

Jesus at the Temple

📖 Luke 2:36-52

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Last week in Luke 2:21-35 we saw the presentation and naming of Jesus in the Temple compound preceded by Simeon's providential viewing of the Messiah before his death, the results of which astonished Joseph and Mary. We didn't get to finish the section, since it closes with another figure, Anna, a prophetess. So after we review these verses we'll add the verses about Anna. Beginning in verse 21, on the eighth day of the Child's life He was circumcised and named Jesus. This was the name the angel revealed to Mary before the conception and to Joseph after the conception. The name in Hebrew is Yeshua and means "YHWH is salvation." In verse 22, when the forty days for Mary's purification according to the law of Moses was completed, they brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. As they came into either the court of the Gentiles or the court of the women, verse 25 says that there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout in his following of the law of Moses and he was looking for the consolation of Israel. That is, he was looking for the Messiah to come and establish Israel's kingdom rest. And note is made that the Holy Spirit was upon Him. In verse 26 it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. And so in verse 27 it says that the Spirit led him into the Temple compound at the exact time that Mary and Joseph were coming into the Temple compound. And when he saw the parents bringing the Child the Spirit revealed to him that it was the Messiah. In verse 28 he took Him into his arms and praised God with the *Nunc Dimittis*, the Latin words that begin verse 29, "Now You are releasing..." What the Lord was releasing was Simeon, the Lord's bondservant from this life, so that he could depart in peace. Verse 30 explains his peace, for my eyes have seen God's salvation, that is, the Messiah. In verse 31, he says this salvation was prepared by the promises and prophecies throughout the history of Israel, now culminating in the presence of all peoples, both Jew and Gentile. And in verse 32 the Messiah would be a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and more than that, the glory of God's people Israel, since they will be chief among all nations in the Messiah's kingdom. In response to this in verse 33 his mother and father were amazed at all the things that were being said about Him. In verse 34 Simeon blessed both of them. He then turned to Mary and revealed that the Child would be appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel. In other words, Messiah would be a point of division, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. And further, to Mary, verse 35, she would have a large, broad, double edged sword pierce her own soul. The reason would be Jesus' divisive ministry that ultimately resulted in His violent

death. That would be difficult for a mother to watch. And lastly verse 35 says that the end result of His ministry would be that many hearts would be revealed. Some would have soft hearts, they would rise, others would have hard hearts, they would fall. Jesus is a point of division.

Immediately after this, still in the Temple compound, verse 36 says **And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.** Luke's mention of a woman alongside a man attesting to Jesus' Messiahship is in keeping with his purpose of showing that Jesus came for all levels of society; social outcasts, the downtrodden, those considered by ancient cultures as less than men, like women and children. Jesus came for them all. Luke mentions women far more prominently in both Luke and Acts than either Matthew or Mark do even combined. And the point he is making is that Messiah came for all people; salvation is a universal offer. He came to save the whole world.

Now this woman was named **Anna**, which in the Greek is "Avva, and akin to our "Hannah," which is a Hebrew word for "grace." She is said to have been **a prophetess.** A **prophetess** is a female prophet. And while **prophetesses** are not as common in Scripture as their male counterparts, the prophets, they are present. Examples from the OT include Miriam in Exod 15:20, Deborah in Judg 4:4 and Huldah in 2 Ki 22:14. Examples from the NT are Philip's four daughters in Acts 21:9 and, of course, Anna. What's interesting about her presence at this time is that it is usually stated that there was no prophet from Malachi until John the Baptist. Yet, so far in Luke we have seen Zachariah prophesy, Elizabeth prophesy, Simeon prophesy and now Anna, an equal number of men and women, and all four came before John. Now this Anna is said to have been **the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.** We know nothing of the father **Phanuel.** But we do know that the **tribe of Asher** is considered one of the ten lost tribes. But Anna was not lost even though she was from a tribe that many consider lost. The idea that ten of the tribes are lost is nothing more than a myth. After the Babylonian exile members from all twelve tribes returned to the land. **Anna** is a descendant of members of the tribe of Asher that returned to the land. We're also told in verse 36 that **She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four.** The question is how old was she? The meaning in the NASB translation is that she was 84 years old when she saw the Messiah in the temple. That would mean the figure of 84 years is giving her full age. However, the Greek indicates something different. It literally says, "she was advanced in many days, living with her husband seven years from her virginity, and she was a widow until the end of eighty-four years." The phrase "advanced in many days" is a phrase indicating extreme age. The mention of her "living with her husband seven years from her virginity" indicates we are to add the years of her virginity to the years of her marriage and then the years of her widowhood to calculate her approximate age. We don't know the number of years she was a virgin, but most Jewish girls married from 12-15 years of age. Let's just say she was a virgin until she was 14 years old, then married for seven years, and then a widow for 84 years. That would make **Anna** was 105 years old. While that seems too long, that length of life is was not unprecedented. Fruchtenbaum said, "A. T. Robertson, the foremost Greek scholar of his day, used the English Revised Version (ERV) of 1881 as the biblical text for his harmony The

