

July 12, 2020

Lesson 6

THE BOY JESUS

ADULT/YOUTH

ADULT/YOUNG ADULT TOPIC: Wisdom that Amazes

YOUTH TOPIC: Wisdom that Amazes

CHILDREN

GENERAL LESSON TITLE: Jesus in the Temple

CHILDREN'S TOPIC: Questions Are Good!

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leviticus 12:1-8; Numbers 3:11-13

ADULT/YOUTH

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Ecclesiastes 3:1-15;

Luke 2:39-52

PRINT PASSAGE: Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7b;

Luke 2:39-52

ADULT KEY VERSE: Luke 2:40

YOUTH KEY VERSE: Luke 2:46

CHILDREN

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Ecclesiastes 3:1-15;

Luke 2:39-52

PRINT PASSAGE: Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7;

Luke 2:39-52

KEY VERSE: Luke 2:46

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7b; Luke 2:39-52—KJV

TO EVERY thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

.....

7 a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.

.....

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7b; Luke 2:39-52—NIV

THERE IS a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.

.....

7 a time to be silent and a time to speak.

.....

39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.

40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

41 Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover.

42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom.

43 After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in

returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.

44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends.

45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.

48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

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

50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

UNIFYING LESSON PRINCIPLE: Some young people amaze us with a wisdom that seems beyond their years. How should we respond to precocious wisdom? Ecclesiastes affirms that there is a time to speak and a time to be quiet, and Luke records that the teachers in the Temple were awed by the wisdom of twelve-year-old Jesus, but Mary and Joseph were confused and exasperated.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Upon the completion of this lesson, the students will be able to do the following:

1. Explore the account of Jesus' experience in the Temple at the age of twelve.
2. Sense the awe experienced by all those who witnessed Jesus' precocious wisdom as well as the angst experienced by Mary and Joseph.
3. Rejoice in the opportunity to know the wisdom of God through Jesus.

AGE-LEVEL POINTS TO BE EMPHASIZED

Teachers of ADULTS and YOUTH

- Jesus’ interaction with the Temple scholars is consistent with the affirmation in Ecclesiastes 3:7b.
- Jews were required to make three pilgrimages to Jerusalem each year: Passover/Unleavened Bread (see Exodus 12:6, 15-20, etc.), Pentecost (see Leviticus 23:15-21; etc.), and Tabernacles (see Exodus 23:16b; 34:22; etc.). Therefore, the Temple was a familiar place to Jesus by the time He was twelve (see Luke 2:41-42).
- “Be in my Father’s house” (Luke 2:49, NIV) can also be translated “be involved in my Father’s affairs” and “be among those belonging to my Father.” In either case, Jesus’ response indicates awareness that being in relationship with the heavenly Father was of greater importance than the earthly one of Mary’s question in Luke 2:48.
- Luke tells us that Jesus was raised by a devout Jewish family. His presence in the Temple with the teachers further shows His foundation in the Law and Prophets.

—Contrary to traditional interpretations, Jesus does not teach the elders; rather, He impresses them with His questions. Wisdom is exercised through cogent questions.

Teachers of CHILDREN

- Ecclesiastes 3:1 and 3:7b speak to the appropriateness of right timing, involving godly discernment as well as an awareness of God’s sovereignty.
- The Feast of Passover required all Jewish males to journey to Jerusalem.
- The journey to Jerusalem took place in caravans, so it would have been understandable for Mary to think that Jesus might have been with other relatives.
- Jesus’ presence in the Temple was not passive, but His questions and interactions with the teachers drew amazement among the teachers.
- Mary expressed to Jesus the concern and worries His disappearance caused.
- Jesus’ response (verse 49) can be connected to the book of Ecclesiastes in terms of God’s purposes and timing.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL SETTING OF THE LESSON

The book of Ecclesiastes was compiled by someone who identified himself by the Hebrew word *qoheleth*, which is commonly translated in English to mean “teacher” or “preacher.” This preacher went on to call himself “the son of David, king of Jerusalem” (1:1), continuing that he had “increased in wisdom more than anyone who had ruled over Jerusalem before me” (1:16) and was one who had collected many proverbs. With Solomon being the wisest man during his time and also being the writer of most of the book of Proverbs, it is safe to assume that Solomon is the *qoheleth* being referred

to in the opening verse. The book claims that the wisdom that inspired the content comes from one shepherd, the Lord Himself (12:11).

