



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

**A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics)**  
**Lesson 6.6.1.2 – The Doctrine of Jesus, Son of God, Messiah (Christology)**

**Jesus' Obedience in His Earthly Life**

God made sure that Jesus was brought up by parents who were careful to observe the laws of God given to the Israelites. We read in Luke 2:21: **“And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”** For the fact is that **“God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons”** (Galatians 4:4-5). Since Jesus was born under the law, it was necessary for Him to be obedient to the law of God. Jesus could redeem us only by perfectly obeying the laws of God. Jesus' perfect obedience to the law throughout His life is known as His active obedience.

We see Jesus' obedience also in what took place when He was forty days old. The days of Mary's purification were completed after forty days, as the law of Moses prescribed, and Jesus, as the first-born son, was presented to the Lord at Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph gave the proper sacrifice **“according to what is said in the law of the Lord, ‘A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons’”** (Luke 2:22-24). Joseph and Mary left Jerusalem only after **“they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord”** (Luke 2:39).

Except for the account of Luke 2:41-52, which tells of an incident in Jesus' life when He was 12 years old, the Bible is absolutely silent with respect to Jesus' youth, education, and early manhood. Since He was the Son of God and without sin, His life must have been extraordinary in many ways. Yet, at the same time, it was quite ordinary. Joseph and Mary seemed very surprised when they found Him **“in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions”** (Luke 2:46). His conversation with them at that time revealed that He knew He was the Son of God, but they did not seem to understand what He meant. Because He was under the law, Jesus **“was subject to them”** (Luke 2:51). He was a perfectly obedient Child. At the same time, He always put God first. And thus **“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men”** (Luke 2:52).

After Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, He became a traveling preacher and teacher. The four Gospels give us many accounts of what He did and said. Although He was accused by His enemies of breaking the Sabbath and blaspheming, these accusations were not true. Jesus was completely without sin. No one replied when He asked them: **“Which of you convicts Me of sin?”** (John 8:46). They could not point to anything He had ever done wrong.

Jesus' whole life must have been filled with pain and suffering, for He, as a holy, sinless Person, was living in a sinful world among sinful people, including His own family and His own twelve apostles. We hear of His anger and also grief and pain at times, both because of the evil of His enemies and the lack of understanding among His followers. Long before He was crucified, Jesus was **“a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”** (Isaiah 53:3). Think of the sadness that He must have experienced as He realized that **“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him”** (John 1:11)! Think of the pain He must have felt in His heart when He said: **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”** (Matthew 23:37). Luke tells us that **“He saw the city and wept over it”** (Luke 19:41).

When Jesus' nine disciples were unable to drive out a demon that was plaguing a man's son, Jesus said: **"O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?"** (Matthew 17:17). In the days after Lazarus' death, when He was with Mary and Martha, **"He groaned in the spirit and was troubled"** (John 11:33). And **"Jesus wept"** at Lazarus' tomb (John 11:35).

Jesus' entire life was a life of perfect obedience. **"He became obedient to the point of death"** (Philippians 2:8). **"He learned obedience by the things which He suffered"** (Hebrews 5:8). Jesus' perfect obedience was necessary for our salvation. **"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous"** (Romans 5:19).

### Questions

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1. Which laws of God did Joseph and Mary obey in Jesus' infancy?
2. What do we know of Jesus' boyhood and education?
3. What is meant by Jesus' active obedience?
4. How did Jesus obey the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment when He was 12?
5. Why didn't Jesus' enemies challenge Him when He claimed to be without sin?
6. What kind of pain and suffering did Jesus experience in His life?
7. Why is it so important that Jesus was sinless?