

On Jesus' Family

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Today being Christmas day, he (Master) will continue the speech on the subject I already mentioned last night. In the Bible we don't find any passage where any one asked Jesus about his father. Who was his father? When we think of that we can imagine that his own disciples might have known already about his background. In the Bible we find that Jesus said unclear things in several places; passages like, "If I say worldly things and you won't understand, how can I say heavenly things?" On another occasion, "I came to the world to bring fire, but would that it were already kindled." That makes us guess that there must have been something he left unaccomplished on earth. When one of his disciples came to him and told him his own mother was there, he answered, "Who is my mother, who is my brother? Only those who act out the will of God." Now that alludes to the fact that his own mother and brother could not cooperate with him and carry out the role assigned to them. In John 7, we read that his disciples and neighbors were a little skeptical about his mission because he remained at home while there was a Passover or public festival taking place in Jerusalem. But his brothers did that. And on still another occasion he said to his mother, "Woman, what have you to do with me?" From all these passages we can say that there are things not clearly told in the Bible. Now let me begin. Through my talk to you last night you learned how difficult it was for God to lay the foundation for Jesus to be born. Now only God, but those who had carried out the mission of laying the foundation, had all struggled so hard until Jesus came. After sending Jesus Christ on the foundation which had been built after so much difficulty and hardship, would God have wanted Jesus to be crucified or suffer so much? Before Jesus there had been many martyrs sent to the world to prepare his way who went through so much difficulties and torture, and then would God have wanted Jesus to be tortured again? For so many thousands of years God prepared the foundation for Jesus. Then would God have wanted the people to persecute and reject him until they could hang him on the cross? If there was a good environment prepared for him, with all the people around him administering to him and serving him., something different from what we have in the Biblical record could have happened. But he was even born in a stable and from then on he had to go through so much difficulty and suffering. Upon his birth the king attempted to kill him, and he had to hide himself, going from place to place. You can imagine that by the age of 30 he had gone through untold difficulties. Even during the three years of his public ministry he was persecuted by Judaism itself. by relatives, and by all the people of Israel. At last he was put on the cross. And we can well imagine that he had to go through many difficult situations which the Bible does not tell us. There is not a single man who was in favor of Jesus, on his side.

Let's go back to Joseph's family. Joseph was in the position of archangel, as I told you last night. Adam and Eve before the fall were in the relationship of brother and sister, or betrothed. Since the archangel took away Eve while they were in that situation, so in Jesus' time, Joseph and Mary had to restore that in the reverse order. Centering on Jesus, God's side had to restore the one who is in the position of Eve before the fall. That's why God made Mary conceive. Mary was chosen in that case. Supposing you are Joseph. Mary is your betrothed. Most unexpectedly your girl is pregnant. How would you say he felt? Girls, answer us. Angry! If you women feel like that, how much more would it have been for Joseph. How much would Joseph have been agonized in heart, after he heard the news. You cannot imagine that any man in such a place can even think of having the girl as his wife. If any of the men members doesn't think he would be agonized, raise up your hand. You may ask the whole population of the world. You will never find a single man who will answer in the affirmative. Almighty God could have imagined those

kinds of things could happen. What must have been the reason for sending Jesus with that background? We can imagine that there must be a reason for God sending the Messiah in such an environment. That's why God sent an angel to Joseph in a dream saying that his wife was going to conceive by the Holy Spirit. And he had to be kind to her and receive her after the childbirth. That was not a vision but a dream, which one could have forgotten. And Joseph who had done as he had been told in the dream, was certainly a righteous man, a just man. If it were you, could you have received this Mary?

It was not an easy job. Would Joseph have been happy to receive Mary? No, Most unhappy and unwilling to receive her. Joseph knew that according to the Mosaic law, unchaste women had to be stoned to death. He knew the law, and there was Mary pregnant. Even though he was told in a dream that she was made pregnant by the Holy Spirit, Could he have believed it? His thought wavered. At last Joseph decided to receive Mary. In that case, did he receive her openly, Do you think he could do that? I think that Joseph brought her into his home in secret, and most unwilling, too. We don't know if Joseph had any brothers or parents or relatives. The Bible doesn't tell us this. We don't have any such record about the family background of Joseph. None of these things is written. If Joseph's family had been in sympathy with Mary and Joseph, there would have been a record of them. Yet, we do not read in the Bible any story or occasion where Mary or Joseph tells Jesus about his grandparents, uncles, or other relatives. There must be a reason for this.

