

Birth and Early Childhood

D. The Magi's visit to the King two years after His birth — Matthew 2:1-12

1. Matthew 2:1a – Matthew locked Jesus' birth into history by giving the geographical location and historical leaders of the time.
 - a. Matthew 2:1b – The Magi were a unique order of Persian scholars who were acclaimed experts in mathematics, astronomy, alchemy, and other studies.

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- b. Matthew 2:1c – Through these men from the east, Matthew emphasized that though Israel was rejecting the Messiah, Gentiles were eagerly embracing Him.

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2. Matthew 2:2a – The Magi went to Jerusalem, the capital of Judea, to ask for directions to the birth place of the king.
 - a. Matthew 2:2b – The Magi knew of the exalted king through reading Balaam's prophecy. Numbers 24:17
 - b. Matthew 2:2c – The Magi's sole purpose was to worship the almighty King.

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3. Matthew 2:3 – Usually, when Herod was troubled, someone died; therefore, all Jerusalem waited fearfully for him to express his anger at news of a new king.
4. Matthew 2:4 – Herod asked the Jewish religious leaders the same question about the birth of the King that the Magi had asked.

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5. Matthew 2:5-6 – The priests and scribes knew that the King would be born in Bethlehem and supported this answer with Scripture; however, they didn't take the prophecy seriously enough to go and investigate for themselves. (Biblical information isn't enough. We must apply Truth to our thinking for our souls to be renovated.)

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6. Matthew 2:7 – Herod used the information from the Magi to learn the age of the Child whom he thought threatened his throne.
7. Matthew 2:8 – Herod didn't want to worship the Child but to destroy Him. His plot was a satanic attempt to stop God's salvation plan.

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8. Matthew 2:9 – The way the star appeared, guided the Magi, and then disappeared was supernatural, a divine light for those who eagerly awaited Messiah's coming.
9. Matthew 2:10 – The Magi rejoiced at the reappearance of the star.
10. Matthew 2:11 – The Magi came, saw, and worshipped the Christ Child.

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- a. Matthew 2:11a – The gift of gold provided Jesus' family with needed income during their stay in Egypt.
- b. Matthew 2:11b – Frankincense, a perfume for nobility, was the right gift for Jesus, the Son of God and the King of Kings.
- c. Matthew 2:11c – Myrrh, an embalming spice, indicated Jesus' future salvation work on the cross, His reason for coming to earth.

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11. Matthew 2:12a – For the first time in the Gospels, Gentiles received a message from God.

- a. Matthew 2:12b – The Gentile Magi believed God's revelation and responded with reverence.
- b. Matthew 2:12c – The fact that the Magi left without Herod's knowing testifies to God's grace to Jews and Gentiles alike.

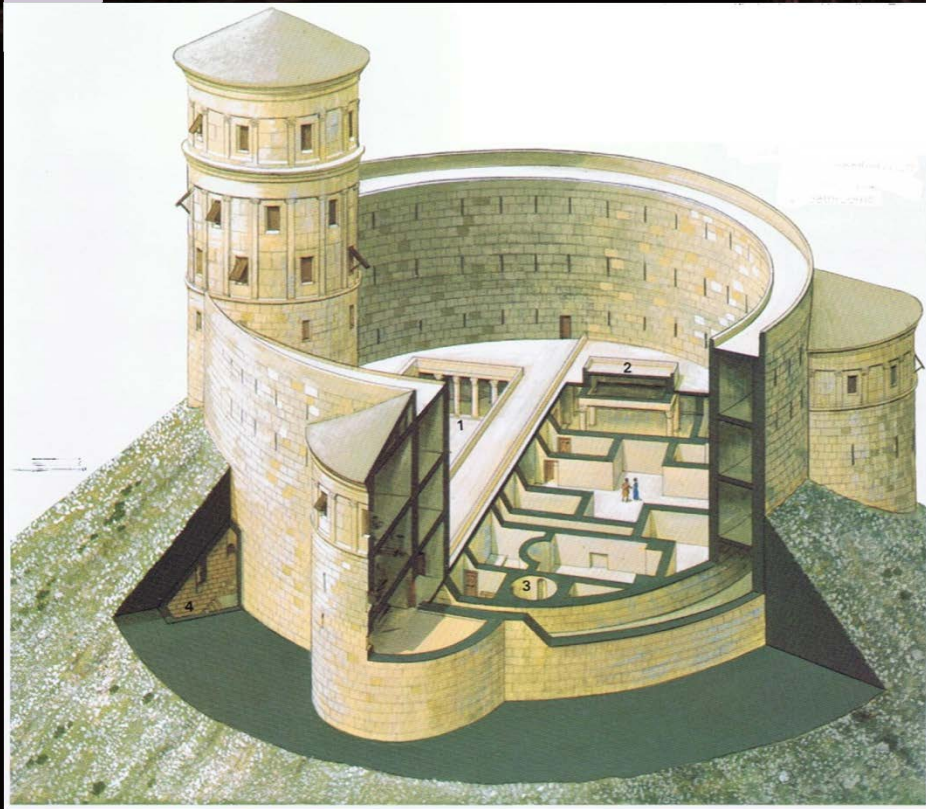
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- 1) Historical note: Herod had the greatest spy system in the ancient world.
- 2) It would have been humanly impossible for the Magi with their many escorts to leave his jurisdiction without Herod's knowing about it.

