

The Childhood of Jesus

The birth of Jesus is covered well by three of the four gospels. After that, none of the gospels tell us about the childhood years of our Lord until he reached the age of 12. Luke tells us about an event in the life of Jesus in Jerusalem which resembled a modern day Jewish Bar Mitzvah.

It is likely that by the time of that event, Jesus had been made aware by his Father that He was the appointed Messiah. As He grew up, Jesus found that the Old Testament had already written much about Him, by way of telling the story of His life and death in advance.

“(Jesus’) parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day’s journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.” And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”
(Luke 2:41-52)

We know little of Joseph after Jesus was born. The family fled to Egypt for a season to escape Herod’s wrath. Then they settled in Nazareth, a small village in Galilee, the traditional family home. Probably Joseph died there having fathered at least six children by Mary. The “public ministry of Jesus” started when Jesus was “about thirty.” **(Luke 3:23)** While he was growing up, Jesus probably had the entire responsibility of caring for his mother and the family in a modest house in Nazareth. (The family was poor). Joseph was a “carpenter,” **(Mt 13:55, Mark 6:3)** and as far as we know, he died before Jesus left home to begin his 3-year public ministry.

Individual Jewish families did not own Bibles as we do today. The Bible (the Tanach, or Old Testament) was kept in the form of scrolls in local synagogues. Yet Jesus knew the Bible well and quoted from many books of the Bible from memory during His public ministry. He also found time also to pray to that He could immediately respond to the Father's wishes. Ray Stedman mentions that there is no record in the gospels of Jesus ever laughing. His mission in life was not about enjoying social events, sightseeing, climbing a ladder to success, or marrying and raising a big family. He was *"a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."*

When Jesus came back to Nazareth early in his public ministry, the townspeople were amazed, *“Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?”* And they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them,

“A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” (Mark 6:1-4)

Mystic arts and Esoteric Religion book stores often carry books on “The Lost Years of Jesus.” None of these “lost years books” can be reconciled with the Bible. However there is much information hidden away in the Old Testament telling us about the life of Jesus. A particular group of Psalms known as the "Messianic Psalms" (referred to in the New Testament) give us information about the Messiah that we would not otherwise have. (See **Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 89, 102, 110, and 118.**)

I happened to be listening to Chuck Missler's commentary on the Psalms recently. Chuck mentioned something special about **Psalm 69**. Although I had to read that Psalm many times I had not seen in it what Chuck pointed out, though it should have been obvious. I remembered that Ray Stedman, my mentor, had suggested that Christians could enlist their "sanctified imagination" in discovering layers of truth in the Bible that were not immediately obvious to a purely rational mind. This particular Psalm, as far as we know, was written by King David sometime around 1000 BC. Like all of Scripture the Bible is "*God breathed*," and the true author is God the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew and loved the Psalms and it's fairly obvious that David knew Jesus in the same personal way we Christians today can know Him.

Philippians 2 explains that the Second Person of the godhead, God the Son, chose to lay aside His powers as God and to become the man Jesus, primarily in order to undertake the enormous task of reconciling sinful man to God by means of His death on a cross, thus making it possible for a Holy God to forgive us sinners and to make us new creatures, when we assent to His Lordship over us.

During His sojourn on earth as a man, Jesus did everything in total dependence upon the indwelling Father. Jesus demonstrated how a normal man with no sin would live. To qualify as a suitable sacrifice for our sins Jesus had to be free from any and all inherited ("original") sin in his person--in body, soul and spirit. He also had to live a sinless life by every daily choice. He matured as a human being under tests and trials until He was fully grown. (The age of thirty was the age a priest began to serve under the Law of Moses).

