

## “Lost for Three Days”

Luke 2:40-52

This narrative of Jesus staying in Jerusalem at the Temple while Mary and Joseph head home seems very odd in our modern world. Parents heading out, leaving a child, and not realizing it for an entire day. As we just drove back from Iowa this week, I can't imagine saying to the girls, “Look, there is the bridge. We're almost home.” And Malinda looks back and says “Oops! We forgot one!”

People traveled differently back in Jesus' day. They traveled by caravan. According to the law of Moses, all men were required to come to Jerusalem for Passover. If they were able, the women and children would also come. There was no one left in Nazareth. The whole town, and others, would be traveling together. Friends, neighbors, cousins would all be jumbled up and mingling with each other as they walked along the road.

Also, in those days, a 12 year old boy would have been

expected to be responsible enough to know the departure time and place. After all, girls typically got married around age 14 or 15. If a 14 year old girl can manage a household, a 12 year old boy can know when it is time to leave and go home. Also, as a 12 year old, Jesus would be almost ready for Bar-Mitzvah (which means Jesus is almost considered an adult.) It would be easy to believe Jesus was tagging along with the men. Mary could assume so.

However, because He is not yet of age, it would be easy to believe Jesus was with the women and other children. Joseph could assume so. Mary and Joseph were not being irresponsible or negligent in their parental duties. They had every reason to believe that Jesus would be departing with them.

As you read through the Gospels, there are many things that amaze me. The humanity of Jesus is near the top of the list. The Son of God lowered Himself and took on the full nature of man. We have spent the past few weeks celebrating Jesus coming to earth as a baby. We sing "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come." When you think about how complete was the humiliation of the Almighty Living God. He took on all the weaknesses of a little

child. He endured all the frustration of being a 12 year-old (where you are not considered an adult, but you are not really a small child anymore). You are given responsibilities, but you don't have any authority in the eyes of the adults.

As the father of a 12 and 15 year-old, I understand the burden. I remember those feeling when I was that age.

Here is Jesus, who has more "authority" than anyone, yet in the eyes of everyone around Him, He doesn't. The book of Hebrews says that Jesus is able to sympathize with our weaknesses because He was tempted in every way that we are, yet was without sin.

Jesus is born and lives on the earth in humility, suppressing His glory and not exercising His authority. He lives in obedience to Joseph and Mary in Nazareth, but He belongs somewhere else.

Jesus remains behind in Jerusalem. Jesus remains at the Temple where He belongs. The Son belongs in His Father's House. Jesus says, "I must be in My Father's House." He also belongs in Jerusalem, because that is where He is destined to be. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus

must be in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is not where He would live. He would live in obedience to Joseph and Mary in Nazareth. But Jesus belongs in Jerusalem, because Jerusalem is where He will die.

Jesus must question and be questioned by the Jewish leaders. On this day, we hear Jesus give answers that amaze and astonish the people during His three days seemingly lost as a 12 year-old.

This is not the last time Jesus would be questioned by the Jewish leaders. This is not the last time Jesus would amaze and astonish the people with His words.

Jesus will come to the Feast of Passover many times in His life, as He was not only obedient to Joseph and Mary, but He was obedient to the will of His Father in heaven also.

The final time Jesus comes to Jerusalem, He will also have a three day period where He is seemingly lost. And as He is “found” on the day of His resurrection, He will amaze and astonish all who see and hear Him. Amen.