

THE LORD'S STATE AT BIRTH

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Lessons: Genesis 12:1-9, Luke 2:40-52

Our first lesson was from the Old Testament. It described how Abram was called by the Lord, and told to go into the land of Canaan. Abram lived in the desert many miles away from the land of Canaan. But the Lord told him to go there, and that if he went there, he would become the father of a great nation.

Our second lesson was the story of how the Lord, when He was 12 years old, was found teaching in the temple at Jerusalem.

At first these stories may seem entirely different and unrelated. But when you think about them, you will see that they tell about a similar thing.

Before Abram could become a rich and a happy man, he had to take a long journey from his own land, into a land far away. He had to work hard in order to obtain what the Lord wanted to give him. But he was willing to work, and so he obeyed the Lord, left his own country and began this journey.

When the Lord was born on earth, He was almost exactly the same as other babies. He could not talk; He could not walk. But because He was the Lord, He had an important work to do. And to accomplish this He had to go through a long journey. He had to grow up and leave his childhood so that He could accomplish the wonderful work of teaching men and leading them to heaven. This He could not do if He remained a baby.

When He was very young—when He was only 12 years old—He knew why He had come on earth, and so He began to teach men and lead them to heaven. This was when He went away from Mary and Joseph and went into the temple and began to teach the oldest and wisest men in the land.

There were so many people going out of the city that Mary and Joseph thought that the child Jesus was somewhere behind them in the crowd. It was only after they had been gone for a whole day that they realized that He was not with them. Then they went back to Jerusalem and found Him in the temple. They wanted to scold Him for not telling them what He was doing. In answer the Lord said a strange thing. He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Many people thought that Joseph was His father, but Joseph was a carpenter and not a teacher. The father of Jesus was the Divine soul. He was the Lord, and He was beginning to do the work that He was sent on earth to do.

It is a wonderful thing that when the Lord was born on earth, He at first did not fully know that He was the Lord. But by the time He was 12, He knew this, and so could leave His childhood and begin to do the work of saving and teaching people.

When you were born, you hardly knew that you existed. You cannot remember what it was like when you were very tiny, because you were hardly conscious then. But gradually you learn about the world around you, and gradually you learn that the Lord put you on earth for a very special reason. He put you on earth so that you would grow up and become intelligent and useful men and women, and so that one day you would become an angel of heaven.

When you first come to realize that you have to work in order to become an angel, you are like Abram when He was called by the Lord to go out of his own land into the land of Canaan. The land of Canaan means heaven. When you come to know that there is a heaven, the Lord is calling you to leave your first world and come into that new and more wonderful world. You must learn that there are people more important than yourself, and that real happiness does not consist in having your own way, but in helping others and in loving the Lord. In order to come into this new kind of happiness, you have to leave your old ideas behind. You have to learn to work - to think and to do what is right. You have to leave the baby world, and come into the world of adults, and then into the world of the angels.

At Christmastime you are very happy, you are happy because you can think of how the Lord came on earth as a tiny babe. And you are happy because everyone is being kind to each other. But sometimes at Christmas you become angry and upset. You worry because someone else received more presents than you did, or because everything was not just the way you wanted it to be. This unhappiness comes because you are being selfish. And if you are to be truly happy you must hear the Lord calling you away from your selfishness, and trying to lead you to heaven—a place where you always think of others—and where your happiness comes from trying to make others happy. *Amen.*

Arcana Coelestia 5110:3:

Nevertheless as man is such that he can have no idea of thought whatever about abstract things unless he adjoins something natural which has entered from the world through the senses (for without some such natural thing his thought perishes as in an abyss and is dissipated), therefore lest what is Divine should perish in man when he is wholly immersed in bodily and earthly things, and with whomsoever it remained it should be defiled by an unclean idea, and together with what is Divine everything celestial and spiritual thence derived should also perish, it pleased Jehovah to present Himself such as He actually is, and such as He appears in heaven, namely, as a Divine Man. For everything of heaven conspires to the human form, as may be seen from what has been shown at the end of the chapters concerning the correspondence of all things of man with the Grand Man, which is heaven. This Divine, or this of Jehovah in heaven, is the Lord from eternity.