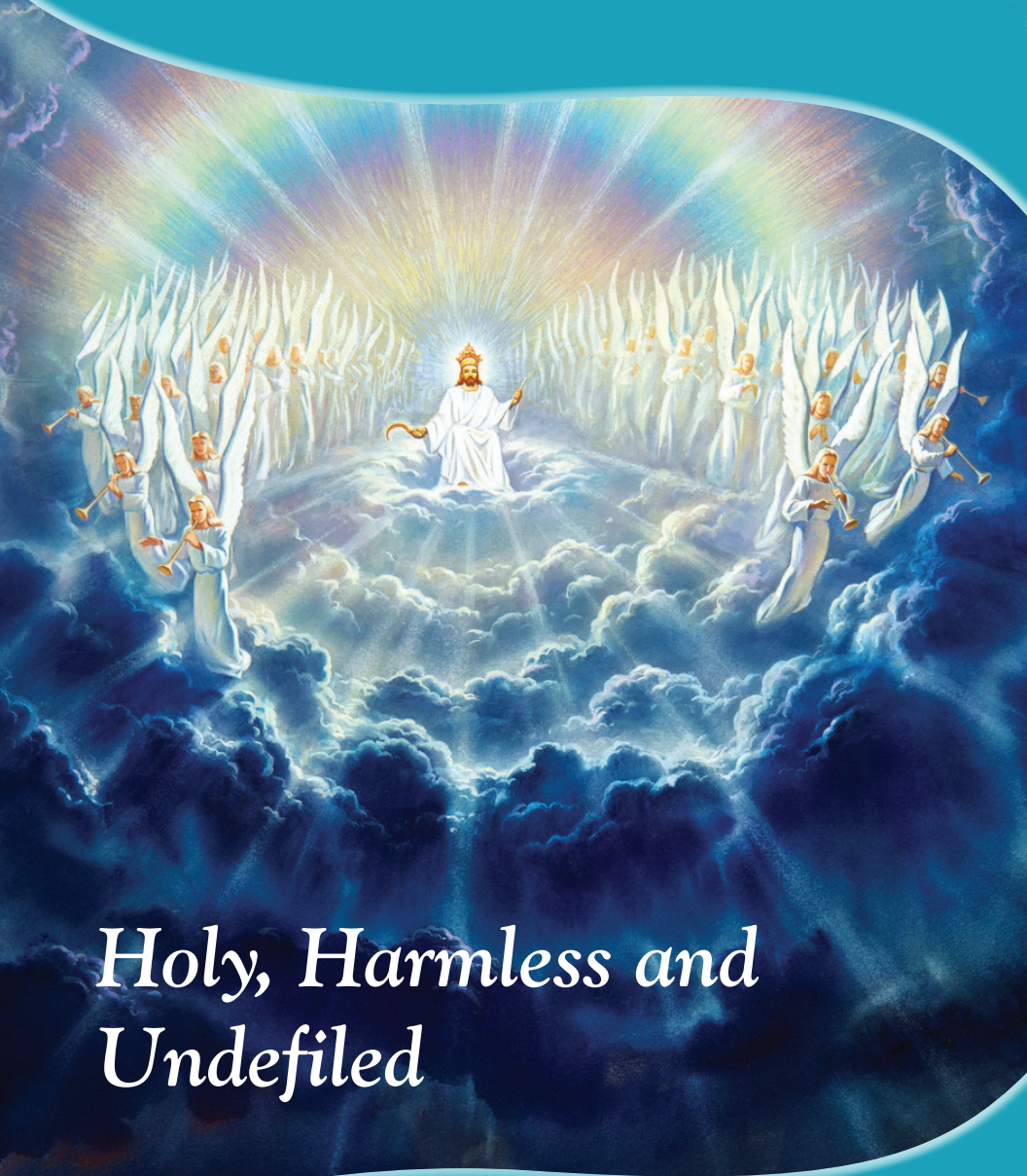


“Prepare to Meet Thy God!”



*Holy, Harmless and
Undefiled*

**Who Can Stand?
Study Guide**

6

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Introduction



*The **incarnation** of our beloved Lord and Savior is a subject that will challenge the greatest minds. Throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity, this profound topic will engage our mental powers, and even then, we will understand only a fraction of the love of God that motivated Him to give His dear Son to rescue the fallen race from the pit of sin.*

“The study of the incarnation of Christ, His atoning sacrifice and mediatorial work, will employ the mind of the diligent student as long as time shall last; and looking to heaven with its unnumbered years, he will exclaim, ‘Great is the mystery of godliness!’ 1 Timothy 3:16” (GW 251).

