

Could Jesus Have Sinned?

Was Christ *unable* to sin? Was there no *struggle* involved in His 33 1/2 years of tabernacling in human flesh? Today, some are plunging into *error*, teaching that it was utterly *impossible* for Christ to commit sin. If this is true, then you and *I have no Savior!* Here is what your Bible says.

by Garner Ted Armstrong

Who *was* Jesus Christ? Was He God? Was He merely human? Was He some mixture of both?

If He was GOD, then was it *impossible* for Him to sin? If He was human, could He have sinned?

No subject has proved more controversial over the centuries than that concerning the nature of Jesus Christ. Dozens of "isms" have been documented in ecclesiastical history as various would-be theologians attempted to define the Godhead. Is God a Divine Triumvirate? One in "Three Persons," each distinct, yet the *same*? Is Christ a separate Member of the Godhead, subject to the Father, yet "equal" with Him? Has Christ always existed, or was there a time when Christ did not exist? Is He, as some teach, a created Being?

Surely, one would assume the one doctrine all churchmen can *agree* upon is the truth about Who, and What, Jesus Christ really was, and is. But as surprising as it appears, there is great *confusion* among religious leaders about the origin and nature of Christ.

Was Jesus Christ merely human?

If He was, then His life could never atone for the sins of the world. His life could only pay the penalty for *one* other human being! The wages of sin is *death* (Romans 6:23). But since God created all things by, and through, the Divine Member of the Godhead (called the *Logos*, or "Spokesman," in the Greek language) Who became Christ; since He was the Maker of man, His death could pay the penalty for all mankind.

How? Simply because, as Divine Creator, His one life is worth more than all the humans who have ever lived.

In order to understand whether it was *possible* for Christ to sin, we must come to understand just Who and What Christ really was. If He was not truly *human*, and possessed superhuman powers, then He would not have been subjected to the pulls of human appetites and temptations, human nature. On the other hand, if He was *only* human, how could the sacrifice of His *one* life atone for the sins of all mankind?

Was Jesus God?

Your Bible says, "In the beginning was the Word [*Logos*], and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God.

"The same was in the beginning with God.

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3). These words are impossible to misunderstand. *Whoever* is meant by the *Logos*, or the "Word," in this passage is obviously *at the God plane*; for He not only WAS GOD, but He was also "WITH God."

Immediately we are confronted with the fact that our English word "God" falls short of conveying the true *meaning* of what is intended.

The first verse in the Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (Genesis 1: 1), and verse 26 reads, "And God said, 'Let US make man in OUR image...'" Even without understanding the original Hebrew word, *Elohim*, one can see from the text itself that more than one Person was involved; that *Elohim* (God) said "Let US"—more than One—"make man."

Elohim, or *Elohiym*, as *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* spells the English version of this Hebrew word, is plural. Strong's shows it is the plural of *Eloah*, or *Eloahh*, which means "God." The word in the first verse of the Bible is a plural word, connoting *more than one*, like our English words "group," or "family" or, "pair."

Now, Who was this who did the creating? Who was it who said, "Let US make man in OUR image?"

John answers, "In the beginning was the WORD, and ... *all things were made by Him...*" He writes, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not ... He [the "Word," or *Logos*] was in the world, and the world was MADE BY HIM, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name..." (John 1:1-12).

Is there any doubt in your mind about Whom this is speaking? The Person who came into the world, unto "His own," was Jesus Christ of Nazareth, born of the Virgin Mary, baptized by John, tempted by Satan, commissioned by the Father to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God unto the Jews. They "received Him not," but put Him to death! But "as many as received Him," including Gentiles, and members of all races of the human family down through time..... to them gave He power to become the sons of God..." This is one of Dr. Billy Graham's most oft-quoted scriptures. He knows, like any other professing Christian teacher, that this scripture is speaking of *Christ*.

It was He who "came unto His own," He who "made the worlds"!

Notice some further verses: "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 bare witness of Him, and cried, saying, 'This was He of Whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me.

"And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came *by Jesus Christ*" (John 1: 14-17).

These striking verses of John's Gospel, the first chapter, plainly tell us the CREATOR Who is introduced in the first chapter of the Bible is the One of the Godhead called the "Spokesman," or the "Word," who BECAME CHRIST in the flesh!

WHY do so many fail to understand this plain, simple, impossible-to-misunderstand text?

Because of all that it obviously implies!

What are, some of the things it implies?

Why, it plainly tells us that the One who wrote the Ten Commandments with His own finger was the One who became Christ! It tells us the One who brought the Flood on sinning mankind; Who called Abraham; Who revealed which foods are clean or unclean; established the laws of tithing and giving; Who broke Egypt's power and brought Israel out of slavery; Who parted the Red Sea; Who inspired His prophets; Who was the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and all the prophets of the Old Testament is the same Personage of the Godhead as Jesus Christ of the New!

But have not millions supposed Christ came on the scene to do away with the harsh, objectionable old laws of the old, out of date, "Father" God of the Old Testament?

Have not millions supposed Christ DID AWAY with all those "Old Testament laws"?

It is *no wonder* that many reject the plain truth of John the first chapter, and the companion truths revealed in Hebrews 1. For, if they admitted those truths they would have to change their teaching about law; about the Sabbath, the annual holy days, clean and unclean meats; a plethora of doctrine!

