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a *Grace Notes* course

## **Life of Christ 100**

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### **Lesson 104**

The Night Before Christmas  
Christ and the Shepherds  
The Circumcision and Presentation of Christ  
The Visit of the Magi  
The Flight to Egypt and Return to Israel  
The Early Life of Christ  
The Event at the Temple

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## Life of Christ 104

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## The Night Before Christmas

On the night before Christmas, God gave Christ the authority to establish His kingdom on earth.

**Daniel 7:13,14**, "I did behold in the night visions, and look! There came with the clouds of heaven one like the Son of Man; and he came to the Ancient of days, and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion and honor and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

The setting of this verse is before the incarnation of Jesus Christ. It cannot occur at any time during the incarnation, because such would violate the tenet of kenosis as spelled out in Phil 2:58.

It could not have occurred during the three days before the resurrection, because John 3:35 indicates that Christ had already received the authority from God, and this was some three years before.

Daniel also gives the purpose of the kingdom as a universal service of Christ. Therefore this giving must have taken place before Christ even offered His kingdom to the Jews. With kenosis, that leaves only a time before the incarnation.

Although the timing of the passage in the chapter seems to be after the judgment of the Great White Throne, which Daniel's vision reveals in verses ten and eleven, verse twelve is the decisive verse.

Verses ten and eleven clearly stand at the Great White Throne and beyond into the eternal state, as confirmed by Daniel 12:1 and Revelation 20:1115. Verse twelve, however, jumps back to the first three beasts of Daniel 7:46. There are four beasts in the chapter. The fourth one is the beast of the tribulation, destroyed by the return of Christ.

In each case the beasts are metaphors that illustrate nations or groups of nations, Daniel 7:17, "These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth."

The first three are nations after Daniel, yet before the incarnation. They are somewhat parallel with the parts of the statue in chapter two.

"The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it." This is Persia.

"And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!'" This is Greece.

"After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given it." This is Rome.

Since these are just before the incarnation, and the fourth beast is tribulational, and since the giving of authority took place before the incarnation, we can place the time of verse 13 and 14 at the night before Christmas with confidence.

Daniel's curiosity concentrates on the fourth beast, the one of the tribulation, v.19. Also, notice that the passage skips over the intercalation of the church age. The four beasts are consecutive in the passage.

What happened on that night before Christmas?

Christ came with the clouds. These clouds are elect angels, attending Jesus Christ.

Christ came to heaven from earth, where He functioned as the angel of Yahweh.

He approached the throne of God, and was presented to Him. The presenting official or officials are not mentioned by name. For this occasion we can place Michael, the archangel here. Perhaps also Gabriel, the kings' herald is also involved.

God, the Ancient of days (a reference to His eternal nature), gives Christ dominion, honor, and a kingdom. Dominion is authority to rule. This is specific authority to rule over planet earth.

- The first Adam surrendered that authority with his sin of abrogation of responsibility. He gave up the earth to be like the woman in sin.
- The last Adam, Jesus Christ, came to earth to retake that authority.

- However, in order to exert His authority, Christ must have the assent of the ruled. This He has yet to get.
- The dominion is everlasting Christ will never relinquish it.
- Honor is the respect that makes one fit to rule.
- Authority without respect is ineffective. Whereas authority is nominative, honor must be earned.
- There is a difference between authority and moral authority. Moral authority is the true right to rule. The Greek word exousia describes moral authority.
- This is given to Christ by God through the Word and the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. On two occasions, God would express His pleasure with the moral authority of Christ: at His baptism, and at the transfiguration.

Then there is the kingdom itself.

- The purpose of the kingdom is for the unification of all peoples of the earth in service to Him.
- This is the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ. It was given at this moment, and stands waiting for His people.
- This kingdom is everlasting, and cannot be destroyed.

And in a moment's time, Christ left.

**Philippians 2:5-8**, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

The motive was love God wanted the very best for sinful and unattractive mankind.

**John 3:16**, "For God loved the world so much that He gave His uniquely born Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish, but have eternal life."

At the next moment, Christ was born, the perfect God-man.

**Luke 2:8-14**

At Christ's baptism, God expressed His pleasure in Christ and told all those present of Christ's moral authority.

**Luke 3:22**, "And the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, 'Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased.'"

A few weeks later, John the Baptist reflected on the great presentation on the night before Christmas.

**John 3:35**, "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand."

Another stamp of approval came before the inner circle of the disciples.

**Matthew 17:1-5**, "And six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and his face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' While he was still speaking behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him!'"

No matter the response of Israel, Christ had to die for sin, and He knew it.

**Luke 22:41,42**, "And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, 'Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but thine be done.'"

The climax of the Divine sacrifice came at the end of the ordeal on the cross.

**Matthew 27:46,49**, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why did you forsake me?' And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit."

Paul introduced his epistle to the Romans in this way:

**Romans 1:1-3**, "Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord."

After the resurrection Christ reminded His disciples of His authority.

**Matthew 28:18-20**, "And Jesus arrived and spoke to them, saying, "All authority was given to me in heaven and on earth. Therefore, as you go, disciple [teach with authority] all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep everything I have commanded you. And behold, I myself am with you all days until the conclusion of the age."

But He also reminded them that the time for His kingdom had not yet arrived.

**Acts 1:6,7**, "And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, 'Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.'"

But that time is set in the decree, and will surely occur.

**Revelation 1:7**, "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen."

The beginning of Christ's kingdom will be dramatic, and we will be there to see it all.

**Revelation 19:11-16**, "And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and he has a

name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. And he is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.'"

### Christ and the Shepherds

**Luke 2:8-20**, "And some shepherds in the same region there were bivouacking and diligently keeping guard over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were afraid with great fear. And the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I am announcing to you good news of a great joy which will be for all the people; because there was born for you today in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' And all of a sudden there was together with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among respectable men.' And it came about after the angels had gone from them into heaven, that the shepherds were saying to one another, 'Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and let us see this event that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.' And they came in haste and found their way to Mary and Joseph and the baby laying in the manger. Now seeing this, they made known the statement which had been spoken them concerning this Child. And all who heard wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. And Mary treasured all these matters, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God over all that they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them."

Greek notes.