How can it be that the Creator of the universe, the omnipotent God adored and worshiped by the angels, consented to leave His beautiful home to come to this dark world filled with misery and pain? There is only one answer. It was love for His created beings. It was love which motivated Jesus to leave His heavenly courts to tabernacle with man. He was moved with compassion as He saw our lost, hopeless condition, and He was not content to remain in heaven while we were estranged from the Father’s house. What condescension; what glorious thought!

The divine Son of God, in taking upon Himself our fallen human nature, forever revealed the value of a human soul. We are precious to Him, and He loves us deeply. By becoming one of us, He understands our pain and our struggles. Jesus knows how to lead us through the land mines of sin that the devil has set to destroy us; therefore, we can trust Him to safely guide us day by day in our earthly journey toward His kingdom above. We invite you to join us in this study, as we humbly and prayerfully pursue this most profound and sublime of all subjects—the incarnation of the Son of God.

1

What is the greatest mystery in the universe?

“This is the mystery of godliness. That Christ should take human nature, and by a life of humiliation elevate man in the scale of moral worth with God: that He should carry His adopted nature to

the throne of God, and there present His children to the Father, to have conferred upon them an honor exceeding that conferred upon the angels,—this is the marvel of the heavenly universe, the mystery into which angels desire to look. This is love that melts the sinner’s heart” (SD 22).

“The incarnation of Christ is the mystery of all mysteries” (6BC 1082). The union of divinity with humanity is a mystery, hidden with God, “the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints” (Colossians 1:26).

Note: This indeed is the mystery of mysteries, a most sublime truth. It is around this topic that many controversial theological battles have been fought and yet the most pertinent questions posed by the human mind can be answered. Jesus has promised that as we search for the truth, He will reward us in understanding as much as the human mind needs to comprehend.

2 What is to be our attitude as we study the incarnation of Christ?

“The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man; He gave proof of His humility in becoming a man. Yet He was God in the flesh. When we approach this subject, we would do well to heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, ‘Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground’ (Exodus 3:5). We should come to this study with the humility of a learner, with a contrite heart. And the study of the incarnation of Christ is a fruitful field, which will repay the searcher who digs deep for hidden truth” (1SM 244, emphasis supplied).

“If there is a point of truth that you do not understand, upon which you do not agree, investigate, compare scripture with scripture, sink the shaft of truth down deep into the mine of God’s word. You

must lay yourselves and your opinions on the altar of God, put away your preconceived ideas, and let the Spirit of Heaven guide you into all truth. ... All self-sufficiency, egotism, and pride of opinion must be put away. We must come to the feet of Jesus, and learn of him who is meek and lowly of heart” (RH Feb. 18, 1890).

3 Why is it so important for the remnant to understand the subject of the nature of Christ?

There are at least two serious implications in failing to comprehend the significance of this vital topic.

First, Christ is the very center of the plan of salvation and if we do not have a correct understanding of His nature, we cannot have a correct comprehension of the plan of salvation and the complete restoration that this plan anticipates. Seventh-day Adventists have been called to preach the everlasting gospel. This is the final message of love to go to “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6), and then Jesus will return. We must preach the correct gospel in order to have a right understanding of the nature of Christ, for only the correct understanding will produce a finished product.

Secondly, if we are to apply a correct remedy to the sin problem, we must see how Jesus met the infinite standard of the law in His human nature, for only then we can trust God to do the same in us. In order to cooperate with Jesus in the cleansing of our soul temples, we must clearly see the far-reaching principles of the divine standard of the law, for only then can we accurately define sin.

Satan knows the power of this precious truth to set us free from his lies and deceptions, so he is determined to keep us from understanding it.

4 What are three basic purposes for Christ becoming incarnate?

1. Christ came to reveal to us and to the universe “the character of his Father, to win man back to his allegiance to God, to reconcile

man to God” (BEcho Nov. 1, 1892). Christ came to personify the law of God, and to be our substitute and example in all that His law requires.

2. Christ came to reveal to us and to the universe what Adam, as God originally created him, could have and should have been but through sin failed to be.
3. Christ came to reveal to us what we, though fallen, can become. He demonstrated this by living a consistently and completely victorious life ever depending upon a power outside of Himself, namely the Holy Spirit. This enabled Him to be our sympathetic High Priest because He was acquainted personally with our weaknesses. Jesus knows experientially what it is like to be tempted in all points like as we are.

5

What are the two precious truths regarding the nature of Christ that we must keep in perfect balance? Why is this so important?

1. “For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26). “In Him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5). Christ in His humanity became our sinless substitute. He can only be such because in Himself He was absolutely sinless. Jesus had to “be separate from sinners;” otherwise, He could not represent us before the infinitely righteous God as our High Priest. Christ, in our behalf, presented before the Father a righteousness that meets the infinite standard of the law.
2. “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation* for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:17). “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). “Sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3).

