

The Lord's birth

Part 1

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Duration	00:42:56
Online version	https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/fw011/the-lord-s-birth

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[00:00:00] Wir freuen uns, heute Abend einen Vortrag über Gottes Wort zu hören.

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And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

[00:01:09] He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever. And of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren, [00:02:01] for with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Now chapter 2 And verse 25 And behold there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord Christ.

And he came by the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms and blessed God and said, [00:03:04] Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all the people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel.

Recently one has been impressed with the end of the dispensation as we find it in the Gospels. I

mean the end of the law dispensation. So few were waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I think we could count them all very easily.

We have Joseph and Mary, blessed by the Lord.

We have Elizabeth and Zacharias.

[00:04:04] We have Anna, an elderly woman.

And we have Simeon.

There may have been others, but these set their attention to in the chapters that we have read in Luke's Gospel and in other chapters, the beginning of Matthew particularly. Now, one feels that this is a very sad reflection on what the law could accomplish after all the centuries of prophecy and the presentation of the law, how few there were ready to receive the Messiah. Sad, sad reflection on the law.

But then when we think of the present moment, as we wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to fulfill his promise, what would the difference? There are millions upon earth at the present moment who are looking for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, what a wonderful indication of the value of the death of Christ [00:05:04] and his resurrection and his ascension and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The fact that millions have been secured through that wondrous death of his and they are waiting for him at the present moment. I think this indicates a very real thing to us, that where man failed under responsibility in connection with the law, God has succeeded in the presentation of Christ in the Gospel in securing men and women for himself. But that's not what I want to speak about. I want to speak about the greatness of Christ because this is the real blessing that can encourage and refresh and build up every believer who loves him. His greatness, his glory, whether it be present or future, anything connected with Christ is calculated to encourage us. So we find the angel coming to Mary, telling her that she's highly favored, [00:06:06] the Lord is with her, blessed art thou among women.

Now I know that we don't want in any way to be affected by the kind of worship or shall we say idolatry that the Roman Catholics give to Mary, the way they give her such a place, such a place alongside Christ. And we might sheer off from giving her any honor or any blessing.

And yet we would be wrong in this because the scripture makes a great deal of Mary and the angel here tells us that the Lord is with her and that she's blessed among women. She has a unique place. She was favored by the Lord to bring the Son of God into this world, a highly unique place of privilege and favor.

And for that reason we think of her affectionately [00:07:02] as the one who was used in this way. But the angel has something more to say to her. It's obvious she was just like any of us. She was troubled at his saying, perhaps worried to her mind what this salutation should be. But the angel puts her at rest and says, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God.

Now that again is another indication of the unique character of Mary that she was chosen by God for this particular service.

We know it was in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy, A virgin shall be with child.

And she stoled not to fear. Fear not, Mary. Wonderful personal salutation.

Wonderful indication that she was known to heaven and chosen by heaven for this particular service. Then he goes on to say, Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, [00:08:01] and shalt call his name Jesus.

Now here's something that we should stop and consider for a moment. Sometimes in talking about the Lord Jesus, we speak about his miraculous birth.

And while no one would quarrel with the expression, that's not just exactly right. It's the miraculous conception, the power of the Holy Spirit, and Mary performing this tremendous work, the incoming of the Son of God into this world. The reason why we draw this distinction is because we can refer to at least four miraculous births.

There was Isaac.

And there was Samuel.

And Samson.

And John the Baptist.

And there was a miracle performed in each of these cases when these little babies were born. It was because of divine power. [00:09:01] And they certainly were miraculous births. But with the Lord Jesus, all the scripture is careful to guard against any idea of human generation he was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And this points him out uniquely, infinitely greater than any other person. And so we find this expression, and shall call his name Jesus.

Now again, I want to draw your attention to something that's often said, that it's his lowly name.

I don't think so, dear Christian friends. I think it's the name of glory and distinction that the lowly man bore. Because we remember that the name Jesus means Jehovah the Savior.