The timeless nature of the book’s wisdom makes it unnecessary to link it with any particular period. The writing of this book of the Bible is dated in the third or fourth century BC by some scholars; others date the book to the time of Solomon (therefore before Solomon’s death in 931 BC). Still others date the book’s writing sometime in the eight or seventh centuries BC, but no one can be really precise. The information contained in the book of Ecclesiastes is also reflected in the books of Psalms, Jobs, Proverbs, and the Song of Solomon. This book’s central message and focus is that the

course of life to be pursued is a God-centered life because the pleasures of life are not intrinsically fulfilling and cannot offer lasting satisfaction, but they can be enjoyed as gifts from God. The intent of the book of Ecclesiastes is to contend that there is nothing “under the sun” that can give meaning to life.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING OF THE LESSON

Some scholars opined that the Hebrew of this book shares similarities with post-biblical Hebrew and that there is a discernible influence from Greek philosophy. This opinion has been strengthened by the presence of a few Persian words and some Aramaic influence in the book of Ecclesiastes. Generally, Ecclesiastes is a book that teaches the reader how to traverse the spheres of life. It carries a core message: fulfillment is God’s business, and it gives us a naturalistic vision of life.

The setting for the book of Ecclesiastes is during the period of the early kingdom of Israel, before the division of Israel into the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. During this period, the kingdom of Israel encompassed the largest geographical area ever in its history, covering the majority of modern-day Palestine. Under the rule of King David and then King Solomon, the nation of Israel was truly in its golden period, a period we will see again when Christ returns to establish His kingdom.

Though some scholars argue that the purpose of Ecclesiastes was to expose the fundamental inadequacy of this paradigm, it is undeniable that the conventions of the genre had a profound influence on the development and organization of the text.

PROMINENT CHARACTER(S) IN THE LESSON

Jesus: Jesus was raised by a devout Jewish family. In this lesson, His presence in the Temple with the

teachers further shows His foundation in the Law and Prophets.

The Teacher/Preacher: The book of Ecclesiastes was compiled by someone who identified himself by the Hebrew word *qohleth*, which is commonly translated in English to mean “teacher” or “preacher.”

KEY TERMS IN THE LESSON

Everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1)—Greek: *pas* (pas): all; the whole; every kind of; “every thing” (KJV).

Heaven (Ecclesiastes 3:1)—Hebrew: *shamayim* (shaw-mah’yim): the usual Hebrew word for “heavens” (NIV) is *shamayim*, a plural form meaning “heights,” “elevations.”

Law (Luke 2:39)—Greek: *nomos* (nom’-os): usage; custom; that which is assigned, hence usage, law.

Season (Ecclesiastes 3:1)—Hebrew: *zeman* (zem-awn’): appointed time; time.

Speak (Ecclesiastes 3:7)—Hebrew: *dabar* (daw-bar’): to assert; to boast; to command; to counsel; to declare.

Time (Ecclesiastes 3:1)—Hebrew: *eth* (ayth): the basis of the Hebrew measurement of “time” was the day and the lunar month.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF THE LESSON

I. Introduction

- A. A Time for Everything
- B. Biblical Background

II. Exposition and Application of the Scripture

- A. Timing Is Everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7b)
- B. The Story of Jesus (Luke 2:39-45)
- C. His Father’s Business (Luke 2:46-52)

III. Concluding Reflection

I. INTRODUCTION

A. A Time for Everything

Ecclesiastes 3 teaches about seasons and discusses working and toiling. This chapter of the book speaks about injustice in the world—wicked people being in positions of power and how they act without justice, corrupting things that should be just. We can see from this chapter that there is a reward for every role people play in life; the good and bad will somehow be rewarded or punished. In this chapter of this Bible book, we are admonished to enjoy what we do while we still have time.

