

IT WILL hardly be possible fully to explain the many reasons which led to the selection of Palestine as the land for Michael's bestowal, and especially as to just why the family of Joseph and Mary should have been chosen as the immediate setting for the appearance of this Son of God on Urantia.

After a study of the special report on the status of segregated worlds prepared by the Melchizedeks, in counsel with Gabriel, Michael finally chose Urantia as the planet whereon to enact his final bestowal. Subsequent to this decision Gabriel made a personal visit to Urantia, and, as a result of his study of human groups and his survey of the spiritual, intellectual, racial, and geographic features of the world and its peoples, he decided that the Hebrews possessed those relative advantages which warranted their selection as the bestowal race. Upon Michael's approval of this decision, Gabriel appointed and dispatched to Urantia the Family Commission of Twelve--selected from among the higher orders of universe personalities--which was intrusted with the task of making an investigation of Jewish family life. When this commission ended its labors, Gabriel was present on Urantia and received the report nominating three prospective unions as being, in the opinion of the commission, equally favorable as bestowal families for Michael's projected incarnation.

From the three couples nominated, Gabriel made the personal choice of Joseph and Mary, subsequently making his personal appearance to Mary, at which time he imparted to her the glad tidings that she had been selected to become the earth mother of the bestowal child.

1. JOSEPH AND MARY

Joseph, the human father of Jesus (Joshua ben Joseph), was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, albeit he carried many non-Jewish racial strains which had been added to his ancestral tree from time to time by the female lines of his progenitors. The ancestry of the father of Jesus went back to the days of Abraham and through this venerable patriarch to the earlier lines of inheritance leading to the Sumerians and Nodites and, through the southern tribes of the ancient blue man, to Andon and Fonta. David and Solomon were not in the direct line of Joseph's ancestry, neither did Joseph's lineage go directly back to Adam. Joseph's immediate ancestors were mechanics--builders, carpenters, masons, and smiths. Joseph himself was a carpenter and later a contractor. His family belonged to a long and illustrious line of the nobility of the common people, accentuated ever and anon by the appearance of unusual individuals who had distinguished themselves in connection with the evolution of religion on Urantia.

Mary, the earth mother of Jesus, was a descendant of a long line of unique ancestors embracing many of the most remarkable women in the racial history of Urantia. Although Mary was an average woman of her

TEŠKO DA je mnoguće u cjelosti objasniti višestruke razloge koji su vodili k izboru Palestine kao zemlje Mihaelovog darivanja, a još manje razloge koji su vodili k izboru Josipa i Marije kao neposrednog okružja koje je omogućilo pojavu ovog Sina Čovječjeg na Urantiji.

Nakon što je proučio specijalni melkizedeški izvještaj o statusu izoliranih svjetova i po savjetovanju s Gabrijelom, Mihael je konačno izabrao Urantiju kao planet svog završnog darivanja. Po donošenju ove odluke, Gabrijel je osobno posjetio Urantiju i kao rezultat njegovog izučavanja različitih ljudskih grupa i njihovih duhovnih, intelektualnih, rasnih i zemljopisnih osobina, zaključio je da su židovi posjedovali određene relativne prednosti koje su ih činile rasom pogodnom za podarenje. Nakon što je Mihael odobrio ovu odluku, Gabrijel je imenovao i poslao na Urantiju Dvanaestočlanu Obiteljsku Komisiju--sastavljenu od pripadnika viših redova svemirskih ličnosti--kojoj je povjereno izučavanje židovskog obiteljskog života. Po okončanju svojih napora, komisija je imenovala tri para koja su prema njezinom mišljenju bila u stanju pružiti najpovoljnije obiteljske uvjete za Mihaelovo planirano darivanje i Gabrijel je bio prisutan na Urantiji kad je primio ovaj izvještaj.

Između ova tri kandidata, Gabrijel je osobno izabrao Josipa i Mariju; on se zatim osobno ukazao Mariji saopćivši joj radosnu vijest da će biti zemaljska majka darovanog djeteta.

1. JOSIP I MARIJA

Josip, zemaljski otac Isusa (Joze ben Josipa), je bio pravi židov, premda je nosio i mnoge nežidovske rasne crte koje su s vremena na vrijeme putem ženskih linija pripajane njegovom obiteljskom stablu. Preci Isusovog oca se pružaju unatrag sve do Abrahamovog doba i preko ovog slavnog patrijarha do ranijih nasljednih loza koje vuku porijeklo od Sumerana i Nodita i preko južnih plemena prastare plave rase, do Andona i Fonte. David i Solomon ne pripadaju neposrednoj liniji Josipovih predaka; Josipova linija ne vuče porijeklo direktno do Adama. Josipovi neposredni preci su bili mehaničari--graditelji, tesari, zidari i kovači. Sam Josip je bio prvo tesar a zatim graditelj i poduzetnik. Njegova obitelj je pripadala dugoj i marljivoj liniji plemenitih svagdašnjih ljudi u kojoj su se s vremena na vrijeme javljale nesvakidašnje osobe koje su se istakle u procesu religiozne evolucije na Urantiji.

Marija, Isusova zemaljska majka, predstavlja proizvod duge linije jedinstvenih predaka kojoj pripadaju neke od najizvanrednijih žena Urantijine rasne povijesti. Marija je bila prosječna žena svog vremena i generacije,

day and generation, possessing a fairly normal temperament, she reckoned among her ancestors such well-known women as Annon, Tamar, Ruth, Bathsheba, Ansie, Cloa, Eve, Enta, and Ratta. No Jewish woman of that day had a more illustrious lineage of common progenitors or one extending back to more auspicious beginnings. Mary's ancestry, like Joseph's, was characterized by the predominance of strong but average individuals, relieved now and then by numerous outstanding personalities in the march of civilization and the progressive evolution of religion. Racially considered, it is hardly proper to regard Mary as a Jewess. In culture and belief she was a Jew, but in hereditary endowment she was more a composite of Syrian, Hittite, Phoenician, Greek, and Egyptian stocks, her racial inheritance being more general than that of Joseph.

Of all couples living in Palestine at about the time of Michael's projected bestowal, Joseph and Mary possessed the most ideal combination of widespread racial connections and superior average of personality endowments. It was the plan of Michael to appear on earth as an average man, that the common people might understand him and receive him; wherefore Gabriel selected just such persons as Joseph and Mary to become the bestowal parents.

2. GABRIEL APPEARS TO ELIZABETH

Jesus' lifework on Urantia was really begun by John the Baptist. Zacharias, John's father, belonged to the Jewish priesthood, while his mother, Elizabeth, was a member of the more prosperous branch of the same large family group to which Mary the mother of Jesus also belonged. Zacharias and Elizabeth, though they had been married many years, were childless.

It was late in the month of June, 8 B.C., about three months after the marriage of Joseph and Mary, that Gabriel appeared to Elizabeth at noontide one day, just as he later made his presence known to Mary. Said Gabriel:

"While your husband, Zacharias, stands before the altar in Jerusalem, and while the assembled people pray for the coming of a deliverer, I, Gabriel, have come to announce that you will shortly bear a son who shall be the forerunner of this divine teacher, and you shall call your son John. He will grow up dedicated to the Lord your God, and when he has come to full years, he will gladden your heart because he will turn many souls to God, and he will also proclaim the coming of the soul-healer of your people and the spirit-liberator of all mankind. Your kinswoman Mary shall be the mother of this child of promise, and I will also appear to her."

This vision greatly frightened Elizabeth. After Gabriel's departure she turned this experience over in her mind, long pondering the sayings of the majestic visitor, but did not speak of the revelation to anyone save her husband until her subsequent visit with Mary in early February of the following year.

koja je posjedovala prilično normalan temperament i među čije pretke ulaze slijedeće glasovite žene: Anona, Tamara, Bat-Šeba, Ansija, Kola, Eva, Enta i Rata. U usporedbi s Marijom, ni jedna Židovka ovog doba nije imala glasovitiju ili potencijalno znamenitiju liniju svagdašnjih predaka. Poput Josipovog, Marijino porijeklo je bilo obilježeno dominacijom snažnih ali prosječnih osoba, linijom koja je s vremena na vrijeme za dugog tijeka civilizacijskog napretka i progresivne religiozne evolucije povremeno bila oživljavana pojavom brojnih izvanrednih osoba. U rasnom pogledu, Marija se teško može smatrati židovkom. U pogledu kulture i vjerovanja, bila je prava židovka, dok je po nasljednom obdarenju bila mješavina sirijskih, hetitskih, feničkih, grčkih i egipatskih nasljednih loza, noseći po rasnom nasljeđu više nežidovske krvi od Josipa.

