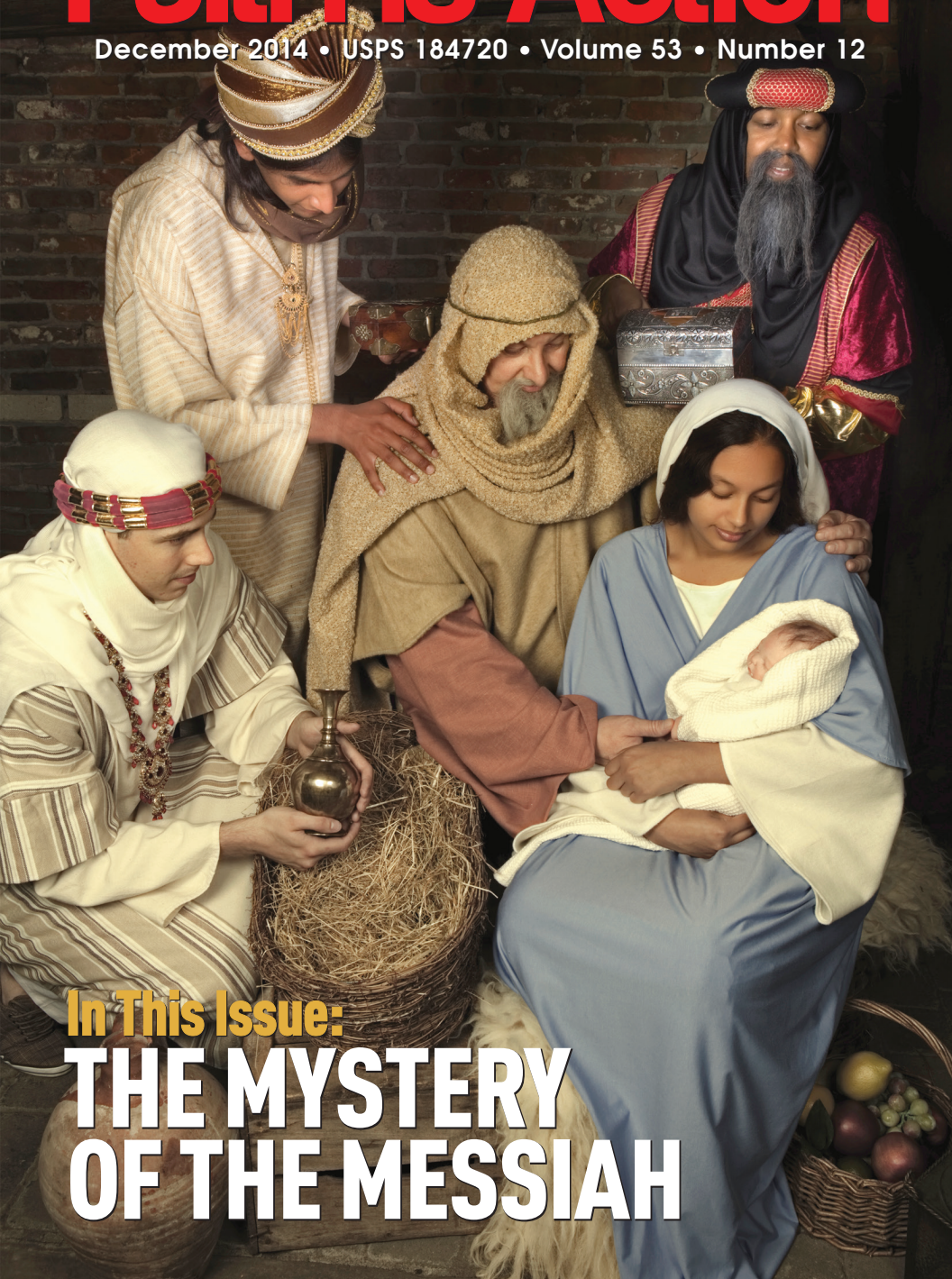


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THE MYSTERY OF THE MESSIAH



THE MYSTERY OF THE MESSIAH

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In the first century of Christianity, while one of the original *eyewitness apostles* of Jesus, *John the Apostle of Love*, was still living, the Church was confronted with the false doctrine that *Jesus did not come in the flesh!* There are some who still seek to propagate this lie, and John warned of these in 2 John 7: “*For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-christ.*”

Jesus had only been resurrected from the dead sixty years, and they were already saying that He had not come in the flesh, but John said: “*And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come: and even now is already in the world*” (1 John 4:3).

