



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Luke

Chapter 2

Bishop Youssef



Introduction

Chapter Outline:

- The Birth of Jesus Christ 2:1-7
- Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20
- Circumcision of Jesus 2:21
- Jesus Presented in the Temple 2:22-24
- The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38
- The Holy Family Returns to Nazareth 2:39-40
- The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars 2:41-50
- Jesus Advances in Wisdom and Favor 2:51-52



The Birth of Jesus Christ 2:1-7

- St. Luke begins Jesus' birth narrative with the phrase *In those days*, About the time in which John the Baptist was born, and Christ conceived, in the manner related in the preceding chapter
- It is a phrase St. Luke uses frequently (i.e. 2:1, 4:2, 5:35, 6:12, 9:36, 21:23, 23:7; Acts 1:15, 2:18, 6:1, 9:37, 11:27, 21:15 etc.)
- He sets the historical time for Jesus' birth during the reign of the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus (29/27 BC - 14 AD) and when Quirinius was governor of the Roman province of Syria
- Publius Sulpicius Quirinius was an influential Roman senator and was born in the early 50's BC and died in 21 AD



The Birth of Jesus Christ 2:1-7

- According to existing historical data, he was the governor of Syria in 6/7 AD
- As a rule the practice in a Roman census was to register people in their place of residence
- The census described wasn't for simple statistics but was to efficiently tax everyone in the Roman Empire
- What happened was God's plan declared previously by the prophet Micah 5:2, *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting"*

The Birth of Jesus Christ 2:1-7



- Bethlehem, called the city of David because it was the place of his birth
- The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem is about 80 miles
- This was not a short distance in those days
- It was a significant undertaking
- Joseph by this act publicly declared both himself and Mary his wife to have been of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David
- *who was with child*, Yet, though in such circumstances, was obliged by this decree, to come to Bethlehem
- This was an example of obedience to civil officials



The Birth of Jesus Christ 2:1-7

- The "firstborn" was the title of rank and birth order for the first male child born to a woman who had never previously had children, though none followed after and it does not imply that the Virgin had other children
- A firstborn son was to be dedicated to the Lord, Exodus 13:1-2,12; Numbers 3:13
- In giving birth to Jesus it is the Church's teaching that St. Mary retained her virginity
- St. Augustine described Jesus' birth as being like "light passing through glass" and therefore leaving Mary's virginity pure

The Birth of Jesus Christ 2:1-7



- *wrapped Him in swaddling cloths*, When a child among the Hebrews was born, it was washed in water and then wrapped in swaddling clothes
- There was nothing special in the manner in which the infant Jesus was treated
- *There was no room for them*, Because of the multitude that were come to be enrolled
- And this shows their poverty and the little attention that was given to them
- For had they been rich they would have been regarded, and room made for them; especially since Mary was in the circumstances she was

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- In the hymn of praise, Mary praised God for raising up the lowly, Luke 1:52
- In the first century no group except tanners were lower than shepherds in Judean society
- Shepherds could not even give testimony in court
- And yet, God chose a group of shepherds to be the first to witness the coming of their Redeemer-Messiah
- So, why were shepherds chosen as the first on earth to hear the glorious news of the birth of the Savior of the world?

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- It seems as though this very humble people was selected as a practical illustration of that which in the future history of Christianity was to be so often exemplified - "the exaltation of the humble and meek"
- Jesus Himself was the chief Shepherd, and the true Shepherd, John 10:11
- The first news of His birth is made to shepherds; not to shepherds that were idle, but occupied with their honest vocations, keeping their flocks
- These men may have also protected and cared for the lambs used in temple sacrifice

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- The sheep intended for the daily sacrifices in the temple were fed in the Bethlehem pastures
- This news of His birth is made by an angel, whether the angel Gabriel before mentioned, or another, is not certain
- *stood before them*, St. Luke suggests a sudden appearance
- The angel comes in a glorious appearance, probably an extraordinary light
- *they were greatly afraid*, At the sight of such unusual light and glory about them; they were not used to such appearances, and were awed with the majesty of God, of which these were symbols, and were conscious to themselves of their own sinfulness

