

## Transcript

### The Jesus Story - The Silent Years

**After the birth of Jesus, up to His appearing at the age of thirty, there is very little recorded about His life. These are referred to as the silent years.**

Today, what I would like to do, is to see what we can find out about those silent years. We can start where we finished in the last session. Jesus as a baby after being dedicated to God. This is what we read in Luke 2 verse 39:

***39 So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.***

In the next verse we have an outline of the next twelve years. Verse 40 tells us:

***40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.***

When we finished last time, we said that we had not seen any wise men. Tradition tells us that the wise men turned up at the stable, with the shepherds. As we will discover today, this was not true.

The silent years that we talk about were, perhaps, not quite as silent as we thought. Matthew 2 tells us of a few of the things that happened in the first two years after Jesus was presented in the Temple. It also explains the reason for what was happening. Matthew 2 v1:

***1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,***

***2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."***

***3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.***

Herod then called the chief priests and scribes together to find out where the Christ was to be born. They told Herod that it was in 'Bethlehem of Judea'. The chief priests and scribes told Herod what the prophets had said of Bethlehem (Matthew 2 v6):

***6 For out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.***

From the visit of the wise men and the Old Testament Prophets, it is possible to get some idea of what happened during those first two years. By putting the verses together we get this possible order of events:

- Joseph and Mary leave Nazareth to go to Bethlehem and Jesus is born there.
- Then they go back to Jerusalem after eight days, taking Jesus to be circumcised.
- Then they return to Nazareth and, a month later, they go back to Jerusalem for purification celebration.
- The celebration of purification takes place, forty days after the birth of Jesus.

- Now, the wise men arrive about six to twelve months after the birth of Jesus, and inquire about the child's whereabouts.

By this time Joseph and Mary are living in a house, and it is in a house where the wise men offer their gifts to the new born 'King of the Jews'. We find this in Matthew 2 v11:

***11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother,***

When King Herod hears of the visit of the wise men, he gets very concerned; he believes that the birth of Jesus poses a threat to his reign. So, Herod sends his soldiers to Bethlehem to kill all the male children who might have been born during the time the wise men had suggested.

Since six months to a year could have passed following the birth of Jesus, Herod instructs his soldiers to kill all the baby boys under two years. It was estimated that forty to fifty baby boys were in Bethlehem at this time and they were all killed.

But Joseph, being warned about the massacre, quickly departs for Egypt where he and Mary would stay until after the death of Herod. We read of this in Matthew 2:13-15.

***13 An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."***

***14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,***

***15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."***

Because of the warning to Joseph, and their flight into Egypt, Jesus escapes the first direct attempt on his life.

Jesus' life and movements were always in line with what the prophets had to say concerning him. Joseph is warned that Herod will try to destroy Jesus and he is told to flee to Egypt. They could have fled to any town, but in order for Scripture to be fulfilled they had to go to Egypt.

This was to fulfil what the prophet Hosea had to say. 11:1:

Out of Egypt I called My son.

In Matthew 2 v19, we read of their Return to Nazareth:

***19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,***

***20 saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead."***

***21 Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.***

**22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee.**

**23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”**

When we read the life of Jesus from being an infant, up to twelve years, this is all that is written about him (Luke 2 v40):

**40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.**

The only way that we can try to understand just what happened during this time is to look at how Jesus developed :

**40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.**

What we need to do is to look at the things that influenced Jesus, from being an infant, up to twelve years.

After the dedication of Jesus we read they returned to Galilee. He returned home with Mary and Joseph. This is all that we read in verse forty:

**40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.**

That does not give us much to go on, just four lines to cover the first twelve years. The only thing that we can do is to look at the conditions that he lived under. We need to look at His homelife, the village that he lived in, and the lifestyle of those around him.

We know what kind of home influences He had. His home was one of those that could best be described as the home of a godly, working class family. Joseph, The Head of the House was a devout man who observed all those religious responsibilities that were expected of him.

And Mary, his mother, she would be the one who had most external influence on His development.

I like the way that Max Lucado describes in one of his books, ‘The humanity of Jesus’, because he describes something that we don’t usually think about. The Jesus that Mary knew; after all she would be the one who would have to feed him, the one who nursed him when he was teething or had a bit of colic.

It would be Mary that Jesus would come running to when he was hurt or upset, or, maybe even afraid.

We tend to forget that for Jesus to be tempted in all points as we are, he would have experienced every temptation that we experience.

Don’t you think that Jesus would sometimes be tempted to answer Mary or Joseph back? If, when he was only twelve, he could sit discussing the law with the teachers of the law, in the temple. At twelve, he must have known far more than his parents did.

He may have been tempted, but I don't think he would answer them back.

Angels must have watched in amazement as Mary changed The Son of God's nappies. The universe would watch with wonder as the Almighty learned to walk. Jesus may have had pimples; it could be that his knees were bony.