ERV translates Luke 2:37 as, *and she had been a widow even four-score and eighty-four years*; in other words, Anna had been married seven years and a widow for eighty-four years. The Greek New Testament allows for this rendering... This author bases his calculation of Anna's age on A. T. Robertson's work.¹ So she was about 105 years old. And the significance of her being a widow for so many years is that she served in the Temple for 84 years showing her devotion to the Lord. Bock said, "Anna was a woman who chose a lifetime of service to God over remarriage, an action that was highly regarded in the first-century religious community (1 Tim. 5:5...)." ²

Verse 37 says that during those **eighty-four** years as a **widow**, **She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers**. So probably from the age of 21 until 105 she had **never left the temple**, a period of 84 years. The language **never left the temple** should not be pushed to indicate she lived in the Temple compound, since the doors were closed every night and there was no place for her to stay there. But the language is hyperbole, indicating extreme devotion to God and the things of God. She **served** there **night and day with fastings and prayers**, all expressions of extreme devotion and single focus on God.

And while serving at the Temple that day, verse 38 says, **At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Israel**. Pentecost thought that she overheard Simeon. He said, "The prophecy of Simeon was heard by the prophetess Anna... When she heard Simeon speak, her spirit rejoiced because the One for whom she had been waiting had come."³ And the first thing she did was **begin giving thanks to God**. The verb **giving thanks** is in the imperfect tense, meaning ongoing action in past time. The word **began** is added by the translators to indicate an inceptive imperfect, emphasizing the beginning of her giving thanks, which is probably correct. She immediately began to give thanks to God for Messiah. The second thing she did was **continue to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem**. The verb **continue to speak** is also an imperfect, and probably an accurate reflection of the event. She continued for some time **speaking of** the Child. Her audience was the remnant of Israel that were in the Temple compound, another indication that there were more Jewish believers who did not follow the false teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees. And these were all **looking for the redemption of Jerusalem**. Note it does not say Israel, but **Jerusalem**. The reason for this is that **Jerusalem** is the eternal capital of Israel and therefore represents all Israel. Messiah is the one who will redeem all Israel. So what Anna and this remnant were looking for is the same thing Simeon was looking for, the consolation of Israel, the equivalent of the redemption of Israel. Pentecost said, "From the mouths of these two witnesses the nation Israel heard of the arrival of the Messiah."⁴ So here's the two witnesses you never hear much about, Simeon and Anna, and they both testified of the Messiah's presence in the Temple.

Now once Anna had said these things to the believing remnant, we have to go back to verse 22 in the chronology. It was at that time that Joseph and Mary were able to complete their task of taking the baby to the east gate to present Him before the Lord. The priest would meet them there and receive either the pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons as a sacrifice for their purification and the dedication of Jesus, their firstborn,

as it is written in the Law. But as far as we can tell they did not pay the redemption price, such that He truly belonged to the Lord. This sets up the next great event twelve years later. And there were no other events during those silent years that were Christologically significant, and so the Scriptures report nothing unusual. But what happens here is unusual.