Od svih parova koji su živjeli u Palestini u vrijeme Mihaelovog planiranog darivanja, Josip i Marija su posjedovali najidealniju kombinaciju široko rasprostranjenih rasnih veza i više od prosječnog obdarenja osobnosti. Mihael se planirao pojaviti na Urantiji kao prosječan čovjek kako bi ga prosječni ljudi mogli razumjeti i primiti; Gabrijel je stoga izabrao osobe poput Josipa i Marije da budu roditelji darovanog djeteta.

2. GABRIJELOVO UKAZANJE ELIZABETI

Isusovo životno djelo je istinski započelo s aktivnostima Ivana Krstitelja. Ivanov otac Zakarije je pripadao židovskom svećenstvu, dok mu je majka Elizabeta pripadala imućnijoj grani iste velike obitelji iz koje je potekla Isusova majka Marija. Zakarije i Elizabeta nisu imali djece premda su bili u braku više godina.

Jednog dana krajem lipnja 8. godine pr.K., otprilike tri mjeseca prije vjenčanja Josipa i Marije, Gabrijel se ukazao Elizabeti upravo kao što će se zatim ukazati Mariji. I Gabrijel reče:

"Dok tvoj muž Zakarije stoji pred žrtvenikom u Jeruzalemu i dok se okupljeni narod moli za dolazak izručitelja, ja, Gabrijel, dolazim da ti kažem da ćeš uskoro roditi sina koji će biti prethodnik ovog božanskog učitelja i kojemu ćeš nadjenuti ime Ivan. On će rasti posvećen Gospodinu Bogu našem i kad odraste, obradovat će tvoje srce jer će okrenuti mnoge duše k Bogu i navijestiti dolazak onoga koji će izliječiti duše tvoga naroda i osloboditi duh cijelog čovječanstva. Tvoja rodica Marija će biti majka ovog obećanog djeteta i ja ću se i njoj ukazati."

Elizabeta se jako uplašila od ovog ukazanja. Nakon Gabrijelovog iščeznuća, neprestano je mislila o ovom događaju dugo razmišljajući o riječima ovog veličanstvenog posjetitelja, ali ne govoreći o ovom otkrivenju nikom osim svoga muža, sve do narednog veljače kad se sastala s Marijom.

For five months, however, Elizabeth withheld her secret even from her husband. Upon her disclosure of the story of Gabriel's visit, Zacharias was very skeptical and for weeks doubted the entire experience, only consenting halfheartedly to believe in Gabriel's visit to his wife when he could no longer question that she was expectant with child. Zacharias was very much perplexed regarding the prospective motherhood of Elizabeth, but he did not doubt the integrity of his wife, notwithstanding his own advanced age. It was not until about six weeks before John's birth that Zacharias, as the result of an impressive dream, became fully convinced that Elizabeth was to become the mother of a son of destiny, one who was to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.

Gabriel appeared to Mary about the middle of November, 8 B.C., while she was at work in her Nazareth home. Later on, after Mary knew without doubt that she was to become a mother, she persuaded Joseph to let her journey to the City of Judah, four miles west of Jerusalem, in the hills, to visit Elizabeth. Gabriel had informed each of these mothers-to-be of his appearance to the other. Naturally they were anxious to get together, compare experiences, and talk over the probable futures of their sons. Mary remained with her distant cousin for three weeks. Elizabeth did much to strengthen Mary's faith in the vision of Gabriel, so that she returned home more fully dedicated to the call to mother the child of destiny whom she was so soon to present to the world as a helpless babe, an average and normal infant of the realm.

John was born in the City of Judah, March 25, 7 B.C. Zacharias and Elizabeth rejoiced greatly in the realization that a son had come to them as Gabriel had promised, and when on the eighth day they presented the child for circumcision, they formally christened him John, as they had been directed aforetime. Already had a nephew of Zacharias departed for Nazareth, carrying the message of Elizabeth to Mary proclaiming that a son had been born to her and that his name was to be John.

From his earliest infancy John was judiciously impressed by his parents with the idea that he was to grow up to become a spiritual leader and religious teacher. And the soil of John's heart was ever responsive to the sowing of such suggestive seeds. Even as a child he was found frequently at the temple during the seasons of his father's service, and he was tremendously impressed with the significance of all that he saw.

3. GABRIEL'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO MARY

One evening about sundown, before Joseph had returned home, Gabriel appeared to Mary by the side of a low stone table and, after she had recovered her composure, said: "I come at the bidding of one who is my Master and whom you shall love and nurture. To you, Mary, I bring glad tidings when I announce that the conception within you is ordained by heaven, and that in due time you will become the mother of a son; you shall

Elizabetha je pet mjeseci pažljivo krila ove vijesti od svoga muža. Kad mu je konačno rekla o Gabrielovoj posjeti, Zakarije je bio vrlo skeptičan, više tjedana sumnjajući u cijeli događaj i jedino djelomično prihvativši pripovijed o Gabrielovu posjetu nakon što više nije bilo sumnje da mu je žena bila trudna. Zakarije je bio jako zbunjen u pogledu Elizabetinog budućeg majčinstva, ali unatoč svojoj poodmakloj dobi nije sumnjao u karakter svoje žene. Tek otprilike šest tjedana prije Ivanovog rođenja i nakon vrlo upečatljivog sna, Zakarije je u cjelosti povjerovao da je Elizabeta trebala roditi sina sudbine, čovjeka koji će pripremiti put Mesijinom dolazku.

Gabrijel se ukazao Mariji sredinom studenog 8. godine pr. K., dok je radila po kući u Nazaretu. Kasnije, kad više nije bilo sumnje da je bila trudna, Marija je nagovorila Josipa da joj dopusti otići u posjetu Elizabeti koja je živjela u gradu Judinu, četiri milje zapadno od Jeruzalema. Gabrijel je obavijestio obje buduće majke o svojim ukazanjima. One su stoga teško čekale da se sastanu, da ispričaju jedna drugoj o ovom događaju i da rasprave pitanja vezana uz budućnost svojih sinova. Marija je ostala kod svoje rodice tri tjedna. Elizabeta je na svaki način nastojala osnažiti Marijinu vjeru u Gabrijelovo ukazanje, te se Marija tako vratila kući entuzijastično posvećena izvršenju svojih majčinskih dužnosti i podizanju sina sudbine koji se uskoro trebao javiti na svijetu kao bespomoćno djetesce, prosječna i normalna zemaljska beba.

Ivan je rođen u gradu Judinu 25 ožujka 7. godine pr.K. Zakarije i Elizabeta su se jako obradovali kad su vidjeli da im se rodio sin čime se ispunilo Gabrijelovo obećanje i kad su osmoga dana otišli obrezati novorođenče, poslušali su Gabrijelov nalog službeno mu nadjenuvši ime Ivan. Zakarijev nećak je već bio na putu za Nazaret noseći vijesti da se dijete rodilo i da su ga nazvali Ivan.

Za najranije mladosti Ivan je diskreno došao pod utjecaj roditeljskog uvjerenja da je s vremenom trebao postati duhovni vođa i religiozni učitelj. I ove su ideje vrlo brzo pustile korijena u Ivanovu srcu. Za najranijeg djetinjstva počeo je provoditi dosta vremena u hramu dok je Zakarije obavljao svećeničku službu i ovu su ga se prizori snažno dojmili.

3. GRABRIJELOVO UKAZANJE MARIJI

Jedne večeri otprilike oko zalaska sunca, malo prije nego što će Josip doći kući, Gabrijel se ukazao Mariji stojeći pored niskog kamenog stola i prije nego što se uspjela sabrati, rekao: "Dolazim na zahtijev moga Gospodina kojeg ćeš uskoro voljeti i hraniti. Tebi, Marija, donosim radosne vijesti da si začela po nebeskom nalogu i da ćeš s vremenom roditi sina kojem ćeš dati ime Isus i koji će među ljudima na zemlji izgraditi kraljevstvo

call him Joshua, and he shall inaugurate the kingdom of heaven on earth and among men. Speak not of this matter save to Joseph and to Elizabeth, your kinswoman, to whom I have also appeared, and who shall presently also bear a son, whose name shall be John, and who will prepare the way for the message of deliverance which your son shall proclaim to men with great power and deep conviction. And doubt not my word, Mary, for this home has been chosen as the mortal habitat of the child of destiny. My benediction rests upon you, the power of the Most Highs will strengthen you, and the Lord of all the earth shall overshadow you."