In view of this, we are going to prove by the Scriptures why it was necessary for the Word of God to

become flesh. Keep in mind that the Greek term for *flesh*, not only means to have a *flesh and blood body*, but to be *human* in every respect, *in nature*, as well as *physiology*. When John said, “*the Word became flesh*,” he meant that He took on the *sum total of humanity*, not only in a physical appearance and substance, but in *essence and nature* as well.

The Word Became Flesh

“*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” (There is no definite article in the Greek before *God*, and therefore it refers to His quality or nature which was *deity*).

“*The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*” (John 1:1-3).

An exact translation of the Greek text reads: “*In the beginning the Word had already been...*” The Word

had already been in existence before the beginning of creation, and everything that was created, He brought into being. The person called *The Word of God* created everything. He was *deity*, which means He was omnipotent, all-powerful, self-existing, and self-maintaining. Then in verse 14 we learn one of the most startling facts about this Deity:

“*And the Word was made (became) human...*” KJV reads “*flesh*,” but in Greek, this word is also without the definite article, meaning “*the sum total of humanity*” — not just flesh and blood, but entirely *human*.

“*And the Word was made (became) human, and dwelt amongst us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*”

There are two Greek words which mean “*to see or behold*.” The common one is BLEPPO, which simply mean “I see.” The other is THEAOMAI, from which we get our English word *theatre*, and it means “*to behold as a spectator*.” This is the term that John used: “*And we were spectators of His deity.*” This invisible God took on human flesh, and John said that he and the other disciples beheld Him as spectators: “*We beheld his glory, his deity—we beheld that He was God in the flesh, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*”

Why was it necessary for deity—the Word—to take on humanity? There are three reasons why the

Word had to become flesh.

1. The Seed of the Woman

To fulfil the prophecy “*to become the seed of the woman.*” When Adam and Eve fell in the Garden, God had to pass sentence upon them which was death, but He also made a promise that He was going to redeem man *through the seed of the woman*. God had not intended for man to know evil, but only good; thus He commanded them not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. They transgressed His commandment and fell, thereby passing on the sentence of death to all of us. In the fall, they also lost part of their *God-form* which was their covering, *their glory*. God had made man “in His own image and after His own likeness,” but with the introduction of sin, this image became marred, and man no longer has a covering of glory. Isn’t it ironic that man is the only creature that does not have a natural covering like all other animals?

Previously, Adam and Eve had not known what the term *death* meant, but soon they were going to learn its terrible meaning and consequences. They plucked the fig leaves to make a covering to hide their shame, not realizing that *their covering was going to die*, and they would be exposed again. When God came walking in the Garden, they did not run to greet Him as was their custom. God called to them, and Adam answered: “*I was afraid, because I*

was naked, and I hid myself."

God said, "*Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree that I commanded you not to eat?*"

Adam replied, "*That woman you gave me, gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*" (Adam's inference was, "*You caused this, God, because You gave me that woman!*")

Then God said to Eve, "*What have you done?*" To this she similarly replied, "*The serpent beguiled me!*" (Her inference is that *God* created the serpent who had tempted her and caused her to sin.)

Notice that God did not say anything to the serpent about his part in the matter, because he had done just what he had intended to do. With this God began to mete out their punishment, which was death, because He had told them, "*In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die*" (Gen. 2:16).

They were barred from the Garden and could no longer eat of the Tree of Life. Since they were not created immortal, they were now subject to death and began to die physically from that moment. Their fellowship with God was severed, and they could only come to Him through the sacrifice of a blood offering. God shed the blood of an innocent animal to make a suitable covering for them to hide their shame and to shelter them from His wrath until He could bring a deliverer to free them from the penalty of death and the power of sin.

