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a *Grace Notes* course

## **Life of Christ 100**

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### **Lesson 106**

The Wilderness Temptation of Christ  
Jesus' First Followers

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## **Life of Christ 100, Lesson 106**

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## The Wilderness Temptation of Christ

The introductory verses, or how Christ got to the wilderness. The three gospel accounts of the event differ substantially so as to shed as much light as possible on it. Since Divine Guidance is in view here, we will exegete each passage in turn in order to get the details.

**Matthew 4:1**, "Then Jesus was led up into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil"

The adverb of time *pote* is translated 'then'. It reveals the sequence of events in Christ's life. Mark uses the adverb *euthus* to communicate the immediate aspect of this transition.

*ie.sous* is the proper noun used as the subject of the sentence. This is 'Jesus'.

The verb is *ane.chthe*. It is in the passive voice, which indicates that our Lord did not produce the action of the verb but instead received it. The constantive aorist tense summarizes the past action into one moment of time. The verb itself means to lead from a lower to a higher point. This point can be figurative, as in the case of spiritual maturity, or literal, as in this instance.

Christ was going from the low point of the Jordan River (just a few miles from the lowest land elevation on the planet) to the rough wilderness above. This emphatically does not mean snatched away, as some have tried to make the point that the Spirit picked our Lord up and bodily moved Him to the desert. This is translated, 'was led up' The Spirit did the leading and Christ did the following. Exactly how this occurred will be the subject of our study of the doctrine of divine guidance.

The prepositional phrase *eis te.n ere.mon* describes the geographical transition from the Jordan to the Wilderness. It is translated "into the desert".

A second prepositional phrase puts forth the leadership of the Spirit, who was the direct agent of the leading. It is *hupo tou pneumatou*, and translated "by the Spirit.

The last clause of the verse is a purpose clause which is *peirasthe.nai hupo tou diabolou*. The verb is the aorist passive of *peirazo*, which means

to put someone to the test. Depending on the one doing the test, the purpose may be good or bad. This is translated, 'to be tempted by the devil'

Notice that *hupo tou diabolou* is identical to *hupo tou pneumatou*. In the battle to come, it will be the ministry of God the Holy Spirit versus the temptation of the devil.

This is the first evidence testing done under the conditions of the church age. Christ is our prototype for the fulfillment of God's plan for the church age dispensation. An entirely new and never before tried set of grace assets will be put through its paces over the next forty plus days.

**Mark 1:12**, "And immediately the Spirit cast Him out into the desert"

The major difference here is in the verb that is used to describe the action of the Spirit in getting Christ to the desert.

In this verse, *to pneuma*, the Spirit, is the subject, and *auton* the personal pronoun describing Christ is the object. This reveals that once under the leadership of the Spirit there was no doubt whatsoever as to what would happen.

The verb *ekballei* is in the present tense, which reveals an action as it happens. It is the dramatic way to present the action typical of Mark's gospel. The verb literally means to cast out. The Spirit 'cast out' Christ into the wilderness *eis te.n ere.mon*. Again we do not yet know how this occurred, only that it did.

**Luke 4:1**, "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was being led by means of the Spirit in the desert."

The main change here is the revelation that Christ was led by the Spirit for the duration of His stay in the desert, and that it was from a state of being full from the Spirit that gave the leadership.

The verse begins with the post positive conjunction *de* which serves as a transition from the genealogy in the last part of chapter 3. Its force is, "now let's turn to another subject.

Four words work together to form the foundational statement of the verse: *Ie.sous ple.re.s pneumatou hagiou*. They are translated "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit."

The nominative case of *ple.re.s* forms the key part of the description it denotes a state of complete fullness. It can denote thought or emotion, negative or positive, but the idea here refers to the control of the soul.

The verse does not say how, but it does make it clear that *Ie.sous* is under the control of *pneumatōs hagiou*.

The first thing that Jesus does under the control of the Spirit is return from the Jordan, where he had just been baptized. The word for returned is *hupēstrepsen*, which is in the aorist tense. This describes a past action occurring in one moment of time, and thus the translation "He returned".

The second thing is that "He was being led by means of the Spirit."

The verb *e.geto* is from ago, which is the simple verb for the act of leading. It is in the passive voice and so reveals that the subject receives the action of leadership. The imperfect tense indicates that the action took place over a duration of time in the past, and not just at one moment. It is translated, "He was being led."

The preposition *en* plus the instrumental case of means shows that the Spirit was the means of the leading.

*en te. eremo.* portrays both location in the desert and the amount of time spent there. It is translated, "in the desert" This tells us that the Spirit not only led Christ to the desert, but also the entire time that He was there.

Analysis of the three.

Although in all three cases Christ got to the wilderness under the leadership of the Spirit, nowhere are there specific mechanics mentioned. This does not indicate however that there were no mechanics at work.

If no mechanics are mentioned, then we must fall back on what we do know about the ministry of the Spirit in relation to Divine Guidance.

The guidance of the Spirit for Christ in the desert must therefore fall within what the New Testament teaches about the guidance of the Spirit in the church age.

Christ is the author and perfecter of our faith. As he goes we should follow.

## DIVINE GUIDANCE OF CHRIST FOR HIS DESERT EXPERIENCE

The Old Testament had plenty of guidance for Christ with reference to His destiny in the desert. Israel experienced several notable failures while wandering in the Wilderness. All three of these failures include both a failure in leadership and a failure in the people to follow. All of the events in the history of Israel are recorded for the benefit of Christian believers of all time.

### Read 1 Cor. 10:1-15

Jesus Christ himself was certainly aware of the will of God with respect to these events.

Some of the events during which Israel failed are:

The Provision of Manna

The Golden Calf Episode

Aaron's Rod that Budded

The Waters of Meribah

### MANNA

Num 11:6; Josh 5:12; Psa 105:40; Ex 16.

Name. Manna means "What is it?" in the Hebrew. This is after the response of the Jews when they saw it for the first time.

Physical Description:

Ex 16:13,14,21 "and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake like thing, fine as the frost on the ground... but when the sun grew hot, it would melt."

Ex 16:20, "But they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul; and Moses was angry with them."

Ex 16:31, "And the house of Israel named it manna, and it was like coriander seed, white; and its taste was like wafers with honey."

Num 11:7, "Now the Manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bedellium."

Num 11:8, "The people would go about and gather it and grind it between two millstones or beat it in the mortar, and boil it in the pot

and make cakes with it; and its taste was as the taste of cakes baked with oil."

It was eaten for the duration of the wilderness experience of the children of Israel.

Its cessation after 40 years was significant enough to be recorded by Joshua, Josh 5:12.

Manna was a miraculous grace provision from God, Ex 16:32, "Then Moses said, 'This is what the Lord has commanded, 'Let an omer full of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread that I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.'"

After a while the children of Israel became dissatisfied with the monotony of manna, Num 11:46, "And the rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, 'Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna.'"

Note that this was a rejection of the grace of God, and therefore called into question His Holy character.

Note the desire to return to Egypt. The Old Testament records the expression of this desire no less than eight times it was probably muttered on many other occasions.

It was the Lord's original plan to give the people meat for a month. So much so that it would come out of their nostrils. Moses failed to believe the Lord, and thus a plague was sent.

The lust of the rabble was met with quail by the millions Num 11:31, "Now there went forth a wind from the Lord, and it brought quail from the sea, and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp."

Those who went to gather quail would have had to go through the manna in order to reach the dead birds.

After a day in the desert sun the quail was well past its prime. In fact, the plague struck those who

were foolish enough to eat it. v.33, "While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very severe plague."

This punitive discipline was designed to wake up the Israelites and renew their dependence on logistical grace.

Christ used manna to illustrate the grace assets related to salvation and eternal life, John 6:31-33, "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.' Jesus therefore said to them, 'Truly truly I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of Heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.'"

The grumbling of Israel is analogous to any time that we call into question the grace provision of God, whether in spiritual or physical form.

10. This failure was memorialized by the placement of a pot of manna inside of the ark of the covenant. In spite of the failure, the covenant continued, covered by the ark of the covenant.

#### THE GOLDEN CALF

Exo. 32; 1 Kings 12:28; 2 Kings 10:29.

The Golden calf represents the failure of the children of Israel at the Holy Mountain of God.

It was there that they made an idol because of their impatience with Moses, who had been on the mountain with God for what they considered as too long.

Ex 32:14, "Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron, and said to him, 'Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And Aaron said to them, 'Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.' Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it into a

molten calf; and they said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.'"

Notice that the people have yet to receive the tablets, but they have already received the commandment against idolatry, and so they are sinning in cognizance against God, Ex 20:23.

Notice also Aaron's direct involvement in this caper. He fashioned it with his own hands.

The people recognize that without Moses they would have died in the desert, and they fear being without him.

It is their desire to replace Moses because they had made him into a god. Their idolatry was directed toward a man, and not the one true god at all.

It is ludicrous for them to think that a calf was the God who brought them up from Egypt. Their reversionism has taken them to irrationality.

In Ex 32, verses 7-14, Moses beseeches God to withhold from destroying the nation of Israel for their idolatry, and the Lord assents.

Moses then descended from the mountain with the tablets of the Law in his arms, he first hears and then sees the idolatrous feast. He is so angry that he dashes the tablets on the rocks at the foot of the mountain. They are utterly shattered. Next he melted down the golden calf, ground it into powder, and scattered the powder over the surface of the water. He made the people drink that water. All this from verses 15-20.

Moses then turns to Aaron, whom he left in command before he went up on the mountain. Aaron's reply is one for the books. Verses 21-24, "Then Moses said to Aaron, 'What did this people do to you, that you have brought such great sin upon them?' And Aaron said, 'Do not let the anger of my lord burn you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. For they said to me, 'Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.'"

Aaron first attempts to blame the people for his failure in leadership.

Second, he fabricates the story of the manufacture of the calf. He implies that the calf is from God Himself by telling of its miraculous production.

As a memorial, the broken tablets of the law were placed inside of the ark of the covenant. In spite of this failure, the covenant would continue, covered by the mercy seat of God.

#### AARON'S ROD

Numbers 17.

In Numbers chapter 16, the rebellion of Korah is recorded. It resulted in the death of 14,700 Israelites by plague.

At the conclusion of the rebellion, there was a great need to reaffirm the authority of Aaron.

Therefore, God conceived a test which the Israelites could perform, so that His choice of Aaron could be made clear to them.

Num 17:17, "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel, and get from them a rod for each father's household: twelve rods, from all their leaders according to their father's households. You shall write each name on his rod, and write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi; for there is one rod for the head of each of their father's households. You shall then deposit them in the tent of meeting in front of the testimony, where I meet with you. And it will come about that the rod of the man whom I choose will sprout. Thus I shall lessen from upon Myself the grumblings of the sons of Israel, who are grumbling against you.' Moses therefore spoke to the sons of Israel and all their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' households, twelve rods, with the rod of Aaron among their rods. So Moses deposited the rods before the Lord in the tent of the testimony."

Of course, Aaron's rod budded, and thus was his authority established, verses 8-11.

Aaron's rod that budded was placed into the ark of the covenant to remind the people of the rebellion of Korah, and the importance of following their divinely appointed rulers.

The covenant continued in spite of the failure, because the sin was covered by the mercy seat.

#### THE WATERS OF MERIBAH

Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 20:2-13.

This is the real third test which Christ received in the wilderness. It was the reason that the people were not allowed to enter the promised land.

At Meribah, the people became thirsty, and demanded that God bring them water.

They had been without water for one day. They were uncomfortable, but not dying.

Because of this thirst, they put the Lord to the test. They demanded that He prove His deity by giving them water. This was the last straw, and so the punishment came.

### THE TESTS OF CHRIST

Test one: the logistics test.

**Matt 4:24**, "And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He finally became hungry. And the tempter said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' But He answered and said, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'"

*ne.steusas* is the verb that is translated fasting. It describes complete abstinence from food. The culminative aorist tense concentrates on the end of the fasting.

*husteron* is used as an adverb to emphasize that Christ was not ordinary man. It is translated 'finally'.

Luke 4:2-4, "And He ate absolutely nothing during those days; and at the concluding of them, He hungered. And the devil said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, speak to this stone that it might become bread.' And Jesus answered him, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

The combination of *ouk* and *ouden* places an absolute negation on the verb *ephagen*.

The preposition *en* plus the phrase *tais heme.rais ekeinai*s shows that the negation lasts for the entire forty days.

The aorist participle *suntelestheiso.n* indicates that it was only at the very conclusion of the forty days that He became hungry. The verb *peinao* describes an obsessive hunger, where all that is thought of is

food. It is not just the growling of the stomach. After forty days, even the healthiest human being is at the limits of his endurance. So was Christ.

The imperative mood of the aorist verb *eipe* shows a command to the stone.

The subjunctive mood of *ginomai* reveals that it all depends on Christ's volition. The devil knows that the Divine Power is available, but that its use would invalidate the purpose of the incarnation.

Matthew says stones plural instead of stone singular from Luke. This difficulty is resolved by applying the principle of plurality. Each recital is correct; there was more than one instance of temptation. Matthew records one of these, while Luke the other. It is likely that Luke records the latter of the two, because of Christ's abbreviated reply. This could not be resolved by applying the principle of translation.

When you put these two together, they form an interesting narrative that describes an ongoing temptation. In the later temptation His Scriptural reply is abbreviated, as though He is at the very end of His endurance, or because it is not necessary to repeat the whole thing.

This test relates to the logistical test of Israel:

The Israelites had something to eat every day. Manna was the world's greatest health food. It was the same thing, but it was something.

Christ had nothing to eat for forty days and forty nights. Therefore, His test was far greater than what they endured. He ate the same thing every day: Nothing.

Placing the manna inside the ark of the covenant foreshadowed this test of our Lord. It commemorated Christ's victory in the desert, and it looked forward to the redemption of this failure at the cross, as represented by the mercy seat.

The essence of the temptation had to do with the temptation to use His divine attributes or rely on what God provided His humanity.

To use His divine capability of omnipotence to turn the stones to bread would violate the principle of kenosis; to do so would destroy divine character.

The very reason for the incarnation would have been undermined and destroyed had Christ given

in here. The cross and the Christian way of life would have instantly become meaningless.

Christ used only what God provided His humanity to resist this temptation. Three grace assets are pertinent:

The human spirit, or spiritual conscience, which was Christ's frame of reference for spiritual matters.

The power of God the Holy Spirit related to the perception and recall of the word.

The Word itself, at the time only the Old Testament canon.

Note that Christ quotes from Deuteronomy 8:3.

The context of this verse is Moses' final exhortation to the children of Israel before their occupation of the promised land.

All three of Christ's replies will come from this speech.

These three things denote readiness for the blessings of the land of milk and honey:

First, there is worship of the one true God and abstinence from idolatry. This is personal love for God.

Second, there is humble acceptance of the circumstances of your life, good or bad, and acceptance of delegated human authority, good or bad.

Third, there is a devotion to the word of Truth, and acceptance of God's logistical grace.

This scripture was originally learned and inculcated by Christ, probably at a very young age.

At this appropriate time, the Spirit recalled this passage into Christ's spiritual frame of reference, His human spirit. Christ instantly understood the issue.

Now the issue remained: Would He apply what had been recalled? The answer is of course. He even quotes the passage directly to the devil.

Deut 8:1-10

Test two: the idolatry test.

**Matthew 4:8-10**, "Again, the devil is taking Him alongside to an exceptionally high

mountain, and showing Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and He said to Him, 'All these things will I give you, if falling down you might worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"

*paralambano* means to take alongside. This verb has a wide connotation which seems to harmonize well with the situation. It means to take someone into your home as a guest; to take someone aside for the purpose of private instruction or reproof; to take someone alongside for purpose of helping them; and in the legal context to take someone into custody. This is the perfect word for this situation, because you can see the enemy taking Christ alongside as a used car salesman does. The historical present is used to emphasize the drama of the moment.

*lian* emphasizes the great height of this mountain; perhaps it was even Mt. Everest or Mt. Ararat...

*deiknumi* means to show or demonstrate something to someone. This too is in the historical present.

The aorist participle *peso.n* demonstrates that the falling down must precede the distribution of the kingdoms and their glory.

The subjunctive mood of the verb *proskune.se.s* indicates that it is up to Christ; He must exercise His will freely in this matter. The verb depicts the kissing of another's feet, and comes with the idea of sycophantic flourish before a deified king.

**Luke 4:5-8**, "And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"

Luke uses the word *oikoumene.s* for world. It bears closer to the meaning of 'establishment', or 'corporation'. This contrasts with the straightforward *kosmos* of Matthew.



Luke adds that the show occurred in one moment of time. Ahem, he did not want Christ to look too closely. This from *stigma. chronou*, a point of chronological time.

*exousia* denotes that Christ would be given delegated authority from Satan over all these kingdoms, along with the glory of them. Let me point out that the glory of the devil's world is only a veneer.

The enemy did not receive the kingdoms of the world because of meritorious service. He deceived Adam, and received the authority because of Adam's irresponsible sin.

This temptation is recorded by both Matthew and Luke, who write and cover it thoroughly between them. There is only one instance of temptation here.

We will accept Luke's order of events here, because they are more logical, and Luke tends to be very chronological in his narrative, while Matthew is topical.

All of the kingdoms of the world would belong to Christ at the right time, and only when His chosen people would accept Him as the Messiah.

This particular condition was not yet fulfilled, and in fact the early indicators were not looking good.

In other words, this was attacking Christ at a potential weak spot. The greatness of the world made the temptation all the more agonizing.

That Christ would continue in poverty for the rest of his life is a testimony to his fantastic resolve.

Part of this test had to do with timing, and part of with idolatry. It harkens back to the failure of the golden calf.

Christ's solution to this problem comes from Deut 6:13. Note that the blessings of the Promised Land are neither earned nor deserved. Yet they are given freely by God.

The offer from Satan is something similar, but infinitely less because of the object of worship. The satisfaction that comes from a relationship with God is so great as to add to one's appreciation and enjoyment of the attendant blessings. In the worship of idols, all the things turn to dust.

Christ applies the perfect passage for this specific temptation, another great testimony to the work of the Spirit and the level of inculcation that Christ has reached.

Again Christ solves the problem through the Holy Spirit, the Word, and His human spirit. These same three grace assets are available to us as church age believers.

In this case kenosis is not as much an issue, because Christ is not directly tempted to use His capabilities to solve the problem.

The authority/putting God to the test.

**Matthew 4:5-7**, "Then the devil took Him alongside into the holy city; and he stood Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning You.' And, 'On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike your foot against a stone.' Jesus said to him, 'On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

*paralambano* is used again by Matthew to describe the sleazy operation of the enemy. This polite word is used to outline an insidious temptation.

*entello* is the word used to indicate the giving of responsibility to the angels. It is in the future tense because it depends on a past condition in the context of Psalm 91.

*palin* is used by Christ to express His contradiction of the assertion of Satan. *palin* means back; again; it is an adverb. Here it takes on the meaning of contradiction. It returns to Scripture, where Satan has just taken the conversation, and contradicts what has just been said.

**Luke 4:9-12**, "And he led Him to Jerusalem and stood Him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning You to guard You,' and, 'On their hands they will bear You up, Lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'" And Jesus

answered and said to hi, 'It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

This test has many levels:

There is a temptation to verify His own Messiahship by jumping down from the temple; from this it appears to be about Aaron's rod that budded.

There is a necessity for Christ to see if the verse quoted by Satan is right and if it applies here.

If it does not apply, then Christ must rely on the Spirit to provide Him with the right Scripture.

This is also a temptation to use the privileges of His own deity 'If you are the Son of God.' kenosis comes back into play here.

Note that in this test the enemy is using Scripture against Christ. It is an oft used ploy, and it seldom fails. This points out the necessity for a prepared pastor.

The enemy quotes Psalm 91 in the temptation. Verses 11 and 12 are quoted but taken out of context.

This Psalm is about trust in God, and how God responds to those who love Him.

Especially pertinent is the conditional clause of verse 9: "If you make the most high your dwelling" This means that the following verses depend on the fulfillment of this condition.

Christ could not demand that God send his angels to cushion up his fall... that would be putting God to the test, as what happened in the wilderness at the waters of Meribah.

This test appears to be about the establishment of Christ's earthly authority. A good miracle in front of thousands of temple worshippers including the most important men in Israel would well establish Christ's authority among the Jews.

How soon they forget. Christ was only forty days before the object of the triple miracle of His baptism. The heavens split open; the voice of God spoke; the Spirit descended in the form of a dove. Yet this miracle, probably in front of those same leaders who were now below in the temple court, did not convince the people to follow Christ.

The spiritual gift of miracles would establish Christ's authority at the proper time. This was not

that time. The gift of miracles functions under the sovereignty of the Spirit so that He chooses the time the place and the miracle to be performed.

The devil is trying to promote Christ before God. The devil is attempting to foist onto Christ an Aaron's rod that budded scenario. He is attempting to do so by quoting Scripture that sounds right.

Christ rightfully sorts this one out, and quotes Deuteronomy 6:16. The full passage through verse 19 goes like this: "Do not test the Lord your God as you did at Massah. Be sure to keep the commands of the Lord your God and the stipulations and decrees he has given you. Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take over the good land that the Lord promised on oath to your forefathers, thrusting out all your enemies before you as the Lord said."

Again this is a quote from Moses final speech in preparation for the second generation to enter the promised land.

This time it was done right by Christ. He passed the tests that Israel failed.

In a completely appropriate way, the three items in the ark of the covenant represent both the failure of Israel and the triumph of Christ.

Christ not only paid for our sins, but He also produced the righteousness which would be imputed to us at salvation.

In producing that righteousness Christ established a way of solving problems which He would leave as a heritage for all church age believers.

That way was total dependence on the grace assets of God.

Christ's testing in the desert was intense, subtle, and could only be passed through dependence on the grace assets.

These three tests fall into three general categories: Provision, prosperity, and promotion.

These three tests were temptations to Christ in three categories:

The temptation to use divine power and violate the principle of kenosis.

The temptation to forsake a great relationship with God for direct worship of Satan.

The temptation to put God to the test.

Putting God to the test.

You put God to the test when you demand Him to reveal Himself in some way that benefits you.

The issue is motive. The issue is self promotion.

You are not promoted until God promotes you.

You are not a success until you succeed according to the standards of the Word of God.

Real promotion and success depend on your fulfillment of the plan of God.

You can only fulfill the plan of God through the implementation of the victorious ideology.

The conclusion of the tests.

**Matt 4:11**, "Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him."

**Mark 1:13**, "and the angels were ministering to Him."

**Luke 4:13**, "And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time."

### Jesus' First Followers

**John 1:35-51** (translation), "Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,

"and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God!'"

"And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

"And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and said to them, 'What do you seek?' And they said to Him, 'Rabbi [which translated means Teacher], where are you staying?'"

"He said to them, 'Come, and you will see.' They came therefore and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

"One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

"He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' [which translated means Christ].

"He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, 'You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas' [which translated means Peter].

"The next day He purposed to go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me'.

"Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.

"Philip found Nathaniel and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'

"And Nathaniel said to him, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.'

"Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!'

"Nathaniel said to Him, 'How do you know me?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.'

"Nathaniel answered Him, 'Rabbi You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.'

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these.'

"And He said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'"

John the Baptist knows Jesus already; they are cousins according to the flesh. So when he sees the Messiah, he points Him out to the two disciples he is with. He calls Jesus the "Lamb of God." This is a reference to the Passover feast.

### The Passover and Unleavened Bread

The Documentation. Ex 12:320; Lev 23:6; Deut 16:18; Num 28:1625.

The Procedure.

A lamb without spot or blemish is slain by the head of each family.

The blood from the lamb is sprinkled with hyssop on the top of the doorframe.

The lamb is roasted and then consumed with bitter herbs by the father and his family.

After Jerusalem was established, the Passover was to be celebrated only there.

For the week following the Passover feast only unleavened bread would be eaten.

On each of the seven days the Levitical priest would sacrifice 2 bullocks, 1 ram, 7 lambs, and 1 goat.

On the second day an offering of barley was made. This was the first harvest fruits of the year.

The Sabbath was observed on the first and last days of the feast, but the entire week was treated as a Sabbath with reference to work. Only work for food preparation was allowed.

The interpretation.

The wilderness journey.

This feast represented the Exodus from Egypt.

The Passover represents the night before the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, Exo 12.

The blood on the doorframe was a sign to God to pass over that house. All other houses would have the firstborn of all men and animals killed by God.

ii. The eating of the lamb would be the last meat eaten before the journey to the promised land.

iii. The bitter herbs represented the bitterness of the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt.

The unleavened bread represented the hurry in which the Jews had to leave. They did not have time for the yeast to rise.

The observation of the Sabbath was a reminder to set apart time for the Lord, so that one would be spiritually prepared for the wilderness journey.

All together, these things represent the beginning of every believer's relationship with God: the moment of belief in Christ.

The believer leaves behind all that he has in the way of pride and human good in order to take hold of salvation in Christ.

The promised land still lies ahead. This is the hope of spiritual maturity and its blessings.

The rituals.

The sacrifice of the lamb was a preview of the saving work of Christ on the cross. The lamb was without spot or blemish, which was the status of Christ at the virgin birth. This called to mind the righteousness, justice, love, mercy, grace, and flexible proficiency of God.

The eating of the whole lamb represented the necessity of total belief in Jesus Christ for salvation.

The priests sacrificing the animals provide a backdrop for the truth of the feast. These were burnt offerings.

The sacrifice of 7 lambs per day displayed the perfect work of God.

ii. The sacrifice of the ram each day was a reminder that this was the sacrifice of God's Son. It harkened back to Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac.

iii. The sacrifice of the goat each day was a reminder that Jesus Christ was the scapegoat for the entire human race.

iv. The sacrifice of the two bullocks per day represented the prosperity which comes from a relationship with God. The bullock was a sign of prosperity and the means to prosperity, for it was a beast of burden. Ownership of two bullocks was considered prosperity in ancient Israel.

The sacrifice of the barley was a giving of the first-fruits of the harvest, and it was given in thanksgiving for logistical grace. It called to mind the faithfulness of God.

The unleavened bread represents the status of Christ on the cross. There is no sin whatsoever in Christ, just as unleavened bread has no yeast.

The daily sacrifices were to remind the Jews of the importance of their relationship with God. They

put an exclamation point onto the other activities of the feast.

The Temple.

The daily sacrifices were made by the priests at the brazen altar in the outer court of the Temple or tabernacle.

This represents the righteousness of Christ ascending up to God the Father in the smoke of the burnt offering.

The copper of the altar represented judgment, and specifically the judgment of Christ in our place on the cross.

New Testament.

Christ spoke of his relationship to the Passover at the last supper. Mat 26:26-30, "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." {27} Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. {28} This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. {29} I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom." {30} When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

Paul used the unleavened bread to illustrate the church without the bad influence of those in the cosmic system. 1 Cor 5:7, "Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth."

In other words, Christ was the fulfillment of the Passover. John knew that Christ was about the redemption of sins; that was the nature of his own baptizing ministry.

The two disciples follow Jesus, because He is the Messiah, and greater than John. This is not too difficult a decision to make.

They use a respectful form of address, Rabbi.' They recognize that Jesus has the authority of a teacher of the Law, and therefore a Jewish

authority. This would certainly miff the Pharisees and Scribes in the days and years to come.

These two disciples want to know where Jesus is staying. This is tantamount to proclaiming that they are with Him now; they want to follow Him wherever He will go. They are through with John.

Andrew went and found Peter; there is not much more that Scripture has to say about Andrew, but this of course was something very good. A lot has been said about this kind of ministry; deservedly so. Even the timid can have great impact simply by repeating the act of Andrew in their own way. It is a simple kind of thing: "I have found the Messiah; come see for yourself."

Jesus calls Simon CEPHAS, which is translated PETROS. They mean rock.' He would be the foundation rock of the early church.

Bartholomew is the name mentioned in the synoptic gospels. This means 'Son of Ptolemies' Since this is only a last name it is not specific as to the actual person behind it. It also may be interpreted 'Son of Ptolemais', a city on the North Coast of Palestine, not too far from Galilee. In modern parlance, 'the guy from Ptolemais'.

John uses Nathaniel, the man's first name. The Ptolemies were the royal family in Egypt, and major players in the events following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. and the building of the Roman Empire. The most famous of all the Ptolemies was none other than Cleopatra of Egypt.

Bartholomew/Nathaniel exhibits an elitist attitude toward Nazareth that could come from being part of a royal family, or simply from a neighboring town.

It is interesting to note that Christ says of Nathaniel, "a real Israelite". The word 'real' is translated from the adverb *ale.thino.s*. This adverb is one of emphasis on true nature. But Nathaniel Bartholomew is of Egyptian heritage he could not be a genetic Jew. But Christ talks about his spiritual heritage as Paul would... that the true Jew is the one who believes in Him regardless of his genetic make up.

Christ also comments that Nathaniel is without guile, or cunning deceit. Another way to put it is that Nathaniel is very forthright; he says what he thinks. Nathaniel is a straight shooter with his

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words, as he has just demonstrated with his comment on Nazareth.

Nathaniel's response to Christ's statement is surprise and disbelief. "How do you know me?" Christ responds, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." We do not know what Nathaniel was doing under the fig tree, but it was certainly related to his forthright nature.

On the basis of Christ's simple statement, Nathaniel believes. It is now Christ's turn to register surprise.

On account of Nathaniel's belief, Christ prophesies: 'You will see the heavens opened , and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.' This is a reference to behind the scenes of prayer. Taking the prayers to God, and returning the answers to man. However, this is a literal vision, and so Nathaniel will have the gift of seeing behind the scenes of prayer.

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