

What Saith the Scripture?

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Victory Over Temptation

"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).

by Tom Stewart

12-13-2000

The choices we make when faced with the temptation to not love God's Word or to speak of ourselves, is the difference between holiness and sin. "For we have not an High Priest [Jesus] 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). That **holy struggle** to overcome the temptation to sin, e.g., the sin of loathing God's Word or of speaking rashly and unlovingly to others, was fought by our Elder Brother, the LORD Jesus. "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of One: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (2:11). Our High Priest told His disciples at the Last Supper, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations" (Luke 22:28).

The significance of the Son of God's incarnation into human flesh was "that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1John 3:8). Christ is not only the One Who Atones for our sins, if we trust Him; but, He set the example and gave us His Spirit to ensure our victory over sinning. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Overcoming the temptation to sin, we see our LORD "leaving us an example, that [we] should follow His steps" (1Peter 2:21). John the Baptist had just baptized the LORD Jesus, and we are shown a perfect picture of the Spirit-filled Son of Man coming out of the water. "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the Heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him" (Matthew 3:16). But, even a Spirit-filled man will be tempted. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (4:1).

How did our LORD overcome His temptations? Jesus set the example of resisting "stedfast in the faith" (1Peter 5:9) by countering every temptation of Satan with the Word of God. "3 And when the Tempter came to Him, He said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But HE ANSWERED AND SAID, IT IS WRITTEN, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5 Then the Devil taketh Him up into the Holy City, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the Temple, 6 and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He [the Father] shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. 7 JESUS SAID unto him, IT IS WRITTEN AGAIN, Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God. 8 Again, the Devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 THEN SAITH JESUS unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for IT IS WRITTEN, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:3-10).

Just as the Scriptures promise to all those that withstand the Devil in faith, "[Satan] will flee from you" (James 4:7), the "Devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him" (Matthew 4:11).

One of the famous verses of the 119th Psalm, is verse 11. "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (119:11). A mistake made by many Christians is to assume that the mere memorizing of Scripture is sufficient to prevent sin. Although the intellectual gathering and storing of Scripture in our minds is important and laudable, only as we **actively believe** what we have read and memorized, can we "not sin against [God]" (119:11). Whoever could sin WHILE they were trusting God? No one! Charles G. Finney called it the Unity of Moral Action, that is, no one can be sinful and holy AT THE SAME TIME. It is impossible to sin WHILE trusting God. [Please read "[Unity of Moral Action](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Unity.of.Moral.Action.html)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Unity.of.Moral.Action.html -- by Charles G. Finney] Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters [at the same time]: for either he will hate the One, and love the other; or else he will hold to the One, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

What is the secret of not sinning? Certainly, by actively seeking God, we will not wander into disobedience. "With my whole heart have I sought Thee: O let me not wander from Thy Commandments" (Psalm 119:10). This is what the Psalmist understood; but, the Saints of the New Covenant have an even greater foundation to keep themselves from sinning. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). The LORD Jesus Christ not only gave us His example of resisting temptation through active faith in the Word of God, but He gave us the Promised Spirit of the New Covenant to CAUSE us "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). "And I will put My Spirit within you, and CAUSE you to **walk** in My Statutes, and ye shall **keep** My Judgments, and **do** them" (Ezekiel 36:27). The Promised Indwelling Holy Spirit is the Means by which the Father secures us in this New Testament dispensation to always walk in obedience without sinning. "But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33). And, the chief feature of the Holy Spirit's teaching, is that He teaches us about the Son, that we would "follow His steps" (1Peter 2:21). "13 Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He [the Spirit] shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:13-15).

How can the Spirit's teaching about the LORD Jesus Christ cause us to walk without sinning? For example, TO BE TAUGHT OF THE SPIRIT THAT CHRIST IS OUR SANCTIFICATION, i.e., "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption" (1Corinthians 1:30), CAUSES US TO ACTIVELY TRUST IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST TO SANCTIFY US. "Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a Chief Corner Stone [Jesus], Elect, Precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded" (1Peter 2:6). It is a confounding impossibility that we would end up committing the same sin that we always have committed, WHILE WE ARE TRUSTING THE LORD to keep us from sinning! "33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit... 35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart

bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:33,35). It is our responsibility to seek the LORD with all our heart. "With my whole heart have I sought Thee: O let me not wander from Thy Commandments" (Psalm 119:10).

It is the Holy Spirit's responsibility to keep us walking always in His Love. "For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the Law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). Again, the Holy Spirit accomplishes this by revealing Christ to our heart. Our article, "[He Will Subdue Our Iniquities](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/He.Will.Subdue.Our.Iniquity.html)" [Micah 7:19] -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/He.Will.Subdue.Our.Iniquity.html> --, shows us how the Spirit reveals Jesus as

"Our Redeemer From All Our Iniquity. 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from ALL iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works' (Titus 2:13-14). Jesus redeems us from all iniquity. Like the Apostle Paul, we seek to be delivered from 'the body of this death' (Romans 7:24), i.e., from being in bondage to sinning. Also, like Paul, we 'thank God through Jesus Christ our LORD' (7:25) for the deliverance from sin and sinning that Our Redeemer From All Our Iniquity can accomplish in us, when we trust Him to do it."

