

A Special Visit to the Temple

Once a year Joseph and the Virgin Mary would go to worship in the great temple in Jerusalem. It was a long way to go on foot from Nazareth to Jerusalem. It took them three or four days to get there. When Jesus Christ was twelve years old, He went to the great temple for the first time. Together with His parents Jesus went to Jerusalem for the great Jewish holiday - the Passover.

Many people came from different towns and villages to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem. The streets were crowded. People went in and out of the great temple, where many beautiful ceremonies were held.

At last it was time to go home. Joseph and Mary, together with a great number of people, went back to Nazareth. They did not notice that Jesus was not with them. It was only at the end of the day that they began looking for Him. They asked their friends and relatives, but no one had seen Jesus.

Mary and Joseph became anxious. They went back to Jerusalem. For three long days they looked for Jesus in all the places where they thought they might find Him, but nowhere was He to be found.

At last, after three days, they went again into the temple and there they found the boy Jesus surrounded by all the most learned men, who had spent many years studying the holy books. Jesus was listening to them, asking and answering questions. All the people who heard Him were surprised and wondered at His understanding and His answers.

Mary said to Him: "My Son, why have You done this? Your father and I have looked everywhere for You. We were very worried." Jesus answered: "Why did you look for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house doing My Father's work?" Joseph and Mary could not understand these words.

Then Jesus went back to Nazareth with His mother Mary and Joseph. He lived with them for many years. He helped them and worked for them like an obedient son, until the time came for Him to go out into the world to preach about the kingdom of God to all the people.