

THE MISSING YEARS IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

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Taken From *Your Heritage*

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Plus Critical Notes

The four gospels written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, tell of the life and ministry of Yahshua the Christ. The gospel of Matthew traces Him from His birth through His 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, as chapter 1 covers His baptism and the beginning of His ministry.

In Luke we have been given more details. Chapters 2 and 3 trace Him from the return to Nazareth through His baptism, temptations and the beginning of His ministry. Luke 3:23 tells us Yahshua's ministry started at the age of thirty. Luke 2:41-52 traces Him on one visit to Jerusalem when He was 12 years old. 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 part of this period, let's trace this absence.

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

The law required that all the men and male children must come to Jerusalem at three feasts each year. Deuteronomy 16:16 states, "Three times in a year shall all the males appear before Yahweh 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 weeks was held 50 days after Passover, in our day is called Pentecost. The feast of tabernacles was a week long feast, the last of the fall festivals. The families of Yahshua and John the Baptist, had to bring them both to Jerusalem three times every year. The families, being such good friends, surely met and the children must have played together on those occasions. So, Yahshua and John the Baptist were very well acquainted. Between Yahshua's 12th and 30th years, the scriptures nowhere even hint Yahshua was in Palestine. We find evidence He was absent from Palestine throughout the greater part of that period.

John 1:29-33 records the event of Yahshua being baptized by John the Baptist, in these words. "The next day, John seeth Yahshua coming unto him and saith, Behold the Lamb of Yahweh, which taketh away the sins of the world. This is He of whom I said, 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 on Him. **And I knew Him not.**" John had received the vision by which he identified Yahshua as the Lamb of Yahweh. However, 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 Yahshua 3 times each year to that time, he certainly would have recognized Him. If Yahshua had been in Palestine during those 18 years, John surely would have seen Him. Therefore Yahshua must have been absent during those years.

This is not the only evidence of Yahshua's absence, for He was required to pay the stranger's 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 saith yes. And when they had come into the house, Yahshua 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. Yahshua 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 Yahshua was regarded as a stranger in the land. Remember, this took place at Capernaum, in His home district of Galilee. Note that the tax which He was called upon to pay, the didrachma, 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. If this tax had been the temple tax, this was not levied on any alien, only on the Judeans. If this were the case Yahshua could not have said that this tax was levied on the aliens and the sons are exempt. Therefore it was clearly the Roman didrachma head tax, levied only on strangers. Also notice how Yahshua 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.

Yahshua spoke of the kings of the earth collecting the tax. The temple tax was collected by the priests, not by a king. So we see that Yahshua had been gone so long that, in His own home district of Galilee, He was not recognized as a local resident. He was asked to pay the stranger's tax, the didrachma.

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

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 off place of north bound caravans and an important commercial center in its day. Matthew 27:57 tells us that Joseph of Arimathea was wealthy, while Mark 15:43 and Luke 23:50-51 tell us that he was an honorable counselor or member of the Great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem.

All four gospels praise him as a good man and Matthew and John further tell us that he was one of Yahshua's disciples. However, during Yahshua's life he remained a secret disciple, **for fear of the Jews**. The Jews would have persecuted Joseph much more savagely than just a poor nobody, had they known he was a follower of Yahshua the 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 Yahshua and was given it. He then buried Yahshua in his own tomb. This seems like a highly dangerous thing to have done. This showed reverence for the remains of one who was so bitterly hated by the Jews and who had been condemned to be killed as a criminal.

There were two cemeteries outside Jerusalem reserved for the bodies of condemned criminals. Here was a man who, during Yahshua's lifetime, had not dared to openly admit that he was Yahshua's disciple. He now openly shows reverence and affection for the remains of the One they had killed that very day.

