

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

January 2001

“Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” (2 Corinthians 1:2-4) All comfort comes from God, and I am certainly happy about that, because He is the best qualified to do it. I pray that this new year brings you closer to God than you have ever been. If there ever was a time that God’s people need to have a close relationship with Him, it is now. The end of all things is just upon us. *“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:3) Let us get ready now to stand in the last days, before it is forever too late!

Sinful Flesh

by Alonzo T. Jones

There is a serious and very bothersome mistake which is made by many persons. That mistake is made in thinking that when they are converted their old sinful flesh is blotted out. In other words, they make the mistake of thinking that they are to be delivered from the flesh by having it taken away from them altogether.

Then when they find that this is not so, when they find that the same old flesh, with its inclinations, its besetments, and its enticements is still there, they are not prepared for it and so become discouraged and are ready to think that they never were converted at all.

And yet, if they would think a little, they ought to be able to see that that is all a mistake. Did you not have exactly the same body after you were converted that you had before? Was not that body composed of exactly the same material—the same flesh and bones and blood—after you were converted as that of which it was composed before? To these questions everybody will promptly say Yes. And plainly that is the truth.

And now there are further questions: Was not that flesh also of exactly the same quality as before? Was it not still human flesh, natural flesh, as certainly as it was before? To this also everybody will say Yes.

Then also a still further question: It being the same flesh and of the same quality—it still being human flesh, natural flesh—is it not also still just as certainly sinful flesh as it was before?

Just here is where creeps in the mistake of these many persons. To this last question they are inclined to think that the answer should be “No,” when it must be only a decided “Yes.” And this decided “Yes” must be maintained so long as we continue in this natural body.

And when it is decided and constantly maintained that the flesh of the converted person is still sinful flesh and only sinful flesh, he is so thoroughly convinced that in his flesh dwells no good thing that he will never allow a shadow of confidence in the flesh. And this being so, his sole dependence is upon something other than the flesh, even upon the Holy Spirit of God. His source of strength and hope is altogether exclusive of the flesh, even in Jesus Christ only. And being everlastingly watchful, suspicious, and thoroughly distrustful of the flesh, he never can expect any good thing from that source, and so is prepared by the power of God to beat back and crush down without mercy every impulse or suggestion that may

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arise from it, and so does not fail, does not become discouraged, but goes on from victory to victory and from strength to strength.

Conversion, then, you see, does not put new flesh upon the old spirit but a new Spirit within the old flesh. It does not propose to bring new flesh to the old mind, but a new mind to the old flesh. Deliverance and victory are not gained by having the human nature taken away, but by receiving the divine nature to subdue and have dominion over the human—not by the taking away of the sinful flesh, but by the sending in of the sinless Spirit to conquer and condemn sin in the flesh.

The Scripture does not say, Let this flesh be upon you which was also upon Christ, but it does say, *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 2:5)

The Scripture does not say, Be ye transformed by the renewing of your flesh, but it does say, *“Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”* (Romans 12:2) We shall be translated by the renewing of our flesh, but we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

The Lord Jesus took the same flesh and blood, the same human nature, that we have, flesh just like our sinful flesh, and because of sin, and by the power of the Spirit of God through the divine mind that was in Him, *“condemned sin in the flesh.”*

(Romans 8:3) And therein is our deliverance (Romans 7:25); therein is our victory. *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 2:5) *“A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you.”* (Ezekiel 36:26)

Do not be discouraged at sight of sinfulness in the flesh. It is only the light of the Spirit of God, and by the discernment of the mind of Christ, that you can see so much sinfulness in your flesh, and **the more sinfulness you see in your flesh, the more of the Spirit of God you certainly have.** This is a sure test. Then when you see sinfulness abundant in you, thank the Lord that you have so much of the Spirit of God that you can see so much of the sinfulness and know of a surety that when sinfulness abounds, grace much more abounds in order that *“as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”* (Romans 5:21)

(The above article was taken from the April 18, 1899 issue of *The Review and Herald*. This article can also be found in the book, *Lessons on Faith*, by A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, pages 90-92. Editor)

Boundless Grace Free to All

by Alonzo T. Jones

“Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:7) The measure of the gift of Christ is *“all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”* (Colossians 2:9) This is true whether viewed as the measure of the gift which God made in giving Christ or as the measure of the gift which Christ Himself gave. For the gift that God gave is His only begotten Son, and in *“him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”* Therefore, from this standpoint the measure of the gift of Christ being only the measure of the fulness of the Godhead bodily and this being only the measure of the grace that is given to every one of us, it follows that unto every one of us is given grace without measure, simply boundless grace.