Mary pondered this visitation secretly in her heart for many weeks until of a certainty she knew she was with child, before she dared to disclose these unusual events to her husband. When Joseph heard all about this, although he had great confidence in Mary, he was much troubled and could not sleep for many nights. At first Joseph had doubts about the Gabriel visitation. Then when he became well-nigh persuaded that Mary had really heard the voice and beheld the form of the divine messenger, he was torn in mind as he pondered how such things could be. How could the offspring of human beings be a child of divine destiny? Never could Joseph reconcile these conflicting ideas until, after several weeks of thought, both he and Mary reached the conclusion that they had been chosen to become the parents of the Messiah, though it had hardly been the Jewish concept that the expected deliverer was to be of divine nature. Upon arriving at this momentous conclusion, Mary hastened to depart for a visit with Elizabeth.

Upon her return, Mary went to visit her parents, Joachim and Hannah. Her two brothers and two sisters, as well as her parents, were always very skeptical about the divine mission of Jesus, though, of course, at this time they knew nothing of the Gabriel visitation. But Mary did confide to her sister Salome that she thought her son was destined to become a great teacher.

Gabriel's announcement to Mary was made the day following the conception of Jesus and was the only event of supernatural occurrence connected with her entire experience of carrying and bearing the child of promise.

4. JOSEPH'S DREAM

Josip did not become reconciled to the idea that Mary was to become the mother of an extraordinary child until after he had experienced a very impressive dream. In this dream a brilliant celestial messenger appeared to him and, among other things, said: "Joseph, I appear by command of Him who now reigns on high, and I am directed to instruct you concerning the son whom Mary shall bear, and who shall become a great light in the world. In him will be life, and his life shall become the light of mankind. He shall first come to his own people, but they will hardly receive him; but to as many as shall receive him to them will he reveal that they are the children of God." After this experience Joseph never

nebesko. O ovome ne govori nikom osim sa Josipom i Elizabetom, tvojom rodicom koja me već vidjela i koja će s vremenom roditi sina koji će se zvati Ivan i koji će pripremiti put poruci iskupljenja koju tvoj sin treba navijestiti ljudima sa snažnom silom i dubokim uvjerenjem. I ne sumnjaj mojim riječima, Marija, jer ovaj je dom izabran da postane dom djeteta sudbine. Moji blagoslovi tebi, Marija, i neka ti Previšnji da snage i neka nad tobom bude okrilje Boga cijele zemlje."

Marija je više tjedana u svom srcu potajno razmišljala o ovom ukazanju sve dok se konačno nije neopozivo uvjerila u svoju trudnoću, kad je konačno smogla snage da ispriča mužu o ovim nesvakidašnjim događajima. Kad je Josip o svemu saznao, premda je imao veliko poverenje u Mariju, bio je jako uznemiren i noćima nije mogao spavati. Josip je isprva sumnjao u Gabrijelovu posjetu. Zatim je postao gotovo uvjeren da je Marija uistinu čula glas i vidjela obličje božanskog glasnika, dok se dugo čudio kako se takvo što moglo dogoditi. Kako će potomak ljudskih bića biti dijete božanske sudbine? Josip nije bio u stanju pomiriti ove protivne ideje sve dok se nakon višetjednog razmišljanja nije složio s Marijom da su bili odabrani kao roditelji Mesije, premda prema židovskim vjerovanjima izručitelj nije imao božansku narav. Kad je konačno donijela ovaj bitni zaključak, Marija je žurno otišla u posjetu Elizabeti.

Marija je po povratku otišla posjetiti svoje roditelje, Joakima i Hanu. Njezina dva brata i dvije sestre kao i njezini roditelji, nikad nisu posve prihvatili ideju da je Isus imao božansku narav, premda u ovom času nisu znali o Gabrijelovom ukazanju Mariji. Ali Marija je povjerila svojoj sestri Salomi kako je očekivala da Isus postane veliki učitelj.

Gabrijelove riječi upućene Mariji koje su pratile dan Isusovog začeća predstavljaju jedinu nadprirodnu pojavu vezanu uz period Marijine trudnoće i uz rođenje obećanog djeteta.

4. JOSIPOV SAN

Josip se nije u cjelosti pomirio s idejom da je Marija trebala roditi nesvakidašnje dijete sve do ovog snažnog sna. U ovom mu se snu ukazalo veličanstveno biće, nebeski glasnik, koji mu je između ostalog rekao: "Josipe, javljam ti se prema naredbi Onoga koji vlada na nebu, da ti kažem o Marijinom budućem sinu koji će postati veliko svjetlo cijelog svijeta. U njemu će biti život, i njegov će život postati svjetlo cijelog čovječanstva. On će prvo doći svome narodu, ali oni ga neće u cjelosti primiti; ali onima koji ga prime, objavit će istinu da su djeca Boga." Nakon ovog doživljaja Josip u cjelosti nikad više nije posumnjao u Marijinu priču o Gabrijelovoj posjeti i obećanju da nerođeno

again wholly doubted Mary's story of Gabriel's visit and of the promise that the unborn child was to become a divine messenger to the world.

In all these visitations nothing was said about the house of David. Nothing was ever intimated about Jesus' becoming a "deliverer of the Jews," not even that he was to be the long-expected Messiah. Jesus was not such a Messiah as the Jews had anticipated, but he was the world's deliverer. His mission was to all races and peoples, not to any one group.

Joseph was not of the line of King David. Mary had more of the Davidic ancestry than Joseph. True, Joseph did go to the City of David, Bethlehem, to be registered for the Roman census, but that was because, six generations previously, Joseph's paternal ancestor of that generation, being an orphan, was adopted by one Zadoc, who was a direct descendant of David; hence was Joseph also accounted as of the "house of David."

Most of the so-called Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament were made to apply to Jesus long after his life had been lived on earth. For centuries the Hebrew prophets had proclaimed the coming of a deliverer, and these promises had been construed by successive generations as referring to a new Jewish ruler who would sit upon the throne of David and, by the reputed miraculous methods of Moses, proceed to establish the Jews in Palestine as a powerful nation, free from all foreign domination. Again, many figurative passages found throughout the Hebrew scriptures were subsequently misapplied to the life mission of Jesus. Many Old Testament sayings were so distorted as to appear to fit some episode of the Master's earth life. Jesus himself onetime publicly denied any connection with the royal house of David. Even the passage, "a maiden shall bear a son," was made to read, "a virgin shall bear a son." This was also true of the many genealogies of both Joseph and Mary which were constructed subsequent to Michael's career on earth. Many of these lineages contain much of the Master's ancestry, but on the whole they are not genuine and may not be depended upon as factual. The early followers of Jesus all too often succumbed to the temptation to make all the olden prophetic utterances appear to find fulfillment in the life of their Lord and Master.

5. JESUS' EARTH PARENTS

Joseph was a mild-mannered man, extremely conscientious, and in every way faithful to the religious conventions and practices of his people. He talked little but thought much. The sorry plight of the Jewish people caused Joseph much sadness. As a youth, among his eight brothers and sisters, he had been more cheerful, but in the earlier years of married life (during Jesus' childhood) he was subject to periods of mild spiritual discouragement. These temperamental manifestations were greatly improved just before his untimely death and after the economic condition of his family had been enhanced by his advancement from the rank of carpenter to the role of a prosperous contractor.

dijete treba postati božanski glasnik cijelog svijeta.

Prilikom svih ovih ukazanja, ništa nije rečeno o kući Davidovoj. Nije bilo pomena da Isus treba postati "izručitelj Židova," niti da je bio dugo očekivani Mesija. Isus nije bio Mesija kakvog su Židovi očekivali, ali je bio izručitelj svijeta. Njegova je misija bila upućena svim rasama i narodima, a ne samo određenoj pojedinačnoj grupi.

Josip nije pripadao liniji kralja Davida. Marija je imala više davidovske krvi od Josipa. Istina, Josip je otišao u Davidov grad, Betlehem, na rimski popis pučanstva, ali ovo treba zahvaliti tome što je prije šest generacija određeni Zadok iz Davidove neposredne loze usvojio određenog Josipovog pretka koji je bio siročić; Josip se stoga ubrajao među pripadnike "kuće Davidove."

