

“The Brightness of His Glory”

9, Part 2

From Glory to Glory



Character development is said to be the most important work ever entrusted to human beings. During the next hour we will explore both our privilege and our responsibility to become Christ-like in character. Join us now for this powerful time of personal renewal as Pastor Stephen Wallace takes us "From Glory to Glory."

Welcome back my friends. I sure appreciate the privilege of studying with you... diligently. We are looking closely at our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is **the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person {Heb 1:3}**; and that has challenged us to ask ourselves - How? How is it possible that He, though a man, could be such? That can't be said of any other man, not even a sinless man before the fall. All of us, since the fall **come short of the glory {Rom 3:23}**; and a sinless man before the fall, was only in the what? **...the likeness of God. {Gen 1:23}** But here's One who is the what? **...the express image and the brightness of His Father's glory.**

How can it be? We have recognized that there's a two-fold answer to that. First of all, we noted that He was not only man, He was also, what? ...God. But the answer to the question, "How can He, though a man be the brightness of His Father's glory?" also lies in the fact that He was a unique man. He wasn't just like all the rest of us. And we have come to the place where we are now trying to understand how, though He is unique in that He is only **"in the likeness of sinful flesh," {Rom 8:3}** and doesn't have the same sinful flesh that we have; how He can still be tempted in all points like as we are, and that's no small challenge. You see, we have selfish natures that have a bent towards evil. Did He have a selfish nature with a bent towards evil? No. We have inbred sin, we have inborn evil in our natural hearts. Did He have such? No. He never had to be born again. He never had to be converted. If He'd had inbred sin, He would have been thereby, sinful and He couldn't have been our sinless substitute. He can only be on the cross for our sins if He has none of His own - in any dimension of His being. And we closed our last study by noting the three-fold dimension of His sinlessness.

Scripture says, **"He did no sin." {1 Pet 2:22}** That means that He was sinless in behavior, in word, and act.

Scripture says, **"He knew no sin." {2 Cor 5:21}** That means that He was sinless in character - in thought and feeling.

But Scripture also says, **"In Him is no sin." {1 Jn 3:5}** That means that He was sinless in nature - in spirit, in desire.

Absolutely sinless, and that is the sinlessness that Paul is comprehending when he says, **"He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." {Heb 4:15}** Without any sin.

But our challenge of course, which is what we're going to address now is: How can it possibly be that our Savior, who is so absolutely sinless, can be tempted like sinful human beings were? ...and are. You see the challenge there? It's a mystery, my dear friends, it's a mystery. But please know that mysteries are not things that cannot be understood. They are things that cannot be understood without the help of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to fully explain how Christ, though sinless, could be **tempted in all things like as we are**; and I'm not going to try to do that. But I do want to share with you that, which has been revealed to us; and **what is revealed to us, is for us and our children. {Deut 29:29}** And there are some precious insights that have helped me to understand, how Christ can be perfectly

sinless, which He must be in order to be our substitute; and at the same time perfectly sympathetic, which He must be in order to be a valid example for us.

You see, that's the challenge: **How to let Christ be both our sinless Substitute and our sympathetic Exemplar at the same time.**

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It's quite easy to take a position on the human nature of Christ that makes Him our sinless substitute. We say, *"Well, He had the nature of Adam before the fall."* By the way - that's what a lot of people believe - and it's also quite easy to establish that Christ is our sympathetic Exemplar, by simply stating that He had the nature of Adam after the fall. Right here is where our controversy as a people is - right here... You can't imagine how many times this man has been approached and asked, *"What do you believe? Do you believe that Christ had the nature of Adam before the fall, or the nature of Adam after the fall?"* ...and they hover, panting... waiting for me to give answer - so they can either embrace me as a brother, or spurn me as a heretic. This has become my dear friends, and I'm not exaggerating, ...this has become in many circles, the supposed litmus test regarding the validity of your claim to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. It's really become that... in many circles, and when I'm asked that question, I'm always inclined to respond one of two ways. The first and most simple is, *"You know I need a third option."* I need a third option, and praise God there is a third option. Or if I really want to confuse them, I'll say something like this: *"Well, neither... or both... depending upon what aspect of the consequence of sin upon human nature you're talking about."* Did you see your way through that?

