

THE MISSING YEARS IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST



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The four Gospels, written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, tell of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. That of Matthew traces Him from His birth through the short sojourn in Egypt, then back to Nazareth, still as a baby; He next appears in this Gospel in Chapter 3, at the time of His baptism just before His 40 days of temptation at the beginning of His ministry. In Mark, the baptism, temptations and the beginning of His ministry are all in chapter 1. In John, as in Mark, His childhood is not covered, and chapter 1 covers His baptism and the beginning of His ministry.

In Luke, we have more details given; chapters 2 and 3 trace Him from the return to Nazareth through His baptism, temptations and the beginning of His ministry, which 3-23 tells us occurred at the age of 30 years. Luke 2:41-52 traces Him on one visit to Jerusalem when He was 12 years old; but all four Gospels are silent on the 18 years between His 12th and 30th years. Where was He, and what was He doing during those years? It can be well demonstrated that He was absent from Palestine for at least most of this period. Let us trace this absence.

Luke 1:36 tells us that Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist, was a cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. There was a very close, friendly relation between the two families; for immediately after Mary was told by the angel that she was to bear Jesus, she went to the home of her cousin, Elizabeth, and stayed in Elizabeth's home for about 3 months, see Luke 1:39-56. It is only natural that this close friendship would endure through the years thereafter.

Now the Law required that all the men and male children must come to Jerusalem at three feasts in each year. Deuteronomy 16:16 states it: "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before YHWH thy God

In the place which He shall choose; in the feast of UNLEAVENED BREAD, and in the feast of WEEKS, and in the feast of "TABERNACLES." The Feast of Unleavened Bread was the week-long feast following Passover, In the spring; the Feast of Weeks was held 50 days after Passover, and in our day is called "Pentecost"; while the Feast of Tabernacles was a week-long feast, the last of the fall festivals.

The families of Jesus and of John the Baptist had to bring them to Jerusalem these three times every year; and the families being such good friends, they surely met and the children played together on those occasions, so Jesus and John the 'Baptist were very well acquainted. But between Jesus 12th and 30th years, the Scriptures nowhere even hint that Jesus was in Palestine; and we find in them evidence that He was absent from Palestine throughout the greater part, at least, of that period.

In John 1 :29-33, we have the record of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist, in these words: "The next day, John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world This is He of whom I said I "After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for He was before me." And John bare record, saying "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. AND I KNEW HIM NOT:* * "' That is, John received the vision by which he identified Jesus as the Lamb of God; but he didn't recognize him as a person, a relative of his, for he says "I KNEW HIM NOT." If John the Baptist had seen his cousin Jesus 3 t5mes each year to that time, he certainly would have recognized Jesus, and if Jesus had been in Palestine during the last 18 years, John would surely have seen Him. Therefore Jesus must have been absent during those years.

But this is not the only evidence of Jesus' absence, for He was required to pay the Strangers Tax. In the original Greek, Matthew 17:24-27 reads: And they having arrived at Capernaum, the collectors of the didrachmas came to Peter, and said Does not your teacher pay the didrachma?" He says 'Yes'. And when they had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "Which to thee seems right Simon? The kings of the earth: from whom do they take custom or head-tax? From their sons, or from the aliens? To Him said Peter, 'From the aliens'. Jesus said to him, 'Then

the sons are exempt. But that we may not offend them, going to the sea cast thou a hook, and the first fish ascending take up; and opening the mouth of him, thou wilt find a stater; taking that, give it to them for Me and thee." Here is clear proof that Jesus was regarded as a stranger in the land; and remember that this took place at Capernaum, in His home district of Galilee. First, note the tax which He was called upon to pay: the DIDRACHMA, which was a head-tax levied by the Romans on all strangers.

This tax of a DIDRACHMA, a Greek silver coin, was not the Jewish Temple Tax of a half-shekel, paid by all who were of the Jewish religion. Merely to ask if He paid the Temple Tax would have been an insult, as doubting His citizenship. Also, If this tax had been the Temple Tax, this was not levied on any alien, but only on the Jews: in which case, He could not have said that this tax was levied on the aliens and the sons are exempt. Therefore, It clearly was the Roman Didrachma head-tax, levied only upon strangers. Also notice how Jesus said to pay it: a fish would be caught, having in its mouth A STATER, which was another Greek coin; the Jewish Temple-Tax could only be paid with a Jewish half-shekel coin, not a coin issued by pagans. Again Jesus spoke of "the kings of the earth" collecting the tax; while the Temple-Tax was collected by the priests, not by a king. So we see that Jesus had been gone so long that, in His own home district of Galilee He was not recognized as a local resident, and was asked to pay the strangers' tax, the Didrachma.

