LESSON #11 **JESUS CHRIST**

Our studies thus far should have impressed upon us how the Plan of God develops and points us to a single descendent of Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob, and King David. We have seen how the entire Old Testament record from the Creation through the Promises, the Law of Moses, the Psalms and theprophets have all provided references and types which point to that 'one seed', the Branch, the Lamb, the Messiah.

As we begin in earnest with the New Testament studies, we will see how all these references and types now become a reality in the man Christ Jesus himself - the 'Word made flesh'. Before we begin this lesson, please take a moment to review the chart to see the period when Christ was born and lived among men.

Galatians 4:4-5 “Fullness" here signifies the completion of a prophetic time period. This confirms again that the Creator is operating according to His own timetable, and a new dispensation commences with His Son, Jesus. Let’s also notice here the emphasis that God’s son was “born of a woman” and thus was under the law. This is important as Jesus lives under the rules of the law, he submits to the constraints that the law imparts.

Luke 1 Luke the Apostle gives us the most complete account of the birth of Christ and the events leading up to his birth. In this chapter we are provided with the preparation made in anticipation of Messiah’s coming. We read the birth of John the Baptist. V17 reveals that John will go as a forerunner to prepare the people to meet the Messiah. This is further supported by the testimony of John in the Gospel of John 1:15 John declares he is a witness. In verses 29-34 he records that even he didn’t know who the Messiah was until it was revealed in the baptism of Jesus. John says v33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

Back in Luke, we notice particularly the reference to the 'house of David' in verse 27. Also in verse 31 we observe the name given: “Jesus” - signifying 'Saviour'. Look also to the phrases in v32; 'son of the highest' and 'the throne of his father David'. Again in verse 33 note the reference to the 'house of Jacob' and 'of his kingdom there shall be no end'. By comparing these phrase to Isaiah 9:6,7 it can readily supported that this prophetically referred to Christ, and now is to be fulfilled in the child born to Mary.

Confirmation of the promises to Abraham is made in verses 54 and 55, and the prophetic words of the priest Zachariah (John the Baptist’s father) recorded in verse 68-73 bring into sharp focus the national aspirations and heritage which had inspired the Hope of Israel from the beginning.

Luke 2:7-14 The Birth of Jesus is seen as a momentous occasion both in heaven among the angels as well as on earth – the words which the angels sang have a prophetic meaning - "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men". The glorious time this speaks of is still in the future, but the chart shows we are nearly 2,000 years closer to it now.

Luke 2:21-24 According to the law, there were certain procedures the parents must follow in order to keep the law. These verses are related to the first reference in this Lesson
– Galatians 4:4,5. They show that Jesus born under the Law and was circumcised according to the Law. There is very little recorded of the events in his early life until he reached the age of 30 years. One brief mention of an episode which took place in

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Jerusalem is found in verses 41-52 of this chapter. Other than that, concerning the childhood and early manhood of Christ we have only the brief statement "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

Matthew 3:13-17 When Jesus was age 30, He came from Galilee to the Jordan River area where he knew John the Baptist to be. Jesus was now ready and prepared to take up his ministry. To fulfill what God had required, he submitted his life in dedication and confirmed it publicly through his baptism. His unique ministry as the Son of God, and Son of Man was confirmed by the Spirit of God descending upon him like a dove, and by the voice from heaven which said "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". Jesus was to be the mediator through whom redemption from sin would be accomplished and reconciliation would be re-established between God and man.

Some find it difficult to associate human nature to Jesus. This association, however, is extremely important since it is only because Jesus was 'made like his brethren in every respect’ (Hebrews 2:17 RSV)that he could represent them perfectly in his sacrifice. In Hebrews 4:15 (RSV) we are plainly told Jesus 'was tempted -In all points like as we are yet without sinning', and because of this he is 'able to help those who are tempted'. We must all acknowledge we are desperately in need of his help in order to overcome sin.

Up to this point in our studies we have purposely deferred any consideration of controversial subjects such as the devil or satan. However, now we need to consider the problem of temptation and sin. It is important that we understand how temptation and sin are to be understood in connection with the work of Jesus. Satan, Devil and demons are “personified”. We generally understand the difference between a “Godly” person and a “wicked” person. Personification applies a personage to a “character”. The word “devil” references those who speak falsely, while “satan” references an adversary. It can be noted that Peter was an “adversary” (satan) to Jesus by telling him he couldn’t go up to Jerusalem to fulfill his purpose for his Heavenly Father. (Matthew 16:13)

The Law of Moses was specific regarding offerings for sin. It placed the responsibility for sin where it rightfully belonged - on the individual himself. The Jew had no delusion regarding his own responsibility in the matter. He knew only too well where sin originated. (Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jesus himself says in Matthew 15:19 “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies”.)