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- *Do not be afraid*, For he was a messenger of good tidings
- The good news announced by the angels was not merely for Israel, but for Gentiles and all men
- Three titles of the Son of God were announced by the angels
- *a Savior*, Whom God had appointed from all eternity; and had been long promised and much expected as such in time; a salvation which, primarily above everything else, was the remission of their sins and restoration of the fellowship lost in Eden

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- *Christ*, Identifies Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, Anointed, Suffering Servant, and Messiah spoken of by the prophets; the promised Son of David
- *the Lord*, It is corresponding to the Hebrew Jehovah; the Lord of all creatures and the Lord of lords
- The angel Gabriel gave a sign to Zechariah and Mary signifying the truth of his words
- Now the angel gives a sign to the shepherds, *lying in a manger*
- It was something exceptional that a new-born infant should be found in a manger

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- *a multitude of the heavenly*, There are thousands, ten thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand of them
- It may be rendered "the multitude", and may intend the whole company of angels, who were all of them together to sing the praises of God, and glorify Him at the birth of the Incarnate Savior, as well as to adore Him; since it is said, *“But when He again brings the first begotten into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him”* (Hebrews 1:6)
- In his hymn, Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would lead the people to peace with God, Luke 1:79 and now the angels echo his prophecy

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- God's good-will in sending the Messiah introduced peace in this lower world, removed and abolished the enmity that sin had raised between God and man, and resettled a peaceable communication
- If God be at peace with us, all peace results from it: peace of conscience, peace with angels, peace between Jew and Gentile
- Peace is here put for all good, all that good which flows to us from the Incarnation of Christ
- Some translation reads it as "It is on earth peace, to men of good-will to men who have a good-will to God, and are willing to be reconciled; or to men whom God has a good-will to, though vessels of His mercy"

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- They did not say, let us go and see if this be true—they have no doubts, but, *Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing ...*
- Does not this confirm the view given on Luke 2:8 of the spirit of these humble men?
- Finding the "sign" of the child in the manger, the humble shepherds are the first to proclaim the Gospel "the "good news"
- *came with haste*, is significant
- When God gives His great opportunities to men, it is needful that they should seize them at once
- Delay may prevent altogether the blessing God intended

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- Thus these humble men were chosen as the first preachers of the new-born King
- Gradually the story got known not only in the inn, and among all the people there but throughout the city of Bethlehem
- The vision of Zacharias, the story of Mary, the two strange births, the marvelous experience of the shepherds
- Following upon all this was the arrival of the Magi, and their inquiries after a new-born Messiah, whom they had been directed by no earthly voices to seek after in the neighborhood of Jerusalem

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- It was then that the jealous fears of Herod were aroused, and the result was that he gave immediate directions for the massacre of the innocents in Bethlehem, of which St. Matthew writes
- Most people were persuaded to wonder about such a message; but there is no evidence that any of them at all were concerned enough about the coming of the Messiah to investigate any further
- This is the attitude of the vast majority of men in all generations
- The greatest news of all ages had broken in their community, and the people "wondered" about it

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- *all these things*, Not merely the "saying" of the shepherds, but that of the angel to herself, that of the angel to Joseph, and many others
- St. Mary would learn from this visit that the words of her hymn would in very truth be realized
- Two things of great importance are here
- (1) *kept all these things*, St. Mary made accurate records of all that took place, there can be no doubt at all that the most accurate record of things that attended Jesus' conception and birth was made by His virgin mother and, in due course, given to the author of this Gospel