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed, and her seed; it shall bruise (utterly crush) thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

The promise was to *the seed of the woman*, from which the deliverer would come! The divine law is "*every seed after its own kind.*" In other words, one would come forth from the womb of the woman who would defeat and destroy Satan. If he was going to come out of *her* and be of *her seed*, then he would *be human* just like *her*. Note that God did not speak of the *man's seed*, but of the *seed of the woman*, because *the father was going to be Almighty God!* "*For God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son!*" (Jn. 3:16).

God begat a Son, and He used the seed of the woman to bring Him forth. A human seed produces a human offspring. He was not going to be an angel or some other supernatural being, but of the *human* family:

"But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5).

Eve was looking for the promise, and when Cain was born she rejoiced saying, "*Jehovah has given me a man.*" But he proved to be a murderer, so God chose her younger son Seth to continue the seed of promise to Noah. Of his three sons, God

chose the line of Shem. Then from all the millions that were born of the seed of Eve, God singled out righteous Abraham and gave him a miracle child in Isaac. From him were born Esau and Jacob, and once again, God chose the younger son, Jacob, to whom were born the twelve patriarchs of Israel. Of these, God chose Judah to be the lineage of the Messiah, and of all the thousands of Judah, God chose David. Saul tried to kill him, but God protected him. Finally, we come down to *Mary and Joseph*, the “supposed father of Jesus.”

The Son of David

Reading their genealogies, we find that God connected both *Nathan’s line* (David’s son and Mary’s lineage), and *Solomon’s line* (David’s son and Joseph’s lineage), and they both head up in *Judah and David*, fulfilling prophecy. (Ref. Matt. 1 and Luke 3). Paul referred to this in 2 Tim. 2:8: “Remember that Jesus Christ of **the seed of David** was raised from the dead...”

When God chose Mary to be the mother of the Messiah, the angel was sent to her saying, “*Blessed art thou among women; thou art highly favored of God, and behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and thou shall call his name Jesus*” (Lk. 1:28-31). And what was Mary’s astonished reply? “*How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?*” To this the angel announced:

“*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the*

Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (vv. 34-35).

When she became pregnant, Joseph, to whom she was espoused to be married, sought to “*put her away privately.*” (Under the Jewish law, a *betrothal* was the same as marriage, and if he had put her away publicly, they could have stoned her for adultery.) But while he thought on these things, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, “*Joseph, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived of her is of the Holy Ghost*” (Matt. 1:19-20).

Jesus was *the seed of the woman*, but it was a miraculous conception, because Mary conceived without being violated. God was going to have a Son, and He was conceived of the Holy Ghost. But the devil was not going to give up yet. Herod sent out an order for all male children two years and under to be killed. (If he didn’t think that Jesus was human, he sure would not have killed all those human babies.) Later, Jesus went to His home town of Nazareth to minister, but they would not receive His teachings or accept His mighty works: “*Is this not the son of Mary and Joseph?*” they said. “*Are not his brothers and sisters here with us?*” they scoffed (Lk. 4:22).

They were offended by Him, and inasmuch said, “*What gives you the right to say and do these things?*” The ironic thing is, the Jews of Jesus’

day never questioned or doubted *His humanity*: **They were offended because He said that He was the Son of God!**

He Emptied Himself

The only part of Jesus that had a beginning was His *human nature*. The inward part, *The Word of God*, had already been in the beginning as God with God. Now we can understand a little fuller what kind of love that God loved us with, that *Deity, the Word of God*, would undergo a change in form and become flesh:

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:6-8).

This Great One, the Word of God, already existed in the form of God. The Greek word for form, “MORPHE,” not only means *outward appearance* but the entire *make-up and nature* as well. He possessed all the essentials of deity: Omnipotence, omniscience, etc. He was God, and because He was God, He thought it not robbery *to be equal with God!* He was in the beginning with God, having made every thing that was created. He could not cease to be Deity, but **“He made himself of no reputation...”**

The Greek KENOO, means “to

empty out.” He emptied Himself of His right to be equal with God. He could not empty out of His divine nature, because He was not only God from all eternity, but He was “*God manifest in the flesh*” (1 Tim. 3:16). He emptied Himself of His God-form even to the degree of *mortality*. He relinquished the glory that He shared with His Father before the world was (Jn. 17:5). He relinquished His equality with God, His authority in heaven and earth, and His divine attributes and powers, and depended completely on the Father and the anointing of the Holy Spirit to whom He attributed all of His works, doctrines, and powers, stating, “*I can of mine own self do nothing*” (Jn. 5:30).

