

First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ part 2

CHAPTER 11

1. Bartholomew, when a child and sick, was miraculously restored by being laid on Christ's bed.

- 1. Another woman in that city likewise had two sons sick.**
- 2. And when one was dead, she took in her arms the other, who lay at the point of death, to the Lady St. Mary, and in a flood of tears addressed herself to her, saying,**
- 3. O my Lady, help and relieve me; for I had two sons, the one I have just now buried, the other I see is just at the point of death, behold how I (earnestly) seek favor from God, and pray to him.**
- 4. Then she said, O Lord, you are gracious, and merciful, and kind; you have given me two sons; one of them you have taken to yourself, O spare me this other.**
- 5. St. Mary then perceiving the greatness of her sorrow, pitied her and said, Place your son in my son's bed, and cover him with his clothes.**
- 6. When she had placed him in the bed in which Christ lay at the moment when his eyes were just closed by death, as soon as the smell of the garments of the Lord Jesus Christ reached the boy, his eyes opened, and he called with a loud voice to his mother and asked for bread, and when he had received it, he sucked on it.**
- 7. Then his mother said, O Lady Mary, now I am assured the powers of God do dwell in you, so that your son can cure children who are of the same sort as himself, as soon as they touch his garments.**
- 8. This boy who was thus cured, is the same who in the Gospel is called Bartholomew.**

We tend to overlook the likelihood that many persons in the New Testament must have grown up in the proximity of Jesus and knew him as a boy. Bartholomew (whose surname was Nathaniel) is mentioned in Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:14, John 1:48, 21:2, and Acts 1:13. He was one of the twelve Apostles; according to tradition, he was a missionary in Armenia and was flayed to death. Jerome says he wrote a Gospel, not extant today.

CHAPTER 12

1. A leprous woman is healed by Christ's washing water. 7. A princess is healed by it and restored to her husband.

- 1. Again there was a leprous woman who went to the Lady St. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and said, O my Lady, help me.**
- 2. St. Mary replied, What help do you desire? Is it gold or silver, or that your body be cured of its leprosy?**
- 3. Who, says the woman, can grant me this?**
- 4. St. Mary replied to her, Wait a little till I have washed my son Jesus and put him to bed.**
- 5. The woman waited as she was commanded; and when Mary had put Jesus in bed, she gave her the water with which she had washed his body and said, Take some of the water, and pour it on your body:**
- 6. When she had done this, she instantly became clean, and praised God, and gave thanks to him.**
- 7. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] Then she went away after she had lodged with her three days:**
- 8. And going into the city, she saw a certain prince, who had married another prince's daughter;**
- 9. But when he came to see her, he perceived between her eyes the signs of leprosy like a star, and as a consequence declared the marriage dissolved and void.**
- 10. When the woman saw these persons in this condition, exceedingly sorrowful, and shedding abundance of tears, she inquired of them the reason of their crying.**
- 11. They replied, Inquire not into our circumstances, for we are not able to declare our misfortunes to any person whatsoever.**
- 12. But still she pressed and desired them to communicate their case to her, intimating that perhaps she might be able to direct them to a remedy.**
- 13. So when they showed her the young woman and the signs of leprosy between her eyes,**
- 14. She said, I also, whom you see in this place, was afflicted with the same distemper, and going on some**

- business to Bethlehem, I went into a certain cave and saw a woman named Mary, who had a son called Jesus.
15. She, seeing me to be leprous, was concerned for me and gave me some water with which she had washed her son's body; with that I sprinkled my body, and became clean.
 16. Then said these women, Mistress, will you go along with us, and show the Lady St. Mary to us?
 17. To which she consented, so they arose and went to the Lady St. Mary, taking with them very noble presents.
 18. And when they came in and offered their presents to her, they showed the leprous young woman whom they brought with them.
 19. Then said St. Mary, The mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ rest upon you;
 20. And giving them a little of that water with which she had washed the body of Jesus Christ, she bade them wash the diseased person with it; when they had done this, she was presently cured;
 21. So they, and all who were present, praised God; and being filled with joy, they went back to their own city and gave praise to God on that account.
 22. Then the prince hearing that his wife was cured, took her home and made a second marriage, giving thanks to God for the recovery of his wife's health.

CHAPTER 13

1. A girl, whose blood Satan sucked, receives one of Christ's swaddling clothes from the Virgin. 13. Satan comes like a dragon, and she shows it to him; flames and burning coals proceed from it and fall upon him; 19. he is miraculously discomfited and leaves the girl.