Jehovah is salvation.

And really, it's God manifest in flesh when we think of this wonderful name, Jesus.

Certainly his personal name that he bore here upon earth [00:10:01] so often referred to in the epistles and in the gospels, this same Jesus.

Bearing about in our body the dying of Jesus.

Giving him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. So this name is used again and again, and I think I can say in a company like this, that name is precious to all our hearts. But it's a name of greatness. It's not a lowly name. It's a name of greatness. A name of power.

A name indicating salvation. A name indicating that God was now amongst his own people in flesh and was going to bless them. Thou shall call his name Jesus.

I think I'm right in saying that the Lord Jesus only refers to himself in this way on two occasions.

Personally, I mean. You remember when Paul, or rather Saul of Tarsus, was on the Damascus road? [00:11:01] The Lord appeared to him, and when Saul says, Who art thou, Lord?

He says, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.

And then in the book of Revelation, we have those wonderful words, I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify of these things to the churches. I, Jesus.

And so this personal name that he bears is a name of greatness and glory and distinction spanning this public life and spanning the time that he is here, that he's at the right hand of God, and spanning to that time when Israel shall be brought back to God.

So let us remember, whenever we read this name, Jesus, it's a name of distinction, a name of unique glory, a wonderful name, and the only one who bore it with all the truth connected with it. Because we do read of other Jewish personages [00:12:01] called Jesus, we find them in the scriptures, but none of them could in any way bear that name in the same way as Jesus did because it was true of him in every possible way.

He shall be great.

Oh, how great he is.

If you turn to the minor prophet Micah in chapter 5, I think it's verse 2, there you will find this explicitly stated by the prophet that the one whose goings forth were from of old, the one who would come forth unto God to be the ruler in Israel, would be great.

And all we know how great he was and how great he is.

In the Gospel by Luke and in the Acts of the Apostles, Luke uses this word again and again, great, what is great.

And here he is using it in connection with the one who is supremely great.

If we think of him as creator, [00:13:01] what greatness.

We are accustomed now to be told about things that are really outstanding and really beyond our ken.

The radio telescope can probe into the vast distances that are connected with space and we are left in a, shall I say, our minds in a boggle as to the vast distances involved. But he created them, the creator.

And it was within his power and wisdom and understanding and ability and although we might not

understand, we know that he did.

As he created the universe, the display of his power and wisdom. What greatness.

Oh, when we see him coming into this world and stepping out in public witness for God. What greatness.

He was able to deal with Satan, able to deal with demons, able to deal with disease, able to deal with the depressed, able to raise the dead, heal the blind, [00:14:02] all the various ailments of mankind, the Lord Jesus in the greatness of his power was able to deal with these things, set people free and send them on their way rejoicing. How great he was.

And oh dear friends, when we think of the work upon the cross and his rising out from amongst the dead and then rising from this scene into glory, there we are confronted with a greatness that is beyond any understanding.

His atonement, the sufferings that he bore, the pressure that he passed through on our behalf.

Oh, how great he was.

No one could do that work but himself and he did it, thank God, in perfection so that we are here this afternoon with the knowledge of our sins forgiven. We are here with the knowledge that we are bound for glory and we owe it to the one, the great one, who gave himself on Calvary Street. [00:15:01] And then how great when he rose out from amongst the dead. In fact, the scripture speaks of this, the great shepherd who rose out from amongst the dead. Oh, how great.

No one else could do that wonderful thing, to rise out from amongst the dead, triumphant over death and Satan's power. Again, a feature of his greatness.

Now, when you consider the time that the Lord Jesus Christ has been at the right hand of God and he has cared for every individual saint, he's protected the testimony of Christianity and all the various vicissitudes that it has passed through and all the attacks by Satan and Satan's agents.

He's cared for those who were depressed, those who needed help of various kinds. Think of the magnitude of the work of that character. And he said that he would do this.

