

What Did Jesus Do for 30 Years ?

Luke 3:23 says that Jesus did not begin His ministry until after He was 30. He lived in a small obscure village on the side of a mountain working as a carpenter. No one, not even his brothers noticed anything special about Him. John 7:5 says that in the beginning of His ministry, His brothers were not believing in Him. They even approached Him in Mark 3:21 and asked Jesus to stop embarrassing them and come home.

The question asked by many for the last 1900 years is, what did Jesus do the first 30 years of His life? There was quite a lot of silly stories and writings in the 2nd and 3rd century about Jesus' childhood, particularly by the Gnostic writers (who were viewed by the church as heretics). I have read most of those, and trust me, they are junk. They had no credibility then or now. The church, and I mean all of the early churches and all the leaders of the churches rejected the Gnostics and their writings. Additionally, their writings are inconsistent with and contradictory to everything in the Bible. The only Bible story about Jesus' childhood is found in Luke 2:42-52 when Jesus was 12 and was discussing the Scriptures with the teachers in the Temple at Jerusalem. The teachers were amazed at His understanding. We can therefore assume that like all good Jewish people, His family journeyed to Jerusalem every year for the major religious memorials and feasts like Passover. We can also see that from the beginning Jesus had a supernatural knowledge of the Scriptures and an understanding of His true identity that was hidden from the rest of the world until His ministry began after the age of 30.

Therefore, with so little valid information, what did Jesus do for His first 30 years? His childhood and early life were consistent with the humility of His birth. Jesus very humbly went about His business as a carpenter and servant to His family and community. He grew up observing the Law of Moses within the religious system of Judaism in the first century, patiently waiting for the day that God the Father had appointed for His ministry to begin.

The question is also asked, "Why did God do it this way? If the Son of God had to come into the world and die a sacrificial death on the cross to save us, why didn't He just arrive in time for the Last Supper on Thursday night of the Passion week, then be crucified on Friday and resurrected on Sunday? Why did He live for over 30 years beforehand? I see two answers to this question:

1. As the “Suffering Servant”, and as the Lamb of God, it was necessary to be born and to live a full life of humility and service consistent with God’s purposes of the first advent. The prophet Isaiah made it clear He would have very humble origins, appearance, and lifestyle (Isa. 53:2-3).
2. Jesus had to live a sinless life. Just showing up for a weekend doesn’t cut it. Jesus needed to live a complete and full life from birth to death and prove to be sinless. Why is that necessary? Consider the many passages about the importance of His sinless life like Hebrews 4:15. Jesus can sympathize with us, He can relate to us because He went through every struggle and temptation in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, except He did it sinlessly. Jesus qualifies to be our perfect high priest as Hebrews 7:26 puts it, “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens”. In order to be our perfect substitutionary sacrifice so that our sins could be forgiven, He had to be proven sinless. Paul said, “God made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”(2 Cor. 5:21). Because Jesus was proven to be sinless, His righteousness was imputed to us who were sinners but have now been forgiven because of His perfect sacrifice on the cross. Isaiah predicted the Messiah would be sinless in Isa.53:9, and Peter quoted Isaiah as referring to Jesus as sinless in 1 Peter 2:22, “He committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth”. John made clear that for our sins to be forgiven, Jesus had to have been sinless in 1 Jn. 3:5 “Jesus appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin”.

ON THE CROSS, GOD TREATED JESUS AS IF HE LIVED YOUR LIFE, SO THAT GOD CAN TREAT YOU AS IF YOU LIVED JESUS’ SINLESS LIFE—THAT IS THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL. Praise God that Jesus lived those first 30 years.

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