Jesus at Twelve in the Temple

Bible Stories Anthology — Luke 2:41-52

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> **Romans 15:4** *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

Why These Stories Were Written — Romans 15:4

Paul had just quoted a thousand-year-old psalm and applied it to Christ (Romans 15:3, quoting Psalm 69:9), and then he explained why he could: *whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning*. **Written aforetime** — the scriptures that already stood before this present age of grace opened at Pentecost: the record God gave through Moses, the prophets and the writings, along with the Gospel accounts of Christ's earthly ministry, which belong to that same time before Pentecost. (When Paul wrote these words, the scriptures he had in hand were the Hebrew scriptures; the Gospels had not yet been written down.) **Written for our learning** — "learning" is the Greek word for *teaching*, the very word rendered "doctrine" in 2 Timothy 3:16. These are not quaint tales; they are doctrine in narrative form. Adam, Ruth and David never knew us, but God did, and He had their lives recorded with us in mind — written *for* us, though not all of it written *to* us, which is why we read Israel's history as our instruction and not as our marching orders. **Through patience and comfort of the scriptures** — "patience" is literally *remaining under*, the staying power we gain from watching men and women stay under a load; "comfort" is a *calling alongside*, the strength God brings when He meets them there, which is why Paul calls Him "the God of patience and consolation" in the very next verse. **That we might have hope** — not a wish, but confident expectation: the return of Jesus Christ and everlasting life with Him. That is why these accounts exist, and it is how they should be read.

Lost for Three Days

Every parent knows the feeling: you turn around, and your child is gone.

Now imagine it lasting not five minutes, but three days. Imagine searching through a crowded city of strangers, a city swollen with pilgrims, soldiers on every corner, and not knowing whether your boy has been hurt, kidnapped or worse. And imagine that the child is not just any child — that an angel told you he would be the Son of the Highest, and God had put him in your care.

That is what happened to Joseph and Mary when Jesus was twelve years old.

When they finally found him, he was not crying in a corner. He was sitting in the temple among the greatest teachers of Israel, listening to them and asking them questions — and they were astonished at him. And when his mother, half-frantic, asked him why he had done this to them, he gave an answer that neither she nor Joseph understood:

Didn't you know I must be in my Father's house?

It is the only story the Bible tells of Jesus' boyhood. It holds his first recorded words. And in a few short verses, it shows us who he was, what he knew, whom he obeyed, and how he grew.

The Setting

When. This series places Jesus' birth in about **3 B.C.** (see story 38). That would make him twelve at the Passover of about **A.D. 10**. Scripture does not give the year; it says only **"when he was twelve years old"** (2:42).

The world. Augustus was Roman emperor. In Galilee, where Jesus grew up, **Herod Antipas**, a son of Herod the Great, ruled as tetrarch. Judea, with Jerusalem, had been placed directly under a Roman prefect a few years earlier, in A.D. 6, after Herod's son Archelaus was removed. The high priest was **Annas** (A.D. 6–15), the same Annas before whom Jesus would stand about twenty years later (John 18:13).

Where. Nazareth, a small village in the hills of lower Galilee, and **Jerusalem**, about 65 to 80 miles to the south depending on the route — a journey of three or four days on foot. Galilean pilgrims went either through Samaria or down the Jordan valley and up through Jericho.

The feast. God's Law commanded: **"Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the LORD God"** (Exodus 23:17) — at Passover and Unleavened Bread in spring, at Pentecost (the feast of weeks) in early summer, and at Tabernacles in autumn (Deuteronomy 16:16). Those who lived far away often went only at Passover. The feast itself began with the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan and continued with **seven days of unleavened bread** (Exodus 12:15-18). Josephus gives figures for the Passover crowds that run into the millions; even if he exaggerated, the city was packed with pilgrims.

The temple. Herod the Great had rebuilt and enlarged the temple, beginning around 20 B.C.; work on the outer courts was still going on in Jesus' day (John 2:20). It was one of the most magnificent buildings in the Roman world, surrounded by great colonnaded porches where teachers taught and crowds gathered.

Who.

- **Jesus**, twelve years old.
- **Mary**, his mother.
- **Joseph**, her husband, whom people supposed was Jesus' father (Luke 3:23).
- **The doctors** — the teachers of the Law in the temple.
- **Kinsfolk and acquaintance** travelling in the same company.

The administration. The **Mosaic Law**. Jesus was **"made under the law"** (Galatians 4:4), and his family kept it faithfully. The Christ administration would open at his baptism, about eighteen years later.

