

# Living with Luke

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## The Boy Jesus at the Temple Luke 2:41-52

<sup>41</sup> Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. <sup>43</sup> After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. <sup>44</sup> Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends.

<sup>45</sup> When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. <sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

<sup>47</sup> Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup> 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."

<sup>49</sup> "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>51</sup> Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

*Passover is celebrated in the Spring.*

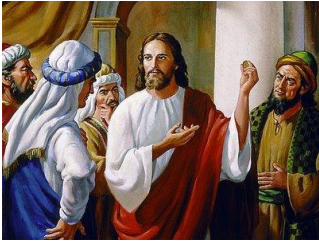
*It is a family festival, and Jews to this day always toast "Next year in Jerusalem" at the end of the meal.*

## Other Good Reads

A wonderful collection of stories of Rabbis through the centuries is *SOULS ON FIRE: PORTRAITS AND LEGENDS OF HASIDIC MASTERS* by Elie Wiesel © 1972, Touchstone Books.

Similar stories in the Christian tradition come from the monks who went into the Egyptian Desert in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries AD. Some of their stories are in James Cowan's *DESERT*

*FATHER* © 2004, New Seeds Books; Henri Nouwen's *THE WAY OF THE HEART* © 1981, HarperCollins; and Thomas Merton's *THE WAY OF THE DESERT* © 1960 by New Directions Books.



In Jesus' day the usual teaching method of the Rabbis was by lecture and Q-&-A. The Rabbi might give a lecture, after which the students would ask questions and the Rabbi would give his answers.

Here are some of the questions Jesus was asked in His teaching ministry. Do you remember His answers?

## Rabbi, We Have Questions

Why do you eat with tax collectors and sinners?

(Luke 5:29-31)

+

What must I do to inherit eternal life?

(Luke 10:24 ff.)

+

Good teacher, what must I do to inherit

eternal life?

(Luke 18:17-19)

+

Who gave you the authority to do all these things?

(Luke 20:1-3)

+

Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?

(Luke 20:22)

+

In the resurrection, whose wife will the woman be [who married the seven brothers in succession as they died]?

(Luke 20:33)

### How Do We Know?

*retold by Doug Lipman*

Some students of the Baal Shem Tov came to him one day with a question. "Every year we travel here to learn from you. Nothing could make us stop doing that. But we have learned of a man in our own town who claims to be a tzaddik, a righteous one. If he is genuine, we would love to profit from his wisdom. But how will we know if he is a fake?"

The Baal Shem Tov looked at his earnest hasidim. "You must test him by asking him a question." He paused. "You have had difficulty with stray thoughts during prayer?"

"Yes!" The hasidim answered eagerly. "We try to think only of our holy intentions as we pray, but other thoughts come into our minds. We have tried many methods not to be troubled by them."

"Good," said the Baal Shem Tov. "Ask him the way to stop such thoughts from entering your minds." The Baal Shem Tov smiled. "If he has an answer, he is a fake."

### Who Has the Answer?

*retold by Doug Lipman*

Some Hasidim of the Maggid of Mezheritz came to him. "Rebbe, we are puzzled. It says in the Talmud that we must thank God as much for the bad days, as for the good. How can that be? What would our gratitude mean, if we gave it equally for the good and the bad?"

The Maggid replied, "Go to Anapol. Reb Zusya will have an answer for you."

The Hasidim undertook the journey. Arriving in Anapol, they inquired for Reb Zusya. At last, they came to the poorest street of the city. There, crowded between two small houses, they found a tiny shack, sagging with age.

When they entered, they saw Reb Zusya sitting at a bare table, reading a volume by the light of the only small window. "Welcome, strangers!" he said. "Please pardon me for not getting up; I have hurt my leg. Would you like food? I have some bread. And there is water!"

"No. We have come only to ask you a question. The Maggid of Mezheritz told us you might help us understand: Why do our sages tell us to thank God as much for the bad days as for the good?"

Reb Zusya laughed. "Me? I have no idea why the Maggid sent you to me." He shook his head in puzzlement. "You see, I have never had a bad day. Every day God has given to me has been filled with miracles."

