

Luke 2:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

The parents' ignorance that Jesus 'tarried behind in Jerusalem' after completing the feast days shows the accidental nature of the separation. The detail that they 'fulfilled the days' emphasizes they completed proper observance before beginning return journey. That 'Joseph and his mother knew not of it' indicates Jesus's action was independent and intentional on His part, not parental negligence. The passive 'tarried behind' suggests deliberate choice to remain. This incident foreshadows Jesus's priority of His Father's business over even legitimate family concerns. His remaining in the temple demonstrates early consciousness of His unique relationship to God and mission.

Historical Context

Large pilgrimage groups traveled together for safety, with women and children often traveling separately from men. It wasn't unusual for parents not to see their twelve-year-old during the day's journey, expecting him with relatives. Jesus's deliberate remaining behind demonstrated remarkable independence and purpose for His age.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does Jesus's deliberate remaining in Jerusalem teach about His self-awareness?
2. How does this incident foreshadow Jesus's prioritizing His Father's will over family?
3. What does this teach about the development of Jesus's human consciousness of His divine mission?

Interlinear Text

καὶ τελειωσάντων τὰς ἡμέρας ἐν τῷ ὑποστρέφειν
And **when they had fulfilled** G3588 **the days** **as** G3588 **returned**
G2532 G5048 G2250 G1722 G5290

αὐτοῦ ὑπέμεινεν Ἰησοῦς ὁ παῖς ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ
his **tarried behind** **Jesus** G3588 **the child** **as** **Jerusalem** **And**
G846 G5278 G2424 G3816 G1722 G2419 G2532

οὐκ ἔγνω Ἰωσήφ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ
not **knew** **Joseph** **And** G3588 **mother** **his**
G3756 G1097 G2501 G2532 G3384 G846

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 12:15 (Parallel theme): Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.