Notice further proof: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by *Whom He also made the worlds*;

"Who, being the brightness of His glory, and the express image [Greek, *karakter*] of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high..." (Hebrews 1:1-3). *Who* has "purged our sins"? Christ! *Who* was the exact, express image of the Father, who said, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father"? Christ! *Who* is now sitting at the right hand of the "Majesty on high," waiting until His enemies be made His footstool? Christ! And *Who* was the Executive Member of the Godhead who created the universe? Christ!

You are reading the *truth of God*, from the pages of *your own Bible*. It does not matter that many theologians deny this truth. That is their responsibility, and God will judge them for it. *Your* responsibility is yours, not theirs. No amount of lame excuses or human reasoning will relieve you of *your* responsibility before God.

Will you now *accept* what your own startled eyes are plainly telling you? Jesus Christ of the New Testament is the One who *did the creating*; the One who *wrote the Ten Commandments*!

No wonder He said, "Before Abraham was, I AM!"

Jesus, then, was GOD. He was a Member of the great, Divine FAMILY, we call, in our English language, "GOD." He was One of the *ELOHIM* of Genesis, the first chapter. Was He also human?

Christ Was Also Human

The wages of sin is *death* (Romans 6:23). Sin is the breaking of God's Ten Commandments (1 John 3:4). The penalty of sin is the death penalty of a human life! Contrary to popular belief, the wages of sin is not eternal life, though eternal life in an everburning "hell fire"; the wages of sin is death, which is oblivion, destruction—the cessation of life!

Sin requires a penalty. The penalty is death. The penalty must be paid. God will never compromise with His law, which is "holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12).

We have learned that Jesus Christ was very God. Yet, He was also human! Notice: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death [the penalty for sins], crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2: 9). Christ was made human. One of the greatest of all reasons for this miraculous fact was that He should "taste death" for *every* man.

Christ was subject to death. He was a living human being, with muscular, nervous, respiratory, digestive, circulatory systems. His life of about thirty three and one-half years on this earth was sustained by food, water, and air. Notice further: "Forasmuch then as the children [of God] are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy [annul, counterwork, or restrain] him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

"And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

"For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.

"Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:9-18).

These verses clearly set forth the humanity of Christ. His genealogies from Adam and the "seed of Abraham," are contained in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. He was to be like a Branch from the root of Jesse, David's father (Isaiah 11: 1-5).

That God in the flesh was to appear was made clear to the prophets, and to Israel's leadership! "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined...For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called WONDERFUL, COUNSELOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

"Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Eternal [YHVH, or "Yahweh"; Jehovah] will perform this" (Isaiah 9:2-8).

Yes, Jesus Christ was *made flesh* (John 1: 14; Hebrews 2:17). John wrote, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is *come in the flesh* is of God:

"And every spirit that *confesseth* not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God..." (1 John 4:2,3).

How did Christ come in the flesh?

By one of the greatest of all miracles, the Creator of both the macrocosm and the microcosm; Who dwells in eternity; Who lives in a completely different, spiritual dimension, *emptied* Himself, and became a tiny, human life—a microscopic, zygote," to develop into a fetus, to grow into a human baby, in the womb of Mary!

God's Word says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

"Who, being in the form of God [prior to His human existence], thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

"But made Himself of no reputation [or, "emptied Himself"], and took upon Him the form of a servant [human form!], 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 stake [Greek: *stauros*—*stake*, or upright pale, not "cross"]. Wherefore God 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 the earth, and things under the earth;

"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord [Master, Ruler], to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11).

Jesus Christ was very God, Who had become human; Who had become *human flesh*, of the seed of Abraham, just like you and me, like any other human being.

Christ called Himself not only the Son of God, but the son of MAN repeatedly.

On one occasion, Jesus Christ asked His disciples about the rumors concerning Him. "Who do men say that the Son of *man* is? And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said unto them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood hath not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven'" (Matthew 16:13-17).

Thus, Jesus not only called Himself the "Son of man," but acknowledged He was the "Son of God." He was *both*. He is *called God* in Titus 2: 10 and 2:13.

What Did Jesus Christ Say About Himself?

Did Jesus say He was the Christ, the Son of God? He certainly did. When Jesus encountered a woman of Samaria, she said, "...I know that Messiah [the Messiah, or "the Anointed One"] cometh, which is called Christ: when He is come, He will tell us all things.'

"Jesus saith unto her, 'I that speak unto thee am He'" (John 4:25,26). He plainly claimed to fulfill the office of the Messiah as described in the Old Testament (Matthew 11:3-5; Luke 4:16-21; 7:19-23). He took upon Himself the names and titles of the Messiah (Luke 19:38-40; Matthew 9:27,28; 21:9).

Jesus claimed He was "greater than Abraham" (John 8:53-56), greater than Moses (Matthew 19:8,9), greater than Solomon or Jonah (Matthew 12:41,42). He continually said He was sent by God to this earth (John 5:36-43), and claimed God was His *Father* (Luke 2:49). He said He was the "living Bread" sent down from God the Father, in heaven (John 6:32-51), and said He was *in existence before Abraham* (John 8:58).

Continually, Christ said He was *sent by God* (John 5:36,37,43), claimed God was His Father, (Luke 2:49, etc.), forgave sin when challenged with the charge that only God can forgive sin (Mark 2:7,10; Luke 5:21,24).

Christ said, "I and my Father are ONE" (John 10:30-36).

Dozens of additional scriptures could be listed from both the Old and New Testaments proving Christ is the ETERNAL Who is revealed in the Old Testament, the *Logos* Who did the creating; that this Divine Member of the Godhead came down to this earth to tabernacle in human flesh for 33 1/2 years; to become *the Savior* of His creation.