Matthew



Matthew 2:12-14



The fortress Herodium (built 20 BC) near Bethlehem was similar to fortresses built by Herod to keep a watchful eye on his subjects.

PANORAMA OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Birth and Early Childhood



Messiah's Early Childhood

E. The flight to Egypt and death of Herod – Matthew 2:13-23

1. Matthew 2:13 – God gave Joseph orders designed to protect Jesus from Herod's murderous hatred.
2. Matthew 2:14-15a – Joseph obeyed God's orders immediately and exactly, showing that he believed God's Word.
3. Matthew 2:15b – Jesus' time in Egypt fulfilled prophecy. Hosea 11:1

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- a. To preserve and protect the infant nation Israel from the vile Canaanite people whom Satan was using to entice them to sin, God sent them to Egypt. Genesis 46:3-4
- b. In a similar manner, God sent the infant Savior of Israel to Egypt for protection from Herod's rage, which obviously was also inspired by Satan.

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4. Matthew 2:16a – Herod's fits of rage were well known. He had murdered several of his sons and wives because he thought they were conspiring against him.
5. Matthew 2:16b – In a fit of rage, Herod demanded that all the male children in Bethlehem two years and younger be killed.

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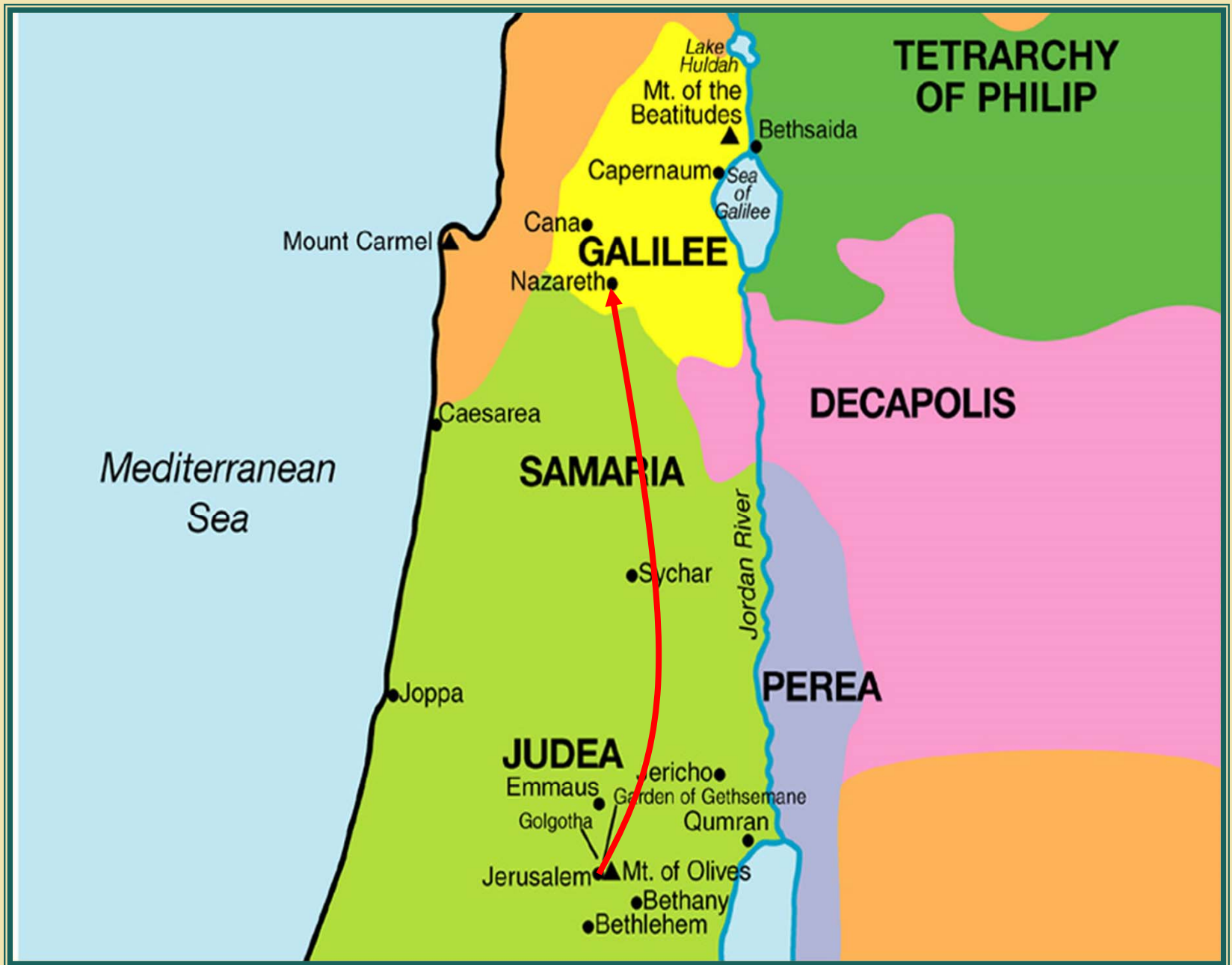
6. Matthew 2:17-18 – Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Matthew cited Jeremiah 31:15 as a similar situation. He altered the quote to keep from suggesting that the slaughter in Bethlehem was God's plan or will. It wasn't. Genesis 35:16-20
7. Matthew 2:19 – After Herod's death, God gave Joseph specific commands that revealed His immediate plan for Jesus.

