

Jesus Grows Up

MEMORY VERSE:

"Keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching."

Proverbs 6:20

When Mary, Joseph and Jesus were safely back in Nazareth, they were able to go to the Temple in Jerusalem again. Jesus had been presented to the Lord at the Temple when he was a tiny baby as the Law required, but all Jews tried to go to the Temple at least once in the year. The most important time to go was at the Feast of the Passover. This was a holiday for all Jews and on this holiday they remembered the time in Egypt when the Angel of Death had passed over the country and killed all the eldest Egyptian children while the Israelites had been brought out of Egypt safely. The Feast of Passover was in the spring.

When Jesus was twelve years old, He was able to take part in the feast for the first time. Almost everyone in Nazareth was going to Jerusalem. Everything had to be made ready - the food, the clothes, the bedding, all that was needed for a three to four day journey. They would travel together for safety. It was a very happy time.

Soon they were ready and set off on their journey. Each day they walked steadily towards Jerusalem, sometimes through little villages, sometimes along a winding path. Each night they wrapped themselves in their blankets and slept under the starry sky. At last they spotted the city in the distance. Hundreds of people were climbing the hill to Jerusalem, all going there for the Passover festival.

When they walked through the city gates, Jesus saw the little narrow streets, the beggars scattered around hoping for a few coins, the Roman soldiers seemingly everywhere. Finally, he saw the great white and gold Temple, gleaming in the sun. Around it were rooms where the teachers taught people about God. There were thousands and thousands of people crowding the streets.

When the feast was over, Mary and Joseph set off for home, thinking that Jesus was with his friends in the group. At the end of the days travel they looked for Jesus and discovered that he wasn't there. They were frightened and headed straight back to Jerusalem to find him. It took them three days to find Jesus. He was in the Temple talking to the teachers and asking them questions, astonishing all who heard him with his understanding.

When Mary and Joseph got near they pulled him aside and asked "What have you been doing? We've been looking everywhere for you!" Jesus answered them "Don't you know that I have work to do for my Father, God?" Jesus knew that he had a great work ahead of him and needed to learn as much as he could about His Father. But he went quietly back with Mary and Joseph and was obedient to them.

As the years passed, Jesus grew in his knowledge and understanding of God and His purpose. He was obedient to his parents and loving and kind to those around him, and God was pleased.

Things to Remember

- Jesus as a child was subject to his parents.
- He grew in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man.
- He knew that God was his Father and he needed to learn all he could about Him.

Discussion

Even though Jesus was only a young boy of twelve, he knew who his real Father was and that he needed to learn how to please him. He was so interested in learning and had so many questions that he had stayed in the Temple instead of going home. However, when his parents found him, he was obedient to them and even though he may have wished to stay longer he returned home with them and was subject to them.

1. How old was Jesus?
2. Where did Mary and Joseph find him?
3. Who did Jesus say his father was?

Activity Suggestions

Do you think it would be fun to go on a long walk like Jesus did with his family and sleep outside at night? Draw a picture of what you think would be your favourite part of the walk to Jerusalem.

Think of ways that you can show obedience in your life. With your parents, design a chore chart with appropriate chores for you to do every day to show obedience. Perhaps you could get a star for every job well done.