He not only took upon Himself the form of humanity, but the *form* (MORPHE) *of a servant!* The Creator became a creature, and the Lord and Master became a servant! Just as much as He was God, He became to the same degree a *servant*. He did not come as a king, but as a lowly servant. In fact, He took on the “*seed of Abraham,*” the Jews, who at that time were under Roman authority and were the servants of Caesar. He emptied Himself to the lowest degree of humanity as a servant.

“*...And was made in the likeness of men.*” He was made in the similitude of a man, human in every aspect. “*And being found in the fashion as a man...*” The Greek word for *fashion* is “SCHEMATI.” and means “*habit*” (like a nurse’s habit or uniform). He displayed all the externals

of humans and mannerisms of men and had all the limitations of man. He had the emotions of a man. He was found completely *as a man*: He looked like a man. He acted like a man. He ate like a man. He slept like a man. He cried like a man. He suffered like a man, *and He died like a man! “Even the death of the cross!”*

Thou Art the Messiah!

For a long time even His disciples did not really recognize that Jesus was truly the Son of God, because His humanity was so apparent. When they came to Him saying that different ones were saying that He was John the Baptist raised from the dead, or Jeremiah, or some other prophet, Jesus said unto them, *“But whom do you say that I am?”*

To this Peter acclaimed, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God!”* What was Jesus’ remark to this? *“Peter, flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven”* (Matt. 16:13-17).

It took a supernatural revelation for Peter to comprehend that *He was not just a man*, but the Son of God, because Jesus’ humanity was so apparent that it blinded them to *His deity*. In fact, Thomas was so convinced of Jesus’ total humanity that it took him long after the resurrection to be convinced that Jesus had risen again as the Lord of Glory. Even then, he had to feel the scars in Jesus’ hands and place his hands in His wounded side to be sure. Likewise,

the half-brothers of Jesus, James and Jude, never believed that Jesus was the Son of God *until after His resurrection*. They regarded Him as their *human brother* until that time (Jn. 7:5).

It was many years later that John, referring to the day Jesus was transfigured before them, wrote: *“And we beheld His glory...”* On that day, Jesus had taken them up to the mountain, and the glory cloud overshadowed them, and His SHEKINA (outward glory) began to break through His tent of skin. (The word translated *dwelt* in Jn. 1:14 can be translated *skinned: He skinned amongst us.*) In the wilderness, the Tabernacle was made of goat and sheep’s skins, and once a year God would come down in the cloud of incense, which the high priest put up to veil the glory of the Lord. When Jesus came, He spread His tent of skin, and dwelt amongst us, and all of the glory, majesty, and deity of the Godhead was in Him:

“For in Him dwelleth all of the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9) ... *“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell”* (Col. 1:19). The Greek word used in these verses for *fulness* is PLUROMA, and means *“the sum total of deity.”* And it dwelt in that *human form, Jesus!*

The trouble with the people of Jesus’ day was that they never viewed Him any differently than any other human being, *but they stumbled over His Sonship and His claim to*

deity. Only His disciples beheld His glory and His manifestation of the Godhead. As far as the rest were concerned, He was just the son of Mary and Joseph, and when He claimed to be the Son of God, they reached down and picked up stones to stone Him for blasphemy. They understood the Hebrew term “son of” to mean “he that is in the same family, and has the same nature of his father.”

When they sought to stone Him, Jesus said to them, “*For which good work do you stone me?*” Their angry reply was: “*For a good work we stone you not, but because you **being a man**, make yourself equal with God!*” (Jn 10:33).

