**“The Obedient Child: Did He Know?”**

#

Luke 2:41-52

 Advent Midweek 2

In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

To review: the **overall** theme for our midweek Advent series of meditations is “**When** Heaven Met Earth,” which is what Advent is all about—**when God’s Son came to earth to be a flesh-and-blood human and when He will be returning on the final day to call the faithful to glory and make all things new**, judging the faithless to the eternal tragedy of condemnation. The beginning and then completing of salvation will, with those 2 comings, have **fully taken place**.

The sub-theme for this short (3-part) series is “Advent **Answers to Hard Questions that Hardly Anybody is even Asking**” and this all came from confirmation questions, this one: “When Jesus was our age, did He **know that He was God?**” Last week’s was focused on “The **Birth** **of God”, becoming a baby born in Bethlehem** and, next Wednesday, we’ll discover Him as, quote, “A **Man’s Man**”. But tonight:

**WHEN JESUS WAS A BOY, DID HE KNOW THAT HE WAS GOD?**

We plan to find some answer to that question observing the 12 year old boy Jesus in the temple: “The **Obedient** Child.”

**I**

Parents did their part to make sure Jesus knew God. There was the angel visits and miracle of the birth of Jesus. They (no doubt) told Him of all of that. But we know little about His youth. Passages before this call Joseph and Mary **faithful parents obedient to the Law**, they **got** Jesus circumcised on His 8th day and **brought** Him to the temple on His 40th for the rite of purification. They **did** what was their duty.

For parents **parallel** **today**, there’s a high priority to baptizing our children and raising them to know God, attending to their **eternally-significant teaching** and **hearing of divine Words**.

Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt to preserve Jesus endangered by Herod, then returned to their Galilee home in Nazareth, where Scripture says He “grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, the favor of God upon Him”.

That “favor of God” Gabriel said also of Mary and now of Jesus. Her favor was in Him as the “bearer of God”, a special thing unfolding through her in Him birthed and growing in stature and age.

**II**

Obvious, Jesus didn’t stay a baby forever. He (like the rest of us) **grew** to be a toddler, walking, then talking, learning to read and write. He **grew** just like any child would. In each stage, how **wonderful it would have been to watch His**.

We don’t know about challenges in His younger childhood, but He grew, we know, in the normal life we see our children growing in. Maybe some sniffles from time to time—maybe some cuts and scrapes—but we know our days have challenges for children, and the days of His growth have to be no different in that.

And, then, we hear of Him at 12, staying behind at Jerusalem’s temple. Why does this “obedient” child **seem so dis-obedient at this point?** Why did He cause so much **worry** in His parents … for **3 days**? Imagine your panic for 3 days? Is **this** the **behavior** **of one knowing Himself as God’s Son?**

**III**

To what level did Jesus’ parents **realize** Him as God while raising Him as faithfully as they knew how? Angels told the parents that He’s the “Son of God”, but did they **understand**, asking (no doubt) regularly “**what child is this?**” For that matter, do any of us really know what our children will **grow into** and **become** when they’re grown?

Twice Luke records that Mary “treasured” things of Jesus and “pondered them in her heart”. Upon His birth then after this 12 year old temple incident, probably (most certainly) the remembrance of the angel’s words brought, anew, “what child would this be?” and, even, “who is He?” Was her knowledge incomplete? Even years later everybody was asking “could this be the Messiah?” and could she have asked that with some regularity. Scripture records her getting into the way of His mission wanting Him not to “embarrass the family” at a wedding. Mary and Joseph were doubtless **far less than clear** about Jesus as God. How **could** anyone fathom this?

**IV**

So, back to the initial question: did He know He was God as a child then adolescent? Did this young boy, even, know what He was doing … and what was in store for Him. Did He know that He was to fulfill the prophets Words from the Old Testament, promised to do so. And, if so, what a burden that would be for any 12 year old’s shoulders.

Hear from that 12 year old Himself: “**Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s house?**” That’s **why** He was at the temple, as He’d said to His parents … and He expected them to know that as well. **He knew** … and was **reminding parents** that **He was the Son of God** and **must be about the business of His Father in Heaven**. **He knew** **that He’d come to earth on a mission of salvation … that He was the one-and-only man (boy) and God who could save** …

… which **qualifies** what we might think was dis-obedient human behavior. He **was** “obedient” to His parents—respectful, “submitting to them” as our text says, but they’d only **assumed** that He should be leaving Jerusalem with the crowds; they’d never **instructed Him to**. And **Jesus knew that He had a job to do centered in the temple there**.

See, Jesus was not only always God but (since God) all-knowing. **At one and the same time, He was all-knowing yet** **humanly growing** …

**V**

… which makes it all the more marvelous that He “**learned things**”. In that portion of His incarnate state (a state of “**humiliation**” as its called), He didn’t always **use** His divine omniscience. To save us, He used every bit of what He needed to, but **had to save us as, also, fully a man**. That’s **why** He asked questions in the temple. He **learned** (and also **taught**) the **way we do:** by **study and asking hard questions that really ought to be asked**.

From the Old Testament prophets, Jesus learned that “although He was a Son, He **learned obedience through what He suffered**”. Hebrews 5:8 clarifies that. Paul writes in Philippians 2 that “He **became obedient to death, even death on a cross**”. **He knew (Jesus did) that this would be the full and final payment for the sins of the world.** **Above all the prophets taught,** **THIS** **Jesus learned well, reinforced by His divine knowledge**.

As a boy even, Jesus knew that He was God … and so are we given to. The Advent message is that “**God became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.**” **Amen.**