You see, if you're talking about depravity, He had the nature of Adam, what? ...before the fall.

If you're talking about deterioration, He had what? ...the nature of Adam after the fall.

If you're talking about being infected with sin, He had the nature of Adam before the fall. If you're talking about affected by sin, He had the nature of Adam 4,000 years after the fall. Are you with me? So, my dear friends please, we need to think a little more, you know... in depth on this issue. I insist that this *"nature of Adam before the fall"* and *"after the fall,"* is very... it's an artificial dichotomy. It's superficial - it doesn't really look at the whole picture. And our challenge, our challenge is to have an understanding of the nature of Christ that allows Him to be both our sinless Substitute - and as far as sinlessness is concerned - He had the nature of Adam before the fall, and our sympathetic Exemplar. As far as that dimension of His ministry is concerned, He had the nature of Adam, what? ...after the fall. But we must have an understanding that allows Him to be both - sinless Substitute and sympathetic Exemplar - at the same time. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

You see if you go overboard in trying to make Him your sinless Substitute, and you make Him so holy other and so different from you, that He can't possibly identify with you - nor you with Him - then you've got a problem, don't you? What do you end up with? You end up with a plan of salvation where Jesus did it all. Just cloak yourself with His righteousness, and don't even worry about it. You're home free - that's cheap grace. Are you following this?

But if in your efforts to make Him your sympathetic Exemplar, you go overboard and you emphasize His likeness to us, so that He's just like us, then inadvertently what do you do? You destroy His capacity to be our sinless Substitute... because you make Him sinful. And my dear friends, if you make Him sinful, then who's He on the cross for? ...Himself - and we're in big trouble. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} We've got to have a sinless Savior. But the challenge, of course, is to have an understanding that allows Him to be both, our sinless Substitute and our sympathetic Exemplar at the same time; and that's what I want to explore with you in this last study tonight.

But before we proceed, we must what? ...we must pause and ask for God's Spirit to guide us in a special way. Please pray for yourself and pray for me, as we spend a few moments in prayer.

Father in heaven, I want so badly to rightly divide the Word of Truth. I want so badly to rightly represent, in everything I say, Him who is the Truth. Please Father, by the Spirit of Truth, guide my thoughts, indite my words, and let me speak the truth and only the truth; the truth as it is in Jesus. By the same Spirit that enables me to speak it, enable each one to hear it. Give us "spiritual hearing aids" tonight; and help us not only to hear the truth, help us to understand the truth. Help us to not only understand it, help us to value and appreciate it. And help us especially to choose to apply it to our lives, that by the truth, we might be changed into the likeness of Him, who is the Truth. In beholding, may we be changed by the power of the Spirit of Truth, is my prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

We are at the top of page 19, aren't we? We just noted the perfect sinlessness of Christ. Please contrast that with our situation. **Signs of the Times, March 17, 1887: "We may have the peace which passeth understanding, but it will cost us battles with the powers of darkness, struggles severe against selfishness and,"** what? **"...inbred sin."** My, inbred sin. That is a most remarkable statement. Obviously my dear friends, there is a deeper dimension to sin than behavior or even character. Right? This is inbred sin.

What, pray tell, is inbred sin? It's selfishness. It's what? It's selfishness. Remember when we looked up that, and read that statement earlier? **Historical Sketches, page 138: "Selfishness is inwrought in our very being. It has come to us,"** how? **"...as an inheritance."** That's inbred. Our children - by the law of heredity - are naturally, what? ...selfish.

Was that baby Jesus naturally selfish? No, He was not. If He had been naturally selfish, He would have manifested selfish behavior until at least He was converted. But did He even have to be converted? Did He ever have to receive a new heart? No. No, absolutely not. He had no inbred sin. **Review and Herald, May 4, 1886;** she speaks of **"the inborn evil of the natural heart,"** the inborn evil. You see all of us, as Adam's descendants, have a natural bent toward evil - a force, which unaided we cannot resist. **Education, page 29: "The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience."** In how many? ...every man's experience, and dear sisters, that's generic. Okay? That includes you. In everyone's experience, **"there is in his nature a bent towards evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist."** All of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam have what? As a result of the eating of the tree of knowledge, what do we have? We have a bent towards evil, a force, which unaided we cannot resist.