1. There was also a girl who was afflicted by Satan;
2. For that cursed spirit frequently appeared to her in the shape of a dragon, and was inclined to swallow her up, and had so sucked out all her blood, that she looked like a dead carcass.

This is reminiscent of medieval tales. It is not said that her mother or anyone else witnessed what the girl saw, so it may have been hallucinations caused by psychotic episodes.

3. As often as she came to herself, with her hands wringed about her head she would cry out and say, Woe, Woe is me, that there is no one to be found who can deliver me from that impious dragon!
4. Her father and mother, and all who were about her and saw her, mourned and wept over her;
5. And all who were present would especially be under sorrow and in tears, when they heard her bewailing and saying, My brethren and friends, is there no one who can deliver me from this murderer?
6. Then the prince's daughter, who had been cured of her leprosy, hearing the complaint of that girl, went upon the top of her castle and saw her with her hands twisted about her head, pouring out a flood of tears, and all the people about her in sorrow.
7. Then she asked the husband of the possessed person whether his wife's mother was alive. He told her that her father and mother were both alive.
8. Then she ordered her mother to be sent to her, to whom, when she saw her coming, she said, Is this possessed girl your daughter? She moaning and bewailing said, Yes, madam, I bore her.
9. The prince's daughter answered, Disclose the secret of her case to me, for I confess to you that I was leprous, but the Lady Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, healed me.
10. And if you desire your daughter to be restored to her former state, take her to Bethlehem, and inquire for Mary the mother of Jesus, and doubt not but your daughter will be cured; for I do not question but you will come home with great joy at your daughter's recovery.
11. As soon she had done speaking, she arose and went with her daughter to the place appointed, and to Mary, and told her the case of her daughter.
12. When St. Mary had heard her story, she gave her a little of the water with which she had washed the body of her son Jesus and bade her pour it upon the body of her daughter.
13. Likewise she gave her one of the swaddling cloths of the Lord Jesus and said, Take this swaddling cloth and show it to your enemy as often as you see him; and she sent them away in peace.
14. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] After they had left that city and returned home, and the time was come in which Satan was accustomed to seize her, in the same moment this cursed spirit appeared to her in the shape of a huge dragon and the girl saw him and was afraid.
15. The mother said to her, Be not afraid, daughter, but let him alone till he come nearer to you; then show him

the swaddling cloth, which the Lady Mary gave us, and we shall see the event.

16. Satan then came like a dreadful dragon, and the body of the girl trembled for fear.

17. But as soon as she had put the swaddling cloth upon her head, and about her eyes, and showed it to him, presently there issued forth from the swaddling cloth flames and burning coals, and fell upon the dragon.

18. Oh! how great was this miracle which was done! As soon as the dragon saw the swaddling cloth of the Lord Jesus, fire went forth and was scattered upon his head and eyes so that he cried out with a loud voice, What have I to do with you, Jesus, son of Mary, Where shall I flee from you?

19. So he drew back much affrighted and left the girl.

20. She was delivered from this trouble, and she and all who were present at the working of the miracle sang praises and thanks to God.

CHAPTER 14

1. Judas when a boy is possessed by Satan and brought by his parents to Jesus to be cured, whom he tries to bite, 7. but failing, he strikes Jesus and makes him cry out. Whereupon Satan goes from Judas like a mad dog.

1. Another woman likewise lived there, whose son was possessed by Satan.

2. This boy, named Judas, as often as Satan seized him, was inclined to bite all that were present, and if he found no one else near him, he would bite his own hands and other parts.

3. But the mother of this miserable boy, hearing of St. Mary and her son Jesus, arose presently, and taking her son in her arms, brought him to the Lady Mary.

4. In the meantime, James and Joses had taken away the infant, the Lord Jesus, to play at a proper season with other children; and when they went forth, they sat down and the Lord Jesus with them.

5. Then Judas, who was possessed, came and sat down at the right hand of Jesus.

6. When Satan was acting upon him as usual, he went about to bite the Lord Jesus.

7. And because he could not do it, he struck Jesus on the right side, so that he cried out.

8. And in the same moment Satan went out of the boy, and ran away like a mad dog.

Note it does not say that Satan fled in the form of a mad dog, but only "like a mad dog," which symbolized the biting behavior of Judas.

9. This same boy who struck Jesus, and out of whom Satan went in the form of a dog, was Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him to the Jews.

Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver and then hanged himself, is mentioned in Matthew 10:14, 26:14, 27:3; Mark 14:10; John 6:70, 12:4, 6, 13:26, 30; and Acts 1:18. (See Zechariah 11:12,13 for the Old Testament prophecy of the thirty pieces of silver.)

10. And that same side on which Judas struck him, the Jews pierced with a spear.

John the Apostle, an eyewitness to the Crucifixion, wrote: "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced." (John 19:34-37) John does not mention which side was pierced. (The Old Testament prophecies are found in Psalm 34:20 and Zechariah 12:10.)

CHAPTER 15

1. Jesus and other boys play together and make clay figures of animals. 4. Jesus causes them to walk, 6. and also makes clay birds, which he causes to fly, and eat and drink. 7. The children's parents become alarmed and take Jesus for a sorcerer. 8. He goes to a dyer's shop, throws all the cloths into the furnace, and works a miracle therewith. 15. At which the Jews praise God.

1. And when the Lord Jesus was seven years of age, he was on a certain day with other boys his companions about the same age.

Dr. Talmage says: "Christ was the joyous boy of the fields. We are not permitted to think that the shadows of Calvary darkened His pathway as a youth, and the Apocryphal Books of the New Testament show a great deal of the early life of Christ not to be found in the four Evangelists."

2. Who at play made clay into several shapes, namely, asses, oxen, birds, and other figures.
3. Each boasting of his work and endeavoring to exceed the rest.
4. Then the Lord Jesus said to the boys, I will command these figures which I have made to walk.
5. And immediately they moved, and when he commanded them to return, they returned.
6. He had also made the figures of birds and sparrows, which, when he commanded to fly, did fly, and when he commanded to stand still, did stand still; and if he gave them meat and drink, they did eat and drink.
7. When at length the boys went away and related these things to their parents, their fathers said to them, Take heed, children, for the future, of his company, for he is a sorcerer; shun and avoid him, and from now on never play with him.

What one thinks of this depends on one's beliefs about the powers of a seven-year-old Christ.

8. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] On a certain day also, when the Lord Jesus was playing with the boys, and running about, he passed by a dyer's shop, whose name was Salem.
9. And in his shop were many pieces of cloth belonging to the people of that city, which they designed to dye of several colors.
10. Then the Lord Jesus went into the dyer's shop, took all the clothes, and threw them into the furnace.
11. When Salem came home and saw the cloths spoiled, he began to make a great noise and to chide the Lord Jesus, saying,
12. What have you done to me, O son of Mary? You have injured both me and my neighbors; they all desired their cloths of a proper color; but you have come and spoiled them all.
13. The Lord Jesus replied, I will change the color of every cloth to what color you desire;
14. And then he presently began to take the cloths out of the furnace, and they were all dyed of those same colors which the dyer desired.
15. And when the Jews saw this surprising miracle, they praised God.

La Brosse's Persic Lexicon cites Persian legends that relate Christ's working this miracle with the colors and claim he practiced the trade of a dyer, and for that reason Persian dyers honor him as their patron and call a dye-house the shop of Christ.

CHAPTER 16

1. Christ miraculously widens or contracts the gates, milk-pails, sieves, or boxes, not properly made by Joseph, 4. he not being skillful at his carpenter's trade. 5. The King of Jerusalem gives Joseph an order for a throne. 6. Joseph works on it for two years in the king's palace, but makes it two spans too short. The king becomes angry with him, 10. Jesus comforts him, 13. and commands him to pull one side of the throne, while he pulls the other, and brings it to its proper dimensions. 14. At which the bystanders praise God.

1. And Joseph, wherever he went in the city, took the Lord Jesus with him where he was sent for to work to make gates, or milk-pails, or sieves, or boxes; the Lord Jesus was with him wherever he went.
2. And as often as Joseph had anything in his work to make longer or shorter, or wider, or narrower, the Lord Jesus would stretch his hands towards it.
3. And presently it became as Joseph would have it.
4. So that he had no need to finish anything with his own hands, for he was not very skillful at his carpenter's trade.
5. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] On a certain time the King of Jerusalem sent for him and said, I would have you make me a throne of the same dimensions with that place in which I commonly sit.
6. Joseph obeyed and without delay began the work, and continued two years in the king's palace before he finished it.
7. And when he came to fix it in its place, he found it lacked two spans on each side of the appointed measure.
8. Which, when the king saw, he was very angry with Joseph;