B. Biblical Background

The book of Ecclesiastes is read throughout the year during the Festival of the Lord or Jewish Memorial Holidays. Traditionally, it is read at the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles, and the background of the book is unique in that the Preacher (*Qoheleth*), though being a believer, often posed questions and made statements as though he was not. Consequently, all he says must be taken in the context of his conclusion.

This book of Ecclesiastes focuses on life and draws logical conclusions about life. However, we are to remember that when God is left out of the equation, life is empty and devoid of value. Ecclesiastes reminds us that an empty, futile life is not an inevitable predicament. If we remember God while we are still young, respect Him and keep His commandments, we will make it through life intact.

II. EXPOSITION AND APPLICATION OF THE SCRIPTURE

A. Timing Is Everything

(Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7b)

TO EVERY thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. . . . a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.

Solomon composes a brilliant treatise on the topic of timing. Timing is the ability to select the precise moment for doing something for the optimum effect. The truth is that there are some things that might be *right* for us but that does not necessarily mean that they are *ripe* for us. It is quite possible to be inside of God's will, but outside of God's timing. Although God's will is perfect, God still allows us plenty

of room for the exercise of our free will. This divine allowance often results in our revealing our wide variety of individual imperfections. From a spiritual perspective, a "season" is a specific time that God has designated for something to take place. If we are not in tune with God's will, it is entirely possible for us to miss God's appointed time and season for our lives. But when we are aligned with God's mind, we can be in the right places at the right time to be blessed by the remarkable timing of God.

There is an old saying that goes, "You have two ears and one mouth; let the majority rule." (See verse 7b.)

B. The Story of Jesus

(Luke 2:39-45)

And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

Nazareth was the geographical site where Jesus spent most of His early childhood (verse 39). It is important to remember that Jesus was both human as well as divine. The divine part of Jesus came from heaven, but the human part of Jesus dwelled on earth and experienced everything that humans experience.

Jesus grew strong in spirit, mind, intellect, and in understanding (verse 40). The fact that Jesus was full of wisdom is reflected by His speaking wisely while just a child of twelve years old when He held conversation with the elders in the Temple. Even as a child, Jesus was wise, pure, pleasing to God, and well-versed in divine Law.

Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem in observance of Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (Weeks or Pentecost), and Sukkot (Tabernacles, Tents or Booths) (verse 41). All Jewish males were required to participate in the festivities. Some of the strictest Jewish laws had been somewhat relaxed during the Jewish diaspora. Those who participated in all the festivities were considered devout and adhering to the rich traditions of the past.

Childhood (verse 42) for a Jewish boy was indicated by the following stages: age three—the boy was weaned and donned the fringed or tasseled garment as described in Numbers 15:38-41 and Deuteronomy 22:12; age five—education started, and the boy learned the Law through extracts written on scrolls, the Shemk, the Creed of Deuteronomy 2:4, the Hallel or Festival Psalms (Psalms 114–118; 136), and by school teachings; age twelve—the boy became more directly responsible for his obedience to the Law; age thirteen—he put on for the first time the phylacteries worn at the recital of his daily prayer (Matthew 23:5). *Phylacteries* are small leather boxes containing Hebrew texts on vellum, worn by Jewish men at morning prayer as a reminder to keep the Law.

Jesus did not stay behind in Jerusalem in intentional defiance of His parents (verse 43). In consideration of His combination of full divinity and humanity, the probable reason had more to do with His precocious nature and His thirst for knowledge and exposure to the sharp intellects in the Temple. He was most likely seeking wisdom in order to adequately fulfill His Father's will. The best way to understand this is to resist the urge to place this scenario into contemporary setting to try to make it make sense from today's perspective.

