

The Mind of Christ Week 9

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Let's start in **Luke 2:41-50** NASB

This was a trip made to Jerusalem and Jesus got left behind accidentally. This brings up all kinds of questions in my mind, as we'll see.

⁴¹ Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; ⁴³ and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, ⁴⁴ but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. ⁴⁶ Then, **after three days** they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. ⁴⁸ When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "[s] Son, (and I wish I knew the inflection of her voice when she said this – 'Son') why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I [t] have been anxiously looking for You." ⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's [u] house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which He [v] had made to them.

There is a lot in this story that raises some questions about Jesus. We're trying to get into the mind of Jesus and here he is; a twelve-year-old. Let's see. Do I have any grandkids that are 12 right now? Sarah is 11. (Alison shared that she has a 12-year-old). Twelve is usually right before they hit that rough spot in the road when they start into middle school and lots of things start changing.

This event to Jerusalem was not His first trip to Jerusalem. His parents had taken Him every year for the Passover feast. The mind of Christ growing up in Jewish society was shaped by events like the Passover. Jesus sat at the center of that Passover meal yearly, and I assume being a Jewish boy, He asked the questions of the meaning of the event. During the Passover, the children were supposed to ask the parents, "What is the meaning of this? Why do we celebrate the Passover?" They would then explain the Passover story to them. They did this every year. It would probably be a good custom for kids today (Christmas or Easter), if we had that conversation with the kids asking questions like, "What is the meaning of this event?"

When He was told of Israel's departure from Egypt by Moses, perhaps he was reminded that He also had an exodus from Egypt as well. I don't know if Jesus was reminded of that but there would be a parallel there with the exodus that Jesus made from Egypt. Special sacrifices were a part of Jesus' life and had to have an effect on His thinking. But the question is "how"? He grew up with a sense of history and a sense of His place in the story. The difference between Jesus celebrating the Passover with His family and us

celebrating Christmas is that He is **in** the story . . . He is **in** the Passover story. He is the Passover lamb.

When they would celebrate Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, He was in that story as well as most all of the other events . . . the sacrifices they made and circumcision. All of these things have some relationship with Him in the processes, either a type or antitype.

How does that affect somebody if they know, if they're sitting there at the Passover and they know the elements of the feast? Does Jesus understand that 'that' was the precursor to Him? Did he realize that this was His story that was going to be 'lived out'?

When He was thirty, John introduced Him as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. I'm raising the issue here, 'how do you, as a child, celebrate year after year rituals that are really all about you'? You're not just thinking about history but about your own place **in** history. I don't know the answers to His recognition of all of that or when it began to be clear to Him, but certainly at twelve it would be reasonable to think that He knew by then what was going on.

This is missing today in the lives of so many children. They don't know the story so they don't know their **place** in the story today. Did Jesus, at age 12, know that He was pre-figured by the **lamb**; was he aware that He would one day save the Israelites by posting His blood, (in a sense, figuratively) on the doorposts of the houses, and deliver **them** from the bondage of death, the Law and sin? Did He understand that when they were reenacting the blood on the doorposts of the houses, that that blood represented the blood that He was going to shed one day to save people from their sins just as they had been delivered from the angel of death?

It just seems to me that if I had known as a 12-year-old boy, that feast would have taken on a very, very serious meaning. It would have been scary to know that something like that was going to happen to me.

Jean: Do you think that he realized that God was his Father and that He was God's Son?

Rod: I think by age twelve He was fully aware of who He was, and why He was on Earth was becoming clear to Him. That's my opinion. That **may** be one of the reasons why the story of His age was put here. When we think of that 'age of accountability', that rite of passage where things begin to become clear, we might not be in that concrete stage of life where you begin to put things together. When I was 12-years-old, I was putting a whole lot together.

Jean: How old were you when you were baptized?

Rod: I was 10.