The shepherds were "AGRAULOUNTES" bivouacking, or staying outside overnight. It is from the noun AGORA, which means outside, and the noun AULAZOMAI, which means to lodge, or stay away from home.

While they were there, they PHULASSONTES PHULAKAS, which is a very strong way to say that they kept guard.

It was in this same region that David watched over his flocks. It was in this same region that the temple flocks were kept. We cannot confirm it, but it may be that these shepherds watched the temple flocks.

The angel of the Lord EPESTE., which literally means to stand over someone. The glory of the Lord shone around them. This is described by the verb PERILAMPO.

The shepherds were EPHOBE.THE.SAN PHOBON MEGAN. Afraid with great fear.

The angel EUAGGELIZOMAI the word from which we get the English evangelize. The herald of the king is announcing His arrival. First the angel makes it very clear that this is great news a great joy for all the people. Then he describes the news in detail. It is important to note that the angel concentrates on Christ as the savior. The herald of the king of kings and Lord of Lords directs his listeners to the mission of the first advent, which is redemption of the soul.

The sign which will reveal the truth of the matter to the shepherds is unique. A baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. This is why Christ had to be born in a stable, and why there was no room at the inn. Because it would provide a unique setting which could be used as a sign of the veracity of God. If one is true, the sign, then the other is true as well, the savior.

The verb EXAIPHNE.S means literally out of a sudden. Our English 'all of a sudden' works also.

The multitude of the heavenly army is PLE.THOS STRATIAS OURANIYOU, and it is literally an army. They appeared to angels, praising God and saying specific things. These things were recorded by Luke in the form of verse, so they may indeed have been singing a song.

They praise God first, worshipping Him for what He has accomplished in the birth of Christ. Second, they give a message of good will to men on earth. They wish peace [eirene] to respectable men. The word for respectable is eudokias, which means to think well of someone. It is literally "well thought of men".

The angels leave, and so the shepherds have a brief discussion among themselves as to what they should do. It is a decisive and quick meeting They say, "let us go through immediately to Bethlehem". In the English, Let's go straight to Bethlehem. The syntax suggests that this is an urgent and repetitive meeting. They recognize clearly that the Lord made known to them this event, and so they take off in haste [SPEUDO] and search and find [ANEURISKO] the stable where the Christ child lies.

The first thing that the shepherds do when they arrive is recount the events of the evening to Joseph and Mary, and everyone there (apparently there were others) wondered at the things which were told them. Mary treasured [SUNTEREO] these things in her heart, putting them together [SUMBALLO] in her heart.

Mary was thinking about these things, and throwing them together so that she had a full understanding of the events of the last few months. She treasured these things they were precious to her, because she knew that her savior was born.

The shepherds had to get back to their flocks, but they left glorifying and praising God over everything which they heard and seen, just as it was spoken to them. Their worship is directed toward the veracity of God, and there is two levels to this veracity, one of which is not mentioned. The first level is the immediate, obvious one. The events of the night fulfilled what had been spoken to them by the angel. The second level is that everything spoken by the prophets of old, everything in the Mosaic Law, was now coming to pass on this night.

These shepherds no doubt had a great sense of destiny before the angel ever came that night. They watched over flocks near the city of David's birth, and near where David himself shepherded. Therefore, when the chief shepherd arrived, they

knew the implications. They were shepherds in the region of the temple flocks.

We cannot be completely sure if their flock was the flock, but even if they were only near, they would have known much about the temple flock, and they would have been acquainted with the temple flock shepherds.

The lamb of God was born that night, and everything in the ritual system was fulfilled in that baby in the manger. Everything that they knew of the ritual system would have come to mind as the angels appeared, and as they rushed to the stable, and as they saw the fulfillment of the sign.

It was what the shepherds knew beforehand that gave meaning to the events of that night. It was especially appropriate that the shepherds should come to see the chief shepherd and the lamb of God in that baby that night. And they went away glorifying God, because what they knew before went together with what they knew now.

The Davidic, Mosaic, and Abrahamic covenants were all fulfilled in Christ, and the shepherds knew it.

### Lessons from the Passage

The quality of our worship is directly related to the amount of Bible Truth that we understand in our hearts. This was true for both Mary and the Shepherds. It is very clear that Mary understands the significance of the birth of her child. Because of this, she treasures those significant things in her heart.

The shepherds worshipped, not because they were neophytes to the faith, but because they had waited faithfully for the Messiah, and knew God already. This is the interpretation which best explains their actions. The shepherds were quite willing to go check out the sign which the angel had provided. They glorify God even as the angels had done just a little while before when the army of heaven was visible to them.

Therefore, the more you know of Bible Truth, the greater your worship and praise of God will be, for God is the author, and the Bible is the mind of Christ. The more you know of Bible Truth, the greater appreciation you will have of the grace of God as it is revealed in the events of your life.

You cannot interpret the events of your life in the right way without the truth. When you do have the truth, the events of your life have meaning.

There is more to this life than the visible there is an invisible realm which is far more important, and which adds meaning and importance to our own visible lives.

The angels rejoiced on that night for what God had accomplished in the birth of Christ. That the elect angels rejoiced gives us an indication of the mood in the enemies' camp on that very same night. It must have been gloomy indeed. Insofar as we take part in the invisible realm of conflict, we add meaning and importance to our lives in the same measure.

God reveals Himself in the first advent His grace and power are revealed in the birth of Christ.

- Through the virgin pregnancy and birth.
- Through the birth of John the Baptist.
- Through the child in the manger.
- Through the minds and hearts of those who were prepared for the first advent of Jesus Christ.

This advent had to do with the redemption of sins.

### The Circumcision and Presentation of Christ

#### Luke 2:21-38

Christ was circumcised according to the decree of the Law. Circumcision was the ritual performed on male babies on the eighth day of their life. It included the cutting away of the foreskin of a child, and a few words spoken in remembrance.

The ritual recalled the first circumcision, which was Abraham. It was a ritual which represented the cutting away of the scar tissue on Abraham's soul, and his advance to maturity. So every Jewish male child was circumcised after the pattern of their forbear, to remind them of the importance of spiritual growth.

**Romans 2:25-29**, "For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? And he who is

physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.”

Christ fulfilled the Law to represent that He too as a man would have to grow up spiritually. Indeed he would.

