

Inspired to Inquire

Key Verse: “He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”
—Luke 2:49

Selected Scripture:
Luke 2:41-52

the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.” (Deut. 16:16) Mary and Joseph, being of a righteous heart, knew the importance of keeping God’s law to the best of their ability, and so made this annual journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem, a distance of about sixty miles, taking young Jesus with them each year.

When they had “fulfilled the days” of the feast (Luke 2:43), Mary and Joseph began the trip back to their home, together with others of their family and fellow Jewish brethren who resided in Nazareth, all of whom had evidently traveled together on this annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Jesus, however, had tarried behind, and since there were so many traveling together back to Nazareth, Mary and Joseph did not realize he was missing until they had traveled a full day’s journey. (vss. 43,44) They looked among the entire traveling company,

WHEN JESUS WAS TWELVE

years old, it is recorded that he went with his parents, Mary and Joseph, to Jerusalem to keep the feast of the Passover [feast of unleavened bread]. (Luke 2:41,42) This was a requirement under the Jewish Law, “Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in

but to no avail, so they turned back toward Jerusalem, most surely concerned for his well-being. Upon arriving back in Jerusalem, they continued to search for Jesus, looking for three days without success. “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.”—vs. 46

Mary, although very thankful and relieved that her son was found safe and well, chided him, saying, “Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.” (vs. 48, *New American Standard Bible*) This would seem to have been a natural and reasonable response from a concerned parent, especially considering that Jesus was only twelve years old, not even close to adulthood. Jesus’ response, however, stated in our Key Verse, was quite astounding. He, in effect, reminded his mother that the Temple is the first place she should have thought to look for him. After all, Mary knew even before his birth that he was to be the Savior of mankind, and hence she should have realized that from a very young age he would have a great desire to learn as much as he could about God’s plan and his heritage as a Jew, born under the Law. How appropriate it was for young Jesus to sit at the feet of the elders in the Temple, soaking up the wealth of information they provided, ‘both hearing them, and asking them questions.’ “And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.”—vs. 47

Jesus realized that, as important as it was for him to gain as much knowledge and understanding of God’s plan as he could at a young age, it was also proper for him to be subject to his parents until he reached adulthood. Thus, the account states, “He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them . . . And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”—vss. 51,52 ■