9. And Joseph, afraid of the king's anger, went to bed without his supper, not taking anything to eat.
10. Then the Lord Jesus asked him what he was afraid of.
11. Joseph replied, Because I have lost my labor in the work which I have been about these two years.
12. Jesus said to him, Fear not, neither be cast down;
13. Lay hold on one side of the throne, as I will the other, and we will bring it to its exact dimensions.
14. And when Joseph had done as the Lord Jesus said, and each of them had with strength drawn his side, the throne obeyed, and was brought to the proper dimensions of the place:
15. When they who stood by saw this miracle, they were astonished and praised God.
16. The throne was made of the same wood, which was in being in Solomon's time, namely, wood adorned with various shapes and figures.

Sir John Chardin mentions a Persian legend concerning Christ's lengthening the cedar-board which Joseph sawed too short.

CHAPTER 17

1. Jesus plays with boys at hide and seek. 3. Some women put his playfellows in a furnace, 7. where they are transformed by Jesus into young goats. 10. Jesus calls them to go and play, and they are restored to their former shape.

1. On another day the Lord Jesus going out into the street, and seeing some boys who were met to play, joined himself to their company:
2. But when they saw him, they hid themselves and left him to seek for them:
3. The Lord Jesus came to the gate of a certain house, and asked some women who were standing there where the boys had gone.
4. And when they answered that there was no one there, the Lord Jesus said, Who are those whom you see in the furnace?
5. They answered that they were young goats of three years old.
6. Then Jesus cried aloud, Come out hither, O young goats, to your shepherd;
7. And presently the boys came forth like young goats and leaped about him; which when the women saw, they were exceedingly amazed and trembled.
8. Then they immediately worshipped the Lord Jesus, and beseeched him, saying, O our Lord Jesus, son of Mary, you are truly that good shepherd of Israel! Have mercy on your handmaids, who stand before you, who do not doubt but that you, O Lord, are come to save and not to destroy.
9. After that, when the Lord Jesus said, The children of Israel are like Ethiopians among the people, the women said, You, Lord, know all things, nor is any thing concealed from you; but now we entreat you, and beseech of your mercy that you would restore those boys to their former state.

Moses married an Ethiopian woman (Numbers 12:1) and Philip converted and baptized "a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians..." (Acts 8:27). "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? [Then] may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jeremiah 13:23) certainly identifies them as being darker than the Jews although not necessarily black, but they were not inhabitants of a specific African country. (Note that Candace is queen of the Ethiopians, a people, not of Ethiopia, a country.)

In the English Bible, "Ethiopia" is a word used by Greeks and Romans for the Hebrew name "Cush." Cush was the son of Ham (one of Noah's sons), and his descendants occupied the area in Egypt south from the junction of the White and Blue branches of the Nile. In a wider sense, however, the area encompassed a much larger area all the way to Abyssinia, or the modern African nation of Ethiopia.

The boy Christ's remark that "The children of Israel are like Ethiopians among the people" can only be understood by knowing it is a quotation from the Old Testament: "[Are] ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? And the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?" (Amos 9:7) The Ethiopians were only one of many peoples Israel warred against, and the thrust of the statement is that the children of Israel had become as unfaithful to God as their enemies.

10. Then Jesus said, Come hither, O boys, that we may go and play, and immediately, in the presence of these women, the young goats were changed and returned into the shape of boys.

CHAPTER 18

1. Jesus becomes the king of his playfellows, and they crown him with flowers, 4. miraculously causes a serpent who had bitten Simon the Canaanite, then a boy, to suck out all the poison again; 16. The serpent bursts, and Christ restores the boy to health.