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- (2) *pondered them in her heart*, This indicates that St. Mary continually had these things in mind, meditating upon them, and wondering, perhaps, what the full meaning of such things could be
- She knows this is only the beginning of a journey that will change the course of human history
- St. Luke uses St. Mary's contemplation to call the reader to also contemplate the meaning of these events, not just in the lives of Mary and those who were present at Christ's birth, but to contemplate what these events mean to the reader personally

Glory in the Highest/The Visit of the Shepherds 2:8-20



- The shepherds glorified God on account of the birth of the Messiah; and praised Him, wondering at His grace, and the high honor put upon them; and that there was such an exact agreement between the things they had seen, and the angel's narrative
- How that echo of the angel's message must have thrilled and benefited them



Circumcision of Jesus 2:21

- The circumcision and naming is an evidence of the obedience of St. Mary and St. Joseph, just as Elizabeth and Zechariah were obedient in the naming of their child
- He was indeed the lawgiver, and as such not tied to the observance of the law, but He was also “*born of a woman, born under the law*” (Galatians 4:4)
- He was to make Himself appear the Son of Abraham; and so this was God’s covenant, Genesis 17:10, with Abraham and his seed after him
- The Lord’s circumcision is a new step the Lord takes on the path of the cross, and His submission in giving up the old law for our sake, fulfilling every righteousness, Matthew 3:15

Jesus Presented in the Temple

2:22-24



- Women who gave birth to male children were required to observe forty days of ritual confinement after which they were to present themselves at the Temple for purification, Leviticus 12:1-6
- The primary idea of the law would seem to have been that of witnessing to the blemish of imperfection and sin attaching to every child of man
- Here it was not necessary; but St. Mary's act was simply one of devout obedience to the law
- The period of purification lasted for forty days from the birth

Jesus Presented in the Temple

2:22-24



- At the end of forty days, Mary went up to the temple to offer the appointed sacrifices for her purification
- Joseph also presented the holy child Jesus, because, as a first-born son, He was to be presented to the Lord, and redeemed according to the law
- The reason of this law was this, when God struck all the firstborn of Egypt, He saved the firstborn of Israel; and therefore claimed a right to them, and obliged their parents, excepting the Levites, to redeem them at the price of five shekels, Exodus 13:12

Jesus Presented in the Temple

2:22-24



- *A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons*, The proper offering was a lamb for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or dove for a sin offering; but for the poor an alternative was allowed - instead of the more costly present of a lamb, a second pigeon or dove might be brought
- The deep poverty of Mary and Joseph is shown in this offering
- The offering had, like all other sacrifices, to be made in the Temple

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- Simon's name means "the listener" or "the obedient" and this may signify the obedient Jewish believers who have long waited for the fulfillment of the prophecies
- The story of Simon the elder as mentioned in the church tradition is summarized as follows:
- He was one of the seventy-two Jewish elders who were asked by Ptolemy to translate the Greek Torah (Old Testament), which was called the Septuagint
- It is said that as he was in the process of translation, he wished to replace the word "virgin" as mentioned in Isaiah prophecy "*A virgin shall conceive*" for the word "a young maiden" because he suspected the issue

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- But the angel of Lord appeared to him and assured him he would not die before he sees the babe born of this virgin
- Like Zechariah and Elizabeth, Simeon is described as “*just*”, *observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly*” (Luke 1:6) and he is also described as “*devout*” in the same way as “a devout observer of the Law” (Acts 22:12)
- Simeon is a prophet and his part in the infancy narrative is prophetic
- And indeed, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he carried the baby Jesus in his arms, and his tongue uttered praises, eager to be released from this world, after he had witnessed by the Spirit the salvation of the entire nations and peoples

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- The Holy Spirit, who dwelt in the soul of this righteous man, directed him to go and see its accomplishment
- Those who come, under the influence of God's Spirit, to the church for worship, will undoubtedly meet with Him who is the comfort and salvation of Israel
- *the parents* , Mary was his real parent, Joseph is called so, as he is his father in Luke 2:48 because he was supposed, and generally thought to be so, Luke 3:23
- The mother knew the truth, Joseph too, and the house of Zacharias the priest, and probably not a few besides among their devout friends and relatives

