

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

Church of Christ
371 W. Main Street
Greenwood, IN 46142
(317)888-8288

VOLUME 6 NO. 14 www.gwoodchurchofchrist.org JUNE 21, 2009

Early Childhood of Jesus (2)

A Selected Article

As a Young Man in Nazareth (Luke 2:40-52)

Little is known of the childhood of Jesus. We are left with a huge blank when it comes to the rest of the infancy and childhood of Jesus. Since God chose not to reveal details of His childhood, it must not be necessary for us to know these things. We do know that He had a “normal” childhood, growing and progressing as a normal child.

From other passages what can we conclude about His childhood? He shared the home of Joseph and Mary with siblings (Mark 6:3 “Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us? And they took offense at Him.”)

From John 7:5 it seems clear that His brothers did not embrace His claim of deity until after His resurrection. It seems to me that this suggests that as a child, Jesus did not, as foolish legends allege, perform miracles and wonders as a child.

Growing up in an orthodox Jewish home, he learned a trade from His earthly father (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). In this case He would have learned the trade of carpentry. Farrar refers to the livelihood provided by the trade of carpenter as “honest poverty” providing only the simplest of lives.

The synagogue of Nazareth would have been a place of frequent assembly and influence. Typically this is where Jewish boys received their secular as well as religious training. This is where Jewish boys learned to read and write.

Jesus as a boy in the temple (Luke 2:40-52).

At age 12, Jesus accompanied His parents to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of the Passover. The age of 12 was pivotal in the life of a Jewish boy. This was the age when a boy was considered emancipated from parental authority so that he could no longer be sold as a slave. This was the age at which he became a “ben-hat-torah” – a son of the law. Up to this age he was considered “little” but at age 12 he was considered “grown up” and received the “tephillin (phylacteries) and was presented by his father in the synagogue.

The Passover was one of three “pilgrimage feasts” when Jewish males were expected to travel to Jerusalem for worship and sacrifice. Joseph and his family would be among hundreds of thousands of Jews flocking to Jerusalem for this solemn feast. It would have been a week of deep happiness and strong religious emotion. Joseph and his family would have been part of a vast caravan making the 80 mile journey from Jerusalem back to Nazareth. The journey was often marked by mirth and music. “They often beguiled the tedium of travel with the sound of drums and timbrels, and paused to refresh themselves with dates, or melons, or cucumbers, and water drawn in skins and water pots from every springing well and running stream...boys and children sometimes walk and play by the side of their parents, and sometimes, when tired, get a lift on horse or mule...But, in any case, among such a sea of human beings, how easy would it be to lose one young boy” (Farrar, page 38).

Rather than returning with His parents, Jesus chose to stay behind in Jerusalem and pursue the spiritual activities in the temple. Any parent who has ever turned to find a child missing can appreciate and identify with the emotions of Joseph and Mary when they realized that Jesus was not among the caravan. In alarm and anguish, they begin to retrace their steps in search of their oldest Son. Making things worse was the fact that Archelaus, Herod’s cruel and disgraceful son, had been deposed by Rome and replaced by Coponius, setting off a revolt that wrapped the whole country in a storm of sword and flame.

For three days Joseph and Mary frantically search for Jesus. They finally find Him sitting in the Temple – seemingly the last place they looked for Him. There amidst the doctors of the law they find Jesus listening, asking questions and challenging their understanding of the Law. Joseph and Mary find an eager-hearted and gifted learner whose enthusiasm kindled their admiration, and whose bearing won their esteem and love. It is one of the sad realities of rejection and hatred that among those who so admired and were so amazed by this 12 year old boy lived to believe on Him. To the contrary, this was the group that most violently opposed and rejected Him. They were charmed and astonished by noble-hearted boy, but repulsed by the adult who called for their submission.

Not surprisingly, it is the mother of Jesus who speaks first. Notice that Mary refers to Joseph as His “father.” It seems to me that this simple statement gives us some insight into how Jesus was reared. Once again, I think we see that the childhood of Jesus was quite normal.

What follows are the first recorded words of our Redeemer: “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house?” “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceed out of the mouth of God.” “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.” Jesus draws their attention to a fact that they knew, but did not take into consideration.

Jesus returned to Nazareth with His earthly parents and continued in subjection to them. What follows in the sacred text is some 18 years of silence. During this time Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, and favor. As much as we might like to know more, God told us only that which is necessary to lead us to humble submission to His glorious Son.

Under Construction!

As you can tell our auditorium is undergoing a much needed renovation. We have all waited a long time for this

and now that it is here we should be very thankful. We know that the conditions we are use to are somewhat disturbed by the construction process. However, we appreciate the fact that the elders have made the decision to move forward on this project. In the last five years the building has been updated to see us through the next several years. This has been done without borrowing any funds. The members are to be commended for this.

Working Together – By Robert Hines

When husbands and wives live different lives the marriage is going nowhere. When members of a congregation don’t pull together in the “unity of the Spirit” (Ephesians 4:1-6) it won’t be long before a hollowness takes over . . . like the difference between a house and a home. But it can be corrected if we first define the problem! Look at Joan McIntire’s nanny story...

“Working as a nanny I once had to use a real dinosaur of a baby carriage. It was so big and unwieldy that I always had trouble on the five steps leading up to my client’s house. One day as I struggled on the steps a neighbor came out to help. We pushed and pulled to no avail, and the poor baby was bounced around until he began to cry. “I don’t understand why we can’t get this buggy down off the porch,” lamented the neighbor. “Down?” I said. I’m trying to get it up!”

As a congregation we need to make sure that we are not working at cross purposes with each other. With every part supplying what the body needs (1st Corinthians 12) then there will be action and real growth. Anything else makes for a lot of expended energy, and plenty of grunting and groaning . . . but just standing still, and upsetting our babies at the same time.