

**THEY FOUND HIM IN THE TEMPLE, SITTING AMONG THE TEACHERS - Biblical Commentary by
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Luke 2,41-52

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

Every time we read, the gospel we must always keep in mind, to understand it, that it does not apply to the record, but to theology. it does not give us a series of facts, but truth. Therefore, the history is not important, but the faith. This is why they are always very actual.

This is very necessary for these verses from the gospel that we read this Sunday. Luke's gospel, chapter 2, 41-52, known as the loss and discovery of Jesus in the temple. So, it is necessary to follow the indications that the evangelist gives us to understand what he wants to tell us. And what is it that he wants to tell us? The great resistance and the great delusion of the Israeli people with regards to Jesus, because he does not follow the tradition of the fathers, but introduces a completely new relationship.

Let's see the gospel. *".. his parents.."* All the characters in this passage are anonymous. The only one that has a name is Jesus. When a character is anonymous, it means that he is representative. Therefore, the evangelist does not want to indicate Mary and Joseph, but the entire population of Israel.

"Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover." There are three great feasts for which it is necessary to go to Jerusalem; the Passover, Pentecost and the Tent feast. *" And when he was twelve years old,"...* why this in particular? Because the evangelist sees in the figure of Jesus one of the great prophets of the history of Israel; the prophet Samuel, that, according to the tradition, also began professing at twelve years old.

"...they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it.." It might seem strange: how is it possible that Jesus remained and his parents did not know? Because his parents were convinced that their son was following them; the son following in the father's footsteps. This is the novelty that Jesus presents to us.

"...supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him."

It may seem strange that this family were not aware of Jesus' absence. The evangelist at the beginning of his gospel, announced the birth of John the Baptist, he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children. It was a quote from the prophet Malachi, that continued; *"and the hearts of children to their fathers,.."* (4, 6)

Luke omits this second part. It is the old, the past, that must understand the new, not the new that must follow the past.

"After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers,.." They are teachers of law. The fact that Jesus is in the middle of them recalls the knowledge of God according to the Book of Sirach, (24, 1) Wisdom will praise herself, and will glory in the midst of her people.

Therefore, Jesus is the image of God's wisdom.

".. listening to them .." and also *"..asking them questions."* A twelve year old asking questions of the law teachers. *" And all who heard him were amazed ."* It is translated as "amazed", but the evangelist uses an expression that means an irritated amazement, they were shocked by Jesus' replies. *".. at his understanding and his answers."*

It seems that he not only asked questions, but also replies. And here is the incident. *"And when his parents saw him, they were astonished."* - literally stunned - *" And his mother said to him.."* Here Mary, mother of Jesus, she is not presented by name, but is a representative of the Israeli people, commits two mistakes. First she calls him "son", the term used means " my child", meaning someone that for right, she has power over

“Son, why have you treated us so?” And here is the second mistake: *“Behold, your father...”* She refers to the figure of Joseph. *“..and I have been searching for you in great distress.”* Now for Jesus’ reply. It is the only time, in this gospel, that Jesus turns to his mother and it is with words of harsh rebuke. The mother, undoubtedly would have remembered the prophesy of Simeon in the temple when he said *“..and a sword will pierce through your own soul...”* (Luke 2, 35) The sword is the word of the Lord.

Jesus replies, *“Why were you looking for me? Did you not know...”* so it was something that they should have known - *“..that I must be..”* the verb “must” in this particular way means God’s will.

“Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?” His mother had said to him: *“..your father and I have been searching for you in great distress..”* Jesus says, no, I must be with my father. Joseph is not his father. What is it that Jesus is saying? That he does not follow the fathers, the past, but follows the Father, he who renews all things. Naturally *“..they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.”* Why do they not understand? Who looks at the past cannot understand that the new advances

“And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them.” And here a new rift opens, hope for Mary, like the episode of the shepherds, Mary had not understood, she also is amazed by this great novelty.

“..his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.” The heart means the mind, the conscience. *“ And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.”* Exactly as the prophet Samuel, as it is written in the bible, grew with this wisdom.

So, the reading ends with a hope for Mary. Mary begins her growing process that will take her to be the mother of Jesus a disciple of the Christ.