

Have You Heard the Story of My Life?

Part 9: A Nazarene Boy and Jesus in the Temple

Dora Beck

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A Nazarene Boy and Jesus in the Temple



I lived in a small, little-known village called Nazareth, in the hills of Galilee. Below it was the Valley of Jezreel with its beautiful landscape.

A trade route passed near our village. On it, trade caravans, loaded with goods, travelled from Damascus to Egypt. This trade business always gave us village boys something new to see. So we

were never bored.

I liked my village and all the people who lived in it.

The simple houses in my village were situated in a wide valley near the hills. A clear fountain flowed in the centre of the town. All the people would meet there when they filled their jars with water. We kids would play together in the centre of the town.



My best friend was Jesus. I liked to play with him, because he would never fight with anyone and was always ready to help others. Although he looked like the other kids, he acted completely different. His father's name was Joseph and his mother's name was Mary.

Often, I would go with Jesus to his father's carpentry shop. There we would see all the different tools and watch his father at work.



Sometimes we would sit under one of the many olive trees that grew on the hills around the village. We would talk about our problems with our parents. Once a year, our parents would go to Jerusalem

for a week to celebrate the great Feast of the Passover. We children were not allowed to go with them until we were twelve years old. So we had to stay at home in our village. We could hardly wait until we became twelve years old, so that we could go with them to Jerusalem.

My friend, Jesus, would tell me many stories about the great works of God. They would make my heart open to God's Word, and I began to love and fear God.

I really looked forward to seeing the Temple of God in Jerusalem. And whenever Jesus talked about God, I felt that he was talking about a close person, one he knew very well and loved very much.

I often thought of how Jesus was so different from the other boys in the village. He never did anything wrong, and he always obeyed and honoured his parents. Everyone in the village, big and small, loved him.

Finally, the time came when Jesus and I turned twelve years old. That year, we travelled to Jerusalem for the first time with our families, relatives, and friends. First, we went down to the Jordan Valley, and then we walked alongside a river until we arrived at Jericho. From there, we travelled up the high mountains of Judea. Those who could not walk all the way rode on their donkeys. We met many other travellers coming from other towns and villages who were also on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of the Passover. It took us three days to travel this distance. When night fell, we stayed at inns which were crowded with pilgrims.



When the morning came, we would go on with our journey. We enjoyed walking together. We young boys would walk ahead of the older ones, because we were anxious to see the Holy City and its Temple. On the way, we would sing beautiful songs and psalms which the prophet David had written centuries ago.



Finally, we reached a mountain that overlooked the Holy City. We quickly spotted the Temple, because it was the biggest and most beautiful building there. Although it was spectacular, I felt that it was small compared to the glory of our God.

During the last part of the journey to the Temple, I walked close to my friend, Jesus. You could sense joy in his face, as he approached God's house. We stayed in Jerusalem for seven days, entering the Temple often to worship and praise God. Our parents slaughtered the Passover lamb, and we ate it together with thanksgiving.

Those were days filled with joy in the presence of our God. We listened to many readings of the Torah, our Holy Book.



Unfortunately, the days passed quickly. Then the day came when we had to leave the Temple and all the new friends we had met in the Holy City.

On our way back to Nazareth, I looked for my friend, Jesus, but I could not find him with the other boys. I wanted to talk to him about what we did in Jerusalem and ask him some questions. When I could not find him, I assumed he was ahead of me, on his way back to Nazareth with his parents.



After we had walked a whole day, we looked for an inn to spend the night at. I met Jesus' parents there. They were upset, because they had been looking for Jesus, but could not find him. They asked me, Do you know where Jesus is? I'm sorry, I answered, I do not know either.

Joseph and Mary became concerned. They decided to go back to Jerusalem immediately and search for Jesus there.



On my way back to Nazareth, I thought a lot about my dear friend, Jesus, and wondered what could have happened to him. When I got back to Nazareth, I decided to check at Joseph and Mary's house each day, to see if they had returned.

Having been home for three days, I knocked on the door, but there was no answer. Late one evening, after a few days, I saw Joseph and Mary walking to their house. They looked very tired.

I ran to them and was happy when I saw that they were alright and that my friend Jesus was with them.



Where did you find Jesus? I asked them. Mary answered, We searched for him throughout the city for three days. We looked for him in the streets and in the shops. We asked the people in the market, those sitting in front of their houses, and those walking in the streets. But no one had seen him. So we were very upset and wondered where he could be.

Mary continued: The third day, we got to the Temple. It was quiet there, because most of the pilgrims had left. Only the priests and teachers of the Torah were still there. We went from one hall to another looking for Jesus until we found him sitting among the elders, listening to their explanations, and asking them many questions. They were all amazed at Jesus' wisdom and understanding as he correctly answered their questions about the Torah.



We were so relieved when we finally found Jesus. I hurried to him and asked him, 'My son, why did you do this? Why did you stay here at the Temple? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you for many days; we were afraid for you!' What do you think his answer was?

He said, 'Why were you so afraid for me? Did you not know that I have been here in my Father's house?' This was his answer. I was amazed at this and was troubled again, because even we his parents did not understand what he was saying. But I am keeping these words deep in my heart,

because I know that he was born of the Holy Spirit.



I was amazed at what I heard and did not really understand what Jesus had said to his parents. Was not his father's house here in Nazareth? What did he mean when he said, I have been here in my Father's house?

I looked at my friend, Jesus, and the look on his face said, Don't you understand me either? God is my true Father and wherever He is, there I also have to be!" I did not understand his thoughts fully, but I saw something of his true nature, and I respected him deeply.

Mary, his mother, understood that Jesus had not disobeyed her. She knew that he was longing for fellowship with his Heavenly Father and joy in His presence. A new wish welled up in my heart. I also wanted to live in fellowship with God.

As Jesus grew up, God's wisdom and love became apparent in his life. The secret of his spiritual growth was that he only did what his Heavenly Father wanted him to do, and he always talked with Him through prayer. God guided him in all his words and deeds.

Dear reader, let us follow the steps of Jesus and turn our hearts and minds towards God, our Spiritual Father, so that His blessing and grace may live in us abundantly.



Quiz

We hope you have enjoyed reading this story. Below are some questions about it. When you have answered them, mail them to us. We will send you the next booklet from this series as a gift.

1. Where is Nazareth?
2. What was Joseph's trade?
3. What did Jesus and his friend wait for impatiently?
4. Why did the children and adults love Jesus?
5. What means of travel did the pilgrims use on their journey to Jerusalem?
6. Who wrote the psalms which the pilgrims sang on their way to Jerusalem?
7. How long did the pilgrims usually stay in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover?
8. How long did Joseph and Mary look for Jesus?
9. Why did Jesus stay in the Temple?

10. Why did God fill Jesus with wisdom and grace?

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