If Jesus Christ was absent from Palestine for many years, between the age of 12 and of 30, where was He during that time? The various enemies of Christianity have originated many legends about this. Some of the various forms of pagan devil-worship of Asia claim that He spent these years in their lamaseries in Tibet and in ancient oases in the Gobi Desert, there learning their teachings. Of one thing we can be absolutely sure: that He who was God in the flesh did not waste any time studying devil-worship among the pagans He didn't borrow any of His teachings from them.

But where did He spend these years? Before we can go into this, we must lay a foundation for it; we must learn some facts as background, which will show how likely our explanation is the true one.

A fairly prominent character in the New Testament is Joseph of Arimathea. Arimathea was 8 miles north of Jerusalem --- the first stopping-place of northbound caravans, and an important commercial centre in its day. Matthew 27:57 tells us that Joseph of Arimathea was rich, while Mark 15:45 and Luke 23:50-51 tells us that he was "an honorable counselor" or member of the Great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem. The four gospels praise him as a good man and Matthew and John further tell us that he was one of Jesus' disciples --- although during Jesus' life he remained a secret disciple, for fear of the Jews, who would have persecuted him much more savagely than just a poor nobody, had they known he was a follower of Jesus. Palestinian tradition all through the centuries has been that he was an uncle of Jesus Christ.

This tradition is evidently well founded, for Matthew 27:57-60 records that Joseph of Arimathea went to Pontius Pilate, asked for the body of Jesus and was given it, and he then buried Jesus' body in his tomb. This seems like a highly dangerous thing to have done---to thus show reverence to the remains of one who was so bitterly hated and who had been condemned and killed as a criminal. There were two cemeteries outside Jerusalem reserved for the bodies of condemned criminals; but a man who, during Jesus' lifetime, had not dared openly admit that he was Jesus' disciple, now openly shows reverence and affection for the remains of the One they had killed that very day. Pontius Pilate was threatened with a Jewish uprising and so he had consented to the murder of Jesus, after officially adjudging Him completely innocent of any crime at all, and had done this astonishingly evil act to avoid offending the Jews, it is unlikely that he would have authorized an honourable private funeral for Him if the leaders of the Jews had not consented to it. Only one explanation of this can be found.

Under both Jewish law and Roman law, it was a duty of the nearest relatives to provide burial for anyone, regardless of how he died. Therefore, despite all their hatred, the Jewish authorities could hardly refuse

permission to the uncle to bury his nephew; so the Palestinian tradition of this relationship was very probably correct.

Then what if Joseph of Arimathea was our Savior's uncle? Again, Palestinian tradition is that his wealth came from his being an importer of tin, from mines which he owned in Cornwall in the British Isles. Naturally, he would have frequently gone with his ships to Cornwall, to inspect his properties there. And what would be more natural than that he would take this wonderful nephew of his along? If this did occur, there must be some record or tradition of it in the place to which they went; so let us next look for such evidence. First, a little review of what was then known about the tin trade. The ancient writers agree that the Phoenicians were the earliest traders who brought tin from the lands beyond the Straits of Gibraltar. Without tin, it was impossible to make bronze; and copper alone, without the tin to harden and strengthen it, was not good enough: so tin was quite valuable. Ships of many other nations tried to follow the Phoenician galleys, to find where they were able to get the tin; but the Phoenicians were such expert sailors that they were usually able to get away from their pursuers. Other records tell of one who could not shake off a Roman ship which followed him, and who finally wrecked his own ship to avoid being traced to the source of the tin; and this record tells how his countrymen reimbursed him for the loss of his ship, being grateful to him for his having protected the valuable secret at so great a cost. Ezekiel 27:12, written about 595 B.C. mentions the tin trade of the ancient city of Tyre: "Tarshish was thy merchant, by reason of the multitude of all kinds of riches: with silver, iron, tin and lead they traded in thy fairs". This tin trade originating in Britain was very ancient, going back to at least 1,500 B.C. a tremendous amount of bronze mistranslated "brass" in your King James version Bible was used in the construction and equipment of Solomon's Temple; and most of the tin for this bronze was probably supplied by the mines of Cornwall. Remember that Ezekiel mentioned "tin and lead": both of these metals as well as some copper were mined in Britain in those days; in fact, an ancient pig of lead has been found, bearing the stamp of Britannicus, the son of Claudius, showing that the mining of lead in Britain was in progress during the time of our Lord.

