He didn't leave you, you left Him! He is right where you left Him...

You'll find Him in the Word, in your secret prayer closet, He's STILL right there on the throne of grace, and He's here in the church gathering, in the midst of God's people!

Luke 2:46-47: But there was blindness in the eyes of Israel's theologians, too proud to humble themselves and consider "this boy" to be the Christ!

Here was the 12-year-old Son of Man giving them a "privileged peak" into who He was..... they had all the advantages and prophecies pointing them to His identity, DID THEY (at least) THINK of Isaiah 9:6-7 when they heard this 12-year-old boy's questions and wisdom?

Did they even think of investigating Joseph and Mary's family lineage to find out if they were David's descendants? Did they not think to ask Mary about how He

was conceived? Joseph about his wife? Did they not know about Zachariah with John, Simeon, and Anna?

But EVEN NOW, after Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the temple, Mary MUST LEARN (from her 12-year-old Son) that our natural families must be put aside when it comes to the business of our Father and our God!

When she found Him, she addressed Him as her Son, He answered her as her God's Son! Luke 2:48-49

I think of the answer of the adult Jesus when He was teaching the people, and His mother and brethren sought to interrupt Him.

Mark 3:31-35, Matthew 10:37

Bishop Hall wrote: "But are we not all sons of God of another kind, indeed we are infinitely less than the Lord Jesus Christ! Consider child of God, that nature and the world think we should attend them, but we are not worthy to say, we have a Father in heaven, if we cannot steal away from our family and earthly distractions and employ ourselves wholeheartedly in the services of our Father and our God!" Luke 2:50-52

It would be 18 more years before Jesus would present Himself to Israel as their Messiah and King!

For each of you here today, don't wander off, get caught up in Christmas festivities, and with your company, and leave Christ behind!

Your most important personal business on this Lord's Day, like any other Lord's Day, is NOT to your earthly family, but in devotion to your Heavenly Father... as sons and daughters of God! May it be so for each of us!