

OUR LORD'S EARLY YEARS
Luke 2:21-24, 41-52

Intro: This is the third Sunday of preparation for the study of the Gospel of Mark which we will begin next Sunday, the Lord willing.

We have been looking into three things which are mentioned only by Luke in his Gospel:

- 1) The angelic announcement made to Mary (Luke 1:26-38).
- 2) The birth, as recorded by Luke, and the visit of the shepherds (Luke 2:1-20).
- 3) Today: our Lord's early years (Luke 2:21-24, 41-52).

Vv. 21-24 deal with the first 40 days of our Lord's life; vv. 41-52 deal primarily with an experience our Lord had when He was 12 years old. Matthew's account of the escape into Egypt comes between these two.

After this the next 18 years of our Lord's life is passed over in silence. He began His public ministry when he was "about thirty years of age" (Luke 2:23a).

I. THE HOME INTO WHICH OUR LORD WAS BORN (Luke 2:21-24).

The main purpose of these 4 verses seems to be to acquaint us with the kind of a home into which our Lord was born.

Lev. 12 and Num. 18:15, 16 should be read as a background for this passage.

- A. It was a Jewish home. Both parents were members of the royal family in Israel.
- B. It was located in Nazareth, not in Jerusalem.
- C. Joseph and Mary were both very devout. This is the outstanding impression we are given in vv. 21-24. Without being legalists and mere ritualists, they lived in complete conformity with the Law--the Word of God. And, they showed just as great concern for the baby Jesus as they did for themselves.
 1. On the 8th day our Lord was circumcised (v. 21). This showed the faith of His mother and Joseph in the covenant God established with Abraham. Cf. Gen. 17. It was at this time that they named our Lord, "Jesus," because this is what the angel had said for them to do.

2. On the 40th day Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem for

two reasons:

- a. To present Jesus to the Lord because He was Mary's firstborn. This, according to Num. 18: 15, 16 meant that He had to be redeemed with 5 shekels of silver.
- b. To offer the sacrifices of a burnt offering and a sin offering for Mary's purification. It is here that we learn that Joseph and Mary's home was not wealthy. While they offered twice as much as they needed to, they evidently could not offer a lamb.

It was a part of our Lord's humiliation that He should be subjected to circumcision, but all of this is very important in showing how concerned Joseph and Mary were that they and her Son be holy before the Lord.

It is obvious from what follows that Mary did not fully understand all that would take place through her Child, but she was very careful to live up to the light she had.

II. OUR LORD AT THE AGE OF TWELVE (Luke 2:41-50).

For 11 years following the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary went at the Passover time to Jerusalem. ON THE 12th YEAR, JESUS WENT WITH THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME. At this age Jewish boys became sons of the Law, or sons of the commandment. From this time on they were responsible to follow all that God had given to Moses in the Law.

Anyone who has studied the Scriptures knows that there is no greater picture in the Old Testament of our Lord's work on the cross than that which we have in the Passover. The Pass-over Lamb was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ in His death! This must be kept in mind because it would have a definite bearing upon what our Lord learned in the Temple, and the answers and questions which Luke refers to.

When Joseph and Mary discovered that Jesus was not in the Nazareth caravan, they went back to Jerusalem and found Him on the third day in the Temple with the teachers.

V. 47 is probably the main verse in this section--showing as it does the outstanding wisdom manifested by our Lord at this early age.

Note Mary's question in v. 48.

Our Lord's answer in v. 49 gives us THE FIRST RECORDED WORDS OF OUR LORD. He was not surprised that they had been looking for Him, but He was surprised that they did not know immediately where they would find Him.

His words also indicate two other things--very important, but merely stated, and then left with a silence of 18 years following. They showed:

- 1) That He was fully aware that He was the Son of the Father --the Son of God!
- 2) That He had been sent to take care of, lit., the things of His father, i.e., "My Father's business."

What was the result? Read v. 50. This refers primarily to Joseph and Mary--a complete failure to comprehend what He was saying.

III. THE YEARS FOLLOWING (Luke 2:51, 52).

Note our Lord's subjection to the authority of Joseph and Mary. (This is the last reference in the Gospels to Joseph. He must have lived many years after, but he probably had died before our Lord was 30. At least there is no mention of him after this.)

We see here an emphasis upon the wisdom manifested by our Lord when He was 12. Cf. vv. 40, 47, 52. What profound truth we have here! He knew more than all of them, and yet He continued to learn just like any human being.

Why did He go back to Nazareth? Did He not belong in Jerusalem? Was this not the best place for Him to learn, to be prepared for the ministry that was to be His in the years to come.

Even with our Lord we have an illustration of Isa. 55:8, 9,
"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

One answer must be that the Father wanted to keep Him away from the corruption of Jerusalem.

But it is also apparent that Mary and Joseph could not have taught Him the things which He was to teach later.

NO, IT WAS NOT TO BE ACCORDING TO THE WAYS OF MEN, BUT IN THE SECLUSION OF NAZARETH, HIDDEN FROM THE EYES OF THE MOST DEVOUT CHILD OF GOD, THE SON OF GOD IN COMMUNION WITH HIS FATHER IN HEAVEN CAME TO A FULL REALIZATION OF THE TRUTH HE WAS TO PREACH AND OF THE MISSION THAT WAS TO BE HIS.

Note carefully v. 52.

Concl: What can we expect from the public ministry of our Lord

as a result of what we have here?

We can expect:

- 1) Further proof that He was truly the Son of God. Therefore, His miracles should not surprise us, but be expected instead.
- 2) Teaching such as we could hear from no one else. Cf. John 7:15.
- 3) To see the unfolding of the mission to which He referred when He said, "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?"

This undoubtedly had attracted the attention of Luke, and what follows had confirmed in his mind the fact that the roots of our Lord's entire ministry were to be seen in this one event when He was only 12 years of age.

May our hearts be open to the Lord in these things too--that we may come to understand Him better, to love Him more, and to trust Him as never before.

(Appeal to those who have never trusted Him as Savior.)