- 1. In the month Adar, Jesus gathered together the boys and ranked them as though he had been a king.**
- 2. For they spread their garments on the ground for him to sit on, and having made a crown of flowers, put it upon his head, and stood on his right and left as the guards of a king.**
- 3. And if anyone happened to pass by, they took him by force and said, Come here and worship the king, so that you may have a prosperous journey.**
- 4. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] In the meantime, while these things were happening, there came certain men, carrying a boy upon a couch;**
- 5. For this boy had gone with his companions to the mountain to gather wood and found there a partridge's nest, and had put his hand in to take out the eggs, was stung by a poisonous serpent that leaped out of the nest; so that he was forced to cry out for the help of his companions, who, when they came, found him lying upon the earth like a dead person.**
- 6. After which his neighbors came and carried him back into the city.**
- 7. But when they came to the place where the Lord Jesus was sitting like a king, and the other boys stood around him like his ministers, the boys made haste to meet him who was bitten by the serpent, and said to his neighbors, Come and pay your respects to the king;**
- 8. But when, by reason of their sorrow, they refused to come, the boys drew them, and forced them against their wills to come.**
- 9. And when they came to the Lord Jesus, he inquired on what account they carried that boy.**
- 10. And when they answered him that a serpent had bitten him, the Lord Jesus said to the boys, Let us go and kill that serpent.**
- 11. But when the parents of the boy desired to be excused, because their son lay at the point of death, the boys made answer and said, Did not you hear what the king said? Let us go and kill the serpent; will you not obey him?**
- 12. So they brought the couch back again, whether they would or not.**
- 13. And when they were come to the nest, the Lord Jesus said to the boys, Is this the serpent's lurking place? They said it was.**
- 14. Then the Lord Jesus called the serpent and it came forth and submitted to him; to whom he said, Go and suck out all the poison which you have infused into that boy;**
- 15. So the serpent crept to the boy and took away all its poison again.**
- 16. Then the Lord Jesus cursed the serpent so that it immediately burst asunder and died.**
- 17. And he touched the boy with his hand to restore him to his former health;**
- 18. And when he began to cry, the Lord Jesus said, Cease crying, for from now on you will be my disciple;**
- 19. And this is that Simon the Canaanite, who is mentioned in the Gospel.**

Simon the Canaanite (also called Zelotes) was one of the twelve Apostles with Christ during his ministry and present on the day of Pentecost. He is mentioned in Matthew 10:4, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15, and Acts 1:13. Tradition says he was martyred by crucifixion.

CHAPTER 19

1. After James is bitten by a viper, Jesus blows on the wound and cures him. 4. Jesus charged with throwing a boy from the roof of a house, 10. miraculously causes the dead boy to acquit him, 12. Fetches water for his mother, breaks the pitcher and miraculously gathers the water in his mantle and brings it home, 16. makes fish-pools on the Sabbath, 20. causes a boy to die who broke them down. 22. Another boy runs against him, whom he also causes to die.

- 1. On another day Joseph sent his son James to gather wood, and the Lord Jesus went with him;**

This James is another of Joseph's married sons, old enough to engage in arduous work.

2. When they came to the place where the wood was, and James began to gather it, behold, a venomous viper bit him, so that he began to cry and make a noise.
3. The Lord Jesus, seeing him in this condition, came to him and blew upon the place where the viper had bit him, and it was instantly well.
4. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] On a certain day the Lord Jesus was with some boys who were playing on the house-top, and one of the boys fell down and died.
5. At that all the other boys ran away, and the Lord Jesus was left alone on the house-top.
6. And the boy's relations came to him and said to the Lord Jesus, You threw our son down from the house-top.
7. But as he denied it, they cried out, Our son is dead, and this is he who killed him.
8. The Lord Jesus replied to them, Do not charge me with a crime of which you are not able to convict me, but let us go ask the boy himself, who will bring the truth to light.
9. Then the Lord Jesus went down and stood over the head of the dead boy and said with a loud voice, Zeinunus, Zeinunus, who threw you down from the house-top?
10. Then the dead boy answered, You did not throw me down, but a certain one did.
11. And when the Lord Jesus told those who stood by to take notice of his words, all who were present praised God on account of that miracle.
12. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] On a certain time the Lady St. Mary had commanded the Lord Jesus to bring her some water out of the well;
13. And when he went to fetch the water, the pitcher broke when it was brought up full.
14. But Jesus spread his mantle and gathered up the water again and brought it in that to his mother.
15. Who, being astonished at this wonderful thing, laid up this, and all the other things which she had seen, in her memory.
16. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] Again on another day the Lord Jesus was with some boys by a river and they drew water out of the river by little channels, and made little fish-pools.
17. The Lord Jesus had made twelve sparrows and placed them about his pool on each side, three on a side.
18. But it was the Sabbath day, and the son of Hanani a Jew came by and saw them making these things, and said, Do you thus make figures of clay on the Sabbath? And he ran to them and broke down the fish-pools.
19. But when the Lord Jesus clapped his hands over the sparrows which he had made, they fled away chirping.
20. Finally the son of Hanani was coming to the fish-pool of Jesus to destroy it, but the water vanished away, and the Lord Jesus said to him,
21. In like manner as this water has vanished, so will your life vanish; and presently the boy died.
22. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] Another time, when the Lord Jesus was coming home in the evening with Joseph, he met a boy who ran so hard against him that he threw him down;
23. To whom the Lord Jesus said, As you have thrown me down, so will you fall, but not ever rise.
24. And that moment the boy fell down and died.

