

Luke Series #1

"The Boy In The Temple" - Luke 2:41-52

I. INTRODUCTION

A. RR [Prayer]

B. Apocryphal Gospels

1. Luke the only one who fills in the 30 year gap between Jesus' birth and the beginning of His public ministry
2. Besides what we read here, nothing about His childhood, teen years, early adult years
3. When such a vacuum exists, someone will make up something
4. And so there has come down to us several other books and writings about the life of Christ that supposedly account for what are called, "The Lost Years Of Jesus."
5. One of them, called *The Gospel of Thomas* gives us several stories from the time of Jesus' childhood
6. We read that Jesus wanted to give some of His friends a special gift; so he fashioned little sparrows out of clay, and then made them come to life
7. He healed the injured, raised the dead, cursed His enemies so that they died, and played the consummate smart alec to His teachers because of His superior knowledge
8. These other gospels did not make it into the Bible because the Early Church Fathers applied very strict tests for the books they allowed into the canon of scripture, and these did not pass the tests of inspiration

C. Only Luke

1. Only Luke gives us a glimpse of the childhood of Jesus
2. And what we find here is highly enlightening
3. It speaks to us about our relationship with God and with others . . .

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 41

41 His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

1. In the Law given by Moses, it was commanded that all Jewish men were to attend 3 annual feasts at the Temple; Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles
2. But by the time we get to the life of Jesus, some 1400 years have passed and the law of God had been modified and re-worked by the rabbis

- a. they knew how hard it was for Jews living all over the world to travel such long distances 3 times a year
 - b. so they said they only had to come to one feast - Passover
 - c. then, they narrowed it even more
 - d. they said that only men living within 15 miles of the temple had to come to Passover
 - e. if a man lived more than 15 miles from Jerusalem, they only had to make the trip once in their lifetime!
3. It's interesting to see how the Word of God changes over time
- a. well really, God's Word doesn't change
 - b. only its interpretation changes
 - c. people bend and twist the Bible to fit their desires
 - d. like a nose on a wax statue, they bend and shape it to fit their particular liking
 - e. ex.: discussion with friend about smoking marijuana
 - knew just enough bible to be dangerous
 - said that bible says we're not to get drunk with wine = narrowly defined that as alcohol [Eph. 5:18]
 - but in Genesis, God gave all green herbs for man for food = widened that to mean smoking, snorting, eating, or as he and his friends called it, any way of "partaking" [Gen 1:29]
4. It's one thing when the unsaved knowingly distort God's word, but it is all together abominable when those who claim the name of Christ do it
- a. the history of the church is filled with examples of how priests, pastors, and other leaders have bent the word of God to fit the convince of their audience
 - b. I have met men who were fired from the pastorate because the would not short sell the gospel
 - what they said offended their congregations or denominational overseers
 - so they were booted
 - men were put in to replace them who would do what was required of them, not by the Word of God, but by man
5. We must ever make sure that we are not bending the Word of God to our convenience and ease
6. I am going to say something and I hope it is not misunderstood :
- a. What we need is less INTERPRETATION and more INVESTIGATION and APPLICATION
 - b. sometimes I think we substitute Bible *Study* for Bible *Application*
 - c. in Acts we read that the first Christians met in the temple for the teaching of the Apostles and then went to their homes where they gathered for fellowship and mutual ministry
 - d. If we look at the sermons in Acts, they were simple affairs in which

- e. there doesn't appear to be long sermons developed on this or that text of scripture
 - f. rather the word was proclaimed, the people gathered in small groups, and encouraged each other to faithfulness
 - g. this method of doing church was so successful, they known world was covered with Christianity in 150 years
 - h. here we are, 1800 years later, and we still have not significantly extended the frontiers of the gospel beyond that point
 - i. what went wrong? We have bent the scriptures to our liking rather than simply obeying what we read
7. Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, over 60 miles away
- a. despite what that rabbis taught, they knew what God's word said
 - b. so they made the annual trip to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover
- B. V. 42

42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.

