

find out why they had not returned. His messengers ask in the town for the three strangers. Oh they have gone away home. They are far away by this time.

Herod had planned, but he forgot to take God into the account. God had sent a dream to the wise men not to return to Herod, but to go to their home some other way.

Herod was very angry that his plan had failed, and that He, a king, had been thus disobeyed, and in his rage he planned to kill all the children of Bethlehem that were under two years of age, thinking that in this way he would be sure to destroy the child he feared.

But he forgot that he had to deal with a Mightier One than himself. God sent another dream, this time to Joseph and Mary telling them to take away the child into Egypt for Herod would seek to destroy it. By night they stole away from Bethlehem when the people were fast asleep, and when morning came, scarcely any one missed them for they were strangers, and any who had known them would suppose that they had left for home. But away into Egypt they journeyed, where, long before, their ancestors had been slaves.

Herod blinded with hate and rage, sent his soldiers and carried out his cruel plan. What sorrow and anguish there would be. The baby boy in every home, not merely laid low in death, but cruelly killed by the soldiers. This is one of the most cruel things in the world's history.

These little ones died instead of the Christ child; of such is the kingdom of heaven, and will not this little band always have a special interest for Christ. Perhaps you and I will see that band some day and will join with them in praising Him who afterwards died for them and us.

But Herod did not live long. A few weeks after this cruel deed he died a horrible death. How bitter are the fruits of sin.

And now another dream came to Joseph and Mary. "Go back again to your own land for those who wanted to kill the child are now themselves dead."

Joseph brought the family back again, and would probably have made their home in Bethlehem, near to the royal city, so that when the child grew up he would be near his throne. But as they were on the way back they heard that Herod was indeed dead, but that his son was king, and they were afraid to live so near him as Bethlehem was, and so they went past, and went away north to their old home, and there the child Jesus grew to manhood.

This making of His home in Nazareth also fulfilled an old prophecy, for the prophets had foretold that the coming king should be called a Nazarene.

1. How safe are those for whom God cares.  
2. How foolish for any one to plan when he is going contrary to God's plans.

3. Let it be our constant prayer that God would lead us in His way, and then His plans will be our delight.

4. The child Jesus was in danger but God saved him, and if boys and girls trust and follow Him now, He will deliver them from all the ills that may seek to injure them.

## 29 July.

### THE YOUTH OF JESUS.

Les. Luke 2: 40-52.

Gol. Text. Luke 2: 52.

Mem. vs. 46-49.

Catechism Q. 86.

We have just one glimpse of Jesus from infancy to manhood. We get a good look at Him when He was twelve years old.

But hold, we have something more about Him before He was twelve. We are told that "He grew and waxed strong, filled with wisdom." What a grand picture of a growing, hopeful boy! Getting bigger and stronger day by day and living wisely and well. There is no need for boys to be as grave as old men. God did not intend them to be. He made the lambs to play and children too. But there is no need for boys to be foolish or bad. It does not make them manly, but the opposite. The boys whom everybody likes and respects are the strong, manly, generous, brave, tender boys. These are the boys whom Jesus loves and He has left an example for them to follow.

Every year there was a great meeting at Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover, and the people from all parts of the country used to go. They would gather in crowds and travel for days together. It was a very pleasant time for them. And best of all they would see the Holy City and the temple God's dwelling place.

When boys reached the age of twelve years they were thought to be old enough to take upon themselves the responsibility of keeping the law, and they were called "sons of the law" and used to go with the older people to Jerusalem, and so the boy Jesus, when he came to be twelve, went up to the feast.

It was probably the first time He had been there since he was an infant. He had heard much about it. When Joseph and Mary came back from previous visits the eager intelligent boy, would question them much about the temple and worship and sacrifices, and with what joy He would set out with them to go to His first Passover. When he reached Jerusalem how delighted He would be! The temple, His Father's house, would be a chief attraction to Him.

The feast was over and the people from Nazareth started to go home, a journey of three or four days, for they would not travel more than fifteen or twenty miles a day.