Did Jesus have a bent towards evil? Absolutely, most emphatically no. Listen: The book **The Faith I Live By, page 49,** from the pen of inspiration: **"He is a brother in our infirmities, but not in possessing like passions. As the sinless One, His nature recoiled from evil."** His nature, what my friends? **"...recoiled from evil."** **"He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin... He could have sinned, He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity."** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} Not only did He have no bent towards evil, His nature, what? ...recoiled from evil, He had a natural aversion to evil. An abhorrence of evil, He was absolutely sinless. Evil was excruciatingly painful and incredibly offensive to Him. Not for one moment was there in Him a, what? ...an evil propensity.

So again, how can it be that He, with a nature that recoils from evil, and we with natures that have a bent towards evil; how can it possibly be that **He is tempted in all things like as we are?** {**Heb 4:15**} Do you see our challenge here? ...and my dear friends, I am addressing this issue, precisely because the primary motivation for those who insist that Christ have a nature identical to ours in every way - with all of the sinful propensities that we have - is because they think that it's essential for Him to have such, if He is to be **tempted in all things like as we are.** But I want to share with you an understanding that will allow us to see how Christ can be **tempted in all things like as we are,** and still be absolutely sinless without any bent or propensity to evil whatsoever. Okay? That's what we're trying to do.

Now, please notice carefully what Paul says. He's tempted in all points, like as we are. How many points or how many types of temptation are there? There are only three. There are what? ...there are only three. What are they? They are recorded in **1 John 2:16: "For all that is in the world -"**

number one, the what? **"...the lust of the flesh,"**

number two, the what? **"...the lust of the eyes,"**

and number three, the what? **"... the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world."**

Now, inspiration tells us that **those three headings comprehend all temptation, and every temptation we experience comes under one of those three headings.** {RH, July 5, 1892 par. 10} Work with me on those three headings. Number one, **"lust of the flesh,"** what's that? We might call it **"sensualism."** That's the idolatrous love of pleasure. **"Lust of the eyes,"** what's that? **"Materialism:"** what you see, you want to get. That's the idolatrous love of the world and all that the world offers. **"The pride of life,"** what's that? **"Egotism,"** that's the idolatrous love of self. Did you see your way through that? Those are the three categories of temptation. And I challenge you: sometime sit down and try to think of any temptation you'd ever had and you'll discover, it goes under those three headings: sensualism, materialism or egotism; **the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life.**

Now, watch something very, very interesting and significant. It is precisely in those three areas that Satan tempted our first parents in Eden and brought about the fall of man. Listen for them; **Genesis 3:6: "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food,"** What's that? **Lust of the flesh.** ...and **"that it was pleasant to the eyes..."** What's that? **Lust of the eyes.** **"...and a tree desirable to make one wise..."** What's that? **Pride of life.** **"...she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."**

Now, work with me on this. When our first parents were tempted in those three areas, did they have a bent towards evil? Did they have inbred sin? No, absolutely not. They were fresh from the Creator's hands. They were perfectly sinless. Are we all together? What then, can we conclude? You don't have to be sinful in order to be tempted in those three areas, do you? Right? How do we know that? Was Adam tempted in those areas? Yes. Was he sinful? No. So obviously, you don't have to be sinful to be tempted in those three areas. Do you have to be sinful in order to be able to yield to temptation... in those three areas? No. What's again our proof? Adam and his wife. Did they yield? Yes. They yielded - while what? ...perfectly sinless.

You see, please understand something here. Satan is appealing to the sinless pre-fall version of what has now become **the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.** In their unfallen condition, they had a desire to enjoy the sensory pleasures that God had given them the capacity to enjoy. They enjoyed the delightful flavors of good fruit. Right? Was there anything sinful about that enjoyment? No. But Satan was appealing to that God-given desire, to enjoy sensory pleasure and trying to get them to satisfy it in a God-forbidden way. By eating of, what? ...the forbidden fruit; and should they indulge in satisfying that holy desire in a God-forbidden way, it would become unholy... and that's exactly what happened... it's exactly what happened.

