

A BREED APART

Luke 2:39-52

It's increasingly common to find people who don't want to remember their past.

The past contains painful memories that we would prefer to forget.

It's hard for us to understand the N.T. background which assumes that the majority would have pleasant memories of home and family, and relates spiritual experience to family roles.

Most people who have grown up in godly homes with godly parents have some less-than-happy moments; but in general, our memories are happy ones.

People often ask to be told over and over again about the days of their childhood.

Grandparents are pestered by grandchildren who want to know about their parents' early days.

A new spouse will listen attentively to stories about their mate's childhood.

In that spirit, Luke pursued Mary to uncover stories of our Lord's early years. While we're left with many holes that we can only fill from our imagination, the one glimpse we do get reveals a great deal about Jesus' childhood.

EVIDENCE OF MESSIAH'S ARRIVAL 1:5-4:13

Testimony from Gabriel's revelation to Zechariah 1:5-25

Testimony from Gabriel's revelation to Mary 1:26-38

Testimony from Mary's visit to Elizabeth 1:39-56

Testimony from John's birth 1:57-80

Testimony from Jesus' birth 2:1-20

Testimony from Jesus' presentation 2:21-38

TESTIMONY FROM JESUS' CHILDHOOD 2:39-52

Jesus returns to His home with His parents and develops normally toward a lifestyle and testimony that are pleasing to God. 2:39-40
Jesus' growth and development confirm His relationship to God.

At each phase of His development Christ was a perfect human for that stage.

He wasn't a 30 year old at 10—neither physically nor mentally.

He was a perfect 10-year-old.

He grew physically, spiritually, and socially.

We learn no more about the 12 years in Nazareth, after the initial experience with Simeon and Anna in the temple.

Little is revealed about Jesus' childhood and youth—only two general descriptions (40, 52), and one specific event (41-51).

The absence of exhibitionism is apparent.

In spite of fantastic accounts in non-biblical documents, the Bible avoids any indication of supernatural exhibitions before Jesus' official presentation to Israel.

Examples of what the Bible might have included if it were just another book of popular myths (as some contend!):

1. Some traditions from Qumran

Jesus consoles His mother when she's recuperating from the pain of His birth.

Friends come to see the newborn infant, and Christ talks with them as if an adult.

2. The Gospel of pseudo-Matthew

When Christ was a small child, as they were traveling to Egypt, His mother was tired and wanted some kind of fruit. Christ ordered a fruit tree to bend over so that she could reach its fruit.

3. "Thomas" "Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ"

Christ presented as a brilliant child in school. He instructs His teachers concerning some "hidden mysteries" of the alphabet.

Within this story, His teacher says, "Say *Aleph*" and He repeated it. Then the teacher told Him to say *Beth*. He replied, "No, I will not say '*Beth*' until you tell me what *Aleph* means" The teacher raised his hand to strike Jesus and his hand became paralyzed.

He performs miracles that amaze His family and friends.

On one occasion, Jesus made 12 clay birds on the Sabbath. Someone went and told Joseph about it. When Joseph bawled Him out, saying: "Why are you doing things that shouldn't be done on the Sabbath?" Jesus said to the clay birds, "Go away!" And they flew off singing.

By way of contrast, John 2 seems to indicate that He withheld any display of supernatural power until His first sign at the wedding in Cana of Galilee.

**There must have been some differences in His development because Jesus is God, –he was a breed apart!–
but He is still totally human.**

Scripture gives no indication that He ever went around putting on a show before His appointed time!

In the one event we do find described of His youth, Luke indicates that while still a youth, Jesus gave testimony to His Messiahship. This wasn't an "eleventh hour" discovery Jesus suddenly made of His destiny, or of Who He was.

While still a youth—at 12—Jesus demonstrates Who His real Father is by staying at His house when Joseph and Mary left, and by His understanding of His Father's Word. 2:41-50

It's hard for us to understand how they could have traveled on the road all day without realizing that He wasn't with them.

In those days they traveled as extended families. It kept them safe from robbers, and they could enjoy fellowship. Thus the assumption that He was with someone else was natural.

