

▣ JESUS' BOYHOOD

Luke 2:39-52 / Yeshua §17-19

Next Week: Resurrection Sunday!

Many of us are familiar with today's story: 12-year-old Jesus spent three days in the Temple astonishing Jewish theologians while Mary & Joseph frantically searched for him. How was it that Jesus was so smart? How did he know the Hebrew Scriptures so well he could converse and even challenge the chief rabbis of Israel?

Did Jesus "dip into" his deity?

Was that the reason Jesus was so advanced at 12?

Please turn with me to Luke 2:39-52 as we explore Jesus' boyhood years.

Part 1. The Coming of the King

→ *Jesus' Boyhood*

Part 2. The Authentication of the King

Part 3. The Controversy over the King

Part 4. The Training of the Twelve by the King

Part 5. The Opposition to the King:

Part 6. The Preparation of the Disciples by the King

Part 7. The Official Presentation of the King

Part 8. The Preparation for the Death of the King

Part 9. The Trial of the King:

Part 10. The Death of the King

Part 11. The Resurrection and the Ascension of the King

Part 12. The Sequels

▣ JESUS' GROWTH (LUKE 2:39-40)

LUKE 2:39-40 (ESV)

³⁹ And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

Luke is the only gospel writer who mentions Jesus' boyhood and growth. Even then, he doesn't supply much detail. From the descriptions of Joseph & Mary we do know that Jesus grew up in a devout Jewish home.

▣ Jesus' Education



In a typical first century Jewish home, by the time a son was five years old (six or seven at the very latest) he began attending *bet sefer* - the elementary school held in the local synagogue. Girls could attend as well if their family's desired, but attendance for boys was compulsory.

The course of study began with Leviticus, not Genesis. The rationale was, "let the pure (i.e., children) come and study the pure," since Leviticus deals with the topics of ritual purity and sacrifices.

Rabbis taught in the *bet sefer* and the *bet midrash* (secondary school). Not all were equipped to teach children. Only those who were devoted to teaching and showed great patience were chosen.

Students were only allowed to sit in the presence of their teachers when they were explicitly invited. Once permission was granted, they were not allowed to get up and leave the room. They had to treat the teacher with the reverence they would show a king. They would never sit in the teacher's seat. They stood when the teacher entered the room. They addressed their teacher as *Rebbi*. They attended to his needs as a servant attends to the needs of his master. When the teacher died, the students mourned him as they would mourn their own fathers.

Students learned to read and write. Memorization was the primary mode of learning. Scrolls were scarce. In Jesus' day, Jewish homes had a scroll or two, but certainly not the twenty scrolls containing all the Hebrew Scriptures. In light of this limited material, the rabbis relied on memorization. Two popular rabbinic sayings demonstrate the high priority put on memorization:

▣ *A person who repeats his lesson a hundred times is not to be compared with him who repeats it a hundred and one times.*

▣ *If (the student) learns Torah and does not go over it again and again, he is like a man who sows without reaping.*

Students studied seven days a week. On the Sabbath they reviewed the previous week's material. The result was that in the days of Jesus most people had committed large portions of Scripture to memory.

At the age of twelve, a son was apprenticed to a specific profession. If he was apprenticed to his father's profession, he would stay home. However, sometimes the father would send his son or sons to another place to be apprenticed to a profession different than his own. In Jesus' case, he was apprenticed in Joseph's profession of carpentry so he remained with his family. The word for carpenter means more than working with wood; it also has the meaning of "stone cutter". Joseph and Jesus were skilled in working with wood and stone.

Was it the education Jesus received at Nazareth Elementary that prepared him to astonish the theologians of Judaism or was it something else?

I believe it was something else. Something that Isaiah the Prophet revealed in Isaiah 50:4-9.

▣ Jesus' Discipleship (Isaiah 50:4-9)

One of Isaiah's favorite titles for Messiah is *the Servant of the Lord*. This passage is part of a larger section in which *the Servant of the Lord* is speaking.

▣ ISAIAH 50:4-9 (ESV)

- ⁴ The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught,
that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary.
Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.
- ⁵ The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward.
- ⁶ I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard;
I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.
- ⁷ But the Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.
- ⁸ He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me.
- ⁹ Behold, the Lord God helps me; who will declare me guilty?
Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

Jesus was disciplined by his Heavenly Father.

In parallel with his classes at Nazareth Elementary, Jesus, the Son, was personally disciplined by God the Father.

This passage reveals that morning by morning, God the Father awakened Jesus His Son and taught him. The Father taught Jesus who he was and what his mission was to be. As a result of this special training by God the Father, at the age of 12 Jesus knew exactly who he was – the Son of God, the Messiah, the King. He also knew the Hebrew Scriptures so well he had no trouble debating the scholars in the Temple when he accompanied his parents to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread.

This is important for us to understand. Jesus is the God Man. Jesus is one Person but he has two distinct natures: a divine nature and a human nature. These two natures exist side by side; they never mixed. In his humanity, Jesus did not know everything. He needed to be taught and trained. God the Father taught and trained Jesus.