Manwardly, we stress the importance of our exercise of faith; while Godwardly, the Spirit is revealing to us the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). **It requires a personal act of trusting the LORD Jesus to keep us from falling back into our old, easy, sinful habits; BUT, the very fact that we continue to strive to love and obey Him, indicates that He has been Faithful in keeping-- and, restoring us, when necessary.** "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it" (1Thessalonians 5:24). When the Holy Spirit reveals the LORD Jesus Christ to us that we might trust Him as the "Great Shepherd of the Sheep" (Hebrews 13:20), then we are assured that the Shepherd will give us a way to escape from temptation. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, Who will not suffer 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" (1Corinthians 10:13). As our understanding grows about this process of temptation, sin, faith, Christ, the Spirit, and sanctification, we will **honor** God more and more, as well as **vindicate** His choice of choosing "us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:4), as we "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 3:18).

Maranatha!

Addendum:

**Christ's Human Sinlessness
Proves the Justice of God's Demand for Man's Sinlessness**

by Tom Stewart

["From the Editor's Desktop"](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/W.S.t.S.Fellowship.html#From%20the%20Editors%20Desk)

-- [http://whatsaiththescripture.com/W.S.t.S.Fellowship.html#From the Editors Desk](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/W.S.t.S.Fellowship.html#From%20the%20Editors%20Desk) --

It is a forthright point of Biblical theology to state that Jesus is truly God Almighty and that He was

truly born as a human baby nearly 2,000 years ago; but, the uniqueness of His person has caused many in the study of theology **to discount the value of His human sinless life**. "And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin" (1John 3:5). "Sure," they may say, "Jesus did not sin while in human flesh, but that's because He is God." But, this misses the point entirely of why the Almighty had to resort to such a daring move as to allow His Eternally Begotten Son to become a defenseless babe in a manger. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1Peter 2:22). You can nearly see in your mind the picture of the Father discussing with the Son that mankind would object to His demand of sinless living as unreasonable and unobtainable because no one could live without sin while in human flesh. But, then the Son said, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). The Son of God was willing to undergo all the difficulties, humiliations, and sufferings of the human condition, **if only the attainability of a sinless walk from man could be proved, then the Father's wisdom and justice of requiring it would be justified**. "5 But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. 6 He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1John 2:5-6).

The Son of God volunteered to become a man, because He desired to justify the Father's demand of loving obedience from all the children of men. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous" (1John 5:3). Since "grievous" Commandments are unbearable and impossible to obey, the Son had to demonstrate that man in human flesh **could** obey everything that the Father commanded of all men. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and Great Commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39). And, if Satan could stumble Jesus into sinning, then Satan would justify himself for his rebellion, *as well as humiliate the Father* for requiring more than He ought from His creation. "**If ye love Me, keep My Commandments**" (John 14:15).

If one must be the Son of God to obey completely the Father, then no one needs to feel himself rebellious for giving only the semblance of partial obedience. But, "whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Jesus came to destroy the arguments of self-justification that allow man to **hide behind physical flesh as his excuse for sinning**. Instead, the Son of God's manifestation in human flesh was to obliterate man's arguments of self-justification for why he sins, which arguments are the "works of the devil". "He that committeth sin **is** of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1John 3:8). Sin is so rampant in this world, and in the Professed Church, because excuse is found everywhere that our flesh made us to sin. "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:12).

Man has transposed sin away from his **willful disobedience** of God and metaphysically made human flesh the residence of sin, as evidenced by the misunderstanding many have of the Apostle Paul's inspired reference to "sinful flesh". "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" (Romans 8:3). **Flesh can only be sinful by how we use it**, else wise Christ could not have "condemned **sin** in the flesh" (8:3) without obliterating flesh entirely-- which He did not. "19 What?

know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1Corinthians 6:19-20). Brother Paul goes on to **disabuse us of any misconception we have that flesh, by itself, is sinful**, by further informing us that:

(1) it is only how we mind or treat the flesh, that makes it sinful, i.e., "6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be Spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:6-7), and

(2) we are no longer minding the flesh, if we are walking after the Spirit, i.e., "8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (8:8-9).

If we desire to honor God for His Love, Truth, Mercy, and Grace, then **we ought to give the Son of God the "glory and honour and power"** (Revelation 4:11) **for walking in human flesh without sinning, without having to resort to miraculous or supernatural advantages normally unavailable to mortal man.** "Though He were a Son, yet **learned He obedience** by the things which He **suffered**" (Hebrews 5:8). Instead of calling for the assistance of angels to stand in for Him when obedience was difficult and sinning was easy, i.e., "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53), **Jesus chose to be humanly perfected and matured by His human sufferings.** "For it became Him [the Father], for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to **make the Captain of Their Salvation [Jesus] perfect through sufferings**" (Hebrews 2:10).

The sinless obedience of Christ while in human flesh magnifies the wise choice of God to create man and to wisely and certainly expect that man must perfectly obey Him, "as unto a Faithful Creator" (1Peter 4:19). "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His Judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33). If the Son of God was the only man to ever obey the Father, then God would still be praised for the wisdom and justice of His decision to require loving and sinless obedience from man. "Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That Thou mightest be justified in Thy Sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged" (3:4). But, the truth is that any time that any man ever does obey the Father, it is because the New Covenant's gift of the Spirit of Christ is working in us to "will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). And, that working in us comes **only** when we trust Him. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23).

For more material related to this topic please see

[Must We Then Sin?](http://whatsaiththescipture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html)

-- <http://whatsaiththescipture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --
Or, A Response to the Doctrine of Sin Nature or the Doctrine of Original Sin
Or, A Clarification of What is Sin, Why We Sin, and How Not to Sin

and

[The Amazing Humanity of Jesus Christ](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Jehovah/Amazing.Humanity.of.Jesus.html)

-- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Jehovah/Amazing.Humanity.of.Jesus.html> --

Or, The Benefit of Christ's Birth

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of Grace and Truth"
(John 1:14).

and

[WStS TOPICAL LINKS: On Salvation](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Jehovah/Topical.Links.Salvation.html)

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