The "Bar Mitzvah" of Jesus was different from any other. I believe that it was at the age that Jesus was made aware of His mission on earth and of the crucial importance of resisting all temptation. As the years progressed the magnitude and weight of His assignment would be something He never lost sight of for a moment. Furthermore, Jesus could not act on own natural power as a man—He had voluntarily set aside His right to act on his powers and resources as God the Son, before He came to earth. He had to depend on the Father for every daily action. The Father empowered Him as well, for the power to carry out all responsibilities, large or small. (We, on the other hand, as forgiven sinners, regenerated and filled with the Holy Spirit, can and do fail repeatedly. We must go back to God for forgiveness and mercy every day.) Jesus did not have this freedom to make any wrong choices. He had to live a "perfect" life.

Jesus was 100% righteous. As C.S. Lewis has said, He endured forces of temptation and testing far more severe than any of us ever has to endure. God's true Lamb had to be without spot or blemish all the way up to His crucifixion. Then instead of simply dying, all human sin from creation to Judgment Day was transferred to Him. Jesus bore the punishment for everyone's sins. (See **Jesus' Death: Six Hours of Eternity on the Cross**, <http://ldolphin.org/sixhours.html>). In the deep mystery of the cross, God suffers not only in time but also in eternity for our sins, yet the work of the cross is now finished completely and our complete cleansing of all sin and new-

creation is guaranteed.

With these brief background notes, see if you can agree with me that **Psalm 69** gives us clear allusions as to how Jesus felt and what He endured as a child growing up into mature manhood destined to be the one suitable human sacrifice for every sin ever committed on earth. Use your sanctified imagination and write me if you see things I have missed. Feel free to disagree if your "sanctified imagination" leads you to somewhat different conclusions.

Psalm 69

<<To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies." A Psalm of David.>>

1 Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck.

2 I sink in deep mire, Where there is no standing;

I have come into deep waters, Where the floods overflow me.

[Verses 1-2 suggest Jeremiah sinking in the mud of a cistern after being throw there because what He had written offended the king. Jonah quoted from the Psalms when he was trapped in the belly of a great fish, about to drown and be suffocated and possibly digested.]

3 I am weary with my crying; My throat is dry; My eyes fail while I wait for my God.

[Verse 3 fits many situation and many trials common to God's people down through all the ages, and to events in the life of Jesus such as His ordeal in the Garden of Gethsemane.]

4 Those who hate me without a cause Are more than the hairs of my head;

[Many godly men and women have been hated, tortured and killed because of their faith. But Jesus remains the most hated of all men who have ever lived.]

They are mighty who would destroy me, Being my enemies wrongfully;

[Leaders in the world are often corrupt and turn from serving the people and God, imprisoning and killing the righteous. The enemies of Jesus had no cause to hate Him and oppose Him.]

Though I have stolen nothing, I still must restore it.

[Rather than referring to a specific incident, since Jesus never stole anything, could this not apply to an incident in His childhood when Jesus was falsely accused and perhaps wrongly punished on set-up charges?]

5 O God, You know my foolishness; And my sins are not hidden from You.

[Ray Stedman notes in his study of Psalm 40 that Jesus was made to be sin for us.]

6 Let not those who wait for You, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed because of me;

[Perhaps: "...may I not be a cause of stumbling because of my failure to walk closely with you. Judge my private life as well as my public life."]

Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel.

[Israel is Your chosen people, Lord, your gold standard for the behavior of people who know you. Above all of my fellow country men I stand before you, Father, as "true Israel" as your servant Isaiah predicted.]

7 Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Shame has covered my face.

[Being maligned, judged, penalized for the wrong doings of others awakens in us sinners a desire for revenge or a false sense of shame.]

8 I have become a stranger to my brothers, And an alien to my mother's children;

[‘Father,’ Jesus may have felt, ‘my half brothers and sisters treat me as an outsider, as a bastard son with no known father.’ ‘Around Nazareth I am considered illegitimate and my own mother is not well-thought of because of me.’]

**9 Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up,
And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.**

[Israel was in a very low state when Jesus lived among them. Knowing what they were supposed to be as a people surely angered Jesus. He, the fully innocent one, was constantly accused of wrongdoing by the townsfolk.]