One thing is for sure that while He was completely divine, He was completely human. He would feel everything that we feel.

He felt weak. He grew tired. He was afraid of failure. He got colds, He burped, and had body odour. His feelings got hurt. His feet got tired and his head ached.

To think of Jesus in this way seems almost irreverent. It's not something that we like to do, it's uncomfortable. It is much easier to keep humanity out of the incarnation.

Clean the manure from around the manger, wipe the sweat out of his eyes. Pretend that that he never snored or blew his nose. Never hit his thumb with a hammer. He is much easier to stomach that way.

There is something about keeping Jesus divine that keeps Him distant, packaged and predictable. But, don't do it! Let Him be as human as He intended to be.

One thing, however, is perfectly clear, and we really need to take this on board. Jesus took part of everything that belongs to a man's nature. His birth was exactly the same as all human births. It was a human He grew from infancy to boyhood. It was as a human that He increased in bodily strength and mental power.

Jesus is able to sympathise with everyone of us in every stage of our existence, from the cradle to the grave. He knows by experience, the nature and temperament of the child, the boy, and the young man. He has stood in their place. He has occupied their position. He knows their hearts.

All those hidden, waiting years, His home life would have an impact upon Him. Jesus would develop and grow in exactly the same way, and at the same pace, as all those other young people around him.

As Jesus developed he would receive His education at home, or from a scribe attached to the village synagogue. Jesus would find that His study of the Old Testament would be invaluable, when He was preaching.

His knowledge of the Old Testament would help him to silence his critics. It was his knowledge of the Old Testament that He used it to overcome the temptations of the Satan:

***40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.***

This is what Isaiah prophesied of Jesus, Isa 53:2:

***2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.***

Then in Luke 2 verse 41, we find the only other recorded incident - the Temple Visit.

In verses 41 and 42 this is what we read:

**41 His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.**

**42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.**

These two verses don't tell us much about Jesus, but, they tell us a great deal about his parents. They were committed believers. Their faith may have cost them something, but, they continued in the task that they had been given to do.

Let's read on in verse 43:

**43 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;**

**44 but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.**

**45 So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.**

This was probably Jesus' first visit as a boy to the Temple in Jerusalem. A Jewish boy became a man, a 'son of the law', when he was 12 years old. At the end of the week, people travelled home together in large groups.

Mary and Joseph did not worry about Jesus until the evening at the end of the first day's journey. Everyone met together in the evening. They knew that Jesus was not with them. They would think that he was travelling with relatives or friends in another part of the group. It was only when they stopped for the night that they found he was missing.

Then Mary and Joseph took a day to travel back to Jerusalem. They looked for Jesus in the city on the second day. It wasn't until the third day, they found him in the court of the Temple. The place where the rabbis taught.

**46 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.**

**47 And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.**

It was usual for students to ask and answer questions. Jesus had joined a group. He was asking questions. He also answered the questions that the teachers asked him. They were astonished at just how much Jesus knew and understood.

How did Jesus gain such wisdom? This is something that we need to take on board. Jesus, although divine, was not born with the exceptional wisdom. The knowledge that Jesus demonstrated was acquired by his studying the Hebrew Old Testament.

It was this that enabled him to challenge the thinking of the Jewish religious leaders with his questions at the age of twelve. Jesus had to be very familiar with the Hebrew Old Testament, as well the skill of reasoning from the Scriptures.

When Joseph and Mary found him, this is what we read in verse 48:

**48 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." Jesus, his simple answer to them was.**

**49 “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”**

This incident shows that Jesus was fully aware of the great commission that He was called to fulfil and His relationship with God. Even at this early age, no Jew would call God ‘my’ Father. But Jesus already realised that he had a special relationship with God.

Joseph was only his legal ‘father’. When Jesus said ‘I must be about My Father’s business’, this demonstrated just how much he knew. Jesus knew that he must do what his Father expected. All through his life, Jesus knew that he must obey God’s purpose for him.

“Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you know that it was necessary for me to be about my Father’s business?”

In that sentence the twelve-year-old boy demonstrates profound understanding of his identity and purpose. He knows he is the Son of God.

He makes it clear that, the Father’s business is his business. Jesus is not being rude. The consciousness of who he really was did not prevent Jesus from performing the normal lowly tasks of daily life, and from being obedient to his earthly parents.

We know this because in verse 51 it tells us:

**51 He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.**

He humbly goes home with his parents and submits to them.

In this introduction to the Life of Jesus, we have the first recorded words that ever came out of the mouth of Jesus.

Luke 2:49:

**49 “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”**

The last recorded words that Jesus ever spoke were about the work that God had given Him to do, (John 19:30). This was when Jesus was on the cross. He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

In between those two verses is a greatest story ever told. There were still a few years left for Mary and Joseph to nurture this growing young man. Jesus stayed close to His parents, a period that was long enough for Him to learn Joseph’s carpentry trade and support Mary with it until He was about thirty years old.