Also, God had given them the desire to acquire beautiful things, and Eve saw that the tree was, what? ...it was a delight to the eyes; it was beautiful. Satan was appealing to that God-given desire to acquire beautiful things, and God had also given our first parents a desire to improve themselves. And here, it was being offered as something that would make them, what? ...wise. In fact they would be like, what? ...like who? ...God, knowing both good and evil. You see, so Satan was appealing to pre-fall desires that God had given. But when those were indulged in a God-forbidden way, they became what now is: post-fall **lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life.** Okay? Perverted.

Now, **Jesus Christ is the second Adam.** {1 Cor 15:45-47} Jesus is what? The second Adam. What does that mean? Listen. **Youth's Instructor, June 2, 1898: "Christ is called the second Adam. In purity and holiness, connected with God, and beloved by God, He began where the first Adam began. Willingly He passed over the ground where Adam fell, and redeemed Adam's failure."**

Question friends: did Adam begin with a sinful, depraved nature? No. **The second Adam, He began where the first Adam began, and He passes over the ground where Adam fell.** Are you following this? Now yes, the second Adam had all of the deterioration of 4,000 years. He had to have that, because He must not only pass the test that Adam failed to pass, but He also must be an example to poor fallen mortals, and show them how they - by His grace - can overcome their daily tests and temptations. Are you following this? That's why He's got to not only be, as far as depravity and sinlessness is concerned, like Adam before the fall; He's got to be, as far as deterioration and weakness is concerned, like Adam after the fall. Are you with me on this? I'm needing feedback, bless your hearts. Okay.

Look at this next one, **Signs of the Times, June 9, 1898: "Christ came to the earth, taking humanity, and standing as man's representative,"** Pause: That means as our second Adam, the head of a new race. Okay? He came to do what the first Adam failed to do in behalf of the human race. Reading on: **"...to show in the great controversy with Satan, that man, as God created him, connected with the Father and the Son, could obey,"** what? **"...every divine requirement."** You see, the issue in the great controversy, is whether or not man - as God created him - could perfectly obey God's law; and Adam gave apparent evidence that he couldn't. So the second Adam comes to prove that man, as God created him, could what? ...could perfectly obey - very important to understand that.

But He also comes to prove that even a fallen man can, in His strength, be an overcomer. Amen? {Amen} That is equally important to emphasize, my dear friends. That is why when He is tested, He must be tested in a way that will enable Him to prove that even a fallen man can overcome any temptation - in His strength. And for that reason, He comes with some very important prerequisites. First of all, inspiration tells us that **there is a load of guilt that is laid on Him as He goes through His test in the wilderness.** {RH, Sept 23, 1890 par. 3} Why? Because you and I have to contend with guilt. You and I have to contend with guilt. So, He bears a consciousness of our guilt, our sins having been laid on Him.

But there is something very significant about the test that He goes to the wilderness to experience. How many times is Christ tempted in the wilderness? How many times, my dear friends? Three times. Well, is that a coincidence? How many temptations are there? Three... and He must be **"tempted in all points,"** what? **"...like as we are."** {Heb 4:15} What do you suppose those three temptations are? What do you suppose they just might be? Luke... I have them recorded here, we can't take the time to read them, but **Luke 4:1-13...**

Lust of the flesh {1 Jn 2:16} - how was He tempted there, in that area? **Turn stones to bread {Mat 4:3};** satisfy your incredibly acute and intense appetite. Do you see that? Then, where does the devil take Him? **Verse 5,** top of page 20: **"Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'All this authority I will give You and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.'"** He is giving Him a panorama view of the world, all the Kingdoms of the world. What are we dealing with, here? **The lust of the eyes,** the lust of the eyes; and then the last temptation, what is it? He takes Him to the, what? ...the pinnacle of the temple, **verse 9:** and says, **"If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down from here. For it is written 'He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you...'"** What's this? **This is the pride of life that leads to presumption.**

