

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE!
The Sunday of the Epiphany of Our Lord
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Luke 2:40-52

40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. 41 Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. 43 After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." 49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them. 51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

I. INTRO (What is Epiphany?)

Today we celebrate the Sunday of the Epiphany of our Lord. Although Epiphany is actually on January 6, which is a Tuesday this year, it can be pushed back to previous Sunday if an actual Epiphany Day service isn't celebrated.

The official name is "The Epiphany of the Lord," this feast celebrates the epiphany or manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. It is symbolized by Christ's manifestation to the Magi, The Wise Men.

That's why the verse always used for an Epiphany Day service is Matthew 2:1-12 the coming of the wise men, that is, Jesus' appearance to the Gentiles. The account of the Magi traveling from the East to see the Christ child appears only in the Gospel According to St. Matthew. The word Magi, in Greek *magoi*, comes from the Latin word meaning "sage." These particular sages were probably Zoroastrian astrologers from Persia. Upon seeing a star rising in the East, the Star of Bethlehem, they realized it was a sign that the king of the Jews had been born. According to St. Ignatius of Antioch (AD 107), the star shone with an inexpressible brilliance, and the sun, moon, and other stars all formed a chorus around the special star (Letter to the Ephesians, 19). The wise men followed the star to Bethlehem of Judea, and to Jesus' dwelling there. Having arrived, they worshipped the infant Jesus, and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

The feast originally was more closely connected to Jesus' baptism, the primary theme of the feast in Eastern Churches to this day. In addition, other manifestations of Christ were often commemorated during Epiphany, including the miracle at Cana. It has been claimed that the Baptism of the Lord, the adoration of the infant Jesus by the Magi, and the miracle at Cana all historically occurred on January 6. Whether there is truth in this or not, regardless, the Epiphany solemnity is celebrated on January 6, which falls within Christmastide. In many western denominations, the feast is moved to a Sunday. But not so in the Eastern Church which calls the holiday The Theophany, which means "manifestation of God." Eastern Christians also refer to the Epiphany as "Holy Lights" because they baptize on this day, and baptism brings about illumination. That's why many churches have another Candlelight Service on the Evening of Epiphany. Traditionally Epiphany marks the end of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

By the way, the word Epiphany means a sudden appearing of something or someone. According to Webster's Dictionary: *It's a sudden, spontaneous perception or insight into the reality or essential meaning of something, usually initiated by some simple, plain, or commonplace occurrence or experience.* It's that moment

when something happens that brings complete clarity to something that was once clouded or even unknown. It's that aha moment when you say, now I get it.

Today's Epiphany text shows the appearing of Jesus in the Temple, His Father's House. All the verses for the Epiphany Season are to show us something true about Jesus. Epiphany always shows us Him Who is both God and man.

II. JESUS HUMANITY

Just verses before our text today Luke says in verse 40: "***And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him***" (Luke 2:40). This clearly points to Jesus humanity. Jesus being human was never a problem He didn't become unpopular until He declared that He was true God and told the Jews about their sins in John 5. That's what got Him into trouble.

Every Jewish male had to go to Jerusalem three times a year, for Passover, for Pentecost, and for Tabernacles (Ex. 23:14-17; 34:23; Deut. 16:16) But since the Babylonian Captivity this law could not be kept. Most Jews in Palestine tried to go to Jerusalem at least once in the year. And being that Passover was the greatest of the three feasts, and had the most gospel in it, Mary would also attend.

Jesus, at the time was *twelve years old*, when He went up with them. The Jewish doctors said that at the age of twelve a child must begin to fast from time to time, that they may learn to fast on the Day of Atonement; and that at age thirteen a child begins to be *a son of the commandment*, that is, obliged to the duties of adult church.

Jesus was an obedient child and His parents trusted Him. We see this in our text, for they did not look for Him until after they had left Jerusalem a whole day's journey. Nazareth is about 60 miles north of Jerusalem. The journey takes about three days. "***After three days***" in verse 46 means one day out of Jerusalem, one day going back and one day searching for Jesus.

You might be thinking they were really bad parents. How could they have missed their son for a whole day? After all Jesus was just a young boy and they should have been paying better attention. But remember they had traveled in a caravan from their home town. And no doubt the caravan was full of family and friends who had come to attend the Passover Festival. If Jesus was going to be in safe company it would be in this caravan.

Mary and Joseph return to Jerusalem and they're surprised at where they find Jesus and what He's doing. The teachers in the Temple are amazed at His intelligence and answers.

III. JESUS DIVINITY

What Mary says in vs. 48 shows deep love for her son. But she finds fault with Him. Yet His two questions in verse 49 don't scold Mary but rather register surprise at her concerns and disapprove of her for having forgotten Who He is. He said: "***Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?***" He had hoped for the answer: "Yes." Before Jesus was born the angel had told Mary that Jesus would be the God-man (Luke 1:32-35). He had also told Joseph the same (Matthew 1:20-22). Mary and Joseph knew Who Jesus was. But evidently Jesus had humbled Himself so deeply that His divinity was not perceivable. He appeared only as a human being, a child, although a righteous one. By the way, the Apocrypha that is the false Gospels wrongly portray Jesus performing miracles as an infant and as a child. The best-known of those false accounts is Jesus and his friends are making birds out of clay and Jesus makes His fly away. Turning water into wine was Jesus first miracle according to the Scriptures (John. 2:11).

Remember an Epiphany always shows us Jesus, Who is both God and man. Verse 48 mentions Joseph, as Jesus' earthly father. But Jesus verse 49 speaks clearly of Jesus heavenly Father. He is human, He is divine. He is man and He is God.

IV. THE PEOPLE REACTION

Verse 50 says *“And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.”* We shouldn’t criticize Mary and Joseph for not understanding what Jesus said. Are we really any better? Verse 51 tells us though that *“Mary treasured all these things in her heart”*. Very likely Jesus said more in the Temple. Very likely as the three walked back to Nazareth, some 60 miles, He told them much more, maybe like the two on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24. But we can’t prove that.

Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem but He didn’t sin. He didn’t even break the fourth commandment. As true God He was above the Law, but as true man He obeyed His parents (verse 51). He put himself under the Law. Galatians 4:4 says: *“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.”*

In this account we have the last mention of Joseph. For that reason scholars have thought that he was older than Mary and that he died soon after this. Perhaps! He is the silent saint. No recorded words.

V. THE CONCLUSION

This text is pure Gospel. It gives us a perfect picture of Jesus according to His two natures. And it tells us that He kept the Law for us. It is far more than Law, the telling of children that they should obey their parents, although that too is God-pleasing. It tells how Jesus is both man and God. He lived a perfect life we could not. He died the perfect death that we dare not.

Jesus is God become flesh to bring salvation to all people. By Jesus life, by His holy incarnation; by His holy nativity; by His baptism, fasting, and temptation; by His agony and bloody sweat; by His cross and passion; by His precious death and burial; By His glorious resurrection and ascension; Jesus conquered sin, death and the devil. For He lived a perfect life for you! He has died a perfect death for you! And all of this has been done for you, so that you may know beyond a shadow of doubt that all your sins are forgiven in the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. For Jesus has prepared a place for you in His Father’s House. In Jesus name, Amen and amen!