Christ was, therefore VERY GOD. His life was given in payment for *all human life*. His death atones for the sins of *all mankind!*

Christ's Pre-human Existence

Christ was the "ROCK" of the Old Testament. Paul described how the Exodus from Egypt revealed many spiritual types relating to repentance, baptism, and salvation: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud [Exodus 13: 21], and all passed through the sea [Exodus 14:22]; and were all baptized [an analogy, or type]; and did all eat the same spiritual meat;

"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that *Rock was Christ*" (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

Christ, in His pre-human form as YHVH, or Yawveh, (or "Jehovah," as some pronounce the Hebrew word), was the Personage of the Godhead who dealt with the patriarchs, with Moses, with the prophets.

The One who became Christ is called the "ROCK" many times in the Old and New Testament alike.

"He is the ROCK, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He ... When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel ... of the ROCK that begat thee thou art unmindful, and has forgotten God that formed thee" (Deuteronomy 32:4-18).

David prayed, "I will love Thee, O LORD [YHVH, or Yawveh—the Eternal God], my strength.

"The LORD [YHVH, the Eternal God] IS MY ROCK, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God...I will call upon the LORD [The Eternal God—YHVH]" (Psalm 18:1-3).

David makes it clear that the ROCK of whom Paul wrote, the "ROCK" that *was Christ*, was also the Eternal GOD to whom David prayed, the One Who was called "YAHVEH" by the ancients; the "Eternal God."

When Moses talked with this Member of the Godhead, and asked Him His name, He replied, "I AM THAT I AM: and He said, 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children, I AM hath sent me unto you.'

"And *God* said moreover unto Moses, 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD [Eternal] God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever and this is my memorial unto all generations" (Exodus 3:14,15).

When Jesus disputed with the Pharisees, He said, "'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.' Then said the Jews unto Him, 'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?'

"Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM'" (John 8:56-58). When Judas betrayed Jesus, He asked the group who had come to arrest Him, "Whom seek ye?"

"They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus saith unto them 'I AM'" (John 18:4-8). He repeated this expression three times, and the motley group reeled away backward, and fell to the ground! The translators added the *italicized* word, "He" in this passage, which is *not* what Jesus said. He said, "I AM."

The Person of the Godhead who is our REDEEMER is Jesus Christ of Nazareth! Read John 4:42, and Philippians 3:20. Jesus, *the Savior*, is YAHVEH, the God of the Old Testament (Isaiah 49:7; 60:16).

He is called the "Redeemer" in Isaiah 48:17. The proofs concerning Christ's pre-human identity are *many*. Christ was the One who was David's "Shepherd," and his "Rock." He was the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." He was the One who said, "Let there be light," and Who created Adam and Eve!

This great CREATOR, this *Logos*, or "Executive Spokesman" of the Godhead, "emptied Himself" of His Divine power (Philippians 2:5-8) to become a tiny, microscopic *human fetus* in the womb of the Virgin Mary!

By a stupendous miracle, God had *become human flesh*. So says your Bible. Christ was human, yet was God in *the flesh*.

Then, since He was also God *in the flesh*, was Christ absolutely *impervious* to sin? Was it IMPOSSEBLE for Christ to commit sin?

Christ Endured Great Temptations

When a professional athlete is about to enter a tournament, or a special sports contest, what does he or she do? Relax? Vacation? Hardly. We all know that whether we are speaking of a concert pianist or a prizefighter; whether basketball star or football quarterback; whether race car driver or golfer—all *practice, practice, practice!*

Professionals must WORK at their sports, or their art, to be keyed up, FIT, for special contests!

Each strives for perfection. They practice hard, endure rigorous schedules, watch their diets, exercise, and undergo self analysis, working on their attitudes prior to a great contest in order to avoid disastrous mistakes!

Did Christ slide through 33 1/2 years with great, luxurious ease? For, if it was impossible for Him to sin, then why struggle?

If it were *impossible* for a professional athlete to make a mistake, then *why practice* so hard? Athletes practice for fame, career, and money.

Did Christ have to *prepare* for special temptations?

Just before the beginning of His public ministry, Christ knew *a horrible confrontation* awaited Him. He was to meet the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4); the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2); that powerful, fallen archangel (Revelation 12:9) who was the most subtle, wily, clever, magnetic, deceptive, influential spirit being this side of heaven: Christ was to come face to face with Satan, the Devil!

Did He treat this impending encounter with a laid back, nonchalance of "ho hum, so what's the 'big deal'?" For, if Christ knew it would be impossible for Him to sin, to give in to Satan's tempting suggestions, then why did Christ fast for 40 days and 40 nights; why did He pray so fervently He exhausted Himself, getting the spiritual help He needed for this encounter?

God's Word says, "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward 'an hungred'" (Matthew 4:1,2). This Greek expression, *pienao*, indicates more than merely, "hungry," but comes from a root which means "to be famished," and includes "pining (away), starving."

The average human will die in about one or two weeks when denied food and water. If panicked, as when lost in the woods, and burning energy and bodily fluids at a rapid pace, death can come much more quickly.

Christ, in this fast, had equaled those of Moses, Elijah, and others—the longest fasts on record in the Bible. He was near *starvation*. But, while *physically* weak, He had become imbued with more and more of God's Holy Spirit; of His Father's Spirit, Mind, and Will.

Christ called out to the crowds on the Last Great Day following the Feast of Tabernacles, "If any man thirst [a spiritual analogy], let him come unto me, and drink.

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly [his innermost being] shall flow *rivers of living water*" (John 7:37,38).

Christ showed how the Spirit of God *flows* from God, like a current. An incandescent light bulb glows, giving off light, because of a heated filament. The filament becomes white hot because of *flowing energy*. Notice the socket on your wall. There are always two holes for the plug (sometimes three, for modern plugs which include a "ground" connection for safety). One hole is for the positive flow of electricity, the other for negative. The current does not stop at the bulb, there to be spent—instead, a portion is expended through heating the filament, while the rest returns to its source.

Read Christ's analogy of the Bridegroom and the foolish virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. Here, the foolish virgins (sleepy, unconcerned "Christians") find their "lamps" (their "reservoir" of the indwelling presence of God's Holy Spirit) are about to flicker out. While they were out, trying to "buy more oil," the Bridegroom (Christ) arrived, and when the foolish ones cried out to gain entrance, His said, "I know you not."

God uses the physical elements of this earth, such as fire (as in Acts 2), *water* (John 3 and 7), and *air or wind* (Acts 2 and John 3) as representations of God's Holy Spirit.

Christ, through fasting and prayer, was divesting Himself of physical cares; going well beyond the point of being concerned for material, mundane things; experiencing the indwelling presence of God's Holy Spirit like a full tide of flowing, spiritual *power*.

Why?

Because He knew He would be facing *Satan!*

I will include, in an inset box, Dr. Bullinger's appendix 116, entitled "The Temptations Of Our Lord," from pages 156, 157 of the appendixes in his *Companion Bible*, in which He convincingly explains that the temptations of Satan probably came repeatedly during the entire 40 days and nights, and not necessarily in only "three" temptations at the very end of the fast.

Obviously, Luke's and Matthew's accounts differ in very important aspects. Please read, carefully, the notes at the end for a fuller understanding.

"And when the tempter [Satan] came to Him, he said, 'If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread'" (Matthew 4:3).

This was a clever, two-pronged temptation. First, Satan probed to see if Christ would respond with anger, to see if there was any human vanity present—for Satan had suggested Jesus Christ was not really Who He said He was! "If you are the Son of God," Satan subtly suggested.

Christ was now extremely close to God. He had divested Himself of earthly concerns, fasting and praying for 40 days. He very powerfully felt the nearness of God, His Father. He did not allow Satan's oily suggestions to anger Him.

The second part of this temptation was Satan's attempt to *couple* his suggestion of doubt about Christ's identity and authority with His terrible hunger! By "proving" to Satan Who He was, He could also satisfy His gnawing, painful hunger!

Was Jesus tempted?

That is the whole point of this biblical account Yes, He was tempted. But being tempted did not mean He dwelt on the temptation.

Certainly, the instantaneous mental picture of fresh-baked, savory loaves of bread had to flit through Christ's mind. But He fought against these temptations—resisted them!

He did not allow His mind to dwell on the subject, did not stare at the large stones, imagining each one as a different kind of succulent bread, perhaps rye, or wheat, or corn, or pastries, or buns, or biscuits, hot and steaming, with butter and jam!

No, He instantly put the mental picture Satan had presented out of His mind and quoted God's Word.

"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4).

This is the first recorded statement of Christ!

It is quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3, where manna was the "bread" that sustained Israel's life for forty years, as a type of God's Holy Spirit. The meaning, and the setting of this first spoken teaching of Christ, is vitally important! It forms the very basis of God's purpose for human life. It shows that our ultimate life—life for all eternity as members of God's own family—does not depend on the length of time our physical bodies are sustained by "bread," or food, water, and air. Rather, our future lives depend on whether we hear and obey the Word of God!

Here, Christ quickly shut out of His mind the temporary desire for bread! He forced His mind away from his terrible hunger pangs. Instead, He thought of the beauty, glorious truth, knowledge, wisdom, and understanding to be gained through "*every word of God.*" He thought of the life-giving quality of God's Word in contrast with the temporary energy gained from physical food.

Now, notice a phenomenal thing! Remember, Satan is the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). The devil was able to destroy Job's eldest son's house, in which all his children were eating and drinking (Job 1: 18,19), probably by a sudden and powerful tornado! God *allowed* Satan to do this.

Now, notice! "Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple..." (Matthew 4:5). Christ was *conveyed through the air* from the "wilderness" (the Negev), perhaps many, many miles away, to the temple. They did not walk, or ride donkeys or camels! Luke wrote, "And he [Satan] brought Him to Jerusalem, and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple."

Thus, Christ allowed Himself to be transported *through the air* by Satan for the purpose of these temptations.

Satan apparently (see notes at the end) repeated this temptation at least twice! Satan said, "IF [the same attempt to appeal to power, position, authority, vanity] Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, 'He shall give His angels charge over Thee: and in their hands shall they bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.'"

"Jesus said unto him, 'It is written again, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God'" (Matthew 4:6,7).

Have you ever experienced the momentary compulsion to throw yourself down from a great height, like a tall building? People have related how such a thought occurs to them. Here, Satan was trying to get Christ to *tempt God* by directly challenging His Word. But Satan *twisted* God's Word.

David's Psalm reads, "For He shall give His angels charge over thee [as guardians], to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Psalm 91:11,12). Satan added the phrase, "at any time," and omitted the middle of the passage! Neither would he quote the following verse, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder..." which refers to treading Satan underfoot.

God's Word shows angels are the protectors of God's people "LEST" they should "dash their foot against a stone"—to protect, and prevent accidents; they are not there to snatch up someone who has deliberately tempted God!