10 When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, That became my reproach.

11 I also made sackcloth my garment; I became a byword to them.

[As a true believer in a nation of mostly unbelievers, Jesus was belittled and maligned when His life style made Him to appear "holier than thou." In fact He was only living the normal life of a "true" (righteous) Jew.]

12 Those who sit in the gate speak against me, And I am the song of the drunkards.

[The town gate is where business and governmental affairs were conducted. Jesus was constantly "the talk of the town," in a derogatory way--all of His life. In the taverns, singers sang bawdy songs taunting Him.]

13 But as for me, my prayer is to You, O LORD, in the acceptable time;

O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.

[From boyhood until His resurrection, Jesus looked to His heavenly Father constantly for the strength to live a godly life, to endure pain and hatred from His own people, to please the Father. It is likely He had no close friends and companions. Even at the end of His life His disciples barely grasped what He wanted them to know.]

14 Deliver me out of the mire, And let me not sink; Let me be delivered from those who hate me, And out of the deep waters.

15 Let not the floodwater overflow me, Nor let the deep swallow me up; And let not the pit shut its mouth on me.

16 Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good; Turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies.

17 And do not hide Your face from Your servant, For I am in trouble; Hear me speedily.

18 Draw near to my soul, and redeem it; Deliver me because of my enemies.

19 You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor; My adversaries are all before You.

20 Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness;

I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; And for comforters, but I found none.

21 They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

[Verses 14-21 takes us through the entire life of Jesus up through His agonizing death on the cross. Jesus endured.]

22 ¶ Let their table become a snare before them, And their well-being a trap.

23 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; And make their loins shake continually.

24 Pour out Your indignation upon them, And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them.

25 Let their dwelling place be desolate; Let no one live in their tents.

26 For they persecute the ones You have struck, And talk of the grief of those You have

wounded.

27 Add iniquity to their iniquity, And let them not come into Your righteousness.

28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous.

29 But I am poor and sorrowful; Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high.

[Verses 22-29 constitute an "imprecatory prayer." This is a prayer asking God to bring justice to Jesus' enemies. This powerful prayer is about the real enemies of Jesus who opposed Him, tracked Him down and killed Him. They then went on to persecute all His followers. These hardened sinners, who know who Jesus was full well, had refused mercy and grace long term, thus passing "beyond the pale." They were guilty of the sin which could not be forgiven.]

30 ¶ I will praise the name of God with a song, And will magnify Him with thanksgiving.

31 This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bull, Which has horns and hooves.

32 The humble shall see this and be glad; And you who seek God, your hearts shall live.

33 For the LORD hears the poor, And does not despise His prisoners.

[After enduring the full work on the cross atoning for the sins of all of us, Jesus "dismissed His spirit, saying, "It is finished." The resurrection brought great liberation for Him and all His followers which continues to work out down through all subsequent history.]

34 Let heaven and earth praise Him, The seas and everything that moves in them.

35 For God will save Zion And build the cities of Judah, That they may dwell there and possess it.

36 Also, the descendants of His servants shall inherit it, And those who love His name shall dwell in it.

[The full work of redemption for Israel by Jesus includes God honoring all of His promises to Israel, at long last. **Isaiah 49:6** says that God will also bring us gentiles into the family God as an extra blessing (a Bride) rewarding the faithfulness of His Son.]

There is only one way to know and that is through the man Jesus Christ. In order for us to benefit from His work on the cross we must place our full trust in Jesus Christ as our Master. We are urged to go beyond a merely formal commitment to Jesus--we are to know Him intimately and personally, as a bride and bridegroom know one another after they take the solemn vows of a marriage covenant. Usually we open our hearts and lives in a general way to "knowing Jesus" on Sundays at church. We may even renew our commitment to Jesus at Easter and Christmas, and when hard times roll in. This is not enough it turns out.

