Luke 2:40-52  41 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. 42 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. 43 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. 44 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. 45 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. 46 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. 47 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. 48 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. 49 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. 50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business? 51 And they went down with him, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD …

1. A Divine Lineage

- Jewish genealogies usually named for an ancestor, this one named for its final descendant.
- Unusual for women to be named in genealogies, but Matthew names five: Tamar was a Canaanite woman who posed as a prostitute to seduce Judah, Rahab was a Gentile and a prostitute, Ruth was a Moabite woman whose offspring were forbidden to enter the assembly of the Lord for ten generations, Bathsheba committed adultery with King David, and Mary bore the stigma of pregnancy outside of wedlock. Five object lessons about the power of grace!
- Jeconiah’s presence in this genealogy (v.11) presents an interesting dilemma. A curse on him forbade any of his descendants from the throne of David forever (Jeremiah 22:30). Since Jesus was heir through Joseph to the royal line of descent, but not a physical son of Joseph, this curse bypassed him. He was the answer to this “riddle of the Rabbis.”
- Joseph’s entry in the genealogy (v.16) is the only one where the word “begot” is not used, including those where whole generations were skipped. The pronoun “whom” is singular, referring to Mary alone. This entry emphatically underscores the miraculous birth.

2. A Virgin Birth

- Matthew 1:23 quotes Isaiah 7:14 which says, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
- Some liberal scholars have pointed out that the Hebrew word “almah” can mean merely “a young woman.” Their attempt to disprove the virgin birth is misguided because:
  * The word “almah” is used seven times in the Hebrew Bible and in each instance it either explicitly means a virgin or implies it, because “almah” always refers to an unmarried woman of good reputation. (i.e. Rebekah in Genesis 24:43)
  * More than two centuries before Jesus was born, the Hebrew Bible was translated into the Greek Septuagint. The Jewish translators chose the Greek word “parthenos,” a word which unequivocally means “virgin,” to render the word “almah.” Many reputable Jewish commentators, both ancient and modern, do not believe in the virgin birth of Christ but are still honest enough to support this translation. Matthew chose to use this word!
- The reactions to Jesus’ birth range from the worship of the shepherds to the indifference of the innkeeper. “The servant is not greater than his Lord” (John 15:20), and our “supernatural birth” (new birth) is received in various ways by others. Some are indifferent, some even get angry, but others worship God at our birth! This new birth puts us in a “royal lineage” and is “not conceived” by man! It is a miraculous birth!

1 Corinthians 6:9-11  9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves
1 Peter 1:18-19, 23  
Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 
But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 
1 Peter 1:18-19, 23

But after the miraculous birth come the silent years.

BUT AFTER THE MIRACULOUS BIRTH COME THE SILENT YEARS ...

- We know only a few details of Jesus’ life during the 28 silent years …
- Pagan wise men followed His star for many arduous miles and found the Messiah.
- Hebrew scholars knew God's Word but were indifferent to a Messiah living five miles away.
- Herod had all children under two murdered in an attempt to kill Him (fulfilling Jeremiah 31:15).
- His family, though devout Jews, were forced to live in Egypt (fulfilling Hosea 11:1).
- When they finally returned to Israel, they were forced to live in Nazareth (fulfilling Isaiah 11:1).
- Through all this time, Jesus remained submitted to His parents (Luke 2:51).

- In the only recorded event from the “silent years,” we are shown His devotion to the house of God!

- THIS “PATTERN OF PROVING” IS TRUE IN EVERY INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN LIFE!
- The times of faithfulness and growth are not glorious, but they are absolutely necessary. Many Christians try to “short-circuit” them, unaware that this is the divine plan of God to develop them.

A faithful Christian life is a sign that points to the King of Kings – all “wise men” will see it!

- A faithful Christian life is a sign that points to the King of Kings – all “wise men” will see it!

Prepare for opposition from so-called “scholars” who are indifferent to the claims of Christ.

(Telegraph Journal, Saturday, December 26, 1998)  Allison Brewer, the leading voice for Fredericton’s gay and lesbian community, has no time for organized religion. She’s been on the receiving end of the intolerance for too long. For Ms. Brewer, God is not found inside churches or religions that voice such seemingly unloving beliefs. “I know from experience that the Bible is just wrong,” she says. “I know from being a lesbian and from being a woman that the Bible doesn’t speak to us. It tends to be quite misogynistic. It’s also extremely contradictory. “I have really grave concerns about people who attach themselves to such an old and dated document.” Rather, she says God is that internal spiritual force that links each of us to ourselves, “God has become such a negative to me over the years I almost hate to use that expression,” she says. “If I believe in a God, I believe that it’s something inside of us. It’s our spirit and who we are. It tends to be quite misogynistic. It’s also extremely contradictory.”

