

Dr. Ernest Martin's Home Study Course: Lesson 11

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped Home Study Course made between 1977-98 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D. Former Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

BIBLE STUDY LESSON 12 HISTORY OF NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

A knowledge of history is very important to our being able to understand properly the fulness of the story of the Messianic birth, death and resurrection. It is an essential foundation to our being part of the 'building', our being the 'Temple'.

The world avoids the study of the Scriptures which is why so many are in a muddle about the truth. People at the time of Christ's birth knew a lot more about astronomy that 'well educated' people do today.

Daniel 9 and the postscripts added by Ezra when Canonising the O.T. bridge the gap between the Old and New Testaments as we covered in the last lesson.

Christ is the 'missing link' between human beings and God. Christ was God's Firstborn, and we are in Him, so we are also Firstborns. Mary, the surrogate mother was a virgin, and God implanted the embryo of Christ into her body to grow as any other would in the womb.

At the time of Christ's birth there was a magnificent display in the heavens which was observed by people who knew how to look. This is why Herod took the Magi very seriously. Any who knew about astronomy would have known that something significant was happening.

The 'Star' was a planet, Jupiter 'stopped' in the middle of Virgo, and does still.

Astrology = Astronomy + Pagan ideas, and is a total Satanic corruption. In 2 B.C., a sign mentioned in Revelation 12 was seen in heaven 37° above the horizon.

Revelation 12:1 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: 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

This in terms of our calendar appeared 27th August - 15th September, and what is described here can only happen on one day. The Moon travels 25 diameters daily in our sky. The 11th September in 3 B.C., was the first day of the civil New Year, on which kings were crowned. This heavenly configuration could only have occurred between 6.17 and 7.45 p.m., on the 1st Tishri, the Day of Trumpets. God wanted humans to know of the annunciation of the birth of His Son.

Josephus is the most detailed history of the time. Six thousand Pharisees knew about the prophecies in Isaiah 56:3 about Christ the Messiah.

Isaiah 56:3 Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.

God is saying that eunuchs would be miraculous be able to have children, so a virgin could have a baby. Six thousand Pharisees confronted Herod and rebelled against him. Paul as a Pharisee of the Pharisees would have been very much aware that something significant had happened.

The whole nation of Israel had signed an oath to be subject to Caesar Augustus at the time of the census, which is why Christ was born in Bethlehem as Mary and Joseph had to attend there for the census.

Luke 2:2 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Herod murdered all children of two years and younger, because Herod knew that a 'King' was to be born imminently as had been described to him by the Magi.

The Pharisees were far more guilty as they knew the Holy Scriptures so well that foretold the event. Saul who had authority to kill Christians was blinded on the road to Damascus.

Acts 9:9 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who

art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

Farmers used sharpened sticks as goads to control oxen as they worked.

Acts 9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

From that moment, Saul/Paul's heart and mind and attitude were changed, and he began to receive instruction and inspiration from Christ.

Pilate and others witnessing the crucifixion had been amazed that Christ had died so soon after He was nailed up. It was not the torture of crucifixion which killed him. The Jews who were attending were carrying out the penalty of the Law required of a blasphemer, they were pelting Him with stones him for six hours.

Psalm 34:20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

Although the stones did not break any bones, the damage to His head and His organs must have been intense, and caused Him to die so quickly. The 'tree' of crucifixion was only a stones throw from the sacrificial area of the Red Heifer on the top of the Mount of Olives. Christ could see His Father's House from where he hung.

Matthew 27:51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; then verse 54, Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

The officers and solders near Christ witnessed the tearing of the Temple curtain at the moment of Christ's death, and realised something significant has occurred.

Why is it necessary to notice technical details about astronomy? Because it proves both historically and astronomically, plus all the events of that moment in time, and the prophesies in the Scriptures that Christ **was** the Messiah.

Acts 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by **many infallible proofs**, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

1 Corinthians 15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

Many religious people say "We don't need all that stuff! All we need to do is to believe in Jesus." Yes but their faith and belief are based on emotion, not on evidence.

The actual evidence puts a rock-like foundation under our faith. With all the multiple proofs of the event, we can not only **know**, but **know that we know**.

False Christs and false religions abounded then, and are deceiving the many to this day, and will continue to do so in the future. So it is important that we know that we are standing on a Rock, not on opinion, or going through the motions of just 'accepting Christ' as so many in Churchianity do.

We have very little information about the period from 6 A.D. - 26 A.D., even Josephus is silent about this period. From birth to twelve years of age, Christ had become learned to the point where He astonished the Pharisees.

Luke 2:42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. Verse 46: And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. 47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

We have a benchmark note on the 15th year of Tiberius when John the Baptist started his ministry. Whether this was Spring to Spring, or Autumn to Autumn, this may have been an indication that Christ began His 3½ year ministry in 31 A.D., but this is not conclusive.

Luke 3:3 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, 2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the

baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

John 2:11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. 12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days. 13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

This is the first Passover mentioned after the beginning of Christ's ministry. Then in John 3 is the story of Nicodemus needing to be reborn. Christ then journeyed to Galilee about 70 miles North of Jerusalem, but stopped at a well about 35 miles from Jerusalem where he met the Samaritan woman.

John 4:5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. 7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

This was the first hint that the Gentiles were to be embraced by God.

John 4:9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

Then there is another calendrical indication we need to note.

John 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. 35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

Was Jesus saying this in the Springtime, when there were yet four months to the harvest? No, it was a Sabbatical year which ran from Atonement to Atonement, when you could eat from the crops but it was against the law to harvest them.

Then after Christ's second miracle recorded at the end of John 4:

John 5:5 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

John 6:6 After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. 2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. 3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. 4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

This was the Passover of 29 A.D. On the next Passover of 30 A.D., Christ was crucified.

Josephus mentions about ten years later during the Winter of 40 A.D. - 41 A.D. When Paul was taken up into Heaven.

2 Corinthians 12:2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Gaius Caligula wanted a statue of Zeus installed into the Temple Holy of Holies, and Petronius was given the job of installing it. He was told to kill all the Jews. Petronius wrote to Caligula telling him that no rain had fallen for six months, and as soon as Petronius sent the letter the rains began. Caligula wrote to Petronius telling him to commit suicide, but before the letter arrived, Caligula died.

Josephus records that in 66 A.D., the gates of the temple which needed 20 men to move them, opened of their own accord. God was leaving the Temple before the total destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.

By learning more about history and the chronology of the times of Christ enables us to put 'flesh' on the skeletal bones that Scripture provides. It helps to bring it all alive, and this is all part of The Knowledge of the Truth being increased as promised in the book of Daniel.

The seventy weeks prophecy, although plain, is still filled with details we cannot completely fathom, so there is a lot more knowledge to be revealed.