## The Apocryphal and “Junk” Gospels

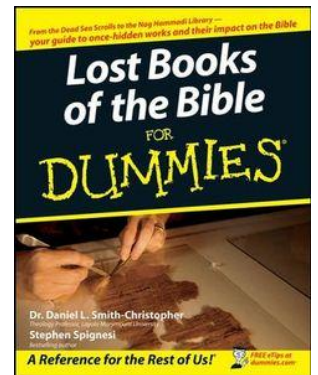
John wrote (20:30-31) “<sup>30</sup> Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe<sup>[b]</sup> that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

We’ve also noted that Luke intends his Gospel *not* to be a biography or collection of “Jesus stories,” but an account of God’s carefully structured plan for our salvation.

For these reasons, there is only this one account of Jesus from his childhood, when He was twelve years old.

Other Apocryphal and “Junk” Gospels try to enlighten us with other stories from His childhood, but their efforts seem to be merely ones of “filling the gaps” or meeting our human curiosity. What else happened when Jesus was a child? You don’t need to know that in order to be saved.

“Apocryphal” (“disguised”) books date from biblical times but were not widely accepted by the Church for various reasons. Sometimes the authorship was in doubt; sometimes the content was questionable.



“Junk Gospels” is my non-scholarly term for those books that seem to have been completely unknown to the early church but have come to light in recent years, describing Jesus’ marriage, bloodline, establishment of Freemasonry, and all kinds of other kooky stuff.

## Snip vs. Vocation

**Don’t you know that I have to be about my Father’s business?**

**Luke 2:49**

Since the Scriptures only give us words and not tone of voice, we don’t know *how* twelve-year-old Jesus spoke these words to His parents. Did He do it with wonder and astonishment? Did He do it with sass and disrespect? Was He being snippy? Or was there something else going on? Let’s think about this.

Jesus said “I *must* be about my Father’s business” and “The Father and I are one” and “I do what I see the Father doing.” In human terms, He had a totally integrated sense of identity and vocation – *what* He did flowed naturally and completely from *who* He was – even at twelve years old? Maybe so.

In the article\* *The Work of a Christian: Vocation in Lutheran Perspective*, author Kathryn Kleinhans makes these observations about the Lutheran understanding of the Christian’s vocation – and I think we can say the same are true of Jesus’ vocation as the Christ.

- The Christian’s task is to discern God’s will and to try to act responsibly in each concrete role or situation.
- The Christian’s vocation is grounded in baptismal identity.
- The Lutheran understanding of vocation is also inseparable from the historic Lutheran commitment to education. . . . to educate both boys and

girls in order to equip them to serve the needs of a changing society.

- Christian vocation is theology for living. It informs how we earn our daily bread and how we live our daily lives. It shapes our sense of identity and our relationships with others.

In this question, then, Jesus is not sassing His parents as much as He is declaring that he clearly understands His identity, His purpose, and His vocation.

\* In *Word & World* Volume 25, Number 4 Fall 2005

**The Magnificat – Luke 1:46-55**

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord  
<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in  
 God my Savior,  
<sup>48</sup> for he has been mindful  
 of the humble state of his  
 servant.

From now on all  
 generations will call me  
 blessed,

<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has  
 done great things for me—  
 holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> His **mercy extends** to  
 those who fear him,  
 from generation to  
 generation.

<sup>51</sup> **He has performed  
 mighty deeds** with his arm;  
 he has **scattered those  
 who are proud** in their  
 inmost thoughts.

<sup>52</sup> He has **brought down  
 rulers** from their thrones  
 but has **lifted up the  
 humble**.

<sup>53</sup> He has **filled the hungry**  
 with good things  
 but has **sent the rich  
 away empty**.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant  
 Israel,  
 remembering to be  
 merciful  
<sup>55</sup> to Abraham and his  
 descendants forever,  
 just as he promised our  
 ancestors.”

**The Last Passover of Jesus - Luke 22:7-20**

<sup>7</sup> Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.”

<sup>9</sup> “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked.

<sup>10</sup> He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, <sup>11</sup> and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ <sup>12</sup> He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.”

<sup>13</sup> They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

<sup>14</sup> When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup> For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

<sup>17</sup> After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. <sup>18</sup> For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

<sup>19</sup> And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

<sup>20</sup> In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

**MAGNIFICAT SCORECARD – Luke2:41-52**

ACTIONS OF GOD	YES	NO
Extended mercy		
Performed mighty deeds		
Scattered the proud		
Brought down rulers		
Lifted up humble		
Filled the hungry		
Sent rich away empty		

More on the web at

[www.christthekinglodi.org](http://www.christthekinglodi.org)

[ctkconfirmation.blogspot.com](http://ctkconfirmation.blogspot.com)