2. The New Adam

The second reason Jesus took on absolute humanity was to become *the new Adam*, or the new federal head for mankind. This was necessary so that He might become man’s substitute to die on the cross and to pay the penalty for our sins. Until Jesus came, God could not get rid of sin. He could only *cover it* with the blood of an innocent animal, but the remembrance of sin and the sinful nature were still present. Because Adam had sold us out, the death penalty for sin and God’s broken law was passed on to every man, and there was nothing that could free us from its power and consequences. “*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 3:23) was the indictment, and *sin cannot atone for sin!* It took the blood of the sin-

less One to become our substitute and atone for our sins. This was the *only way* that Jesus differed from all other humans: *He was without sin*. Like Adam was in the Garden before he fell, Jesus was a perfect, sinless man:

“*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son **in the likeness of sinful flesh**, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh*” (Rom. 8:3).

Adam’s sin was imputed to every man; thus, in Adam we all died, but God imputed our sins to Jesus, *the new Adam*, and in Jesus’ death, we all are made alive, everyone in his own order (Ref. Rom, 5:12-19). The whole family of man, everyone, *saint and sinner alike*, is going to be made alive in the resurrection of the dead.

This point of Jesus’ *physical death* is of a crucial doctrinal nature which requires more space than I can devote herein. Briefly stated, the *physical death of Jesus* satisfied the death penalty of the broken law and *reconciled us to God*.

The Dual Nature of Christ

One of the most amazing discoveries I have learned about this Word of God Who became flesh, is that *never again will He be like the Father and the Holy Ghost!* He does not have the *same body* that they have, and they do not have the *same human nature that He has!* Here is the parallel: God the Father and God the Holy Spirit with *only the God-nature*—versus fallen man with *only*

the human nature. To mediate between them is *Jesus, the last Adam, with both God and human natures!* Possessing the dual, divine and human natures, He can understand *both sides!* This brings us to the third reason the Word became flesh, and for the believer, it is the most beneficial.

3. Eternal High Priest

*“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of **flesh and blood**, he likewise also took part of the **same**. 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 behooved him to be **make 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 succour them that are tempted”* (Hebrews 2:14-18).

Our Lord was made like unto us in *all things*. And He was subjected to be tested on *every human point and weakness* that He might be able to identify with us when we are tempted. He could not do this if He did not partake of the human nature. James 1:13 tells us that **God cannot be tempted!** His holy, righteous nature cannot be tempted to do evil, to sin, or to be overcome by the carnal, fleshly nature. How then would He be able to understand us who are confined to this house of flesh when we battle to overcome these tempta-

tions?

Because Jesus was made like unto us, not only with a flesh and blood body, but in **all things**, He has endured the sufferings of being tempted, and therefore can succour us when we are tempted. I want to point out the Greek meaning of the word *succour*: *“To run to the aid of one who cries for help.”* Let me tell you, whenever I am in trouble, whenever I am weak, when I am burdened down and pressed out of measure, I cry out *“Jesus!”* And He runs to my rescue, because He *knows and feels* what I am going through:

*“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, who 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 feelings 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).

Jesus can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, because He was subjected to every human condition and temptation that you and I will ever be. God the Father was not. This is what allows Jesus to be faithful and merciful in His office as our High Priest. The function of the high priest is to mediate for the sins and the weaknesses of the people. He is our go-between, to stand between God and the people, and to plead our case. Hebrews teaches us

that Jesus became the mediator of a “new and better covenant based on better promises” (8:6). How much more is He a surety or guarantee of a better covenant, founded on better promises, sprinkled with the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than the blood of Abel’s (7:22, 12:24).

His death as the Lamb of God canceled our debt. His resurrected life as our mediator and high priest brings us all the benefits of God and saves us from all wrath that is to come, now or ever: “*He is able to save them to the uttermost (or forever) that come unto God by him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them*” (7:25).