**Luke 2:22-24**, "And when the days were fulfilled for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought Him up into Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord, just as it has been written the Law of the Lord, 'Every first born male that opens the womb will be called holy to the Lord.' and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the law of the Lord, 'A Pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.'"

The reference for the purification of the woman is:

**Leviticus 12:2-8**, “When a woman gives birth and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of here menstruation she shall be unclean. On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. Then she shall remain in the blood of her purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed. But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstruation; and she shall remain in the blood of her purification for sixty-six days. When the days of here purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting a one year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering. Then he shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, whether a male or a female. But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take

two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.”

The woman’s purification had a practical function related to health and hygiene; but there is also a representation here related to original sin.

The purification of the male child begins with a Sabbath period, and commemorates the original creation of man. That purification then continues for thirty-three more days, for a total of forty. Forty was the number of purification from sin by means of doctrine forty days and forty nights of the flood; forty years in the wilderness. So there is circumcision for spiritual growth and forty days for purification by it.

The female child required fourteen days for the first period of purification, representing her place as second in creation or perhaps it took two Sabbaths to adore the woman. Then sixty six more days for a total of eighty, a double wilderness experience for her.

That Joseph and Mary gave the two turtledoves or pigeons in place of the lamb tells of their financial station in life: they were quite poor.

The burnt offering and the sin offering were related to the imputation of the righteousness of Christ and Adam’s sin respectively. They commemorated the first born in such a way as to call to mind the Passover, and thus the work of Christ. Exodus 13:1.

The Passover is recorded in Exodus chapter 12.

The firstborn’s holiness comes directly from the firstborn of God, Jesus Christ. Everything was done properly with regard to Jesus Christ, even though He did not require it. The propriety of these acts was quite poignant, and even ironic.

Luke 2:25-35

So they came to the temple for Christ's dedication and Mary's purification. Simeon and Anna and others were there in the temple. Apparently they were part of a regular crowd that was faithful to God and waited for the true Messiah. Both of these people were old, and yet they remained faithful to God even in their old age.



Simeon was righteous, DIKAIOS, and well receiving, EULABES. The latter means that he had true humility, a predisposition to obey. PROSDECHOMAI means to wait for some event. It could as easily describe waiting for the bus as for the Messiah. But Simeon is waiting for the encouragement of Israel. PARAKLESIS is a word which means to call someone alongside, as in getting a lawyer, or other kinds of help. It was used for the role of the Messiah. So Simeon is waiting unconcernedly for the Messiah, because he has received word from God.

The pluperfect periphrastic construction is EN and the perfect participle of CHREMATIZO. The latter verb describes the naming of an heir in a Roman adoption ceremony. CHREMA means money, so there is a kind of Christmas connection here.

There is great emphasis on the perfect aspect of this construction, so it concentrates on the irrevocability of this action by God.

So Simeon has been irrevocably told that he will not die before he sees the Messiah, and so in spite of his advanced age he is waiting for Him just as though he was waiting for the bus.

This is certainly the way to wait for Christ's return, which is the rapture. Not by checking your watch every five minutes. The rapture will occur it has been promised. But we know neither the day nor the hour; it is hidden even from Christ.

Simeon is deeply moved by the event, and utters a prayer of thanksgiving, knowing that his life was complete with this event. He asks God to die, a remarkable request indeed. He has done his duty and he has seen what was promised. He calls God a DESPOTA, a lord or master of property. The DESPOTA is a ship's captain. He sees God as the owner of the earth.

The reason for this unusual request is that he has seen the salvation of God. This distinction is made because many were calling themselves God's salvation, but only one was it.

Many call themselves God's salvation even today Buddha, Mohammed, and so on. But there is only one true God man, and that is Jesus Christ. And this provision of salvation is distributed to each individual face to all humanity. The distributive

use of KATA with the noun PROSOPON indicates all this. It portrays both the whole of humanity and every individual face in it.

Simeon furthers this idea by saying that the child is a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel. The Gentiles are the unbelievers of Simeon's world; Christ reveals God. Christ is the glory of Israel He is their crown and greatest child, the fulfillment of all the promise of Abraham, Moses, and David.

And to Mary alone Simeon says something pretty hard...

The child is appointed for the fall and rise of many. PTOSIN means fall, and it describes the violent fall of a person in their death, or the violent destruction of a house or building. The Christ child is appointed for the violent end of many He will judge all of humanity. ANASTASIN means rise from the prone position, or even resurrection. Christ is appointed for the resurrection of many.

All of humanity falls into these two categories. You will either fall because of your unbelief and meet the final violent end of eternity in the Lake of Fire, or you will rise because of your belief and receive a resurrection unto eternity in Heaven.

Simeon continues giving the reason for the appointment of Christ with a statement even about Mary herself.

He calls it a corresponding sign, a SEMEION ANTILEGOMENON. Christ is appointed for something corresponding with regard to Mary; corresponding to what has just been said. ANTI mean 'face to face' when in compound verbs, so this is 'speak face to face.' The idea is that this sign speaks face to face with what has already been said. It does not necessarily contradict it though, and it does not here.

The ROMPHAIA was the heavy broadsword of the Thracians. They used it from horseback with devastating results to the human body. Simeon says a ROMPHAIA will pass through the very soul of Mary. The verb DIERCHOMAI means to 'pass completely through' something. The idea is that wielding the heavy sword from horseback causes it to pass completely through the body of the enemy.

Well, this is the sword of the Spirit passing completely through the soul of Mary, and exiting. It is the sword of inspiration.

**Hebrews 4:12**, “For the word of God is living and operational and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing between the soul and the spirit, joints and marrow, and is the critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Several other verses shed light on this statement:

**Ephesians 6:17**, “And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

But especially Revelation, which has the ROMPHAIA in a prominent place.

**Revelation 1:16**, “In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.”

**Revelation 2:12**, “And to the angel of the church of Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this...”

**Revelation 2:16**, “Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the word of My mouth.

**Revelation 19:15**, “From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.”

**Revelation 19:21**, “And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

So the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, the sharp two-edged sword of the mouth of Jesus Christ will pass through Mary. This will result in the revelation of the reasoning of many hearts. The word of God reveals the reasoning of your heart. It is the critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This is portrayed as an event yet future, so that it is not a reference to the virgin pregnancy.

