

**Cinematic Childhood(s) and Imag(in)ing the Boy Jesus: Adaptations of Luke 2:41-52 in Late Twentieth-Century Film**

By James Magee

ABSTRACT: Despite sustained academic examinations of Jesus in film over the past couple of decades, as well as biblical scholars' multidisciplinary work in the areas of children's and childhood studies, the cinematic boy Jesus has received little attention. This thesis will begin to fill the lacuna of scholarly explorations into cinematic portrayals of Jesus as a child by analyzing two adaptations of Luke's story of the twelve-year-old Jesus in late twentieth-century film. Using methods of historical and narrative criticism tailored to the study of film, I will situate the made-for-television movies *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977) and *Jesus* (2000) within the trajectories of both Jesus films and depictions of juvenile masculinity in cinema, as well as within their respective social, cultural and historical contexts. I will demonstrate how these movie sequences are negotiations by their filmmakers between theological and historical concerns that reflect contemporary ideas about children and particular idealizations about boyhood.