

John 1:14 *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.*

Philippians 2:5-11 *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Revelation 12:1-5 *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailling in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*

- In Revelation 12, John reaches back in time to place emphasis on the two monumental events of history which will eventually lead to the ultimate conflict between good and evil at the end of the Tribulation:
 - the humiliation of Satan, the dragon, who was cast out of Heaven with one-third of the angels
 - the birth of the man-child (Jesus) through the woman (Israel) and the resulting persecution by the dragon
- Satan had a choice to serve God and refused; he is jealous of mankind's choice and wants to insure that we refuse!
- The conflict recklessly rampages through man's history from the beginning in the Garden of Eden. Satan was successful in leading Adam and Eve into sin, but God intervened in a redemptive act and spoke this promise:
 - **Genesis 3:15** *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*
- From that very moment, Satan began working feverishly on his plans to launch a preemptive strike against God by aborting the line through which the man-child was to come. He wanted to stop the people of God at all costs!
 - He filled Cain with enough hatred to murder his righteous brother Abel. God raised up Seth.
 - He led mankind into enough wickedness that God destroyed the world in a flood. God raised up Noah.
 - He deceived men with false religions that worshipped the gods of nature. God raised up Abraham.
 - He caused Pharaoh to issue a death warrant for all Hebrew baby boys. God thwarted his plan through Pharaoh's own daughter ... and the opportune tears of a baby named Moses.
 - He tempted Israel into lustful orgies before a golden calf. God raised up the sons of Levi.
 - He bribed the prophet Balaam to curse the nation of Israel. God took control of Balaam's tongue.
 - He frightened the spies with the giants of the land of Canaan. God raised up Joshua and Caleb.
 - He tried to starve out the nation through the raids of the Midianites. God raised up Gideon.
 - He bound the strongman Samson with cords of lust that he could not break, and handed him over to the Philistines to rot in a prison. God gave Samson his greatest victory when he repented in his lowest moment.
 - He polluted the priesthood of Israel through the wickedness of Eli's sons. God raised up Samuel.
 - He snared King Saul with the sin of pride. God raised up a man after his own heart named David.
 - He caused Queen Athaliah to kill of the royal seed. God used Jehoiada the priest to hide little Joash.
 - He helped Haman hatch his plot of genocide against the Jews. God raised up Queen Esther.
- He polluted the lineage with so much wickedness that God cursed King Jeconiah and all his descendants. Jeconiah was the last king in David's line. He was succeeded not by his son, but by his uncle Zedekiah. Zedekiah was blinded and led to Babylon in chains, and his reign marked the end of Judah as a kingdom. Satan thought "the curse of Coniah" would "devour the man-child" but God had other plans!
 - **Jeremiah 22:28-30** *Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.*
- Jesus, as the legal but not the literal son of Joseph, was a miraculous answer to this riddle of the rabbis.
 - **Galatians 4:4-5** *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*
- So many times in history God's "chain of promise" seems to depend on only one very fragile link! However, God delights in having a people who serve him simply because of their choice and obedience to His Word! He receives glory from our obedience in front of Satan who refused his chance to obey!
- At no time in history was the "link" more fragile than at the Incarnation! God in human form - a baby!

- Look how far Jesus came to save us!
 - He traded the robes of eternity for rags which wrapped His tiny body.
 - His golden throne room was abandoned in favor of a dirty sheep pen which reeked of dung.
 - The angels who worshipped him were replaced with kind but bewildered shepherds.
 - Divinity entered the world in a stable, through the womb of a teenager and in the presence of a carpenter.
- He didn't have to come! He had a choice. Had he chosen to stay in Heaven, who would have known? Who would have blamed him? He could have come back as a man in another era, when crosses were out of style! But his heart wouldn't let him! Divinity heard the voices of hopelessness and despair from mankind - from you!
- Max Lucado, in "God Came Near," writes twenty-five questions he would like to have been able to ask Mary:
 - What was it like watching him pray?
 - How did he respond when he saw other kids giggling during the service at the synagogue?
 - When he saw a rainbow, did he ever mention a flood?
 - Did You ever feel awkward teaching him how he created the world?
 - When he saw a lamb being led to the slaughter, did he act differently?
 - Did you ever see him with a distant look on his face as if he were listening to someone you couldn't hear?
 - How did he act at funerals?
 - Did the thought ever occur to you that the God to whom you were praying was asleep under your own roof?
 - Did you ever try to count the stars with him ... and succeed?
 - Did he ever come home with a black eye?
 - How did he act when he got his first haircut?
 - Did he have any friends by the name of Judas?
 - Did he do well in school?
 - Did you ever scold him?
 - Did he ever have to ask a question about Scripture?
 - What do you think he thought when he saw a prostitute offering to the highest bidder the body he made?
 - Did he ever get angry when someone was dishonest with him?
 - Did you ever catch him pensively looking at the flesh on his own arm while holding a clod of dirt?
 - Did he ever wake up afraid?
 - Who was his best friend?
 - When someone referred to Satan, how did he act?
 - Did you ever accidentally call him Father?
 - What did he and his cousin John talk about as kids?
 - Did his other brothers and sisters understand what was happening?
 - Did you ever think, "That's God eating my soup"?
- Why did he come as a human being? So people could come to him. There is never a hint in Scripture of one person who was afraid to draw near Jesus. There were those who mocked him. There were those who were envious of him. There were those who misunderstood him. There were those who revered him. But there was not one person who considered him too holy, too divine, or too celestial to touch. There was not one person who was reluctant to approach him for fear of being rejected. (Remember that the next time you are looking at all your failures.)
- But what a risk! What fragility!
 - The omnipotent in one instant made himself breakable.
 - He who had been spirit became pierceable.
 - He who was larger than the universe became an embryo.
 - He who sustains the world with a word chose to be dependent upon the nourishment of a young girl.
- Satan once again stood to devour the man-child through the person of King Herod:
 - Herod had used the title "King of the Jews" - no wonder he was fearful of the fulfilled prophecy.
 - Herod's chief appeal to Rome was the merciless efficiency with which he was able to extract taxes.
 - He murdered his wife Mariamne and her brother Aristobulus, the High Priest.
 - He murdered his two eldest sons, one of them five days before his death. His paranoia was legendary.
 - One of his final acts was to imprison the most distinguished citizens of Jerusalem so they could be killed the moment he died. He said, "The people will not weep when I die, and I want them weeping, even if they weep over someone else." Even in death he orchestrated a great slaughter.
 - He was the king who commanded all male babies under two to be slain. But God gave Joseph a dream!
- Satan tried to tempt Jesus to give up the Incarnation. He whipped up a storm on the Galilee in an attempt to drown the sleeping Jesus. He incited angry townspeople to try and throw Jesus off a precipice. He stirred up the hatred of the Pharisees and Chief Priests until they were successful in orchestrating the crucifixion. He even used a disciple!
- What Satan didn't realize is the plan of God is not as fragile as it sometimes appears! Jesus resurrected in power!
- The only "weak link" in God's chain of redemption is the link he made called "CHOICE." God allows YOU to break the chain of promise in your own life if you refuse to obey him.