

*Beulah Baptist Church*  
*Rev. Jerry D. Black, Pastor*

*Sunday School Lesson*  
*July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020*  
*Rev. Mark A. Seals, M.Div., Instructor/Teacher*

**Lesson: The Boy Jesus**      **Text: Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7; Luke 2:39–52**

**I. Aim for Change**

By the end of the lesson, we will: EXPLORE the account of Jesus' experience in the Temple at the age of twelve, SENSE the awe experienced by all those who witnessed Jesus' wisdom as well as Mary and Joseph's angst, and REJOICE in the opportunity to know the wisdom of God.

**Unifying Principle—Wisdom in Action.** Some young people amaze us with a wisdom that seems beyond their years. How should we respond to precocious wisdom? Ecclesiastes affirms that there is a time to speak and a time to be quiet, and Luke records that the teachers in the Temple were awed by the wisdom of twelve-year-old Jesus, but Mary and Joseph were confused and exasperated.

Key Verse— “*And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him*” (Luke 2:40, KJV).

**People Places and Times**

**Feast of Passover.** The Feast of Passover celebrates the Jews' passage from slavery to freedom and commemorates the occasion in which the death angel passed over the Hebrew households in Egypt (see Exodus 12–13). Jews are commanded to remember the night of their liberation by partaking of the Seder, a traditional meal with each item of food representing part of the liberation story. During biblical times, the seven-day celebration was held in Jerusalem and attendance by the entire family was required (see Exodus 23:14–17).

**II. Background**

The Gospel of Luke provides the most comprehensive picture of Jesus' ministry of all four of the Gospels, with about one-third of the material included only appearing in this account. Luke focuses on Jesus as the Son of Man, the promised Messiah. Beginning with the birth announcements of John the Baptist and Jesus, Luke provides multiple indicators of Jesus' divine nature, while revealing his true humanity.

**The Lesson At-A-Glance...**

1. A Time for Everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7)
2. The Family Returns Home (Luke 2:39–40)
3. Boy Jesus in the Temple (vv. 41–52)

### ***III. In Depth with More Light on the Text***

***Ecclesiastes 3:1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: v7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;***

In the case of young Jesus, He spoke before it was socially acceptable, but His words were the words of wisdom and truth that needed to be heard by those in the Temple.

***Luke 2:39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. 40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.***

The requirements of the Law of the Lord referred to were Jesus' circumcision and dedication as the firstborn male in the Temple in Jerusalem. During that trip to keep the covenant God made with Israel, Simeon, an elder, and Anna, a prophetess, both prophesied over Jesus that He was the Messiah that had been long awaited in Israel. But the second part of the verse gives another glimpse into Jesus' anointing and divinity: He was filled with wisdom and God's favor was on Him in a way that was recognizable even at a young age. Jesus was again affirmed as special from birth to childhood.

***41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.***

The feasts were part of the Jewish customs and practices. Celebrating the feasts was in fulfillment of the covenant God had with them. The Passover feast mentioned in this verse was the first of the three major annual festivals of the Jews; it was celebrated in Jerusalem in the month of Nisan (March–April), from the 14th to the 21st. The first day, the 14th, was the actual Passover feast, while the remaining days were called Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Passover commemorated the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage and the sparing of their firstborn when the destroying angel smote the firstborn of the Egyptians. The Greek word translated “Passover,” pascha (**PAS-khah**) in this verse, is used to refer to the meal, the day, the festival, or the special sacrifices connected with the Passover feast

***42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.***

***43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.***

The Greek word translated “custom” is ethos (**EH-thoce**); it signifies “usage prescribed by law; a manner, habit; a rite or ceremony.” The word translated “feast” is heorte (**hehor-TAY**); it means a “holy day.” Making the journey to Jerusalem, performing the special sacrifices, eating the Passover meal, and all that is done in observing the Passover had become a habit or rite prescribed by Law for the Jews. Those who traveled to Jerusalem from other towns, like Jesus and His parents, had to stay in Jerusalem during the period of the feast. This is what is meant by “they ... fulfilled the days.”

As the Son of God who came to fulfill God's will, Jesus' tarrying wasn't an act of His own will but of God's. There was a heavenly outpouring of spiritual virtue upon the boy Jesus at the age of twelve to reveal His divine nature. In the meantime, His parents didn't realize they left Him behind as they journeyed home.