I'm with you to the end of the age, he says, [00:16:02] to his disciples and of course that includes every believer. As the head of the body, he has provided resource and encouragement for every member from Pentecost up till the present moment. He has protected assemblies passing through difficulty. He has provided for missionaries in different parts of the world in danger and in difficulty.

All these things he has done in the power that he has and in the greatness and glory of his person. You see, sometimes we just limit the activity of the Lord to our personal life.

And that's a very small thing in one sense. Very great to us, very small to him. Oh, when we think of the magnitude of the work done by the Lord Jesus Christ over the last 2,000 years in relation to his people, how great he is.

And we're not forgetting that along with that by him all things subsist.

[00:17:03] Not only has he created the universe but in divine power it subsists through him and in him. So we're under no misunderstanding as to his greatness when we start and think about it. We must be impressed with the magnitude of the work that the Lord Jesus Christ does every day, every moment.

This work is going on in preserving and caring for his people. No wonder he's the object of worship and praise. Now it says he shall be called the son of the highest and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.

I believe there are two suggestions here. The highest would always connect us with the thought of the nations and of course the throne of David connects us with the nation of Israel. And here is the one who is going to look after all the nations and bring them into blessing. [00:18:03] Here is the one who is going to sit upon the throne of his father David and bring blessing into the life of that persecuted nation Israel.

Now the reason why I say the highest is connected with the nations is because Scripture does connect the highest in this way. You remember Daniel tells us that Nebuchadnezzar came to this understanding that the most high ruleth in the kingdoms of men. And Moses in the book of Deuteronomy tells us that the most high assigned to the nations different boundaries, different places where they were to be. He put them in their different places. The most high.

And we believe the most high is a millennial title and has to do with all the nations that eventually shall be blessed. Who is going to do it?

The son of the highest. Now at the present moment we are witnessing the collapse [00:19:02] of all the ideas of men. Democracies and dictatorships and whatever you like they've all had an opportunity and the mess is there for us all to see. I know that the world has passed economic troubles in the past and they have got over them and things have gone on again. But one wonders if now we are seeing a total collapse of all that man brags about, boasts about and considers is the cure for the ailments of men. No matter what they try it seems to fail. Well then, who is going to succeed? The son of the highest. Time will come when he will bring blessing to the nation that exists when he rules but before he deals with the nations he is going to sit upon the throne of his father David.

Now it's a very wonderful thing to think about this.

One day in the city of Jerusalem where he was crucified where he was rejected by the leaders [00:20:02] of the nation he will publicly in person sit upon the throne of his father David. Now you might say how can that be?

It's easy to visualize it. For 40 days after the Lord Jesus rose out from amongst the dead he met with his disciples he spoke with them, he ate with them and so there he was a living person out of death they could handle him they could see that he was in flesh and bone condition not in spirit condition and so what was true in those 40 days will be true especially when he sits upon the throne of his father David in Jerusalem. His feet shall touch the Mount of Olives he'll come to the help of his beleaguered nation and he'll bring in power and blessing what a wonderful day that will be for himself oh let us think of this in the place where he was rejected there he is going to be exalted and glorified.

[00:21:02] I think we all like to be a success and perhaps in a certain area where people have scoffed and jeered at us in one way or another we've experienced that kind of thing and then to prove through God's help that we've been blessed and we're able to find our way in the world and have a success in business or in any other way, scholastic well that's a table stand and it's not that we feel proud but we're deeply thankful for what the Lord has done for us in spite of all the scoffing and jeering now what will it mean to Christ oh my dear friends what will it mean to him in the very city that had the opportunity to accept him it refused him and in that city he's going to be manifested in glory he's going to sit upon the throne of his father David the fulfillment of the covenant made to David and he in person is the direct fulfillment of it [00:22:02] and what a fulfillment it will be and for a thousand years there will be a reign of blessing, a reign of glory a reign of plenty no dynasty has ever lasted a thousand years no empire has lasted a thousand years Hitler boasted that the third reich would last for a thousand years, but it didn't it didn't last twenty years oh my dear friends, when we think of the wonder of the reign of Christ for a thousand years, the land will be blessed the world will be blessed and righteousness shall reign oh what a demonstration what an exhibition of his greatness and glory now it says and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there shall be no end great kingdoms, great dynasties have risen and fallen, sometimes through internal dissension [00:23:02] other times through other powers coming against them and overpowering them, this will never happen in the kingdom of the sun, this will never happen when he reigns, he shall reign forever, it will be an everlasting kingdom and it will be for the glory of God now we can understand Mary saying to the angel how shall this be?

