

The Old Paths

Volume 10, Issue 24

August 10, 2003

“Joseph and Mary’s Assumption”

Jarrold Jacobs

“**N**ow his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?” (Lk. 2:41-49).

I am sure that this account is familiar to most of our dear readers. Perhaps upon reading this text it brings to mind a time when you lost sight of your children in a crowd. Has this happened to you, yet? Perhaps you “assumed” they were right with you, only to realize that they were not with you. Can you remember the panic, the fear,

at not knowing where your child was? Imagine Joseph and Mary’s panic and fear. They did not just lose sight of Jesus for a moment, but for a total of four days!! I don’t imagine they got any sleep in the three days they spent searching for Him, do you? Might you imagine they were feeling guilt and remorse at the fact that they simply “assumed” He was with the family or a friend, when in fact, He wasn’t? What a horrible feeling!!

Do you remember the relief you felt when you found your child that you had lost sight of just a few moments earlier? Imagine the joy of Joseph and Mary as they finally found Jesus, and He was safe, unharmed, and in good health after the three days of searching.

Of course, we should also remember those who have lost a child or a family member and searched for days or years in vain. Their loved one was lost or stolen, and their return home seems hopeless. Sadly, many times these stories end in tragedy. Perhaps many folks scour the countryside looking for this person(s), and yet no positive results come from their search. This is truly a tragedy.

Yet, is there not a greater tragedy than these we have mentioned? Greater than the physical loss of a loved one, we see folks who are spiritually lost every day. How sad it is to see folks who, like Joseph and Mary, assume Jesus is with them, when He is not! How sad it is to know those who, when you tell them Jesus is not with them, get mad, and think that everything is OK. They refuse to accept the plain evidence of Scripture. This happens too often in our world!

Who is it that assumes Jesus is with them when He is not?

1) Those who are doing “religious” things without authority from Christ (Col. 3:17). When Jesus spoke of the judgment scene, He said, “*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*” (Matt. 7:22-23). Notice Jesus did not deny that these folks did “many wonderful works.” What He said was that they worked iniquity (“lawlessness,” NKJ). In other words, they did things without authority from Heaven. For this, they were condemned by Christ! Why is this? It is because unless one acts and speaks according to the authority of God, then one is not doing a “good work” (II Tim. 3:16-17).

2) Those who think they are saved without being baptized (I Pet. 3:21). Our Lord said in no uncertain terms that one needs to believe and be baptized in order to be saved (Mk. 16:16). It is just that simple. If one refuses to do this, regardless of how many “preachers” say he/she is saved, that person is lost! That person is living without a relationship with Christ! One who “*puts on Christ*” is the one who has been “*baptized into Christ*” (Gal. 3:27). That is the truth. When folks simply assume Jesus is with them, based upon a “feeling,” “faith only,” saying a prayer, etc., they no more have Jesus with them than Joseph and Mary did on those days recorded for us in Luke 2!

3) Those who say “Choose the church of your choice.” The New Testament declares to men that Jesus built only one church (Matt. 16:18). He purchased only one church with His blood (Acts 20:28). He is the head of only one church (Col. 1:18). Therefore, it is not within the scope of man’s authority to tell people to

simply “choose” the church they like! Biblically speaking, you have the “choice” of one!! I remember one woman telling me, “Jesus is in all churches.” While this sounds nice, it is just as wrong as it can be! Christ is NOT a part of every group that calls themselves a “church.” There is only one church that Christ chose, and that church needs to be my choice, too! If I am not a member of the church that is found in the Bible (Rom. 16:16), then I am living a lie by assuming Christ is with me when He is not!

4) Those who are living with unrepented sin. John taught, “*If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth*” (I Jn. 1:6). Remember, “*God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*” (I Jn. 1:5). Therefore, if one has sin in his/her life and refuses to repent, Christ is not with that person! For example, if one is a Christian, but for whatever reason begins to harbor an attitude of pride, of covetousness, of adultery, of divisiveness, of selfishness; is a “closet drunk,” addicted to tobacco or drugs, or is omitting various parts of the Lord’s word, etc., Christ is not going to be with that one until/unless he repents of that sin.

Sin separates between man and God (Isa. 59:1-2) Therefore, let us be conscious of our spiritual standing before God and repent of sin while we have the opportunity to do it (Heb. 3:7-8; II Pet. 3:9).

Conclusion

This account in Luke 2 has a happy ending despite Joseph and Mary’s assumption; because they searched until they found Jesus (Lk. 2:45-46). Friend, will your **life** have a happy ending? It will not have a happy ending unless you belong to Christ (Gal. 3:27). We cannot just “suppose” He is with us. We must know He is with

us by diligent searching and obedience to Him (Acts 17:11, 27; Rom. 6:17-18; etc.). Don’t risk an eternity in Heaven on an “assumption”!

POINTED PARAGRAPHS

R.L. Whiteside (1869-1951)

“**H**ere am I; send me.” To know the Lord and to realize our dependence upon him makes us willing, even anxious, to do whatever he wants us to do. There is something fearfully wrong with the heart of one who inquires concerning any duty. Will it pay? Is it pleasant work? Will I be thrown with the right sort of people? Will it enhance my reputation? Is the work below my dignity? The true servant of the Lord, like Isaiah, says: “Here am I; send me.” Like his Lord he can say, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work” (Jn. 4:34). “I delight to do thy will, O my God; yet thy law is within my heart” (Ps. 40:8). (p. 62)

Instead of recognizing that God was working out through them his plan for the redemption of the world, the Jews concluded God cared for no other people. The promise to Abraham and their own prophets should have taught them the truth, but they were too much wrapped up in themselves to see the truth.

From the things we learn from

God’s dealings with nations, it can be safely said that no nation falls so long as it serves a purpose in God’s plans. This was true anciently, and it is true today. (p. 31)

If you become a little squeamish about denouncing false teachers, read Jeremiah. If you think people are so hardened in sin that they hate you for preaching the word, read Jeremiah. A careful study of Jeremiah is good tonic for anyone.

Jeremiah has been unjustly called the “weeping prophet,” as if he were a sort of weakling; whereas there was never a more heroic soul. Nothing turned him aside from his duty. If he wept, it was because he loved his nation, and his heart was torn with the knowledge of what was coming to his people. He would have been cold-blooded had he not wept. (p. 17)

To write the word of Christ upon the heart, or, what is essentially the same, to let it dwell in us richly, means more than to commit it to memory. It is to make it the dominant factor in our thinking and in our plans and purposes. (p. 99)

There are only two things that a person can do with a command — he can obey it or disobey it. One whose heart is right toward God will do whatever God commands him to do. (p. 26)

(From: The Kingdom Of Promise And Prophecy)

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