

The Journey... Walk as Jesus Walked

Part 5 – Home Alone... Jesus in the Temple

Luke 2:40-52 – January 10, 2010

Intro: Movie Home Alone... Premiered Nov. 10, 1990 in Chicago. It is the story of 8 year-old Kevin McAllister (Macaulay Culkin) who is accidentally left behind when his family takes off for a vacation in France over the holiday season. Once he realizes they've left him home by himself, Kevin learns to fend for himself, and eventually has to protect his house against bumbling burglars Harry and Marv, who are planning to rob every house in Kevin's suburban Chicago neighborhood. Kevin's mother Kate is frantic when she realizes that she and the family have unintentionally left Kevin behind in Chicago, and she tries to make it back to Chicago as fast as she can, getting help from a polka band leader named Gus Polinski (Jon Candy).

Transition: Jesus had a similar experience in being left behind, and like Kevin, shows remarkable composure as he converses with the religious leaders of the day. Our passage this morning gives us a snapshot of Jesus just before his Bar Mitzvah. What is remarkable is his growth and maturity, even as a pre-teenager! What was he like?

I. A Geographical Review of the Family's Travels

We have virtually no record of his life from his early childhood, until this passage as a 12 year-old. He has moved at least 4 times in his young life.

- A. **Bethlehem:** Jesus is born and announced by the angels and visited by the shepherds (Luke 2:1-20)
- B. **Jerusalem:** Jesus presented in the Temple to Simeon (Luke 22-38). Some feel that Joseph and Mary go back to Nazareth (Luke 2:39) to collect their belongings and then relocate “permanently” to Bethlehem.

- C. **Bethlehem:** Visit of the Magi who came through Jerusalem looking for Jesus. The “star” leads them to the exact location in Bethlehem (Mt. 2:9) where the young family is residing in a house, not a stable (Mt. 2:11). It is possible that the gifts that are given to Mary and Joseph are God’s provision for their escape to Egypt. It finances their trip! Remember these kids are poor!
- D. **Egypt:** They escape from Herod by going to Egypt (Mt. 2:13-18) having been warned by an angel in Joseph’s dream. It is the second time that an angelic dream has played a prominent role in Joseph’s decisions. It is the third dream after Herod’s death (Mt. 2:19) in which he is told to go back to Israel; but fearing that Herod’s son Archelaus might still seek Jesus’ death he is warned in a 4th dream (Mt.2:22) from God himself (not angel) to go back to Nazareth where he started from in the first place!
- E. **Nazareth:** Jesus comes back to Nazareth where he spends his childhood and on into early manhood. (Luke 2:40-52). We will pick up the story here.
1. The village where Jesus grew up was called Nazareth. It is not mentioned in the OT, the Talmud, or in Josephus. It was apparently a term of reproach because of its location far from Jerusalem in a Gentile area (cf. John 1:46 and Acts 24:5, even though this, too, was prophecy [cf. Isa. 9:1]). This may be why “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” was inscribed on the placard which was placed on the cross above Jesus’ head. Utley, R. J. D. (2004). *Vol. Volume 3A: The Gospel According to Luke*. Study Guide Commentary Series. Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International

II. Jesus as a **child** (Luke 2:40)

A. The Context

1. After Jesus’ birth, we know very little about his childhood other than he spent part of it in Egypt... how long, we don’t know. Long enough for Herod to die! We know that he is

not more than 2 years old when they go to Egypt. The summary of his childhood is seen in v. 40

2. In Jewish culture the mother was responsible for the child's development until age 5 and then the father until age 12.

B. The characteristics...

1. **Physically:** He grew physically strong.
 - This childhood description may have been an attempt to refute the early assertions of Gnosticism. Jesus was both God and man. The early Gnostics tried to assert that anything material or physical was evil.
 - There is no reference to childhood miracles like some of the other books (Infancy Gospel of Thomas or the Protevangelium of James) assert! Didn't wow his friends!
2. **Mentally:** He was wise. How would it be to parent a perfect child as an imperfect parent?
3. **Spiritually:** God's grace was upon Him. Are our homes seasoned with grace?