I know not the man and the angel answered and said unto her the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee the power of the highest shall overshadow thee therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God I'm sure you're acquainted with the teaching of the meal offering in the book of Leviticus and we are reminded that the fine flour was mingled with the oil and we believe this is a beautiful picture of the birth of our Lord Jesus [00:24:02] Christ, the incarnation as we call it, the clothing of the Lord Jesus with flesh now the mingling with the oil would suggest how intricately the spirit was occupied or the spirit was engaged in the birth of our Lord Jesus we read in the meal offering that the meal was anointed with oil and we believe that would refer to the moment when the Lord Jesus set out in public witness for God and was anointed with the Holy Spirit at Jordan here we believe we have an expression of the meal offering, the flour mingled with oil, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee then there's this distinction that the Lord Jesus Christ is described as that holy thing that shall be born we are reminded in the Psalms that we are born in sin [00:25:02] and shaped in iniquity we are all suffering because of Adam's fall and we all inherit a fallen nature and although we might deny it it's not very long before we express it in disobedience and in an aptitude for sin that clearly indicates we have this fallen nature not the Lord Jesus Christ he was born that holy thing he came into the world holy untainted by sin as he passed through it and offered himself in the power of the Spirit without spot to God absolutely intrinsically holy not a blemish, not a spot or a stain or a sin but in a way connected with the Lord Jesus now we live in days when people who ought to know better say that it was possible for the Lord Jesus Christ to sin but perhaps they say in faithfulness but he never sinned [00:26:02] when they speak about the temptations and the other things that he passed through and they say what's the point of him going through temptation if he couldn't have sinned the point is this the first man sinned in beautiful conditions in conditions that God created for him in conditions where we might have thought he'll never sin well the first man did sin in those conditions the second man out of heaven tried in far worse conditions to prove powerful enough to overcome Satan's wiles that's why he was tried that his divine perfection might be shown in all its work and in all its greatness now John in his epistle tells us that the divine nature cannot sin he says that explicitly and that's referring to Christians Christians