Three temptations, the very three that Adam was tempted with, in Eden, and the very three that you and I have to contend with, on a daily basis. Was Christ **"tempted in all things like as we are"**? Was He? **"All points like as we are"**? Yes. But work with me further on this. And by the way, in **Testimonies Volume 3**, before we move on, **page 372**, she states very clearly: **"He who knew no sin was made sin for us. With this terrible weight of guilt upon Him because of our sins He withstood the fearful test upon,"**

what? **"...appetite, and upon,"**

what? **"...love of the world and of honor, and,"**

what? **"...pride of display which leads to presumption."**

There you have it, the three that we just outlined in Luke. **"Christ endured these three great leading temptations, and overcame in behalf of man, working out for him a righteous character,"** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} Praise God that He did! **"...because He knew man could not do this of himself. He knew that upon these three points Satan was to assail the race. He had overcome Adam, and he designed to carry forward his work till he completed the ruin of man. Christ entered the field in man's behalf to conquer Satan for him because He saw that man could not overcome on his own account. Christ prepared the way for the ransom of man by His own life of suffering, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, and by His humiliation and final death. He brought help to man that he might, by following Christ's example, overcome on his own account, as Christ has overcome for him."** That's so profound and insightful; I had to share it with you.

Now, lets briefly take a look at the first of the three temptations. That's all we're going to have time for tonight. I want you to recognize, and understand, and appreciate, the profound significance of what Christ had to go through before He could be tempted in the area of appetite. You see, Christ has no perverted, sinful appetite, does He? No, He doesn't. He has no evil propensities in the realm of His appetite. He has a sinless appetite. At birth He has no bent towards evil, and He has always lived a life of perfect obedience. So, He doesn't have any depravity in the realm of appetite. So the question arises, how then is He going to be tested in that area, in a way that will enable Him to be sympathetic with, and a valid example to those of us who have depraved appetites? Are you following this? How's He going to do that?

Well my dear friends, before He's tempted in the area of appetite, what does He do? What does He do? He goes without food for how long? **...forty days and forty nights...** forty days and forty nights. Then, the Bible says, **"when He was an hungered,"** {**Mat 4:2**} which is probably one of the greatest understatements in Scripture. Please understand something with me. When you first go on a fast, you're very hungry, aren't you? Have you ever tried fasting? Oh, it's really tough the first day. But the second day, what happens to the appetite? It gets weaker until after a while, you don't feel hungry at all. Very interesting, you don't feel hungry at all. Until when? Until just before you die. Just before you die, the body makes one incredibly intense cry. It screams out for food. It is the most powerful impulse that the human body can experience... just before death.

Now, come with me to the wilderness. Who is watching our Savior? ...every move He's making? Satan; he has his plans all laid. He's been working on them for 4,000 years. He's got his agenda perfectly planned, but he wants to hit Christ with the appetite temptation... By the way, that's where he was successful in bringing about the fall of man, wasn't he? Eve saw that the tree was good for food, to start with; and he realizes that his best chance is to come with a temptation in the realm of appetite, but he wants to do it when he is likeliest to get Christ to indulge appetite. So he watches; he knows human physiology. He knows that eventually Christ's body is going to start to convulse with those incredibly intense pangs of hunger; and he counts the days, and he begins to wonder, when is it going to happen? How come He's surviving so long? ...and He survives as long as He does, because He's an incredibly

healthy specimen when He comes in to the wilderness. But Satan knows that sooner or later, He's going to crack, and He's going to start to convulse; and he's waiting for that moment... and when he sees it begin to happen on the fortieth day, what does he do? He comes in, and what does he say? **"If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."** {Mat 4:3} *"And by the way, if you don't do it quick, you're going to die."*

Now my friends, consider with me what's going on here. It is really a temptation that is beyond our comprehension to fully understand the intensity of, and the power of. Christ has been baptized just prior to coming to the wilderness. Correct? ...and what did God tell Him as He comes out of the water? **"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."** {Mat 3:17} Now, Christ must depend exclusively upon the Word of God. His faith must cling to that, as far as His personal identity is concerned.

