



Community
Group
study guide

LUKE
J E S U S F O R E V E R Y O N E

Pregame series
5th January 2020



Before every major sporting event there is the pregame show, which provides information for those who are both knowledgeable and inexperienced so that when kick off takes place they can more fully understand what is taking place and enjoy the game more.

In this series we are going to look at four stories which take place before Jesus kicks off His ministry, and Luke gives us these stories so when Jesus does start His ministry we have all the information we need to be on board with Him from the beginning.

However, unlike many sports pregame shows which simply have to fill time, Luke isn't interested in giving us stories for the sake of filling time, but he tells us about plays which take place which get us excited about who Jesus might be and cheering for Him when His ministry starts.

39 And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favour 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 according to custom. 43 And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, 44 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, 45 and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 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 great distress." 49 And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" 50 And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. 51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man.

Luke 2:39–52 (ESV)

Commentary

This is the only account we have of Jesus' childhood in the Gospels. There are other stories of Jesus as He grew up, but these are not found in the Gospels, they are in non canonical books, namely the Infancy Gospel of Thomas and other apocryphal books. These stories were written much later, well over a hundred years after Jesus had lived and can be discounted because of what we read in John's Gospel. Jesus went to Cana with His mother and disciples to a wedding, during which they prematurely ran out of wine, and Jesus made new excellent wine out of water. John sums up the miracle this way:

11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

John 2:11 (ESV)

Luke make two summary statements about Jesus that bracket this story:

40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

Luke 2:40 (ESV)

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

Luke 2:52 (ESV)

This story then, is a key moment in Jesus' development and taking step towards His revelation as the messiah.

Joseph and Mary are pious Jews and make the trip to Jerusalem on an annual basis to celebrate the Passover. The festival lasted seven days, and the trip was ninety miles each way. Jesus is twelve, and about to step into manhood, and accompanies His parents on the trip, but when the time comes to leave deliberately stays behind. Mary and Joseph don't discover

ISRAEL AT THE TIME OF JESUS

1ST CENTURY AD



His absence until the end of the day's journey, thinking that he is somewhere in the group of family, friends, and neighbours who have travelled to the feast as a community. It is the morning of the next day before they can start their journey back to Jerusalem and night fall as they arrive, and not until the morning of the third day do they eventually find Jesus in the temple in deep discussions with the teachers, and showing the wisdom and grace Luke described.

Jesus is coming to the fore in His own right, and His mother and Joseph are taking back stage. Naturally enough his mother questions why He would do such a thing, and we get Jesus' first words in the Gospel.

49 And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

Luke 2:49 (ESV)

The place where they found Jesus was in the temple (Father's house), but the Greek phrase could equally be translated "Father's business," and that is what Jesus is saying. He is affirming both who His Father is, and that He is committed to be about His Father's work, doing His will.

For now though, Jesus will submit to His earthly parents, and He returns to Nazareth with them where He continues to grow in wisdom, grace, and favour.

Group Study

Open the group with prayer and discuss how you have used your application from last week's study in your life, and what you have learned from it.

Did you know any child prodigies growing up, or were you one?

How were they treated differently?

What are some things you would love to know about Jesus' childhood years?

Why do you think Luke doesn't tell us?

As Jesus was both fully human and fully God, how do you think His development mirrored ours and yet was very different?

Read the following verses from Psalm 122:

- 1 *I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the LORD!"*
- 2 *Our feet have been standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem!*
- 3 *Jerusalem—built as a city
that is bound firmly together,*
- 4 *to which the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD,
as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.*

Psalm 122:1–4 (ESV)

There are fifteen Psalms of “Ascent,” psalms which were sung approaching the temple.

Do you feel like that when you come to church, open your Bible, meet in your community group, or when you pray, because you are going to come into the presence of the living God?

When have you left something important behind? When did you realise you left it behind? What did you do?

Read Jesus’ critique of the church in Ephesus:

To the Church in Ephesus

2 *“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.*

2 *“ ‘I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. 3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.*

5 *Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. 6 Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 He*

who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

Revelation 2:1–7 (ESV)

What were the Ephesians doing right?

Why did Jesus reprimand them?

Where do you think they had lost their “first love?”

How would they reignite it?

Where do the dangers lie for us losing Jesus?

How do we rediscover Him again?

What is the most surprising thing you have learned about God in the last year?

How has it changed how you see God and how has it changed your life?

The Apostle Paul says;

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:5–7 (ESV)

What would it look like for you to be focused on your Father’s “business” this next week?

Personal study time

Take some time this week to consider how you might grow in the grace, wisdom and favour of the Lord, and the favour of others.

- 23 *Buy truth, and do not sell it;
buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.*
- 24 *The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice;
he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him.*
- 25 *Let your father and mother be glad;
let her who bore you rejoice.*
- Proverbs 23:23–25 (ESV)

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James 1:5–8 (ESV)

I will grow in wisdom this year by:

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
the LORD bestows favor and honor.

No good thing does he withhold
from those who walk uprightly.

12 O LORD of hosts,
blessed is the one who trusts in you!

Psalms 84:11–12 (ESV)

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

James 2:21–24 (ESV)

I will grow in favour this year by:

12 *The righteous flourish like the palm tree
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*

13 *They are planted in the house of the LORD;
they flourish in the courts of our God.*

14 *They still bear fruit in old age;
they are ever full of sap and green,*

15 *to declare that the LORD is upright;
he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*

Psalms 92:12–15 (ESV)

16 *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching,
for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,
17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good
work.*

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)

I will grow in grace this year by:

KIDS CORNER



Have you ever lost your parents while out shopping? Perhaps you got bored, or attracted by something more interesting and wandered off, and turned around and saw your parents were gone!

Or maybe you were out hiking and lost sight of your mum and dad.

How did you feel?

In this only story of Jesus' childhood, Jesus decides to stay behind at the temple in Jerusalem while Mary and Joseph thinking He is with their group start travelling home before realising that evening Jesus wasn't with them.

The next day they go back to Jerusalem and find Him the following morning with all the top teachers in the temple, amazing them all with His questions and answers. Mary and Joseph were amazed too that Jesus had decided to stay here.

Jesus is not encouraging us to be disobedient to our parents when He tells Mary, *“Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”*

What Jesus is saying is the most important person we need to stay close to is God.

What are some ways we can stay close to Jesus?

How do we first get close to Jesus?