The Story, Told Faithfully

The Child Grew

> **Luke 2:39** *And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.*
>
> **Luke 2:40** *And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.*

"When they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord." Joseph and Mary had done everything the Law required after Jesus' birth: his circumcision on the eighth day (2:21), Mary's purification and the offering of two birds (2:22-24; Leviticus 12:8). They were a family that obeyed God.

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit." Luke chooses his words carefully. Jesus **grew**. He was a real child who developed as children do. *Waxed strong in spirit* means he became strong inwardly — in character, in understanding, in his walk with God.

“Filled with wisdom.” The Greek participle (*plēroumenon*) means *being filled* — a continuing process. Wisdom was being poured into him as he grew.

“And the grace of God was upon him.” God’s favour rested on him. Isaiah had foretold of the Messiah: **“And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD”** (Isaiah 11:2).

Between verse 40 and verse 41, about twelve years pass in silence.

Every Year at the Passover

> **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.*

“His parents went to Jerusalem every year.” The Law required the men to go (Exodus 23:17). Mary was not required to go — but she went too, every year. Hannah had done the same, going up yearly with Elkanah to Shiloh (1 Samuel 1:7; story 21). This was a devout family. Jesus grew up in a home where God’s appointed feasts came first.

“When he was twelve years old.” Why does Luke mention his age? In later Jewish practice, a boy became a *bar mitzvah*, a “son of the commandment,” responsible for keeping the Law himself, at thirteen. That ceremony is not recorded until long after Jesus’ time, but the Mishnah, written down about A.D. 200, already speaks of thirteen as the age for the commandments (*Avot* 5:21), and of training children to fast on the Day of Atonement a year or two before they were obligated (*Yoma* 8:4). At twelve, Jesus was on the edge of religious adulthood. Luke may be showing us the moment he began to step into it.

“After the custom of the feast.” They did everything the way it was always done.

Left Behind

> **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.*

“When they had fulfilled the days.” They stayed the full seven days of the feast. Pilgrims were not required to stay all seven days; Joseph and Mary stayed to the end.

“The child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem.” He stayed on purpose. He was not lost in the sense of wandering off; he chose to remain. Luke does not say he was disobedient, and the rest of the story shows that he was not. He was doing what he knew he must.

“Joseph and his mother knew not of it.” Notice how Luke writes: *Joseph and his mother* — not *his parents* here. Luke is careful: Joseph was not Jesus’ father. Jesus was conceived by God’s power, **“therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God”** (Luke 1:35; story 38).

> **Luke 2:44** *But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.*

“Supposing him to have been in the company.” *The company* (Greek *synodia*, a *journey-together*) was the caravan of relatives and neighbours from Nazareth and the villages around it, all travelling home

together. Large groups travelled together for safety on the roads. Children ran between families; a boy of twelve could easily be with an uncle or cousins all day. It was natural for Joseph and Mary not to worry until evening.

"Went a day's journey." About twenty miles. An old tradition places the first night's stop at Beeroth, about ten miles north of Jerusalem; that is tradition, not Scripture.

"They sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance." When the caravan stopped for the night, they went from tent to tent and fire to fire asking. No one had seen him.

Three Days

> **Luke 2:45** *And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.*
>
> **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.*

"They turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him." The Greek tense pictures them *searching as they went* — along the road, asking every traveller.

"After three days." Most likely counted the way people then counted days: the first day travelling out, the second day travelling back, and the third day searching in the city, when they found him. However it is counted, it was days of anguish.

"They found him in the temple." Of all the places to look in Jerusalem, the temple was perhaps the last they thought of — though it should perhaps have been the first. Teaching took place in the temple's outer courts and porches. A later Jewish tradition records that members of the great council taught on the temple terraces on sabbaths and feast days, where anyone could come and listen.

"Sitting in the midst of the doctors." *Doctors* (Greek *didaskaloi*) means *teachers* — the rabbis and scribes, the experts in the Law. Students sat at their teachers' feet (Acts 22:3). Jesus was **sitting**, the position of a student, in the very middle of the circle.

"Both hearing them, and asking them questions." Notice the order. First, **hearing** — he listened. Then **asking**. He did not lecture the teachers; he learned from them and asked questions. In the Jewish way of teaching, questions were how students learned and how teachers tested them, and a good question showed real understanding.

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

"All that heard him were astonished." The Greek word (*existanto*) means literally *stood out of themselves* — they were beside themselves with amazement.

"At his understanding and answers." *Understanding* (Greek *synesis*) is the ability to put things together, to see how one part of Scripture connects with another. *Answers* — so the teachers asked him questions too, and his answers stunned them. A twelve-year-old from a village in Galilee, with no rabbinic training, was showing an understanding of God's Word beyond men who had studied it all their lives. Years later, people would ask the same question: **"How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"** (John 7:15).

