

MORTAL BIRTH OF OUR LORD

And it came to pass that he said unto me: Look! And I looked as if to look upon him, and I saw him not; for he had gone from before my presence.

And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, and also other cities. And I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white.

And it came to pass that I saw the heavens open; and an angel came down and stood before me; and he said unto me: Nephi, what beholdest thou?

And I said unto him: A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins. (1 Nephi 11:12-15.)

One little interesting sidelight on this is that the King James version of course, talks about a virgin conceiving. The Book of Mormon—here is a volume that substantiates it through the Bible. Here is the biblical proof on the virgin birth being confirmed; the interesting thing is that the new edition of the Bible changed the King James version as . . . (inaudible) . . . and a “young woman” shall conceive . . . (inaudible) . . . of our Lord. This newer version—some of them have been prepared more particularly by people who did not believe in the divine Sonship. “And he (the angel) said unto me: Knowest thou the condescension of God?” (1 Nephi 11:16.)

Now, let us take that sentence, that question, as our key sentence to introduce our subject. Suppose you had been in Nephi’s position. You had been talking to one heavenly personage and now you see another one. You see envisioned Jerusalem and Nazareth and Mary, and you are aware that she is a virgin, exceeding in prominence any other on earth. And then an angel says to you, with no seeming apparent reference to the fact that here is Nazareth and here is Mary, “Knowest thou the condescension of God?” Well, you have already read this at some time or other, so you know what is coming ahead in the passage. But even thinking now with your present knowledge which was greater, in some respects, to Nephi because you know what he was going to see, what is the answer to this question? “Knowest thou the condescension of God?” If I ask you a question, for instance, that; and you answer what the condescension of God is. Well, this is a tremendous, glorious thing. Nephi was like a lot of us today. “And I said unto him: I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17). That is, he sort of says, he would like to say, “No, I’m sorry, I don’t know the answer to your question.” “I do know something, but I don’t know everything.” “And he said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh” (1 Nephi 11:18). Now, does it sound accomplished? Does it sound like he asked the question and then he answered the question? Well, this is just a glorious, glorious answer, if we can catch the vision of what is involved here. We have a conversation and the conversation says, “Tell me what the condescension of God is, and the answer is, Mary, the virgin, is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner

of the flesh.” Well, that is one answer, and there is another answer in this same thing. We will pick them both up and see what kind of a total picture we get. But [verse] 19 first:

And it came to pass that I beheld that she [meaning Mary] was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time the angel spake unto me, saying: Look!

And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms.

And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! . . . (1 Nephi 11: 19-21.)

Now, look back at the first verse of this chapter, and in that verse Nephi says, “. . . I was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceeding high mountain, which I never had before seen, and upon which I never had before set my foot” (1 Nephi 11:1).

Well, let us just take these things for what they say now. What happened to Nephi? Nephi was somewhere and the Spirit of the Lord picked him up bodily and transported him and put him on top of a mountain somewhere so he could get these visions that he is going to have. This is not unusual; this same thing happened to Philip, did it not? He baptized Enoch, and after he had done it, the Spirit of the Lord took him up and transported him somewhere and put him down. Later on in the Book of Mormon we have this account of Lehi and Nephi preaching and having so many appointments to go to, they could not do it, and so the Spirit of the Lord picked them up and transported them from one congregation to another, so that they could preach. Now, here is a case of Nephi going to a mountain, being taken by the Spirit, and it is in this same type of language that he uses about Mary. So, here is a situation where Mary gets carried away, transported somewhere by the Spirit of the Lord, and the next thing that you see (or that Nephi sees) is her with a child in her arms and the announcement made that the child is the Lamb of God, the Son of the Eternal Father.

Now, let us take one more thing here, and then see if we know what this means. Look down to verse 26:

And the angel said unto me again: Look and behold the condescension of God,

And I looked and beheld the Redeemer of the world, of whom my father had spoken; and I also beheld the prophet who should prepare the way before him.

And the Lamb of God went forth . . . [and so on]. (1 Nephi 11:26-27.)

And then it describes in detail, some detail, for the balance of the chapter, what happens in the life of Christ: his baptism, the calling of the Twelve, his healings and miracles, his crucifixion, his being raised up upon the cross. Now, that does not sound anything like this account of the condescension of God that we first read about. What is the answer?

Does somebody want to tell me what the condescension of God is, within the true meanings that are here involved, that are separate and distinct? The condescension of God.