This must be a function of inspiration through her. God the Holy Spirit will inspire her so that she says or writes something that is the measure of

thought for many hearts. Since the famous magnificat is already passed, it is not likely just that, although Simeon could indicate that what she has said will be employed to reveal the thoughts of many.

To this end, Mary did say “He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart.” However this is not a very exact fit for what Simeon says.

Although Mary makes an occasional appearance in the gospel narratives, nothing comes close to fit the bill of this great announcement.

Acts 1:14 is the last official mention of Mary in the Bible: “These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

John 19:27 reports that after the crucifixion she lived in the home of John, and yet he mentions her not at all. Mary was likely in her mid to late forties at the time of the death of her son; she may have lived quite long after that.

From Luke’s narrative of the nativity of Christ there is some evidence that he has access to Mary. This may well be her legacy that was prophesied by Simeon.

There is no possibility that this statement could lead one to believe in Mariolatry. Participation in inspiration, yes. But we do not worship the writers of the New Testament.

An intriguing possibility exists with Mary as the author of the letter to the Hebrews. Unfortunately, there is just not enough evidence to make a definitive assertion at this time.

Luke 2:36-38

Anna had been a widow for some fifty or sixty years. She lived a life dedicated to service in the temple with fastings and prayers. Just as Simeon is speaking with Mary, Anna walks up and begins to thank God, and preaches to everyone there on that day.

Notice that she preaches to an exclusive group those who are looking for the redemption of Israel. This was a very mature woman, and there is little doubt that these faithful, Simeon and Anna knew one another. You can envision Anna glancing over

at Simeon as he performs this ritual, and then she sees the light of his face and she knows. She knows!

The nativity story teaches a couple of important lessons.

That God is immanent; that is, He intervenes in the lives of men. This is perhaps the greatest lesson of our lives.

Immanence on the part of God requires responsibility on our part. If God is not responsible for His creation, which is the assertion of deist belief, then man is not responsible to God. But God's intervention puts responsibility squarely in our laps. God therefore requires of us certain things:

- He requires us to depend on His grace for salvation.
- If He did not intervene in our lives, then we would have to produce our own salvation.
- He requires us to depend on Him for our post salvation glorification of Him. It is His grace which accomplishes our achievements in the post salvation plan.
- Grace, and not works is the general rule because of the interventionist attitude of God.

This is why the birth of the Messiah was so very meaningful to men like Simeon and women like Anna. They were relieved to see a visible manifestation of grace and know that they were not responsible for providing their own salvation. You see Simeon say that it is the Lord's salvation, and not his.

Apart from spiritual responsibility, there is a logistical responsibility to provide for ourselves. This is one of the implications of the fall. It is grace and not works. So that with immanence there is an implicit trust in God. This has a profound effect on personal belief and even political philosophy.

The second lesson is imminence, and that is a philosophy of waiting.

Simeon and others had an understanding that the first advent was imminent. Not that it would occur right away, but that it would occur because God had promised it.

Although God has made no such promise with regard to the rapture, that is, that it will occur in

our lifetimes, it is an event promised by God, and we are to wait as graciously as Simeon did.

And even if we are not fortunate enough to see the rapture, the ends of our lives are imminent; they may happen at any time.

Living in that imminent state of mind has its impact as well. You can take no vacation from the plan of God. You can make no assumption that you will have plenty of time to grow later. God has already set the date for your end, and you may die at forty.

Therefore do not say to yourself that you will really concentrate on spiritual growth after you raise your children or establish financial security or some other distraction in life. That can be a truly crucial mistake in the arrangement of your priorities.

### **The Visit of the Magi**

Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh.

#### **Matt. 2:1-12**

This passage records the doings of the magi from the east. There are some things that we do not know about them. We do not know their country of origin. We do not know how many there were. The number three comes from the number of different gifts given to Christ. We are not aware of their royal status they are never called kings.

What is significant is their humility, especially as compared to that of the spiritual leaders of Israel. The spiritual leaders of Israel knew where the child would be born, but they did not go. The Gentile magi did not know where he was to be born, but they found out and went.

Also significant in this passage is the beginning of Herod's scheme to kill the child. Herod wants to know the exact time at which the star of the Magi appeared. He instructs the Magi to search thoroughly for the child. He gives as his reason his desire to worship the child as well. Herod is an evil man, jealous of any who would take his throne.

He was worse than a Gentile; he was a half Jewish Idumaean, a descendant of Esau, a wild desert dwelling type. The Jews considered them with no small amount of prejudice. To make matters

worse, Herod was hardly a model human being. He has been called a monster one who was crafty and cruel, jealous and vain and always quick to seek revenge when wronged.

He came to the throne over the Roman province of Judea through cunning and manipulation of Marc Antony.

He had nine or ten wives. Even the historians lost count after a while.

On the smallest of suspicion he had even his favorite wife, Mariamne, put to death, along with her sons Alexander and Aristobulus.

Even while on his own deathbed, just days before he died he had his own son, his flesh and blood Antipater put to death. Caesar Augustus was heard to say, "It is better to be Herod's hog than his own son!"

Again at his deathbed he ordered all the principle men in Israel to be rounded up and placed in the local stadium, where they could be surrounded by his soldiers and then slain when he died. The reason: so that there would be great mourning at his death.

Herod tried bribing the Jews, so that they would like him, and he could view himself as a successful ruler.

Julius Caesar had given Herod a fantastic and truly royal inaugural celebration back in 37 BC, when Herod took the throne. He always longed for that past glory, when in fact the traditional Roman warning of "sic transit gloria mundi" applied to him more than any other.

The bribes came in the form of a building program that was the very rival of Solomon's. He built monuments and buildings in the Holy Land, and even rebuilt their temple in magnificent fashion, topping it with a golden dome. Other buildings and monuments were undertaken: a temple, a forum, and a theater at Samaria, a great Greco-Roman capital, a temple, and port at Caesarea.

The port was an engineering marvel that even today is remarked upon by the archaeologists who work at the site. Luxurious palaces and fortified retreats were built at Masada, Jerusalem, Jericho, and Herodium, which was near Bethlehem.

In Jerusalem he had baths, a theater, and a Hippodrome constructed. He also promoted Greek and Roman games so that the people might be entertained.