The parents of Jesus went an entire day's journey because they assumed that Jesus was in the care of relatives and extended family in the caravan (verse 44). It was only when they were unable to locate Him in the usual places and with the usual people that they changed their tactics. From a spiritual perspective, how often have we been confident that Jesus was with us, only to find out that He was nowhere around us? We look for the security of Jesus' presence in the company of family members

and friends, but after we make a good search, we find that we come up empty and are forced to change tactics.

C. His Father's Business

(Luke 2:46-52)

And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

On the third day after leaving Jerusalem (verse 46), Jesus was located in the place of worship. Even though He was just twelve, Jesus was not found playing with other children or enthralled in some mischief, but His father found Him in His Father's house. He was actually not in the Temple building itself, because that space was reserved for the Levitical priests. But He was in the "court" of the Temple (see Matthew 21:12). He was in dialogue with the teachers and the rabbis, who were the instructors of the people in matters of the Torah. He was both posing and answering questions.

Teachers and interpreters of the Law were impressed and amazed by the high level of knowledge and theological acumen Jesus demonstrated (verse 47). Perhaps Jesus was likewise very much at ease and enamored with the opportunity to dialogue with the rabbis and

instructors. God is not limited or restricted to whom He may use as an instrument to communicate the message of truth.

When Mother Mary discovered that Jesus had been in the Temple instead of with the rest of the family caravan, she responded to Him on a human level as a worried and concerned human mother who was speaking to a precocious and seemingly careless son who has gotten Himself in big trouble (verse 48). Her words were laced with motherly reproach as she understandably released her frustration on her son. However, even at that age He was strong enough to take it, as was evidenced by His response.

Jesus' response to His mother's in explaining His absence at first sounds disrespectful (verse 49). There are many seasoned mothers I know who would surely not have tolerated such a response. Jesus, of course, intended no disrespect but was quick to reveal the fact that He was indeed being obedient. But His obedience was to His heavenly Father rather than to His earthly father. His Father's business was for Him to serve as a prophet to the nations and to usher in the kingdom of God. Even though Joseph and Mary were the earthly parents of Jesus, they did not completely understand Him even though they were related (verse 50). That same trend continues today: Although we are spiritually related, we do not always understand.

The heart of Mary must have been so full because of all the things she had to store there (verse 51). Undoubtedly, there were many instances in which Mary observed things about Jesus that she had to deposit rather than share

because nobody else would quite understand. Even though Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus, Joseph was still honored and respected as was Mary.

There is not a great deal of information that is documented about the early life of Jesus (verse 52). We read about Jesus at birth and this snapshot of His life at age twelve. At that point, there is an eighteen-year gap during which we know very little about His life. Although this verse is brief, it can serve as a template for categorical growth in individuals between the ages of twelve and thirty. Jesus grew intellectually (wisdom), physically (stature), spiritually (favor with God), and socially (favor with man). This balanced approach to growth can produce a lifetime of positive results when one

is continually grounded in God's Word and led by God's Spirit.

III. CONCLUDING REFLECTION

Wise people have learned when to speak and when to keep silent. The right words at the right time can unlock previously dead-end situations. Conversely, the wrong words at the wrong time can build tall walls of division and offense. Reliance on the Holy Spirit can keep us from falling into negative patterns of disobedience to God.

PRAYER

Lord, help us to live a life that is reflective of Your pattern of growth when You walked the earth as a young adult. Help us to increase in wisdom, stature, favor with God, and favor with others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

(July 6-12, 2020)

The Boy Jesus

MONDAY, July 6: "Everything Has Its Time and Season" (Ecclesiastes 3:2-8)

TUESDAY, July 7: "Perform Your God-given Task" (Ecclesiastes 3:9-15)

WEDNESDAY, July 8: "The Firstborn Belong to God" (Numbers 3:11-13)

THURSDAY, July 9: "Jesus Is Presented to the Lord" (Luke 2:21-24)

FRIDAY, July 10: "Simeon Praises God for the Child" (Luke 2:25-35)

SATURDAY, July 11: "Anna Speaks about the Christ-child" (Luke 2:36-38)

SUNDAY, July 12: "The Wise Boy Jesus Amazes Teachers" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7b; Luke 2:39-52)