

Matthew 3 - The Kings Boyhood and Baptism

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Events leading up to Jesus baptism

His early life : age 8 to 30 years old - Mt 2:23 & Luke 2:39-52

Jesus returned with Joseph and Mary and *was subject unto them*, Lk 2:51, Phil 2:5-8

He attended all Jewish services, Lk 4:16

He learned Hebrew, Greek, Latin (Lk 23:38) and Aramaic (Jn 5:2).

Jesus Boyhood

“The Hamlet of Nazareth in northern Israel was a miniature of the whole country in the sense that it's location afforded ready contact with the outside world, yet considerable separation from it (the very features that Israel had enjoyed historically). Nazareth was near the crossroads of the Roman world but detached by the topography : the town was on a plateau while the flow of traffic passed thru the lowlands beneath.

From the hillside, Jesus as a boy must have often scanned the horizon in all directions (visitors have attested to the magnificent view from this spot). The panorama would include the Mediterranean sea to the west with Mt. Carmel and the plain of Sharon just south of it. Turning to the north he saw Mt. Tabor and the broad valley of Esdraelon. Looking south : nearby was the hill of Moreh, with Mt. Gilboa behind it and Samaria beyond. Eastward was the Sea of Galilee emptying into the Jordan river (southward) and beyond were the hills of Bashan-Gilead country. Looking far to the Northeast were the lights of Caesarea Philippi with the glistening Mt. Hermon behind capping the scene (~ 15 miles beyond).

Any true Israelite looking upon these vistas would be reminded of the stirring events of Jewish history that took place there : Elijah's triumph over the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel (1K18), Barak and Deborah's victory over the Canaanites at Mt. Tabor (Judges 4), the crushing of the Midianites by Gideon and his band at the hill of Moreh (Judges 7), the lamentable death of Jonathan and Saul at the hands of the Philistines at Mt. Gilboa (1 Sam 31 & 2 Sam 1:17-21). These and other exciting episodes would easily arise out the past and be reenacted in fancy.

Yes, Nazareth was secluded, but just beyond it's sheltering quiet lay the world of affairs of that day. It was God's gift to young Jesus in two ways : (1) to live a life of simplicity growing up, and (2) to provide a window to view the busier and more complex world in which he would minister.

Nazareth's livelihood depended on the tillage of its grain-fields (wheat and barley), and the cultivation of its vineyards and groves, which ranged up and down its neighboring hills. Jesus loved the out-doors : there he both labored and roamed the near-by countryside in meditation and prayer for his recreation. Years later he would often slip away from human companionship to commune with his Father.

Jesus cultivated early in life the habit of observing what went on around him and then used these observations in his parables. He observed that not all the sower's seed fell on good ground (Mt 13). He saw that only a good tree in could bear good fruit (Mt 7:17). Many times he stuffed dried grass into his mother's stove to heat it for baking, grass that only a short time before had been growing in the field (Mt 6:30). Perhaps he once watched Mary light a candle and look carefully for the coin that had slipped from her hand and rolled from view (Lk 15:8).

Whether indoors or outdoors, laboring or on a leisurely stroll , Jesus was alert to all that was going on around him (*circumspect*, Eph 5:15). The panorama of his early years furnished him with many true-to-life illustrations as he stood before the multitudes and taught." { excerpted from *A Short Life of Christ*, Everett F. Harrison }

Jesus baptism

v 15 The need : *to fulfill all righteous,*
doct: Jesus is being anointed to begin His ministry at the age of 30 yo, Num 4:1-3

v 16 The method : bodily immersion (of an adult) ... *he went up out of the water*

v 16 The manifestation : *the Spirit of God descended...lighting upon him*
Mk 1:10 Lk 3:22 John 1:29-34

v 17 The Witness : *a voice from heaven, saying,*
This is my beloved Son, in whom I a well pleased.
cf John 5:37