Most commentators are aghast at the depictions of Jesus as a vindictive child with such an ungovernable temper that he caused the death of other boys; they cite it as ample evidence of pure fanciful fabrication.

However, neither the readers of that time, nor even a few Church Fathers later, had difficulty with these accounts because they believed it was possible and considered, after all, Christ even as a child was the Lord of life. From another perspective, it seems consistent with the psychology of seven- to nine-year- old boys at play; fortunately, they do not have power to act out their hostile fantasies.

As an adult, with better provocation, Christ was capable of anger: "And when he had looked round about on them with anger..." (Mark 3:5) Modernists also have criticized the New Testament accounts of Christ's scathing denunciations to the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:13-33) and his violence in driving money- changers from the Temple (Matthew 21:12, Mark 11:15, John 2:14-17) because they opine it was un-Christlike behavior. Perhaps we need to reassess our own views about what may be un-Christlike in Christ's words and actions.

CHAPTER 20

4. Jesus sent to school to Zaccheus to learn his letters, and teaches Zaccheus. 13. Sent to another schoolmaster, 14. refuses to tell his letters; when the schoolmaster goes to whip him, his hand withers and he dies.

- 1. There was also at Jerusalem one named Zaccheus, who was a schoolmaster.**
- 2. And he said to Joseph, Joseph, why do you not send Jesus to me, so he may learn his letters?**
- 3. Joseph agreed, and told St. Mary;**
- 4. So they brought him to that master, who, as soon as he saw him, wrote out an alphabet for him.**
- 5. And he asked him to say Aleph; and when he said Aleph, the master asked him to pronounce Beth.**
- 6. Then the Lord Jesus said to him, Tell me first the meaning of the letter Aleph, and then I will pronounce Beth.**
- 7. And when the master threatened to whip him, the Lord Jesus explained to him the meaning of the letters Aleph and Beth;**
- 8. Also which were the straight figures of the letters, which the oblique, and what letters had double figures; which had points, and which had none; why one letter went before another; and many other things he began to tell him and explain, of which the master himself had never heard, nor read in any book.**
- 9. The Lord Jesus further said to the master, Take notice how I say to you; then he began clearly and distinctly to say Aleph, Beth, Gimel, Daleth, and so on to the end of the alphabet.**
- 10. At this the master was so surprised that he said, I believe this boy was born before Noah;**
- 11. And turning to Joseph, he said, You have brought a boy to me to be taught, who is more learned than any master.**
- 12. He said also to St. Mary, This your son has no need of any learning.**
- 13. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] They brought him then to a more learned master, who, when he saw him, said, say Aleph.**
- 14. And when he had said Aleph, the master asked him to pronounce Beth; to which the Lord Jesus replied, Tell me first the meaning of the letter Aleph, and then I will pronounce Beth.**
- 15. But this master, when he lifted up his hand to whip him, had his hand presently withered, and he died.**

Sir John Chardin mentions Persian legends concerning Christ's dispute with his schoolmaster about his ABCs. The reason Persian legends reflect incidents in this book is that by the second century there were (according to Mari, disciple of Addai) 360 Christian churches in Assyria and Persia, and the Christian presence was widespread in Persia by the third and fourth centuries.

The Christian historian Eusebius cites a Book of the Laws of the Countries by Philip, a pupil of Bardesanes, to the effect that Christianity made great social and moral changes wherever it had gone: "...the Parthian Christians are not polygamists, nor do Christians in Media expose their dead to dogs, nor do Persian Christians marry their own daughters, nor are those in Bactria and among the Gelae debauched..."

The Church in Persia survived intense persecution that began in A.D. 340 under Shapur II, but at the Synod of Bait-Lapat (Jundi Shapur) in A.D. 485, a majority of delegates embraced Nestorianism; it was this heretical form of Christianity that Persian missionaries carried to countries still farther east (to China in the seventh century). It will be remembered that Nestorianism was the only type of Christianity known by Mohammed. The final irony is that Persia is now the modern Islamic nation of Iran.

