

Luke 2:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

Analysis

The 12-year-old Jesus responds to Mary: 'How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' (τί ὅτι ἐζητεῖτέ με; οὐκ ᾔδειτε ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου δεῖ εἶναί με;). The Greek phrase 'en tois tou patros mou' (ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου) literally means 'in the things/house of my Father'—referring both to the temple and to His Father's concerns. The verb 'dei' (δεῖ, must/it is necessary) indicates divine compulsion, not mere preference. This is Jesus' first recorded words, and they express His consciousness of unique sonship and mission. His question implies Mary and Joseph should have understood His priorities. Even at 12, Jesus recognized His identity and purpose.

Historical Context

At age 12-13, Jewish boys became 'bar mitzvah' (son of the commandment), assuming adult religious responsibilities. Jesus' discussion with temple teachers during Passover week demonstrates His exceptional grasp of Scripture. That 'all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers' (v.47) indicates He was not merely learning but teaching. His presence in 'my Father's house' foreshadows His later temple ministry and ultimate cleansing (John 2:16, same possessive claim).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does Jesus' early consciousness of His unique sonship teach about His self-understanding and mission?
2. How should Jesus' prioritization of Father's business over family concerns inform Christian discipleship priorities?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	εἶπεν	πρὸς	αὐτούς	Τί	ὅτι	ἐζητεῖτέ	με	οὐκ
And	he said	unto	them	How	is it that	ye sought	I	not
G2532	G2036	G4314	G846	G5101	G3754	G2212	G3165	G3756
ἤδευτε	ὅτι	ἐν	τοῖς	τοῦ	πατρός	μου	δεῖ	εἶναί
wist ye	is it that	about	G3588	G3588	Father's business	my	must	be
G1492	G3754	G1722			G3962	G3450	G1163	G1511
με								
I								
G3165								

Additional Cross-References

John 6:38 (Parallel theme): For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

John 8:29 (Parallel theme): And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

Malachi 3:1 (Parallel theme): Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to

his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Psalms 40:8 (Parallel theme): I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

John 4:34 (Parallel theme): Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Luke 2:48 (Parallel theme): And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

John 5:17 (Parallel theme): But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

Matthew 21:12 (Parallel theme): And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

John 9:4 (Parallel theme): I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.