Viewed from the measure of the gift in which Christ Himself gives to us, it is the same, because *“he gave himself for us.”* (Titus 2:14) He gave Himself for our sins, and in this He gave Himself to us. And as in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and as He gave Himself, then the measure of the gift of Christ on His own part is also only the measure of the fullness of the Godhead bodily. It therefore follows that from this standpoint also the measure of grace that is given to every one of us is only the measure of the fullness of the Godhead; that is, simply immeasurable.

Thus in whatever way it is viewed, the plain word of the Lord is that unto every one of us He has given grace to the measure of the fullness of the Godhead bodily; that is, boundless, immeasurable grace—all the grace He has. This is good. But it is just the Lord; it is just like the Lord to do that, for He is good.

And this boundless grace is all given, given freely, to *“every one of us.”* To us it is. To you and me, just as we are. And that is good. We need just that much grace to make us what the Lord wants us to be. And He is just so kind as to give it all to us freely that we may be indeed just what He wants us to be.

The Lord wants every one of us to be saved, and that with the very fullness of salvation. And therefore He has given to every one of us the very fullness of grace, because it is grace that brings the salvation. For it is written, *“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”* (Titus 2:11) Thus the Lord wants all to be

(Continued on page 12)



Alonzo T. Jones 1850-1923



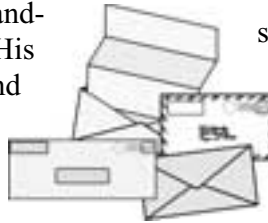
Letters from our Readers



“We are joyful, that you received the last translation on The Trinity, an excellent, well done job. We will soon have a class about it. In this country controlled by the idolatry and all pagan rituals, our work battling all these roman pagan beliefs; that has this country under misery, poverty and sickness; All these tracts and all these truths about our Heavenly Father, his commandments, statues, ordinances and the faith in His Only Begotten Son IS A GREAT HELP!! And people are responding to it.

“We ask for your prayers, and all your support. We will be opening a school for twenty children by the beginning of next year. It will be totally free for children in need. If our Heavenly Father put in your hearts and your offerings still on, like I told you in our last e-mail you can do it through Western Union! PLEASE also if you Smyrna Family can raise a Missionary funding and offering will be highly appreciated and highly rewarded by our Almighty God and our Saviour and Messiah Jesus Christ.

“GREAT NEWS!!!!!! THE LOVE OF GOD—EL AMOR DE DIOS - IS ON ITS WAY!!!! If anybody from Smyrna would like to come, we will be glad to bring hospitality for them.”



Peru

“I am studying the October 2000 issue of *Present Truth*. I have a problem with the statement on page 6 in the middle of the column: ‘They could not keep His Sabbath in Egypt.’ Maybe they did not, but I believe they should and could have. God does not ask anybody to do anything that cannot be done.”

Tennessee

(You are right. Please forgive me for the mistake. That was an article written by James White, and I did not notice the problem before printing. Thank you for the correction. Certainly the Jews could have kept the Sabbath in Egypt.

Editor)

“I would be interested to know what the Missouri reader was talking about mixing the Old Covenant with the New in the [October] 2000 issue.”

Tennessee

(I am not quite certain what was meant myself. **Note:** the Missouri reader referred to the writer of the September issue. The man who wrote the above letter is the writer.

Editor)

“We were happy to receive *Present Truth*... People want to be fed the truth here. We have been cut off from church fellowship in this area. Partly by our choice, and partly by theirs. There have been very strong influences

against the truth, but by God’s grace we choose to be faithful to all God’s truth! We cannot play games with God. We feel we must take a firm stand on the side of right. Thank you again for being a light. You do not know how much it means to others.”

Washington

“Thank you so much for the materials you sent... We really want to start sharing in a greater way than we are now. Please send us some more tracts, etc., also audio tapes and videos.”

Washington

“Thank you for the info on the tapes and I have already received them. I have also received the whole set from West Virginia camp meeting. I have listened to a couple and they are wonderful. I praise the Lord for them.”

Arkansas

“I received the *Present Truth* newsletter sent on 30 October, 2000. I am a *Present Truth* believer... As a result I differed with my local church. Therefore, I earned an excommunication and expulsion from my local church. It has been one year and three months since we have been worshiping in my house sitting room. We now number 16 of us.

“Thank you for putting me on your mailing list for the newsletter. I loved the article “Righteousness by Faith” because it is the subject I am studying. Please, send me some materials on the topic “Righteousness by Faith.”

Zambia

“Please remove my name from your mailing list. I believe your teachings are cultish and never read your paper. It should be renamed “Present Half-Truth.”

Wisconsin

(How could you believe our teachings are cultish if you “never read” the paper?

Editor)

“Just a note asking our Lord to continue blessing your wonderful ministry of *Present Truth*. I would like to receive taped videos from West Virginia camp meeting since I couldn’t go because of my job.”

New Jersey

“Kindly correct the spelling of my surname on your mailing list. I enjoy your articles, indeed, God is really wanting to cleanse His loved ones prior to His soon return in the Person of Jesus Christ. But oh, how few it seems truly understand the vital necessity to be sinless before we can stand before that throne, spotless in the Lamb. Praise the Lord for His honest servants in this

great time of shaking, those who hold fast to the original foundation truths of His Word...” *Canada*

“Thank you for the uplifting and inspiring material you send. I would like to receive the free book on last day events and if possible some more of the flyers sent out recently on ‘The Truth About God.’ Thank you.”

South Dakota

“I wonder how many *Present Truth* issues you mail out each month, and could you add around 100 more addresses if I send them to you?”

Tennessee

(Thank you for your interest in spreading the truth. Certainly we will add your friends to our mailing list. *Editor*)

“I would like to receive *Present Truth*. Thank you.”

North Dakota

“According to _____, she was amazed that it [La Verdad Acerca de Dios] was a very accurate translation of ‘The Truth about God,’ the English text to Spanish. She could find no areas that needed re-translation.”

Florida

(**Note:** We now have the tract entitled “The Truth About God” available in Spanish. *Editor*)

“Please send information and cost of ‘A Time to Choose’ and ‘America in Prophecy’ to: _____.” *Illinois*

“I just wanted to briefly say that God gave the Ten Commandments right? Now when I ask people whether or not we should still obey the Ten they say yes... and then I think well what about the Sabbath is it any less holy than do not murder or do not take His name in vain? I’m just simply saying that if you are going to obey one why not all. But yet what about when Jesus told that man which ones he was to obey Jesus just gave him a few but did not tell him to obey the Sabbath.” *Tennessee*

“Hello, I enjoy your newsletters you send me, they are very informational, thank you. I came to know this ministry through Doug when I met him outside a promise keepers event in Dallas a few years ago handing out tracts before they chased him off, for whatever reason. I didn’t think it was cool, but it happened.” *Texas*

“We were very thankful to receive your gift, tapes, literatures and video cassette. We were very glad indeed to hear the preaching on the tapes, including the studying of the literatures and we know that God will also provide a way we can get a video cassette [player]. May almighty God bless you.” *Rwanda*

“‘What the Bible Says About Hell’ came into my hands—very well explained—thank you! It’s worth to have some more to give away.” *Australia*

“Please accept my small offering and excuse the amount. My world in here is limited by making a financial living. However, please do not feel guilty of accepting my tithe. I am keeping the law of our Father Yahweh, and Yahshua (Jesus) our Savior! Hallelu-Yah!...”

“Please continue reaching to all mankind. Thank you for patiently helping me; and helping men in my world.

“If there is any way I can help others out please use me. I can freely share my personal testimony and use it in any way. I look forward to continuing searching the *Present Truth* and praising Yahweh and His Son Yahshua with all the brothers and sisters of *Present Truth* and beyond... You have my permission to give my name and address out freely to all who like to share the gospel and testimonies to each other.

“Again, if there is anything at all I could do to help more people by sharing my testimony or whatever else please feel free to ask me. Thank you again for your kind and free materials you have sent me and others.” *Ohio*

(If there is anyone who would like to contact this brother in prison, or would like to be contacted by him to share his testimony please contact us. *Editor*)

“When I was traveling to another city I came across a man who gave me a pamphlet entitled ‘How many Gods are there?’ and tracts that include ‘The Truth About God,’ ‘The Importance of Knowing the Truth About God,’ ‘The Holy Spirit.’

“I then read through the pamphlet which told me that the doctrine of the trinity originated from paganism, unbiblical, very erroneous and heathenism.

“Brethren, I want to tell you I went to my local pastor so rapidly thinking that he will help me but I was very amazed than he said to me, ‘You are worried of things that contain no salvation.’

“Therefore I am writing this letter asking for books... Furthermore, I would like you to send me video, audio cassettes, tracts if available in your ministry. May God bless you and your families. Amen.” *Zimbabwe*

“I got the materials that I requested, along with the book ‘I Can Handle it’ by Dee Stringfellow. I really appreciate all the materials you make available to me and others. I also wanted to let you know I really enjoy your Bible course ‘These Last Days’ that you send.” *Ohio*

(**Note:** For those of you who are interested, we have a free Bible study correspondence course. *Editor*)

“I greet you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour. Full of Joy, peace, love and happiness, I am writing this letter giving thanks to God for the tracts and a couple of America in Prophecy you gave me last time. I

would like to tell you that your work of sending books to other countries, even though it costs a lot of money, it's very important. Such that the Lord God of heaven will bless you and your children and children's children forever.

"May God bless you as you continue with this work of spreading the truth to the entire world. May all the blessings that were announced by God to the children of Israel fall upon you is my prayer. Amen." *Zimbabwe*

"I thank you so much for your letter and parcel of books and tracts which reached me in good condition. Since then we at work with them. As we distributed people find them very delighted. It is really life changing words to God. Of which many people came out to, but few people received and I promised them through your help. May God reward you all very great as you removed because of us in the bush area of Nigeria. Continue your good work! While we will continue to remember you in our daily prayer. Remember our newly friends in Christ that they remain in faith with us here! In fact, many people are glad with your tracts, and books, how you teach is very clear. Your attention is needed. You have a clear message with one voice in the Holy Bible. Put our names in your mailing list. Continue to send us study papers and news papers, also cassettes, etc. We look forward of your message." *Nigeria*

"Thank you for the literature you sent and I have found the material to be very informative, interesting and inspiring, that if you read it and remain unchanged, you have to pray earnestly than never before. Your work has been a blessing to me and my family and the rest whom we share the message with." *Zimbabwe*

"We are more than grateful to inform you that your package which contains 11 Bibles sent to us were received safely date 20 Nov., 2000 and we thank you very much for your effort and contribution of replying our letter requested for Holy Bibles for the newly converts who cannot afford for one. We also thanks the Almighty Father who has given you brethren the privilege of wisdom, love and strength to do His work creditably in this end-times for this good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour (1 Timothy 2:3) for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have showed toward His Name (Hebrews 6:10).

"Our burden is how to get more copies of Holy Bibles for souls, in fact the 11 copies sent to us was not reach everybody in this ministries. Many peoples are still crying and fighting to get one for their own used. John 8:32. We have 1620 souls in this ministries last year and

this year we converted 402 souls and our needs are great. We sincerely beg the entire members of Smyrna Gospel Ministries to kindly extend the hand of assistance to us again with more copies of Holy Bibles—even old one to us, you can send address to other friends who can also supply us with Bibles.

"We are financially down because of one of our pastors who is not well, very very sick. [Picture of a sick person included] The sickness is over two months now and we pray and spent a lot of money. He is now in the hospital. There is no money for us.

"Please, we need helps. Present this letter in the whole of your ministries for helps whatsoever you has sent it to us (Malachi 3:6-18). By register air-mail thanks.

"In God we trust. May God bless you all as should continue to studies his word with us. We need to hear from you very soon." *Nigeria*

"I thank you so much for your boxes of books and tracts which reached me in good condition on the 19th October 2000, and has helped us in a great way in our ministries of which we are glad of having such people like you in this last days. We pray that God will refill back where you have removed to see that these materials reached us. Also we pray that God will touch your hearts of the donors to continue helping us in this great work...

"For your information, this is to inform you that I left from home to Lagos formal capital of Nigeria for special assignment in God's work on the 25th October, 2000. So 15 armed robbers came to my house with gun point, break the doors and took away all my belongings and the last money I have for my feeding and wounded my wife together with her newborn baby of five month old to the extent that blood rushed out from her head and she fainted. So nearby neighbors came to her assistance took her to the hospital where one of my friend treated her.

"Then as I returned on the 26th October night and saw all these incident, I thanked God that they did not die, rather they are alive now. All these are the hand work of the enemy of progress and it is a test of life, and this will not deprive me from doing the work of God rather it has encouraged and strengthened me to continue spreading the good news of Jesus Christ." *Nigeria*

(If any of you would like to help these dear brothers overseas with literature or shipping costs, please send us a donation and designate it for "overseas missions." Every penny that is sent in for this purpose will be used for this purpose. We know that these people are busy spreading the truth because of some of the letters we have received from those to whom they have been sharing. We appreciate your help very much, and so do they. *Editor*)



Questions and Answers

by Lynnford Beachy



Question:

“Did Jesus obtain a sinful nature when He was here 2000 years ago? In other words, if He became like one of us in all ways, was His nature the same as ours? Would you please explain.”

Florida

Answer:

The book of Hebrews answers this question quite well. Here we read of Jesus, “*I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*” (Hebrews 2:13, 14)

Here the Bible makes it clear that just as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, Christ took part of the same. Who are these children? The Bible tells us they are the children which God has given to Christ. These are the redeemed. It is not speaking here of Adam and Eve before they fell into sin, but of those who have already sinned and been redeemed from their sins.

It is obvious then, that just as you and I are partakers of flesh and blood, Jesus took part of the same—the same flesh and blood that you and I have, not the flesh and blood that Adam and Eve had before they fell.