Satan perverted, twisted, misquoted God's Word, and added words of his own!

Christ resisted him again, properly quoting scripture, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Study the notes at the end for a full picture of these many temptations of Christ. As Bullinger shows, there were two different occasions when Christ rebuked Satan. Once He said, "Get thee behind me," and the second, and final time, He commanded, "GET THEE HENCE, SATAN!" The Devil had to *obey* Christ's command.

This was a spiritual battle. Our minds find it difficult to accept, but a mental, spiritual struggle, a clashing of will can leave one utterly weak, and exhausted.

Notice what happened immediately after the devil had to slink away in defeat: "Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered to Him" (Matthew 4: 11). Christ was utterly exhausted. He was near death from lack of food and water and from the grueling consequences of this titanic clash of will. Did the angels provide water, a sponge bath, food? It is certainly implied in the statement that they "ministered" unto Him.

Anyone who foolishly believes Christ nonchalantly underwent this climactic battle for *control of all humankind*, *this* battle over *who was qualified to be world ruler*, is either simply ignorant, or terribly deceived! It was POSSIBLE for Christ to have failed. The fact that He fasted for *40 days* proves the depth of His concern, the determination of His mind, the force of His resolve that He not fail!

Like the professional athlete facing a championship, Christ prepared to meet Satan!

Jesus Christ has placed eternity as *very God* at risk! It was only through the most grueling, intensive prayer, hours and hours of prayer—weeks of fasting—that Christ overcame all these temptations; even though allowing Himself to be transported about in the air by the devil, to the temple, to a high mountain, He nevertheless resisted Satan, and conquered him by the power of God's Spirit!

There are differing degrees of temptations, just as Satan is more powerful than any of his demons. The Bible reveals there are more tenacious demons, which require more spiritual power to resist.

When Christ commissioned His disciples, He gave them power over demonic spirits (Matthew 10: 1-8). They returned joyfully, exclaiming over how demons had obeyed them, and left their grip on people's lives. Yet, a little later, when those same disciples attempted to cast some of Satan's demons out, *they failed*.

"And when they were come to the multitude, there came to Him a certain man, kneeling down to Him, and saying,

"Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is 'lunatik' [an old English word based on fable, meaning "moonstruck," which is an erroneous translation], and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

"And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

"Then Jesus answered and said, 'O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

"And Jesus rebuked the devil [demon]; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, 'Why could not we cast him out?'

"And Jesus said unto them, 'Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

"Howbeit this kind goeth not forth but by *prayer and fasting*" (Matthew 17:14-21).

Christ was *Human*, just like the disciples were human. The disciples, however, had allowed their faith to wane; they had not been fasting and praying enough! They were not as *close to God*; did not have as much of His power, His Holy Spirit, flowing through them like spiritual energy, as did Christ. Christ had been fasting and praying! He was imbued, "without measure," with God's Holy Spirit. But He had to continually *struggle* to maintain this spiritual closeness with God.

Could Christ Have Been Tempted to Sin?

God's Word says Christ was sorely *tempted* to sin. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

"For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points *TEMPTED like as we are*, yet without sin.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

The only difference between Christ's temptations and our own is that He was "yet without sin"! Otherwise, our temptations are the *same* as Christ's. Study that scripture carefully. It shows us our High Priest in heaven can be *touched* (moved, concerned—having empathy) with the feelings we experience as we struggle against Satan's world, against our own human natures, against the myriad temptations that surround us.

Do we ever want something *so bad* we can hardly stand it, yet know that it would be *wrong*? Do we *FEEL* such a temptation? Does it set up an inner conflict—produce a *struggle* within us?

Are we prone to feel *hatred* for others? Do we wrestle with feelings of jealousy, envy, anger, greed, or lust?

Do we sometimes come to the "end of our rope," crying out to God, "I can't take this any more"? Did Christ ever come perilously close to the "end of the rope" in His earthly struggles?

Christ was *tempted*. Therefore, He experienced desire in many directions, which, if He had followed those temptations to their ultimate conclusion in either thought or deed, He *would have committed sin!* But He

overcame each temptation as it occurred! Did He do so *easily*, like a champion weightlifter, picking up a mere 20 pound weight?

No, the Bible shows Christ had to WRESTLE with His own inclinations, that He had to STRUGGLE to overcome temptation!

Tempted Like as We Are

The book of Hebrews was written to convince Jewish Christians of the efficacy of the Priesthood of Christ. It goes deeply into the Levitical priesthood, the types of the priest in the temple, and the far greater and eternal Priesthood into which Christ has entered.

What Paul is showing in the fourth and fifth chapters is how we may approach the "throne of grace" in heaven BOLDLY, having faith to know our prayers are heard as we wrestle with the same kinds of temptations Christ endured, and overcame. God wants us to know that Christ knows how we feel!

God says Christ was tempted "in all points ... like as we are" Hebrews 4:15). The Greek word for "tempted" is *peirazo*, which comes from *peiro*, meaning, "to pierce through," or "to test." Some have twisted the meaning of this expression, abandoning the obvious implication of *stress*—a torturous, near violent meaning of "to pierce through" like "to be stricken," or to hurt—in favor of merely "testing," as if Christ's testing were not rigorous, or that it required a real *struggle!*

This is patently ridiculous in the context of Christ's 40-day *fast*. Why undergo such pain-wracked suffering if He were to toss off His encounter with Satan with consummate ease?

No, Christ suffered through His temptations! He felt them. And He therefore knows how we feel!