Verses 39-40 are transitional. And **When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord.** The emphasis is on Joseph and Mary's obedience to **the Law.** They lived under the **Law** given by **the Lord** at Mt Sinai, it was their rule of life. They were careful to perform every detail of the **law.** Afterwards **they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.** Now in between this verse Matthew gives the account of the wise men who saw His star. That's Matthew 2. And in that passage the wise men recognized His star in the east and so they traveled west to find the King of the Jews. And when they arrived in Jerusalem there was a big fuss and they came to Herod trying to locate the child King. And Herod wanted to kill the rival so he sent out his soldiers to slay all baby boys in Bethlehem two years old and younger. But an angel warned Joseph in a dream and they escaped to Egypt. After Herod died an angel revealed it was time for Joseph and Mary to return. It was the summer of 4BC when they returned, not to Bethlehem, but verse 39, **to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.** And their return to Nazareth will set up the fulfillment of the prophecy that Messiah "shall be called a Nazarene," a term which means "despised." As Nathaniel indicated later, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" The implied answer is, "No," but his brother said, "Come and see." Fruchtenbaum noted, "Galileans looked down on those among them who came from Nazareth. Nazareth was a town of ill repute. Since it was a Roman garrison, Jews who lived there were viewed as traitors."⁵ Thus, Messiah would be raised in a place that was viewed as traitorous. And Jesus was later considered a traitor.

In verse 40 Luke telescopes the first twelve years of Jesus' life into a single verse, saying, **The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.** The words **grow and become strong** are both imperfect tenses. The first relates to His physical growth. He continually grew physically. The word **become strong** relates to spiritual growth. He continually grew spiritually. One of Luke's major purposes is to demonstrate that Jesus is a true human. He does this by showing that He had a true human birth, a true human physical growth and a true human spiritual growth. Jesus was a true human. It may surprise many that the Lord Jesus Christ had to grow spiritually, but He was not just deity, He was also humanity. He had two natures and the two natures do not mix, but together they constitute His one Person. And it was not in His divine nature that He had to grow spiritually, but in His human nature. In His human nature He had to learn the Scriptures. Isaiah 50:4-9 predicted that His primary teacher would be the Father. Fruchtenbaum said, "While in His deity, He is omniscient, in His humanity He had to undergo the same type of learning experience that all humans have to undergo. In His humanity, He simply did not know everything. He needed to grow up and to be trained. God the Father did that by waking Him up morning by morning to train Him in matters concerning His person, His message and His work...." This was not the only means of His education; His father and mother as well as synagogue would also be involved. But His primary education would take place through the Father's

personal teaching. And He grew spiritually and He became **strong**. That this was a process is indicated by the phrase, **increasing in wisdom**, which in the Greek is the present passive participle, “being filled with wisdom.” He was being filled up with wisdom over time by His Father who woke Him each morning to prepare Him for His Messianic ministry. And **the grace of God was upon Him**. **Grace** here refers to “special favor.” The special favor of the Father rested on Him. The result is that He grew, especially in respect to **wisdom**.

So, verse 40 is all we know about His childhood from age three or four until 12. The apocryphal writings contain many fanciful stories about Jesus in this period, they recount how He did miracles and such,⁶ but the Scriptures are silent and report only that He underwent both physical and spiritual development as a human in order to impress upon us that He had a true human nature. Ultimately, Fruchtenbaum noted that the result was His messianic consciousness, “As a result of this training by God the Father, at the age of 12 Yeshua knew exactly who He was: the Son of God. He also knew the Scriptures so well that He was able to debate them with the scholars in the Temple compound.”⁷ To that event we now turn.

Verse 41, **Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of Passover**. The Law of Moses required Jewish males to go up **to Jerusalem** three times a year; for Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. It was not required that women go up for these feasts. But the text indicates that they both went up **every year**. The meaning is that Joseph and Mary were particularly devoted. They did more than the law of Moses required. The **Feast of Passover** was celebrated every Spring on Nisan 14, which is around our March-April. It was instituted to remember God’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt at the Exodus and it was connected with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The journey for Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Jerusalem was 80 miles. Since the roads were often exploited by highway robbers they would travel in a caravan. These caravans included people from their town as well as the surrounding towns, so they were quite large. And they could cover about 20 miles per day, so the journey would take about four days.

