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St. Luke 2:40-52:

## **The Word Made Flesh as a Boy**

- I. Thinking of Us
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St. Luke 2:40-52

Dear Friends in Christ,

I have two pieces of information that I gathered from the internet. First, "A light-year is the distance a beam of light travels in a single Earth year, which equates to approximately 6 trillion miles...". The farthest galaxies discovered so far are over 14 trillion light years away. Second, "Our...spaceships, like Apollo, reach speeds around...24,500 mph. It would take around 27 thousand years to travel one light year ([www.google.co./search](http://www.google.co./search))." I wouldn't buy a ticket for a trip!

In "light" of what we're considering this morning, we don't to want miss this: The universe - with all its galaxies and stars and planets and life on earth - the universe was created by God with words in 6 twenty-four hour days. He spoke His Word and it came to be. It's mind boggling! And here we are, 11 days after celebrating the birth of the Jesus, who, as the Apostle John wrote, was the Word made flesh and "lived for a while among us (Jn.1:1b,14)."

It has been stated, "Whether you condemn or deny God's existence is to say something about Him, which is the act of a theologian." Most theologians of the day can be identified by such words as "I think God is," or, "I feel God is...". Who cares? We're here to learn from . . .

## THE WORD MADE FLESH AS A BOY

### I. Thinking of Us

"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 (vv.41,42)." Twelve years old. The One who has no beginning and has no end takes on flesh and submits to parental authority - not to discover what it's like to be human or live with humans - but that you and I would understand how much He understands and loves us. He attends the Feast of the Passover which He had instituted centuries before; the feast that featured the Passover Lamb that foreshadowed John's words concerning Jesus: "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn.1:29)" - Jesus.

We heard the words, "...And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom (v.42a)." Twelve years old was when a Jewish boy became "a Son of the Law," that is, would learn and observe its teachings. God in the flesh submits to the custom of learning the Law that He had given through Moses centuries before. We can't comprehend this. R.C.H. Lenski wrote:

It is impossible for us to penetrate this development in Jesus...His mind and his soul, which were truly human indeed, grew...in perfection and in power beyond anything that is possible to sinful mortals...We see his mind and his soul in full action during his ministry, a mind and soul that are vastly beyond those of mere man (Lenski, Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, p.160).

It was the Apostle Paul who wrote:

...though he was in the form of God, (He) did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Phil.2:6-8).

How often do we stop to think about this; how much God loves us? To think about The Word Made Flesh As A Boy; twelve years old and living for you and me and doing everything necessary to remove from us the condemnation of our sin; to win our eternal life? As Paul wrote, "And being found in appearance of a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross (Phil.2:8)." He was thinking of us.

## II. Teaching

He was also teaching! We're told:

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. And 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 fear and distress (vv.43-48).

So, the questions fly, don't they? "How could Jesus do this to His parents? Why didn't He tell them where He was going?" Well, evidently, it was not uncommon for children to move around with other children in a setting like that. If it was this time and this place, parents would be going out of their minds. But, above everything, This is God in the flesh making the journey with them. Evidently, the words the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary hadn't fully registered:

"...do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God. And behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end (Lk.1:31-33)."

And, evidently, Joseph hadn't digested this word:

"...an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins (Mt.1:20,21).

And get this, "... they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions." And this, they were "amazed at his understanding and his answers." Got it? Through His answers He was clarifying their answers and teaching them!

## III. Saves

What we see in the reactions of Mary and Joseph remind us of how human thinking and emotion can set aside the clarity and meaning of God's Word, especially this Word to Joseph: "...you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sin." This is the issue of the entire Scripture; not one thing to do with a heaven on earth! It's what God said through Jeremiah concerning His people: "...they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more (Jer.31:34)."The Word Made Flesh came to Save us. This is the issue of our lives as Christians.

It's amazing and horrifying how fallen human nature will twist, ignore, or reject the clear Word of God and live in delusion. For most, Jesus is a fiction. For many, and much of the church, He is a nice person who accepts what anybody wants to believe, making His love a permissive love. And for much of the church, walking with Him has been relegated to the back seat of flesh driven priorities.

So consider this: "After three days they found him in the temple." Remember that Jesus said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking about the temple of his body (Jn.2:19-21)." The constructed temple foreshadowed Christ, the ultimate Temple of Sacrifice for the sin of the world.

In the Book of Jonah we're told, "And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights (Jonah1:17)." Moving to St. Matthew's Gospel we're confronted by these words of Jesus: "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Mt.12:40)."

All of this is a part of the most astounding testimony to the inspiration of Holy Scriptures. Astounding testimony to a world so wrapped up in itself that the only unchanging thing it has to offer is...the grave. He presents Himself to us in the written and spoken Word. His presence in Word and Sacrament lifts us from the dying and death of this life to eternal life. As the writer of Hebrews states:

Since the children have flesh and blood (that's us; subject to decay and death), he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death (Heb.2:14,15).

So, there He is, God in the flesh at the age of 12; Creator of all things, making His journey to Calvary for us, doing everything for our forgiveness and eternal life. So tell me, what is the most important thing in our day to day living, as we run and labor for . . . what?

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott