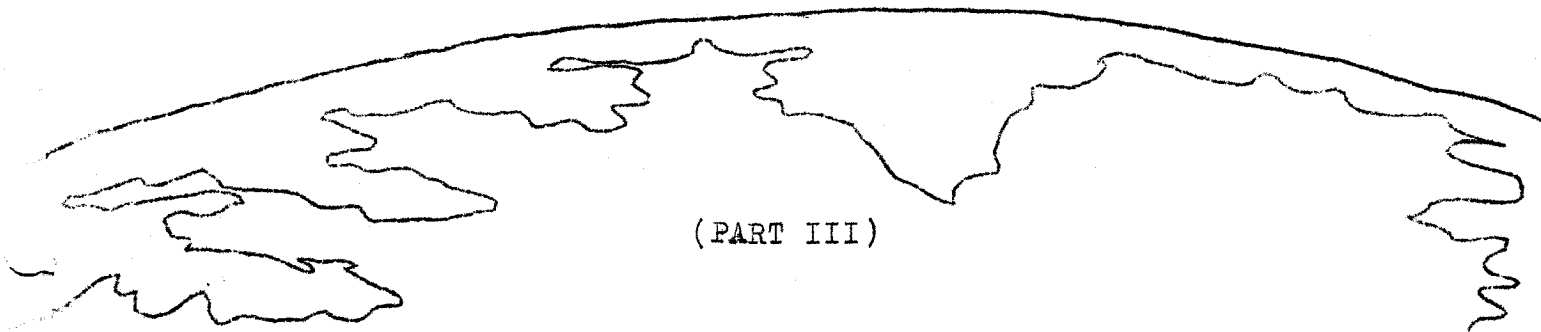


Phantom-Drama

of

Creation



(PART III)

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM INTERPRETED
Lesson 49

MEMORY TEXT: "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his." Daniel 2:20

Daniel was a young Israelite who was taken captive to Babylon. This captivity occurred while Jehoiakim was king of Israel, eleven years before his son Zedekiah was punished for breaking the Babylonish agreement.

Daniel loved GOD and was used of Him. He served King Nebuchadnezzar well because that was his job. But he prayed to the LORD and obeyed Him, and lived according to His commands.

One night the King of Babylon had a dream, and it bothered him dreadfully; yet he could not remember it, except that it seemed important and terrible. If he had told it to the "wise men" of his court, they might have guessed at an interpretation; but they could not easily explain a dream he could not even remember.

Nebuchadnezzar was so angry that he ordered that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. Daniel and his Israelitish friends would be included, for they were among the company of men who counselled the king.

So Daniel and his companions prayed to the LORD for guidance. And the LORD answered Daniel's prayer. This was the dream:

There was a great image; its head was gold, its breast and arms silver, its stomach and sides brass, and its feet were iron mixed with clay.

Then the king saw a Stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and hurled at the feet of the image. The image fell, ground to powder, and the wind carried it away. Then the Stone grew and filled the earth.

Parents' reference: W.T. 5526

DANIEL'S DREAM -- ANOTHER VIEW
Lesson 50

MEMORY TEXT: "The kingdom and dominion...shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High...an everlasting kingdom...."
Daniel 7:27

Daniel was very much interested in God's plans, and so God revealed many things to him. If you and I really want to do the LORD'S will, we must study to learn what that will is. This strong desire to cooperate with the divine purpose is pleasing to the Father, and He will bless our efforts.

Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed of a grand image which represented the kingdoms of this world. Most people look at wealthy nations and say, "How marvelous! How powerful!" But this is an example of man's thinking being different from God's. Daniel had a dream of earthly kingdoms, too. But in Daniel's dream the kingdoms looked wicked and beastly, as they seem to God.

In Daniel's dream, the empire of Babylon looked like a lion -- splendid, proud, ruler of all. The empire of Medo-Perisa looked like a bear -- big, heavy, stubborn, powerful. The empire of Greece looked like a leopard -- clever, sneaky, unreliable, deceitful. The Roman empire was represented by a beast that could not be described -- frightening, disgusting, completely terrible.

This fourth beast had ten little horns at first. (Horns represent power.) Then the Roman empire changed: Instead of being a pagan kingdom of armies and false religions, it changed its name to Christian. The Holy Roman Empire was just as cruel as the pagan empire had been, and just as ungodly, but they said they were fighting for Christ! This change (from pagan to "nominal" Christian) was shown in Daniel's dream when another horn (representing the nominal Christian Church of Rome) grew in size until three other little horns (the divisions of the old Roman

DANIEL'S DREAM -- ANOTHER VIEW
Lesson 50



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. When men think of wealthy earthly kingdoms and their grandeur, what unhappy situations do they overlook?
2. Will these unhappy situations always exist?
3. Can you think of other significant animals in the Bible? John 1:29,36; Revelation 20:2; Isaiah 40:31; Leviticus 16:21; Hebrews 10:4; Matthew 10:16.
4. Find a newspaper clipping that shows the beastly things that happen in the kingdoms of this "present evil world."
5. According to the newspapers, would you say that people are satisfied with the governments of this world?
6. How should you feel when you hear of this time of trouble upon the kingdoms of this world? Luke 21:31.

KING BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST
Lesson 51

MEMORY TEXT: "The LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD,
the hope of their fathers." Jeremiah 50:7

In Malachi 3:6, God says, "I am the LORD, I change not." In Isaiah 55:11, He says, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

These are some of the scriptures which remind us of God's fairness. When He promises a blessing or a reward, you can be sure it will happen. When He warns a sinner to stop his wickedness, it is not an idle threat. Punishment will follow wrong-doing.

We cannot feel, "This is just a little wrong. God really won't care. He may not even notice." There is no such thing as a little sin. God cares about everything. God notices everything.

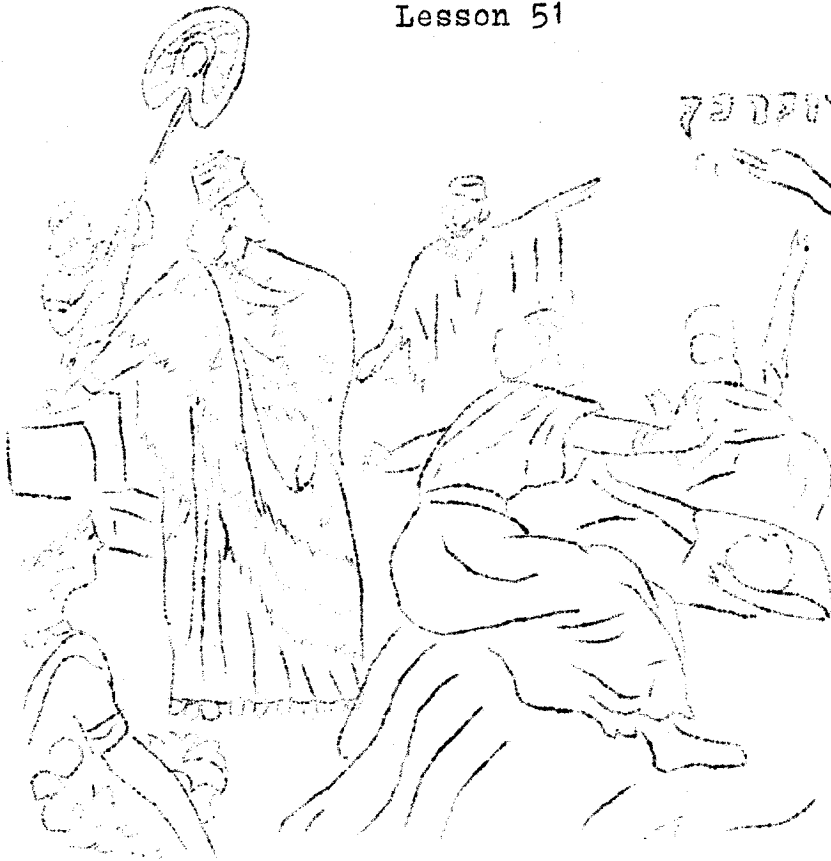
On the other hand, He also notices every time you try to do right. He may not reward you right away, but He is watching, and you are closer to His love and care because you tried to do His will.

The book of Daniel tells of several events of trial and reward, and of judgment and punishment. Do you remember the three young men who refused to bow to King Nebuchadnezzar as a god? They were thrown in a fiery furnace, but were not hurt. (Daniel 3) (Trial -- reward.)

Then there was the time that the king became so proud that the LORD punished him with a disease of the mind. (Daniel 4) (Judgment -- punishment.)

The next king was named Belshazzar, and his judgment and punishment were terrible. (Daniel 5) (Judgment -- punishment)

KING BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST
Lesson 51



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What does Nominal mean?
2. What is "the nominal church"?
3. Is every Catholic or Presbyterian or Methodist person wicked?
4. Why would it be wrong for you to attend a nominal church?
5. Will there be nominal churches in the Millennial Kingdom?
6. How would a church get along if it had no people or money?
7. The Babylonians thought that the River Euphrates would protect them from their enemies. What happened when the river dried up?
8. Who will teach people about God when the nominal churches lose their power?
9. Will this be better or worse?

KINGS DARIUS AND CYRUS
Lesson 52

MEMORY TEXT: "Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13

During the Israelites' seventy years of captivity in Babylon, four kings learned of the God of Israel. There was Nebuchadnezzar, who returned from his insane life with the animals to say: "I praise and extol and honor the King of heaven...whose works are truth and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase." (Daniel 4:37)

There was Belshazzar, who served his wine in the goblets stolen from God's temple, and that night was slain. (Daniel 5: 2-4, 30)

There was also King Darius, the Median who took the kingdom of Babylon that night, and who took Daniel as well, that he might be his first prince over all the princes and rulers.

Darius appreciated Daniel's honesty, and grew to love him as a noble friend. But the princes and rulers were jealous, and hated the king's favorite. Not only did they desire the favor of the king, but they could not steal from the empire's wealth with Daniel watching everything so carefully.

"If we could only get his job," they thought. But he did his job so well that they could find no fault with him. The only thing he did besides work long hours for the king was to pray to his God. Ah! That was it! Daniel was thrown into a den of lions because he prayed to the God of Israel. The story of his experience and rescue is found in Daniel 16.

And lastly, there was King Cyrus of Persia, who issued a proclamation giving all Israelites liberty to return to Palestine. He also gave money, and decreed that the vessels of the LORD'S

KINGS DARIUS AND CYRUS
Lesson 52



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Is it usual for wicked people to hate good people? John 15:19; Genesis 4:8; 37:4.
2. What are some causes for hatred? Songs of Solomon 8:6; I Corinthians 13:4; II Timothy 3:2.
3. Give examples of how Daniel's honesty and conscientious service to the king might affect the other rulers and the princes.
4. One of the thrilling things about the Bible is its harmony, even though different parts of it were written by many different authors over a period of about 1600 years. Read of the events of our recent lessons in II Chronicles 36.
5. Did the LORD foresee these events? Jeremiah 25:1-12.
6. Why do you think Cyrus helped the Israelites?
7. Why didn't all the Israelites return to Palestine?

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES
Lesson 53

MEMORY TEXT: "They shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob...forever."
Ezekiel 37:25

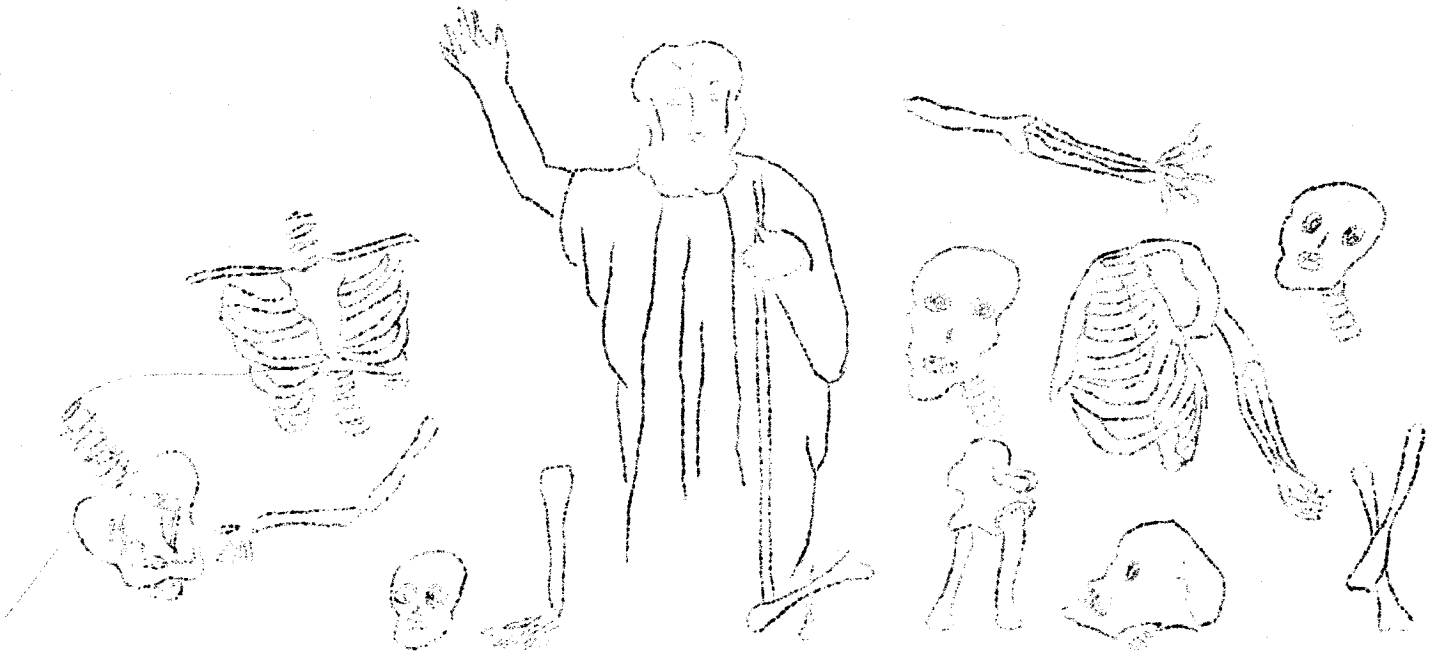
Daniel was not the only prophet of Israel in Babylon. Ezekiel, the priest, was also used of the LORD to prophesy. Naturally, faithful Israelites yearned to know about their future as a nation -- what were God's plans for His chosen people? Whereas Daniel worked in the heathen palace and witnessed for the LORD to the Babylonians, Ezekiel taught his own people, and lived among them.

The elders of Israel came to Ezekiel to learn God's will. These people had obeyed the prophets of the LORD in surrendering to Nebuchadnezzar peaceably. But they yearned to return to their homeland, and they inquired of Ezekiel.

This is what Ezekiel told them: the power of the LORD caused him to see a vision. In this vision, the prophet saw a valley full of dry bones. And he knew these dry bones were like his nation -- scattered throughout Babylonia, their hopes dead.

As Ezekiel walked among the bones (in the vision), he wondered if they could ever live again -- could the nation of Israel ever be restored? And the LORD said, Yes, the day would come when the scattered bones would come together to form a full skeleton; and flesh and muscles and skin would cover the skeleton; and the breath of life would enter that body, and it would live again. Yes, the nation of Israel would live again. Ezekiel was told he must prophesy, and then the bones would come to life, and this would happen while there was great commotion, thunder, and a great earthquake, picturing that God would restore Israel during the time of trouble.

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES
Lesson 53



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Read Ezekiel 36:26. Did the children of Israel receive a pure heart when they returned to Palestine? What is a stony heart?
2. When Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to Israel, did they form a free nation?
3. When did Israel become a free nation?
4. Tell what you know about the Land of Israel today. Read from an encyclopedia to see what has been happening there since 1878. Read from a library book to see what has been happening since 1948.
5. Read Zechariah's prophecy. Zechariah 12:8-10.
6. How do you know that Ezekiel's vision refers to the restoration of Israel and not the resurrection of dead bodies? Ezekiel 37:11; I Corinthians 15:37.
7. Cyrus offered liberty to God's people in his day. Who is the great Cyrus of the Millennial Day?
8. The children of Israel saw the fall of Babylon before they were freed. What great system will fall before Israel is fully restored as the nation of blessing?

THE LOGOS MADE FLESH
Lesson 54

MEMORY TEST: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14

Long, long ago, there were kings who would sit behind a screen and tell a Logos what to say to the people. The King of the Universe, Jehovah God, had a favorite representative like this. He called this wonderful person His Logos.

The Logos of the Almighty God created marvelous worlds and creatures, always according to the Great Creator's instructions. The Logos had more power and skill than anyone but God Himself; but he never worked against God's plans -- he only took pleasure in doing God's will.

This dear Son of God, the Logos, is described in Colossians 1:14-19 as "the image of God, God's firstborn, the creator of all things in heaven and earth."

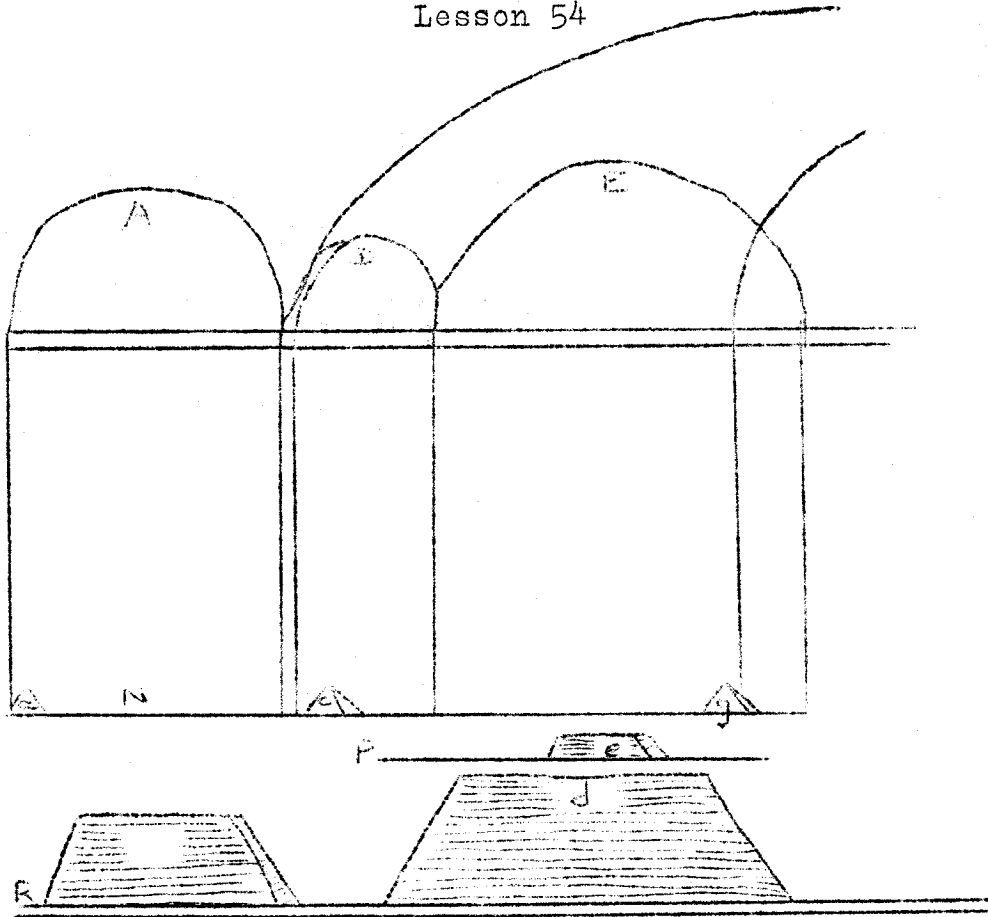
It is hard for us to think of a time when we ourselves were not alive, but now we must think back before our grandfathers lived, before George Washington lived, even before Adam was created in the garden of Eden. Back before our heavens were made, or the angels of those heavens, the Logos was created by God.

How much they loved one another, Jehovah and His Logos! What great things they did together! One of the most loving things they did was to create man. Genesis 1:26. How sad they were when Adam disobeyed God! How much they wanted to help him, even though he was disobedient.

Together they decided, the Almighty God and His beloved Logos, that the Logos would come to earth and die in Adam's place so that Adam and all his family (which means every human who ever lived) might live forever in God's Kingdom.

Parents' reference: Volume 5, pages 67-69, 85-96

THE LOGOS MADE FLESH
Lesson 54



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What does John 1:1-5, 9-14, tell you about the Word (Greek, LOGOS)?
2. What is a god? Psalm 82:6,7; Exodus 7:1.
3. Was the Logos the same person as Jehovah God? John 1:2.
4. What does Revelation 3:14 tell you about the Logos?
5. What does Revelation 21:6 tell you about the Logos?
6. From Study XII in the Divine Plan of the Ages, can you identify what is represented by:
A, D, E, N, P, R; Pyramid a, b, c, d, e, g.

TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY

Lesson 55

MEMORY TEXT: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Luke 2:10

The Logos had everything. He enjoyed God's love and the friendship of other Spirit beings. Although we cannot know exactly how spirit beings live, Hebrews 2:6 says that man is lower than the angels, so we know that spirit beings must have a very remarkable life.