All of these things struck a sour note as any bribe to a slave will. The people really did not want these things. They wanted to be autonomous and free. But in order to be truly free, any people must know God, and that was exactly the problem in Israel.

But what is really significant about this passage is the gifts of the Magi.

Gold was appropriate, since it represented royalty. It did so even in the ritual system of Israel it represented exactly that. It also represented deity.

Frankincense was burned on the incense altar in the Temple. It represented the righteousness of Christ.

Myrrh was used to scent the oil that burned in the golden lampstand of Israel. It was also used to embalm the dead.

These Magi brought the gifts which perfectly portrayed Jesus Christ from the viewpoint of the ritual system, and they were not even Jews! You can see why God led them to Bethlehem. It was entirely appropriate that they should do so, since the Jews would reject Him. This hearkens forward to the church age.

### **The Flight To Egypt and Return to Israel**

Matt 2:13-23

The magi had been in Jerusalem to ask about the location of the Messiah. They figured they could find the information at the capital city.

Since Bethlehem was just five miles from Jerusalem, it was just a couple of hours by foot. Herod had instructed the magi to find the Christ child, so that he could worship him, too. Of course this was a lie. Herod was jealous, irrational, and probably demon possessed. Herod wanted to kill Christ. Because of the short distance between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, Herod would have expected an answer the next day or evening at the latest.

The magi came and worshipped the child, and then returned to their country by a different route. This

would have given Joseph and Mary no time at all to prepare for the long journey to Egypt. It was more than 200 miles, and with a child just a few weeks old.

Joseph and Mary knew that their child was the Messiah, and they were experienced by now with angelic communication. This was no time to quibble they left that very same night.

Joseph and Mary and their child stayed in Egypt until the end of Herod, probably not more than a month.

Matthew is a great recorder of prophecy. Since he wrote his gospel to the Jews, he was always on the lookout for ways in which he could prove that Christ truly was the Messiah.

For this event, Matthew draws on Hosea 11:1, which records the call of Israel from Egypt. The historical event was the Exodus of Israel under the guidance of Moses. The wilderness journey was an event which was celebrated in the three annual feasts. The Jews were constantly reminded of the events of that journey, because it was a great analogy for their spiritual lives and their national heritage.

The passover and the feast of unleavened bread reminded them of the beginning of their journey and salvation.

The Pentecost reminded them of the law giving at Mt. Sinai, and the importance of the Word in their spiritual lives.

The feast of tabernacles reminded them of their failure in the desert.

The historical event of the Exodus also stood as a prophecy pertaining to the life of Christ. The call is facilitated by an angel, and through Christ's parents. It is interesting to note that Hosea substitutes 'son' for 'Israel', the king for his subjects. Just as Israel would have its beginning in Egypt, so also would their king, Jesus Christ. This was another great reason to believe in Christ as the Messiah.

Herod understood [IDO.N] that he had been tricked by the magi. They never came back, and so he assumed that they were making fun of him, ridiculing him [EMPAIZO]. In reality, the magi simply obeyed the word of the angel which guided

them, but Herod took the thing as a dirty trick. The word emphasizes Herod's perception of the event.

Because of his perception of the event, Herod was very enraged.

The word for rage here is ETHUMO.THE., which is similar to Joseph's anger at hearing about the pregnancy of marriage. There, the word was enthumeomai, or inward anger. Joseph did a slow burn.

Here, the word is modified by the adverb LIAN, which strongly magnifies the emotion. Herod does a fast and violent burn.

Herod's anger, together with his jealousy for the Messiah, made him a virtual humanization of the devil himself.

This would motivate him to murder all the male children, two years old and under, in and around Bethlehem.

The number of children was not all that many by holocaust standards. There probably were not much more than twenty or so.

The word for murder is ANAIREO, which means to snatch away violently. It is a Greek word for illegitimate killing.

Herod had little information on the child Messiah, and that is why he calculated [E.KRIBO.SEN] the age of the child as 2 years or less.

The magi had seen the star some two years before, and so he assumed that the child may have been born then. Of course, we understand that Christ was only six or eight weeks old at the time, but Herod did not know that. That is why he was so liberal in his murderous decree.

Herod sent [APOSTELLO] to have the children killed. He was a powerful man, and he had others do the dirty work for him.

Again, a prophecy is fulfilled here, and Matthew is kind enough to record it. Jeremiah 31:15 finds its fulfillment here.

The prophecy there has to do with the exile of the southern kingdom of Judah.

Ramah was just to the north of Jerusalem, and on the exile route to Babylon. It was a high place, and it was here that it was likely that the children and

the aged who would not be able to make the journey would be killed.

There was great weeping that day by the women of Judah.

Rachel was the wife of Jacob (Israel), and so she came to represent the women of God's chosen nation.

And now Bethlehem is another Ramah. Bethlehem also was a city on a hill, just like Ramah to the north. Ramah meant 'height' or 'high place'. And Bethlehem is a place where children are murdered. The women are crying out loud, and mourning for their children. This is the kind of hard grief, where you do not want someone around you, because it is so very painful.

This is the record of the return of Joseph and Mary and Christ to Israel.

Joseph was guided in two ways: first, to return to Israel, and second to avoid the region of Judea and to go north to Nazareth. The immediate reason to go to Nazareth was to avoid Herod's son, Archelaus. The act of avoidance fulfilled another prophecy concerning the Messiah.

Herod did not last much more than a few weeks after his murder of the children in and around Bethlehem.

His death went like this: (ugly people die ugly deaths)

When it was apparent that he was going to die, and even Herod understood that he was on his own deathbed, he ordered that his own son, Antipater to be slain for no good reason.

Just a day or two later, he ordered that all the principle men of the nation be gathered in the hippodrome (horse racetrack) and surrounded by soldiers.

These soldiers were ordered to kill these men when he died, so that there would be much mourning in the land at the time of his death. The order was never carried out.

Archelaus was also anti-Semitic, and during his reign he would slaughter thousands of Jews, until he was deposed and exiled to Vienna, where he died.

The death of the children around Bethlehem caused an uproar, and since Jesus, Joseph, and Mary left at night and in a hurry, it was probably assumed that Jesus died there as well, since they never returned to Bethlehem.