In verse 42 **And when He became twelve they went up there according to the custom of the Feast**. It is not perfectly clear whether Jesus went up with them in previous years. All that we can say for certain is that Joseph and Mary went up **every year at the Feast of Passover** and the year that Jesus **became twelve they** took Him with them **according to the custom of the Feast**. Now it is often thought that they took Jesus up this year for His Bar-Mitzvah. The Bar-Mitzvah is the celebration of the boy coming of age. The words Bar-Mitzvah mean “son of the commandment.” It indicated they were responsible for keeping the commandments of the Law of Moses from that day forward. However, there are two reasons Jesus did not go up to Jerusalem at age twelve for His Bar-Mitzvah. First, the Bar-Mitzvah was for boys age thirteen, not twelve. Jesus was not coming a year early. Second, the tradition of the Bar-Mitzvah did not begin until after the time of Christ. So there is no way Joseph and Mary took Jesus up for His Bar-Mitzvah. Why then did they take Him up? Edersheim said, “...the legal age for this was not twelve, but thirteen (*Ab. v. 21*)...the Rabbinical law enjoined (*Yoma, 82 a*) that even before that—two years, or at least one year—lads should be brought up to the Temple, and made to observe the festive rites.

Unquestionably, it was in conformity with this universal custom that Jesus went on the occasion named to the Temple." So He was taken up to start observing the festive rights, to become accustomed to them.

In verse 43, the days they spent there are skipped over as it says, **and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.** It's difficult to say exactly how many days they spent **in Jerusalem.** Some argue that it was common for people to stay for the two holy days; the day of Passover and then the first day of Unleavened Bread, on which travel was not permitted, such that Joseph and Mary left on the third day. However, others argue that the expression **after spending the full number of days** indicates that they stayed for the Feast of Passover and the entire Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was seven days. If so that would show the devotion of Joseph and Mary even more strongly. In my estimation, whenever the caravan returned, they returned, and when exactly is unclear. What is clear is that they fulfilled the requirements of the law on this journey. But **as they were returning** to Nazareth the note is made that **the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.**

But verse 43 says **His parents were unaware of it, but supposed Him to be in the caravan.** It's at this point that many people criticize Joseph and Mary for being negligent in not making sure Jesus was with them **in the caravan.** However, the nature of travel in those days was not like it is in our day. It was normal for husbands and wives to travel separately during the day and for the children to join up and travel separate from the parents. With many relatives and neighbors and others traveling together, it was a good supposition that Jesus was among them. So the fact that Jesus was left behind, unbeknownst to his parents is not a sign of negligence, and clearly Joseph and Mary were not concerned about it. They made a normal supposition, but they were mistaken this time.

Verse 44 says they **went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.** It took a whole day before they began looking for Him. The reason is because the caravan would come together at the end of each day's travel and each family would find one another and sleep together for the night. It was only that the boy Jesus didn't show up so they **began looking for Him.** The verb **looking** is from αναζητεω and is used of looking for a criminal or runaway slave. It therefore refers to an intense search. They began their intense search for Him **among relatives and acquaintances,** the most logical place.

But verse 45 notes that **When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him.** The participle **find** and the verb **returned** are both aorist and indicate a quick decision. When they did not find Him they decided immediately to return to **Jerusalem.** The participle **looking** indicates the passage of time as they anxiously searched for their Child when they arrived.

In verse 46 **Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers.** Now as for the amount of time that passed, some think the three days are the entire time between their leaving Jerusalem and their returning and finding Him. In that reckoning, the first day was they day they traveled away

from Jerusalem, the second day was the return to Jerusalem and the third day they found Him. But again the text seems to read otherwise. It seems they traveled away for one day, returned one day, and looked for Him for three days in Jerusalem before they found Him. Just think then, as a parent, it had been five days. Fruchtenbaum agreed saying, "...it took them three days of searching around Jerusalem before they found their son in the Temple area."⁸