having the divine nature cannot sin [00:27:02] what God has given to us cannot sin, it's an impossibility now then if the Lord Jesus could have sinned that surely implies that he had a fallen nature and then the saint that loves him would repudiate such a suggestion no my dear friends he was the holy thing that was born intrinsically so it wasn't that he made progress in holiness he was ever holy spotless and pure and so the angel says that holy thing which shall be born shall be called the son of God oh how great here we have depths that we cannot possibly consider, that we cannot possibly plumb, the son of God coming into this world as a little infant so helpless outwardly and yet still the creator and upholder of the universe the son of God [00:28:02] oh how great he is and oh the glorious things that he was going to accomplish and oh the great things that he has continued to do since he went on high the son of God of essence with the father same nature oh how great the son of God he shall be called the son of God I can't say any more than what I've said about him how great he is and one would like to have a greater command and language just to express how great he is he shall be called the son of God, not the son of Adam not the son of anyone else although perhaps he was called the son of Joseph or the son of David but pre-eminently above all others the son of God, wonderful glorious person and how he proved this in his life now we turn over from that [00:29:02] that was heaven's communication to Mary now we find a man upon earth under the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit and he has some appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ divinely imparted to him and how satisfied he was but look at him, Simeon I don't know how old he was tells us that Anna was an elderly person but here we find Simeon and it says he was just and devout and he was waiting for the consolation of Israel and the Holy Ghost was upon him now why I want to say a few words about this passage is because it brings us in now while it was uniquely in connection with Simeon that this happened and we must again for him the blessing that was his in being guided [00:30:02] and controlled by the Spirit to perform the service towards the infant Jesus yet I believe the principles connected with this man could easily be connected with us the first thing is he's just and he's devout he's not leading a life of sin or self-will self-indulgence or wickedness, he's a man who has some appreciation of God and some idea of what it is to live before God and to such a one the Holy Spirit comes and gives him direction and what a wonderful opportunity he had now it seems to me my dear hearers that we are in this position if the Holy Spirit is going to teach us in relation to Christ then we believe there is this rectitude of life that is necessary a life that is pleasing to God a life of obedience a life of devotion and to such persons the Holy Spirit is free to teach the great things of our Lord Jesus Christ [00:31:02] perfectly obvious you wouldn't go to a wicked man and ask him for some appreciation of Christ, he wouldn't be able to give it the Holy Spirit wouldn't teach him the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit and he delights to unfold the things of Christ to those who have some appreciation of him and whose lives are an indication of this so I think this is a beautiful sight this man Simeon just and devout just and upright a good man in Jerusalem waiting for the consolation of Israel very sad that here upon earth there wasn't a great stir thinking about the coming of Christ and the fulfillment of the prophecies in Matthew's gospel we do find that the city was troubled and we find that Herod was troubled too, but all that seemed to pass away so quickly but there were just a few who really were waiting [00:32:02] and who could be used by the Spirit in this wonderful way and so it says the Holy Spirit was upon him now we've often been taught and rightly taught that in the Old Testament we find a few references to the Holy Spirit being upon persons and when whatever service they were to render was finished then the Holy Spirit was taken from them or he left them, but in the New Testament we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and he indwells us forever he's never taken from the individual or from the church, the believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and this morning as I was thinking about this I said to myself what a tremendous blessing that a divine person indwells us I believe no one person is able to have the fullness of the indwelling [00:33:02] Spirit and I must be careful about what I say because I may be entirely wrong in this, but we are indwelt by the Spirit, our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit directs us to the Father and to the Son and

empowers us for every Christian privilege and every Christian responsibility what a marvelous blessing to have the indwelling Spirit not to be taken from us, always with us, so while it was a pond Simeon, we can claim on the testimony of the Word of God this Spirit indwells us, so if we feel that we are very weak in connection with Christian testimony, thank God for that feeling because that is just how we should feel and that throws us back upon the divine power that we have in the indwelling Spirit and if we feel that we are quite unable to witness and worship, then [00:34:02] good for us if we feel that way for again the Spirit is the power to help us to worship and write either the Lord Jesus or the Father now it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ it's not very often that we get God called the Lord in the New Testament but here is one of the occasions the Lord's Christ the Lord's anointed I think in this case Jehovah's anointed what a marvelous communication Simeon got it doesn't tell us how he got it, except by the Spirit, but in what way it was communicated, but he received this communication that he wasn't going to die until something happened, until he had seen the Lord's Christ for himself now down through the ages of prophecy thousands of people were [00:35:02] waiting for this, and here was one man who was told specifically Simeon, you're not going to die until you've seen with your eyes Jehovah's anointed wonderful, wonderful blessing and the time came when he was led by the Spirit into the temple and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law they took him up in his arms and blessed God what a moment for this dear servant that he's privileged to take into his arms this little babe who is none other than Jehovah's anointed perhaps he wouldn't understand that he was the creator, he was the son of God and other great things that we've been speaking about, he had been told specifically that he would see the Lord's anointed and now the moment had come what a moment of fulfillment [00:36:02] and realization for that dear servant of the Lord to hold the Lord Jesus in his arms, what a privilege and so he says, Lord and he uses a different word there it's the word that we have for desperate, Lord now let us bow thy servant depart in peace according to thy word for mine eyes have seen thy salvation I think that's a wonderful statement he's saying, I have nothing more to live for, I have no more interest here, my time has come to an end, I'm completely satisfied, I've seen thy salvation not only had he seen the Lord's Christ, but he saw the one in whom salvation would be secured the one in whom salvation would be available, the one who would effect the work of salvation himself, mine eyes have seen thy salvation now dear friends [00:37:02] when we see the Lord for the first time, we won't be saying this kind of thing we won't be saying, we're ready to depart, we'll be there forever what a moment what a moment of realization when we all see the Lord Jesus Christ, he might be entirely different from the way he is portrayed by the artists but one thing we are assured of we'll recognize him, we'll know him and know what a moment it will be, a moment of complete and eternal satisfaction when we see him we're all accustomed to perceiving things here upon earth perhaps we want to go to some city where there are some great sights to be seen and we go there and the first visit oh it's a wonderful place, we're thrilled at what we see, and then gradually it dies off and it all more or less becomes commonplace it will never be like that in glory the first view that will so thrill our hearts [00:38:02] will be the same thrill that we'll have throughout all eternity, what a wonderful moment, what a wonderful realization, and what a wonderful end to this great salvation that the Lord Jesus Christ secured for us for Simeon, it was to see the one in whom salvation would be secured, for us it will be salvation behind us and all that that means and then an entrance into the glory that he prayed about in John 17 he says I want them to be with me I want them to share my glory I want them to have the same love upon them as I had when I was here in this world, as I received from the Father, he says I want them to enjoy that, what a wonderful person he is, and how anxious he is, if I could use that word for our present and eternal blessing, now he says which thou hast prepared before the face of all the people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy [00:39:02] people Israel while I believe that Prince of Galilee Simeon is thinking of the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and there are many that indicate that Israel will be blessed and the Gentile