C. The comparison:

1. Wouldn't we like our children to be described like that?
2. Do we need to teach our kids discipline, respect, self control, etc? There is a balance in freedom and control!

III. Jesus as a 12 year-old (Luke 2:41-50)

A. The **missing** son (2:41-47)

1. The **occasion** (41-42):
 - *"went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover"* Jewish males over 21 years of age were required to attend all three major annual feasts (cf. Ex. 23:14-17; 34:23; Deut. 16:16). In the first century this was reduced to one feast because of the number of Jews living outside of Palestine. This is another evidence of

Jesus' parents' dedication to the Law of Moses. Mary was not required by law to attend, but she wanted to. Uteley, R. J. D. (2004). *Vol. Volume 3A: The Gospel According to Luke*. Study Guide Commentary Series. Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

- *“Went”* is an example of the iterative imperfect which indicates that Jesus' family **habitually went to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover**. *“Every year”* further emphasizes this.
 - *Passover*: Each year they would commemorate God's “passing over them” in executing the 10th and final plague in Egypt. All of the Egyptian firstborn children were taken, but the Jews were spared by putting a spot of blood on their doorposts.
 - *“He became twelve”* (v. 42) Jesus was coming very close to His Bar Mitzvah, which made a Jewish boy a “son of the Law.” His 12th birthday would have been one year before Jesus officially became an adult Israelite and accepted responsibility for fulfilling the law. This occurred at age thirteen. (Although the official Jewish *bar mitzvah* ceremony may not have existed in Jesus' day, its analogy to Roman coming-of-age rituals supports other evidence for an official entrance to adulthood around this age.) Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.
 - It is possible that Luke recorded His age as twelve to show how fully developed He was in the Scriptures. Jesus obviously, by this time, recognized who He was (cf. v. 49).
2. The **oversight** (43-45)
- *“Full number of days”* v. 43
Usually either 2 or 7 days. They didn't “ditch”. They didn't do the bare minimum. **Illustration: Missions Conf., taking notes, sitting in the front row.**

- *“Parents were unaware”*
He is accidentally left behind by his parents. Usually in these caravans of pilgrims the men and women traveled separately and often times the children would play together. Probably each parent thought that Jesus was in the care of the other or with the cousins. It was an easy mistake! We left Katie when she was about 4 years old. It was simple miscommunication with Cheryl about who was picking up from SS. We got all the way home 14 miles away.
- *“went a day’s journey, and they began looking for Him”* (v. 44)
Usually these caravans left Jerusalem and stopped at Beereoth, about eight to ten miles from Jerusalem, for the night. The normal distance of a day’s journey was over twenty miles.

3. The **outcome** (v. 46-47)

- *“after three days”* This includes their one day travel away from Jerusalem, the one-day journey back, and one day to search for Jesus. After looking for him everywhere, they finally locate him in the Temple, discussing theology with the Jewish teachers.
- *“in the temple”* On the Sabbath and on feast days the rabbis lectured in the covered porches of the Court of the Women (outermost courtyard of the shrine).
- *Listening to them and asking questions* (v.46)
Some Jewish teachers in this period reportedly conducted their classes in the temple courts; the famous Hillel and Shammai may have been two such teachers. Asking questions was used both in teaching and in learning, but it was important for learners to ask intelligent questions, as Jesus does. He simply followed the custom of the time, which allowed anyone who chose to question the teachers on any points they

desired. Teachers could answer questions with questions, and Jesus' answers are also intelligent.

- Some try to say that the child Jesus was teaching these learned men, but that is not what the verse says. He was asking them questions and learning from them. They were, however, amazed at His understanding and answers to questions that they asked Him – asking questions of students was a rabbinical method of teaching. Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). *Manners & customs of the Bible* (Rev. ed.) (502–503). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers.

Application: James 1:22 “Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. Are we quick to interrupt? Do we hear people’s whole story without jumping to conclusions.

- *Amazed at his understanding and answers* (v. 47)

By this age he probably speaks Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek. He may have begun to study with a rabbi and has begun memorizing the Torah.

