



**The DAILY JESUS NEWS #023**  
**Jesus' 30 Years of Preparation for Ministry**

**Jesus Communes With His Father in the Temple in Jerusalem**  
**LK 2.41-52)**

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41 Every year, Jesus' parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. 42 When Jesus was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to their custom.

43 After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Assuming that he was in their group of travelers, they journeyed on for a day. Then, they began looking for him among their relatives and friends, 45 and because they did not find him, they headed back to Jerusalem to continue searching for him.

46 After three days, they found him in the temple courts, sitting in the midst of the teachers, continuing to listen to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was in a state of amazement at his understanding and his answers.

48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

49 *"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Did you not know that I had to be focused on my Father's interests?"*

50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them. 51 Then, he went down to Nazareth with them and was continually obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus continued growing in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus.*

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	Egypt and Nazareth
Time	About Three Years After Jesus' Birth
Stage of Jesus' Life	Stage II: His 30 Years of Preparation for Ministry
Chapter 4	The Infancy and Growth of Jesus

Luke used just one incident in Jesus' 30 years of preparation to represent his growth into maturity over the entire period. It summarizes the most important things we need to know about Jesus during his years of development and preparation for Messianic ministry.

At the age of twelve, Jesus was considered an adult under the law. While we consider a twelve year old to be a child today, far from adult status, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century they were seen as young adults. Twelve year olds were of marriageable age, and most were married by fourteen or fifteen. Thus, Luke chose to feature the scene in Jesus' growth years that shows us both his youth, and his mind-set as an adult.

Jesus had waited his whole life for this trip to Jerusalem. He could finally enter into the inner court of the Temple that was reserved for circumcised, adult males. He was overjoyed to be able to fellowship in his Father's Word with those who loved and knew it best, while communing with him in the place dedicated to his presence.

The altar of sacrifice and laver for washing were located in the inner court of the Temple. It had to have been a shattering experience for Jesus to see the Passover Lamb, and a host of other sacrifices presented on the altar for the first time in his life during this Passover. They spoke to him of his own death as the Lamb of God some 21 years in the future in a powerful way. This makes his concentration on the Father's interests during these days that much more remarkable and inspiring to behold.

The leading Bible teachers and scholars of the land were shocked by Jesus' knowledge of the Word, and his Father-God. The text makes it clear that Jesus was not only answering their questions, he was also making his own queries as a way of teaching them, in the "Socratic method." Teaching by questioning was an established technique in the first century, and that was what Jesus was doing in the Temple. No wonder that everyone who heard him was amazed by his understanding. He was feasting on the fellowship of the Word, even as he led the discussion.

The moment by moment communion of heart, mind, and spirit that Jesus always treasured with His Father and the Spirit took on fresh power and satisfaction for him, as he soaked in the God-centeredness of everything that was said and done in the Temple. He didn't want to miss a thing. Jesus was "*consumed with zeal for his Father's house,*" (Ps.69.9) as was later said of him when he first cleansed this same Temple (Jn 2.13-17)

We see that consciousness of his Father's presence, love of his Word, and passionate concern for his interests in this world were paramount in Jesus' mind and heart at age twelve. This was so much a given for him that he assumed his earthly parents would know exactly where he was, and what he would be doing. There was no disobedience or rebelliousness in Jesus' heart when he stayed in the Temple.

After searching for Jesus for three days and coming up empty, his parents probably went to the Temple to pray and offer a sacrifice in hopes of receiving God's help in finding him. As much as Mary and Joseph were shocked to find Jesus at the center of the lively fellowship of the leading Bible scholars of Israel, Jesus was equally amazed that Joseph and Mary could be so ignorant of his own passion for his heavenly Father's interests.

***"Why were you searching for me?" Didn't you know that I had to be focused on my Father's interests?"***

These are the first spoken words of Jesus' earthly life that are in Scripture. They define his life-focus: his relationship with his Father and identity as his eternal Son. Jesus used the Greek verb that indicates necessity in this statement. "*I had to be...*" His focus on his Father's interests was necessary because he loved him with all of his heart, mind, soul and strength--not because it was a religious rule, or a cultural

expectation. Jesus was totally "Father-centered" in his whole being. It should have been a "no brainer" for them to find him in the Temple. Where else could he possibly want to be?

As the Psalmist had written long ago: *"A day in the your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere."* Ps. 84.10A (see all of Ps. 84)

Luke added another statement of Jesus' continual growth in all areas at the conclusion of this scene. This described his advance into perfect maturity over the next 18 years of his life.

*"And Jesus kept on growing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."* (2.52)

The next time we see Jesus it will be in the ministry phase of his life, and we will see an increased consciousness of his Father's presence, love of his Word, and passionate commitment to his Father's interests abounding in him. Jesus never stopped growing in any aspect of his life. He is our example in this. Neither should we.

#### APPLICATION:

Just as Jesus was Father-centered, we should be Christ-centered in our whole being. Sadly, we are all too easily distracted. Paul wrote to the Philippians:

*"For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ."* (3.21)

*Whose interests dominate your mind and heart?*

*How fully do Jesus' interests command your own desires?*

*What does Jesus' example say to you about the priorities of your own life?*