Većina takozvanih mesijanskih proročanstava iz Starog Zavjeta je iskrivljena kako bi se mogla povezati s Isusom dugo nakon njegovog života i smrti. Židovi su stoljećima navješćivali dolazak izručitelja, te su tako kroz cijeli slijed generacija ova obećanja tumačena kao da se odnose na novog židovskog vladara koji treba sjesti u Davidovu stolicu i navodnim čudesnim Mojsijevim metodama učiniti palestinske židove moćnom nacijom oslobođenom svakog oblika inozemne dominacije. I u ovom slučaju, mnoge figurativne izreke iz hebrejskih spisa su isto tako naknadno neispravno povezane s Isusovom životnom misijom. Mnoge izreke iz Starog Zavjeta su iskrivljene kako bi se činile prikladnom vezom s nekom epizodom Učiteljevog zemaljskog života. Sam Isus je jednom prilikom zaniijekao svoju povezanost s "Davidovom kućom." Čak su i riječi "i djevojka će roditi sina," preinačene u "djevica će roditi sina." Isto se odnosi na mnoga obiteljska stabla kako Josipovih tako i Marijinih predaka koja su sastavljena nakon Mihaelovog života na zemlji. Mnoge takve loze istinski ukazuju na velik dio Učiteljevog potomstva, premda sve u svemu ne pružaju cjelovit prikaz njegove loze i ne trebaju biti prihvaćene kao gotove činjenice. Isusovi rani sljedbenici su suviše često podijegali iskušenju da podese starija proročanstva kako bi se život njihovog Učitelja i Gospodina mogao protumačiti kao njihovo ispunjenje.

5. ISUSOVI ZEMALJSKI RODITELJI

Josip je imao vrlo blagu narav, izvanrednu savjest i u svakom pogledu duboku vjernost religioznom konvencionalizmu i običajima svoga naroda. Malo je govorio dok je puno razmišljao. Jako ga je žalostio nezavidni položaj židovskog naroda. Živeći kao mladić među osmoro braće i sestara bio je prilično vedrog raspoloženja, dok je za ranijih godina bračnog života (za vrijeme Isusovog djetinjstva) povremeno podlijegao razdobljima slabije duhovne obeshrabrenosti. Ove promjene raposloženja su postale znatno blaže neposredno prije Josipove prijevremene smrti, nakon što je prijelazom od tesarskog do poduzetničkog statusa značajno unaprijedio ekonomske uvjete svoje obitelji.

Mary's temperament was quite opposite to that of her husband. She was usually cheerful, was very rarely downcast, and possessed an ever-sunny disposition. Mary indulged in free and frequent expression of her emotional feelings and was never observed to be sorrowful until after the sudden death of Joseph. And she had hardly recovered from this shock when she had thrust upon her the anxieties and questionings aroused by the extraordinary career of her eldest son, which was so rapidly unfolding before her astonished gaze. But throughout all this unusual experience Mary was composed, courageous, and fairly wise in her relationship with her strange and little-understood first-born son and his surviving brothers and sisters.

Jesus derived much of his unusual gentleness and marvelous sympathetic understanding of human nature from his father; he inherited his gift as a great teacher and his tremendous capacity for righteous indignation from his mother. In emotional reactions to his adult-life environment, Jesus was at one time like his father, meditative and worshipful, sometimes characterized by apparent sadness; but more often he drove forward in the manner of his mother's optimistic and determined disposition. All in all, Mary's temperament tended to dominate the career of the divine Son as he grew up and swung into the momentous strides of his adult life. In some particulars Jesus was a blending of his parents' traits; in other respects he exhibited the traits of one in contrast with those of the other.

From Joseph Jesus secured his strict training in the usages of the Jewish ceremonials and his unusual acquaintance with the Hebrew scriptures; from Mary he derived a broader viewpoint of religious life and a more liberal concept of personal spiritual freedom.

The families of both Joseph and Mary were well educated for their time. Joseph and Mary were educated far above the average for their day and station in life. He was a thinker; she was a planner, expert in adaptation and practical in immediate execution. Joseph was a black-eyed brunet; Mary, a brown-eyed well-nigh blond type.

Had Joseph lived, he undoubtedly would have become a firm believer in the divine mission of his eldest son. Mary alternated between believing and doubting, being greatly influenced by the position taken by her other children and by her friends and relatives, but always was she steadied in her final attitude by the memory of Gabriel's appearance to her immediately after the child was conceived.

Mary was an expert weaver and more than averagely skilled in most of the household arts of that day; she was a good housekeeper and a superior homemaker. Both Joseph and Mary were good teachers, and they saw to it that their children were well versed in the learning of that day.

Marija se po temperamentu posve razlikovala od svoga muža. Bila je neobično vedra, vrlo rijetko potištena i obdarena odličnim raspoloženjem. Davala je oduška svojim emocionalnim osjećajima vrlo često i bez i malo ustručavanja, i sve do Josipove iznenadne smrti nikad nije bila obuzeta tugom. I Marija se nije u cjelosti uspjela oporaviti od ovog šoka kad su se pred njezinim zaprepaštenim očima počeli razvijati događaji nesvakidašnjeg života njezinog najstarijeg sina koji su donijeli nove neizvjesnosti i sumnje. Ali tijekom cijelog ovog neobičnog iskustva, Marija je ispoljila smirenost, hrabrost i određenu mudrost po načinu na koji se odnosila prema svom čudnom i teško shvatljivom prvorodencu i svojoj ostaloj djeci.

Isus je naslijedio najveći dio svoje neuobičajene nježnosti i izvanrednog razumijevanja ljudske naravi od svoga oca; od majke je naslijedio učiteljska umijeća i snažno obdarenje za nepogrešivu netrpeljivost prema nepravdi. Po emocionalnim reakcijama na okruženje Isus je nekom prilikom nalikovao ocu--bio je sklon meditaciji i obožavanju premda povremeno obuzet tugom--dok je češće ispoljavao majčino optimistično i odlučno raspoloženje. Sve u svemu, dok je odrastao i vukao prve znamenite poteze svog zrelog doba, božanskim Sinom je sve češće dominiralo Marijino raspoloženje. Isus je u određenim pogledima bio mješavina oboje roditelja; po drugima je ispoljavao crte jednog roditelja u suprotnosti s drugim.

Od Josipa je naslijedio strogu disciplinu u sprovedbi židovskih ceremonija i neuobičajenu upoznatost s hebrejskim spisima; od Marije je vukao šire gledište religioznog života i slobodnije tumačenje osobne duhovne slobode.

Obitelji Josipa i Marije su bile visoko obrazovane za mjerila svoga doba. Josip i Marija su bili nadprosječno obrazovani za svoje doba i životni položaj. On je bio mislilac; ona je znala planirati, stručno se prilagoditi i praktično riješiti neposredna pitanja. Josip je bio smeđ s crnim očima; Marija je imala svijetlu kosu i smeđe oči.

Da je poživio, Josip bi nesumnjivo povjerovao u božansku misiju svog najstarijeg sina. Marija se dvoumila između vjere i nevjere, snažno se vodeći prema poziciji Isusove braće i sestara kao i svojih rođaka i prijatelja, dok se njezin konačni stav uvijek temeljio na sjećanju na Gabrielovo ukazanje neposredno nakon djetetovog začeca.

Marija je bila odlična tkalja prilično vična domaćim poslovima svoga doba; bila je odlična domaćica i jako dobra gazdarica. I Josip i Marija su bili dobri učitelji i pobrinuli su se da im djeca ovladaju suvremenim učenjem i vještinama.

When Joseph was a young man, he was employed by Mary's father in the work of building an addition to his house, and it was when Mary brought Joseph a cup of water, during a noontime meal, that the courtship of the pair who were destined to become the parents of Jesus really began.

Joseph and Mary were married, in accordance with Jewish custom, at Mary's home in the environs of Nazareth when Joseph was twenty-one years old. This marriage concluded a normal courtship of almost two years' duration. Shortly thereafter they moved into their new home in Nazareth, which had been built by Joseph with the assistance of two of his brothers. The house was located near the foot of the near-by elevated land which so charmingly overlooked the surrounding countryside. In this home, especially prepared, these young and expectant parents had thought to welcome the child of promise, little realizing that this momentous event of a universe was to transpire while they would be absent from home in Bethlehem of Judea.