But Satan comes to challenge that, and he says... and inspiration fleshes this out for us {DA 119.2} - he says to Him: *"You know, you must be the fallen angel. There's been a rebellion in heaven, and You obviously have been cast out. I mean, You are rejected by God and man; You must be the fallen angel. But if You are the Son of God, prove it by doing something only God can do. Turn stones to bread."*

Now my dear friends, if you and I had been tempted to turn stones to bread, would that even have been a temptation to us? No. Why? We can't do it. Was it a temptation to Christ? Was it? Absolutely. Why? Because He could do it. You know, bless your hearts... those who insist that Christ was tempted just like we are... it seems like if they would just take a look at Christ's temptation, they would have to recognize that, no, there's something radically different about His temptations. I've never been tempted to turn stones to bread, nor have you! But Christ was. Now, that wouldn't have been a temptation to us, because we couldn't have done it. Was it a temptation to Christ? Yes. Why? Because He could have done it. With one word - the same word that brought this world into existence - He could have turned every stone on the desert floor into a fresh-baked loaf. Every stone into a fresh-baked loaf, easily... and satisfied His hunger and proved that He was not who the enemy was insinuating He was, in the process - proved that He was the Son of God. And if you don't think that was a temptation, please think again. My dear friends, that was an overwhelmingly powerful temptation.

And it was going through that temptation that made it possible for Him to sympathize and identify with any temptation that any fallen human being has to experience, in the realm of **the lust of the flesh**. Please, understand that though Christ was powerfully tempted in that area of appetite, it was not a sinful appetite that was being appealed to, was it? Was it sinful for Christ to be hungry after going without food for forty days and forty nights? Was it? No, absolutely sinless. But was it a powerful appetite? Oh, it was powerful. Was it as powerful as the depraved, perverted appetites that you and I have to contend with? Yes, yes! So can anyone say, follow now, can anyone say who's having to contend with a depraved, perverted appetite in some area of **the lusts of the flesh**, can anyone say, *"Christ doesn't know what it's like. He can't sympathize with me."* Can you say that? No, you can't. Why can Christ sympathize with you though? Because He has had your exact same temptation? No. But because He's had a temptation in the area of **the lust of the flesh**, that's fully equal to anything you will have to contend with in **the lust of the flesh**. Do you understand what I'm trying to explain?

You see my dear friends, I've got to make this just very clear. There are those who insist that **"tempted in all things like as we are"** {Heb 4:15} means that Christ had every single temptation that we have. In fact, there are those who go so far as to say, for instance... for example... this is just one: that Christ had the temptations of a homosexual. This is in print, by the way. And they, who say that, are well intentioned because they think that in order for a homosexual to be able to know that Christ understands what he's going through, has to be assured that Christ actually had those temptations. My

dear friends, please understand that we don't have to do that. We don't have to go there; and God forbid that we do. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

Because you see, if Christ has every temptation that we have, we have not only got to give Him a depraved nature, we've got to give Him as depraved a nature as anyone has ever had or could ever have. Are you following this? I don't even have the temptations of a homosexual and I'm a fallen man. I don't understand that. I realize that there are those who have such temptations, but I don't have them. Christ's capacity to sympathize with us, is not dependant upon His having had to handle every single one of our temptations. I mean, aren't there temptations that are unique to women, for instance? Why, of course. And if a woman thinks that Christ has to have had all of her temptations while being a man, then she's got to come to the conclusion that He can't possibly identify with her. Are you following the reasoning here? But can Christ identify with anyone's temptation in any of those three areas? Yes! Why? Because He had specific temptations? No... but because He had a temptation that makes Him fully sympathetic in everyone of those three areas; and it was fully equal in intensity to anything you and I will ever have to meet. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

Can a heroin addict say Christ doesn't know what it's like? No. Why? Because that comes under the heading "**lust of the flesh,**" and Christ had a temptation in the area of **the lust of the flesh** that was fully as powerful as that, of a heroin addict's. Did He have to be a heroin addict to be able to sympathize with a heroin addict? No. Did He have to be a heroin addict in order to be a valid example to a heroin addict? No. Do you see how we can have an understanding that allows Christ to be perfectly sympathetic while perfectly sinless at the same time? Do you see that my dear friends? That's our challenge; and that's what Christ was. He was perfectly sinless yet perfectly sympathetic at the same time. Praise God for such a Savior. Amen? {Amen} Praise God for such a Savior.

