

THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL

THE RESCUE *begins*

GOD THE SON

Jesus In His Father's House

Today, we will study the one instance in scripture regarding the childhood of Jesus. There is no other Word regarding the life of Christ until he reaches the age of 30 when He is baptized. God did not give us very much information regarding the early life of His beloved Son on earth. Ironside comments that, “Uninspired writers have tried to fill the gap by producing imaginary stories of the Childhood, and Youth, and Manhood of Jesus. There are weird myths stating that He went off to India as a young man and sat at the feet of Hindu yogis, and learned the art of healing, and such like rubbish. We may be sure none of these things is true. Our Lord Jesus lived a normal life as a boy, growing up in a beautiful Jewish home where the Word of God was adored and loved. As a young man He worked at the carpenter's bench with His foster-father, Joseph, and inasmuch as Joseph disappears from the picture in a little time and never seems to appear again, we are forced to the conclusion that he must have died while our Lord was quite a young man. That would bring Him to the place where He would be the head of the family, and caring for His mother and His younger brothers and sisters, for the Scriptures speak of His brothers and sisters. God never seeks to gratify mere curiosity.”

Beware of extra-Biblical writings which contain stories of Jesus' youth (the Gospel of Thomas, for example). The gospel of Thomas discovered in 1946 is a Gnostic gospel. Gnosticism is an early system of false teaching that taught that knowledge is the way to heaven. Some like to picture Jesus performing childhood miracles. The Bible tells us that Jesus' first miracle was when He turned water into wine at a wedding at the beginning of His ministry.

Inquiring minds wonder: “When did Jesus know that He was God?” Gotquestions.org answers, “From the heavenly perspective, the Son knew from eternity past who He was and what His earthly work was to be. From the earthly perspective, the incarnate Jesus came to that realization at some point early in life. Just when that point was, we cannot know for sure.”

This we know concerning the young Jesus: He learned and loved God's law.

Read Luke 2:40-47 (ESV) ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him. ⁴¹ Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. ⁴³ And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴ but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵ and when they did

not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

The Temple courts were famous throughout Judea as a place of learning. At the time of the Passover, the greatest rabbis would assemble to teach and to discuss great truths among themselves. The coming Messiah would no doubt have been a popular discussion topic, for everyone was expecting him soon.

By the time Jewish boys were five they had begun to read the scriptures aloud including the ceremonial laws of Leviticus. By 12, they would know the Psalms and they were instructed in the basics of Hebrew Law and history. At 13, Jesus, like all other Jewish boys, would become an adult by Jewish law. Today, the Jewish practice in which a boy becomes a “man of the covenant” is called the Bar-Mitzvah.

Those who attended these feasts often traveled in caravans for protection from robbers along the Palestine roads. It was customary for the women and children to travel at the front of the caravan, with the men bringing up the rear. A 12-year-old boy could have been in either group, and both Mary and Joseph assumed Jesus was with the other one.

As we consider this event in the life of Jesus, we must never forget that though human, Jesus was, in fact, no ordinary child. He was also divine. We are not looking at the story of a strong-willed boy or careless parents. This was the Son of God taking the necessary steps needed to learn of His future. The family had gone to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. Jesus learned of the Passover firsthand from the great teachers in temple. Possibly, they spoke of the story of Abraham and Isaac’ experience on Mt. Moriah when God provided a ram in the thicket to take the place of Isaac on the altar. At some point, Jesus would come to the recognition that His mission was to be the Passover Lamb who would take away the sins of the world! Unlike in the life of Isaac, there would be no sacrifice replacement on the altar for Jesus. Jesus was born to be the sacrificial Lamb. We can only imagine how Jesus felt the moment he realized that truth of the Old Testament scriptures.

Even though this is not an ordinary parent/child story, we can see from Mary and Joseph’s experience of ‘losing Jesus’ how easy it is for those of us who have the Presence of Christ in our lives to lose fellowship with Him in the confusion of everyday life. We can only imagine how frantic Mary and Joseph must have been when they realized that Jesus was NOT with the caravan.