Up until this point, there had been a lot of hoopla over the birth of Christ and John the Baptist. They were already mini-celebrities.

The assumed death of Christ allowed Him to grow up in Nazareth in a quiet way, without the bother of the masses, and without other satanically inspired attempts on His life.

### The Early Life of Christ

**Luke 2:40** "Now the child was growing and being made strong being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him."

The noun PAIDION describes Christ. It depicts a child from the viewpoint of trainability. This stage began when the child was eight days old, and continued until adulthood (which was the early teens at the time).

The first two verbs describe the early life of Christ:

- EUXANEN is from AUXANO, which means to grow. It is in the imperfect tense, which portrays a past action occurring over a duration of time. This is in the active voice, which portrays the child as the source of the action. It is a reference to the physical growth of Christ's body. Since this verb is often used to describe the growth of plant life, you could loosely translate this "He grew like a weed."
- EKRAITAIOUTO is from KRATAIOO., which means to strengthen, or empower. It is in the passive voice showing that the child did not produce this action. This verb is in the imperfect tense, showing the past action over a duration of time. This is a reference to the spiritual growth of Christ.

The idea of Christ's spiritual growth is further strengthened by the modal participle PLE.ROUMENON.

- A modal participle reveals the manner in which the action of the main verb occurs.
- This participle shows that the strengthening of Christ occurred through His filling with wisdom.

- The participle is in the present tense, so its action occurs at the same time as the action of the strengthening.
- The basic meaning of PLEROO is "to fill to the point of overflowing". It leaves no part of the vessel unfilled.

The substance of the filling is SOPHIA, or wisdom. SOPHIA is applied truth; truth that has become a real part of the person's life not just a theory but much more an application. Christ was made strong, being filled with wisdom.

A final note is made about Christ's childhood: "and the grace of God was upon Him."

- The preposition EPI plus the accusative of the personal pronoun AUTO portrays a motion that reaches its goal completely. It shows that the grace of God completely reached its goal in Jesus Christ.
- During the childhood of Christ, the grace of God fully attained its goal in Him. It reached its maximum potential through His appropriation of it. Even as a child, Christ was perfect.

General principles of Jewish child raising during the time of Christ.

Since a child was renamed a PAIDIA at eight days of age, it revealed their attitude that children were to be trained from the youngest stage of infancy.

The religious education of children began as soon as they could speak. The child's earliest vocabulary included doctrinal terms. This early religious education was done by the mother more often than not. Of course, our Lord could not have found a greater teacher than his own mother she was a great believer. Instruction in the Law fell to the father of the house it was his duty to instruct the children in the keeping of the Law.

The schooling of children was almost exclusively religious by nature. General education and vocational training came later. This religious training took place in the local synagogue under the tutelage of a Rabbi. The purpose of these schools was as follows (Edersheim, pp. 231232):

- to keep children from all contact with vice;
- to train them in humility, even when the bitterest wrong had been received;
- to show sin in its repulsiveness, rather than to terrify by its consequences;
- to train to strict truthfulness;

- to avoid all that might lead to disagreeable or indelicate thoughts;
- to do all this without showing partiality, without either undue severity, or laxity of discipline, and with judicious increase of study and work with careful attention to thoroughness in acquiring knowledge.

Until age ten the Bible was exclusively the textbook, from ten to fifteen the Mishnah, which was the traditional oral teachings of the Jews. It was largely philosophical by nature. Its equivalent would be systematic theology.

After age fifteen the young man could divert his studies to vocation or continue with his higher religious education. This determination was made on the basis of the aptitude of the individual.

Perhaps because of the strong Pharaonic influence, the first book studied by children was Leviticus, the laws and ordinances for Israel's spiritual and national life.

The home was the seat of the ritual.

- Many times each day the child was reminded of the importance of God's Word through the mezuzah, which was attached to the door frame of every Jewish home. This device held a small parchment the outside of which was inscribed with the name of God. On the inside was written Deut 6:49 and 11:1321. The Jews would touch the mezuzah every time they passed the threshold, and then kiss the fingers that touched it as a reminder of the importance of application.
- Every sabbath there were preparations made by the family to remind them of their responsibility in relationship with God.

The yearly schedule of feasts was a great aide in teaching the character and plan of God. Since it was on a yearly schedule the level of inculcation was high. Think about our holiday schedule.

It is clear from Christ's ministry that He knew the Old Testament far better than any of His peers.

Remember from our dispensational constants two things:

- That spiritual growth is always through faith perception and testing through adversity and prosperity. This is exactly how Christ grew strong. That he was being filled with wisdom meant that the perception and inculcation had to take place beforehand.

- That the character and sufficiency of God are always the issue. And so they were for Christ during His childhood. Imitation of God's character and reliance on Him are the very essence of SOPHIA.

### The Event at the Temple

Luke 2:41-50.

[Translations the author's from the Greek]

**Luke 2:41**, "And every year His parents used to go into Jerusalem for the feast of Passover."

This verse sets the stage for the story to follow. It shows the custom of Joseph's family with reference to the Passover feast.

The preposition KATA plus the accusative of HETOS means "every year".

The customary imperfect of the verb POREUOMAI is translated, "used to go"

The dative case of the noun HEORTE.S shows the reason for their annual trip to Jerusalem the passover feast.

As a matter of fact, it was the custom for all Jewish men over the age of twelve to do so. That Mary went when she was not required revealed her devout nature. The child Jesus was apparently left behind with friends or relatives until he was old enough to go.

**Luke 2:42,43**, "And when he became twelve, they went up according to the custom of the feast, and upon their return after the full number of days, Jesus the boy stayed in Jerusalem but His parents did not know it."

More attendant circumstances to the main story are related in these two verses. They actually form one sentence in the Greek. The style of the sentence is quite dramatic. The crucial details are withheld until the very end.

The first phrase determines the time of this episode: the culminative aorist of GINOMAI shows that twelve years in the life of Christ had already past. He was actually twelve and a few months. This was to be the first passover of the child.

- Remember, Herod is dead, and the events of the nativity are now twelve years past.

- The excitement of the nativity is long past, obscured by the present sufferings of the nation.