Comment: (Inaudible.)

BRM: That is excellent for one definition. Now, who could that apply to?

Comment: (Inaudible.)

BRM: That applies to Christ. All right. That is what is involved in verse 27 and thereon. “Look and behold the condescension of God,” meaning, the condescension of Christ. In our first lesson we talked about Christ being the Lord God Omnipotent and the creator of all things and having all power and being like unto God. And here he steps down from that exalted state and becomes a man like all the rest of us and is subject to fatigue and to anguish and sorrow and tears and temptation and all the rest. So that is the condescension of God, in the sense of Christ being a God and he doing this thing. To condescend is to step down; to . . . (inaudible) . . . to something is beneath the high status that you already have.

All right, that is good; that is one definition of what is involved here. The other definition—we take that just to get a perspective. The other definition is what is important to our consideration this morning, and that verse is 16 and verse 18. “. . . Knowest thou the condescension of God?” “Why yes, a virgin shall be the mother of the Son of God after the manner of the flesh.” So the condescension of God is what? Now, this is just beyond us to describe: the glory and grandeur of God, the Father.

Comment: Well the Father becomes . . . (inaudible).

BRM: Sure. The condescension of God, in the full sense in which we are talking about, is that here is a glorified personage who has a body of flesh and bones and such omnipotence and such power, they—using Christ as the agent—have created the universe. He has billions of spirit children, and he has gone on in glory and dominion and exaltation and might and power, to a status that is so far beyond anything that we can even conceive of, that we do not have any language to describe it or any mental capacity to comprehend what really is involved. So he is just up—we recognize him as God and we use the best language we can, but he is just up here in dominion so far beyond us that we just really do not visualize our relationship to him. And yet this kind of a being, who is holy and exalted and has all this power and might, with his body of flesh and bones, steps down, as though you step down from all eternity, from the pinnacle of all things, to a lowly, mortal state, and what did he do? He becomes the father of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.

Well, this is the doctrine of the mortal birth of our Lord. This is what is meant by the condescension of God. Now, with that in mind, let us look on page 80 in our text. We are

dealing with a number of things here, and we will just have time to pick out . . . (inaudible).

Comment: Brother McConkie, you were saying Mary . . . (inaudible) . . . I do not know about the condescension of God, but was it mandatory to do this? Being baptized is a . . . (inaudible) . . . you know, was a condescension to . . . (inaudible).

BRM: Where Christ is concerned?

Comment: Yes.

BRM: We have two definitions here of the condescension of God, and one of them seems to apply to the Father, and the other one seems to apply to the Son. Well, when it says that it talks about the condescension of Christ in . . . (inaudible) . . . this thing, there is a whole column of listed things that he did, and one of them was to be baptized. He condescended, in a sense, to go through what is a lowly thing, a token of humility; a lowly ordinance from the standpoint of someone who created the earth, and so on. That is surely true. All that he—what he was doing, in a sense, was that one thing, that indicates his stepping down from omnipotence to mortality to be like other men. Being lifted upon the cross is the same thing, submitting to men, condescending to let men crucify him though he were the creator of all things.

Well, let us just read and note a couple of little things in particular. In Matthew's account here, look at verse 18 on page 80: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:18; emphasis added). Now, the sectarian world has all kinds of problems that we do not have. Here is a statement that says the Holy Ghost is the father of Christ. She was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Or at least it can be so interpreted and, in effect, they do interpret it that way. And the Inspired Version makes no correction of it; it does not improve that verse at all, which it might well have done. As you know, the Inspired Version was just partially done, and they were correcting by subject and doing part of it, but there is more to be done. So, if you were the Prophet Joseph Smith, making an Inspired Version, how would you make that 18th verse read to make it an honest translation? We will take that as a little problem, and we can easily solve it, I think. Look down to what Luke says in the 35th verse:

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35.)

Is that the same thing that Matthew says? It is not really, is it? Matthew is recording what the angel said to Joseph. Here is what the angel said to Mary. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee." Well, here is another one of these marvelous illustrations of what the Book of Mormon does for us. This is the document that clarifies the doctrines of the gospel and lets us know what is involved. Look in Alma, the seventh chapter. We understand the Bible because we have

the Book of Mormon. The fact is, we believe the Bible to be true because we have the Book of Mormon as a witness of it. Look in the tenth verse of the seventh chapter of Alma. The thought that has just been made is the Son of God cometh upon the face of the earth.

