

## WHERE WAS CHRIST FROM 12 TO 30 YEARS OLD?

Many people throughout the centuries and up until today—some unknowingly due to ignorance and naivety, others deliberately due to cunning and evil intentions—claim that the Holy Gospels supposedly preserve secretive silence on the subject of Christ's life between the ages of twelve (when He appeared in the Temple) and the age of thirty (when He began to preach publicly).

This allegation, of course, is totally false and unsupported. Most people make this assertion with ill intentions, hoping through such slander to somehow support and prove that Jesus Christ is not God. Unfortunately, their impetus and hidden motive is to disprove and reject the miraculous power of Christ's divinity, and thereafter to proclaim that Jesus worked His miracles aided by the knowledge and skill He supposedly acquired in India! If, however, such people had ever read the New Testament carefully, they would realize that Jesus Christ lived within the borders of Israel throughout His entire life, and had no need to obtain human knowledge from others.

Let us begin by examining the words of St. Luke the Evangelist, who describes Christ at the age of twelve: “And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast...And 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...**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 it is necessary for me to be in My Father’s dwellings?**’...And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and submitted Himself to them” (Lk. 2:41-52).

They who claim that the Gospels henceforth cease detailing Christ's life speculate that He must have left His homeland and travelled to eastern regions where He found medicine men and shamans who taught Him how to perform sorcery and exorcisms, and then returned to His country eighteen years later with newly acquired knowledge and skills. Every earnest reader, however, will realize from the above text that Christ was not in need of travelling to India in order to acquire literacy and magical powers. For a twelve-year old child who has the ability and wisdom to converse with teachers in such a way as to “astonish all the listeners on account of His understanding and answers” is not a common child, but a Divine Child and Son of God. Furthermore, when responding to His mother,

“Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s dwellings?” Christ refers to the Temple as the home of His Father, intending with these words to reveal to everyone who was present that He is the true Son of God. Unfortunately, they “did not understand” what He said concerning His relationship with God the Father and the Temple, just as all who seek to defame Him throughout the centuries fail to understand.

The fourth chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke contains the following informative passage: "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.’ And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, ‘This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.’ And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, **‘Is not this Joseph’s son?’**" (Lk. 4:16-22).

Three inferences can be derived from the above narrative: First, that Christ was raised in Nazareth. Second, that the Spirit of God exists within Him. Third, that everyone in the synagogue who heard Him expounding the prophecy of Isaiah were amazed at His wisdom and knowledge—because they knew Him to be a simple carpenter, not a learned individual who had studied abroad. They knew Him as the son of a humble carpenter; this is why they asked, **"Isn't he the son of Joseph?"** Even though He grew up in Nazareth, it was natural for Him as the God-man to be able to explain the prophecy and amaze the listeners, without having to receive training in foreign lands.

Yet another testimony comes from the Evangelist Mark. "And He went out from thence, and came into His own country; and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath day was come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing him were astonished, saying, **‘From whence hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Judah, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?’** And they were scandalized with him. But Jesus said unto them, ‘A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and

among his own kin, and in his own house.' And He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them" (Mk. 6:1-5).

From the above passage, it can be concluded that Jesus never exited the narrow borders of His homeland. This is why His fellow countrymen could not accept this "new" Jesus. They were scandalized when they witnessed Jesus, who was up until then a simple carpenter, performing miracles and healings. If He had left the country, it would not have seemed so strange to them. They would reason that he had studied for so many years in another country, where he surely learned skills that now enabled him to accomplish all these works. However, since they knew that He had never left from Nazareth and also aware that he was unlearned, they couldn't believe their eyes. This is why they asked, **"Isn't he the carpenter, the son of Mary?"** As a matter of fact, they regarded the sudden and unexpected change in the Lord serious enough to characterize him as crazy. They could not explain and account for this transformation, and this is why, "when His friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: **for they said, He is beside himself**" (Mk. 3:21). Hence, the very people who lived in the same village as Christ testified and assured us with their reaction that He had never left Nazareth.

St. John the Evangelist also provides us with testimony that Christ never distanced Himself from His homeland.

"Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marveled, saying, '**How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?**'" (Jn. 7:14-15).

Clearly, the Jews were aware that Christ had never learned how to read. Their amazement is marvelous testimony that Jesus did not distance Himself from His home. Had he been absent from His country for eighteen lengthy years, the Jews would have neither been surprised nor would they have confirmed that He was illiterate.

The Lord desiring to answer and to release them of their skepticism responded thus: "Jesus answered them, and said, '**My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent Me.** If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself'" (Jn. 7:16-17).

In other words, He was saying to them, "You are surprised and scandalized that I am able to speak and preach without having gone to school and without having received an education? This very fact should make you realize that the things I am saying and preaching are not from this world but from Heaven. If you firmly resolve to keep the commandments of God (of My Father) Who has sent Me to the earth, you will understand that I am speaking the truth,

and that all the things I teach and do are from Heaven above."

It can therefore be concluded from the narrative of this Evangelist that Christ never distanced Himself from Nazareth, and that His fellow countrymen as well as His supposed brothers disbelieved and rejected Him because they knew well of His life, upbringing, and lack of education: "For neither did his brethren believe in Him" (Jn. 7:5).

Behold how all the four Evangelists provide testimony on this "controversial" topic! They who arrogantly maintain that the Gospel remains silent on the life of Christ during the ages of twelve and thirty inadvertently reveal that, in fact, they are ignorant of the Scriptures, their claims are void of sound reasoning, and, deep down inside, they reject the divinity of Christ. Jesus Christ was not only the son of the Virgin Mary, but also the Son of God. Consequently, He had no need of obtaining human wisdom or acquiring magical powers in eastern lands.