

## **'THE WAY' AFTER THE MANGER'**

### ***(The Maturation of God The Son)***

#### **The Rest of the Christmas Story: Luke 2**

#### **Going Forth 'til Our Going Up**

##### ***(The 2012 Vision for CBF)***

To tell you the truth, many Christians and I are rather surprised that we are still here. The world conditions seem so ready for the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ (*Matthew 24:4-8, Luke 21:29-36 & Revelation 6*). Knowing that His actual return to earth (*John 14:1-3, Acts 1:11*) will be preceded by the even more imminent evacuation (the 'rapture') of all believers before 'the 7-year Tribulation' (*1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, 1:10 & 5:9*) makes this seeming delay of our Lord more exciting than disappointing. *2 Peter 3:14-15* says: "**Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things (last days & 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ), be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation....**" A few verses before he had revealed the reason why God is being extremely patient in these days before the end of this age: ***'The Lord is not slack concerning His promise ... but is longsuffering toward us (all elect believers), not willing that any (any of those He foreknew would be saved) should perish but that all (the 'us' & 'any') should come to repentance'*** (*2 Peter 3:9*). So how are we to interpret the Lord's longsuffering in these final days before He takes us away prior to the Tribulation period and what are we supposed to do besides 'watch and pray' while we wait? It seems clear that there is a single answer to both questions— the purpose of this pause or delay is SALVATION (v 15). And what are we supposed to do while we eagerly await the call of Christ to the clouds above earth? SALVATION (v 15) is also the answer for how we are to occupy our time in these last days. SALVATION of those He has chosen to be 'saved' before the end is God's purpose for not having ended the age yet. And escalated SALVATION activity by those of us who have already been saved is to be the heightened focus of our prayers, energy, and monetary expenditures (individually and congregationally) (*Revelation 3:7-13*).

Thus, CBF's primary ministry objectives for 2012 are clearly influenced by the above prophetic philosophy of ministry more than any other single factor. Yes, we do earnestly pray and hope for property and a larger facility where our worship services and restricted ministries can be consolidated and expanded. Yes, we do earnestly hope and pray for the addition of a pastoral staff pastor and wife to oversee and develop the teenage and young adult ministries of CBF. Yes, we do hope and pray for resumption of Christ's Bible Institute (which was discontinued due to the lack of classroom space). But as important as these are, they are secondary to the SALVATION of those the Lord wants brought to faith and into the family of God before time runs out on the Church Age. As God provides and leads, we will take care of the flock of God and the material things He has entrusted to us – but escalation of SALVATION related ministries will tend to drive our vision for year 2012 or until the Lord returns. To the leadership of CBF, church growth does not refer to numbers of people or the facilities in which to serve them – it refers to spiritual maturity and fruitfulness of the church family. Those other definitions of growth will happen as God wills but we must focus on discipleship of those who have SALVATION and delivering it to those who don't.

Translated into actual ministry vision, this means that we anticipate God's opening of many doors of opportunity for CBF to tell others about His SALVATION in these last days. Locally, because we are effectively reaching many thousands of unsaved and un-churched people on Guam through radio, cable television and the internet, we will try to expand and improve these areas this year. Regarding foreign missions, we will be adding new missionaries and missions endeavors to neglected places and difficult regions of the world as much as possible. The missions trip to Myanmar/Philippines by the team from CBF and the meetings being planned in northern India for later this year are just the beginning of getting the 'Best News' of salvation out while there is still time left before the end comes. In-house ministries to the CBF congregation will not be neglected in any way – men's and ladies' Bible studies will be continued; VBS and other outreach ministries will go on as usual; new approaches to serving families such as the 'Modest Is Hottest' seminar will happen. But SALVATION will be the spiritual motivation of all ministries at CBF.

**WARNING:** The enemy has just read this, too. He has circulated news of this to every lowdown fallen angel in the area and in regions we will be infiltrating for Christ. Satan has already tried some dastardly attempts to distract and impede our 2012 strategy vision. But, as usual, he has been thwarted ... for now. But know that he will be back when he schemes up a new strategy for disruption of the 'game plan' of CBF. Usually his attempt comes through some weak-link believer within or some wicked adversary from without. This is a typical concern for all Christ-centered, Bible-teaching fellowships of Christians who are committed to a clear and biblical vision for what God wants done through it. So, be on alert for the enemy, but don't worry about him or those who he uses to sow discord from time to time – he's a defeated foe throwing devilish temper tantrums on the way to the Lake of Fire (*Revelation 20:10-15*). Just put on the armor of light (*Romans 13:11-14*) and take your stand in the power of His might when the 'evil day' comes (*Ephesians 6:10-18, James 4:7-10, 1 Peter 5:8-9*). We are always victorious in Christ Jesus as long as we are vigilant in prayers, holy in our lifestyles, faithful in our ministries and gracious in our evangelism of others (*1 John 5:4-5, 18*). I can't guarantee you that 2012 will be nice and easy, but with the biblical mandate of 'SALVATION' it will be challenging, exciting, fruitful and rewarding when He finally does come again – ***"I am coming quickly and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his (or her) work"*** (*Revelation 22:12*)

... “Surely I am coming quickly!”... ‘Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus!’ (Revelation 22:20).  
~Pastor Tom

**‘Twas the Life After Christmas’**  
*(The Childhood, Teenage, & Young Adult Years of Jesus)*  
Luke 2:39-52

**The Boyhood of Jesus**  
*(The Childhood Years)*  
vs. 39-40

“So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. **And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him.**”

<b>The Word to children:</b> <i>Exodus 20:12</i> <i>(Commandment #1 to #5)</i> <i>Ephesians 6:1-3</i> <i>Colossians 3:20</i>	<b>The Word to parents:</b> <i>Deuteronomy 6:1-8</i> <i>Psalm 78:4-8</i> <i>Proverbs 13-24</i> <i>Matthew 18:6-11</i> <i>Ephesians 6:4</i> <i>Colossians 3:21</i>
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**The Adolescence of Jesus**  
*(The Youthful Years)*  
vs. 41-50

“His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And **when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.** When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it, but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day’s journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was that **after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers,** both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.” And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? **Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?**” But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.”

<b>The Word to teenagers:</b> <i>Deuteronomy 5:16-21</i> <i>(Commandments #1 - #10)</i> <i>1 Timothy 4:12-16</i> <i>Samuel, David, Daniel</i>	<b>The Word to parents:</b> <i>Joshua 24:15</i> <i>Psalm 127-128</i> <i>Proverbs 1-10</i> <i>2 Timothy 1:5-7, 3:14-17</i> <i>Titus 2:6-8</i>
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**The Manhood of Jesus**  
*(The Adulthood Years)*  
vs. 51-52

“Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was **subject to them,** but His mother kept all these things in her heart. **And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.**”

<b>The Word to adult believers:</b> <i>Psalm 90:10-17 (by Moses)</i> <i>Ecclesiastes 12</i> <i>2 Timothy 4:6-8</i>	<i>Proverbs 25-31</i> <i>Philippians 3:12-14</i>
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