And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God. (Alma 7:10.)

Do you see what Alma has done? Without even being aware that there were going to be two verses, one in Matthew and one in Luke some future day, the Holy Ghost has had Alma take those two verses and unite them in one and add something to the Matthew account so that it changes from what it reads in our book to what really was the case. The same words are here: “overshadowed” from Luke, “conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost,” and then Luke’s words, “bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.” All right, somebody hands you the Bible and says pick up this so that the Inspired Version is the way it ought to be. And what do you do with that verse in Matthew? You change it, all right. I think I will buy that. You improve it. There are lots of things that can be pretty tough to improve in the Bible that are not quite the way they ought to be, but this is one that is easy. This is one that you can make right. All you would have to do to this 18th verse in Matthew on page 80: “When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child (by the power of) the Holy Ghost.” And what you have done is take the phrase out of the Book of Mormon and insert it in the Bible to amplify it. Now, there would not be much question but that is the way Matthew wrote that in the first instance—the Son of God and not the son of the Holy Ghost. Of course the sectarian world is faced with this problem of not distinguishing between the Father, Son and Holy Ghost really, in their credo language, at least.

Well, here then is the doctrine of the birth of Christ into the world. He . . . (inaudible) . . . that his father on the one hand and his mother on the other hand. God was his father. God is an immortal personage. He has a body of flesh and bones; this is the language of our revelations. He has the power of immortality. He is immortal. He has the power of immortality. Now, immortality is to have a body and spirit united together inseparably in a resurrected state. We will be immortal when body and spirit are together again, never to be torn asunder. That is the state that God the Eternal Father is in, and that condition of so being is the power—that contains within it—of immortality. The power to live forever without dying. There is no death. There is no corruption. There is no . . . (inaudible) . . . to be as an eternal, resurrected soul. That is what he is now and what he was in this day. Now, here we come to Mary, and she is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh, which means just what it says. You and I got born after the manner of the flesh, meaning that we were conceived in a mother’s womb by the normal processes that are ordained to bring conception about.

Well, Mary is mortal. And mortal means death, within the definition of death that we normally have, which is that body and spirit separate—not that the spirit ceases to exist

but that the elements from which the body were made cease to exist, but that body and spirit separate. We call that the natural death. Mary was subject to this. And so, by way of contrast, she had something that is called “the power of mortality,” which is the power to die; the ability to separate body and spirit. Here then is someone who is born into the world, and he is the only being in this earth or in any of the earths (the infinite number that the Father, through his instrumentality, had created) who is born with an immortal father and with a mortal mother. Now, I am born from a mortal father and a mortal mother. So I inherit from my father and from my mother the power of mortality. I just get automatically what they had, and that is the power to die. So Christ inherited from Mary the power of mortality, the ability to die, the ability to separate body and spirit. But he inherited from his father the power of immortality, the ability to keep body and spirit together or the ability, having elected to exercise this other power and permit death to occur to him, to have the power to reunite body and spirit again in immortality in glorious resurrection.

Well, this is what is important in the birth of Christ into the world. This is the whole central thing, as far as his birth is concerned. If you do not believe that Christ is literally the Son of God, you cannot believe in the atoning sacrifice in the sense that you have to believe in it to be saved in the Kingdom of God. So, the world just gets in an awful state. Here they say, God fills the immensity of space; he is a spirit essence, and he is everywhere and nowhere in particular . . . (inaudible) . . . ; he is corporeal, uncreated, immaterial, and all those other things. You cannot worship that kind of a God and get the concept that a literal father passes on to a son the inheritance of immortality. You have to begin with the knowledge that God is a personal being in whose image man is created, to get this concept, which is the concept on which the Atonement rests.

Now let us just read two passages, and then we will comment about this, if our time permits, before going on to another phase of it. Look in 2 Nephi, the second chapter. Part of this is the marvelous sermon of Lehi on the Atonement. In the eighth verse:

. . . how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits and mercy and grace of the Holy Messiah [here is our point], who layeth down his life according to the flesh [According to the flesh. According to what he had inherited from Mary, he being born after the manner of the flesh, meaning after the manner of mortality. So he could lay down his life because of this], and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit [now, it is power of the Spirit here, the same thought in essence as the power of immortality], that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise. (2 Nephi 2:8; emphasis added.)

A man with a dual inheritance: from God, immortal and from Mary, mortal.

