



# sunday 2nd august 2009

## study 1... about God

Luke 2:41-53

**Luke 2:49** "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

We move on from our 'Got Questions' series to some even more important questions than the ones we ask of God... the ones he asks of us. The first thing Luke records after the birth of Jesus is that at the age of twelve he was in the temple "asking them questions" (2:46). Asking questions was always a crucial part of Jesus' ministry. Questions of the heart. Questions of our hearts. Questions that ultimately could not only be asked, but also only answered, by him.

In this first study we meet Jesus as a 12 year old (the key apprenticeship year for a Jewish boy as he approaches 13 and adult responsibilities). He should be trailing his father Joseph everywhere, asking him questions, learning his trade and learning about God, especially at such an important occasion as the Passover. This episode gives us a glimpse at Jesus as a boy knowing there is another apprenticeship underway where he is listening to his Father in heaven. It's as though Mary says "you should be with your father" and Jesus, at the temple, says "I am". 18 years later his Father would announce Jesus as his Son and pour his Spirit upon him (Luke 3:21-23). Jesus would then announce that this relationship would be made available to all his disciples (Luke 11:1-13) and we also will be able to call God Father (11:2) and receive the Spirit (11:13). Luke assures us that the boy Jesus goes home and is obedient to his parents (which is necessary for him in offering up a completely righteous life) but we sense that there is another journey ahead in his being obedient to his real Father (and Luke writes the body of his gospel as a journey to Jerusalem and back to the temple—see 9:51) . And after dying on the cross and rising from the dead, the 3 days as a 12 year old where he "had" to be at the temple is matched by the 3 days after another Passover where Jesus "had" to suffer (Lk 24:26,46) ... suffering that won us the relationship with God where we are his Spirit-filled children. He was obedient to his parents and obedient to his Heavenly Father... obedient to the death. Incredibly, God now sees his obedience in us because we are in him.

### SOME NOTES ON QUESTIONS

Q1. See Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6. Luke starts and finishes his gospel at the temple. As the meeting place between God and man it pre-figures Jesus' ministry in fulfilling its role.

Q2. "So it was thought" are key words in 3:23. Jesus obeyed his earthly father Joseph but we learn as we read on in the gospel what it means for Jesus to have God as his Father (3:38) and to be obedient to him.

Q3. Not only does Jesus ask questions he seems to always need to be the one to provide the answers. Or the answer—himself.

Q4. See the introduction above.

Q5. While the boy Jesus was obedient to his parents there is a later tension that develops in his ministry as he does the work of his heavenly Father and as he redefines family in those terms.

Q6. See also Lk 24:26, 46. Even as a 12 year old Jesus is conscious of the divine mission he has come to earth to carry out.

Q7. I suppose we have to be careful with this question in that we don't really know how much Jesus understood as he grew up—but it is an interesting question to think through just to appreciate Jesus as both fully human and fully God.

Q8. Ok it's a leading question. But Christianity has been around so long and had so much influence that even non-Christians or other 'faiths' talk of us as being God's children. But Jesus' invitation to personally call God was (i) radical and new ... & (ii) only possible by his cleansing death winning us the gift of the Spirit by whom we call God Father (see the Galatians passage in digging deeper).

Q9. See Ephesians 5:1ff, for example.