Pontius Pilate had consented to the murder of Yahshua, after officially adjudging Him completely innocent of any crime at all. He had done this astonishingly evil act to avoid offending the Jews. It was unlikely that he would have authorized an honorable private funeral for Yahshua, if the leaders of the Jews had not consented to it. Only one explanation of this can be found. Under both Jewish and Roman law, it was the duty of the nearest relatives to provide burial for anyone, regardless of how they died. Despite all their hatred, the Jewish authorities could hardly refuse permission to the uncle to bury his nephew. The Palestinian tradition of this relationship was probably correct.

What if Joseph of Arimathea was our Savior's uncle? Palestinian tradition is that his wealth came from being an importer of tin, from mines that he owned in Cornwall in the British Isles. Naturally he would have frequently gone with his ships to Cornwall, to inspect his properties there. What would be more natural than 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. Next, let us 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 islands beyond the Straits of Gibraltar. Without tin, it was impossible to make bronze. Copper alone, without tin to harden and strengthen it, was not good enough, so tin was very valuable. Ships of many other nations tried to follow the Phoenician galleys, to find where they were able to get tin. The Phoenicians were such expert sailors, 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. 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 1500 B.C.. A tremendous amount of bronze (mistranslated brass in the King James Bible) was used in the construction and equipment of King Solomon's temple. Most of the tin for this bronze was probably supplied by the tin 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. An ancient pig of lead has been found, bearing the stamp of Britannicus, the son of Claudius. This shows that the mining of lead in Britain, was in progress during the time of Yahshua.

Despite all Phoenician efforts to keep it secret, the Greeks discovered the source of tin in Britain in the year 330 B.C.. The Phoenician monopoly was broken. So in Yahshua's lifetime, his uncle Joseph of Arimathea, was the owner of tin mines in Cornwall. Did he take the young Yahshua 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 Yahshua with him. 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 center of the ancient lead and copper mines.

We next find the tradition that Yahshua was brought to Britain, at Somerset, by his uncle Joseph of Arimathea. The tradition says, "They came in a ship of Tarshish to the Somerland, and sojourned in a place called Paradise." The Summerland is Somerset. At the mouth of the Brue river, which runs down from Glastonbury, lies Burnham and Godney. Old ordinance survey maps give the name of the area around Burnham, 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. Godney means God's marshlands. The Glastonbury traditions are more concerned with Yahshua's visit during His manhood.

Tradition also attests that much of Yahshua's sojourn in Britain was spent at or near Glastonbury. Later there was 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. In its day it was the greatest abbey in Britain. Royal charters were signed in the church. Two of these are still in existence, the one signed by King Ina in 704 A.D. and one signed there by King Cnut, in 1032 A.D. In 1184 A.D, the abbey buildings and the famous library of Glastonbury, covering a thousand years of history, was burned. Therefore, today we only have scattered references to these things in the works of various historians of the early days. However, there were many of these.

Taliesin the Druid, the great Welch prince and Bard of the sixth century wrote, "Christ, the Word from the beginning, was from the beginning our teacher, and we never lost His teachings." 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 the riches of Divine mercy received the beams of the Son 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 Yahshua's crucifixion. The Jews bitterly persecuted the Christians, as we know. John 12:10-11 tells how even during Yahshua's lifetime, the Jews plotted to murder Lazarus, because Yahshua had raised him from the dead.

Cardinal Baronius, a very careful church historian who was librarian to the Vatican, quotes a Vatican manuscript dated 35 A.D. This manuscript reports that in that year the Jews had arrested Joseph of Arimathea, the Virgin Mary, Martha, and two other Christians. They were put in a boat and were set 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 600 A.D., 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 a glorious martyrdom. By the testimony of ancient records they were said to have entered this island because of its isolation, the benevolence of the British princes and freedom from Roman tyranny. This place was more opportune and better prepared for entertaining and learning the gospel of the kingdom, than almost any country under the Romans."