In Heavenly Places, page 194; note some of the insights that we have regarding this first particular temptation. "**Intemperance lies at the foundation of all the moral evils known to man. Christ began the work of redemption just where the ruin began. The fall of our first parents was caused by the indulgence of,**" what? "**...appetite. In redemption, the denial of appetite is the first work of Christ.**" Oh, my dear friends, we've got to pause here.

You know inspiration tells us that **if we can get the victory over appetite, we can get the victory over every other sin.** {CD 59.3} That's why it is absolutely imperative for us - with Christ - to get the victory over appetite. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} **The lust of the flesh,** that's the big one; and if we can gain the victory over that, we'll gain the victory over the other two. That's why Christ had to gain the victory over appetite first; and it was that victory, that put Him in good stead to get the victory over the ones that followed. **Signs of the Times, December 3, 1902: "Here is the insinuation of distrust. In the tones of the tempter's voice is an expression of utter incredulity. Would God treat His own Son thus? Would He leave Him in the desert with wild beasts, without food, without companions, without comfort? Satan insinuated that God never meant His Son to be in such a state as this. 'If Thou be the Son of God,' he says, 'show Thy power by relieving Thyself of this pressing hunger. Command that these stones be made bread.'"**

Now, watch here carefully. Did Christ have the power to turn stones to bread? Did He? Yes. Why? Because He was divine; He was the divine Creator. He had creative power within Himself. You see, Satan wasn't so foolish as to be tempting Him to do something He couldn't do. He knew full well that he was dealing with not only a man, but dealing with the Creator-God, and a man; and so he was trying to reach Him through both. He was appealing to the intense hunger of the man, but he was appealing to the divine power of the God within Him, to satisfy the hunger of the man. Did you see that? {Yes} And my dear friends, all the way through His life Christ was thus tempted. In fact, inspiration tells us, that **Christ's greatest temptation was to use His divine power in His own behalf.** {RH, April

1, 1875 par. 3} It was to, what? ...it was to use His divine power in His own behalf. You and I... you know, we can't even - I don't think - fully understand how powerful that temptation must have been.

You see, I believe... let me put it this way: I believe that Christ's temptations were as much stronger than yours and mine are, as the nature He was tempted to rely upon, was stronger than yours and mine is. Did you see your way through that? What nature are we tempted to trust in and to rely upon? A fallen, sinful nature. What nature was Christ tempted to trust in and rely upon? An infinitely powerful nature - that could turn stones to bread. Now, why was it absolutely necessary that Christ not exercise divine power in His own behalf? Why? Because had He done that... please follow this... had He done that at any time to meet His own personal needs, **He would have immediately incapacitated Himself to be a valid example for us.** {RH, April 1, 1875 par. 1} Because you see, none of us have personal divine power to rely upon. We have to rely upon who, in order to overcome temptation and meet our need? ...external divine power. Amen? Not internal divine power. So, as far as His own needs were concerned, Christ had to constantly depend upon who? ...the Father... and if the Father wasn't going to feed Him, He was willing to what? ...die rather than use His divine power, as no human could, to feed Himself. Because He wanted to be able to identify with us.

You've got to love a Lord like that. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} You've got to love a Lord like that.

Knowing full well all the time that He could have done it. How did He know that? Well, every day He worked miracles, didn't He? ...and those were by His own divine power; yes, only as the Father authorized Him to do so. That's why He says, **"Of Mine own self I can do nothing."** {Jn 5:19.30} *"Of My own initiative,"* is what He's really saying there, **"...I can do nothing."** *"I have come to be a man, therefore, I must go through life as a man. And if I'm going to exercise divine power, it can never be for Myself. It can only be for others, but even then it can only be as the Father authorizes Me to do so."* Are you following that? Now, the last miracle that Christ worked, what was it? ...raising Lazarus from the... dead. That was the most stunning of all of His miracles; and what did He say, as He stood at the tomb? *"Lazarus, in the name of the Father, come forth"?* No; He said what? **"Lazarus, come forth."** {Jn 11:43} After having told Mary and Martha, **"I am the resurrection and the life."** {Jn 11:25} Amen? {Amen} And inspiration tells us, that **that final miracle was the crowning evidence of Christ's divine power.** {DA 529.1} He raised Lazarus by His own divine power, and He knew full well, because He could exercise that divine power in behalf of others, as the Father authorized Him to do so. He knew full well that He had it.