Now, how are we tempted?

From earliest childhood, our human natures held sway over our minds. We grow physically first, then mentally, and finally emotionally—perhaps! From childhood, we give in to our impulses, our appetites. When hungry at age 6 weeks, we cried. When we were wet, or uncomfortable, or frustrated, our crying took on new and more strident notes. Mothers and fathers soon learn when their tiny progeny are angry, or feeling self pity (watching those little lower lips curl up and turn down at the edges as their child sobs can tug at your heart!), or are tired, or frustrated.

As we grow, it is extremely rare if someone teaches us how not to envy, or to be jealous, or to have resentment; how not to be greedy, or engage in acts of violence.

Carnal human nature, apart from God's Holy Spirit, is a collection of selfishness, vanity, jealousy, lust and greed! These are the motives that drive people to "success" in corporate business and private entrepreneurship, to "success" in the military, or politics.

The most powerful human emotions, it has been said, and written about interminably, are love and hate. Thousands of plays, books, and movies have illustrated such themes. Vengeance, lust, vanity, jealousy, love [usually lust, which Hollywood *thinks* is love], hatred—these powerful emotions form the basis for much of the world's entertainment.

The "soaps" on TV are a continual merry-go-round of secret desires, betrayals, jealousies, hatreds, lusts, love triangles, homosexuality (and therefore illicit, perverted lust), mental and emotional struggles. This is why so

many millions of frustrated people revel in such trash—they enjoy watching others act out the real or imagined fantasies of their own lives.

The reason so many hundreds of "country western" songs are based on "You done left me fer another" is because this is the way so many people live their lives, including most of the country western singers! (Not long after Tammy Wynette came out with her famous hit single, "Stand By Your Man," she divorced George Jones!)

The movies, TV, books, magazines, plays—practically everything that passes for "entertainment" is geared to the down side of human nature. It appeals to the prurient, the illicit, the illegal, or the libidinous.

When we become converted; when we TURN AWAY from a life of sin (to be converted means to be changed; Romans 12:1,2), we find we have a struggle on our hands.

This world is filled with the Satanic enticements of sin, with churches which are abandoning God's Word in favor of the changing mores of human conduct, ordaining lesbians and sodomites into the clergy, allowing premarital sex, "live-in" relationships, same-sex "marriages." Perhaps it is cynicism to observe that it is only a matter of time until some pervert leads a horse down the aisle of one of these churches.

Today, even churchmen seem to be saying, "If it feels good, do it." In a drug-infested, sex-mad, chaotic society of licentiousness and pleasure-seeking, it is a real struggle for a converted Christian to overcome temptation!

Abraham's children could not see nude women exposing themselves on centerfolds in magazines available in practically any grocery store! Children in the time of Christ could not go to movies and watch lovemaking scenes. Children in Daniel's day had not sat in front of television for more hours than they would ever spend in formal education, watching garrotings, stabbings, bludgeonings, rape, arson, shootings, dismemberments, sex orgies, explosions, or chain saws slashing through human flesh—all in the name of "entertainment"

People's minds had not been quite so *polluted* then.

Jesus Christ's temptations were real to Him. They ran the gamut of all human appetites. Could not Christ have looked upon the lovely young women of His time, and momentarily experienced the thought of desire toward them? Either He did, or no normal heterosexual male has a Savior! But Christ did not lust for them! He could admire beauty without thinking illicit thoughts.

God's Word is not implying that Christ experienced every minute little temptation that might be around us today. Rather, it is showing that Christ was tempted in every category of human appetite, every category of human nature.

He was tempted to allow vanity, or jealousy, or lust, or greed to enter in. But through God's Holy Spirit He overcame those temptations.

Christ never smoked. Yet, He could experience temptations having to do with appetite. Smoking is a sin. Smoking is also an addiction. The body becomes dependent upon nicotine once a person has struggled to force himself or herself to ingest choking clouds of pollution into the lungs, and is finally hooked on cigarette smoke. From that time on, the body and its appetites are dictating to the mind and the will what shall be done.

The mind is no longer in control. The bodily appetites have taken over.

Christ was tempted by the senses of smell, taste, touch, and the like. Surely He was mightily tempted to crave food tempted to lust for it, when He fasted 40 days! Were not there dozens of times when the vision of a savory

lamb roast, or a delicious stew, or some fresh fruits or crisp vegetables, even a crystal clear glass of water, tormented His thoughts?

But, by the power of God's Holy Spirit, He forced such thoughts from His mind, turning, instead, to *prayer*. Had He allowed His mind to give in to the temptation to dwell on food; spending long moments imagining just how certain things would taste, He might have broken His fast, and then He might have failed when He locked minds and wills with the most powerful spirit being this side of heaven!

But Christ overcame temptation!

He overcame it by a struggle—by literally *suffering!*

God says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.

"Let no man say when He is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God [God in heaven, in His Divine state—not Christ during His earthly experience] cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man.

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1: 11-15).

God the Father in His flawless perfection CANNOT BE TEMPTED!

But Christ, in His human state was "tempted in every point like as we are" so He could qualify to become our High Priest; so He could suffer, struggle, agonize, and endure the inner conflicts of human nature; so He could overcome temptations, and prove it is possible for a human being, filled with God's Spirit, to resist sin!

God says we are blessed when we *endure temptation!*

Those who have experienced the fight against smoking, and who have overcome it; who have struggled against alcoholism, and have beat it; who have wrestled against lust, and conquered it, are "blessed," and shall receive "the crown of life."