Continuing on we read, “*For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.*” (Hebrews 2:16)

Here again we see that Christ took on Him the seed of Abraham rather than the nature of Adam before he sinned. Then we read, “*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 2:17)

Here is an even more conclusive statement. Jesus had to be made *in all things* like his brethren. We also read that He “*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*” (Hebrews 4:15) If in any point Jesus was not made “*like unto his brethren,*” then in that point He could not have been “*tempted like as we are.*” If Jesus did not take upon Him sinful flesh then He could not be tempted like as we are, because we are tempted through our sinful flesh.

Yes, Jesus did obtain a sinful nature when He was here 2000 years ago. I hope this helps to answer your question.

Question:

“Could He [Jesus] have sinned?”

Florida

Answer:

First of all, let me say that this is an excellent question. It is one of my favorite questions to ask a trinitarian, because either a “yes” or “no” answer would yield many problems to the trinitarian mind.

You see, if Jesus could not have sinned, then it reduces the mission of Christ to an act or play. Somewhat like a mock trial—a trial that is decided beforehand which has no chance of any other outcome, but is held anyway to appease the public.

This makes the sacrifice of God in giving His Son nothing more than a minor inconvenience for a few years, rather than a risk of losing something.

If a trinitarian would answer “yes” to this question, then it would pose the problem of the possibility of the trinity becoming separated, or reduced to a twinity rather than a trinity. Because if Jesus would have sinned then He would have to die for His own sins without a Saviour, for “*the wages of sin is death.*” (Romans 6:23) This is something the trinitarian cannot accept as a possibility.

The risk of God losing His only begotten Son poses no dilemma for the non-trinitarian, however. It is true that if Jesus would have sinned, then not only Jesus, but all of us would be eternally lost. Certainly that would not be pleasant, but it was a real possibility, and therefore elevates our understanding of God’s love in allowing His only begotten Son to come down to this earth in sinful flesh and take the risk of failure and eternal loss.

Concerning Christ, Isaiah wrote, “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder.*” (Isaiah 9:6) Here we read that the government would be upon the shoulders of Jesus. What government? The Jewish government? The Roman government? Certainly not! This is talking about a much higher government than any earthly government. This is the government of God Himself. God’s government would stand or fall based upon the outcome

of Christ's mission on earth. Was this a mock trial that had no chance of failure? I think not!

Let's allow the Bible to answer the question of whether Jesus could have sinned. "*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.*" (Hebrews 4:15)

Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are. What does it mean to be tempted? James wrote, "*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God 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 1:13-15)

First of all we learn here that God cannot be tempted. Even Jesus, the Son of God, could not be tempted until He became a man.

Notice also that temptation takes place when a man is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. If a man does not have lusts, then it is impossible for him to be tempted. Jesus, however, was tempted in all points like as we are. Therefore He must have had the lusts, or sinful flesh that we do.

Now, someone may say, "If Christ had lusts then He sinned, and the Bible says that He didn't sin." Let's not get lust and sin confused. To have lust is not to sin, for the verse goes on, "*when lust hath conceived, then it bringeth forth sin.*" Christ never allowed lust to conceive and bring forth sin, but He must have had the lust in order to be tempted.

"Hold on" someone may say, "Jesus said that to lust after a woman is sin." That is not exactly what He said. Let us read it. Jesus said, "*whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*" (Matthew 5:28)

If you decide to stare at a woman for the purpose of lusting after her, then you have already committed adultery with her in your heart. However, the initial desire to look upon a woman is not sin in itself. It is only when you allow that desire to take root that it becomes a sin.

For example, suppose a man is walking through the checkout line in a grocery store. Inevitably there are several magazines in the racks that have half naked women on the cover. The man glances around, and notices one of these magazines. There is something in him that is drawn to continue looking at this picture; however, he understands that it is wrong to continue looking at the picture, and immediately turns away. Realizing

his own weakness, and the danger he is in, he calls upon the Lord to deliver him from this temptation. And immediately the Lord gives him the victory he so longs for, and draws his mind to focus on eternal things.

Was it a sin for the man to have glanced at the picture to begin with (in this case we will say he did it innocently), and have some longing to continue looking at it? No. He was tempted by being drawn to do that which was wrong to do, but this temptation was not a sin. It would have become a sin had he stared at the picture and allowed his mind to wonder on forbidden territory. This is "*when lust hath conceived, and it bringeth forth sin.*" (James 1:15)

So it is clear that Jesus must have had lust in order to be tempted. If not He could not have been tempted, and certainly not "*tempted like as we are.*"

If there were no chance that Jesus could have sinned, then all of Satan's temptations would have been a waste of time. Also there would be no victory over sin by our Saviour, because what real victory is there if there is no possibility of defeat.