Even when the Father revealed that Jesus must suffer the agony of crucifixion, Jesus did not rebel (50:5). He did not turn back and try to escape the Father's call upon his life. When it came time, Jesus, "gave His back to those who strike and his cheeks to those who pull out the beard". He "hid not his face from disgrace and spitting."

The fruit of Jesus' discipleship would be on full display when his parents took him to Jerusalem and the Temple to celebrate Passover.

12-YEAR-OLD JESUS AT THE TEMPLE (LUKE 2:41-50)

LUKE 2:41-50 (ESV)

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. 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.

This event once again shows Joseph & Mary were members of the believing remnant who obeyed the Mosaic Law. The Law of Moses commanded the men of Israel come together three times a year to celebrate the Feasts of the Lord (Exod. 23:14-17; Deut. 16:1-8). That Mary came as well attests to the sincerity of her faith.

As Luke notes, Jesus was 12. Some have taught this was Jesus' *Bar Mitzvah*. It was not. A boy's *Bar Mitzvah* was celebrated at the age of 13. However, there was a rabbinic tradition that strongly encouraged that a boy turned 12 be taken to Jerusalem to participate in the Feast of Passover. This was in preparation for his *Bar Mitzvah*. Joseph & Mary seemed to be fulfilling this rabbinic tradition on Jesus' behalf.

The population of Jerusalem at this time is estimated to be 80,000. The influx of pilgrims further swelled the population. After celebrating Passover, Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits, Joseph & Mary rejoined the group heading north to Galilee / Nazareth. When they stopped at the first night's lodging, they discovered Jesus was missing. Undoubtedly, they hurried back to Jerusalem the next day in a panic. It took them three days to find Jesus in the Temple.



The description of Jesus with the teachers indicates he was listening with understanding to their theological discussions and asking them questions. These were not the questions of a typical 12-year-old. The text also indicates the teachers were asking Jesus questions and were amazed by his answers. Obviously, Jesus' insights and understanding of Scripture and theology was not the result of his studies in the Nazareth school system; these reflected his training by God the Father.

As we can image, Joseph & Mary were relieved to find Jesus and then a bit peeved. Mary, a typical Jewish mother, tried to lay a guilt trip on Jesus; "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." Verse 49 contains the first recorded words of Jesus. And they have a bit of an edge.

And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

Jesus rebuked his mother insisting she knew enough to realize where Jesus would be – in the Temple. Jesus also reminds Mary that Joseph is not his father, but that God is his Father and she should have known to look for him in his Father's house.

It is significant that 12-year-old Jesus referred to God as "my Father". In Judaism, God is often called *Father* particularly in prayers. However, because He is seen as the Father of Israel, His Fatherhood is collective. He is addressed as "our Father", not "my Father". When Jesus spoke of "my Father's house" he was revealing his personal relationship with his heavenly Father.

From 12 to 30 Jesus' life is shrouded in mystery. Luke simply records that Jesus returned to Nazareth and continued to grow and develop.

☐ JESUS GROWS INTO MANHOOD (LUKE 2:51-52)

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.

In verse 51 Luke records 12-year-old Jesus returned to Nazareth and was submissive to his parents. Jesus submitted to Joseph and Mary despite the fact he far surpassed them in knowledge and spiritual maturity as demonstrated in the Temple. Rather than “copping an attitude” of arrogant disrespect, Jesus humbly submitted to their God-ordained authority over him as his parents.

Over the next eighteen years Jesus increased in *wisdom* meaning he grew intellectually.

He increased in *stature* meaning he grew physically.

He increased *in favor with God* meaning he grew spiritually.

And finally, he increased *in favor with man* meaning he grew socially.

For me, this was a heart-warming discovery that Jesus was disciplined by His Heavenly Father.

Just as God the Father disciplined Jesus His Son so also, we are to disciple our sons and daughters. Unfortunately, this is an area of my life with a lot more misses than hits. Cathy and I are blessed with two wonderful daughters, a son and now a wonderful daughter-in-law. I think we did well in making sure they attended church, Sunday School, AWANA, youth group. I think we lived honestly before our children and taught them key principles and values which they have embraced. I know we loved them with all our hearts and expressed that to them all the time.

But I never found a sustainable way to study the Bible with them. I tried a few things which never went over well. So, I stand before you as one who was not particularly effective in discipling his own children. But I look around our church family and I see some families who are. My encouragement to you is to seek out these parents and explore what they are doing to disciple their children and how they go about it. Discipling is more than study material it also involves an atmosphere. Seek to learn as much about the atmosphere these parents set for discipling as the material they are using.

Discipling our children is a challenge. As a church family we need to be helping each other. In addition to C2C, AWANA and our youth ministry, another resource is the Children's Library. Cathy has assembled a wonderful collection of books and DVD's designed to help our children follow Christ.

May the Lord give you grace and wisdom to disciple your children and grandchildren in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Grace News and Notes

Opportunities to Serve on Worship Team: See Traci Adams about serving on Audio / Media / Instrumental / Vocal teams.

Walk For Life: April 27th, 8:30am @ Collier Park: Sponsorship Information on Patio

Spring Business Meeting: Sunday, April 28th, 6PM, bring finger foods to share, childcare provided.