He knew at thirty, obviously, because He was proclaimed by John to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. But when did He know for sure, and what effect did it have on Him? Are we told the story of age 12 because by then He knew what His Father's business was? When He tasted lamb, did He think of His future death on the

cross? I wonder if lamb (or goat) was His favorite food. Remember the goat that was killed for the sins of the people, and the scapegoat that was set free (Leviticus 16:6-10). Most of us know that we will die one day, but we're not told how or when. Jesus had rich stories of the past that told His future. The Passover feast of Unleavened Bread lasted a total of 8 days (Exodus 12). The Jews considered a boy to be a man at age 13. That was the 'golden' age when he had his Bar Mitzvah. Girls had a Bat (or Bas) Mitzvah. This story raises the issue of custom, or what is customary for the family. Jesus' family had customs that He was exposed to and that shaped Him. "Going to church" shapes children just by the fact that parents go to church. Regardless of what church it is or what the customs of that church are (high liturgy or free flowing), whatever they have been exposed to at church has a great affect on them. I don't know how many people I've studied with over the years who 'went to church' a lot when they were kids. They cannot tell you a whole lot about what they learned, but they can tell you about the effects the church had on them (sometimes positive and sometimes not).

Both of Jesus parents participated in the Passover. We don't know the length of Joseph's life, but we know that he was alive at this Passover. Joseph does not seem to be around when Jesus was 30. It is noteworthy that they spent the full number of days in Jerusalem. In thinking about that, with the 8 days of the feast, and all the travel involved in that, it could have been 10 or 11 days. They may have taken a couple of weeks off work for just this one feast every year in Jerusalem. I believe this is significant. You had to take time off from work and save money for travel expenses, money for Jerusalem – food and a place to stay so this was a real commitment. I think for me, it would be like when I grew up you went to church for Sunday morning bible class, Sunday morning worship, Sunday night, Wednesday night, gospel meetings, fellowship means and all other times that the church met—**that** was the commitment I grew up with. How many hours and hours and hours ... That is what shows the seriousness of your family.

Luke refers to Jesus as 'the boy' (pais - παῖς). This is a child—not yet an adult. He is under the authority of His parents. Jesus was no ordinary child, mature beyond His years, and I would probably say that He was 'gifted'. It's a technical term we use today in schools, but I would say Jesus was a gifted child as we use the term today. Did He excel, and how? Did he excel in all areas of life? Was he athletic? Was He well rounded? Did he study a lot? Did He have access to books (since books were not readily available to people in those days) or did He have to go to the synagogue for the reading of the law or the books of the prophets? It was not likely that He was staying up at night going over books unless He was writing some things down and going back over them. So we don't know if He had access to books or not. Did He spend time with local teachers of the Law? I wonder if He hung out at the synagogue and had conversations with the Rabbis and teachers of the Law in Nazareth. We don't know, but trying to get into that 12-year-old mind and what He'd been doing...I just go back to my own childhood. At 12, I'd had much exposure to the teachings of the Bible, the church, Christian School, and I found it fascinating to talk to people—older people, who had studied the Bible a lot more than I had. I can remember the times in my life when I was exposed to more teaching, particularly missionaries. We had several missionaries, two or three who had come from Africa. I loved it when they were in town with their stories—it was just fascinating to

me. But we wonder what Jesus was exposed to growing up; how He was able to sit in the Temple Courts where the teachers of the Law (and some of the upper echelons were). They may have come from different areas and were there for the Passover. Jesus was there for about 3 days. Maybe one of them said something like, “You’re parents will be back quickly.” There must have been some adults that would not let Him go hungry.

But when his parents were returning home, Jesus stayed behind. But how do we take this? I mean, I would be in big trouble if I was a kid and I didn’t stay with **my** family and my mom had to find me after three days. I’d be in a heap of trouble.

Jean: I don’t know why the parents wouldn’t know that He wasn’t with them. I lost one of my kids once. I left them in another town ...

Alison: I left one when Ron was in ministry. My Mom and dad and my granddad were all here. We left the church building and all headed to lunch at a restaurant and when we got there, there was no “Doug” so we had to go back to the church and get him.

Rod: We did that a couple of times with our kids. One was sleeping under the bench.

Alison: It’s like a second home for them so he wasn’t scared or anything like that.

Rod: Timothy was still asleep when we got to him.

Carole: What gets me is what did Joseph and Mary think? How do you tell God that you **lost His** son?

Rod: Oops

Carole: Of all kids ...

Ruth: Jesus said, “Didn’t you know that I had to be in my **Father’s house**.” I know it was Jesus Christ, but He said, “**My Father**”. He didn’t call it “The Temple”. He called it, “**My Father’s House**”.

Rod: Later He’s going to say the same thing when He drives out the money changers saying, “My Father’s House is to be a house of prayer...” (Matthew 21:13).