The women and children would travel at the front of the caravan, while the men would bring up the rear. It would have been easy for Mary to think Jesus was with His father, and Joseph to think He was with His mother, especially since this was a major transition point in His life.

He had just become a “son of the law,” mature enough to stand before God. His dad could understandably still think of Him as more closely related to mom, while mom would not be surprised that He would want to be with the men. *The fact is that He WAS with His Father, but not in the sense they had in mind.*

The three days of searching were probably one day out, one day back, and one day searching the city for Him.

Jesus’ parents finally found Him in the temple, asking questions and listening to their answers. 2:46

It hadn’t occurred to them that His newly acquired right to present Himself in the temple would give Him *the occasion to make a statement: to present Himself as the Son of the Father* that they worshipped. He was now legally responsible and able to enter the temple for worship. At the first such opportunity, Jesus makes a statement as to Who He is.

**The teachers in the temple were amazed
at both His questions and His answers. 2:47**

**This wasn’t the normal understanding of a 12-year-old.
Judging from later testimony, He probably talked
like someone who knows what he’s talking about!**

**His questions may have led to new insights
that never occurred to them before.**

As an effective teacher, He may have taught more by His questions than by the answers given. In any case, the observers were impressed.

The “round table discussion” was customary at feasts. The leaders would sit around impressing the masses with their knowledge. This time it didn’t work that way. A 12-year-old stole the show! He asked questions that they had never thought of, and seemed to do alright with answers as well.

Jesus expresses surprise that His parents didn’t know where to look for Him. They should have understood that His highest priority was His Father’s business.

He thus confirmed His relationship with His real Father and His commitment to do God’s will above all else.

Only when His two familial relationships conflicted with each other did Jesus fail to obey His parents.

Though Jesus is God, He demonstrates His submission to God by submitting to the authority God has established in the home.

In every other sense, Jesus grew up as an ideal child. 2:51-52

He didn’t strike out in independence.

Barclay: "The fact that He was God's Son made Him the perfect Son of His human parents. The real man of God does not despise earthly ties; precisely because he is God's man he discharges human duties with supreme fidelity."

We see in Jesus a young person who wanted to please God in everything He did.

He achieved more because *He was no ordinary person—He WAS a breed apart.*

But His example is still valid for people who want to please God today.

WHAT WAS HE LIKE? Let's observe some of His traits that we might imitate:

1. He had a thirst for God and for the things of God. 46-47, 49

He wanted to be in God's house.

He wanted to be around God's people.

He asked lots of questions concerning the truth.

His knowledge of God's Word had two sources:

Divine—He was God.

Human—He asked questions and listened to the answers.

He spent time in it.

2. He submitted to the authority of His parents. 51

If anyone ever had an excuse NOT to submit, it was Jesus! Yet He did.

3. He looked for the way to please God in everything He did. 40, 52

4. He tried to live in a way that would please others also. 52

There was a balance in His growth and development.

LESSONS FOR US IN CHRIST'S EXAMPLE:

Jesus stood out as different—as a breed apart—**THREE REASONS:**

1. Because He recognized Who His real Father is.

This was especially true of Jesus in a unique sense, but it should also be true of us.

—especially if we come from a wounded past!

Who is our *real* Father?

Have you set your focus on the right family relationships? If our earthly parents have failed us, the One Who is our real Father will never fail us. He is always looking out for our good. He wants us to look to Him as our Father.

Do WE act like children of this kind, loving Father?

Can people tell who *our* Father is?

2. Because He understood proper priorities.

He had to be about His Father's business—"the things of My Father."

Do we?

How important are the matters that are important to God to us?

What are we doing about it?

Relationship is more important than service.

But service *is* important too!

Are we seeking to be identified with Him?

Do we desire to be part of His affairs?

There is no contradiction between *growing up* and *serving God*.

Even Jesus, as a youth, went back home to finish going to school and growing up! He waited quietly for 30 years until the time when He would be considered a mature person!

Nevertheless, even at 12, He still had to be involved in His Father's business—there was a balance here.

3. Because **He grew up as a whole, balanced person**.

He developed balance in all areas

Submissive to God

Submissive to parents

Appropriately related to others—socially

Physically healthy