The larger part of Joseph's family became believers in the teachings of Jesus, but very few of Mary's people ever believed in him until after he departed from this world. Joseph leaned more toward the spiritual concept of the expected Messiah, but Mary and her family, especially her father, held to the idea of the Messiah as a temporal deliverer and political ruler. Mary's ancestors had been prominently identified with the Maccabean activities of the then but recent times.

Joseph held vigorously to the Eastern, or Babylonian, views of the Jewish religion; Mary leaned strongly toward the more liberal and broader Western, or Hellenistic, interpretation of the law and the prophets.

6. THE HOME AT NAZARETH

The home of Jesus was not far from the high hill in the northerly part of Nazareth, some distance from the village spring, which was in the eastern section of the town. Jesus' family dwelt in the outskirts of the city, and this made it all the easier for him subsequently to enjoy frequent strolls in the country and to make trips up to the top of this near-by highland, the highest of all the hills of southern Galilee save the Mount Tabor range to the east and the hill of Nain, which was about the same height. Their home was located a little to the south and east of the southern promontory of this hill and about midway between the base of this elevation and the road leading out of Nazareth toward Cana. Aside from climbing the hill, Jesus' favorite stroll was to follow a narrow trail winding about the base of the hill in a northeasterly direction to a point where it joined the road to Sepphoris.

The home of Joseph and Mary was a one-room stone structure with a flat roof and an adjoining building for housing the animals. The furniture consisted of a low stone table, earthenware and stone dishes and pots, a loom, a lampstand, several small stools, and mats for sleeping on the stone floor. In the back yard, near the

Kao mladić, Josip je radio za Marijinog oca na proširenju kuće i udvaranje između ovo dvoje ljudi kojima je bilo suđeno da postanu Isusovi roditelji je istinski započelo kad je Marija jednog dana za vrijeme ručka Josipu donijela čašu vode.

Josip i Marija su se uzeli prema židovskim običajima u Marijinom domu u blizini Nazareta kad su Josipu bile dvadeset dvije godine. Ovim brakom su zaključene gotovo pune dvije godine udvaranja. Nedugo zatim preselili su se u novu kuću u Nazaretu koju je Josip sagradio u suradnji sa svoja dva brata. Kuća je bila smještena nedaleko od podnožja obližnje uzvišice s koje se pružao predivan pogled na obližnje predjele. Uz naročite pripreme, ovi mladi i uzbuđeni roditelji su se nadali da će u ovoj kući dočekati rođenje obećanog djeteta, ne očekujući da će ovaj značajni trenutak nastupiti za njihovog odsustva, za vrijeme putovanja u gradu Betlehemu u zemlji Judeji.

Veći dio Josipove obitelji je prihvatio vjerovanje u Isusova učenja, dok je nekoliko Marijinih rođaka povjerovalo u Isusa jedino nakon što je napustio ovaj svijet. Josip je više naginjao duhovnom konceptu očekivanog Mesije, dok su se Marija i njezina obitelj, a naročito otac, držali ideje da je Mesija bio zemaljski izručitelj i politički vladar. Marijini preci su aktivno sudjelovali u skorijim makabejskim događajima.

Josip se čvrsto držao istočnog—babilonskog—tumačenja židovske religije; Marija je snažno naginjala k liberalnijem i širem zapadnom ili helenističkom tumačenju zakona i proroka.

6. NAZARETSKI DOM

Isusov dom je bio smješten u blizini višeg brda u sjevernom dijelu Nazareta, nešto dalje od seoskog izvora smještenog u istočnom dijelu grada. Isusova obitelj je živjela u predgrađu, što mu je pružilo veći i češći užitak u šetnjama kroz prirodu i odlascima na obližnje gorje koje je bilo najviša uzvisina u nesporednoj blizini Nazareta izuzev Taborskog gorja na istoku i planine Naine, koji su bili otprilike jednake visine. Njihov dom je bio smješten nešto jugoistočnije od ovog južnog predgorja i otprilike na pola puta između podnožja ove gore i puta koji je vodio iz Nazareta prema Kani. Pored planinarenja ovim gorjem, Isus se najviše volio popeti uskom stazom koja se protezala podnožjem ovog brda prema sjeveroistoku, do vežišta s putom za Seforis.

Ova kuća Josipa i Marije je bila jednosobna kamena građevina s ravnim krovom na koju se nadovezivala staja. Namještaj se sastojao od niskog kamenog stola, glinenog posuđa i kamenih lonaca i tava, razboja, stočica s lampom, te nekoliko manjih stolova i prostirača za spavanje na kamenom podu. U dvorištu iza

animal annex, was the shelter which covered the oven and the mill for grinding grain. It required two persons to operate this type of mill, one to grind and another to feed the grain. As a small boy Jesus often fed grain to this mill while his mother turned the grinder.

In later years, as the family grew in size, they would all squat about the enlarged stone table to enjoy their meals, helping themselves from a common dish, or pot, of food. During the winter, at the evening meal the table would be lighted by a small, flat clay lamp, which was filled with olive oil. After the birth of Martha, Joseph built an addition to this house, a large room, which was used as a carpenter shop during the day and as a sleeping room at night.

7. THE TRIP TO BETHLEHEM

In the month of March, 8 B.C. (the month Joseph and Mary were married), Caesar Augustus decreed that all inhabitants of the Roman Empire should be numbered, that a census should be made which could be used for effecting better taxation. The Jews had always been greatly prejudiced against any attempt to "number the people," and this, in connection with the serious domestic difficulties of Herod, King of Judea, had conspired to cause the postponement of the taking of this census in the Jewish kingdom for one year. Throughout all the Roman Empire this census was registered in the year 8 B.C., except in the Palestinian kingdom of Herod, where it was taken in 7 B.C., one year later.

It was not necessary that Mary should go to Bethlehem for enrollment--Joseph was authorized to register for his family--but Mary, being an adventurous and aggressive person, insisted on accompanying him. She feared being left alone lest the child be born while Joseph was away, and again, Bethlehem being not far from the City of Judah, Mary foresaw a possible pleasurable visit with her kinswoman Elizabeth.

Joseph virtually forbade Mary to accompany him, but it was of no avail; when the food was packed for the trip of three or four days, she prepared double rations and made ready for the journey. But before they actually set forth, Joseph was reconciled to Mary's going along, and they cheerfully departed from Nazareth at the break of day.

Joseph and Mary were poor, and since they had only one beast of burden, Mary, being large with child, rode on the animal with the provisions while Joseph walked, leading the beast. The building and furnishing of a home had been a great drain on Joseph since he had also to contribute to the support of his parents, as his father had been recently disabled. And so this Jewish couple went forth from their humble home early on the morning of August 18, 7 B.C., on their journey to Bethlehem.

Their first day of travel carried them around the foothills of Mount Gilboa, where they camped for the night by the river Jordan and engaged in many

kuće blizu staje, nalazila se nadstrešnica koja je prekrivala pećnicu i mlin za žito. Ovim su mlinom morale upravljati dvije osobe od kojih je jedna okretala ručicu dok je druga ubacivala žito. Kad je bio mali, Isus je često ubacivao žito dok je Marija okretala ručicu.

Tijekom kasnijih godina, kako je obitelj sve više rasla, obično su objedovali za većim kamenim stolom služeći se zajedničkom posudom ili loncem. Za vrijeme zime, stol bi za večernjeg obroka osvjetljivala mala glinena lampa napunjena maslinovim uljem. Nakon Martinog rođenja, Josip je proširio kuću dograđivši veliku sobu koja je preko dana služila kao tesarska radionica a preko noći kao spavaća soba.

7. PUTOVANJE U BETLEHEM

Tijekom veljače 8. godine pr. K. (Josip i Marija su se upravo bili uzeli), Augustin Cezar je izdao naredbu da se prebroje svi žitelji Rimske Imperije, da se izvrši popis pučanstva koji bi vodio uspostavi boljeg poreznog sistema. Židovi su uvijek bili puni predrasuda prema svakom nastojanju da se "prebroji narod" i zajedno s ozbiljnim domaćim teškoćama judejskog kralja Heroda, ovo je vodilo odgodi popisa za cijelu godinu dana. S izuzetkom Palestine, širom cijele Rimske Imperije census je obavljen 8. godine pr. K., dok je jedino u Herodovom kraljevstvu u Palestini izvršen 7. godine pr.K., godinu dana kasnije.