Is it horribly wrong to be tempted?

According to some, whose values are not those of God, it would so appear. There are those who, knowing a spouse could be tempted to break the commandment against coveting one's neighbor's wife (or husband), would be blindly furious at a mate simply because there might be a temptation! Such would not call a person "blessed" who had wrestled with, and overcome temptation, but would be horribly angry, instead!

Not our Savior. Not Christ. Instead, He would look down kindly from His place at the right hand of God and say, figuratively, "I know how you feel. I know what you endured. I know what you just overcame." He would turn to His Father, and ask forgiveness for such an one, would give strength to such a person through the supply of God's Holy Spirit.

How Difficult was Christ's Struggle?

Those who teach the heresy that it was *impossible* for Christ to commit sin are denying some of the most important scriptures in the Bible. Worse, they are *denying their own Savior*, for they are denying His traumatic struggles in His human form! They are denying the humanity of Christ.

John warned, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh [they do not confess His humanity, with its attendant pulls and tugs of human nature, with its weaknesses, its potential for failure, its struggles, pains, sufferings]. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. "Look to yourselves [heretics who deny Christ's sufferings, take heed!], that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ [this is the whole truth about Jesus Christ—What and Who He was, what He did, His human sufferings!], hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive Him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed" (2 John 7-10).

John felt this deeply, for He was the "disciple whom Jesus loved," the disciple who was so moved by Jesus' passion that he leaned on His breast at the Last Supper. John alone seemed to have been deeply aware of the feelings of rejection, the loneliness, the near anxiety of Christ as He contemplated what awaited Him that horrible night of His sufferings just before His death.

Now, notice some extremely important facts about Christ's lonely sacrifice: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Eternal [YHVH] revealed?

"For He shall grow up before Him [Christ, as a baby, then a boy, then a man, in the sight of His Father in heaven] as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground [the faithless generation and religious leaders of His day]: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

"He is *despised and rejected* of men; a man of *sorrows*, and *acquainted with grief*. and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was *despised*, and we esteemed Him not.

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and *carried our sorrows*: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

"But He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised *for* our iniquities: the chastisement of [which procured] our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity [sin] of us all.

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isaiah 53: 1-7).

Notice! God says Christ was DESPISED!

Have you ever been despised? Does it *hurt* to know someone absolutely *hates* you? What if someone you *love* becomes filled with hatred toward you? Does that hurt?

Jesus Christ was flawlessly perfect. He was of perfect character, perfect conduct. There was *no reason* for any person to have any emotion toward Christ except admiration, approval, love, *worship!*

Yet, in spite of His perfection, He was *despised* by the scribes and Pharisees, despised by his own near kin, despised by countless hundreds and thousands! You and I know how it *hurts* to be hated! Christ, too, *hurt* under these rancorous, venomous, spiteful hatreds of people. He *suffered* greatly under it!

God says He was "*rejected* of men..." Have you ever been *rejected*?

Divorce is *rejection!* In such a terrible, sinful occurrence, two people who once experienced the most wondrous, romantic, expectant, exciting, loving emotions—who grew close in marriage, experiencing the deepest and most fulfilling intimacies of married love; two people who said, over and over again, "I love you," who made up little words of endearment to use for each other, have now become *hateful*, spiteful, contemptuous, distant, reproachful, angry, cold and aloof. Now, they REJECT their mate!

Does divorce HURT?

You *KNOW IT DOES!* Many reading this, divorced or not, have experienced *rejection!* I was rejected by my own father, charged with doing things I simply *did not do*, and denied access to him for the next eight years—never given the opportunity to see him personally, or even so much as talk to him on the telephone. He died, never having permitted me to see him. That *is rejection!* And I can tell you, it *HURT!*

Christ was a "man of *sorrows*. Were these "fake" emotions? Nonsense! Sorrow is painful. It is disappointment, failure, emptiness, loss, sadness! It is an emotion of pain! Christ experienced these feelings of rejection, of denial, of loss and sorrow, so that He can help us in our time of rejection, pain, and loss! He is our High Priest for daily trials and troubles, not *only* our Savior Who paid the penalty for our sins!

God says, "Surely He hath borne our grief." Is grief real? Did Christ feel the pain of sorrow, and grief?

We know Jesus wept. Did He "fake" it? For, if heretics who teach Christ could not have sinned are correct, then there was simply no need for Christ to ever have been concerned—He could have sailed through His physical experiences knowing He could never make a mistake, knowing He had nothing to lose!

Jesus Christ cried. He groaned with pain. He was deeply sorrowful. He felt, deeply, the rejection of His own beloved people. He *suffered!*

How utterly shocking to see there are those who are now denying the sufferings of Christ! And how plain it is that if they do so, they deny Christ!

Your Savior and mine risked it all for us!

God says, "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made *like unto His brethren*, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

"For in that He Himself hath suffered being *tempted*, He is able to succor [help, comfort] them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:17,18). God says our Savior overcame through pain and suffering, through trial and temptation; that He offered up "strong cryings and tears" as He struggled against Satan, against human nature, against the world around Him!

"But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels, for the *suffering* of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

"For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS" (Hebrews 2:9,10).

Finally, rejoice in these rich, blessed words: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us *hold fast* our profession.

"For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched [moved, made compassionate] with the *feeling* of our infirmities; but was in *all points tempted like as we are*, yet without sin!

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Thank God it was *possible* for Christ to sin! Glory, honor, praise, awe, admiration, and WORSHIP to Him, praise to His Holy Name, that He DID NOT!