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- St. Mary and St. Joseph, resting quietly in their simple faith, left the rest to God, who, in His own season, would reveal the secret of the nativity
- The Holy Family was in the outer court when Simeon approached them
- *into the temple*, St. Luke uses a Greek term that includes the whole of the Temple complex and not the inner court and Sanctuary that is accessible only to priests

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- Having been told that he will live until he has seen the Messiah, Simeon now identifies Jesus as the promised Redeemer-Messiah not just for Israel but for all nations, proclaiming a universal message of salvation
- *he took Him up in his arms*, What must the holy soul of this man have felt in this moment!
- *now You are letting Your servant depart in peace*, Now, having seen Him, he expects to be immediately dismissed in peace into the eternal world; having a full assurance and enjoyment of the salvation of God

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- Though Simeon means his death, yet the thing itself is not mentioned; for death has not only lost its sting, but its name also, to those who have, even by faith, seen the Lord's anointed
- Addressing God and using the prophetic language of Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6, it is the child Jesus who Simeon identifies as *Your salvation*
- *A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.*”This is in accordance with the prophecies in the Old Testament, Isaiah 49; Isaiah 9:6-7; Psalm 98:3
- The Gentiles are represented as sitting in darkness that is, in ignorance and sin

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- Christ is a "light" to them, as by Him they will be made acquainted with the character of the true God, His law, and the plan of redemption
- As the darkness rolls away when the sun arises, so ignorance and sin flee away when Jesus gives light to the mind
- Nations shall come to His light, and kings to the brightness of His rising, Isaiah 60:3
- *the glory of Your people Israel*, The Messiah was born of the Jews and among them

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- He was first sent and came to them, and lived and dwelled with them; taught in their streets, and wrought His miracles in the midst of them
- The Gospel was first preached to them
- Jesus was indeed the glory of Israel; but the Israel of this promise is far more extensive than secular or national Israel, and encompasses the redeemed of all ages
- The beautiful little hymn of Simeon was no doubt preserved by the Virgin Mary and given to St. Luke

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- *Joseph and His mother*, To confirm that Joseph was not the father
- It was not so much that Simeon foretold new things respecting the Child Jesus that they marveled; their surprise was rather that a stranger to them and the child, coming into the temple at this instant, should have such a revelation made to him, and be able to say the things he did
- For they not only knew that the same things were predicted of the Messiah, but they had heard and known, and believed the same concerning this child

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- Some believe that, while Simeon blesses Mary and Joseph, he refrains from blessing the Child
- It was not for one like Simeon to speak words of blessing over "the Son of the Highest"
- However, others believe that the blessing included Christ just as a general blessing; praying God to bless them
- *said to Mary*, Again, not to Joseph, who he knew was not His father
- *this Child is destined for the fall and rising*, This seems an allusion to Isaiah 8:14-15

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- *the fall and rising of many in Israel*, It is a warning prediction because the "falling" comes before the "rising"
- Simeon has announced the rejection of the Messiah by His own people, but in the fullness of time there shall be a rising again of many in Israel, Romans 11:26
- If God the Father has sent His son for the salvation of the world, John 3:16, through the sign of cross, yet not everyone accepts this sign and responds to God's overwhelming love, rather some may reject the cross and find it offensive
- The fall and rise of many may also refer to the fall of evil in our life so that God's kingdom rises in us

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- *will be spoken against*, Simeon here prophesies, that Christ, and His followers, should be ridiculed, and all the arrows of ungodly men should be shot against Him; which proved true in that age as to Christ and His apostles, and in succeeding ages as to all that derive from Him, and will so hold to the end of the world
- He was to endure *such hostility* of sinners, Hebrews 12:3
- There is probably a reference also to Isaiah 65:2, “*I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people,*”
- The whole history of our Lord’s ministry—one might almost say, of His whole after-work in the history of Christendom—is more or less the record of the fulfilment of Simeon’s prediction