Now after **they found Him** it says He was **sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening and asking them questions**. The word used of **teachers** is not the customary term used for a lawyer, νομικός, or a scribe, γραμματεὺς, but simply a teacher, διδασκαλός, a word usually reserved for Jesus, but used once of John the Baptist. The term is a neutral one. To understand their status as teachers one has to understand the Jewish education system. According to Jewish education, most children would begin reading Scripture at age six or seven, and only if one was strong and healthy would they begin at age five. The starting point was not Genesis but Leviticus. This was because Leviticus deals with purity and the children were viewed in a state of purity at such a young age and in need of remaining in purity. Most families had only one of the twenty Hebrew scrolls in the home, so the chief means of learning became memorization. Even the youngest students studied seven days a week. On the Sabbath day they did not receive new material but spent time memorizing what they had learned the previous week. Because of this method, over time they memorized large portions of Scripture. Attesting to this, when Jerome went to Bethlehem after the time of Christ to learn Hebrew, he said, "There doesn't exist any Jewish child who doesn't know by heart the history from Adam to Zerubbabel [i.e., from the beginning to the end of the Bible]." This would go on till they were twelve. At age twelve their formal education would end and they would begin apprenticing for work and helping around the home with the agricultural chores. The few who continued their education would do so at the *bet midrash* with adults who studied in their spare time. The *bet midrash* was the house of commentary, it was like a school. And the most outstanding students at the *bet midrash* would eventually leave home and study under a famous rabbi. That would be someone like Paul. The **teachers** in the temple that day were like the teachers of Paul. They were rabbis with many years. The Mishnah states, "He used to say: five years [is the age] for [the study of] scripture, ten — for [the study of] Mishnah, thirteen — for [becoming subject to] commandments, fifteen — for [the study of] Talmud, eighteen — for the [bridal] canopy, twenty — for pursuing, thirty — for [full] strength, forty — for understanding, fifty — for [ability to give] counsel, sixty — for mature age, seventy — for a hoary head, eighty [is a sign of superadded] strength, ninety [is the age] for [a] bending [figure]..." These would have been rabbi's in their sixties, seventies and eighties who had spent a lifetime studying and teaching. And here's Jesus, twelve years old, **sitting in the midst of them**. Now it is often claimed that He silenced these teachers or He became their teacher. And these things are included in apocryphal or legendary accounts of this event.⁹ But the biblical text simply says He was **listening and asking questions**. In other words, at this time He was taking the place of a learner. Bock said, "The custom in Judaism was that pupils entered into the question-and-answer dialogue with their mentors." Jesus respectfully listened and asked questions in the format of that day. By **listening** to them

Jesus was hearing their deep theological discussions. And, as verse 47 says, He was **understanding** them. He was also **asking them questions**. And the teachers realized in verse 47 that the questions He was asking were not the kinds of questions twelve-year-old's ask.

So, **all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers**. He both asked very intelligent questions and He was also able to answer their very hard questions. And they knew this was not possible for a twelve year old under the Jewish education system. If they had remembered what Isaiah wrote, they would have known that this was the Messiah. For Isaiah 50:4 says of Messiah, "He [the Father] awakens Me [Messiah] morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple. The Lord God has opened My ear;" They should have known who He was. Fruchtenbaum noted, "They were amazed at this because He was only 12 years old, and they knew He could not have learned all this from the Nazareth school system. This shows the results of His individual training by God the Father."¹⁰

Now, remember that while all this was going on His parents were looking for Him for three days in Jerusalem. So He had been doing this for three days. In verse 48, **when they saw Him, they were astonished**; The term **astonished** means "amazed." They were amazed that He was sitting with the teachers engaging in discussion, but they were all relieved. As the end of the verse indicates, they were anxious. **And His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You."** Fruchtenbaum said, "Miriam used an approach that is somewhat typical for Jewish mothers. She tried to give Yeshua a guilt trip" "Son, why have you done this to us?" One has to be sympathetic with her: She was the only Jewish mother who ever really did have a perfect child! Now and then, she forgot who He was, as she did here, and scolded Him."¹¹ But it's her question that prepares the way for Jesus' first recorded words in Scripture.