At what point did Jesus begin to devote all His time and energy to God the Father on our behalf? Was it on the cross? **Psalms 69** and other similar Scriptures remind us that we can come to understand that Jesus is able to relate to us at any age. Jesus loves lonely boys and girls, mistreated children, the fatherless and motherless of this world. He knows how we all felt growing up. The life of Jesus as He was growing up was surely a lonely life. He lacked a balanced and healthy family to be part of. He was a social outcast from an early age--no one wants to hang out with the most religious kid in town whose life style puts us all to shame. Jesus was born and grew up at a time when the spiritual life of Israel was at a very low ebb. He had no living mentors to learn from, no trusted friends to pray with.

It is true that our sins were transferred to Jesus during his last 3 hours on the cross. But He began to identify, to pray and to serve His people from his boyhood until His death. "He came unto His own but His own received Him not..." Therefore Jesus understands us whether we are very young or very old. "...they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but

the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God." (**Mark 10:13-14**)

Psalm 40 is all about the resurrection of Jesus. Ray Stedman's excellent commentary is at <http://www.raystedman.org/old-testament/psalms/lo-i-come>.

Health: The New Year finds me regaining energy and endurance after gall bladder removal in early November. It appears that the old gall bladder had been acting up for about three years presenting only subtle direct symptoms most of the time. However, I seem to have been "chosen" to learn a lot about God and about myself by means of the inconvenience of a bit of extended illness. I am learning a lot, and I can only thank God for short-term "light afflictions." Our present bodies are as yet not redeemed but still wonderfully designed and built. "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well." (**Psalm 139:14**) Pain and hospital discomforts fade away when we invite Jesus with us when we are out of commission. As I have said, for me the past 3 years have been an incredible learning time.

The End of the Age: I am beginning to look forward to the next staging all followers of Jesus will soon experience when Jesus returns to call us out of this "world" and into new imperishable, immortal bodies. In the past few months many Christian friends have developed a new interest in what the future holds. Without the Word of God planted in our hearts we can't help but feel we are adrift in a sea of relativism.

I developed a keen interest in prophecy back in 1962 when I was born again, and I have kept up every since. What amazes up about the last few years of earth-history is the cascade of evidence from around the world indicating that the return of Jesus Christ for His Bride, the true Church, could occur any day now. Those earth inhabitants who do not have a relationship with Jesus are oblivious to the Biblical picture of the end of the age, though many are nervous and anxious about the economy and growing world tensions. Followers of Jesus, even those with genuine faith may not be well studied in prophecy. A clear picture of prophecy requires knowing the whole Bible cover to cover. I hope you will get copies of the new book on prophecy written by Ron Graff and me. Please visit: <http://bible-prophecy.com/connecting> to order or order copies from Amazon.com. It's available as soft cover or e-Book. The Bible speaks of a great falling-away of professing Christians at the end of the age, and the rise of deceptive, false teaching both spiritual and secular.

The recent revolution in Egypt is a huge development considering the close involvement of the Egyptian people and the Jews dating back to the days of Abraham. Egyptians are not Arabs. Egypt, plus a new nation Assyria yet to be built, plus Israel will be key players in the coming Millennium when Jesus reigns on earth from Jerusalem. "In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, 'Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.'" (**Isaiah 19:23-25**)

Contributions: I do want to thank all of you who send in financial contributions. Medicare has covered most of my medical expenses but there is a small residue I have to pay on my own. Currently this balance due is about \$3500. If you are able to invest in my ministry, I'd be most grateful. You may send contributions directly to my [PayPal account](#). Or, Ray Stedman

Ministries has graciously provided a channel for tax-deductible donations. If you would like a tax receipt, send your check to Ray Stedman Ministries, Attn: Lambert Dolphin Ministries, PO Box 413, Mount Hermon, CA 95041.

*He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD (**Psalm 40:2-3**).*

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