

## Thoughts About Jesus in His Incarnation

*Preface statement: Please note that in this article, I never make a claim that “Jesus could have sinned.” I am merely attempting to demonstrate that it is unbiblical to claim “Jesus could not have sinned.” Such a claim relies on human reasoning.<sup>1</sup>*

As Bible believers, we hold to the truth that Jesus is God the Son. Though the Bible does not use this term, from biblical observations, we sometimes refer to Him as the “God-man.” But just as we do not want to diminish His deity in any measure, we must also be careful to avoid diminishing His humanity. This can easily happen if all we do is lean to our own understanding. After all, since He is God in nature (Hebrews 1:1-3), logically, His divine attributes would overpower any weakness associated with the man, Christ Jesus. In nature, the more powerful overcomes the less powerful. Thus, it is easy to fall into the error of viewing Jesus’ humanity as somehow overpowered by His deity. We can easily fall into the error of thinking that Jesus, since He is the “God-man,” had some kind “inherent God-power that insured victory” in His resisting temptation and sin. The Bible does not say that Jesus had some kind of inherent God-power that insured victory, but that as a man, He always did the things that pleased His Father. This is what qualified Him to be the perfect Lamb of God without blemish. Only Jesus, the Last Adam, could qualify as the perfect sacrifice that could satisfy God’s demand that justice to be carried out.

*“If by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many” (Romans 5:15).*

The sacrifice had to be a real flesh and blood man in order to satisfy God’s demand for justice. Whenever the Bible speaks of His sacrifice, it speaks of it as something accomplished by THE MAN, Christ Jesus.

*Of this MAN Jesus, it says, “<sup>7</sup>In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. <sup>8</sup>Although He was a Son, **He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.** <sup>9</sup>And **having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation**” (Hebrews 5:7-9).*

If Jesus’ overcoming of temptation and sin was due to some inherent God-power that insured the victory, then why did Jesus have to “learn obedience?” Wouldn’t His inherent “God-power” been active from birth? But the Bible says that Jesus “learned obedience.” This learning was something Jesus had to do as a man because God does not have to learn anything. And why did Jesus have to go through the process of being made perfect through the things He suffered? If He was resisting temptation and sin through some sort of “inherent God-power that insured victory,” why would He have to undergo the process of being made perfect through His sufferings?

For those who insist that Jesus had some inherent God-power that insured victory in His resistance of temptation and sin, then why did He spend so much time praying? He prayed for hours at a time. What was He praying about? Only others? Or was He also calling upon God for help that He needed as A MAN? Consider the following passage that gives us a peek into a moment of intense praying by Jesus:

*“<sup>41</sup>And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, <sup>42</sup>saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.” <sup>43</sup>Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. <sup>44</sup>And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground” (Luke 22:41-43).*

If He was relying on some sort of “inherent God-power” that insured victory, then why was Jesus in agony? Why was He crying out so desperately? Why did He even bother praying about this at all? He was evidently suffering as a MAN and crying out as A MAN to His heavenly Father to help Him. He needed help and so He prayed.

The Bible teaches that Jesus is our High Priest. By the very nature of the office, a high priest must be A MAN. One of the chief roles of a high priest is to represent his fellow man before God. Jesus is our High Priest who “ever lives to make intercession for us.” (See Hebrews 7:25.) Only a man can effectively do this because a man has experience living as a man. Because he is a man, he knows what it is like to go through the trials of life. He can then come before God to plead in behalf of his fellow man with passion. He is not disconnected from what his fellow man is going through. As our High Priest, Jesus experienced being tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin. As a result of this experience of being tempted and having to resist, he knows exactly what we are going through when we face temptation. He can sympathize with us.

*“<sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).*

We must be careful to avoid diminishing Jesus’ humanity because without it, He would not qualify as our High Priest! In our deep trials, we might conclude that Jesus does not know intimately what we are experiencing as we fight against sin. We might feel alone in our battle. Rather, let us take comfort in the knowledge that because he has experienced the very temptations (at full force) we are going through, He intimately knows what we are going through.

In conclusion, let us not rely on our own understanding but rather just entrust these deep things to God who knows all things, including the incarnation. Let us guard against any reasoning that will take away from what the Bible clearly reveals about Jesus THE MAN. We must not declare that Jesus could not have sinned because the Bible does not declare it. What we do know is that He was tempted in all ways as we are, yet without sin. What we do know and can safely claim is that Jesus did not sin. Let us not go beyond what the Bible declares.

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<sup>i</sup> Some state, “We know that God cannot sin. Since Jesus is God, therefore, He could not sin.” I suggest that this is nothing but human reasoning and it is simplistic to apply such reasoning to something as complex and mysterious as the incarnation. A similar statement could then be, “We know that God cannot die. Since Jesus is God, therefore, He could not die.” But the fact that He died shows the fallacy of such simplistic reasoning.