16. Then said Joseph to St. Mary, From now on we will not allow him to go out of the house, for every one who displeases him is killed.

CHAPTER 21

1. Disputes miraculously with the doctors in the temple, 7. on law, 9. on astronomy, 12. on physics and metaphysics, 21. is worshipped by a philosopher, 28. and brought home by his mother.

- 1. And when he was twelve years old, they brought him to Jerusalem to the feast; and when the feast was over, they returned.**
- 2. But the Lord Jesus continued behind in the temple among the doctors and elders, and learned men of Israel; to whom he proposed several questions of learning, and also gave them answers:**

The canonical account is in Luke 2:42-52, but does not include the interrogation on scientific matters.

3. For he said to them, Whose son is the Messiah? They answered, the son of David:

4. Why then, said he, does he in the spirit call him Lord? when he says, The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, till I have made your enemies your footstool.

5. Then a certain principal Rabbi asked him, Have you read books?

6. Jesus answered that he had both read books and the things which were contained in books.

7. And he explained to them the books of the law, and precepts, and statutes, and the mysteries which are contained in the books of the prophets, things which the mind of no creature could reach.

8. Then said that Rabbi, I never yet have seen or heard of such knowledge! What do you think that boy will be!

9. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] When a certain astronomer who was present asked the Lord Jesus whether he had studied astronomy,

10. The Lord Jesus replied and told him the number of the spheres and heavenly bodies, as also their triangular, square, and sextile aspect; their progressive and retrograde motion; their size and several prognostications; and other things which the reason of man had never discovered.

11. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] There was also among them a philosopher well skilled in physics and natural philosophy, who asked the Lord Jesus whether he had studied physics.

12. He replied and explained to him physics and metaphysics.

13. Also those things which were above and below the power of nature;

14. The powers also of the body, its fluids, and their effects.

15. Also the number of its members, and bones, veins, arteries, and nerves;

16. The several constitutions of body, hot and dry, cold and moist, and the tendencies of them;

17. How the soul operated upon the body;

18. What its various sensations and faculties were;

19. The faculty of speaking, anger, desire;

20. And lastly the manner of its composition and dissolution, and other things, which the understanding of no creature had ever reached.

21. Then that philosopher arose and worshipped the Lord Jesus, and said, O Lord Jesus, from now on I will be your disciple and servant.

22. [New paragraph in the oldest extant manuscripts] While they were discoursing on these and such like things, the Lady St. Mary came in, having been three days walking about with Joseph, seeking for him.

23. And when she saw him sitting among the doctors, and in his turn proposing questions to them and giving answers, she said to him, My son, why have you done thus by us? Behold I and your father have been at much pains in seeking you.

24. He replied, Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I ought to be employed in my father's house?

25. But they understood not the words which he said to them.

26. Then the doctors asked Mary, Is this your son? And when she said he was, they said, O happy Mary, who have borne such a son.

27. Then he returned with them to Nazareth, and obeyed them in all things.

28. And his mother kept all these things in her mind;

29. And the Lord Jesus grew in stature and wisdom, and favor with God and man.

This is repeated exactly in Luke 2:52. In his Incarnation Jesus makes humanity completely his own, including progress in wisdom and grace. Since he is at once both God and man, he increases humanly in the grace and wisdom which are already fully his in his divine nature, prefiguring his followers' growth into union with him.

CHAPTER 22

1. Conceals his miracles, 2. studies the law and is baptized.

1. Now from this time Jesus began to conceal his miracles and secret works,

Gone are the childish miracles. From his twelfth to his thirtieth year, he does no more public miracles.

2. And he gave himself to the study of the law, till he arrived to the end of his thirtieth year;

3. At which time the Father publicly owned him at Jordan, sending down this voice from heaven, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased;

4. The Holy Spirit being also present in the form of a dove.

Compare with Matthew 3:16, 17; Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21, 22; and John 1:32.

5. This is he whom we worship with all reverence, because he gave us our life and being, and brought us from our mother's womb.

6. Who, for our sakes, took a human body, and has redeemed us, so that he might so embrace us with everlasting mercy, and dominion, from henceforth and for evermore, Amen.

The oldest extant copy of this manuscript contains this closing note: "The end of the whole Gospel of the Infancy, by the assistance of the Supreme God, according to what we found in the original."

email_seraphim@devout.com Your comments or feedback on The Seraphim Files are welcome.

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