The Psalm says: **"I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation"** (Psalm 119:99). As this series understands it, that verse describes exactly what the teachers

saw — not knowledge Jesus possessed from before birth, but the fruit of a boy whose whole heart was set on God's Word, with the grace of God upon him.

Thy Father and I

> **Luke 2:48** *And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.*

"They were amazed." A different Greek word (*exeplagēsan*), meaning *struck out of their senses*, stunned. Joseph and Mary had expected to find him frightened or lost. They found him in the middle of the teachers of Israel.

"Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?" Mary spoke first, as a mother would. Her words are not angry so much as wounded: *Child, why have you done this to us?*

"Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." *Sorrowing* (Greek *odynōmenoi*) is a strong word for pain and anguish. Luke uses the same word of the rich man **"tormented in this flame"** (Luke 16:24). These were three days of agony. Simeon had warned Mary, when Jesus was a baby, **"a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also"** (2:35). This was perhaps the first stroke of that sword.

"Thy father." Mary called Joseph *thy father*, as anyone would have — he was Jesus' father by law and by love, and he had raised him.

My Father's Business

> **Luke 2:49** *And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

These are the first words of Jesus recorded in the Bible. They are two questions.

"How is it that ye sought me?" He was not scolding them. He was surprised that they had needed to search all over the city. *Why did you have to look? Didn't you know where I'd be?*

"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" *Wist* is old English for *knew*. Look at each part.

"My Father's." Mary had said, *thy father and I*. Jesus answered, *my Father*. He was not being rude to Joseph. He was stating a truth: his Father was God. At twelve years old, Jesus knew who his Father was. This contrast between *thy father* and *my Father* is a figure called **antithesis**.

"Business." The Greek says literally *in the things of my Father* (*en tois tou patros mou*). The word *business* is supplied; the Greek leaves it open. It can mean *in my Father's house* — and this is how most modern translations read it, since they found him in the temple, God's house. It can also mean *about my Father's affairs*, as the KJV renders it. Both are true. Leaving out a word that the reader must supply is a figure called **ellipsis**, and it allows both meanings to stand. He was in his Father's house, about his Father's work.

"I must." The Greek word *dei* means *it is necessary* — a divine necessity, something that *has* to be because God has purposed it. Luke uses this little word again and again for the path God had set before Jesus:

- **"I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent"** (Luke 4:43).

- **“The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected … and be slain, and be raised the third day”** (Luke 9:22).
- **“The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again”** (Luke 24:7).
- **“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?”** (Luke 24:26) — *ought* is the same word.
- **“All things must be fulfilled, which were written … concerning me”** (Luke 24:44).

The first *must* Jesus ever spoke, at twelve, was the beginning of a path that led to the cross, the empty tomb and his Father’s right hand.

They Understood Not

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

“They understood not.” Even Mary, who had heard the angel’s message, and Joseph, who had been told in a dream — they did not understand what he meant. This is honest. Scripture does not make Jesus’ family into people who knew everything. Later, his own disciples also **“understood not this saying, and it was hid from them”** (Luke 9:45), and when he told them plainly that he would be killed and rise again, **“they understood none of these things”** (Luke 18:34). Understanding would come after the resurrection, when **“beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself”** (Luke 24:27).

Subject 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.*

“He went down with them.” Jerusalem sits high in the hills, so one always went *up* to it and *down* from it. But there is more here. He went *down* from the temple and its teachers to a small village and a carpenter’s workshop.

“And was subject unto them.” The Greek is a continuing tense: *he kept on being subject to them.* He obeyed Joseph and Mary. The boy who knew God was his Father submitted himself to an earthly carpenter and a village mother. Knowing who his Father was did not make him proud; it made him obedient. The Law said, **“Honour thy father and thy mother”** (Exodus 20:12), and Jesus did.

For the next eighteen years he lived in Nazareth. People there later knew him as **“the carpenter, the son of Mary”** (Mark 6:3). The Greek word *tektōn* means a builder or craftsman who worked with wood and stone. Jesus worked with his hands for most of his adult life. Joseph is never mentioned again in the Gospels as living, and many believe he died during these years; Scripture does not say.

“But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.” *Kept* means *treasured, carefully guarded.* After the shepherds’ visit, Luke wrote almost the same words: **“But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart”** (2:19). Mary did not understand, but she did not forget. As this series understands it, these verses quietly tell us where Luke learned these stories of Jesus’ childhood: Luke **“had perfect understanding of all things from the very first”** (1:3), and the person who held these memories in her heart was Mary.