Despite all Phoenician efforts to keep it secret, the Greeks discovered the source of tin in Britain in the year 330 B.C., and the Phoenician monopoly was trading. So, in Jesus lifetime, his uncle Joseph of Arimathea was the owner of tin mines In Cornwall. Did he take the young Jesus there? The first tradition that he did so is found in Cornwall; In Baring Gould's "Book of Cornwall" he writes, "Another Cornish tradition is to the effect that Joseph of Arimathea came in a boat to Cornwall, and brought the boy Jesus with him: and the latter taught him how to extract tin and purge it of the wolfram. When the tin is flashed, then the tinner shouts "Joseph was in the trade". We find it again at Priddy, a little village lying at the top of the Mendip Hills, right in the centre of the ancient lead and copper mining area.

We next find the tradition that Jesus was brought to Britain by his uncle Joseph of Arimathea, at Somerset, where the tradition says "The came in a ship of Tarshish to the Summerland, and sojourned in a place called "Paradise." "The Summerland" is Somerset, of course. At the mouth of the River Brue, which runs down from Glastonbury, lies Burnham; and old Ordnance Survey Maps give the name of the area around Burnham as "Paradise"; it is still known by that name. Ancient writings have said that Glastonbury was once known as "Paradise". About a mile from Glastonbury lies the village of Godney and Burnham at the mouth of the River Brue. "Godney" means "God's marsh-island". The Glastonbury traditions are more concerned with Jesus Christ's visit during His manhood.

Tradition also attests that much of Jesus' sojourn In Britain was spent at or near Glastonbury. There was later built at Glastonbury a great Abbey. For almost a thousand years, the greatest kings, bishops, saints and heroes of the British race were buried there, as it was In its day the greatest Abbey in Britain. Royal charters were solemnly signed in the church; two of these are still in existence: one signed by King Ina, in A.D. 704, and one signed there by King Cnut, in A.D. 1032. In 1184, the Abbey buildings, and the famous library of Glastonbury, covering a thousand years of history, were burned. Therefore, we have today only scattered references to these things in the works of various historians of the early days; but there are many of these.

Taliesin, the Druid, the great Welsh Prince and Bard of the sixth century, wrote that: "Christ, the Word from the beginning, was from the beginning our teacher, and we never lost His teaching." The great Church Historian, Hugh Paulinus de Cressy, writing in 1668 A.D., said, "This our land of Brittany, though called by the Romans another world, as being divided from the whole then discovered habitable earth, yet by the riches of Divine mercy received the beams of the Sun of Righteousness before many other countries nearer approaching to the place where He first rose."

Further support is lent to these ancient reports by what happened later, after Jesus' crucifixion. The Jews bitterly persecuted the Christians, as we know; and John 11:10-11 tells how even during Jesus' lifetime, the Jews plotted to murder Lazarus, because Jesus had raised him from the dead. Cardinal Baronius, a very careful Church Historian, who was Librarian to the Vatican, quotes a Vatican manuscript dated A. D. 35, which reports that in that year the Jews had arrested Joseph of Arimathea, Lazarus, the Virgin Mary, Martha, and two other Christians, put them into a boat and set them adrift in the Mediterranean without oars or sails; they finally reached land and went to Britain. Many early historians confirm this. St. Gregory of Tours, in his History of the Franks, written shortly before A.D. 600; Haleca, Archbishop of Saragossa; and the Chronicon of Pseudo Dexter; all agree that Joseph of Arimathea was the first to preach the Gospel of Christianity in Britain. Hugh Paulinus de Cressy says, "Now the most eminent of the primitive disciples, and who contributed most to this heavenly building, was St. Joseph of Arimathea, and eleven of his companions along with him, among whom is reckoned his son of the same name. These, toward the latter end of Nero's reign, and before St. Peter and St. Paul were consummated by horrendous martyrdom, are by the testimony of ancient records said to have entered the British island, as a place for refuge, the benevolence of the British Princes, and the freedom from Roman tyranny, more opportune and better prepared for entertaining the Gospel of peace than almost any country under the Romans".

