

Bi132 The Gospels

Lesson Bi132-7 The Boy Jesus

Have you ever misplaced something really important to you? Whether it was a document, money, or an heirloom from a family member, you searched until it was found. Even worse, have you ever thought about losing a child? As a parent this is one of the worst things that you could ever imagine. So it was with Mary and Joseph, who one day discovered that Jesus was missing!

Every year Jesus' parents traveled from their home in Nazareth to Jerusalem, for the Festival of the Passover. You recall that the Passover celebrates God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt. When he was 12 years old, they went to the festival, according to their custom. After the feast while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they did not know it. Thinking he was with their group, they traveled on for a whole day. When at sunset they looked for him among their relatives and friends, they could not find him. So they hurried back to Jerusalem.

After three days, they found him in the temple courts. He was sitting among the teachers there, listening to them and asking questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding of the Law of God and his ability to answer questions about it. When his parents found him, they were not impressed, but upset and hurt. His mother said, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you" (Luke 2:41-48).

Consider this question, "Why did Jesus place greater importance on being in the temple than going home to Nazareth with his parents?"

"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand the meaning of what he was saying to them.

Then he went home to Nazareth with his parents and lived obediently with them. But his mother pondered these things deep in her heart. As Jesus grew in years, he grew in stature, matured in wisdom, and was blessed by both God and people (Luke 2:41-52).

This short story is the only thing we know about Jesus from the time his family returned from Egypt until he was baptized in the Jordan River at about age 30. Like all 12-year-old Jewish boys, Jesus was studying the Scriptures and preparing to take his place as an adult in the religious community at age 13. We see that he was already aware of his unique relationship with the heavenly Father. Jesus respected the religious leaders, even though he perhaps understood the coming conflict he would have with them. Notice that he sat among the teachers, listening to them. Only after listening did he ask them questions. These leaders were astonished at his understanding of the Jewish Scriptures and the answers he gave to them.

In relation to his parents, he obeyed them, but they still didn't understand why he had to be at the temple, his heavenly Father's house. As Jesus continued to live in his parents' home, he grew in many ways. He grew spiritually—in wisdom and understanding. He grew

physically—in his stature. And he grew in favor with God and with people who knew him. Although Jesus was God, there is no indication that he had all wisdom and knowledge from birth. He laid those aside to be born as a helpless baby. But he did grow!

This story is **important** because it shows us that Jesus was being prepared by God to understand people and to acquire the wisdom he would need to accomplish his mission. Already he felt a closer relationship with God, his heavenly Father, than with his earthly family. Mary and Joseph were aware that God had a special plan for Jesus. They did not fully understand, however, any details about that plan or about God's timing.

The **main truth** of this story is that in the years before his public ministry began, Jesus was aware of his special relationship with God the Father.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. Why did Jesus go with his parents to Jerusalem when he was 12 years old?
A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, "because every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover," you are correct.
2. What relationship with God did Jesus refer to when his parents found him?
A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said "Jesus told them he had to be in his Father's house" you are correct.
3. In what ways did Jesus continue to grow?
A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, "He grew in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and with people who knew him," you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to the story at least three times. As you hear the story each time, imagine how it happened. See the events in your mind. Then tell the story in your own words to someone who has never heard it and ask, "Why is it important to know that Jesus was aware of his relationship to God as his Father at an early age?" The answer is that his relationship with God did not originate at his baptism. As he prayed and studied the Scriptures, he became aware of his unique relationship to God as his Son.