Wisdom, Stature and Favour

> **Luke 2:52** *And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*

This one verse covers eighteen years. It describes Jesus growing in four ways:

- **In wisdom** — mentally and spiritually, in understanding of God and His Word.
- **In stature** — physically. (The Greek *hēlikia* can mean height or age; either way, he grew up.)
- **In favour with God** — in his relationship with his Father.
- **In favour with man** — in his relationships with people. He was well regarded in Nazareth.

The *and … and … and* is **polysyndeton**: each part of his growth stands on its own.

The echo of Samuel. Luke's words deliberately echo what was said of the boy Samuel, who also served in God's house from childhood: **"And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men"** (1 Samuel 2:26; story 21). Samuel was a prophet of God. Jesus would be *the* prophet Moses foretold (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22).

He really grew. This verse is important for understanding who Jesus is. He **"increased in wisdom."** God cannot increase in wisdom; God already knows everything. But Jesus grew in wisdom, as a real human being does. He learned. He did not know everything: even as an adult he said that of the day of his return, **"knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father"** (Mark 13:32). **"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered"** (Hebrews 5:8). **"Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren"** (Hebrews 2:17). Jesus is the Son of God — not God the Son, but a real man, conceived by God's power, filled with God's spirit, who grew up and learned and obeyed perfectly. Peter later called him **"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you"** (Acts 2:22).

What about the "missing years"? Some ancient writings outside the Bible, like the so-called *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, invent stories of the boy Jesus doing miracles: making clay birds fly, striking other children dead. These stories are not Scripture, and the Bible itself contradicts them. John says Jesus' turning water into wine at Cana was **"This beginning of miracles"** (John 2:11) — his *first* miracle, done as an adult. The only story God gave us of Jesus' boyhood is this one, and its point is not miracles but wisdom, devotion to his Father, and obedience.

Where the Story Leads

To the Messiah

His first words and his last. Jesus' first recorded words speak of **"my Father."** His last words on the cross, in Luke's Gospel, also speak to his Father: **"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"** (Luke 23:46). From twelve years old to his death, his life was about his Father.

Passover. The first time we see Jesus in Jerusalem as a boy, it is Passover. The last time we see him there before his death, it is Passover again — and this time he is the Lamb: **"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us"** (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Lost three days, then found. Joseph and Mary searched for him in grief, and found him **"after three days"** in his Father's house. Years later, his followers grieved for three days after his death, and on the first day of the week the women came to the tomb seeking him, and the angels said, **"Why seek ye the**

living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5) — almost Jesus' own words at twelve, *Why did you seek me?* Then he ascended to his Father's presence (Luke 24:51). This parallel is this series' observation; Luke does not draw it, though he may have intended his readers to notice.

The temple. The boy who sat in his Father's house would later cleanse it, teach in it daily, and say, **"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up ... But he spake of the temple of his body"** (John 2:19, 21). Malachi had promised: **"the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple"** (Malachi 3:1). As this series understands it, that promise was fulfilled when God's Son, His representative, came to His temple — and the visit at twelve was a quiet first glimpse.

"I must." The divine *must* began here, and it ran all the way to the cross, the resurrection and the ascension: **"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"** (Luke 24:26).

The obedient Son. He was subject to Joseph and Mary. He was subject to his Father always: **"I do always those things that please him"** (John 8:29). And **"he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"** (Philippians 2:8) — and **"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him"** (Philippians 2:9).

To the Grace Administration

Grow up. Jesus increased in wisdom, stature and favour with God and man. Believers are told to grow too: **"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"** (2 Peter 3:18), until **"we all come ... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"** and **"may grow up into him in all things"** (Ephesians 4:13, 15). Growth takes time — eighteen quiet years in Nazareth — and it is mental, physical, spiritual and social.

Listen first, then ask. Jesus was found **"both hearing them, and asking them questions." "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak"** (James 1:19). Good questions are part of learning God's Word.

The young can know God's Word. Jesus at twelve astonished the teachers. Timothy knew the scriptures **"from a child"** (2 Timothy 3:15). **"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers"** (1 Timothy 4:12). Young believers should not wait until they are grown to take God's Word seriously.

Children, obey; fathers, nurture. "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Colossians 3:20). Jesus, who knew his Father was God, was still subject to his earthly parents. And to parents: **"ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"** (Ephesians 6:4) — as Joseph and Mary did, taking him every year to the house of God.

Our Father's business. Every believer is a son of God by the new birth (Galatians 4:6-7; 1 John 3:1) and is called to be about the Father's business: **"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men"** (Colossians 3:23) — whether in the temple courts or the carpenter's shop.

