

THIS IS JESUS

UNIT 1: THE MESSIAH NAMED JESUS PART 1: JESUS THE MESSIAH

Lesson 4: The Pre-Teen Messiah

Devotion 1

And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. (Luke 2:42)

Some families take vacations to certain spots at a certain time of year. For example, your family may go to the beach every Memorial Day weekend. Or perhaps your Aunt lives several hours away, but the whole family drives to her house at Thanksgiving. In today's verse, we will read about a special trip that Jesus and his parents made when He was young!

Read Luke 2:42.

The Passover festival was a seven-day event that remembered God's faithfulness to His people who had been enslaved in Egypt. During Passover, a lamb was slain in memory of lambs whose blood was put on the doorposts as a measure of protection in the original Passover. (If you want to know more, you can read Exodus 12.) In Jewish tradition, a boy became a man at 13 years old. It was common for the father to take his son to certain religious celebrations during the year before his thirteenth birthday. This may be why Jesus accompanied Mary and Joseph to the spring Passover feast in Jerusalem. However, it could also be that Jesus went with them to the festival every year because of the festival's importance.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

- Imagine that you are young Jesus, tagging along with your parents to the Passover festival. What are some things you might take note of? What would be exciting about this journey? What might scare you a little bit?
- The Passover will be mentioned much later in Jesus' life as well. What other important event happened after Jesus celebrated Passover? (Hint: Read Luke 22)

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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." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. 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. (Luke 2:48-51)

Read Luke 2:48-51.

Jesus gave His parents quite a scare when He disappeared to the Temple. You can probably imagine Mary's thoughts as she searched high and low: "What kind of mother am I? I've lost the Son of God!" It is easy to see why there would be a lot of distress leading up to the moment when Jesus was spotted in the Temple, doing exactly what you would expect the Son of God to be doing.

When confronted, Jesus responds in three very important ways:

1. He listened to what His parents had to say.
2. He calmly explained His position/reason for being there.
3. Even though they didn't understand Him, he was obedient and went home.

Take a moment to think about how you respond to others when moments like this arise. How can you respond to others, particularly those who have been charged with your care/well-being, as Jesus did?

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So some of his disciples said to one another, "What is this that he says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'; and, 'because I am going to the Father'?" So they were saying, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We do not know what he is talking about." (John 16:17-18)

Do you ever feel misunderstood? (Most people do at some point in their lives!)

Read John 16:17-18.

In our Luke 2 passage this week, we see that Jesus' parents had trouble understanding Him. This would be a MAJOR theme in His life. The crazy part is, when Jesus would 'confuse' people, it wasn't because He valued making them look foolish, or wanted to look like the most intelligent guy in the room. He always asked questions and told stories so that we could look deeper into our own minds, and ask ourselves, "What do I think about God? Am I right? Do I need to look closer and get to know Him more?"

For the rest of your devotional time, do a little investigation into John 16:16-24 and Luke 2:41-52. Try to discover what Jesus wanted each confused group to discover about themselves and their view of God.

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Devotion 4

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4)

We often forget that Jesus had a whole childhood filled with "Make sure you clean your plate, Jesus!" and "Don't forget to put your toys back where they go, Jesus!" (Well, it probably wasn't those exact phrases... but you get the point!)

Read Ephesians 6:1-4.

Scripture tells us that Jesus obeyed all of the laws given in the Old Testament (Matthew 5:17-20). That includes the command to honor one's parents found in Exodus 20:12.

Now, not every child has both parents, or even one parent. So you might think that Jesus' modeling obedience to our parents and the encouragement in Ephesians 6:1-4 isn't for you... But there is still a lot of wisdom when you look at the heart of these verses.

God is always faithful to put people in our lives who seek to bring us up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. It could be a parent, but it could also be a grandparent, a youth leader, or even a teacher at your school. Take a few moments to think of the people in your life who want to encourage you to grow closer to the Lord. How can you honor them today?

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And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. (Luke 4:16)

Today's passage is not about Jesus as a teenager. Instead, it is about His adult journey back to His hometown, a place you would think would be very receptive to Him. Today's verse is the beginning of the passage, and points out that Jesus had returned to Nazareth, where He grew up.

Read Luke 4:16-30.

Odds are, if you left your hometown to go become a doctor, or learn how to make the perfect pistachio ice cream, or even to become a famous movie star, everyone who knew you growing up would proudly welcome you back when you visited. In some cases, people you barely know might talk about how they "remember seeing you when you were only this tall."

So you would think that Jesus would have come back to Nazareth after leaving to become a great teacher, and His childhood friends would have been excited to welcome Him back. And when they found out He was the Messiah? You would expect them to have a big sign posted as you enter Nazareth, saying, "Welcome to Nazareth! Hometown of the Savior to the World." But that didn't happen. Instead, Jesus lived out the lot of a prophet who was not welcome in His hometown.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

- Why might it have been more difficult for people in Nazareth to accept Jesus?
- Does knowing someone when they grow up sometimes change how we see them as an adult? Do you feel like there are people in your life who only ever see you as a little kid?
- It's very possible that Jesus knew His hometown would respond the way they did. However, He still tried to share God's Word and His role with them. How can that inspire you to share God's Word?