1. We don't know if this was Jesus' first trip to Jerusalem, or if he had gone before
2. Travel in those days was difficult and dangerous
 - a. went by foot
 - b. in a large group, due to robbers
 - c. men from an entire village would go together
 - d. for people from Nazareth, it would take 4 to 5 days
 - e. because of the difficulty and danger, often left kids at home with aged parents and women who were not going to the feast
3. But at the age of 13, Jewish boys became men
 - a. the time of their "*Bar Mitzvah*"
 - b. they became a "*son of the law*"
 - c. this passage into manhood marked a new phase of life and was a time of great celebration and rejoicing in Jewish social life
 - d. when Jesus turned 13, He would *have* to attend the feast of Passover in Jerusalem,
 - e. so his parents bring Him along on this trip so that the one next year will not be so foreign to Him.
4. At the age of six, Jesus would have joined the other boys of Nazareth at the local school, called "*the house of the book*"
 - a. sat in a semicircle on the floor, facing a teacher
 - b. a married man of good reputation, paid by the synagogue
 - c. lessons written on wooden tablet or floor; memorized and repeated
 - d. all lessons drawn from the law, prophets, and Psalms = OT
 - e. at 10, began to learn the rest of the Jewish traditions; teachings of

their greatest rabbis

- f. at age 15, if a youngster showed great potential, was sent to Jerusalem to sit at the feet of the scholars and scribes
- g. this *higher education* was called the “*house of study*” and corresponds to our college or university

C. Vs. 43-45

43 When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it;

44 but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day’s journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

45 So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

1. These verse create two reactions in me; seem almost contradictory
 - a. one, makes me chuckle
 - b. how like every family = lose one of the kids!
 - c. other emotion = terror!
 - d. I am a parent; and I know what it is like to lose a child
 - e. years ago at Mervyns at Centerpoint Mall; lost Luke,
 - found him later in the toy department;
 - lost for a good ten minutes
 - utterly terrified! frantic, ready to scream, absolutely most desperate I have ever been
2. I can sympathize with Mary and Joseph as they realize they have lost Jesus
3. How could this happen? Were they careless and abusive parents? Hardly!
4. What happened was this . . .
 - a. Jesus at that transition age between childhood and manhood
 - b. up to this point, had hung with the women
 - c. as a man, expected to stick with the guys
 - d. but at 12, in the gray area between the two
 - e. so Mary thought he was with Joe and Joe thought He was with Mary
 - f. they don’t discover the problem until they get a full day’s journey from Jerusalem
 - g. then, probably at dinner, they discover the truth
5. So they begin backtracking, and end up all the way back at Jerusalem

D. Vs. 46-47

46 Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

1. The three days mentioned here does not mean they looked for him for three days IN JERUSALEM
2. It means from the time they left Jerusalem.
 - a. traveled for a day before they realized He wasn't with them
 - b. took them a day to get back to Jerusalem
 - c. then, on the third day, they found Him
3. And notice where they found Him . . .
 - a. in the temple, sitting among the teachers
 - b. the only place where a group of teachers would be gathered would have been in the House of Study, the Jewish College that was a part of the Temple grounds

47 And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

4. Can you picture this?
 - a. here is this little tyke, not even Bar Mitzvahed yet
 - b. and he is amazing the scholars with His grasp of the things of God
 - c. both His questions and His answers reveal a depth of wisdom well beyond His years
 - d. he has been a good and diligent student back home at Nazareth and now that he is at the Temple in Jerusalem, the Center of Jewish thought and wisdom, He poses some questions that leave His hearers speechless
5. History has seen numerous child prodigies
 - a. Music: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart -
 - greatest musical prodigy who ever lived
 - at 4, a virtuoso on the piano, playing long and complex musical compositions from memory
 - composing minuets at 5 and symphonies at 9, and first opera at 12
 - at 6, became a virtuoso on violin as well
 - b. Science & Math: Blaise Pascal
 - a prodigy in mathematics
 - at age 12 had mastered Euclid's geometry and many subtle and obscure theorems of mathematics
 - invented the first calculating machine, the hydraulic press and the syringe = all in his 20's
 - c. Chess: Bobby Fischer
 - an international grand master in chess by the age of 15