The Bible says, "*For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*" (Hebrews 2:18) This verse would be meaningless if Jesus had not truly overcome temptation like we must. If He had not overcome the same temptations that we face, and in the same way, then His help would not be much good. Furthermore, if we are receiving help from someone who has not overcome the same temptations we are faced with we could have received the same help from this Person before He was tempted, and hence this verse would be meaningless.

I am thankful that we have a High Priest who has been tempted like we are, and has overcome like we must, and who is helping us right now to overcome the temptations that we are faced with. Praise the Lord for His goodness to us!

"Hold on," some may say, "Jesus had all power while He was on earth, and therefore overcame sin with power unavailable to us." This would be a reality if Jesus had all power while He was on earth, but the Bible tells us differently.

Jesus said, "*The Son can do nothing of himself.*" (John 5:19) And again, "*I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*" (John 5:30)

According to Jesus Himself, He did not possess all power while He was on earth. And again we read, "*And*

Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28:18) It is not possible to give all power to an individual who already possesses it. Evidently Jesus did not have all power while He was on earth, and therefore was dependent upon His Father's power for every victory over sin, just as you and I must be.

Yes, there was a risk involved in God sending His Son into the world. Jesus could have sinned and failed in His mission, which would have meant eternal loss for both the Father and His Son, and all of the universe. If He would have sinned, then God's government would have failed. The entire universe would look upon God and His government with suspicious eyes, and there would be no certainty that sin would not rise a second time.

But praise God that it will not. We read, "*What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.*" (Nahum 1:9) After sin is eradicated in this world, it will never arise again because everyone will know the awful results of rebellion against God. God's government will be secure throughout eternity.

Question:

"The other question is about Gabriel in Daniel, who revealed to Daniel the meaning of his vision on the final days. Was Gabriel actually Jesus? What other Scriptures support such a concept?"

Florida

Answer:

No, Gabriel was not Jesus, for Gabriel was the one who announced to Mary that Jesus would be born of her. There are not any verses in the Bible that support such an idea.

Here are all the verses that mention Gabriel:

Daniel 8:16 "*And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.*"

Daniel 9:21 "*Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.*"

Luke 1:19 "*And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.*"

Luke 1:26 "*And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth.*"

Question:

"I am still searching for a better understanding of which laws in the Bible were a shadow of Christ and which are still a blessing for us to keep today. James White's letter seems to say only the Ten Commands stand today, but I see many great blessings in keeping some of the laws that Moses wrote, like tithing, not eating unclean animals, principles of how to keep your body and home clean and free from germs and diseases, how to deal with other people in certain circumstances, etc. Please help me understand such things better."

Tennessee

Answer:

There certainly are principles in the Old Testament that are a blessing to observe today. Let us clarify some of the things you mentioned here.

First of all you mentioned tithing and linked it with the law of Moses. It is true that Moses wrote about tithing but it did not originate with him. Tithing was in effect long before Moses was born.

In Genesis we read about Abraham who gave tithes to Melchizedek. "*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.*" (Genesis 14:18-20)

Abraham's grandson, Jacob, also followed this practice. Jacob said, "*And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth [tithe] unto thee.*" (Genesis 28:22)

Jesus also instructed us to continue tithing when He said, "*Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*" (Matthew 23:23)

So it is clear that tithing was not a part of the Mosaic law, but an institution that preceded Moses by many years.

You also mentioned not eating unclean meats. Here again we are dealing with an institution that was in effect long before Moses was born, and therefore could not be part of what the Bible calls "*the law of Moses.*"

When God sent a flood upon the earth He commanded Noah to bring more clean animals into the ark than unclean animals. "*Of every clean beast thou shalt*

take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.” (Genesis 7:2)

After the flood Noah offered only clean animals as a sacrifice to God. “*And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.*” (Genesis 8:20) God never permitted men to offer unclean animals as a sacrifice to Him.

“*He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.*” (Isaiah 66:3)

God speaks of swine as being an abomination to Him. “*The swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase.*” (Deuteronomy 14:8)

We also learn that at the time of the Lord’s coming this prohibition against swine is still in effect. “*They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.*” (Isaiah 66:17)

Both tithing and unclean meats were instituted long before “the law of Moses” existed. Therefore they cannot be lumped together with that which has been done away.

There are principles in the law of Moses regarding the way we should deal with our fellow man, and keep ourselves clean, that are still good, and many things that are still in effect. For example, “*Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion.*” (Leviticus 18:22, 23)

These were not just temporary prohibitions, but principles to be followed today. There are many examples like this in the books of Moses. It is obvious that those relating to the sanctuary and its service are not binding for us today.

I am certain that some of these things are still binding, and that others are not. Yet determining which is which is a little difficult. I understand that tithing and unclean meats are still in effect since they are not part of “the law of Moses.” It is also clear from the Bible that

the Ten Commandments are still in effect. Of these things we can be certain.