Jesus is the “learner” in this temple setting. I am told that the Gospel of Thomas has a different version of this incident. Thomas (who was not Thomas the disciple) pictures Jesus at 12 as an all-wise teacher who silences the other teachers by His perfect display of wisdom. However, the Word of God presents Jesus as the Learner who listened to the teachers. For me, this indicates www.cybersundayschool.net

the humanity of our Savior. Jesus, the divine Son of God, was yet human and He needed to learn just like the rest of us. Learning as a human would have been a vital part of the mission given to Him by His Father. As we struggle to learn and grow into spiritual maturity, it is comforting to know that Jesus Himself first learned before He fulfilled His Father's mission. However, His wisdom even at age 12 was amazing.

Next we see that Jesus was involved in 'His Father's' work early in life.

Read Luke 2:48-50 (ESV) ⁴⁸ *And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress."* ⁴⁹ *And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"* ⁵⁰ *And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.*

In this passage we have the first recorded words of Jesus: *I must be in my Father's house* or as the King James says, *I must be about my Father's business*. I prefer the KJV translation because those words remind us what the focus of each of God's children should be. Our heart's desire should be to live a life that exists to do our Father's business.

After searching for three days, naturally Mary and Joseph were upset. They saw Jesus as their boy who was not grown up enough to stay by Himself in Jerusalem. It seems they forgot that His was more than a boy – He was the Son of God. I don't think that they fully comprehended that even though they knew He was virgin born.

Humanly speaking, it is easy to jump to the conclusion that Jesus' action of remaining in Jerusalem was disobedient or mischievous. If He were any other child, that would be true, but since Jesus was the Son of God, it was His mission to be about His Father's business – which at that point in his life consisted of learning and growing in wisdom and understanding.

Jesus found favor with God and others.

Read Luke 2:51-52 (ESV) ⁵¹ *And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.* ⁵² *And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*

All we have concerning the next part of Jesus' life, up to the beginning of His public ministry is found in just two verses. These two verses are all that God has been pleased to tell us of the hidden years.

I like to apply scripture to our daily lives. In this passage, we need to distinguish between those things which are unique to our Lord, as being God With Us and those things where our Lord leads by example for us.

1. Children should not take the fact that Jesus stayed behind when His parents left Jerusalem as a biblical example that they should strike out on their own without permission – even if it involves something like a church activity. The on-going submission of our Lord to His parents after this incident rules against this conclusion.
2. On the other hand, if God is our Father, then our ultimate obedience must be to Him, and not to any earthly authority, when the two conflict. *Acts 5:29 (ESV)* ²⁹ *But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.*
3. From Mary and Joseph’s relationship with their Son, we are reminded that when God is leading our children, other family members or even friends in a way that take them away from us, we should not stand in the way of them following the Lord’s will for their lives.
4. Nothing should hold us back from the things that contribute to our spiritual growth. Since Jesus’ spiritual growth was so important to Him even as a child, we should follow His youthful example. Being at the temple, exposed to the teachers of that day, was a way for Jesus to grow in His knowledge of spiritual things. Ways for us to grow spiritually today include the reading and study of scripture, joining with others believers in praise and worship, prayer, and obedience to His will.

God because He is God is able to intertwine the human and the divine to fulfill His purposes. We have already seen how God was able to use the decree of a pagan ruler to arrange for the arrival of the Messiah in Bethlehem as prophesied, rather than in Nazareth where the baby’s mother lived. God later used the religious leaders of Israel and the Roman government to bring about the sacrificial death of His Son.

In this passage, we find Mary and Joseph struggling to put together the humanity and deity of Jesus. The scripture tells us that were confused when Jesus spoke about His need to be in His Father’s house. Their first thought of His father’s s house most likely would have been their home in Nazareth. The humanity of Jesus was so real, they forgot His deity.

The Apostle John wrote in *John 21:25 (ESV)* ²⁵ *Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.* God in His infinite wisdom has provided everything we need to know in order to receive eternal life. Look to Jesus and live!