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- St. Mary also used the rising and falling imagery in reverse in her hymn of praise when she spoke of God lifting up the lowly and throwing down the rulers from their thrones, Luke 1:52
- *yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also*, It refers to the anguish St. Mary must have felt and the wound of her heart when standing beside the cross of her tortured Son, John 19:25
- *the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*, The gospel times, especially times of persecution, will discover whom God has chosen, and whom He has not, by discovering the thoughts of their hearts

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- It will then be seen who will receive and who will reject the Messiah, who is on His side and who will be against Him
- Wherever Christ is preached, there is a manifestation of the thoughts of men's hearts, of their secret yearning after righteousness, their secret bitterness against it
- Persecution is the Lord's filter, by which He examines churches and separates the tares from the wheat
- Gospel times and times of persecution are both of the times which make great discovery of men's spirits
- Men's views and decisions regarding Christ are a mirror in which the very "thoughts of their hearts" are seen

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- The Spirit of prophecy now began to revive, which had ceased in Israel above three hundred years
- We find a woman recognized as a prophetess at a time when no man is recognized as a prophet
- *a prophetess*, Perhaps no more is meant than that she was one who had understanding in the scriptures, and made it her concern to instruct the younger women in the things of God
- She is named, as if it were a well-known fact, as having been the wife of Phanuel, and she is not of the tribe of Judah, but of Asher

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- Though her family might have been a distinguished one in Jerusalem, yet we find that it was her very exemplary faithfulness that entitled her to be thus honorably mentioned in the sacred history
- That tribe, though belonging to the Ten that had been carried into exile by Shalmaneser, 2 Kings 17:6, had not been altogether lost
- Some, at least, of its members survived and cherished the genealogies of their descent, as one family of the neighboring tribe of Naphthali are said to have done at Nineveh, Tobit 1:2

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- *seven years from her virginity*, The words are emphasized as expressing chastity prior to marriage, and as excluding the thought of a second marriage
- *who did not depart from the temple*, She was constant in her devotion there, at the time of divine service, whether by night or day
- Some think she had lodgings in the courts of the temple, either in an alms-house, being maintained by the temple charities; or, as a prophetess, she was lodged there, as in a proper place to be consulted and advised with by those that desired to know the mind of God

The Prophetic Statements of Simeon and Anna 2:25-38



- Others think *her not departing from the temple* means no more, than that she was constantly there at the time of divine service; when any good work was to be done, she was ready to join in it
- *And coming in that instant*, When Joseph and Mary brought the Infant into the temple by the direction of the Holy Spirit
- She praised Him that He had sent the promised and long looked for Messiah and Savior; and that she had lived to see His blessed face, and this happy day; and that she should be directed to come in at this instant, and be favored with this singular mercy of seeing the new born Savior, and His honored parents

The Holy Family Returns to Nazareth 2:39-40



- *they had performed all things*, Relating to the purification of St. Mary, and the presentation of her firstborn, and the required sacrifices and ceremonies
- *according to the law of the Lord*, Another note, which tells us of St. Mary and St. Joseph's obedience to the Law
- *to their own city, Nazareth*, Between this verse and the last come there are the events narrated by St. Matthew only; namely the visit of the Magi; the flight into Egypt; and the massacre of the innocents children

The Holy Family Returns to Nazareth 2:39-40



- But it is very likely, that as soon as the presentation in the temple, and the ceremonies relative to it, had been accomplished, that the Holy Family did return to Galilee, as St. Luke here states, and that they continued there till Herod's decision to kill the children was known to them by the Lord after the departure of the magi
- After which, they fled into Egypt, where they continued till the death of Herod; and it is probable that it is of a second return to Nazareth that St. Matthew speaks

