

The Four Gospels of the Bible, Visit to Temple

Luke 2: 41-52

⁴¹ Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. (NIV)

Every year Jesus' parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up as they always did for the Feast. When it was over and they left for home, the child Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents didn't know it. Thinking he was somewhere in the company of pilgrims, they journeyed for a whole day and then began looking for him among relatives and neighbors. When they didn't find him, they went back to Jerusalem looking for him.

The next day they found him in the Temple seated among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions. The teachers were all quite taken with him, impressed with the sharpness of his answers. But his parents were not impressed; they were upset and hurt.

His mother said, "Young man, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been half out of our minds looking for you."

He said, "Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that I had to be here, dealing with the things of my Father?" But they had no idea what he was talking about.

So he went back to Nazareth with them, and lived obediently with them. His mother held these things dearly, deep within herself. And Jesus matured, growing up in both body and spirit, blessed by both God and people. (The Message)

Every year they went...

A perennial pilgrimage is the event on which we first read of Christ being about "the things of my Father." No doubt he was a dutiful child and, being the first of the siblings, was prone to more purpose than the others. Of course, being the eldest son had its benefits – along with the responsibilities and expectations of this traditional society and family. But on this trip, things were changing...

Missing in action

Imagine being without your child or children; of you being in one land, and your child somewhere else – though not sure quite where he is...or they are. The situation for the two parents could rend empathy from most parents who have experienced the crisis – or who has lost a child. The child is missing in action, and the parent are late in discovering it. What to do?

Hold these things

This expression, "hold these things", is probably most associated as the prelude for "...to be self evident; that all men are created equal." As it was for Mary, to *hold these things* was to reflect on what Jesus did and said – it's significance for the moment of *missing in action*, the message of the angel regarding the conception, and all else that might matter to a mother...

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