Verse 49, **And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"** These are the words that some think are disrespectful. But, as mentioned last week, when Jesus was taken to the Temple, as far as we can tell He was not redeemed by the payment of five shekels of silver. Therefore, He really did belong to the Father and only to Joseph and Mary secondarily. And the first question, **"Why is it that you were looking for Me?"** infers that they should have known where He was. If they knew who He was they would know where He was. The second question, **"Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"** tells them who He was. He was the Son of God. Now, they evidently did not know this or else they would have known where to look for Him. But that they spent three days looking for Him indicates they did not know who He was. Part of the problem was that Jews referred to God as "our Father," in the sense of the Father of Israel. But as individual Israelites they did not know God as "My Father." Jesus' reference to God as **"My Father"** was unique. It showed a special relationship between Him and God. And He had to be in His **Father's house**. It was of necessity. This is where His Father resided and this is where instruction about His Father was given. But why did He of necessity have to be there? Because He had developed as a human to the point that it was time to reveal His identity and mission to His parents.

But, as verse 50 says, **they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.** Some find it hard to believe that they did not understand Jesus' identity and mission at this time, especially when Mary had heard Elizabeth's Song, uttered the Magnificat at the conception, heard Zachariah's Benedictus at the birth of John, the angel's words reported by the shepherds, Simeon's Nunc Dimittis and Anna's proclamations. But even considering all they knew, it was still hard to imagine. Here was a boy who is born into this family with unique claims made of Him that were so magnificent that it was hard to understand. Bock said, "Such closeness to God not only is something Jesus' parents need to appreciate but also is a point the disciples will struggle to grasp (9:59-62; 14:26; Mk 10:29-30). In fact, Luke makes this the first note in a series of revelations that will build the case for who Jesus is. The infancy material stresses Jesus as Messiah, but this text is one of two early hints in Luke's Gospel that he is also much more. Luke reveals Jesus' identity gradually, bringing the reader along in an understanding of who Jesus is."¹² This understanding of His identity and mission simply did not take place over night, even for those who were closest to Him.

In verse 51 we read, **And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.** Now that they had found Him **He went down with them** from Jerusalem **to Nazareth**, where He would continue to grow up under the tutelage of His parents. It is significant that it notes **He continued in subjection to them.** He had been **in subjection to them** and He **continued in** that **subjection**, putting Himself under their authority. That's a lesson for every child. They are to continue in subjection under their parents. And another note about Mary's response to these things, she **treasured all these things in her heart.** These **things** refer to more than just the things that happened at the Temple that day, but everything that happened. It means "to keep something mentally," "to keep something in mind." She kept thinking about these things. And we are supposed to keep thinking about them too; about who He is and about what He did, about His person and His work.

In verse 52 we read a similar statement to that made in 2:40, but with further progress. **And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.** The narrative has progressed quickly through Jesus' human development. Four different Greek words are used to describe His human development. In verse 16 He is a "baby," (βρεφος) in verse 40 a "child," (παιδιον) in verse 43 a "boy" (παις) and by verse 52 simply as "Jesus". MacLeod said that these words show the "genuine human development of Jesus." He grew from infancy, to childhood, to a boy, to a man. What is clear is that Luke wants to trace the human growth and development of Jesus from infancy to adulthood. The last words summarize His development over the next twenty years of His life. He was **increasing in wisdom**, meaning advancing in spiritual insight into the Scriptures. Again, this had to do with His humanity. He was one Person but with two natures; a divine nature and a human nature. In His divine nature He was omniscient, but in His human nature He had to learn like any other human being. His characteristics of His divine nature were not transmittable to His human nature. He could not borrow them. He also increased in **stature**, referring to His physical development. And lastly, He **kept**

increasing in favor with God and men. He had the favor of others upon Him during His upbringing, but that would not last, He would become a figure of derision and division.

In summary, we have just completed the infancy narratives in Luke 1-2. This is an introductory section to the ministry of Jesus. Without it we would know almost nothing about His upbringing. Luke has recorded it to show us that Jesus is a real human being who had a real human birth and development so that we can see how He identifies with us as human beings. Jesus was not simply God as man, God wearing the cloak or mask of humanity. Jesus was a real human being. The last section shows how Jesus had a special relationship with God from very early in His life and how He came to Messianic consciousness by the age of twelve. He knew exactly who He was when He was twelve years old and He knew exactly what His mission was.