When Joseph had to bring Mary, could he have consulted the matter with his parents, if there were any, or any of his relatives? Could he have done that? In light of the Mosaic law, he couldn't do it. Even though those people around him might not have known that she was pregnant, he could not have brought her to his home while they were still in the stage of betrothal. How much more difficult it would have been for him to bring the girl there while there was such a strict Mosaic law. And all the more since she was pregnant before marriage. Although he brought her in secret, don't you imagine that rumors of her pregnancy had spread? Seemingly they must have lived together in one room. Rumors and gossips rapidly spread, especially among children-some of these children must have belonged to his relatives.

In the very bottom of his heart, would Joseph not have wondered about who. the other man was? He guessed this way and that. However righteous a man he may have been, there must have been occasions on which he asked his wife about the matter. Joseph was a very generous and righteous man and the benefactor of her life, because she was supposed to have been stoned to death. And Mary, who knew this and who was so grateful to her husband, could she have answered the question boastfully like this: "Well, the child of my womb is conceived by the Holy Spirit." Could she have answered like that? In that case, Could he have believed it? Well, I think many of you. here are from Christian families, leading lives of faith so far, but still to you it would be unbelievable; you cannot even imagine that You could believe those words., Then how much more it would have been with other people! If Mary had answered that way, Joseph would have been very angry, ever) though he .was told in a dream about something like -that. If Mary had answered that the child -was conceived by the Holy Spirit, he could not have believed it, but more than that, he would have been very angry and indignant. And he could have guessed or imagined that Mary's story was to conceal the fact that she had been seeking to cheat her husband. Can you imagine Joseph's facial expression? *Happy? Indignant? Angry'? From this time on, there were troubles between the two. Joseph on several occasions had asked questions of that kind, and Mary on her part had difficulty with those questions. There had been troubles already arising. Could it have happened just once, or could it have continued from time to time? It is natural that the quarrel among them continued. There had been attentive ears and inquiring eyes around them, pointing to her. Don't you imagine that there had been gossip spreading all over the village? There could have been someone eavesdropping on the conversations between the couple, who spread the rumor. There could have been many such things. Mary was in such a situation! How lonely she Must have been.

Now consider them going towards Bethlehem. It was almost the time for her to give birth. If the environment was such that she could have prepared things for the coming child, she would have done that, but she could not prepare anything for the child. When the child was born, she laid him in a stable manger and wrapped him in swaddling clothes. If Jesus had had physical relatives united with Mary and Joseph, would they not have helped Mary prepare

the way beforehand? From all those things we can gather that Mary gave birth to the child in a lonely, lonely situation. But even after the birth of the child there appeared angels. So Joseph thought that the child might be from God. And then came the three wise men led by the stars from the East, to worship him and bring him gifts. And there were shepherds who came to worship him. So that sort of consoled Joseph or made him think differently. After the childbirth, when they had to flee to Egypt there also appeared an angel to guide the way. An angel also directed their way back.

With such a background there was Jesus growing between Mary and Joseph. But even the child sensed that there was something tangled between them. Between Joseph and Jesus there was no relationship of lineage, so they were entirely strangers to each other. On Mary's part, even though she may have wanted to do things for her son, like make clothes for him, she had to find out if on that day Joseph was in a good or bad mood. Jesus could well sense that his parents had an inner quarrel because of him. Since there are many divorced families in the United States, many boys and girls have step parents who are not their real parents. In this case, those step sons and daughters often have some kind of ill sentiment towards their step parents. If it is so with you in the present, how much more it would have been back in that day — 2,000 years ago. Well, whether he was to be clad, whether he was to eat or sleep, he had to observe the mood of his parents. You have read the Biblical record that Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover when he was 12 years old. Joseph and Mary took the child to Jerusalem. After the festival the parents returned home, but only after 3 days did they know that the child was lost, and went back to look for him. It is a simple record, but behind it there is a sad story. We read that Jesus was such a wise and clever child as he discussed Biblical passages with priests. But still he was 12 years old. If it were you, would you not have looked for the child to bring him back? There can be no such parents. Also Joseph and Mary knew that the child was lost, but Joseph had a hurt heart. He did not mind and did not talk about it. Mary, even though she was so deeply wounded in her heart, could not utter a single word about getting the missing child. So, in silence, she came back and spent three unhappy days. But after the three days, Joseph might have thought that it was too much for him. What would the neighbors think? I can enumerate many more such examples. With those things hidden in his heart, the child grew up to the age of adulthood. Well, then came his brothers.

His brothers could sense that there was some untold, entangled story centered on Jesus. That's why even his brothers could not trust or believe in what Jesus was doing. In the meantime, not only Joseph but all Jesus' relatives came to know that.

