

The Atonement of Jesus Christ
Week Five – October 11, 2023
The Birth of Christ
Notes and Quotes

1 Nephi 11:20-26

Bruce R. McConkie, “Behold the Condescension of God,”
New Era, December 1984, 34-39.

What, then, is the condescension of God? As I understand the definition of *condescension*, it is the act of descending to a lower and less dignified state; of waiving the privileges of one’s rank and status; of bestowing honors and favors upon one of lesser stature or status.

So if we are going to speak of the condescension of God, meaning that of our Eternal Father, we must first know the nature and kind of being he is. We must come to know the dignity and majesty and glory that attend him, of the things that he had and is doing for us and for all his children and in all eternity among all his creations.... When we think of him, we think of the most noble and exalted being there is. Then we read this question, “Knowest thou the condescension of God?” and discover that somehow it is associated with his love for us, his children, his spirit children who are now dwelling as mortals here on earth. We discover in our text that he shall be the Father of a Son born “after the manner of the flesh”; that is, he condescends, in his infinite wisdom, to be the Father of a holy being who shall be born into mortality. He determines to fulfil what he decreed and announced in the plan of salvation in the premortal life when, having explained the plan, he asked for a redeemer and a savior and said, “Whom shall I send to be my Son?” Thus the condescension of God is that he is the Father literally of a Son born in mortality, in the language here, a Son born “after the manner of the flesh.... Now we are all the spirit children of this glorious and omnipotent being. We dwelt with him for an infinite period of time in the premortal life. We were trained and prepared and made ready to come here for this mortal probation, and we have come as the children of mortal parents. But there is one person, one-person only—and that was his firstborn spirit offspring, the Lord Jehovah—who was destined to come into mortality with God our Father, an immortal person, as the parent of his mortal body, and, of course, with Mary, a mortal individual, as the mother of his mortal body. The angel, having manifested this truth about the condescension of God the Father to Nephi, then shows him added material, added visions, and comes again to the matter of divine condescension. He says: “Look and behold the condescension of God!” (see [1 Ne. 11:26](#)). And this time he is talking about the condescension of Christ the Son, and not God the Father.... Now we have a second matter relative to Deity’s condescension. This time it is the fact that Christ elected, chose, and volunteered to come into the world and be born as God’s Son, undergo the mortal probation and ministry assigned him, and then climax it with the working out of the infinite and eternal atoning sacrifice.

Luke 1:31-35

James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. 1916, 81.

“That Child to be born of Mary was begotten of Elohim, the Eternal Father, not in violation of natural law but in accordance with a higher manifestation thereof; ... In His nature would be combined the powers of Godhood with the capacity and possibilities of mortality; and this through the ordinary operation of the fundamental law of heredity, declared of God, demonstrated by science, and admitted by philosophy, that living beings shall propagate—after their kind. The Child Jesus was to inherit the physical, mental, and spiritual traits, tendencies, and powers that characterized His parents—one immortal and glorified—God, the other human—woman”

Robert E. Wells, “Our Message to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 65.

“The divine Sonship of Jesus Christ ... is central to understanding the entire plan of salvation. He is the First Begotten Son of the Father in the premortal existence and the Only Begotten Son of the Father on earth. God the Eternal Father is the literal parent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and of His other spirit children. ... The ‘divine Sonship’ also refers to the designation ‘Only Begotten Son in the flesh.’ ... This title signifies that Jesus’ physical body was the offspring of a mortal mother and of an immortal Eternal Father, which verity is crucial to the Atonement, a supreme act that could not have been accomplished by an ordinary man. Christ had power to lay down His life and power to take it again because He had inherited immortality from His Heavenly Father. From Mary, His mother, Christ inherited mortality, or the power to die. This infinite atonement of Christ and Christ’s divine Sonship go together hand in hand to form the single most important doctrine of all Christianity”

(Cf. Matthew 1:21-23; John 5:17-23; 1 Nephi 11:14-21)

Luke 2:40, 52

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:33

Without a doubt, Jesus came into the world subject to the same condition as was required for each of us – he forgot everything, and he had to grow from grace to grace. His forgetting, or having his former knowledge taken away, would be requisite just as it is in the case of each of us, to complete the temporal existence.

James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 111.