Various historians of those early times --- such as St. Gildas and William of Malmesbury---record that the British King Arviragus granted to

Joseph of Arimathea a considerable area at Glastonbury, to be held forever, free from all taxes, as a site for a church and * its accessory buildings and fields. That this is no mere legend is proved by one of the greatest official records of all British history. After conquering England in the year 1066 A. D., William the Conqueror had a survey made of all the lands of the kingdom, as to what taxes they had paid; this record called "Domesday Booke", was completed in 1088 A.D. It contains this record: "The Domus Dei, in the great Monastery of Glastonbury, called The Secret of the Lord. This Glastonbury church possesses in its own Villa XII hides of land which have never paid tax." Note that this official record names this early church "Domus Dei"---"The Home of God" .--- and "The Secret of the Lord".

Joseph of Arimathea and his companions erected a mud and wattle church at Glastonbury; and among their first converts were members of the Royal Family, children of Caractacus, cousin of King Arviragus of South Wales. Still existing royal Charters granted by King Ina, dated A. D. 704, and by King Cnut, dated 1032, attest that they were signed by these kings in this church. Ancient records tell of its being preserved by a shell built around it of boards covered with lead; then later, a stone church building was erected, enclosing the original church. St. David erected a large stone church as an addition to this, In A.D. 546. A record he made of this on a bronze tablet was still in place at the time of the seizure and dissolution of the Monastery under orders from King Henry VIII.

Even In Ireland is found the tradition of Joseph of Arimathea having founded Glastonbury Church; the record no doubt having been brought to Ireland by St. Patrick, who had spent considerable time at Glastonbury, and who returned there for the last years of his life.

This great Abbey was the one destroyed by fire In A.D. 1134. Immediately thereafter, King Henry II of England issued a royal charter for the rebuilding of Glastonbury Abbey, which the charter called "the mother and burying-place of the saints, founded by the very Disciples of our Lord."

Well substantiated ancient records tell of the death and burial of Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury. The epitaph on his tombstone read, "I came to the Britons after I buried Christ. I taught. I rest." Between 1345 and 1367, the body was placed in a silver casket, with a beautiful stone sarcophagus, which was still in position in the year 1662, when the St. Joseph's Chapel containing it had become partially ruined. Later, out of fear that Puritan fanaticism would result in its being destroyed as an object of idolatry, the sarcophagus was secretly removed by night to the Parish Churchyard, and its identity concealed by saying that the initials "J.A." carved on it stood for "John Allen." Thus it escaped destruction. In 1928, it was found nearly buried in the soil, and removed into the church, in the North Transept of the ancient St. Katherine's Chapel. Its construction indicates it was made to fit the silver casket. It bears the initials "J.A." with a caduceus between them. The caduceus--- a winged staff with two serpents twined around it--is used today as the emblem of physicians. Originally, it was the badge of Ivercury, the Messenger of the Gods. It has been assimilated into the symbolism of some Christian churches, even today; for in our own times, the Patriarchs of the Eastern Church have a caduceus, not a crozier, carried before them in official processions. It was an official badge, which would not have been put on a mere private person's tomb.

So we see, therefore, that not only ancient legends and ancient historical records, but the official acts and records of kings of the Middle ages, have recognized the close connection of Joseph of Arimathea, the uncle of Jesus Christ, with Cornwall and Glastonbury, in Britain. All of these lend strong support to the ancient legends and records of these places that it was here that Jesus Christ spent those 18 years of His life which the Bible does not account for. And where else would we expect Him to go, but to what was to become the principal home of His own people, ISRAEL?

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About Pastor Dr. Bertrand L. Comparet, A. B., J. D.

Upon reading these most interesting discussions one will quickly recognize that the author is an ardent student of the Bible and particularly eschatology or the study of the prophecies of the things which have already taken place, the things that are now taking place, and the things that are yet to take place in the future. He is an ordained minister. His studies in this area of thought extend back over a period of thirty years.

One will quickly appreciate also the straight forward manner of factual presentation and logical thinking. This is due to his professional training and occupation as a well recognized Attorney at Law. He not only writes in a clear, convincing style, but is distinguished in the pulpit, on the lecture platform, and over the air for his clarity of thought and profound logic.

Bertrand L. Comparet is a native Californian, born in San Diego. He was graduated from Stanford University with the degree of Bachelor of Arts and Juris Doctor. He was admitted to the California Supreme Court or California Bar in 1926 and by the United States Supreme Court in 1956. From 1926 to 1932 he was a Deputy District Attorney in San Diego County and from 1942 to 1947 was Deputy City Attorney for the City of San Diego.

After that time he was in private law practice.

Quite obviously, he is a tried and true Christian and a loyal and patriotic American, a believer in a Sovereign America under Constitutional government.

Pastor Bertrand L. Comparet started teaching in 1933 and continued for over 40 years. He returned to the Father in August of 1983.

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