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8. Matthew 2:20-21 – Joseph's faith in God led to exact and immediate obedience to His commands. He didn't even wait until morning to leave Bethlehem.
9. Matthew 2:22-23a – Joseph recognized the danger. God gave him further general instructions that he followed using his discernment.

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10. Matthew 2:23b – Most Jews despised those from Nazareth. Jesus was from Nazareth.



Joseph and Mary return to Nazareth with Jesus

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11. Four examples from Matthew 2 of the use of Old Testament quotations in rabbinic literature

- a. Matthew and the other New Testament authors interpreted the Old Testament as literal prophecy with literal fulfillment. Compare Matthew 2:5-6 to Micah 5:2.

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- b. Or New Testament authors interpreted the Old Testament as literal prophecy with a representative application. Compare Matthew 2:15 to Hosea 11:1. They used the literal, historical events of the Old Testament as types in the New Testament.

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- c. Or New Testament authors gave non-literal interpretations and non-literal applications of the Old Testament, similar to a summary statement of an overarching theme.
 - 1) Matthew 2:23 – The Old Testament did not prophesy that Christ would be a Nazarene but that He would be despised.
 - 2) What does it mean then?

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- a) Non-Scriptural Judeans looked down on all Galileans because they were ignorant of the oral traditions taught by the Pharisees.
- b) By the time Christ came into the world, a person from Nazareth of Galilee (a Nazarene) was despised and rejected.
- c) Jesus Christ of Nazareth was both despised and rejected as the Messiah.

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- d. Or New Testament authors interpreted the Old Testament as literal prophecy with an application. Compare Matthew 2:17-18 to Jeremiah 31:15.
 - 1) Jeremiah did not prophesy about the future or refer to a past historical event. He recorded an event taking place at that time.

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- 2) The similarity between the two verses was that Jewish mothers (all Jewish mothers in Jeremiah and only those in Bethlehem in Matthew) were weeping for sons they would never see again.

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F. Only Luke recorded Jesus' childhood. Luke 2:39-52

