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was the rousing annual promise that all may have life and, out of God's great bounty, have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

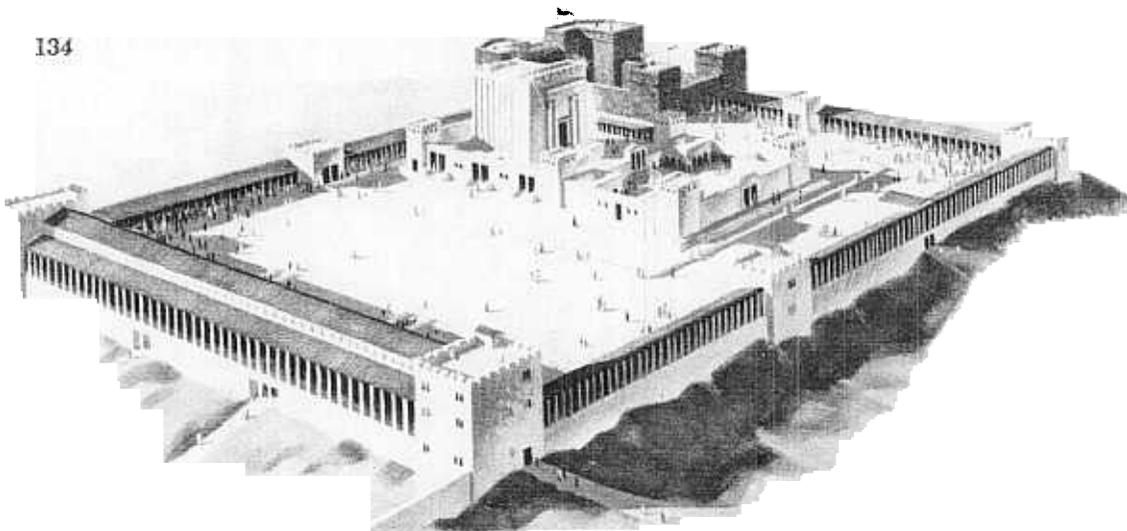
The hillsides around Nazareth are generally a little too steep for easy cultivation, but they do furnish pasture for many small flocks of sheep and goats. And in those ancient days, as today, the herdsman usually had his creatures well trained. If they began to stray they returned when they heard him calling (John 10:2-5), so he spent the long hours watching over them from the pleasant shade of a tree or jutting rock. At such times one might hear the notes from his pipe rippling over the warming air or see him with a tapering spindle, a baked clay whorl and a heap of combed wool, twisting and spinning it into yarn from which his wife would then weave the family's clothing. By the time Jesus was born, life was much changed and perhaps far less severe than it had been when the tribes fought their way into the Promised Land after bondage in Egypt. But among the common people one still had to work hard if one expected to eat.

What languages were spoken locally? In Nazareth, as elsewhere in the Holy Land, many languages were used and so one had to be quite a linguist. At the time of the Chaldean Empire a Semitic tongue known as Aramaic came into general and widespread use. Laban had employed it in Haran even in the early days (Genesis 31:47), and after the return from the Babylonian Captivity it became the common tongue of Palestine as well as Syria. Hebrew was still understood by the Jews, of course, for

it continued to be their sacred language, yet it was Aramaic that was spoken in the homes. Roman domination also had its influence; it brought with it some use of Latin, while the great trade routes which ran through the Holy Land, north and south, resounded with numerous other dialects and lesser tongues. In the streets and marketplaces, conversation was generally carried on in Greek. This was not the classical Greek of the Golden Age in Athens, but Koine, or common Greek, which had become the commercial tongue of Syria, Palestine and Egypt. It was in this language that the great bulk of the New Testament was first written. The differences between it and classical Greek were not well known or appreciated until the 1890s. As soon as scholars had a better understanding of them, there was an expanding interest in new and revised translations of that part of the Bible.

What was commerce like? The trade routes of Palestine were alive with traffic. After the days of Solomon, international exchange, except perhaps with Phoenicia, had lessened, but with the return from the Captivity commerce flourished once more. Freedom from local wars during the years of domination by the Seleucids and then the Romans served as an encouragement to trade. After Rome conquered Palestine, manufacturing increased by leaps and bounds in some sections of Italy; these finished goods were traded with the Holy Land for grain and other foodstuffs, of which Rome seemed always to be in need. Even today the remains of iron tools, utensils and horse-

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Herod's dazzling Temple, ornamented with gold, was begun in 20 B.C., but the great double walls and outer courts were not completed until 62 or 64 A.D.