The Holy Family Returns to Nazareth 2:39-40



- From these few words St. Luke evidently understands the humanity of Jesus as a reality
- The growth of our Lord is here described as a natural human growth
- Which shows that it was a true body Christ assumed, and like ours, which did not come to its maturity at once, but by degrees
- *filled with wisdom*, This is to be understood, not of His essential wisdom as God, nor of those treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which were hid in Him as Mediator; but of His created and natural wisdom, as a man; in which He increased gradually, as His body grew

The Holy Family Returns to Nazareth 2:39-40



- We should never forget that Jesus was perfect man, as well as God
- Even Christ Himself, who knew no sin, grew in the favor of God
- From this we learn that, if a man were as pure and as perfect as the man Jesus Christ Himself was, yet he might nevertheless increase in the image, and consequently in the favor, of God
- It is remarkable that this is all that is recorded of the infancy of Jesus; and this, with the short account that follows of His going to Jerusalem, is all that we know of Him for thirty years of His life

The Holy Family Returns to Nazareth 2:39-40



- The design of the evangelists was to give an account of Jesus "public ministry," and not His private life
- Hence, they say little of Him in regard to His first years
- What they do say, however, corresponds entirely with what we might expect
- He was wise, pure, pleasing God, and deeply skilled in the knowledge of the divine law
- He set a lovely example for all children; was subject to His parents, and increased in favor with God and man

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars 2:41-50



- The Law of Moses required the attendance of all males at the three feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, Exodus 23:17; Deuteronomy 16:16
- The scattering of the Jews had, of course, relaxed the obligation for those who lived at a distance; but it was still more or less generally recognized by those who dwelt in Palestine
- The school of Hillel held the Passover to be binding upon women as well as men
- The yearly journey to Jerusalem may therefore be taken as an indication of devout obedience

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars 2:41-50



- When a Jewish boy was three years old he was given the tasseled garment directed by the Law, Numbers 15:38-41; Deuteronomy 22:12
- At five he usually began to learn portions of the Law, under his mother's direction
- At twelve a Jewish boy became a son of the law, with the responsibility of a man and an obligation to keep the law
- This mention of the age of Jesus is probably to suggest that this is the first time His parents took Him to Jerusalem and to indicate that He is now twelve with a responsibility to keep the Law

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars 2:41-50



- The feast of the Passover, and of unleavened bread, held seven days, during which time Joseph and Mary stayed in Jerusalem, and then returned
- *the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem*, The words do not imply that He intentionally stayed behind
- Perhaps, on each of the Feast's days, the Boy Jesus was seeking wisdom to do His Father's work at the hands of the appointed teachers who "sat in Moses' chair"
- This had become habitual and He went, as usual, when the Feast was over

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars 2:41-50



- But Joseph and Mary, instead of seeking Him there, took for granted that He had started with the other boys of the same age who had come from Nazareth
- *their relatives and acquaintances*, Those of the same family and neighborhood went up to Jerusalem together on such occasions
- Many may continue along life's way believing that Jesus is in their company, when actually He is not
- Sure enough, Jesus was found in the temple, a figure of His church; and that is where He is found today

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars 2:41-50



- *seeking Him*, Diligently, if they sought earnestly when they first found Him missing, there is little doubt that their diligence must be greatly increased during His three days' absence
- Jesus was missing for three days in Jerusalem, as He will be missing on the three days between His crucifixion and Resurrection. "Finding" Jesus on the third day prefigures the events of the Resurrection
- Strange that they should have for so long searched in other places

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars 2:41-50



- Had they only called to mind the sacred secret of the Child, surely they would have gone at once to the temple; was it not, after all, His earthly home, that holy house of His Father in Jerusalem?
- *sitting in the midst of the teachers*, Not standing as a catechumen to be instructed by them, for He had discovered such measures of knowledge and wisdom that they admitted Him to sit among them as a fellow or member of their society