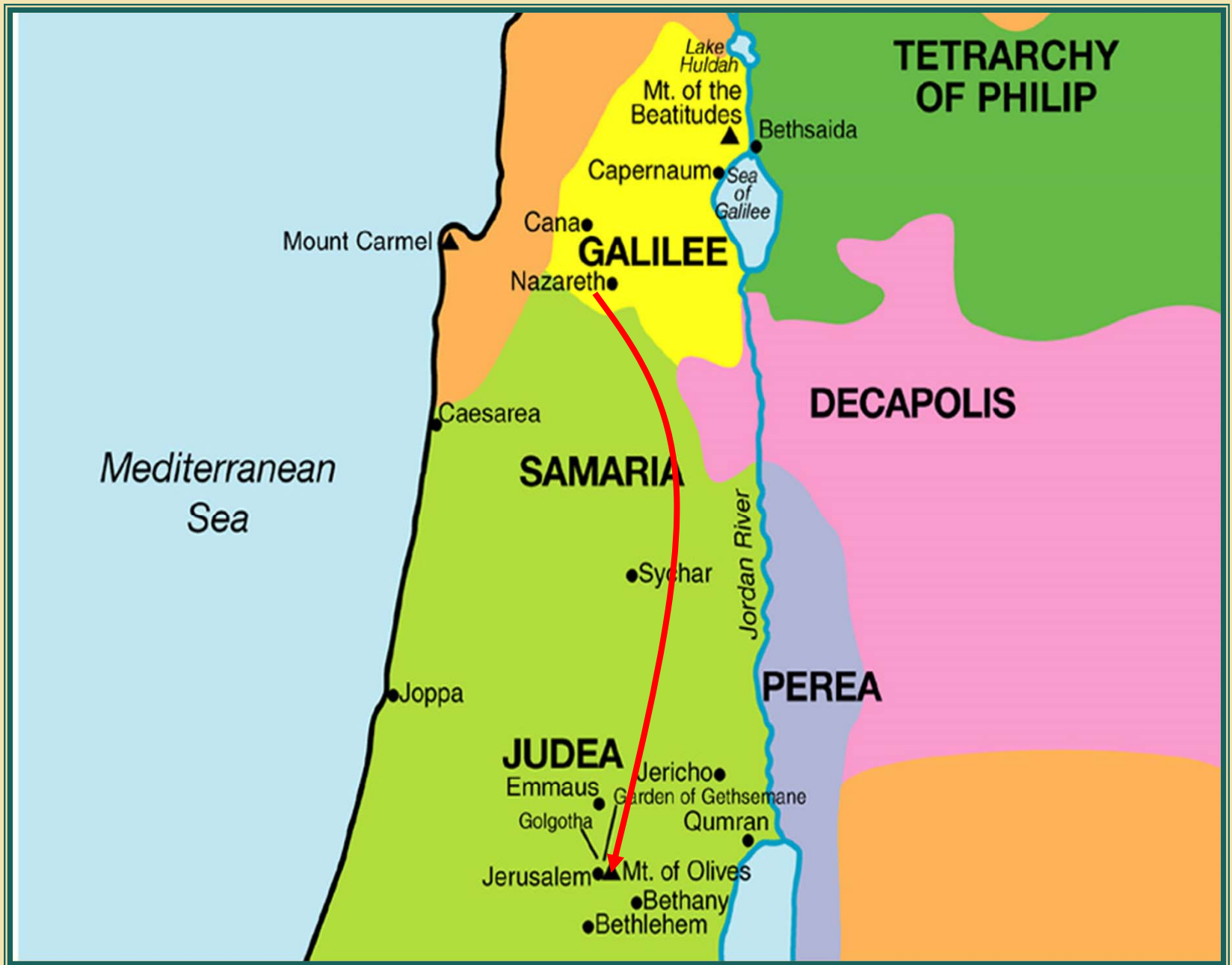
1. Luke 2:39 – Luke did not describe the Magi's visitor Jesus' family's flight to Egypt.
2. Luke 2:40a – The fact that Jesus grew as do all children emphasized His humanity.
 - a. Luke 2:40b – Jesus grew in wisdom (biblical knowledge understood and applied). Proverbs 8

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- b. Luke 2:40c – God the Father continually showered Jesus with grace just as He does all His children.