The only remedy for sin is to seek forgiveness and this is founded upon repentance associated with sacrifice for the remission of sins. The Mosaic ritual provided for this. The Israelite identified himself with the sacrificial animal by placing his hands on the head of the animal and confessing his wrong. There was never any thought of an outside tempter in the form of a supernatural devil who prompted or led him into the path of evil.

Think for a minute - if such an outside evil influence had existed, how tragic the consequences would have been, as no provision had been made in the Law of Moses to cope with it. It is significant that no suggestion, reference or information of any kind concerning a devil or satan is to be found anywhere in the writings of Moses, who received his instructions from God.

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Matthew 4:1-12 Jesus is now aware of his possession of the Holy Spirit. “Holy” means “set apart” and “Spirit” refers to the “wind” or power of the wind. This Holy Spirit is best understood as a power that is “set apart” for the work of God. For Jesus to have this at his disposal was for holy and Godly purposes. The Holy Spirit was bestowed upon him at his baptism. The Spirit then compelled him to seek the solitude of the wilderness to meditate upon his ministry and the implications of possessing “the spirit without measure”. The possession of God's inspiring power must have made Jesus fully aware and to see more clearly the course of events which were to follow in his life, as foretold in the various prophecies he knew so well. It appears, by his words in the Gospel records, that Jesus understood in advance the dread anticipation of a cruel death by crucifixion and that the human mind would naturally seek for alternatives or even escape. An inner conflict between his natural human inclinations to avoid the cross on the one hand, and the desire to do His Father's will on the other, weighed heavily upon him as it would on anyone. Human reasoning would plan to use the possession of this tremendous power to provide personal benefit. He realized, however, that the use of the Holy Spirit for any other purpose, or in any other way than that directed by God, could only bring a very limited and temporary achievement compared with what God had planned. Jesus had been preparing his mind by his study and assimilation of God's Holy Scriptures. Now, 40 days of fasting and prayer after his baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit, there was no uncertainty regarding the path he would follow. His course was set according to his acceptance of the Divine principle: "It is written".

Luke 4:13

In Luke's account of the temptation we read that Jesus emerged the victor in this trial. That temptations would continue and other trials take place is clearly indicated in the 13th verse where we read' 'He departed from him for a season".

Luke 4:14-15

Now Jesus directed himself to the use of the Spirit in the preaching of the Gospel and the healing of those who were physically and spiritually sick.

The four Gospels give us the history of Christ's life and ministry. His ministry can be divided into four sections which briefly highlight the events that outlined his work and led up to his crucifixion.

1. Jesus spent the greater part of his first year's ministry Judea and about the lower Jordan. During this year his first disciples came to him and through his teaching he began to find recognition as a teacher and prophet. The Scribes and Pharisees became increasingly aware of his growing power and sent their representatives to evaluate his influence with the people.

2. Toward the end of his first year Jesus journeyed northward through Samaria to Galilee. For a year and nine months he was actively engaged in this area preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing the sick . During this period he chose the twelve apostles who became his constant companions through the rest of his ministry. By now the Jewish authorities had become alarmed and apprehensive about Jesus' tremendous popularity with the common people. They envisioned the loss of their own prestige and even a possible revolt against the state under the leadership of this Galilean prophet. It was under these conditions that Jesus began to speak to the people in parables, many of which were directed against the Scribes and Pharisees. With their pride and hypocrisy laid bare they demonstrated their hostility to Jesus by endeavoring to discredit him before the people in questions of the Law and Sabbath. History also tells us that at this time the work of John the Baptist came to an end. He was imprisoned by Herod in March A.D. 28 and the following year in March A.D. 29 he suffered a martyr's death--at the hand of this wicked and depraved ruler.

3. As the third year drew to a close Jesus began to speak frequently of his final journey to Jerusalem and the cruel death awaited him there. In spite of the opposition of his disciples it came to pass when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem". His journey southward brought him to the district, east of the Jordan, where he spent 4 busy months in preaching the Gospel and healing the sick. The Pharisees and Scribes now joined by the Sadducees, openly

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opposed him, seeking an excuse to put him to death. Their hatred had grown to such proportions that the animosity that existed between them was put aside in the common cause.

4. As the time of the Passover drew near Jesus came to Bethany to the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. During this time he made the short journey to Jerusalem with his disciples and returned each evening to the warm hospitality of their home. The events of the week follow in dramatic and rapid succession. Jesus made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem with the enthusiastic acclamations of the pilgrims heralding his approach from the Mount of Olives. On the following day he came again to the city and entering the temple enraged the priests and rulers by casting out the money Changers and those that sold doves.

 The next day was the last Jesus devoted to public teaching. As he taught in the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him and demanded his credentials (Matthew 21:23). In this confrontation he answered their challenge with a series of parables which exposed their hypocrisy and their intention to put him to death. They were unable to arrest him at this time because of his popularity with the people, but their opportunity would come shortly from a surprising and unexpected source. They were to have an ally and fellow conspirator in one of Christ's own disciples. As this trying day came to a close he once again turned his steps toward Bethany. During
his ascent of the Mount of Olives he rested for awhile and during this pause gave his disciples a. graphic preview of the awesome events that would terminate two great time periods in world history. The significance of Christ's Mount Olivet prophecy will be explained in Lesson 16.