- d. Religion: Elijah ben Solomon
 - 18th Century, Lithuania
 - memorized the bible by the time he was 8
 - Talmud by 9
6. But no prodigy born among the children of men amazed the adults more than Jesus
- a. the word Luke uses to describe their reaction was that they were “*astonished*”
 - b. Greek = *existemi*
 - literally = to stand besides one’s self
 - translated as “amazed, astonished, insane”
 - modern translation = “they were blown away,” or “They were trippin’ out”

E. Vs. 48-50

48 So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.”

1. When Mary and Joseph found them, I wonder if they ran in and interrupted the discussion with the teachers
2. These men were the very elite of Jewish social life and I don’t find it at all unlikely that when Joe and Mary found Jesus, they stood quietly on the sidelines until a lull came in the conversation
3. Then, Mary pushed forward and asked her son these tender words = “Son, why have You done this to us?”
 - a. why have you put us through such agony?
 - b. did you not stop to think about how concerned we would be about you?
 - c. we have been consumed with grief, looking frantically for you everywhere
4. Jesus’ response may sound to us to be a bit lacking in respect, but that is only in the translation
5. Actually it was both a respectful and true response

49 And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”

50 But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

6. There was no need to look for Him; they should have known that if He was not with them, He would be busy with the things of His Father

7. And here is where we see for the first time that Jesus understood His true identity
8. Mary had said, “Your father and I have sought You anxiously.”
9. Jesus replied, “I must be about My Father’s business.”
 - a. Joseph was not Jesus’ real father
 - b. God was His Father
 - c. and now that He is becoming a man and a son of the law, He must move his loyalty and submission from his earthly parents to His Father in heaven
10. It is v. 49 that makes me believe this was Jesus’ first trip to Jerusalem
 - a. he had been attending the school in Nazareth for 6 years
 - b. had been steeped in the traditions of the Jews
 - c. had quizzed his teachers at home beyond their ability to answer
 - d. now that He is in Jerusalem, the capital of Jewish thought, He thinks to get His questions answered
 - e. when His parents begin the return trip, He’s not finished with the list of questions he brought from Nazareth, so He stays behind, grilling the rabbis with his inquiries
11. Jesus saw huge inconsistencies between the word of God and the practice of His people
 - a. no doubt He was asking the authorities why
 - b. and as they tried to formulate answers, they came to see how far they had strayed from the word of God
12. We must ever be on guard against letting our traditions cloud the simple meaning of the Word of God
 - a. we must never be afraid of asking the question why we do what we do
 - b. there is nothing inherently wrong with traditions
 - c. what is wrong is when they become convenient ways to avoid being obedient to God
13. One more thing before we move on: I am stuck by the strength and determination of Jesus’ words here.
 - a. “Did you not know that I **MUST** be about My Father’s business?”
 - b. how many 12 year olds do you know who can speak with such certainty and determination about the direction of their lives?
 - c. how many people, PERIOD do you know who can speak with such certainty?
 - d. Jesus knew who He was and what He was about!
 - e. and that was the priority of putting first the things of the kingdom of God
14. That same priority is ours
 - a. Mat 6:33 “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”

- b. this is the “Must” of our lives
 - c. this is the “must” that compels us
15. Jesus told Mary it was no surprise where He could be found because He must be about His Father’s business
 16. Does that same “must” determine where we go, where we can be found?
 17. We too, no matter where we are or what we are doing should be able to say, “I am here, doing this, because I must be about my Father’s business.”

F. Vs. 51-52

51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

1. Being about the Father’s business did not preclude Him from living obediently in the home of Joseph and Mary.
2. The Man who was God obeyed a flawed mother and foster dad
3. Here is a mystery that transcends our understanding
4. But is also leaves us a worthy example
5. If Jesus, who was perfect, submitted himself completely to imperfect parents, how much more ought and must we submit our imperfect selves to our perfect heavenly Father?

III. CONCLUSION

A. What “Must” Governs Your Life?

1. Want to conclude today by asking this question . . .
2. What is the driving force of your life?
3. What is the “Must” that focuses your decisions and affects your choices?
4. The answer to that question reveals what God you are serving, and so, your eternal destiny