Question:

“I am reading your August 2000 issue... in this issue, I was a little disturbed by the reply you gave on page 6 about using the name Yashua and the Tetragrammaton. I feel that you omitted the main arguments for using God’s name. It was obvious you were trying to downplay their importance because of this, and I cannot help but to cry out and respond.

“The reference to calling YHWH ‘Ishi’ is used only once in the Bible, and God is not saying here that is his name. He is simply saying that we are going to say You are my husband. That does not make ‘my husband’ into a personal name...

“Names are always transliterated, not translated. Over the whole globe, our President is called Bill Clinton... Paul transliterated the Hebrew name Yahshua into Greek the best he could, but he found a number of problems, such as Greek not having the ‘sh’ sound, or a single letter for the ‘yah’ sound. Also all male words ended in ‘s.’ But we have none of those problems now. We can transliterate the name correctly if we want to. Why not want to? What makes us resistant? We all like to be called by our correct name... He says to ‘call upon the name of YHWH.’ And ‘the name of YHWH is as a strong tower. The righteousness runneth into it and is safe.’

“Yes, I agree that when we talk to the ‘drunk on the street’ we should use language familiar to him. But I am not the drunk. I am in His family. Shouldn’t I know His name and use it? Especially to Him and others in the family?”

Tennessee

Answer:

Certainly it is okay to call God Jehovah, Yahweh, or Yah, etc. However, I do not believe it is required for salvation, or that it should be made to appear that it is.

In Hosea 2:16 we read, “*And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali.*” Every other place in the Bible where the word Ishi is used it is a proper name of an individual. I do not advocate that we must call God “Ishi,” yet it is evidently an acceptable name to call Him.

Regarding names always being transliterated rather than translated. That is not always true. In fact in other languages of the Bible the sound of some names have a sound that you or I could not possibly recognize. For example in Spanish, the book of James is called

Santiago. There are many names that are translated rather than transliterated when changing from one language to another. I know many people who have taken an English version of their name rather than retaining their given name. For example George is Jorge in Spanish, Peter is Pedro in Spanish, William is Guillermo in Spanish.

It is true that there is no reason why we cannot transliterate names to the best of our ability. Yet there is much confusion as to what a proper transliteration of God's name is in English. Some say it is Yah, others say, Yahvah, and still others say, Yahweh, or Jehovah, etc. I cannot say for certain who is right.

Jesus told us how we are to address God. He said, *"When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth."* (Luke 11:2)

Jesus never commanded us to call God Yahweh, but He did tell us to call Him Father. You see, there is a much closer relationship that Jesus is calling us to have with God. Closer than someone whom you know on a first name basis. Closer than a friend. God wants to have a father-son relationship with us.

I cannot remember ever calling my father John, even though that is his proper name. I would feel out of place to call him John. I don't believe my father would appreciate it if I called him by His proper name. When I say to him "father" or "dad" I am indicating a closer relationship than by saying John. Using his proper name would put him at a distance to some degree. I believe this is why Jesus instructed us to call God "Father" rather than by His proper name.

A similar illustration could be used with my wife. I most often call my wife by something other than her proper name. I use endearing names that signify a closer relationship than I have with others. I use names that I would not use for anyone else. Those people in our lives, like mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, spouses, etc., generally prefer to be called by something other than their proper name.

It is the relationship we hold with God that is important—much more important than the name we call Him by. To make a doctrine out of what we must call Him, is to create a distance in the relationship rather than the closeness that God is looking for. I don't believe God wants us to get caught up in the debate over how to pronounce His name.

Many people refer to the following verses as proof of the importance of this issue. *"And it shall come to pass,*

that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered." (Romans 10:13) Does this mean that if I know the proper pronunciation of God's name and use it that I will be saved? I don't believe this was Joel's meaning. I believe there is a deeper meaning, because just having a knowledge of how to pronounce God's name can never save anyone. Certainly Satan knows how to pronounce God's name, but it doesn't save him.

Let's notice a few examples of how the word "name" is used in the Bible.

"And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." (Genesis 32:28) Why was Jacob's name changed to Israel? Because his character had changed. Jacob was no longer a suitable name for him because he was no longer a deceiver, for that is what Jacob means.

Let's notice another verse. *"And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee."* (Psalms 9:10)

Here David says that they that know God's name will put their trust in Him. Surely this is not talking about someone knowing how to pronounce God's name, for there are many people who know how to pronounce God's name who do not trust in Him. Having a knowledge of God's name does not automatically make a person trust God. Obviously David used the word "name" here to signify God's character. If we truly understand God's character, then we will put our trust in Him, because we will know that He is trustworthy.

"Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name." (Psalms 91:14) Is God going to allow people to enter into heaven just because they know how to pronounce God's name? Certainly not. It is because they know God's character, and if they know God's character they will trust in Him and love Him.

The problem in this world today is not that people do not know how to pronounce God's name, but that they do not know God's character. The word "name" is used in the Bible over and over again to signify a person's character. It is possible to know a person's character without knowing his proper name.

Jesus said to His Father, *"And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."* (John 17:26) Jesus said that He had declared the Father's name in order that the Father's love could be in His people. There is no way that knowing how to

pronounce God's name enables God's love to dwell in a person. But it is true that to know God's character of love enables that love to dwell in us.

Jesus made it clear that He wants us to address God as "our Father." The focus of Christ's ministry was not upon how He could get people to know how to pronounce God's name, but rather to get them to understand God's character. Let's take up His mission and reveal God's character to the world which will enable His love to dwell in our hearts.

Question:

"What about when Jesus told that man which ones [commandments] he was to obey Jesus just gave him a few but did not tell him to obey the Sabbath."

Tennessee

Answer:

You brought up a very good point. Let us look at this in context. Jesus said, "*If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" (Matthew 19:17-19)

It is obvious that Jesus was not giving this man a complete list of God's laws. One obvious point that is very clear is that Jesus did not mention any of the first four commandments which deal with our relationship with God. He only made mention of the second half of the Ten Commandments, and then summed them up by saying, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*" Jesus met this man where he was at—pointing out his need. He further stated, "*One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*" (Mark 10:21)

Jesus knew that this young man did not love his neighbor as himself, and therefore pointed out where He needed work. Jesus did not give this man an exhaustive list of the Commandments of God. Please notice that Jesus not only left out all of the first four commandments, He also did not mention the tenth commandment which says, "*Thou shalt not covet.*"

If the fact that Jesus omitted the Sabbath commandment in His discourse with the rich young ruler, means that the Sabbath is abolished, then it must also be true of the first three commandments and the tenth commandment, because He omitted them also. It is obvious that

Jesus was only dealing with the second table of the Ten Commandments which deal with our relationship with our fellow man.


He said in another place, "*They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.*" (Matthew 22:21) Here Jesus made a clear distinction between those things which we owe to Caesar and those things which we owe to God. We owe Caesar (all mankind) obedience to the second table of the Ten Commandments, and we owe God obedience to the first table of the Ten Commandments.

There is no earthly government that has a right to require us to render to Caesar those things which belong to God. Or in other words, they have no right to require us to obey any of the first four commandments. For to do so would be forced worship and would require someone to decide in which manner the first four commandments should be kept. This would be nothing more than a man-made religion and as worthless as worshiping Satan himself.

This is what Nebuchadnezzar did when he required his subjects to bow down and worship an idol. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, knew better than to yield to such a law, for to do so would be to disobey God. God honored their decision to obey God rather than man by protecting them when they were thrown into the fiery furnace.

Jesus understood very clearly the distinction between the first four commandments and the last six commandments. He summed them up in this way, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*" (Matthew 22:37-40)

It is clear that Jesus was not teaching that the first four commandments, along with the tenth, are abolished. He upheld these commandments very strictly. He kept the Sabbath over 1500 times in His life. "*And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.*" (Luke 4:16)


I would rather follow Jesus than all the learned men of this world. Peter said it very well, "*We ought to obey God rather than men.*" (Acts 5:29) 

(Continued from page 2)

saved and therefore He gave all of His grace, bringing salvation to all. The marginal reading of this text tells it that way, and it is just as true as the reading in the verse itself. Here it is: *"The grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared."* All the grace of God is given freely to every one, bringing salvation to all. Whether all or any one will receive it, that is another question. What we are studying now is the truth and the fact that God has given it. Having given it all, He is clear, even though men may reject it.

The Lord wants us to be perfect, and so it is written: *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."* (Matthew 5:48) Desiring that we shall be perfect, He has given us, every one, all the grace that He has, bringing the fullness of His salvation, that every man may be presented perfect in Christ Jesus. The very purpose of this gift of His boundless grace is that we may be made like Jesus, Who is the image of God. Even so it is written: *"Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ... for the perfecting of the saints... till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto*

the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:7, 12, 13)

Do you want to be like Jesus? Then receive the grace that He has so fully and so freely given. Receive it in the measure in which He has given it, not in the measure in which you think you deserve it. Yield yourself to it, that it may work in you and for you the wondrous purpose for which it is given, and it will do it. It will make you like Jesus. It will accomplish the purpose and the wish of Him who has given it. *"Yield yourselves unto God."* (Romans 6:13) *"I beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."* (2 Corinthians 6:1) 

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