***44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. 45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.***

In the course of the journey, assumption gave way to awareness. Mary and Joseph became aware that Jesus was not in the group after traveling an entire day. The Greek word for “company” (sunodia, **soo-no-DEE-ah**) denotes “companions on a journey” or a “company of travelers.” It was a significant distance between Nazareth and Jerusalem, and travel is safer in numbers. Since all Jews are expected to come to Jerusalem for the Passover, there must have been many families on the road. The holy family must have been traveling with a large “company” of “kinsfolk and acquaintance” and assumed Jesus was with someone else in their caravan as they set out.

***46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. 47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.***

The Greek word translated “doctors” (didaskalos, **dee-DASkah-loce**) signifies “instructor, teacher, or master.” These doctors were teachers of the Law who taught the Jewish religion; they were also called scribes, professional expositors of the laws of Judaism. The scribes underwent special training and had to pass rigid examinations before being officially recognized. They were highly respected within the Jewish community. These were the caliber of people with whom the boy Jesus was having an intellectual discussion at age twelve.

He was listening and “asking them” questions. The Greek word translated “asking” (eperotao, **eh-peh-row-TAH-oh**) signifies “to demand, inquire or desire” and suggests asking with some eagerness. The Greek word translated “answers” (apokrisis, **ah-POEkree-sees**), meaning “a response,” tells us that Jesus was also asked questions to which He gave responses. His answers, He revealed an understanding that astonished the doctors in the Temple.

***48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.***

The Greek word translated “amazed” (ekplesso, **ek-PLACE-so**) means “to be struck with astonishment.” This was how Jesus’ parents felt upon discovering Him in the temple. They didn’t expect to see Him in the temple with the teachers of the Law.

***49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? 50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.***

The Greek word translated “wist” (eido, **AY-do**) means “to know, to be aware,” hence “Wist ye not” can be translated, “Don’t you know?” or “Are you not aware?” Jesus’ response appears to admonish His parents that they should have known He would be somewhere on assignment for His Heavenly Father.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

***51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.***

In his reply to His mother in verse 49, He questioned her with His spiritual authority as the Christ, the Son of God, who came from heaven to fulfill God’s work on earth. But His full

awareness of the fact that He was human, a boy of twelve, and still under parental care, made Him conduct Himself in the most appropriate manner: He went back to Nazareth with His parents and became subject to them. The Greek word translated “subject” (hupotasso, **hoo-poe-TASS-so**) means “to submit oneself to, to obey or make oneself a subordinate.” He was still a child, Jesus complied with natural order by submitting Himself to the authority and protection of His parents. His mother became a repository of His sayings. The Greek word translated “kept” (diatereo, **dee-ah-tay**– REH-oh) signifies “to keep carefully, to observe strictly.”

***52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man***

As Jesus grew up, He increased in wisdom. The Greek word for “wisdom” (sophia, **so-FEE-ah**) is used in a broad sense to mean “human and spiritual wisdom.” Increasing in wisdom is an indication of spiritual development and growing in the Holy Spirit, for the wisdom of God is one of the principal manifestations of the Spirit in one’s life.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Liberating Lesson & Application for Activation—see Sunday School book**

Little attention is given to the subtle ways God intentionally showed Jesus’ parents in childhood, who he was destined to be. It appears that they knew it cognitively, but not experientially. In contrast to Anna, Simeon, and the shepherds who worshiped the Messiah, Mary and Joseph saw a child—their child. As a result, they seemed to underestimate and even get frustrated, when God’s power and leading were evident in His life. We sit in awe of a child who seems wiser than his age dictates but do not encourage his spiritual growth, neglecting to recognize that God works through and in children as well. We put God in a box, and when He does not “fit,” instead of adjusting our expectations, we get frustrated. In doing so, we miss the opportunity to marvel in God’s greatness and worship Him in response.

Mary and Joseph were living their lives when one day, God sent an angel and changed everything. While we will not have such a drastic experience as that, there has probably been some redirection in life. Spend time this week reflecting on how God has redirected your life. Consider your response to the change. Was it one of joy, worship, and obedience? In hindsight, what clarity do you now have?

**Vocabulary Words You Should Know...**

**A. Didactic**—designed or intended to teach people something, such as an attempt to teach what is proper or moral. (...didaskolos)

**B. Didache**—The Lord’s teaching through the Twelve Apostles to the Gentiles. The first genre of Church Orders, revealing how Jewish Christians saw themselves and how they adapted their practice for Gentile Christians.