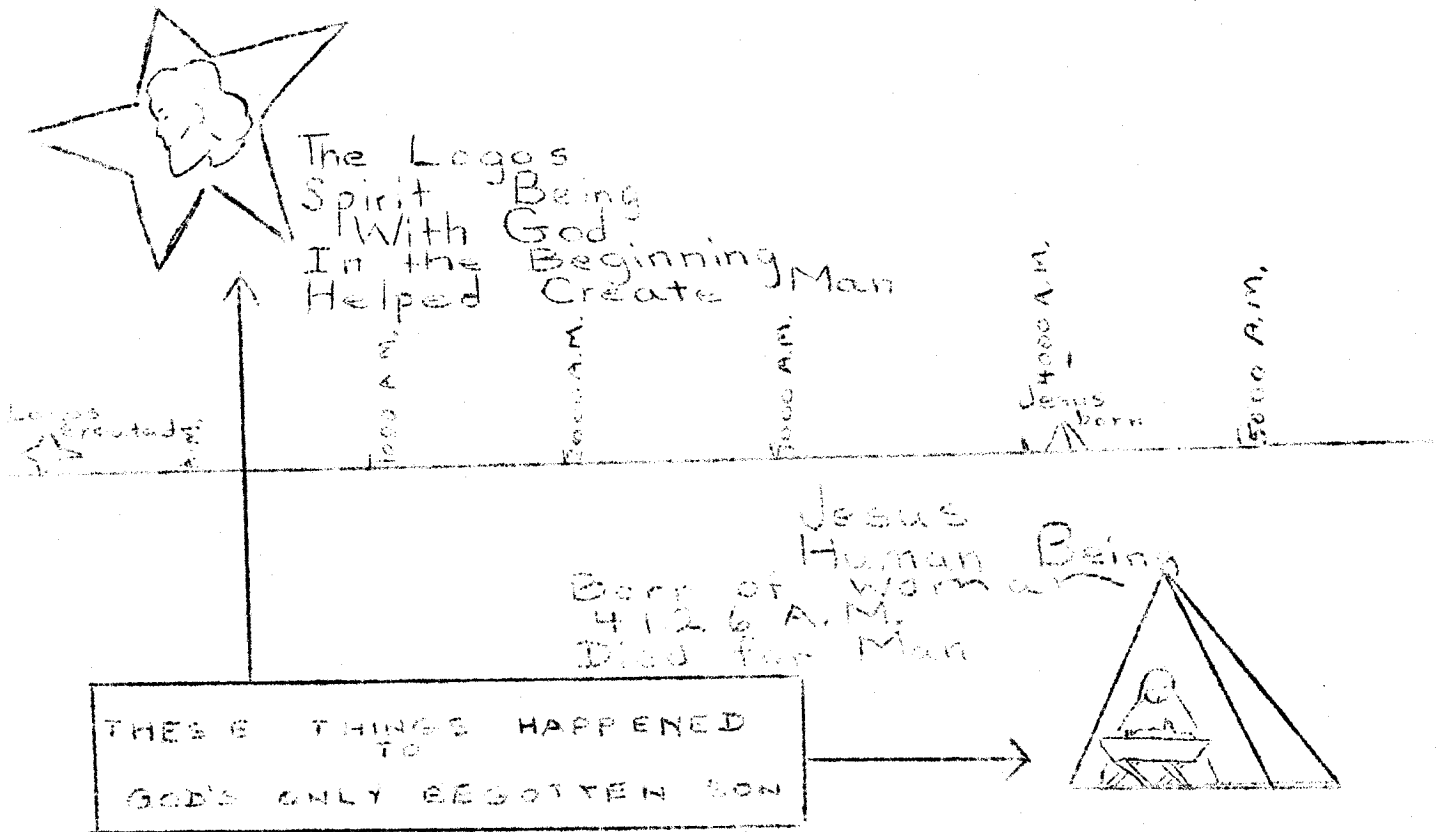
From his high position of favor as God's chief helper on a perfect, sinless plane of life, the Logos gave his life to God to become man's Redeemer. "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." 2 Corinthians 8:19.

God's law is very exact: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life. Deuteronomy 19:21. A perfect human life had to die because Adam had disobeyed God. This life could not be that of a sinner or anyone who makes mistakes, as you and I do. This life could not be that of an angel. It had to be a perfect man, like Adam was before he sinned. 1 Timothy 2:6.

But there was no perfect human being like Adam, so God prepared a perfect human for the Logos. Hebrews 10:5. And this human body was born as a baby, the baby of a faithful young Jewish woman named Mary.

No wonder the angels sang praises to God above the fields of Bethlehem! Luke 2:13,14. The birth of the Savior had just been announced -- the one who would save all people from the great enemy Death. Luke 2:10,11. Hebrews 7:25. Here was the True Light who would lighten every man that would come into the world. John 1:9.

TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY
Lesson 55



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What do you know about angels? Matthew 18:10; Psalm 34:7; Luke 1:11-13,19; 2:26,28,29,30.
2. How rich was the Logos? Explain. John 17:5; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16,17; Hebrews 1:2.
3. How did he become poor?
4. What is poverty?
5. How did his poverty make his followers rich?
6. What did the Law of Moses mean when it said "an eye for an eye"?
7. What does the name Jesus mean? Matthew 1:21.
8. How was Jesus "the light of the world"? John 8:12; 2 Timothy 1:10.
9. Could Jesus, while a baby, die for Adam as a ransom, a corresponding price? Was the baby Jesus a perfect man?
10. Who could have been a ransom for Adam (except Jesus)? Psalm 49:7.