Take one more reference: the tenth chapter of John, where he himself says this same thing. Just a phrase or two without spending any time on it; verse 11: “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” Verse 17: “Therefore doth my Father love me,” . . . (inaudible) . . . well, [verse] 15: “. . . I lay down my life for the

sheep.” It is voluntary. [Verse] 17: “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:17-18). Well, that is the doctrine. Christ could have lived forever, because God was his Father. He elected to die, and he had the power because Mary was his mother. And then he elected to live again, because he had inherited the power of immortality from his father, and all of this, which his Atonement, rests upon the manner in which he was born into the world. So this becomes a tremendously vital doctrinal concept, to know what basically and fundamentally is involved in the birth of the Son of God.

What sections are sections about this, now?

Comment: This power that was inherent in him, I hear it anyway, talk sometimes—people are talking about being foreordained, saying that even Christ could have backed out; that he could change his mind; that he did not have to make a sacrifice. If this power was inherent in him, then would he still have his status of godhood?

BRM: Well, I do not know. . . (inaudible) . . . he had his agency. If he had failed on his mission he would have ended up with Lucifer, would he not? He would have been a Son of Perdition; he would have been cast out. It is theoretically true that he had his agency and he could have fallen, but if he had done that, the whole system would have stopped and some other provision would have had to have been made for a redeemer, but you see, when you get talking about that, you are way off and . . . (inaudible) . . . I agree that theoretically he could have fallen because he had his agency, and he could have refused to do it, but actually that is just so far outside the realm of what would have been, that it is highly speculative.

Comment: But you did emphasize several times that he elected to do this.

BRM: He elected to do it. It was voluntary. “No man taketh my life” from him. He did not have to permit himself to be crucified. He could have gone on living because of this power. Now, if he had done that and refused to comply, he would have been in rebellion, and I do not know what would have happened. The Father would have had to have done something else. But it is a basic and important concept that this was a voluntary act on his part, and that he had a choice, but he made his choice right, of course. He had a choice in this, as in all things, like you and I have a choice in all things. This is the one thing in which he is not the prototype for us, and it is because of his parentage of eternity. In everything else, Christ is the prototype for us, meaning that we can pattern our lives after the course that he followed, but we cannot do it in this instance.

There is an interesting thing here that you ought to know. On page 74 in our text it bears right in with what we are saying here. John here, is talking about the Word being made flesh. Notice John’s account. He says: “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . .” (John 1:13-14). Now notice what the Inspired Version does: “He was

born, (that is Christ) not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (Inspired Version, John 1:13.) And the Word was made flesh. Now, you see it says Christ was born, not of blood. Not of mortality. Well, that is only half true because he was born of blood because of Mary. But the point is, he was born not of blood, because God his Father is an immortal being and has a body of flesh and bones, and there is no blood involved, and blood is the flesh. “Nor of the will of flesh”—he is born the Son of God. There are a host of interesting little sidelights like this; all of it is tied into that picture. He is the only man that is born in this sense, not of blood, not of the flesh, but born of immortality.

Well, let us . . . (inaudible) . . . yes?

Comment: The question of sealing frequently comes up. To whom would Mary be sealed?

BRM: Well, this is pretty far out, too.

Comment: I know.

BRM: But the fact of the matter is, and you probably have this in mind, that President Joseph F. Smith preached a sermon that said she was sealed to the Father. Obviously that had to be so. This sermon, incidentally, is published; you can get it and read it. Somebody gave me a copy of it just the other day; they found the original of it that they have been looking for, for a long time. Up until now we only had quotations from it. But listen, let me tell you in this connection, a word about Mary. You think of Christ, and we are thinking of the omnipotence and the might and the glory of Christ, and his preeminence above every man who ever lived, of course. Well, here is Mary and she is as near to being of like caliber with Christ as a mortal person could be. She is preeminent above all women who ever lived. Now, unfortunately we are faced with this nonsense in this world that the Catholics have. In the midst of this ecumenical convention that they were having in Rome, there was great agitation from the Catholic hierarchy of South America to get Mary appointed, by their dogma, co-redemptre with Christ. They wanted her to be equal with Christ in working out the Atonement. Time Magazine carried it, The New York Times carried the details—co-redemptre with Christ. Well, presumptively this is what they believe, the generality of them, and what their doctrine is. But this ecumenical convention was concerned with the great problem of darkening the face of Catholicism and making it more attractive to the prodigy world, and so they did not dogmatize that, because it would have had the reverse effect. It is a little sad what the Catholic world does to Mary. But on the other hand, the fact still is (they do not know what they are talking about) that Mary is the preeminent woman and she gets virtually (I better not say virtually), but she approximates and gets close to the stature of Christ, in the eternal overall scheme of things. And the question you raised is precisely what is involved with her. President Clark said in General Conference, extolling the virtue of . . . (inaudible) . . . I do not know whether he said it in General Conference or otherwise, but in one of his great sermons extolling the virtues of Mary, “there is only one Christ and there is only one Mary.” Now, we cannot do too much to say things about the grandeur and glory and