When Jesus was born, the veil of forgetfulness common to all who are born to earth, by which the remembrance of primeval existence is shut off, was cast over him. In the premortal world, Jesus had stood as “one like unto God,” (Abraham 3:24), “more intelligent than they all” (Abraham 3:19), meaning all the other created spirits. But although his capacity was greater than that of any other, and he was designated to become the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh, still he was meek and humble, and he condescended to have a veil cast over him and to have the knowledge of his glory and power in premortality blocked from his mind at birth.

Mosiah 15:1-5

1st Presidency, “A Doctrinal Exposition” (1916); cited in *Articles of Faith*, 470-71.

In all his dealings with the human family Jesus the Son has represented and yet represents Elohim His Father in power and authority. This is true of Christ in His preexistent, antemortal, or unembodied state, in the which He was known as Jehovah; also during His embodiment in the flesh; and during his labors as a disembodied spirit in the realm of the dead.... Thus the Father placed His name upon the Son; and Jesus Christ spoke and ministered in and through the Father’s name; and so far as power, authority, and Godship are concerned His words and acts were and are those of the Father.

(Cf. Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 19:9-10)

Condescension, Submitting, At One Ment of Jesus Christ

God, our Eternal Father, condescended to create with a mortal woman a being of who is the epitome of at one ment, being both mortal and divine. Christ condescends from his pre-mortal throne to become subject to all the challenges of mortality, being born “of lowly station” in order to be at one with all mankind. He submits completely to the will of the Father and does the will of the Father in all things. He then, is both the epitome of condescension and submitting. Following the example of Christ, mortal man must submit the will of the flesh to become one with the Father. Thus, as God condescends to be one with us, we must submit to become one with Him. Christ is the perfect manifestation of condescension and submitting, creating the perfect at one ment.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 555.

The most successful program of complete youth fitness ever known to man was described in fourteen words. They are the words of the beloved disciple Luke in the New Testament. He uses just one sentence to cover a period of eighteen years – the eighteen years in which the Savior of the world, after returning from Jerusalem, prepared himself for his public life. “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.” (Luke 2:52)

Learning about growing up from the life of Christ in Luke 2 – 4

2:40 Line upon line, follow the spirit of God within.
2:49 Know who’s business you are about (Moses 1:39)
2:46-48 Learn and understand doctrine at a young age
2:51 Subject yourself to your parents (Exodus 20:12)
2:52 Develop a well-balanced life (Intellectual, physical, spiritual, and social)
3:8 Repent by bringing forth the works of repentance (3 Nephi 9:19-20 A Broken heart and contrite spirit)
3:11 Be kind to those in need
3:13 Integrity and honesty
3:14 Do not avenge or accuse, be content with honest wages
3:21-23 Receive and live ordinances
3:23-38 Learn and appreciate your heritage
4:1-2 Fast to spiritually feast and rejoice (D&C 59:13-21; Isaiah 58:3-11)
4:3-12 Study and apply the scriptures (2 Nephi 32:3)
4:13 Sin is not a one-time battle
4:16-21 Attend & participate in church (Isaiah 58:12-14; D&C 50:17-22)
4:22-30 Don’t let others stop you from becoming what you should be.
4:31-41 Teach and serve others
4:42; 5:16 Pray in secret
Throughout His youth, Jesus was taught by the Spirit of God (**John 8:26-28**)

Christmas Poem

Did everyone see the star, that silent, holy night?
Did they not know to follow its sacred beam so bright?
Were glorious streams and angels hidden from their sight?
Or were their lives so busy, that they couldn’t see the light?

They said there was no room that night at the crowded highway inn.
But had those with much more money been allowed to pass within?
Were the innocent and holy turned away because of sin?
Because of greed and worldliness had they refused to let them in?

Was it hearts that were closed and not just doors, to the Savior of the earth?
Would more humble folk have opened up to a women giving birth?
Could they not feel the spirit’s power amid merriment and mirth?
Had wealth and money hardened hearts to what was of true worth?

In Bethlehem, the house of bread, men ate and filled their bowls,
But they missed the living manna, which would have filled their souls.
The world and their carelessness had taken heavy tolls,
While Joseph, Mary and Jesus quietly fulfilled their roles.

Now do I see the Savior in the busy life I lead?
Or do I go about and give Him little heed?
Do I only seek the Savior in my desperate times of need?
Or do I seek Him daily in the scriptures that I read?

The scriptures are a modern star to point the way for man.
And through the spirit’s holy light we can know and understand
That Jesus is the Savior who fulfills God’s holy plan.
He shows us how to get back home and redeems us so we can.