

For the first day Joseph and Mary did not see Jesus, but thinking that, boy-like, He and the other boys from Nazareth were together somewhere in the company, they were not anxious. When they stopped for the night, lodging by the wayside, in the open air, they went from group to group, inquiring for their boy, but could not find Him.

They would not sleep much that night. How could a mother sleep when her boy was lost. Her anxious wonder would be "Where is my boy to-night? Perhaps she would think of the time when he was an infant, when Herod tried to kill Him and had killed all the children in Bethlehem, and she would fear that He had been cruelly put to death.

Early next morning they left their friends and started back alone. How eagerly they would ask along the way, whether a boy had been seen. About nightfall they would reach the city. Next morning they began their search, and at length, coming to the temple, they found Him talking to the teachers there, while everybody wondered that He knew so much and was so wise. His mother asked Him why He had done this and told Him of how sorry and anxious they had been about Him. He asked her if she did not know that He must be about His Father's work. These are the first of Christ's words recorded in the Scriptures. A mother's anxiety had made her forget the wonderful things about His infancy, or she would not have been so anxious, she would have known that something wise and good was detaining him.

The happy family start on their return to Nazareth, and though he knew so much, knew that He was the Son of God, He was subject unto them. Like a dutiful, obedient son, He lived and worked with them until He was thirty years of age.

Before and after this visit to Jerusalem, out especially before it, would be the school boy days of Jesus, His learning would be in the village schools of the Rabbis, where he would commit the Scriptures to memory, and also the comments of the old teachers upon them.

1. Jesus lived on earth a child and knows how to sympathize with children.

2. The childhood of Jesus shows what children should seek to be, "Strong, active, healthy, wise, religious, obedient to parents."

3. If boys and girls get to twelve years of age and are not about their father's business, they are not doing what Jesus would have them do.

4. The place where a boy is drawn to, shows what kind of a boy he is.

5 August.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

Les. Mark 1: 1-11.
Mem. vs. 9-11.

Gol. Text, Mark 1: 11.
Catechism Q. 87.

When boys are looking forward to something great in life, they do not often stay contentedly at home. But Jesus, though He knew His great work and mission, and how vast the interests that depended upon it, remained quietly at home, obedient and helpful, until he was thirty years of age.

For about four hundred years there had been no prophet from God to Israel as there used to be in the old days, and now the report came through the country that a prophet had come, that he was the forerunner of the Great Messiah, that he was calling on the people to repent of their sins that they might be fitted to welcome that Messiah.

This strange preacher made a great stir in the land. He dressed something like Elijah, and this gave him great authority among the people. He lived on very simple food, and, until he began preaching, he lived most of the time away from men in the lonelier parts of the country, here called the wilderness.

John the Baptist, for this was the great preacher, spoke very plainly. The people flocked from all parts of the country to hear him, and as they remained for a time listening to him they had to find a place in that dry country where there was abundance of water, not for the baptism, but for the drinking and cooking and washing of such throngs, and for their animals that they rode.

The people of Nazareth heard the news, and though it was several days journey distant a great many of them went to hear him. The Messiah himself had been with them for thirty years in their weekly work and in their little synagogue on the Sabbath day, and they did not know it.

Jesus hears the news, He feels that it is now time for Him to take up His great work. He too goes to the Jordan and asks John to baptize Him. John feels in some way that Jesus is much better than he is, that he himself has more need of repentance, and to be baptized of Jesus and he says so. Jesus does not deny it, but asks him to let it be so this time.

Then Jesus steps down to the river brink where John was standing on the edge of the water. Jesus steps into the water beside him. John reaches down his hand in some dish that he has, takes up some water pours it on Jesus, just as he had done with multitudes all day long. Then comes the wonderful sign. A dove coming down to Him and a voice saying from heaven "This is My Beloved Son."

Perhaps nobody but Jesus and John heard that voice for there was no stir among the people. The Messiah had come. The Messiah was among them and they did not know it.

1. Jesus is near to you, with you, as he was in that throng at the Jordan. Have you yet given yourself to Him.