

## THE YOUTH OF CHRIST

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**Luke 2:41** *Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.*

**Luke 2:42** *And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.*

**Luke 2:43** *And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.*

Youth can often be a time spent without purpose. The life of the child Jesus teaches us however that a childhood motivated by the will of God is fully possible. Let us explore this awareness in the youth of our Lord Jesus. In the scriptures above, Luke records that the entire family of the Lord would make the difficult journey to Jerusalem for the Passover every year. Jesus was accustomed to the sound of lambs and sheep, among others, accompanying the pilgrims down to Jerusalem from Nazareth every year. The child Jesus knew what no one in Israel knew at the time: that he was the real Lamb of God who alone could wash away the sins of the entire world.

**Matthew 1:21** *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

How his heart must have wanted to save his people from their sins already at the age of 12! Luke records ‘the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem’ (Luke 2:43). Jerusalem was the place God chose for the Temple to be built, and anyone who was concerned with repentance and restoration of relations with God, must go to

Jerusalem. In the Book of Exodus, God commanded the children of Israel to examine the lamb for any blemish; the lamb must be perfect. The child Jesus stayed behind in the Temple in Jerusalem to be examined by the scribes and Pharisees. And what was their verdict?

***Luke 2:46** And 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.*

***Luke 2:47** And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.*

What lessons can children draw from this? To begin with, God does not despise childhood. Although Jesus never acted before the time appointed, the account of Luke tells us that God can use childhood powerfully. We cannot tell how many more people were blessed by the ministry of the child Jesus, but this account gives us a glimpse into the fruitful childhood of the Lord. Paul admonished the young Timothy:

***1Timothy 4:12** Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

Luke's account of the childhood of Jesus demonstrates how focused the Lord was on his mission. 'And 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). While childhood is a time for play and growth, we must be concerned when it is filled with everything except spiritual issues. It is as if, in some instances, modern childhood has been designed to cram every sort of 'fun and frolic' except the Father's business. We have the account of Jesus' childhood so that

children may also follow Jesus. In fact, as a child Jesus corrected Joseph and Mary and said they should have known where he was – in his father’s house. He was not rebellious; he was their God and their teacher.

**Luke 2:50** *And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.*

**Luke 2:51** *And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.*

In returning to Nazareth and submitting to them, the Lord again teaches children a profound lesson: though he was God, who never ever obeyed anyone prior to coming to earth, he humbled himself and did whatever the adults asked him to do. He was patient. Youth need to know the value of patience. Notice that the Lord was later crucified as a troublemaker with a myriad of accusations hurled at him by the religious establishment. If he really was a rabble-rouser, how is it that he live for 30 years in Nazareth without an incident? The truth is that Jesus took on him the form of a servant and subjected himself to every ordinance of man so he could be the Lamb of God who saved us from our sins.

**Phil 2:5** *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

**Phil 2:6** *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

**Phil 2:7** *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

**Phil 2:8** *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*