Marija nije bila obvezna ići u Betlehem kako bi se prijavila — Josip je mogao prijaviti cijelu obitelj — ali kao pustolovna i agresivna osoba, Marija je insistirala da mu se pridruži. Bojala se da se dijete moglo roditi za Josipovog odsustva iz Nazareta, a kako se Betlehem nalazio nedaleko od grada Judinog, unaprijed se radovala mogućnosti susreta sa svojim rodicom Elizabetom.

Premda je Josip doslovce zabranio Mariji da mu se pridruži na putu, ova se zabrana nije pokazala djelotvornom; pripravljavući hranu za tri-četiri dana unaprijed, Marija je pripremila duple porcije spremno čekajući da krenu na put. Josip se, međutim, prije polaska pomirio s ovom idejom tako da su radosno napustili grad u ranu zoru slijedećeg jutra.

Kako su Josip i Marija bili siromašni i imali samo jednu teretnu životinju, Marija je radi svoje poodmakle trudnoće jahala na teglećoj marvi natovarenoj stvarima dok je Josip upravljao životinjom idući pješice. Josip je bio jako opterećen izgradnjom nove kuće i nabavkom namještaja, naročito kako je pored toga morao pomoći pri izdržavanju svojih roditelja (otac mu je nedavno onemoćao). I tako je ovaj židovski par napustio svoj skromni dom ranog jutra 18. kolovoza 7. godine pr.K. idući prema Betlehemu.

Prvog su dana obišli podnožje Gilboanske gore gdje su se utaborili preko noći pored rijeke Jordana i proveli večer nagađajući o osobinama očekivanog sina,

speculations as to what sort of a son would be born to them, Joseph adhering to the concept of a spiritual teacher and Mary holding to the idea of a Jewish Messiah, a deliverer of the Hebrew nation.

Bright and early the morning of August 19, Joseph and Mary were again on their way. They partook of their noontide meal at the foot of Mount Sartaba, overlooking the Jordan valley, and journeyed on, making Jericho for the night, where they stopped at an inn on the highway in the outskirts of the city. Following the evening meal and after much discussion concerning the oppressiveness of Roman rule, Herod, the census enrollment, and the comparative influence of Jerusalem and Alexandria as centers of Jewish learning and culture, the Nazareth travelers retired for the night's rest. Early in the morning of August 20 they resumed their journey, reaching Jerusalem before noon, visiting the temple, and going on to their destination, arriving at Bethlehem in midafternoon.

The inn was overcrowded, and Joseph accordingly sought lodgings with distant relatives, but every room in Bethlehem was filled to overflowing. On returning to the courtyard of the inn, he was informed that the caravan stables, hewn out of the side of the rock and situated just below the inn, had been cleared of animals and cleaned up for the reception of lodgers. Leaving the donkey in the courtyard, Joseph shouldered their bags of clothing and provisions and with Mary descended the stone steps to their lodgings below. They found themselves located in what had been a grain storage room to the front of the stalls and mangers. Tent curtains had been hung, and they counted themselves fortunate to have such comfortable quarters.

Joseph had thought to go out at once and enroll, but Mary was weary; she was considerably distressed and besought him to remain by her side, which he did.

8. THE BIRTH OF JESUS

All that night Mary was restless so that neither of them slept much. By the break of day the pangs of childbirth were well in evidence, and at noon, August 21, 7 B.C., with the help and kind ministrations of women fellow travelers, Mary was delivered of a male child. Jesus of Nazareth was born into the world, was wrapped in the clothes which Mary had brought along for such a possible contingency, and laid in a near-by manger.

In just the same manner as all babies before that day and since have come into the world, the promised child was born; and on the eighth day, according to the Jewish practice, he was circumcised and formally named Joshua (Jesus).

The next day after the birth of Jesus, Joseph made his enrollment. Meeting a man they had talked with two nights previously at Jericho, Joseph was taken by him to a well-to-do friend who had a room at the inn, and who said he would gladly exchange quarters with the Nazareth couple. That afternoon they moved up to the

Josip naginjući konceptu duhovnog učitelja, a Marija ideji židovskog Mesije, izručitelja židovske nacije.

Rano ujutro 19. kolovoza, Josip i Marija su ponovo krenuli na put. Nakon što su zastali da ručaju na Sartabskoj gori odakle su pružao pogled na jordansku dolinu, nastavili su s putovanjem predvečer stigavši u Jerihon gdje su prenoćili u gostionici na prometnom putu u predgrađu Jerihona. Nakon večere i burne rasprave o Herodu, popisu, tlačiteljskoj rimskoj vlasti i značajnom utjecaju Jeruzalema i Aleksandrije kao centara židovskog učenja i kulture, nazaretski putnici su se povukli na počinak. Rano narednog jutra, 20 kolovoza, nastavili su s putovanjem stigavši u Jeruzalem prije podneva, odakle su nakon posjete hramu krenuli prema svom konačnom odredištu, Betlehemu, gdje su stigli prije podneva.

Kako je gostionica bila zauzeta, Josip se ponadao da će naći prenoćište kod svojih daljih rođaka, što se pokazalo nemogućim jer je u Betlehemu svaka soba bila krcata posjetiteljima. Po povratku u dvorište gostionice, Josip je saznao da je obližnja karavanska štala koja je bila izdubljena u stijeni, ispražnjena i spremljena za smještaj posjetitelja. Josip je ostavio magarca u dvorištu, te nakon što je uprtio vreće s odjećom i drugim potrepštinama, uputio se s Marijom kamenim stepenicama koje su vodile do svratišta. Našli su se u prostoriji koja je služila kao spremište za žito na samom ulazu u pregrađene štale i jasje. S plafona su visile zavjese od šatorskog platna i putnici su se smatrali jako srećnim što su bili u stanju naći tako udoban smještaj.

Josip se odmah htio otići prijaviti, dok je Marija bila jako umorna; bila je prilično uznemirena i iznurena te je zamolila Josipa da ostane kraj nje, što je on i učinio.

8. ISUSOVO ROĐENJE

Marija se cijele noći prevtala, tako da ni ona ni Josip nisu puno spavali. U zoru je počela osjećati snažnije bolove tako da je uz ljubeznu pomoć drugih putnica 21. kolovoza 7. pr.K. rodila muško dijete. I tako je na svijet došao Isus iz Nazareta; i majka Marija je tako umotala dijete u pelenice koje je ponijela da joj se nađu na putu i položila ga u jasje.

Obećano dijete je došlo na svijet na isti nači na koji se rađaju sva druga djeca kako prije tako i poslije njegovog doba; i kako je bio židovski običaj, obrezan je osmog dana i formalno nazvan Jošua (Isus).

Dan nakon Isusovog rođenja, Josip se prijavio na popis. Na putu je sreo čovjeka s kojim je razgovarao prije dvije noći u Jerihonu, i kako je ovaj čovjek imao imućnijeg prijatelja koji je našao sobu u jednom svratištu, ovaj se prijatelj ponudio da zamijeni mjesto s nazaretskim parom. I tako su ovog poslijepodneva prešli u

inn, where they lived for almost three weeks until they found lodgings in the home of a distant relative of Joseph.

The second day after the birth of Jesus, Mary sent word to Elizabeth that her child had come and received word in return inviting Joseph up to Jerusalem to talk over all their affairs with Zacharias. The following week Joseph went to Jerusalem to confer with Zacharias. Both Zacharias and Elizabeth had become possessed with the sincere conviction that Jesus was indeed to become the Jewish deliverer, the Messiah, and that their son John was to be his chief of aides, his right-hand man of destiny. And since Mary held these same ideas, it was not difficult to prevail upon Joseph to remain in Bethlehem, the City of David, so that Jesus might grow up to become the successor of David on the throne of all Israel. Accordingly, they remained in Bethlehem more than a year, Joseph meantime working some at his carpenter's trade.

At the noontide birth of Jesus the seraphim of Urantia, assembled under their directors, did sing anthems of glory over the Bethlehem manger, but these utterances of praise were not heard by human ears. No shepherds nor any other mortal creatures came to pay homage to the babe of Bethlehem until the day of the arrival of certain priests from Ur, who were sent down from Jerusalem by Zacharias.