Various historians, of these early times, such as Gildas and William of Malmesbury, record that the British King Arviragus granted to Joseph of Arimathea a considerable area at Glastonbury. This was 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 proven 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 had been paid. This record called Domesday Booke, was completed in 1088 A. D. and it contains this record. "The Domus Dei, in the great monastery of Glastonbury, called the secret of Yahweh. 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 Yahweh.

Joseph of Arimathea and his companions erected a mud and wattle church at Glastonbury. Among their first converts were members of the royal family, children of Aractious, cousin of King Arviragus of South Wales. Still existing royal charters granted

by King Ina, dated 704 A.D., and by King Cnut dated 1032 A.D., 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. Later a stone building was erected, enclosing the original church. St. David erected a large stone church as an addition to this in 546 A.D. 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 the Glastonbury church. The record was no doubt 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 1184 A.D.. Immediately thereafter, King Henry II of England issued a royal charter for the rebuilding of Glastonbury Abbey. The charter called the abbey, "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 the Christ. I taught, I rest." Between 1345 A.D. and 1367 A.D., the body was placed in a silver casket with a beautiful stone sarcophagus, which was still in position in the year 1662 A.D., when the St. Joseph chapel containing it had become partially ruined.

Later, out of fear that Puritan fanaticism would result in it being destroyed as an object of idolatry, the sarcophagus was secretly removed by night to the parish churchyard. Its identity was 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. It was 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 the initials. 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 Mercury, the messenger of the Gods. Even today it has been assimilated into the symbolism of some Christian churches. In our own times, the patriarchs of the eastern churches 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 common person's grave.

Therefore we see that not only ancient legends and ancient historical records, but the official acts and records of the kings of the middle ages, have recognized the close connection of Joseph of Arimathea, the uncle of Yahshua the 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 Yahshua spent those 18 years of His life, which the Bible does not account for. Where else would we expect Him to go, but to what was to become the principal home of His own people Israel.

Critical note by Clifton A. Emahiser: In my *Watchman's Teaching Letter*, #13, I wrote the following: **BRITAIN'S RELIGION**: To get started with this phase of the study,

I am going to quote again from the book, *Father Abraham's Children*, by Perry Edwards Powell, Ph. D., pages 140-142:

“Now we come to the missionary movement of Joseph of Arimathea, who was appointed by Philip the apostle. After the passion of his Nephew, persecution fell heavily upon the infant church. The Jew and the Roman were bitter persecutors but he knew where there was no persecution, but protection. However, he was seized, and since the Jew could not kill [under the Law directly], he and Lazarus and Mary and Martha his sisters, Mary Magdalene, Marcella, Maximin, and others, all objects of especial Jewish hostility, were ‘exposed to the sea in a vessel without sail or oars.’ They drifted to Marseilles, southern Gaul, where they arrived in a famished condition. The Arimathean knew the territory and friendly traders, and was aided on his way, the destination of which was now Britain. Here they eventually arrived and came to rest in Ynis Avalon, Glastonbury, where he rested and soon began his labors for his Nephew. The year was 37 A.D. On his tomb is the epitaph: Ad Britannos veni post Christum sepelivi – Docui – Quievi. ‘I came to the Britons after I had buried the Christ. I taught. I have entered on my rest.’

“When he began, St. Paul was still in Arabia preparing for his mission. Joseph preached in Britain from 37-76 A.D. King Arviragus decreed the perpetual exemption from taxation of the twelve ploughs or hides of land on which this first mission stood. Thus Britain has the second congregation and the first Christian church building in the world. The mother church of Christianity was Jerusalem and it met in the ‘upper room.’ And the [pagan] church at Rome was not yet organized. ...”

“The first apostle to visit the island was Simon Zelotes after he had preached the gospel across Africa, Spain, and into Britain where he was crucified by the Romans. Coming at about the same time was Aristobulus, the brother of Barnabus, the father of Peter’s wife, and *the first Bishop of Britain. He was sent by Paul. Arwystli, Wales, commemorates him.*”