NOTES

From *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 116:

THE TEMPTATIONS OF OUR LORD

It is well known that the order of the temptations in Matthew is not the same as in Luke. Commentators and Harmonizers assume that one is right and the other is wrong; and proceed to change the order of one in order to make it agree with the other...

But an examination of the combined accounts, giving due weight to the words and expressions used, will explain all the differences, and show that both Gospels are absolutely correct; while the differences are caused by the three temptations being repeated by the devil in a different order, thus making six instead of three.

Mark and Luke agree in stating that the temptations continued all the forty days (Mark 1: 13, Luke 4:2); they are described as follows:

I. (Luke 4:3, 4) "The devil (*ho diabolos*) said to Him, 'Speak to this stone (*to litho touto*) that it become a loaf (*artos*).' "This appears to be the first temptation: and there is no reason whatever why it should not have been repeated in another form; for it is nowhere stated that there were three, and only three temptations.

II. (Luke 4:5-8) "And the devil, conducting (*anagagon*) Him, shewed to Him all the kingdoms of the habitable world, or land (*Gr. oikoumene*), in a moment of time." Nothing is said about "an exceeding high mountain." Lachmann brackets the words "into an high mountain," and Tischendorff, Tregelles, Alford, WH, and R.V. omit them.

The devil claims to possess the right to the kingdoms of the world, and the Lord does not dispute it. Satan says: "To Thee will I give this authority (*exousia*) and all their glory, for to me it has been delivered, and to whomsoever I wish I give it. Therefore, if Thou wilt worship before me, all shall be Thine."

Nothing is said here about "*falling down*," as in Matthew. Here, only "authority" is offered, for all the critical Greek texts read "*pasa*" (not "*panta*") fem. to agree with *exousia*.

The Lord did not say, "Get thee hence" (as in Matt. 4: 10), but "Get thee behind Me," which was a very different thing. Satan did not depart then, any more than Peter did when the same was said to him (Matt 16:23).

III. (Luke 4:9-12) "And he conducted (*egagen*) Him to Jerusalem, and set Him upon the wing (or battlement, Dan. 9:27m.) of the temple, and said to Him, 'If Thou art the Son of God, cast Thyself down hence, for it is written, that to His angels He will give charge concerning Thee, to keep Thee (*tou diaphulaxai se*),' " &c.

There is nothing said about this "*keeping thee*" in Matthew; moreover, it is stated that having finished every form of temptation, "he departed from Him for a season." Note that the devil departed (*apeste*) of his own accord in Luke 4:13, while in Matthew the Lord summarily dismissed him, and commanded him to be gone (Matt. 4:10).

IV. (Matt. 4:3, 4) After the "season" (referred to in Luke 4:13), and on another occasion therefore, "he who was tempting Him (*ho peirazon*), having come (*proselthon*), said, "If Thou art the Son of God, say that these stones become loaves (*artoi*)." Not "this stone," or "a loaf" (*artos*), as in Luke 4:3. Moreover he is not plainly called "the devil," as in Luke 4:3, but is spoken of as the one who had already been named as tempting Him (*ho peirazon*); and as "having come" (*proselthon*): not as simply speaking as being then present.

V. (Matt. 4:5-7) "Then (*tote*)!—in strict succession to the preceding temptation of the "stones" and the "loaves"—"Then the devil taketh (*paralambanei*) Him unto the holy city, and setteth Him upon the wing (or battlement) of the temple," &c. Nothing is said here about the angels being charged to "keep" Him (as in Luke 4: 10); nor is there any reason why any of these three forms of temptation should not have been repeated, under other circumstances and conditions.

VI. (Matt. 4:8-10) Here it is plainly stated that the second temptation (Luke 4:5-8) was repeated: for "Again the devil taketh Him unto an exceedingly high mountain, and sheweth to Him all the kingdoms of the world, *kosmos, not oikoumene*, as in Luke 4:5, and their glory, and said to Him: "All these things, not "all this authority," as in Luke 4:6, will I give to thee if, *falling down*, thou wilt worship me." Here, in this last temptation, the climax is reached. It was direct worship. Nothing is said in Luke about *falling down*. Here it is boldly and plainly said, "Worship me." This was the crisis. There was no departing of Satan's own accord here. The moment had come to end all these temptations by the Lord Himself. "Go! said the Lord (*hupage*), Get thee hence, Satan... Then the devil leaveth (*aphiesin*) Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered to Mm."

This angelic ministry marked the end. There is no such ministry mentioned at the end of the third temptation in Luke 4:3-12; for then Satan "departed" of his own accord, returning (in Matt. 4:3) after "a season" (Luke 4:13).

True, the Lord had said "Get thee behind Me, Satan" (Luke 4:8); but He did not, then, summarily dismiss him, nor did Satan depart: he continued with his third temptation, not departing till after the third had been completed.

We thus conclude that, while there were temptations continuous during the whole of the forty days (Mark 1: 13, Luke 4:2), they culminated in six direct assaults on the Son of man, in three different forms; each form being repeated on two separate occasions, and under different circumstances, *but not in the same order*.

This accords with all the variations of the words used, explains the different order of events in the two Gospels, and satisfies all the conditions demanded by the sacred text.

The two different orders in Matthew and Luke do not arise from a "mistake" in one or the other, so that one may be considered correct and the other incorrect; they arise from the punctilious accuracy of the Divine record in describing the true and correct order in which Satan varied the six temptations; for which variation, he alone, and neither of the Evangelists, is responsible.

-End-

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