These priests from Mesopotamia had been told sometime before by a strange religious teacher of their country that he had had a dream in which he was informed that "the light of life" was about to appear on earth as a babe and among the Jews. And thither went these three teachers looking for this "light of life." After many weeks of futile search in Jerusalem, they were about to return to Ur when Zacharias met them and disclosed his belief that Jesus was the object of their quest and sent them on to Bethlehem, where they found the babe and left their gifts with Mary, his earth mother. The babe was almost three weeks old at the time of their visit.

These wise men saw no star to guide them to Bethlehem. The beautiful legend of the star of Bethlehem originated in this way: Jesus was born August 21 at noon, 7 B.C. On May 29, 7 B.C., there occurred an extraordinary conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces. And it is remarkable astronomic fact that similar conjunctions occurred on September 29 and December 5 of the same year. Upon the basis of these extraordinary but wholly natural events the well-meaning zealots of the succeeding generation constructed the appealing legend of the star of Bethlehem and the adoring Magi led thereby to the manger, where they beheld and worshiped the newborn babe. Oriental and near-Oriental minds delight in fairy stories, and they are continually spinning such beautiful myths about the lives of their religious leaders and political heroes. In the absence of printing, when most human knowledge was passed by word of mouth from one generation to another, it was very easy for myths to become traditions and for traditions eventually to become accepted as facts.

svratište, gdje su ostali gotovo tri tjedna, kad su prešli u dom Josipovog daljeg rođaka.

Dva dana nakon Isusovog rođenja Marija je poslala vijesti Elizabeti o djetetovu rođenju, nakon čega je Josip primio poziv da dođe u Jeruzalem da raspravi svoje planove sa Zakarijem. Josip je narednog tjedna otišao u Jeruzalem da porazgovara sa Zakarijem. Zakarije i Elizabeta su bili obuzeti čvrstim uvjerenjem da je Isus trebao postati židovski izručitelj, Mesija, i da je njihov sin Ivan trebao postati njegov glavni pomoćnik, desna ruka ovog čovjeka sudbine. I kako je i Marija dijelila ova uvjerenja, bilo im je lako uvjeriti Josipa da ostane u Betlehemu, Davidovom gradu, kako bi Isus mogao postati Davidov nasljednik koji će zauzeti prijestolje cijelog Izraela. I tako su se zadržali u Betlehemu više od godinu dana i Josip je u međuvremenu najvećim dijelom radio kao tesar.

Točno je da su se u podne na dan Isusovog rođenja serafi Urantije okupili pod upravom svojih upravitelja i da su nad Betlehemskim jaslama pjevali himne u slavu djeteta, ali ove se himne nisu mogle čuti ljudskim ušima. Ni pastiri niti bilo koje drugo ljudsko biće nije došlo iskazati poštovanje Betlehemskom novorođenčetu sve do dolaska određenih svećenika iz Ura koje je Zakarije poslao iz Jeruzalema.

Određeni religiozni učitelj iz Mezopotamije je povjerio ovim svojim zemljacima kako je u snu primio saopćenje kako se na zemlji trebalo pojaviti "svjetlo života" u obličju židovskog djetetca. I ova tri učitelja su se tako uputila u potragu za ovim "svjetlom života." Nakon više tjedana uzaludnog traganja Jeruzalemom, upravo kad su se namjeravali vratiti u Ur, sreli su Zakarija koji im je rekao da se onaj kojeg su tražili, djetetce po imenu Isus, rodio u Betlehemu, gdje su ga i našli i gdje su ostavili darove kod Marije, njegove zemaljske majke. Djetetu su bila otprilike tri tjedna u vrijeme njihove posjete.

Ovi mudraci nisu došli u Betlehem slijedeći zvijezdu. Lijepo predanje o betlehemske zvijezdi predstavlja rezultat slijedećih okolnosti: Na dan Isusovog rođenja, u podne 21. kolovoza 7. godine pr.K., nastupio je nesvakidašnji susret Jupitera i Saturna u zviježđu Riba. Gotovo ista nesvakidašnja astronomska pojava se odigrala 29. rujna i 5. studenog iste godine. Na osnovu ovih nesvakidašnjih premda posve prirodnih događaja, dobronamjerni zanesenjak iz druge generacije vjernika su saskali primamljivo predanje o betlehemske zvijezdi i mudracima koji su je slijedili do štale, gdje su našli dijete i gdje su mu iskazali poštovanje. Istočni i bliskoistočni umovi jako uživaju u predanjima, neprestano izmišljajući primamljive pripovijedi o životu svojih religioznih vođa i političkih heroja. Prije tiska, kad se ljudsko znanje najvećim dijelom prenosilo usmenim putom, predanja su vrlo lako postajala tradicije i tradicije su vrlo lako prihvaćane kao gotove činjenice.

9. THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

Moses had taught the Jews that every first-born son belonged to the Lord, and that, in lieu of his sacrifice as was the custom among the heathen nations, such a son might live provided his parents would redeem him by the payment of five shekels to any authorized priest. There was also a Mosaic ordinance which directed that a mother, after the passing of a certain period of time, should present herself (or have someone make the proper sacrifice for her) at the temple for purification. It was customary to perform both of these ceremonies at the same time. Accordingly, Joseph and Mary went up to the temple at Jerusalem in person to present Jesus to the priests and effect his redemption and also to make the proper sacrifice to insure Mary's ceremonial purification from the alleged uncleanness of childbirth.

There lingered constantly about the courts of the temple two remarkable characters, Simeon a singer and Anna a poetess. Simeon was a Judean, but Anna was a Galilean. This couple were frequently in each other's company, and both were intimates of the priest Zacharias, who had confided the secret of John and Jesus to them. Both Simeon and Anna longed for the coming of the Messiah, and their confidence in Zacharias led them to believe that Jesus was the expected deliverer of the Jewish people.

Zacharias knew the day Joseph and Mary were expected to appear at the temple with Jesus, and he had prearranged with Simeon and Anna to indicate, by the salute of his upraised hand, which one in the procession of first-born children was Jesus.

For this occasion Anna had written a poem which Simeon proceeded to sing, much to the astonishment of Joseph, Mary, and all who were assembled in the temple courts. And this was their hymn of the redemption of the first-born son:

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
For he has visited us and wrought redemption for his people;
He has raised up a horn of salvation for all of us
In the house of his servant David.
Even as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets--
Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;
To show mercy to our fathers, and remember his holy covenant--
The oath which he swore to Abraham our father,
To grant us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies,
Should serve him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
Yes, and you, child of promise, shall be called the prophet of the Most High;
For you shall go before the face of the Lord to establish his kingdom;
To give knowledge of salvation to his people
In the remission of their sins.

9. GOVOR U HRAMU

Mojsije je poučio Židove da svaki prvorodeni sin pripada Bogu i da tako, umjesto što će slijediti običaj poganskih nacija žrtvujući prvorodenu mušku djecu, trebaju isplatiti djetinji život tako što će položiti pet šekela u ruke ovlašćenih svećenika. Mojsije je pored toga odredio da majka nakon određenog vremena ode u hram kako bi prošla kroz proces očišćenja (ili da pošalje nekog drugog da u njezino ime preda odgovarajuće žrtve). Ove su ceremonije obično izvođene u isto vrijeme. Josip i Marija su tako osobno otišli u hram kako bi predstavili Isusa svećeniku tražeći djetetovo iskupljenje i kako bi Marija predala odgovarajuće žrtve u ime ceremonijalnog očišćenja od tobože nečistog porođajnog procesa.

Dvije izuzetne osobe, pjevač Šimun i pjesnikinja Ana, nisu ostavljale hrama. Šimun je bio iz Judeje, dok je Ana bila iz Galileje. Ovo dvoje je uglavnom provodilo vrijeme zajedno i oboje su bili vrlo bliski prijatelji Zakarija koji im je povjerio tajnu o Ivanovu i Isusovu rođenju. Šimun i Ana su željno iščekivali Mesijin dolazak i kako su imali veliko povjerenje u Zakarija, povjerovali su da je Isus bio obećani izručitelj židovskog naroda.

Zakarije je znao kad su se Josip i Marija trabali pojaviti u hramu s Isusom te se dogovorio s Anom i Šimunom da im pokretom ruke doznači koje je dijete iz dugog slijeda prvorodenaca bilo Isus.

Ana je za ovu priliku napisala pjesmu koju je Šimun otpjevao na veliko iznenađenje Josipa, Marije i svih okupljenih u dvorištu hrama. I bio je to njihov hvalospjev iskupljenju ovog prvorodenca:

Neka je hvaljen Gospodin, Bog Izraelov;
Jer nas posjeti da otkupi narod svoj;
Učini da izraste rog svečijeg spasenja
Među potomstvom Davida, sluge svoga.

