

Christopher Halls
**The First Ten Thousand Days: The silent years of Jesus.
A Study Guide**

ISBN 9781 4120 5499 7

Trafford Publications, Victoria BC Canada & Cheshire UK, 2005, £8.50

We have here an interesting journey into what the author terms a 'disciplined use of the imagination' regarding the 'silent years of Jesus'. Halls pictures the scenes of Jesus' childhood and growing-up years but does not speculate on their significance or deviate from known facts. He considers it fruitless to consider the features or the appearance of his subject, or to ask how he would have spent his time, beyond what we know.

He believes that we do know what is written - 'the events surrounding his birth are well known' and finds much to discover 'if we look in the right places'. He does not demythologise but sticks closely to the biblical text. Nor does he attempt to argue any theology, accepting, for instance, that Jesus is Son of God, fully human and fully divine and does not question things which more liberal-minded Christians might do, such as the virgin birth. Unlike some critical scholars he accepts the words of Jesus at face value, assuming we have an accurate and literal report of those words; and that they convey what Jesus intended.

One of the real merits of this piece of writing is the emphasis on the Old Testament as the educational material for Jewish boys of that time. This makes it imperative for the reader to reconsider our own knowledge and valuing of it. So many Christians these days do not bother with the Old Testament, seeing it as merely history and a collection of bloodthirsty stories! In fact Hall's book presents an enormous wealth of knowledge and background culled from wide sources, and all in readable form. Many questions arise and a very real portrait of the young Jesus is shown.

I found much here that I would like to discuss, and some points with which I might take issue; altogether a fascinating and useful study.

Elizabeth CSF