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars 2:41-50



- This is an instance, not only that He was filled with wisdom, v. 40, but that He had both a desire to increase it and a readiness to communicate it
- He is an example to children and young people, who should learn of Christ to delight in the company of those they may get good by, and choose to sit in the midst of the godly scholars and teachers rather than in the midst of the ungodly

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars 2:41-50



- We do not know anything about the conversation between Christ at the age of twelve with the teachers
- But we do know that, “*all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers*”
- *His understanding*, In the knowledge of the law, and of the Scriptures
- We also know that St. Mary and Joseph, “*when they saw Him, they were amazed*”
- St. Mary's words have in them something of a gentle reproach
- St. Joseph, it is noticeable, stands evidently apart

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars 2:41-50



- St. Augustine comments on St. Mary's words (Luke 2:48) that "*Your father and I*", saying that though she obtained all this honor having God's Word in her womb, yet she behaved in spiritual modesty towards St. Joseph, by presenting him first, then herself to follow
- She knew only too well He was not of St. Joseph seed, but by means of her spiritual love that filled up the holy family, she considered him His father and thus she mentioned him first, before herself

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars 2:41-50



- These words are very memorable as being the first recorded words of Jesus
- Jesus reminded them here that He came down from heaven; that He had a higher Father than an earthly parent; and that, even in early life, it was proper that He should be engaged in the work for which He came
- Throughout His ministry, this claim of Jesus was often repeated
- Clearly, this statement of Christ so early in His life is the principal thing Luke intended to be taught by this episode

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars 2:41-50



- We are quick to think that St. Mary and St. Joseph should have understood, and skeptical criticism has seen in this a contradiction to the previous history of the Annunciation and the Birth
- Twelve years, however, of the life of childhood after the outward pattern of that of other children, may have dulled the impressions that had then been made
- And even if they, in part, understood the words as referring to the marvel of His birth, they were still in the dark as to what He meant by being *about My Father's business*

Jesus Advances in Wisdom and Favor 2:51-52



- Jesus was obedient to the commandment to honor His earthly parents, Exodus 20:12
- The hour of His appearance as the world's Savior had not come
- In the meanwhile, He manifested the noblest quality of youth, that of loving submission to His earthly parents
- By St. Mary contemplated these events probably means that she did so in terms of what had been revealed to her in the past and what was likely to unfold in the future according to the prophecy she had received and the teaching of the prophets, Luke 2:19

Jesus Advances in Wisdom and Favor 2:51-52



- Her continuing thoughtful contemplation shows her appreciation of God's Divine plan and her part in it
- The fourfold development of Christ: mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually is here affirmed, exactly the type of growth and development that is inherent in the very fact of the incarnation
- He who "emptied Himself" and became man found it needful to pass through the helplessness of infancy, the ignorance of babyhood, and the incompetence of adolescence just like all men
- The true humanity of our Lord is thus brilliantly presented by Luke, no less than His true deity

Jesus Advances in Wisdom and Favor 2:51-52



- If any ask how He, who was the eternal Wisdom of the Father, (who is the only wise God), increased in wisdom, they must know that all things in Scripture which are spoken of Christ, are not spoken with respect to His entire person, but with respect to the one or the other nature united in that person; He increased in wisdom, as He did in age, or stature, with respect to His human, not to His Divine nature
- Here Luke attributed to St. Mary the narratives just concluded, and without actually naming her as his source, nevertheless made that conclusion obligatory



Discussion

- How did Joseph's trip to Bethlehem fulfil the prophecy?
- God sent three witnesses to testify to the birth of Jesus. Who were they?
- How old was Jesus when He was circumcised? How was His name chosen?
- Who met Jesus and His parents in the temple? What kind of man was he? And what did he say and do regarding Jesus?



Discussion

- How can we become strong in spirit?
- What can we learn about young people's commitment to God and obedience to parents?
- How is the rest of Jesus' youth summarized?
- What are some of the titles by which the Church honors the Virgin Mary?