The next phrase tells us that this year was no different than the others. They went up according to the custom of the feast. the verb ANABAINO is put into participle form, and this is a genitive absolute. It makes a parenthetical statement that gives necessary details, but the genitive absolute communicates that the details are not vital to the story. Luke is simply telling us an extra detail that is not really vital. "when they were returning from the feast (they went up first)" would be a good way to communicate this.

Next Luke says that Christ's parents were returning after the full number of days.

It was allowable for many to leave the feast before its completion if they had a ways to travel. The most important parts of the celebration were early in the week, so many families took advantage of the 'getaway' days. (Easter vacation at school). Joseph's family did not do this.

The full number of days is TELEIO.SANTO.N TAS HE.MERAS in the Greek. The participle is used in the temporal sense to show that they left long after many others. They stayed for the full feast regardless of the inconvenience, ostensibly to gain its full benefit. The aorist participle shows that they stayed the full number of days before they returned.

Luke next tells the real story: that Christ remained in Jerusalem while his parents left for Nazareth, and they did not know about it.

The articular infinitive HUPOSTREPHEIN with the preposition EN shows that it is during their return that they did not know that their son was with them.

The constantive aorist tense of the verb HUPOMENO describes Christ's decision to remain. It summarizes his entire stay into one whole.

Luke also makes it clear that Jesus is still just a boy by adding the word PAIS. He desires to remind us of this to show how extraordinary this boy was.

Under normal circumstances good parents would keep a close eye on their twelve year old son when they were on a trip.



Verse 44 heightens the drama, revealing the mistake of Jesus' parents and their action to rectify it.

**Luke 2:44**, "Now assuming him to be in the caravan they went for a day's journey they were seeking him among relatives and acquaintances."

The aorist participle *nomisantes* shows their wrong assumption, which preceded their wrong action. The action of an aorist participle precedes that of the main verb, which shows them looking for Him in the caravan as it went along. *nomizo* is a verb which reveals thinking that is still in the theory stage. Joseph and Mary's theory is that Jesus is in the caravan, *en to sunodia*.

- As many as two hundred thousand people would go up to Jerusalem for the feast. Great caravans with thousands of people would leave together for mutual protection since the roads were relatively unsafe.
- With so many people, it would be easy for one to get lost or not be seen for a while.
- Joseph and Mary trusted their son implicitly. Besides, he had just come of age by going to his first passover. He was now considered a man, wasn't he?

It was their decision to go along for a day's journey and seek for their son in the caravan. It would take at least a day to search thoroughly among so many people.

The word used for seek is the imperfect tense of *ANAZE.TEO*, which means to search for a fugitive or an escaped slave. The addition of the preposition *ana* onto the regular verb shows a great intensity of action.

They look among their relatives, and "known ones", or more properly, "acquaintances." They figure that the boy will be with someone they know are related to. Maybe he is with John, the son of Elizabeth and Zacharias, who would also have been at his first passover that year. Maybe with James and John the sons of Zebedee or Simon who would be called the Zealot. All of those families were most likely there, being devout and from the North.

**Luke 2:45**, "and not finding they returned to Jerusalem seeking him."

So far, one day of searching has passed, and still no Jesus.

The subjective negative adverb *ME*. is used to denote their failure. It allows the element of doubt in the matter. They did not find him, but neither were they sure that he was not with the caravan. Nevertheless, the percentages now lie with Jerusalem, and so they return.

The aorist tense of the participle *HEURONTES* confirms that their failure to find Jesus preceded their decision to return to Jerusalem.

Again the verb *ANAZE.TEO* is used to describe their desperate search for their son. Israel at this time was not the safest of places, and they had already come so close to losing their son right after he was born. These things no doubt heightened their fears.

In verse 46, Luke narrates the reunion of the child and his parents.

**Luke 2:46**, "and it came about after three days they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers and listening to them and questioning them."

The three day period is significant, very significant. The exact Greek phrase is *META HE.MERAS TREIS* it shows the completion of three full days. This is used elsewhere in Scripture as a prediction of the amount of time that Christ's body would spend in the tomb.

**Mat 12:40**, "for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

**Mk 8:31**, "And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."

**John 2:19**, "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'"

Mary, after Christ's death some twenty two years later, would recall this event. How clear it must have been to her that while Christ was gone He was about the things of the Father.

At the passover, 30 A.D. Christ would die and His body would lie in the tomb for three days and nights. During that time His soul would be attending to the Father's business, making the great proclamation TETELESTAI to the fallen angels in prison under the earth, 1 Pet 3:19.

It is clear that Luke interviewed Mary or someone close to her in order to learn of this episode in the life of Christ. The information could not have come from any other source.

The days lay out as follows:

- Day one: Joseph and Mary stay in the caravan and search for Him as they travel north.
- Day two: travel back to Jerusalem.
- Day three: search in Jerusalem.
- Day four: find Christ in the temple.

The circumstantial participle KATHEZOMENON shows the circumstances in which they found their Son sitting EN MESO TO.N DIDASKALO.N 'in the midst of the teachers'. didaskalon denotes a teacher with authority, an expert in the study of the Mosaic Law. This and the following two participles are in the present tense, indicating that all this was going on at the moment that his parents found him.

Two other circumstantial participles spell out what Jesus was doing while he sat.

- AKOUONTA AUTO.N listening to them. The genitive case of auto.n indicates that He listened with humility.
- EPERO.TO.NTA AUTOUS questioning them. EPERO.TO.NTA portrays a very intense questioning. Here not in the sense of aggressiveness, but in the depth and detail of the questions themselves. That the student should interrogate the teachers is a remarkable thing in itself!

In His humanity our Lord still had much to learn. Up to this point he had learned all that he possibly could, but there was more to go with each passing moment. Remember that in the incarnation the deity and thus the omnipresence and omniscience of Christ is completely restricted.

Christ in his humanity was finite and limited in what he could know and apply. The creature is always finite.

Verse 47 reveals the response of the teachers to the knowledge of Christ.

**Luke 2:47**, "Now everyone who heard him was astonished by his perspicacity and his answers."

This comment seems to be an aside to the drama of Christ being lost and then found by his parents, but in a way it is the real story. This is a mile marker in Christ's young life it gives us a brief check on his ability to perceive and apply the truth.

First is the response of the hearers: they EXISTANTO "were astounded."

