

# EPIPHANY IN THE TEMPLE COURTS

Epiphany 2025: Introducing us to Jesus

January 18, 2025

*"Why were you searching for me?" [Jesus] asked.  
"Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"  
But [Joseph and Mary] did not understand what he was saying to them.  
Luke 2:49-50*

## An "aha!" moment with Jesus

1. Epiphany (from the Greek *epi* + *phainein*, "to shine upon") is the season of Jesus' introduction to the world. Today Jewish teachers and his human parents meet Jesus in temple courts. The next time we see Jesus in the temple courts is at the beginning of his ministry (Luke 4; John 2:12-24).
2. Listen to this morning's text with these two questions in mind:
  - 1) What does it mean for the child Jesus to have two "homes" and a surprise Father?
  - 2) Why is the temple so important? See Luke 4:9, 19:45-47, 20:1 and John 2:14-25.



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## Exegeting Luke 2:41-52

<sup>41</sup> Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. <sup>43</sup> After the Feast 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 men.

1. Once again, Jesus humbles himself to God’s creational (submission to parents) and redemption (submission to his redemption role) orders.

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—<sup>3</sup> “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”*

*<sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

Ephesians 6 (Note the promise repeated from Exodus 20!)

2. Was Jesus asking about the Messianic implications of the Passover just celebrated?

*<sup>12</sup> “On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. <sup>13</sup> The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you.*

Exodus 11 (See also the Suffering Servant Song in Isaiah 53 and Servant Song in Isaiah 42-45.)

3. The focus is on “Father” (both “home” and “business” work, see ESV footnotes and KJV).

4. Watch the directions. After going “up” in 2:4, now the story takes us “down” in 2:51. Most of Luke’s gospel takes us back “up” (see 19:28) to Jerusalem for the events of Holy Week.

5. We have a beautiful look into Mary’s heart. Luke 2 begins and ends with Mary “treasuring” (that is, “keeping close”) the story of Jesus.

6. Jesus had to grow! Yes, even Jesus “learned obedience”

*<sup>7</sup> During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. <sup>8</sup> Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered <sup>9</sup> and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him <sup>10</sup> and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

Hebrews 5 (See also the Christ Hymn in Philipians 2:8 and Jesus’ cries from the cross.)

## Lessons from the temple courts

1. Joseph and Mary are presented in a positive light, as examples of faithfulness, obedience and supportive husband and wife

<sup>21</sup> *When the man Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfill his vow,* <sup>22</sup> *Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, "After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the Lord, and he will live there always."*

<sup>23</sup> *"Do what seems best to you," Elkanah her husband told her. "Stay here until you have weaned him; only may the Lord make good his word." So the woman stayed at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him.*

1 Samuel 1

2. We should all be about the Father's business

Go out now, and if you are tempted by the world, may the Spirit enable you to reply, "I must be about my Father's business." Go out, and if they call you fanatical, let them laugh at you as much as you like, tell them you must be about your Father's business. Go on, and conquer. God be with you. And now farewell, with this last word, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned." Faith in Christ is the only way of salvation. Ye who know your guilt cast yourselves on Christ, and then dedicate yourselves to him. So shall you have joy here, and glory everlasting in the kind of the blessed, where bliss is without alloy, and joy without end.

Spurgeon's "About His Father's Business" conclusion

3. If Jesus had learn obedience, how much more important is that for me!

<sup>13</sup> *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.* <sup>14</sup> *As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.* <sup>15</sup> *But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;* <sup>16</sup> *for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

1 Peter 1 (Romans 1:5, 16:19; 2 John 6)

## Resources for an epiphany in Luke's gospel:

The Bible Project material on Luke is at <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-luke/>

Spurgeon has a wonderful sermon on this text at <https://www.romans45.org/spurgeon/sermons/0122.htm>

J. C. Ryle's comments are very good at <https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/Luke.htm>

Bob Deffinbaugh has this sermon series on Luke at <https://bible.org/series/luke-gospel-gentiles>

John MacArthur has a sermon on Anna at <https://www.gty.org/sermons/42-31/testifying-to-jesus-anna>

Martin Luther has a commentary on this text at [https://godrules.net/library/luther/129luther\\_a10.htm](https://godrules.net/library/luther/129luther_a10.htm)

Ligon Duncan's very good sermon series on Luke can be found at <https://fpcjackson.org/resource-library/sermon-series/luke-2/>