

**Christ's Middle Years**  
**Luke 2:39—51**

One other way to look at the events surrounding the birth of Jesus is to have Joseph and Mary staying in Bethlehem from the time of Jesus' birth until the visit of the Magi. This could be inferred from Matthew 2:22—23. When Joseph was told to leave Egypt to go into the land of Israel he was afraid to go (back) to Judea because Archelaus was reigning there and after being warned in a dream he continued on into Galilee and settled in the city of Nazareth. It appears that he was going to settle in Judah (around Bethlehem) instead of going directly to Nazareth making it look like he intended to settle down in the place they had been living until they fled to Egypt. This would mean that Luke 2:39 would cover a period of time from Mary's purification to their settling in Nazareth, skipping the details about the Magi and their trip to Egypt and back.

**Jesus at the temple**

Luke is the only person who recorded anything about Jesus between two years old and His public ministry (around 30 years old). We see from Luke 2:40 that Jesus grew up much like any boy growing physically and mentally. The only difference was that He was without sin. He never had to be told twice to take out the garbage or make his bed.

Many people believe that Jesus had the power within Himself to perform miracles and have special knowledge about people or events (see John 4:18; Matthew 11:21). However, they find it hard to explain why Jesus did not know when the Millennial Kingdom would be set up (Matthew 24:36). Jesus also developed like any other boy growing in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52). How is it that God the Son would need to grow in wisdom? If Jesus knew all things and was all-powerful then when did this happen since He certainly did not display these attributes when he was lying in a manger.

I believe Jesus voluntarily gave up the display of His glory. He set aside anything that God could do but man could not. He became completely a man relying totally on the Father and the Spirit to do those things that were supernatural. The only time Jesus revealed His veiled glory was at the transfiguration in Matthew 17 and Luke 9.

**The Kenosis**

The technical term for the Second Person of the Trinity to empty Himself is Kenosis. This is a Greek term that comes from Philippians 2:7 when He emptied Himself when He left heaven to become man.

**Philippians 2:6—8** <sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

But just what did the Second Person of the Trinity empty Himself of? Some say He emptied Himself of His divinity or deity but even though He became man he never stopped being God. Others say He emptied Himself of His attributes but that would be impossible to do and still be God. Still others think Jesus the human was on earth while the divine person was in heaven.

According to Colossians 1:19 the Second Person of the Trinity resides in Jesus. We can see from this that the Divine was not residing in heaven while the human was on earth. It was Jesus who WAS the Second Person of the Trinity who had come down in human form. While Jesus was lying in the manger as a helpless baby He was holding the universe together. While Jesus was hanging on the cross He was holding the nails and the cross together with His power.

**Colossians 1:19** For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

**Colossians 1:16—17** <sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

**1 Timothy 3:16** He [God] who was revealed in the flesh...

God the Son willingly limited Himself by not revealing His glory to the world when He presented Himself as a human. He did not give up His glory but veiled it so it would not be seen. He came into the world as 100% human and grew up as 100% human. The only thing different was that He was without sin. When He emptied Himself He did not empty Himself of Deity but emptied Himself of His visible glory. He appeared empty of the glory He always had. Only once did He remove that veil for a moment at the transfiguration in Matthew 17 to reveal His true self. John also saw His glory in Revelation 1:17. When He ascended into heaven He stopped veiling His glory.

**Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

**Philippians 2:6—9** <sup>6</sup>who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup>

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

**John 17:5** Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

## Hypostatic Union

It is the hypostatic union that describes the joining of God and man in the Second Person of the Trinity. This is a Greek word that is translated *person* (KJV) and *nature* (NASB) in Hebrews 1:3. The Son has two natures; divine and human. Strong says about these two natures:

The Orthodox doctrine (promulgated at Chalcedon, 451) holds that in the one person Jesus Christ there are two natures, a human nature and a divine nature, each in its completeness and integrity, and that these two natures are organically and indissolubly united, yet so that no third nature is formed thereby. In brief, to use the antiquated dictum, orthodox doctrine forbids us either to divide the person or to confound the natures.

What this boils down to is two things about His nature:

1. The two natures are distinct and unchanged.
2. The two natures did not blend into a single nature.

To illustrate, His nature is not like a mixture of salt and pepper where each component is distinct but they are not united since they can be separated into their distinct components. His nature is also not salt that is composed of sodium and chlorine. The salt becomes a completely new compound completely separate from the two elements used to make it. Instead, the Son is completely God and completely man united as one yet completely distinct and not taking away from or adding to either one. As an example of this union, Jesus the man could say before Abraham was, I am even though Jesus was born thousands of years later.

Jesus voluntarily humbled Himself, making Himself a little lower than the angels (Hebrews 2:9), He made Himself a servant and became obedient (Philippians 2:5—8). He put Himself under the Father and allowed the Father to work through Him. He did nothing without the direction of the Father. This is how He could be born a helpless baby and then grow in wisdom and in stature (Luke 2:52). He was not aware of who He was when He was born so there must have been a time when He discovered His destiny as Messiah. He must have know this by the time He was 12 years old and astounding the intelligentsia in the temple (Luke 2:46—47). He also knew nothing about when He was coming back to set up the Millennial Kingdom and would know nothing of the Mystery revealed to Paul. If these things were revealed in the Old Testament then He would have know.

**John 14:16** I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

**John 5:19, 30** <sup>19</sup>Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things

the Son also does in like manner. <sup>30</sup> “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

**John 8:28—29** <sup>28</sup> So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. <sup>29</sup> And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

**Colossians 2:9** For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

Unfortunately, we are incapable of really understanding how Man and Deity can reside in one Person. If we were able to fully understand God we would be above God so it is a good thing that He is incomprehensible. His thoughts are way above our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8—9).