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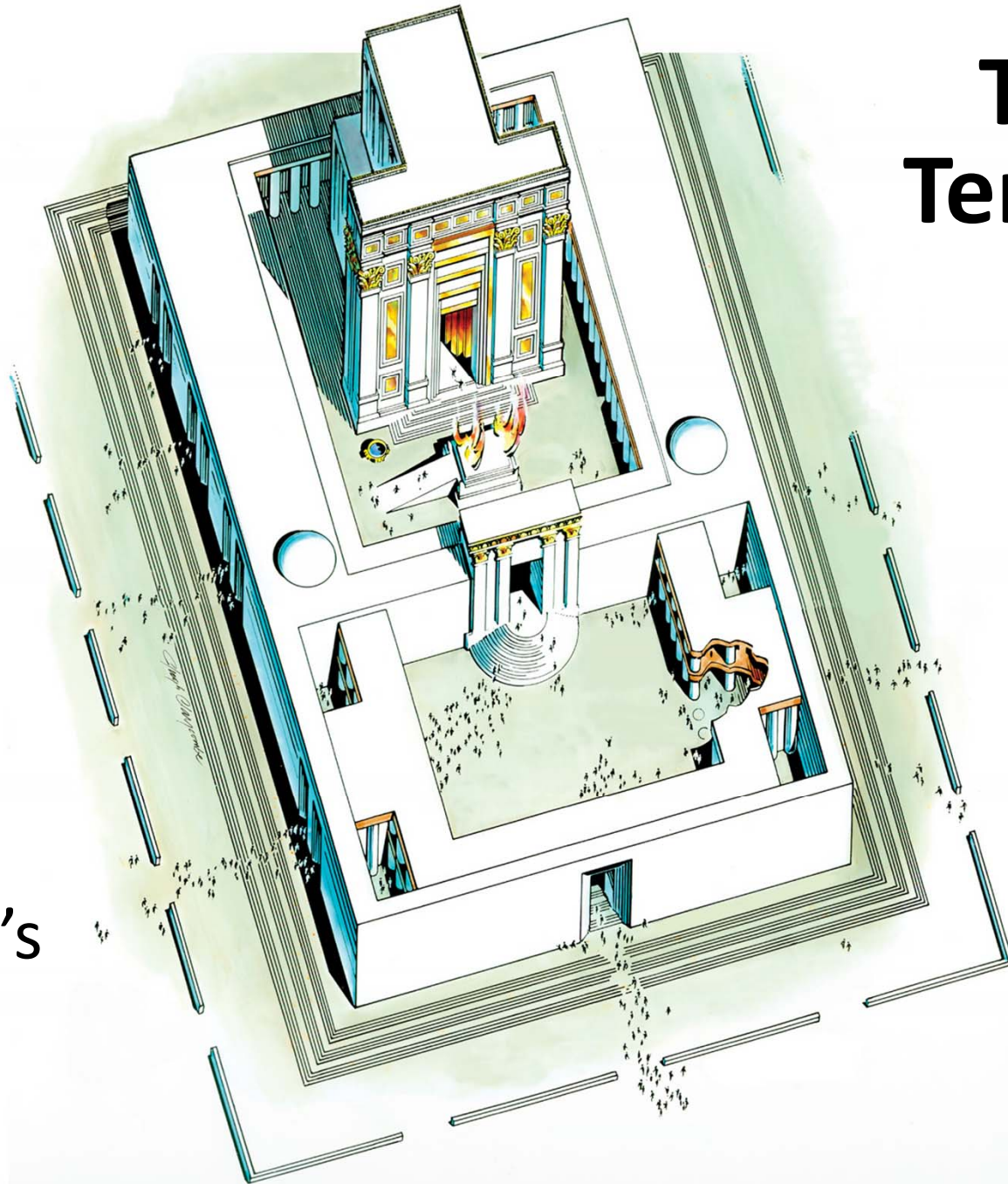
3. Luke 2:41 – Mary and Joseph were in the habit of going to Jerusalem to observe the Passover every year, another example of their obedience to God's Word.
4. Luke 2:42 – Jesus was of age to participate in the ritual that depicted the redemptive work He would accomplish on the cross twenty-one years later.



Joseph and Mary return to Nazareth with Jesus

The Temple

Gentile's
Court



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5. Luke 2:43-45 – Mary and Joseph lost their Son, the future Savior of the world.
 - a. Luke 2:43 – The phrase *the full number of days* showed that Joseph and Mary were careful to obey the entire Law and didn't slip away a few days early.
 - b. Luke 2:44 – Men traveled separately from women and children; thus, Joseph may have thought Jesus was with Mary while she supposed Jesus was with him.

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- c. Luke 2:45 – Mary and Joseph had to retrace their steps to Jerusalem to find Jesus.

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6. Luke 2:46a – The three days may have included a day traveling toward Nazareth, a day's journey back to Jerusalem, and a day looking for Jesus in Jerusalem.
 - a. Luke 2:46b – Jesus was in the temple, learning from the teachers.
 - b. Luke 2:46c – In humility, Jesus listened and asked questions of the teachers (rabbis). He respected their opinion of the Law.

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7. Luke 2:47 – Jesus' understanding of God's Word amazed even these learned scholars.
8. Luke 2:48 – Mary responded as would any mother whose son had been missing for three days.
9. Luke 2:49 – Though Jesus maintained respect for His mother's authority, His comment was a subtle but gracious rebuke.

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10. Luke 2:50 – Though His parent's may not have fully understood, at the age of twelve, Jesus already knew who He was, who His Father was, and what His purpose was in this world—to save mankind from sin.

11. Luke 2:51 – Jesus obeyed His parents.

12. Luke 2:52a – Jesus continued to increase in wisdom.