nations will be blessed with them, I want to apply this to the present day in which we find ourselves because we find many passages in the New Testament that tell us that both Jews and Gentiles are blessed together and they form one body in Christ without any national distinction they are one before him and oh how true it is that he's a light to light the darkness of the Gentiles he's the glory of Israel that he fulfills all the prophecies in relation to them so whether we think about it in the present or think about it in the future, those statements are true in Christ alone could Jews and Gentiles be blessed without any racial [00:40:02] hatred or distinction and be brought together in one and we do thank God that in the future this also will be true the Middle East problem great and complex will never be settled until Israel is reconciled to its Messiah and then the rest will be simple that's the real problem not the problem between Jew and Gentile not the problem between Arab and Israel the real problem is Israel refused its Messiah rejected and crucified him and until they get right with him, this problem will be outstanding oh the wonder of it, that when they see the one whom they crucify and pierce and they're reconciled to him, the process of the Lord's government will go on for their blessing and the blessing of the nations and those complex problems that man cannot deal with will be dealt with by the Son of God oh let us rejoice that at the present moment [00:41:02] the Lord Jesus has put away all the national distinctions that cause so much strife upon earth and in the truth of the church he brings people of all nationalities together without any color, bar or social status or any other kind of status and he brings them together as one body in himself members one of another all connected to him the head and he blesses them according to the greatness of his person my dear Christian friends how great he is and so with these few thoughts I would ask you to again and again consider him more and more because whatever else might be passing he remains in all his greatness and we can turn to him at all times to find resource and blessing and encouragement and you know this passage that we've been considering, it's not a huge campaign with thousands [00:42:02] of people, it's not a large turnout in a vast auditorium it's just a few but there's divine blessing there I'm not putting any premium upon a small company, but I do say this, that a small company is not shut out from the blessings of God, a small company can be blessed by God and as it was at the beginning, so it can be now, that wherever there are hearts that show any appreciation of Christ, we can be sure that all the interest of heaven is focused upon them and they can get resource and help and encouragement through the Holy Spirit, so we can take courage, whether there are two or three, or whether there are two or three hundred, the same applies that wherever the truth of Christ is maintained, there will be divine blessing and resource, may we know more about it, for his name's sake