position in the plan of salvation of either one of them because of what is here involved. Mary involves a God.

Now, maybe before we leave this, we ought to just say one more thing. You cannot really talk about the mystical fancies of the world and all the rest, but when we say that Christ was born as the Son of God, we are in the habit of using this word: we are in the habit of saying he was “literally” the Son of God. Maybe we use it and the meaning does not dawn on us as to what this actually is saying. Let me just say this much: Christ was literally the son of Mary. Now, that makes him the son of Mary in every conceivable respect that any of us are the sons of mortal women. And when we say he is literally the Son of God, we mean it. We mean it. He is the Son of God like I am the son of my father. Just as literal and as actual as it can be. Now, I have said enough of this, if you catch what I am saying. He is literally the Son of God. Why is he born of a virgin if he is literally the Son of God? Well you figure out the answer to that. The answer to that is implicit in this account of a resurrected being coming through the wall.

All right, so much for . . . (inaudible) . . . (laughter). Our time is almost up, but let me . . . (inaudible) . . . let us . . . (inaudible) . . . these things over here—here is the account of Joseph and Mary going to Bethlehem, and the account of Jesus being born in the stable, heaven and earth proclaiming his birth, the shepherds bearing witness, and so on. Let us just say this one thing about being born in the inn. Look on page 91 in your text. It is sort of a . . . (inaudible) . . . thing to do, but the fact of the matter is, practically all of the things they say during Christmas-time, traditionally were tied in, do not have any real resemblance to what took place. And here is one of them. Look on page 91 in the Inspired Version of Luke.

And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was none to give room for them in the inns (Inspired Version, Luke 2:7).

Inns: I-n-n-s. Now, you hear the Christmas episode that has the inn keeper and the all the rest and some inn keeper rejected them. I think it must have been like this—this is not latter-day revelation, but this is what the sectarian commentators say an inn was. And it just so happens that it conforms to this comment in the Inspired Version. An inn was not a (this is an accident whenever I write . . . (inaudible)—an inn is not what we know as an inn. It is not a motel or not a hotel in ancient Palestine. But an inn was some kind of a shelter that was provided. They were traveling (normally square or rectangular) by camel and by donkey and so on, and these places were provided for them to camp—to lay out a bedroll and to build a fire, and to do some cooking over it. They were provided so that there would be a little shelter, and they would have a dividing point down the middle, and the people would sleep on one side of these shelters, and they would put their animals on the other side, and there would be lots of these things. Now, Mary is pregnant; they are traveling slow; by the time they get to the area where the inns are, where they could make a camp, everybody has already taken them. And they set up their bedding and their sleeping under one side, and they put their animals onto the other side. So, when you get right down to it, it is not some inn keeper that was rejecting Mary, it is all people. It is all

this body of people; it is the scores and hundreds of them that are sleeping in these shelters, refusing to move over and provide for her, although it was sort of self-evident that she was right on the verge of having child, and so she gets her shelter in the side with the animals. Now, this probably is what takes place; at least that is what the sectarian commentators say, and in accord with the fact that the Prophet just chanced to make that inn, in the plural.