There he was, working as an assistant to his carpenter father, while inwardly preparing for his mission. He knew he was going to do a great mission under God's guidance. Sometimes Jesus felt like asking his mother, "Why, why am I treated like this? Who is my father? What is your problem and how does it fit in?" Mary could never answer Jesus. Then there was a sort of emotional distance between Mary and the child. As time went by, Jesus came to know what to do and what direction he was headed. He must have been told on some occasions, but he himself knew that he was different from other boys. More than that, he was told by God about his mission. In carrying out his mission, he had to pass through a period of preparation; and he had to prepare a good environment to help him. He could not expect people to receive him without that foundation. Jesus always wished that his own parents, brothers, and relatives could help him in the mission. If his parents had not been able to help him, then who else would help? Jesus was the central figure, the personage of divine mission whom God sent after a preparation of 4,000 years. There were people prepared to receive him. In order for him to be able to establish the Kingdom of God on earth he must have been able to establish the Kingdom right in his own family first. He knew the heavenly law of the divine family, so his own family had to be placed under that law. According to that divine law, Joseph should have loved and ministered to Jesus, not to speak of his mother Mary. Jesus had even to educate his own parents and brothers and sisters; they had to love him more than anyone else, ministering to him and helping him in his mission. Jesus was a prince of the Kingdom of Heaven. He was not known as an ordinary prince of a kingdom on earth. He was the only son of God—the only prince of God and he was sent to do this mission as the single central figure sent by God. Then that family must play the role of setting up his law, the heavenly law. They had to exemplify and build the tradition by ministering to the child, even though he was their son. In preparing food for him, in preparing clothes for him, in doing anything for him, they were to be very sincere and whole hearted. Their other sons and daughters should have

helped Jesus carrying out his mission. But the situation was in conflict- it was not like this. So Jesus could find no one in his family that he could tell about his mission and the heavenly Kingdom. With all of these things happening in his environment, he had to lead an unhappy life preparing for his mission alone until the moment he was 30 years of age.

But we find that Jesus had told his mother about his mission several times. We can imagine that he has done that, his mother being somewhat closer to him. The boy knew his mission and looked for a helper who could cooperate with him. Would he not have told her? But the people around him looked at things from a different angle, so he could not openly talk about his mission. How could he have explained it? He could not help feeling that his mother, at least, would be obedient and cooperative with him. He had told his mother that she should love him more than Joseph and more than any of his brothers according to the divine will. Jesus thought that his mother had to love him more than anyone else and that she was responsible for making her husband love him with that ardor, and influencing his brothers and sisters to love him. Jesus came as the master of love, the prince of love, and the center of love. He should have received more love than anyone else in the world: from his parents, from his brothers and sisters, from his relatives and neighbors. But we cannot say that he had received such love from anyone. On Jesus' part, he could not love his parents as a single example of parenthood-, he could not love his brothers and sisters more than anyone else. Now God, seeing all those things take place, must have grieved. How grievous must have been Jesus' heart! The Kingdom of God was supposed to be the Kingdom of love. Jesus, who came as the center of love, should have established that kind of family first of all. But it seemed hopeless to him, so he had to flee from his home. He was then 30 years old.

His parents should have thought about his marriage. They should have consulted with Jesus about that matter, to locate a bride for him, a bride of good heart, pure lineage, and good family background. They should have chosen a bride for him out of a family of good faith in God. But we find no such record in the Bible. It would have taken Mary courage of almost revolutionary character to do that. She should have influenced her husband and other children, arousing their attention. Let's think of the matter from a different angle. If Joseph were placed in the position of archangel, and Mary in the position of Eve, could Joseph take Mary even after the birth, and could they be together? They could not. Jesus, who knew the divine will, told his mother about this. And if Mary had been prepared for the mission, she, together with her son, could have revolutionized the home, even though they might have been driven out of the family. When you closely think over such matters, you cannot say that Mary carried out her mission properly. As for Jesus' bride, no one else than Mary should have chosen her. Mary was the one closest to him. Not only in the divine will, but also in the physical sense she was the closest to him. God wanted Mary to cooperate with Jesus from his very birth in carrying out the mission. For Jesus, Mary was important. Where could they locate the bride for Jesus? They could not have found just anyone from any family ; there had to be a good girl. There was elimination out of divine will, out of certain families, out of certain backgrounds. There was a condition that the bride had to be from one of the relatives, having the same lineage. 'Men we see that Joseph was from righteous lineage, but other than that whom can we name? We can name Joseph's and Zachariah's family. One was in the position of Cain and the other family was in the position of Abel, on the family level. Elizabeth, Zachariah's wife, and Mary should have discussed their two children, John the Baptist and Jesus. They should have talked about how they grew, and what difficulties they faced in raising the children and all such things. They should have been concerned with both of the children, both of them. Mary and Elizabeth were sisters. So Jesus and John the Baptist were cousins. John the Baptist was, when he was born, a strange, extraordinary child. Even before the birth of John the Baptist there was a most unusual story. His father Zachariah was a priest. When he offered sacrifice at the temple, the angel of the Lord came to him and announced the coming of the child, while his wife was aged. And when he did not believe the words, he was made dumb. And after the birth, after he had named the child as he had been told by the angel of the Lord, he spoke. And the whole village heard of this. Jesus also was born in that same tradition, in that same unusual way, and those two as cousins could have associated with each other and discussed matters on intimate terms. In the Bible we find there was only one occasion on which Mary visited Elizabeth. This was another very tangled story. If they were close sisters, they Could have Come back and forth to consult matters. Zachariah and Elizabeth heard the rumor about Jesus as the holy child. So Zachariah and Elizabeth did not like to have Mary visit their family too often because there was gossip among the villagers. That's the reason for Mary not being able