Not understanding — and keeping it anyway. Mary did not understand, but she kept Jesus' words in her heart. Sometimes we do not understand what God is doing. We can still treasure His Word and wait.

To the Topic of Growing Up in God

- **Grow in a home that honours God** — every year to the feast.
- **Grow in God's Word** — hearing and asking.

- **Know who your Father is** — "my Father."
- **Know what you must do** — "I must."
- **Honour your parents** — "was subject unto them."
- **Grow in every way** — wisdom, stature, favour with God and man.
- **Be patient** — eighteen quiet years before public ministry.

The Main Takeaway

When Jesus was twelve years old, Joseph and Mary took him, as they did every year, to Jerusalem for the Passover; when they left with the caravan for Nazareth, he stayed behind without their knowing, and after a day's journey they searched for him among their relatives, then turned back, and after three days found him in the temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions," and "all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers"; when Mary said, "thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing," Jesus spoke his first recorded words: "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" — and they did not understand; then he went home with them to Nazareth "and was subject unto them," his mother kept all these sayings in her heart, and "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." At twelve Jesus knew that God was his Father and that he must be about his Father's things — and he showed it by listening, by learning, by obeying his parents, and by growing as a real man grows, on the path that would lead him to the cross, the resurrection and his Father's right hand.

- **Put God first** — as Jesus' family did every year.
- **Listen, then ask** — be a learner of God's Word.
- **Know your Father** — and be about His business.
- **Honour and obey your parents.**
- **Grow** — in wisdom, stature, and favour with God and man.
- **Treasure what you do not yet understand.**

For Our Learning — The People

- **Jesus.** Twelve years old; the Son of God, conceived by God's power; grew up in Nazareth.
- **Mary.** His mother; kept his sayings in her heart.
- **Joseph.** Mary's husband, supposed to be Jesus' father (Luke 3:23); a carpenter of Nazareth; not mentioned again as living.
- **The doctors.** Teachers of the Law in the temple, astonished at the boy.
- **Kinsfolk and acquaintance.** Relatives and neighbours travelling in the caravan.
- **Annas.** High priest at the time (A.D. 6–15); later questioned Jesus (John 18:13).

For Our Learning — Customs and Orientalisms

- **Three pilgrim feasts a year,** required of men (Deuteronomy 16:16).
- **Women attending voluntarily,** as Hannah and Mary did.
- **Passover and the seven days of Unleavened Bread.**

- **Travelling in a caravan (synodia)** of relatives and neighbours.
- **A day's journey** — about twenty miles.
- **"Going up" to Jerusalem** and "going down" from it.
- **Teachers teaching in the temple courts** during the feasts.
- **Students sitting at the feet of teachers.**
- **Teaching by question and answer.**
- **Religious adulthood approaching at twelve or thirteen.**
- **Sons learning their father's trade** — the carpenter's son became a carpenter.

For Our Learning — Figures of Speech

A figure of speech is a deliberate departure from the plain, ordinary way of saying something, used by God to add emphasis and feeling. These are the ones in this story:

- **Antithesis (contrast)** — "thy father" (2:48) and "my Father" (2:49).
- **Ellipsis (omission)** — "in the [things] of my Father" (2:49); the reader supplies "business" or "house."
- **Erotesis (questions asked to make a point)** — "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not …?" (2:49).
- **Polysyndeton (many ands)** — "in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (2:52).
- **Idiom** — "kept all these sayings in her heart" (2:51), treasured them.
- **Synecdoche (a part for the whole)** — "a day's journey" (2:44), a measure of distance.

What the Bible Actually Says

- **Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem every year** for Passover.
- **Jesus was twelve** on this visit.
- **He stayed behind on purpose** after the feast.
- **His parents searched a day's journey** among relatives, then returned.
- **After three days they found him in the temple** among the teachers.
- **He was hearing and asking questions;** all were astonished at his understanding and answers.
- **Mary said, "thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."**
- **Jesus' first recorded words:** "wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"
- **His parents did not understand.**
- **He went home and was subject to them.**
- **Mary kept these sayings in her heart.**
- **Jesus increased in wisdom, stature, and favour with God and man.**
- **The Bible records no miracles in his childhood;** his first was at Cana.

God's Will and Intent

- **God gave His Son a real childhood** in an obedient, God-honouring home.

- **God filled him with wisdom** as he grew, and His grace was upon him.
- **God was his Father** — and Jesus knew it.
- **God set a path that "must" be walked** — to the cross, the resurrection and the ascension.
- **God honours obedience** to parents.
- **God wants His children to grow** in every way.
- **God exalted the obedient Son** to His right hand, and through him calls us to be His sons and daughters.