I hope you can see that Jesus never relinquished His human nature. The glory that was His from the beginning was returned to Him, and He assumed the position of power, honor, and authority, seated at the right hand of the Father. But *He ever liveth to make intercession for His brethren!* His is an *eternal priesthood*. We have a very unique being in Jesus Christ: He is both God and man. Thus, He understands God’s part and can represent and reveal God to us. He also knows, understands, and sympathizes with the frailties and weaknesses of human flesh, and He can mediate for us to God: “*For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all*” (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

In Hebrews 3:1, Paul said, “*Consider the Apostle and High Priest of*

our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed Him...” As God’s representative to us, Jesus serves as the “*Apostle of our faith,*” because *apostle* means “one who is sent on a mission.” As man’s representative to God, He is our “*High Priest.*”

He still maintains His human nature, and so He is able to understand the human side of our failures. John stated: “*If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*”

I want to stress the fact that one of the major qualifications of the high priest is to be able to sympathize with and have compassion for the people he represents. He must thoroughly understand them; otherwise he could not be a compassionate mediator for them. This is why we can stand on the promise of 1 Cor. 10:13: “*There is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer (allow) you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*”

The Temptation of Jesus

God does not know what you or I are able to bear, because He has never possessed humanity, but Jesus does. He knows what it is to stay up all night in prayer with demons buf-

feting Him. He was fully tested under all human conditions so He can fully understand mankind. Even Satan dealt with Jesus *as a human being* in his temptation. In Luke 4, after His baptism by John, Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. When He was baptized, the Holy Ghost, in the bodily shape of a dove descended on Him, and God spoke out of heaven saying, *“This is my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.”* These were the *last words* that He heard His Father speak before His temptation. In the wilderness, He fasted for forty days. Now what was the first thing that Satan tempted Jesus on? Satan knew that Jesus was human and had a human nature, and he tempted Him with the *lusts of the flesh*, saying: **“If thou be the Son of God...”** He was not questioning Jesus’ *humanity—but His deity!*

“...Command these stones to be made bread.” It is obvious that Satan was tempting Jesus on the lusts of His flesh, because He had not eaten for forty days, and the Bible says that afterwards *He hungered!* You see, God in His God-form doesn’t get tired; *He neither slumbers nor sleeps.* He does not have to eat, because He needs to. He only eats for pleasure. Man has to eat and sleep out of necessity. Man lost something physically when he could no longer eat of the Tree of Life. He gets a little of it back by God’s allowing him to eat animals to replace that lost nutrition. It was not, however, God’s original

plan for man to take life and shed blood for food.

Jesus answered: *“It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”* What was He tested on? The last thing that He heard His Father speak was, *“This is my beloved Son!”* He was saying: “I don’t have to do anything to prove that I am the Son of God—all I have to do is believe the Word of God that proceeded from my Father’s mouth!”

Every human temptation falls into one of three categories according to 1 Jn. 2:16: *“The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.”* It was so in the Garden when Adam and Eve were tested and fell, and it was so in the temptations of Christ. Having tempted Him through the lusts of the flesh, Satan then took Jesus up upon a high mountain where he showed him all of the kingdoms of the world in a moment, saying, *“All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine.”*

Satan tempted Jesus’ *human side* saying, “All this power will I give unto thee.” As God, He could have claimed it by reason that He made it, but Satan appealed to His humanity, and Jesus did not dispute Satan’s claim to give it to whomsoever he would. He knew that He would have to go to Calvary and seize back the right of rulership, and He subse-

quently said during His ministry: “Now is the prince of this world judged... Now is the prince of this world cast out.” And on the cross, He cried out, “It is finished!”

Satan taunted: “If thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine!” Jesus said to him, “Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Again Satan pressed Him to prove His deity by tempting Him to cast Himself off of a high pinnacle, saying, “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence...” But Jesus did not have to prove anything; He believed the Word of God, and when God allows you and me to be tested, it is going to be on the known Word of God. He will never allow us to be tempted above that we are able. I always say, “God will never bring you to your *breaking point*, but only to your *able point*!”

And Jesus knows what that point is! He proved that we can make it, because He was tempted in *every point* like as we. Now, if He was not human and did not possess the human nature, this would mean absolutely nothing! But Praise God, He loved us so much that He was willing to undergo such a radical change in His form and be made like unto you and me in all things, and be tested in all points, that He might become a faithful and merciful high priest and mediator.

“And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was

manifest **in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim. 3:16).

Coming Next Month:
Are you a Brick or a Stone?