And talk about habit patterns... work with me on this. How long had Christ been exercising divine power to do anything He wanted? How long? For all eternity. You think you've got a habit pattern to overcome! Are you hearing what I'm telling you? He had an eternal habit pattern to overcome. He had used His divine power for eternity past to do whatever He wanted to do, and now during time, He can't do it for Himself, if He's going to be a valid example for you and me, if He's going to be able to sympathize with you and me. Isn't that amazing?

Listen to this statement, **Review and Herald, May 14, 1908: "Coming to the Son of God, the great deceiver claimed to be commissioned by the Father with a message to the Savior. He need no longer hunger. 'If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' But by such an act as this, Christ would have broken His promise that He would never exercise His divine power in order to escape any difficulty or suffering that man in his humanity must meet."** Do you see that? That was part of the covenant agreement with the Father. He would come to earth and He would never exercise His divine power to meet any need of His own - because He has to go through life as a man.

Look at **Desire of Ages, page 119** - top of page 21: **"Christ was not to exercise divine power for His own benefit. He had come to bear trial as we must do, leaving us an example of faith and submission. Neither here nor at any subsequent time in His earthly life did He work a miracle in His own behalf. His wonderful works were all for the good of,"** who? **"...others."** Others, others. O, do you see the selflessness, the self-denying, self-sacrificing love of the character of God revealed here, my dear friends? Do you see it?

Temperance, page 20: "Satan was defeated in his object to overcome Christ upon the point of appetite. And here in the wilderness Christ achieved a victory in behalf of the race upon the point of appetite, making it possible for man, in all future time, in His name to overcome the strength of appetite on his own behalf." My dear friends, is there any excuse for us to remain slaves of **the lust of the flesh**? No. Why? Because Jesus Christ has proven that He has power, sufficient to overcome the most intense temptation in that area that any human being will ever have to contend with. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} There is no excuse then, for remaining slaves to appetite, **the lust of the flesh** - which includes passion as well, by the way - appetite and passion. No excuse.

Please understand, that in overcoming this temptation - this first one and every temptation - Christ relied upon nothing that is not readily available to us by His grace. Did you hear what I just said there? In overcoming this temptation, and every other temptation, Christ relied upon absolutely nothing that is not readily available to us by His grace. **Desire of Ages, page 24: "...He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us."** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} No power. How did He overcome, for example, the temptation to indulge appetite? What did He say? **"It is written..."** {**Mat 4:4.6.7.10**} Is that a weapon that's available to us, my friends? Is it - in overcoming temptation? Is it? Yes, it is.

But we have the New Testament as well, He only had the Old; and we have above all, His example of victory. Christ had no one's example of victory, because the first Adam and all of his descendants had failed to overcome. Praise God that we have the Scriptures, and the glowing, glorious, victorious example of the Word made flesh: Jesus Christ. **Review and Herald, November 28, 1882: "Christ overcame Satan, showing us how we also may overcome. Christ resisted Satan with Scripture. He might have had recourse to His own divine power, and used His own words; but He said, 'It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'"**

Pause... Who was He quoting there? Himself. He was quoting Himself from Scripture. He had said that, but does He say something by His own authority when He takes the role of a man? No, He quotes the Bible - something that had been recorded that He Himself had originally said. Amazing! Reading on: **"With the second temptation He says, 'It is written again, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' Christ's example is before us. If the sacred Scriptures were studied and followed, the Christian would be fortified to meet the wily foe; but the Word of God is neglected, and disaster and defeat follow."**

Oh, my brother, my sister, I plead with you. Behold Christ in the wilderness, and beholding, be changed - learn from Him. Become like Him; hide God's Word in your heart, as David did. **"Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not,"** what? **"...sin against Thee."** {**Ps 119:11**} You have a sympathetic Savior. Amen? {Amen} One who has been **"tempted in all points like as you are, yet without,"** what? **"...sin."** {**Heb 4:15**} He's perfectly sinless, praise God, while being perfectly sympathetic at the same time. Praise God for such a Savior. Shall we stand for prayer?

Father in Heaven, thank You so much for Jesus. May we behold Him, and in beholding may we become like Him, is our prayer in His name. Amen.