Well, He was so engaged in conversation with Jewish teachers that He did not realize that His parents had left. Maybe, and I'm asking a question. This seems more reasonable to me than Jesus simply ignoring or disobeying His parents (“I'm not going with you). I think He was so absorbed in conversation that He didn’t realize they left and later He realized that He wasn’t with them.

Carole: It was explained to me when I first learned about this, that when they traveled, the women would go ahead of the men since they walked slower. The men stayed behind visited and talked, and they would leave later on and meet up at night. So Dad was sure

Jesus must be with mom, and mom knew that He must be back with Dad and I'll see them tonight. Then they meet. "You don't have him?" "He's not with you?"

Rod: That's reasonable. It was a big caravan.

Brian: It's very interesting because it shows His nature both as a man developing and as God. As the Son of God, He is consumed by the thinking of the process of Passover, righteousness and the history of Israel. As a 12-year-old boy, He is single-minded, focused on the dinosaurs, the space-crafts the things of 12-year old boys. It's just a very human thing to do – and all of a sudden, His parents are gone. Then He goes to the teachers to try to get answers to His questions. This is exciting. And when you put God and this boy together with the developing sense of who he is...

Rod: I think it's fascinating. There must be more of His childhood and stories we don't know about, but we get this little window into this piece of His childhood. He may have been pre-occupied. His parents didn't realize He was not with them. Did He realize at some point that He was left? At some point He must have thought, "Wait. Where is everybody?" When it dawned on Him that had been left, did He then decide to stay with the teachers of the Law as a safe place for Him to be as a 12-year-old boy, rather than go "on the road" to try to find His parents?

Brian: It just says it was obvious to Him that He had to be about His Father's business. What else could there be in this world but to be about the Father's business?

Rod: Well, I could tell you this. If I left my boys behind, I would not have automatically thought that they would have been about their father's business. (Laughter) I remember one time Brenda and I left to go somewhere and she forgot something so we went back to the house to get it. Our boys were teenagers and we had told them, "Do not drive the other car." We had been in the car. So when we pulled back in the driveway, the other car was gone. They had been joy-riding around the neighborhood and they pulled back in and "Ooh".

Another question is, "Did Jesus remain in a public place for His parents to find Him? If He had gone home with someone, His parents would have had a hard time finding him. There is so much that we don't know. Was He scared to be left behind? How big was the caravan they were in? He had brothers and sisters at this point. Maybe Joseph and Mary were so busy keeping up with the younger ones, they didn't worry about the 12-year old. So they looked for Him among the relatives first. What was the moment like when they realized that He was not there? Was this three literal days—three 24-hour periods, or could it have been part of three days (like when He was in the resurrection)? So it was anywhere from 26 hours to three 24-hour periods. It was a long time to be separated requiring at least one night's sleep. He must have slept somewhere ...

Twenty years later, did this night play some role in Jesus' death? They found Jesus in the sacred place – the Temple precinct. He probably wasn't in the Temple proper but in one of the courtyards. He was likely in the 'court of the men' where the men were allowed. If this is so, then Mary would not have been with those who found Him. She wouldn't be

allowed in that part of the temple courts. Joseph may have found Him and brought Him out to His mother. That would have been an interesting conversation between Joseph and Jesus.

We find Him reuniting with His mother. I can only imagine what Joseph's conversation with Jesus would have been like from the time he found Him to the time he reunited Him with His mother. I can only imagine what that conversation was like. (Son, we need to have a little talk here. I'm okay and I understand. You're 12 years old. I'm glad you're safe. I'm cool with this. Things happen. Mom may not be quite as understanding as me so just prepare yourself. You are going to get an earful.) I don't know.

Jesus was in the midst of these teachers (didaskolos - διδασκαλων) of the law. The Jewish doctrines of these Rabbis could have been the very ones that tried to trick Him throughout His ministry. I wonder if some of the rabbis were young enough, and knew Him as a 12-year-old boy that when He was thirty, they may have been some of the very ones who engaged Him and tried to trick Him into some contradiction about the Law.

It is reasonable to talk about the women who had lost their children, that perhaps they knew Him when He was an adult at the start of His ministry. Did they make the connection that He was partially the reason for their losing their children (when the babies were being killed in Bethlehem)?