Now this is the last time Joseph was mentioned in the gospels. It is generally believed that he died during the early years of Jesus while Jesus was still just a youth. This would leave the care of the family in the hands of Jesus.

Something else that we don’t usually think about, there were other members in the family. Jesus had brothers and sisters. Jesus was brought up in the heart of a big family.

From Mark 6v3 we learn something else, and, there is so much we can learn from this one verse:

**3 “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?”**

The title that Jesus is given - ‘The carpenter, the Son of Mary’ - from this we can safely assume that by this time Joseph had died, because, Jesus is now the carpenter. ‘The brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?’ Four brothers and we don’t know how many sisters, this was a large family.

For some eighteen years after that visit to Jerusalem, Jesus appears to have lived and toiled as a carpenter at Nazareth.

As the years went on, Jesus grew from a boy to a young man. He grew, too, in knowledge and in wisdom and in the favour of God. Jesus learned the trade of a carpenter with Joseph; Joseph had died while Jesus was still a young man.

Jesus, as the oldest son, would have to care of His mother and His younger brothers and sisters. And so with the work of the carpenter’s shop and the quiet life of a country village and the worship of the synagogue, the years passed until Jesus was thirty years of age.

There are few places where human nature can be studied better than in a small village, because in that sort of close community we see so much of peoples individual lives, and everyone knows everyone else’s business.

The account we have of the early years of Jesus is very concise. There may not be enough to satisfy our curiosity, but there is enough to help us to adjust our conduct.

The only authentic record which we have of just what happened during those childhood years, we find in verses 51-52.

**51 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.**

**52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.**

It is well worth taking note of the way that Jesus grew. Jesus grew in wisdom (intellectually), He grew in stature (physically), He grew in favour with God (spiritually), and He grew in favour with man (socially). The development of Jesus was the same as all of us need to develop.

This shows Jesus to be one of us.

This marks His life on earth as progressive, passing through successive stages. Jesus had to learn as others learned, subject to the ordinary growth and development of human knowledge. Jesus Christ is the great pattern, the one that we are to use as our example.

We should never be at a loss to know what we should do.

He is our example, we need to know either what he did, or what he would have done in any situation that we may find ourselves in.

Though Jesus was the Son of God, still he was also the ‘son of Mary’, and he loved

and obeyed his mother, and was 'subject' to her.

Nazareth was a notoriously wicked town, we learn from the question, that was asked - Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?

Jesus had no association with sin in His own life, but, in Nazareth He would see the awful problems that sin caused. This was going to be something that would be His lifework to deal with.

He was still further brought into contact with human nature by His trade. That He worked as a carpenter in Joseph's shop there can be no doubt. 'Is not this the carpenter?'

That is something else that we really need to take on board. Of all the jobs that God could have chosen for His son when He dwelt among men; out of all the possible positions in which He might have placed Him, He chose the lot of a working man. In a working class family.

This made Jesus aware of the needs and feelings of the multitude of people that He had come to minister to. As Jesus grew up in Nazareth, This is what we read in verse 40:

***40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.***

The rest of Jesus youth and early masculinity is summed up by Luke in one short verse:

***52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.***

The two verses, 40 and 52, give us the only really sound basis for what happened during those silent years. In verse 39 we find clue on how verse 40 came about:

***39 So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.***

It would be in the home of Mary and Joseph, it would be their influence that played a part in just how the child grew:

***40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.***

Again verse 51, it sheds light on what took place:

***51 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.***

It would be what was going on around Jesus that would have the greatest impact on the life of Jesus. That is why it is so important that we understand something. Not just what was going on around Him but how He reacted to those things: 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.

What are the lessons that we can learn from those Silent Years? During those silent years Jesus would experience all those situations that all human beings experience. He would grow the same way as all of us grow.

He would face exactly the same problems that we all face. Learning a trade, all those work related problems that we face, He would face.

Would he be able to earn enough to feed the family? Then there would be all those family problems, not just the provision of all their material needs, there would be sorting out personal family problems. He would experience all the family problems that we face.

He was in all points tempted as we are. Just think of the problems that you have experienced down the years. Jesus has experienced most of them and more.

Hebrews 4:15 could not be any clearer:

***15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.***

To be like Jesus should be the aim of every Christian. To follow the example that He set for us. The example of those silent years was clear enough. Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.

That is what we should be striving to do. That is where Luke chapter two finishes. Luke then takes more than twenty verses to introduce us to John the Baptist.

John the Baptist played such an important part in the life of Jesus. There are so many things that we can learn by looking closely at John the Baptist and his relationship with Jesus. This is what we shall be looking at, God Willing in the next session.