- This is an IMPERFECT MIDDLE INDICATIVE, which suggests a repeated experience. He didn’t get one right question... He wasn’t lucky... He was amazing! This was Jesus’ only known chance to hear the great rabbis in Jerusalem and discuss the Law with them.
- These same religious leaders 18 years later would not listen to Him as an adult! They go from amazement to anger and ultimately will have him crucified.

B. The messianic Son (2:48–49)

1. Mary’s rebuke (2:48) “*Why have you done this to us?*”

- The parental question was framed in *astonishment*. This literally is “struck with a blow” (cf. 2:48; 4:32; 9:43; Acts 13:12). Application: The parents were *blown away* as they watched him interact with the

religious leaders. **Illustration:** Bragging about your kid! No really...

2. Jesus' **reminder** (2:49) "*You should have known that I would be in my Father's house.*"

- These are the first recorded words of Jesus. This shows that Jesus knew something of His origin and purpose, even at this early age.
- He wasn't disrespectful, or chiding or scolding. He was just matter of fact.
- Did Jesus get caught up in the moment and forget the time? Where did he sleep for 2 nights?

C. The **misunderstood** Son (2:50)

1. They cannot comprehend what He is saying! Jesus often spoke in parables to confuse the religious elite but to teach the spiritually sensitive.
2. This section begins and ends with a visit to the temple. Jesus was presented to the Lord (2:22-24) and ends in His Father's House as well.

IV. Jesus as a young man (v. 51-52)

A. **What was more important?**

1. "*He went down with them and came to Nazareth*" 2:51

This is the last mention of Joseph. Apparently he died at an early age, but the couple had several other children first (cf. Matt. 12:46; 13:55; Mark 6:3; John 2:12; 7:3, 5, 10; Acts 1:14; I Cor. 9:5; Gal. 1:19).

2. "*continued in subjection to them*"

This is a PERIPHRASTIC IMPERFECT PASSIVE, "**He was continually subject to them.**" The law was very strict on this (cf. Deut. 21:18–21). Jesus grew up in a normal Jewish household, obeying and following the normal Jewish rules for children. **App. Young adults learn from Jesus' example!**

B. Life balance in Jesus' life. *Jesus kept increasing...*

1. **He applied truth intellectually.** *"Wisdom"*
 - Diff. with knowledge and wisdom.
2. **He matured physically** *"Stature (lit. age)"*
3. **He pleased God spiritually** *"In favor with God"*
4. **He developed socially** *"and men"*
 - The only additional description that was added from the childhood list. Not an odd duck.

V. Lessons to be lived... so what?

- A. **Spirituality requires intentional cultivation.** It needs to be a priority! If we want godly kids, we need to initiate with them. It just doesn't happen. Don't expect spiritual results in lives of your kids, without putting in the time and effort to help them grow spiritually. Too busy? What is more important?
- B. **Obedience to God is seen in sacrifice.** Mary and Joseph sacrificed to get to Passover. It was a priority. Example: Our casual approach to missing church on Sunday mornings? Is soccer really more important? If you do miss, what are you doing to "make up" the lost time? *Every year v. 41*
- C. **Kids: Submission to parental authority teaches us honor and develops character.** Eph. 6:1-2 ...it comes with a blessing! *Subjection v. 51*

Table Talk

1. What was so amazing about Jesus' childhood?
2. What were the outstanding characteristics of his early childhood?
3. Have you ever left your child somewhere unattended? Do you think Mary's response was appropriate?

4. Are you intentionally discipling your kids? If not, why not? What can you do this week that will make a spiritual difference?

Sneak Peek (next week's reading!)

Next week we will look at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. It starts with His baptism by John the Baptist. Please read:

- Matt. 3:13-17
 - Mark 1:9-11
 - Luke 3:21-23a
1. Why was it important for Jesus to be baptized?
 2. What was the difference in John's baptism and our baptism today?

Note: If you really want to study, order *The Harmony of the Gospels* by Robert Thomas and Stan Gundry.

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