Were these some of the same teachers who tried to trip Him up eighteen years later? Could they, then, already have had a taste of how smart He was? *In Jesus' sermon in Matthew 23, there was a strong denunciation of the people. Could His experience with these people have dated to the age of 12?*

In the temple, how did He come to be among "them"? Did He seek them out? Did He listen for a while before He asked these questions? Did He raise His hand to be acknowledged? It says, **He listened to them, He heard them and He asked questions** (Lk. 1:16).

I wonder what questions Jesus asked these teachers of the Law? I would love to know the questions that He asked. It doesn't tell us. Was He seeking to expose them? Was He already on the attack and trying to expose them, or was He just seeking information? Was the reception calm or was it a **heated** discussion? Now He's only 12 years old. *(Now, at that age, I could be in some pretty heated discussions about matters of the Law according to the churches of Christ. I could get into really heated discussions on those matters. I mean, I could argue a lot.)* Were the topics discussed on this occasion the same as those that would reach some of His later teachings? Did He learn some things from them that He later incorporated into His teaching?

Their reaction to Jesus was **astonishment**. The word means, "To put out of his place". It seemed so out of place for a 12-year-old boy to be able to ask these kinds of questions . . . to engage in this kind of conversation. It was **astonishing** to them.

Jesus' answers seemed out of place to them. I don't know if they were out of place because they were contradictory to them, or they were out of place because He seemed to

be so smart. In Luke 24:22 the Emmaus disciples said that “the women were **amazed** when they went out to the tomb.” Certainly, something was “**out of place**” when they reached the tomb.

Simon, the magician, “**amazed**” people with his tricks in Acts 8:11. In Matthew 12:23, the crowds were **amazed (astonished)** at Jesus’ healings. In Mark 3:21 they thought Jesus had lost His senses (**He was out of His mind**)...this same word. He was “beside himself” (exesta - εξεστη). What He was doing seemed “out of place” to them. So when someone was “astonished” at something, it does not always mean something positive. It may just seem odd. It could be odd in a good way, like “Wow!” or it could be odd in a bad way like, “that doesn’t seem right”. The word depends on the context. Maybe His just “being there” seemed out of place. 12-year-old boys don’t end up being in the Temple talking to the Teachers of the Law. What’s He doing there? Another place where this word is used in 2 Corinthians 5:13, “**For if we [e] are beside ourselves (mad), it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you.**” Something unusual...out of place.

Jesus’ *intelligence* and questions were “out of place” (unexpected, not easily explained). Intelligence means that things have “come together”. It could be a strange coming together of different trains of thought, and blend them into some teaching or some argument. That was the idea of *intelligence*. So when you see kids, you look for signs of their putting things together—{making sense of them} in their mind.

It can be very simple things. I was with little Molly today. We have a little ritual that we do where I lean toward her and she’ll lean her head towards me and we’ll touch heads. And then, she’ll back up, she’ll come around and grab my face, and sometimes she’ll kiss me. It’s an endearment to her. And then the third thing she’ll do is try to put my glasses on her face. But I watched her today while Brenda was in the ER. As a one-year-old, I know she’ll be into everything. If it’s on her level, she will try to touch. But if I say, “Uh uh”, she’ll stop. She may try a little bit, but she doesn’t keep pushing it. She may forget and come back to it later, but for about 10 minutes, she’ll remember the “uh uh”, she’ll stop, back off, and go do something else. She’s a very unusual child for a 1-year-old. And to me, that’s pretty intelligent. She doesn’t cry. She’ll look at you to see if you are really serious, if you really mean this, and then she’ll go on to something else. This is extreme intelligence here.

Intelligence is when everything comes together ... everything begins to come together. (Sunesei - συνεσει). It is sagaciousness (**insight, perceptiveness, prudence, sage, wise sapient,**). It’s discernment. This word is used a lot in the New Testament.

There was astonishment to Jesus’ intelligence. They were astonished that at 12, He could put things together so well. He understood what they were talking about, He made sense of it, and asked intelligent questions about it. That is one way that you know someone is “getting something”; it is by the questions they ask you. That is what they were recognizing in Jesus. That is a **KEY** insight into the mind of Jesus. They were astonished at His intelligence. At twelve! How astonished will people be at His intelligence at Thirty? They must have wondered where He got all of this learning. Amazing teaching.

We're getting a preview at 12 as to what kind of a teacher Jesus will become at 30. Let's look at the meaning of Jesus question in Matthew 22:42, "Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question: ⁴² "What do you think about [p] the Christ, whose son is He?" That question was a question put there by God.

1 Cor. 1:20, 25

²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²⁵ **Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. *What seems out of place to man is exactly in the right place to God.*** Things that seem strange to men, God may look at and think, "Why don't they get this?" Jesus would say it ... "Don't you understand? Don't you understand what I am saying to you?"

So much seems so "out of place" to the people of His day... of the teaching that He was giving them. So they were astonished at Jesus' answers as a response to certain questions or circumstances like Matthew 3:15 when Jesus was going to be baptized by John, He said, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." The answers display no doubt to the wisdom of God, but they may not have appeared so to these teachers. The answers were not always well received by the teachers as we see.

Now, here's Mary. Jesus is being reunited with His mother. Mary took Jesus' actions personally. She said, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I [t] have been anxiously looking for You." She could just as easily have said, "Why have you done this to *me, Jesus?*" "*Why have You treated me this way?*" I believe that **this** is the intent of this because I don't think that Jesus was trying to do **anything** to His mother. (It's human nature, sometimes, to blame things on someone else **even when** you did it yourself. Mary asks, "Why have you done this to **me**?") Human nature wants to blame it on someone else. Why did **you** make **me** do this?

We had a professor at Harding, James D. Bales, who was always talking way up here – a couple of Doctor's degrees and philosophy degrees and he (his wife, really) was telling the story of their little boy. Their 4-year-old son one day came up to the professor and tried to kick him and James stepped aside. Their son lost his balance and fell down. The little boy looked up at his dad and said, "Look what you made me do!" His dad looked down at him and said, "Don't rationalize, son." (Laughter). He's telling his 4-year old that he needs to understand that he himself caused his own fall.

So it is human nature when we feel ashamed of something, we often have to try to turn it around and at least find someone to share the blame with us.

Carole: She's really saying, "How could you scare me this way. If you had been with me I wouldn't have been so scared."

Rod: Well, I think it's this "Jewish Mother" kind of thing. (giggles)

Now, Mary called Jesus a "Teknon" (meaning "son" referring to a little child - τεκνον). We know he was a boy already, but to her He was a child. He's not 12. He's not almost a teenager. He's a child. That's what Mary calls Him. So in this situation she is

establishing her authority over Him and the justification for her anxiety that she has experienced over the past several hours (days). She's expressing her sorrow, **agony**, grief, and torment. The word for **agony** is (adunemenoi - αδυνωμενοι). So this was like Hell to Mary.

It is the same word as used in Luke 16:24 about "**the rich man and Lazarus**". The rich man wanted Lazarus to dip into the water and cool his tongue for he was also in **agony** in Hell.

So for Mary, this was like Hell. I mean she...they...were suffering greatly at the loss of Jesus. This was not like leaving your son at the local church and you go back to find him a few minutes later. This was a part of *three days* and Mary is out of her mind with worry.

So those are the words that were quoted—not Joseph's words, but Mary's. We don't know anything Joseph said. I wonder if he was as stressed as Mary was. I don't know. But notice how Jesus reacted to this intense distress of His parents. He seems to have stayed very calm. He gives a measured response. His first statement was a question. "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's [u] house?"

Why have you sought me? Why were you looking for me? That seems like a strange question. I don't think he was saying, "Why did you **come looking for** me?" It was more, "**Why didn't you know where I would be?**" Why were you seeking me when you should have known where I was all along. The word "**sought**" is the word seek, search for, (exateite - εξητειτε). It means also, 'to question' – why are you questioning me? That's a more accurate translation of this. Not why are you seeking me, but why are you questioning me? Should it not have been obvious to them where He would be? He seems to think that they should have known. What would most 12-year-old runaways have been doing? Probably **not** what Jesus was doing.

Alison: What would most worldly parents be thinking what was going on with their child when they don't have a grasp of life or being gifted. ...it would be extremely distracting. We can't think in those terms. – I couldn't hear the rest.

Rod: That is exactly it. The way Jesus is responding indicates that He had thought what they should be thinking about this ... that they should have been thinking about this differently.

Okay, I have too much more to do and I don't have the time. We'll pick this up again next Wednesday night.