(Vance Havner) Modernism has no message, for it denies the only hope of the world, a supernatural Bible and a supernatural Christ. It is rooted in evolution and therefore rotten at the source. It denies the depravity of the human heart and the need of a blood-bought redemption. It laughs at a “slaught-house” theology and eliminates the “blood songs” from hymnals. It takes the precious name of “Emmanuel,” removes the “Em” from the beginning and the “uel” from the end, and leaves only “man.” It gives to the congregation a set of blocks and lets the people spell “God” the best they can. It calls weakness what God calls wickedness, recommends culture instead of Calvary, and polish instead of pardon. “God has become such a negative to me over the years I almost hate to use that expression,” she says. “If I believe in a God, I believe that it’s something inside of us. It’s our spirit and who we are. I don’t believe in the old guy sitting in the sky version - that doesn’t wash with me.”

(IGNORANCE OF SCHOLARS) Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal, they lay down for the night and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend. “Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see.” Watson replied, “I see millions and millions of stars.” “What does that tell you?” Holmes asked. Watson pondered for a minute. “Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of
The devil has launched an all-out attack of sin against the world in an effort to destroy you. But, his attacks miss the faithful Christian! Living faithfully for God may not be glorified by the world or the liberal church, but it certainly has its benefits!

(James Dobson) To date, over 20 different and dangerous sexually transmitted diseases are rampant among the young. Add to that the problems associated with promiscuous behavior: infertility, abortions and infected newborns. The cost of this epidemic is staggering, both in human suffering and in expense to society, yet experts tell us we've only seen the beginning.

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- The Federal Centers for Disease Control estimate that there are now 1 million cases of HIV infection in the U.S.
- 1 in 100 students coming to the University of Texas health center now carries the deadly virus.
- The rate of heterosexual HIV transmission has increased 44% since September 1989.
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) infect 3 million teenagers annually.
- 63% of all STD cases occur among persons less than 25 years of age.
- 1 million new cases of pelvic inflammatory disease occur annually.
- 1.3 million new cases of gonorrhea occur annually; strains of gonorrhea have developed that are resistant to penicillin.
- Syphilis is at a 40-year high, with 134,000 new infections per year.
- 500,000 new cases of herpes occur annually; it is estimated that 16.4% of the U.S. population ages 15-74 is infected, totaling more than 25 million people – among certain groups, the infection rate is as high as 60:5.
- 4 million cases of chlamydia occur annually; 10-30% of 15-19 year-olds are infected.
- There are now 24 million cases of human papilloma virus (HPV), with a higher prevalence among teens.

(Illustration) Lady at school curriculum meeting who was ridiculed for promoting abstinence and didn't shake hands at coffee break. Chairperson: "Who has a chair with a mark on the bottom? Who did you shake hands with? And you? (etc.) This is how AIDS is spread, and now each one of you would have AIDS." Lady: "I don't have AIDS, I abstained."

- We are living in Egypt, "in the world but not of the world." At the rapture, God will call His church out of the most sinful generation history has ever seen, to His ultimate glory!

- When Matthew quotes the prophets saying "He shall be called a Nazarene," he is making reference to the fact that Jewish society saw the word "Nazarene" as a synonym for someone who was despised or detestable. That is why Nathaniel said, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Those in the last generation look down on faithful Christians; they are "despisers of those that are good." (2 Timothy 3:3)

- A faithful Christian remains submitted to God – and to spiritual authority – throughout the "silent years" of the Christian life. Only God's glory is sought!

- The only recorded words from Jesus during this time are, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). JESUS WAS FAITHFUL IN OBSCURITY!

MIKE ESSES, IN "JESUS IN EXODUS" ...

Praise God that He has given His children the high calling! If God has called you to be like Jesus in all of your spirit, and if you have absolutely sold yourself to be His slave, He will take you at your word. He will wrap you up in a jealous love and will put on you such demands of obedience that He will not allow you to do things which He seems to let other good people do. A Christian is not to reproach another Christian. He is to rebuke his enemy in the Lord.

Others will be allowed to accumulate great wealth, but God may supply your needs on a daily basis because He wants you to have something far better than gold - and that is a helpless dependence on Him. The Lord may let others be honored and put forward while He keeps you hidden away in obscurity, because He wants you to produce some choice fruit for His coming glory that can be brought forth only in the shade. God will let others be great, but He will keep you small. He will let others do a work for Him and get credit for it, but He will make you toil without knowing what you are accomplishing. And then, to make your work still more precious, He will lead you into some deep mortification that will make you despise yourself and all your good works.

When you are so possessed by the living God that you are in your secret heart delighted over this peculiar, personal, private, jealous guardianship and management of His Holy Spirit over your life, you will have found the vestibule of heaven in Jesus Christ.