So reviewing 2:41. His parents fulfilled more than what was required by the Law, they both went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of Passover. In verse 42, when Jesus turned twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast. This was the custom of introducing a child a year or two ahead of time to the festive rights. In verse 43, after they fulfilled the required number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, unbeknownst to His parents. In verse 44, they supposed He was in the caravan with relatives and friends, and they went a full day's journey before stopping for the night and discovering His absence. They began looking for Him among relatives and friends. But in verse 45, when they did not find Him they made a quick decision to return to Jerusalem and begin looking for Him. In verse 46, after three days of searching for Him they found Him in the temple, sitting among the well-educated teachers, engaging in question-answer dialogue. In verse 47, all who heard Him were amazed because He asked intelligent questions and answered their questions with a level of understanding that was not possible for a twelve year old under the Jewish system of education. It was evident that this child had a unique relationship with the Father. They should have detected He was the Messiah. In verse 48, when Joseph and Mary found Him, they were amazed that He was sitting among them in dialogue. Mary used an approach typical of a Jewish mother, she put a guilt trip on Him, asking, "Why have You treated us this way? Behold your father and I have been anxiously looking for You?" Jesus answered in verse 49 with His first recorded words in Scripture. His answer was to the effect that they should have known exactly where He was, that of necessity He had to be in His Father's house. If they had known who He was, they would have known where He was. His statement is that He is the Son of God. Yet, in verse 50, Joseph and Mary did not understand. So in verse 51 they went down to Nazareth and He remained in subjection to them until the time of His ministry, and Mary kept in mind all the things that were said and done. And during that time verse 52 says Jesus kept increasing in spiritual wisdom or skill with the Scriptures as well as physical growth in stature. And he was in favor with God and men.

What can we learn? First, that Jesus was a true human with a true human development. That is the main reason Luke 1-2 have been written and our verses tonight are the high point of that argument. He grew in wisdom and insight and stature such that there is no question that Jesus had a real humanity. Second, that human

development resulted in His gaining Messianic consciousness by at least age 12. He knew that He was the Son of God and He knew His mission. Third, Jesus held the Scriptures and discussion about the Scriptures in the highest regard. He was completely immersed in the Scriptures and His emphasis is an argument for the Scripture holding the highest regard in the Christian's life. Nothing trumps the Scripture, not experience, not reason. The Scripture is the ultimate authority. Fourth, that if you are a child, you should live in submission to your parents. If Jesus did, as the very Son of God, certainly you should, as simply a son of man. Fifth, that there is one response we are to have to this section, and it is Mary's response. We are to treasure these things in our hearts, think about them deeply, meditate upon who He is and what He came to do.

Next week we'll look at chapter 3 where Luke jumps across the 20 "hidden years," years that should not be speculated on, for if there was something of Christological importance, it would have been revealed. So what we are to gather is that He had a normal Jewish upbringing until John came.

¹ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, fn. 343, 441.

² Darrell Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 252.

³ J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 66.

⁴ J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 66.

⁵ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, 468.

⁶ The apocryphal *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (2:1–5) tells us that the five-year-old Jesus played at a pool and there molded twelve clay sparrows. It was the Sabbath Day, and Joseph rebuked Him for desecrating the Sabbath. Jesus clapped His hands, and said to the clay sparrows, "Be gone!" They immediately flew away chirping. Later (4:1–2) a child ran into Him, hitting Him on the shoulder. Jesus was angry and said, "You shall not go further on your way," and immediately the child fell down and died. In the *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy* (40) some boys with whom He was playing hid from Him, so He turned them into little goats. The effect of these and other stories is to portray the child Jesus as an *enfant terrible*. We are struck less by the piety of the child than by His destructiveness. In short, the Apocryphal Gospels give us no help on the "hidden years" of Christ.

⁷ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, 478.

⁸ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, 483.

⁹ The Apocryphal *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (19:2) has Jesus' comments silencing the teachers. The *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy* (50–52) pictures Jesus instructing them in the statutes of the Law and the mysteries of the Prophets as well as in astronomy, medicine, physics, and metaphysics.

¹⁰ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, 484.

¹¹ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, 484.

¹² Darrell Bock, *Luke*, 63.