

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:

One of the many laws that the Israelites were required to obey was to observe the yearly Passover festival in Jerusalem. It was a time to remember when God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt over a thousand years before Jesus was born. God's destroying angel had killed all the firstborn Egyptians, but he didn't harm the firstborn Israelites because they had obeyed God's instructions to kill a lamb and mark their doors with its blood. When the destroying angel came to a house that was marked with the blood, he "passed over" it. The Egyptians were so afraid of the Israelites' God that they released them from slavery, and all the people of Israel left Egypt to journey to a new land God would give them.

God had said that from then on, the Israelites should kill a lamb every year on that same day to remind them of what He had done for them in Egypt. He also wanted them to understand that their sins could be forgiven only through a sacrifice that served as a substitute. Of course, an animal can't really serve as a substitute for a human being, so we know that the animal sacrifices only served to reveal what Jesus would do for us when He died as our substitute on the cross. That is why Jesus is referred to as "the Lamb of God" in the Bible. Jesus died on the cross during a Passover festival.

When Jesus was young, He journeyed every year to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover with Mary, Joseph and many other people who lived in Nazareth. The festival lasted for one week, and then everyone returned to their home towns. Mary and Joseph, probably knowing that Jesus was responsible enough to take care of Himself, didn't worry that He wasn't with them when they departed from Jerusalem. They assumed He was with their friends and relatives traveling back to Nazareth with them. Once they discovered He was missing, however, they went back to Jerusalem and frantically searched for Him, finally finding Him three days later talking to the religious leaders in the Temple. Mary and Joseph were probably very angry with Jesus at first, but they could hardly remain angry since He was amazing everyone in the Temple with His deep understanding of spiritual matters. (If you were missing for three days, your parents would be very angry with you, but if they found you at school teaching your teachers and the principal, they would probably cool down quickly!)

Jesus was surprised that Mary and Joseph had searched for a whole day in Jerusalem before they found Him. He thought they should have known right where He'd be, in His "Father's house," the Temple. But Mary and Joseph didn't understand what He meant, which is often the case with parents and their children!

Q. At twelve years of age, Jesus was most interested in spiritual matters. Does that mean He was a nerd?

A. No, it means that He was a very wise boy with whom God was pleased. Kids are often very interested in sports, hobbies and other fun activities, and there is nothing wrong with those interests. However, wise young people are most interested in learning more about their relationship with God. Knowing and obeying God should be the most important thing in everyone's life, young and old.

Q. Because Jesus remained in Jerusalem when His parents left for Nazareth, does that mean He was disobedient to His parents?

A. Although it may seem that way, it couldn't be that way because disobedience to parents is a sin, and Jesus never sinned. Mary and Joseph apparently departed from Jerusalem without being certain Jesus was with them, assuming that He was with others who were also departing. It could be considered a case of negligence on their part. Perhaps when Jesus discovered that His parents had departed without Him, He assumed they would soon return upon discovery of His absence. And the best place to wait for them was at the Temple, as that would surely be the first place they would look for Him, knowing who He was. One other possibility is that Jesus' heavenly Father had instructed Him to remain at the Temple. If that was the case, Jesus had to obey regardless of how Mary and Joseph reacted. The only time it is acceptable to disobey parents is when obeying them would mean disobeying God.

Application: Since we are followers of Jesus, we should obey our parents just as Jesus obeyed Mary and Joseph.