 On the first day of the feast of unleavened bread Jesus sent two of his disciples into Jerusalem to prepare for the Passover. In the evening he came to the "prepared" upper room with his disciples and after teaching them an unforgettable lesson in humility partook of the Passover supper with them. It was during the supper he declared his betrayal - and Judas, the betrayer left their company. The institution of the Lord's Supper followed at which his farewell discourse and prayers were given as recorded in John, Chapters 14 through 17. At the close of Christ's prayer the disciples joined him in the singing of a Psalm and then went out to the Mount of Olives. There in the Garden of Gethsemane, in extreme anguish of spirit, Jesus
prayed for delivering himself to his Father's will he received strength for the dreadful ordeal that lay ahead.

At this time the deputies from the High Priest arrived, with Judas at their head, and arrested Jesus. Shortly after midnight he was taken before Annas, and then to Caiaphas the High Priest for further questioning. Finally he was brought before a pre-dawn assembly of the Sanhedrin where, in a mock trial, he was sentenced to death on the charge of blasphemy. In the early morning hours, Jesus was brought by his captors before the Roman procurator for confirmation of the death sentence. The events that took place before Pilate's judgment seat were tragically dramatic: the exhausted, yet unprotesting prisoner; the vacillating, conscience striken judge, and the murderous priest inspired mob. The outcome was inevitable. For the sake of political expediency Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified.

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Here at Golgotha, outside the walls of Jerusalem our lesson ends - but surely there was more than Jewish intrigue and Roman politics involved in the death of Christ. Our Bible tells us that the salvation of mankind was dependent upon Jesus' death on the cross. The significance of the sacrifice of Christ will be the theme of the next lesson.

SUPPLEMENT TO LESSON #11

The following material may be helpful in a further consideration of the Devil, Satan, demons, etc.

A review of events which transpired between the time of the close of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament provide an explanation of why we find the Devil and demons mentioned so frequently in the Gospels. The Greek Empire had dominated the entire inhabited world socially as well as politically. Greek culture had exposed the Jews to its language and its pagan ideas concerning a world filled with supernatural evil spirits or demons. That is why we leave the Old Testament without having met any problems concerning demons and evil spirits and open the pages of the New Testament to find Jewish life and religious beliefs contaminated by Greek philosophy in this and other matters. In the 4th chapter of Matthew we face the idea of a personal devil for the first time. We must therefore be prepared to deal with the matter and clarify the problem.

It is understandable that in order to describe, even briefly, in Christ's time, his experience in such a physiological and psychological struggle, words and expressions must be used with which the simple folk of that day would be familiar. The people of the East were, and still are, accustomed to personalizing ideas and things, especially those which have no specific form of their own. We do this ourselves today in a lesser degree. Sin and evil, sickness and disease were especially treated in this way in Christ's day, and attributed to spirits and demons. Greek mythology and philosophy relating to demons had provided expressions which had become part of everyday speech and conversation. Christ himself metaphorically referred to Beelzebub and popular idioms of his day in order to make other points more understandable to his audiences. Our first step, therefore, in explaining the personalization of sin to a student is to show how this characteristic of giving personalities to inanimate objects arose, and then to explain the meanings of the Greek words originally employed. The word 'devil 'for instance, comes from the Greek word 'diabolos' which if translated into our Bible as other Greek words are,
would read slanderer or false accuser - as indeed in some cases it has been. Similarly the word 'Satan' is a Hebrew word carried over into the Greek writing of the New Testament, and is usually not translated into English as it is in most cases in the Old Testament. There are some places where the word 'satan' is translated into its correct meaning of 'adversary' - one who opposes. There is even a place where an angel is called a satan in Hebrew and translated 'adversary'. Numbers 22:22. Individuals in certain circumstances are called 'satan' in the New Testament. Christ called Peter 'Satan' for example, and he certainly would not have suggested

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Peter was a supernatural evil spirit. Peter was stating his opposition to a course of action which Christ would take that would lead to his crucifixion.

The people of Christ's time also believed that many diseases were caused by disembodied spirits called demons. Epilepsy, a chronic nervous disease, was commonly believed to be caused by an evit spirit taking possession of a person. It would have taken Christ much longer to correct such misunderstandings than it would to cure their physical ailments. We, ourselves, sometimes refer to a mental patient as a lunatic - which means 'moonstruck', but we do not really believe the moon has anything to do with his mental trouble.

We cannot deal with the subject of the Devil and Satan more fully in these notes, but there are a number of very helpful writings on the subject such as "The Problem of Evil' by N. Richards, a chapter in 'Christendom Astray' and one in 'God's Way' by John Carter which will give the teacher ample background information to prepare for a full discussion.