Kao što obeća na usta proroka svojih svetih—
Spasenje od naših neprijatelja i iz ruke svih koji nas mrze,
Da učini milosrđe koje obeća ocima našim i da se sjeti svetoga zavjeta svoga—

Zakletve kojom se zakle Abrahamu ocu našem,
Da nam dopusti da, izbavljeni iz ruku neprijatelja
Služimo Njemu bez straha,
U svetosti i pravednosti pred njim u sve naše dane.

A ti ćeš se, djetetšce, prorok Previšnjeg zvati,
Jer ćeš ići pred Gospodinom da utemeljiš njegovo kraljevstvo;
Da narodu njegovu pružiš spoznaju spasenja
Koje biva u oproštenju grijeha njihovih.

Rejoice in the tender mercy of our God because the
dayspring from on high has now visited us
To shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow
of death;
To guide our feet into ways of peace.
And now let your servant depart in peace, O Lord,
according to your word,
For my eyes have seen your salvation,
Which you have prepared before the face of all peoples;
A light for even the unveiling of the gentiles
And the glory of your people Israel.

On the way back to Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary
were silent--confused and overawed. Mary was much
disturbed by the farewell salutation of Anna, the aged
poetess, and Joseph was not in harmony with this
premature effort to make Jesus out to be the expected
Messiah of the Jewish people.

10. HEROD ACTS

But the watchers for Herod were not inactive.
When they reported to him the visit of the priests of Ur to
Bethlehem, Herod summoned these Chaldeans to appear
before him. He inquired diligently of these wise men
about the new "king of the Jews," but they gave him little
satisfaction, explaining that the babe had been born of a
woman who had come down to Bethlehem with her
husband for the census enrollment. Herod, not being
satisfied with this answer, sent them forth with a purse
and directed that they should find the child so that
he too might come and worship him, since they had
declared that his kingdom was to be spiritual, not
temporal. But when the wise men did not return, Herod
grew suspicious. As he turned these things over in his
mind, his informers returned and made full report of the
recent occurrences in the temple, bringing him a copy of
parts of the Simeon song which had been sung at the
redemption ceremonies of Jesus. But they had failed to
follow Joseph and Mary, and Herod was very angry with
them when they could not tell him whither the pair had
taken the babe. He then dispatched searchers to locate
Joseph and Mary. Knowing Herod pursued the Nazareth
family, Zacharias and Elizabeth remained away from
Bethlehem. The boy baby was secreted with Joseph's
relatives.

Joseph was afraid to seek work, and their small
savings were rapidly disappearing. Even at the time of the
purification ceremonies at the temple, Joseph deemed
himself sufficiently poor to warrant his offering for Mary
two young pigeons as Moses had directed for the
purification of mothers among the poor.

When, after more than a year of searching,
Herod's spies had not located Jesus, and because of the
suspicion that the babe was still concealed in Bethlehem,
he prepared an order directing that a systematic search be
made of every house in Bethlehem, and that all boy
babies under two years of age should be killed. In this
manner Herod hoped to make sure that this child who

Radujte se milosrđu Boga našega,
zbog koga će nas pohoditi Sunce s visine
Da obasja one koji prebivaju u tami i sjeni smrtnoj;
Da upravi korake naše na put mira.

Sad možeš, Gospodine, otpustiti slugu svojega da,
Prema riječi tvojoj, ide u miru,
Jer mi oči vidješe spasenje tvoje,
Koje si pripremio pred licem svih naroda;
Svjetlo da rasvijetli pogane
I slavu naroda tvoga Izraela.

Prilikom povratka u Betlehem, Josip i Marija su
bili nijemi — zbunjeni i puni strahopoštovanja. Mariju
su jako uznemirile riječi ostarjele pjesnikinje Ane, dok
Josip nije mogao pomiriti svoja preuranjena nastojanja da
si predoči Isusa kao očekivanog Mesiju židovskog
naroda.

10. HERODOVA DJELA

Ali Herodovi promatrači nisu mirovali. Kad su
mu donijeli vijesti o posjeti urskih svećenika Betlehemu,
Herod je pozvao ove Kaldejce da ga dođu posjetiti.
Podrobno ih je ispitao o novom "kralju Židova," premda
mu nisu pružili mnogo informacija objasnivši da je dijete
pripadalo ženi koja je s mužem došla u Betlehem da se
prijava na popis pučanstva. Kako nije bio zadovoljan s
ovim odgovorom, Herod ih je poslao s novčanom
nagradom da nađu dijete kako bi mu i on mogao iskazati
poštovanje (oni su smatrali da će ovo novo kraljevstvo
biti duhovno a ne zemaljsko). Ali kad se mudraci nisu
vratili, Heroda je počela izjedati sumnja. Dok je po glavi
prevrtao sve ove događaje, doušnici mu doniješe
podrobne vijesti o skorašnjim događajima u hramu,
priloživši dijelove Šimunove pjesme koja je pratila
Isusovo ceremonijalno iskupljenje. Ali doušnici su
izgubili traga Josipu i Mariji i Herod je bio jako ljut što
mu nisu bili u stanju reći gdje se dvoje uputilo s djetetom.
Herod je zatim je poslao doušnike da nađu Josipa i
Mariju. Saznavši o potrazi za nazaretskom obitelji,
Zakarije i Elizabeta su se držali podalje od Betlehema.
Djetešce je bilo sakriveno kod Josipovih rođaka.

Josip se bojao tražiti posla i njihova mala
ušteđevina je svakim danom postajala sve tanja. Prilikom
ceremonijalnog očišćenja, Josip se smatrao dovoljno
siromašnim da ponudi u ime Marijinog očišćenja dva
mlada goluba, što je bilo u skladu s Mojsijevim nalogom
za siromahe.

Kako nakon više od godinu dana uzaludnog
traganja Herodove uhode nisu bile u stanju naći Isusa i
kako je dijete još uvijek moglo biti u Betlehemu, Herod je
izdao naredbu da se sistematski pretresu sve betlehemske
kuće i pobiju sva muška djeca ispod dvije godine. Herod
se nadao da će tako osigurati djetetovu smrt i uništiti
budućeg

was to become "king of the Jews" would be destroyed. And thus perished in one day sixteen boy babies in Bethlehem of Judea. But intrigue and murder, even in his own immediate family, were common occurrences at the court of Herod.

The massacre of these infants took place about the middle of October, 6 B.C., when Jesus was a little over one year of age. But there were believers in the coming Messiah even among Herod's court attaches, and one of these, learning of the order to slaughter the Bethlehem boy babies, communicated with Zacharias, who in turn dispatched a messenger to Joseph; and the night before the massacre Joseph and Mary departed from Bethlehem with the babe for Alexandria in Egypt. In order to avoid attracting attention, they journeyed alone to Egypt with Jesus. They went to Alexandria on funds provided by Zacharias, and there Joseph worked at his trade while Mary and Jesus lodged with well-to-do relatives of Joseph's family. They sojourned in Alexandria two full years, not returning to Bethlehem until after the death of Herod.

“kralja Židova.” I tako je u judejskom Betlehemu u jednom danu ubijeno šesnaestoro muške djece. Treba imati na umu da su i u samoj Herodovoj obitelji i na njegovom dvoru spletke i ubojstva predstavljale normalnu pojavu.

Ovaj pokolj djece se odigrao sredinom listopada 6. godine pr. K., kad je Isusu bilo malo više od godinu dana. Ali i među samim Herodovim poslanicima i dvoranima bilo je onih koji su vjerovali u dolazak Mesije i jedan od ovih vjernika, nakon što je saznao o naredbi da se pobiju betlehemska muška djeca, saopćio je ovu vijest Zakariju koji je smjesta poslao glasnika Josipu i noć prije ovog pokolja Josip i Marija su s djetetom napustili Betlehem uputivši se prema Aleksandriji u Egiptu. Kako ne bi privukli ničiju pažnju, putovali su sami s djetetom. Do Aleksandrije su stigli zahvaljujući Zakarijevoj novčanoj pomoći i Josip je tamo bio u stanju raditi u struci dok su Marija i Isus boravili kod imućnog člana Josipove obitelji. U Aleksandriji su se zadržali dvije godine ne vraćajući se u Betlehem sve do Herodove smrti.