Well, here is another one of these things that is not so, particularly. Look on page 101, and then we will look on page 105 in this account of the wise men coming from the east. I suppose the most interesting thing in connection with the wise men is, who were they? And you have to do a little bit of speculating in that connection, but the speculation is so . . . (inaudible) . . . on what the scriptural account is, that we cannot be far off. These wise men that came from the east obviously were prophets. Obviously they knew the truth. They are not some cultists of some sort. They were perfectly well aware that there were prophecies that said that a new star would arise. We do not know what the prophecies are. Now, providentially the Book of Mormon keeps an account of these prophecies, so we do know that it is true that a new star was to arise. There is no biblical account of it. So these people have an account, and there obviously was a biblical account for that day, because Herod and the Jews understood and believed these things, and knew what it meant. But these men who came from the east are of unspecified number. Two or twelve, how do you know? It says just the word “wise men,” which is the plural. In other words, a group came. We get the tradition that there were three because they . . . (inaudible) . . . and say myrrh and frankincense and gold were gifts. Now, obviously each one of them gave a gift, and there must have been three! Maybe there were two, and maybe there were ten; in any event, there were a plurality of people who had some inspiration and the Lord would listen. Now you know that positively from the fact that they had a dream that said, “Get out of here and don’t go back and tell Herod.” So the Lord was manifesting things to them; they were spiritual people. An interesting thing about it now, on page 101 . . . turn over to 102 the seventh and the eighth verses: “Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared” (Matthew 2:7; emphasis added). That is, when did this star come? He wanted to know when this child was born, and then go search in Bethlehem. Now, over on page 105:

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men (Matthew 2:16; emphasis added).

Now, all the traditions say the wise men got there on the twelfth day, which is where these 12 days of Christmas comes from. This is how the sectarian world celebrates the holiday of Kippen[?]. Well, when did the wise men come? I do not know when they came. But Herod made diligent inquiry and said, “When did this star come that shows that a child was born?” And they said, “Well, the star came on such and such a day.” And then Herod got busy and he killed everybody who was two years of age and under. And you are two years of age and under until you are three, so if you really wanted to work this out, he killed children that were almost three years of age. So that he gets the people

that were born in the span of time that was involved in the appearance of the star. Well, where did the wise men come? Look back on page 101 or 102 look in the 11th verse: “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother . . .” (Matthew 2:11). Not a baby but a young child; not a stable, but a house. All somebody would really have to do is read what this King James Version says, and . . . (inaudible) . . . that he got at Christmas time allegedly telling what has happened in the life of Christ. There is an interesting summary on page 107 (at least this is quite interesting to me); this is a complicated thing to work out, but I am quite sure that it is reasonably accurate as to where Jesus lived. We will not read it, but you look at page 107 that we have analyzed there and shown the reasons for it, the conclusion, as to the successive places that Jesus lived in the course of his ministry or in the course of his life, insofar as it is recorded. Now, there might be a whole host of things that we do not know anything about as far as where he lived.

Well now, in the light of what we are talking about here this morning, and in the remaining moments, is there any question anyone would like to ask? Historically, from the standpoint of drama, there are a lot of interesting things in these passages. It is quite a remarkable thing to have heavenly choirs sing; to have an angel coming down and saying, “Unto you this day in the city of David is born a Savior,” and so on; to read the testimony of Anna and Simeon when he is taken into the temple; it is a gruesome, horrible thing to read what Herod did when he slaughtered the innocent children; to know about the wise men that came; it is an interesting sidelight and fact to have some understanding of the symbolism that is involved here and the symbolism with these—it is a whole nation and not an individual was forecasting their rejection of their Messiah by refusing to accommodate the obvious need at the time of his birth; there are a lot of fascinating and interesting historical and related events in connection with his birth. But over here is the great thing. Over here is the glorious thing. Here is the doctrine; here is where our attention centers as far as the birth of Christ into the world is concerned. If we could drill into ourselves that concept and begin to comprehend it . . . (inaudible). When we approach it from this perspective of “knowest thou the condescension of God,” it puts us in a little state of awe and reverence with respect and appreciation. It begins to enhance the appreciation that we have for what God has done for us. He created the earth; he ordained this whole plan of salvation, the James version says, and then right in the midst of all of it, he just subjects himself to the lowliest condescending circumstance in order to effect the greatest plan that he had . . . (inaudible) . . . that he got at Christmas time allegedly telling what has happened in the life of Christ. There is an interesting summary on page 107 (at least this is quite interesting to me); this is a complicated thing to work out, but I am quite sure that it is reasonably accurate as to where Jesus lived. We will not read it, but you look at page 107 that we have analyzed there and shown the reasons for it, the conclusion, as to the successive places that Jesus lived in the course of his ministry or in the course of his life, insofar as it is recorded. Now, there might be a whole host of things that we do not know anything about as far as where he lived.

This is a glorious, glorious doctrine—the foundation stone on which the greatest doctrine of the kingdom rests. Well, we will go on next time and maybe start with the baptism of Christ.