- Usually amazement is short-lived; a surprise hits, the amazement comes, and then it is gone as quickly as it came. Not so here. The imperfect tense of EXISTE.ME shows that the boy's listeners were in a constant state of amazement.
- EXISTE.MI means to stand outside of oneself. It shows that you are beside yourself with surprise, amazement, etc. It is even used to show a state of befuddlement or even psychosis. Luke makes a joke here: Christ's listeners are stunned to the point of unthinking about His thinking!

The object of the teachers' amazement is twofold.

- The SUNESIS of Christ. This summarizes His perceptive ability with reference to spiritual matters. In essence it reveals the function of Jesus' human spirit. It is definitely a function of the heart the kind of thinking that immediately precedes application. Naturally this includes belief. This understanding only comes from the grace of God, and not the power of man, Eph. 3:4 and 2 Tim 2:7.
- His answers, described by the word APOKRISESIN. Interestingly enough, this word comes from a compound which literally means 'from the source of judgment'.
- Of course, the teachers cannot see our Lord's thought processes, but they can listen to His answers. From his answers they deduce His fantastic thought processes.

**Luke 2:48**, "and seeing him they were thunderstruck and his mother said to him, "Child [TEKNON] why have treated [done] us in this manner? Behold your father and I searched for you in torment."

To begin with, the astonishment of Joseph and Mary is not due to the spiritual discussion which is

going on as they arrive. They are amazed that they have found him at all they were at the point of giving up. If they were amazed in the same manner as the teachers, their response would have been in that category. There is a certain agony in finding that which is lost, even when it is found intact. Joseph and Mary experience just such an emotion.

Mary is the one who speaks. Joseph may have spoken but it is not recorded here. She definitely rebukes her son, but that rebuke is definitely wrong.

She calls him TEKNON this is not a term of respect it is the neutral child appellation, but it has no reference to authority. Mary assumes that her child is wrong because of the way that she suffered.

Mary adds an adverb to describe their mental attitude during the search ODUNO.MENOI. This is the present passive participle of ODUNO.MAO., which functions as an adverb to describe their mental attitude. The search was full of doubt and mental agony. The verb literally describes the agony that comes from burning. They were out of fellowship while they were searching.

Parents: there will be times when you agonize over your children. Your attitude is your responsibility, regardless of what your children do. Whatever your children do, right or wrong, your bad attitude is your fault, and never, ever theirs.

Verse 49 gives Christ's reply to the accusation of his mother.

**Luke 2:49**, "and he said to them, "Why were you seeking me? Did you not know that it is necessary for me to be about the things of my Father?"

First there is a legitimate question. 'Why were you seeking me?' It is wonderful to notice that he does not judge his parents. He does not use the compound verb for the desperate search, nor does he use the adverbial participle for mental torment. He asks why they searched for him at all, when they should have known all along where he was. Christ uses the objective negative adverb OUK to indicate that there is no doubt that they should have looked at the temple first.

Although they assumed [NOMIZO] him to be in the caravan, they should have assumed him to be in the things of the father.

EN TOIS TOU PATROS MOU should be translated 'about the things of my father.' Not 'in my father's house'. The word OIKOS [house] is not in the text.

The word DEI describes the higher calling of the boy. It shows a moral necessity for him to be about the things of his father. The things of the father have to do with faith perception of the truth also consistent with verse 40 and its record of Christ's childhood of wisdom.

This is the first indication of Christ's self-awareness of His essence and mission in life. It is likely that He knew it long before this, but this is our indicator of its existence at age 12.

From at least age 12 Christ was aware that he was the son of God. It is also apparent that it was necessary for Him to upgrade his education by speaking with the teachers at the temple.

Joseph and Mary's response to Christ's truthful statement is recorded in verse 50.

**Luke 2:50**, "and they themselves did not understand the statement which he spoke to them."

The verb SUNIE.MI is used to denote that the statement [RHE.MA] had to be understood on a spiritual level. Joseph and Mary are not using their spiritual frame of reference for this incident.

The negative adverb OUK shows that their misunderstanding was complete they missed the boat they didn't even find the dock in fact, they were not even near the water.

Joseph and Mary are so wrapped up in their own pain that they cannot see that not only did they mistakenly assume that Christ was in the caravan, but also there was absolutely nothing wrong with what the boy did in staying at the temple. Their rationale is irrational: because they suffered, they assumed him wrong.

It is not that they did not understand Christ's statement in an academic sense; it is just that they are so out of fellowship with God that they will not accept the conclusion of their son. To accept his conclusion is to admit their wrong, and that is

just something that they will not do. One or the other of them had to be wrong; it was not Christ.

One of the greatest surrenders of pride is to admit that you have caused your own pain; that is what Joseph and Mary are struggling with. Make no mistake the accusation of Joseph and Mary is completely unfair. The next statement is all the more remarkable because of this.

Verse 51 reveals Christ's obedience in this unfair situation.

**Luke 2:51**, "And he went down with them and came unto Nazareth and he remained subordinate to them. And his mother was maintaining all these events in her heart."

It was His parents original wish to go back home to Nazareth; it was Christ's righteous desire to remain in Jerusalem. Since the boy was under the authority of his parents, he went back down to Nazareth. Nazareth is down for two reasons: because it is down with respect to elevation it is downhill; and because it is down with respect to importance Jerusalem is the most important city of all.

Luke uses a very strong idiom the periphrastic participle to show Christ's utter and complete subordination to his parents. It immediately became DEI a moral necessity to obey his parents' wishes. It was God's direct will in spite of his

parents out of fellowship state and the importance of his interchange with the temple teachers.

Mary was maintaining these things in her heart. This is why we know that this is Mary's narration to Luke. Only Mary could know her own heart. She would have had to tell someone about the thoughts of her heart.

The word for maintain is DIETEREI the imperfect tense of DIATEREO. The imperfect shows that she did this constantly, not just at one moment of time.

DIATERO here is contrasted with SUNTEREO of 2:19, when Mary heard the words of the wise men from the east. This is not the same as treasure. It is closer to remember without reference to an emotional appreciation. It literally means to 'keep through'. This concentrates on the duration of the events. Verse 19 concentrates on Mary's understanding; this verse concentrates on her memory without reference to understanding.

PANTA TA RE.MATA is a phrase which indicates that not only this event but many others remained in Mary's memory.