to visit Elizabeth's family. If those two — Elizabeth and Mary — had been one under God's will and could discuss back and forth between themselves about the mission of Jesus, things would have been much easier. On the part of John the Baptist, who came to make straight the way of Jesus, if he had really been able to witness p to Jesus being the Lord, then the people of that time, who esteemed him highly, could have followed Jesus more easily. And if the mothers had become one, that would have made things much easier. John the Baptist unconsciously witnessed to Jesus when he was attuned to the spirit world, but he did not even dream of Jesus really becoming the Lord or savior. While he had been preparing the way for the Lord for 30 years, spending almost the whole of his life, he expected the Lord to be something like this: very wonderful looking, and outwardly a very capable person, we can imagine. In many ways this person should have been far better, far more elevated, far more wonderful than he himself was. He did not dream of his cousin becoming the Lord, and savior of the world.

Jesus was nothing compared with John in many ways. John the Baptist had gone the way of faith, was highly educated, and he had many unusual things to offer the people. In Jesus,, the carpenter's assistant, people could find nothing, nothing conspicuous. In the United States, do you think of carpentry as a high-standard profession? When Jesus came to him to be baptized, he spiritually was moved and witnessed to him. When he saw the dove alighting on him and heard "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased and he. is going to save the world," he witnessed to him. But when he came back to his own consciousness, it was different. With the Holy Spirit gone from him, it seemed like a dream. If there are any spiritually receiving members here, you must have experienced the same thing. The mission of John the Baptist was until the time of Jesus' coming, so after he had witnessed to Jesus he should have been so happy to bring all his disciples to him and follow him. The whole of the Israelites believed him to be the greatest of all the prophets. Then what must have prevented John from following Jesus after having witnessed to him? There was a great reason for that. He had heard the rumor of Jesus being illegitimate. John the Baptist did not even think of Jesus as his cousin. His mother Elizabeth talked that way to him.

There was some sentiment between Elizabeth and Mary and John the Baptist and Jesus. There was John the Baptist — highly esteemed with higher education and recognized as a great prophet and there was the boy Jesus — entirely ignorant of any ordinary matters, and not educated enough. Recognizing those differences in background, how could John the Baptist follow Jesus? In Matthew you can read a those stories. When John the Baptist sent one of his disciples to him while he was in the prison, and asked him "Who are you?" Jesus retorted, "Blessed are those who are not offended," signifying that John the Baptist had already offended him. And he went on to say, "What did you go out to the wilderness to see, those who were clad in the rainments of reed? What did You go out to the wilderness to see — the people richly clad'? Did you not see John the Baptist witness to me as the Lord, did you forget?"

If John the Baptist had witnessed to Jesus and right after that had followed him, he Could have played the role of the first disciple, the main disciple. The chief disciple was shifted to Peter. That's why at the last minute of his life John the Baptist was miserable.

He was imprisoned and killed, beheaded. What if he had been beheaded in the place of Jesus? That's why in the Bible Jesus said "Among those born of women there was no one greater than John the Baptist, but in the Kingdom of God the least is greater than John." Those passed-away saints and prophets could only witness to the Lord or lords from a distance. But John the Baptist would witness to him directly, with the person in flesh right there. So in that sense John was the greatest of all prophets. But in the spirit world, any spirit-man could have witnessed to Jesus as the Lord. But there was John who had been prepared for the purpose, for that mission, and he could not follow him and minister to him. So that makes him the least.

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