*Propitiation: Strong’s Concordance Greek #2435 *hilasterion*, the lid of the Ark of the Covenant, the mercy seat, an atoning sacrifice, reconciliation by blood.

“If he did not have man’s nature, he could not be our example. If he was not a partaker of our nature, he could not have been tempted as man has been. If it were not possible for him to yield to temptation, he could not be our helper. It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the battles as man, in man’s behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature” (RH Feb. 18, 1890).

Note: We must give equal emphasis to the truth that Christ was fully divine, fully God and fully human, fully man. Jesus was our sinless substitute as well as our sympathetic Savior. These aspects of Christ must be held in perfect balance. As God, He had a divine nature, as man He had a human nature like you and me.

The question is posed—why is this so important? It is because the person and the work of Christ are inseparably related to the mission He came to accomplish for mankind. Christ’s nature was directly determined by what He came to do; thus, He had in Himself the qualification to represent God to man but also to represent man to God. This enabled Christ to redeem the fallen race and answer the charges Satan brought against the government of God.

6

What was the nature of man before the fall?

“When Adam came from the Creator’s hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. ‘God created man in His own image’ (Genesis 1:27). ... All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase” (Ed 15).

“There were no corrupt principles in the first Adam, *no corrupt propensities or tendencies to evil*” (1BC 1083, emphasis supplied).

“His affections were pure; *his appetites and passions were under the control of reason*” (PP 45, emphasis supplied).

“In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God; *the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart*” (GC 467, emphasis supplied).

7

What caused the fall of our first parents?

“He [Adam] possessed a right understanding, a true knowledge of his Creator, of himself, his duty, his obligations in respect to the law of God. His judgment was uncorrupted, unbiased, and disposed to obedience and affection, regulated according to reason and truth. ... *Yet he was not placed beyond the reach of temptation.* He stood as the representative of the human race,—a free moral agent” (YI Aug. 10, 1899, emphasis supplied).

“In what consisted the strength of the assault made upon Adam, which caused his fall? It was not indwelling sin; for God made Adam after His own character, pure and upright” (1BC 1083).

Note: Adam and Eve did not have a tendency or bias toward evil. In order to tempt them, Satan had to use deception for they had no inclination to sin. They could not be tempted with evil because they had no bent to evil, no desire for evil. Only in disguising evil as something good could Satan tempt the holy pair to sin. They yielded to temptation. Why? It is the mystery of iniquity. If we could give a cause for it, it would cease to be sin.

8

What were two fundamental changes in the nature of man after the fall?

“Through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil” (SC 17).

“Selfishness is inwrought in our very being. It has come to us as an inheritance” (LHU 326).

“Adam sinned, and the children of Adam share his guilt and its consequences; but Jesus bore the guilt of Adam” (ST May 19, 1890).

Note: The most profound change that took place as soon as man sinned was that his nature became perverted, deranged, and depraved in all its powers of mind, body and spirit. These we will refer to as sinful propensities.*

*Propensity: a natural and intense tendency, to behave in a certain way, inclination, disposition, bent, weakness. (See *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, 2020).

The second fundamental change that took place after the fall was that man's nature was weakened, deteriorated, and diminished in all his powers of body, mind and spirit. He became subject to death. These we will refer to as innocent infirmities. Man is not under condemnation of God's law because he is mortal. His weaknesses and his mortality are the unavoidable consequences of sin, not sin itself.

9

How was man's spiritual nature affected by the fall? What was God's solution?

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because* all sinned." "For as by one man's disobedience many were made** sinners" (Romans 5:12, 19).

**Because: *Strong's Concordance* Gr. #1909, meaning with the result, all sinned

***Made: *Strong's Concordance* Gr. #2525, meaning constituted or ordained to be

"These dear children *received from Adam an inheritance of disobedience, of guilt and death*" (13MR 14, emphasis supplied).

"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." (Ps. 51:5)

"As a result of Adam's disobedience *every human being is a transgressor of the law, sold under sin*" (HP 146, emphasis supplied). Our own disobedience only ratifies this fact.

“We must remember that our hearts are *naturally* depraved (AG 258, emphasis supplied). Selfishness is the essence of depravity” (RH July 25, 1908).

“From the cross to the crown there is earnest work to be done. There is *wrestling with inbred sin*” (RH Nov. 29, 1887, emphasis supplied).

“There is in his nature *a bent to evil*, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist” (Ed 29, emphasis supplied).

“Because of sin, his posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience” (13MR 18, emphasis supplied).

“*Jesus, coming to dwell in humanity, receives no pollution*” (DA 266, emphasis supplied).

Note: From the above statements and texts, we can readily see as Paul states in Romans 7:14 that, “I am carnal, sold under sin.” What happened to Adam’s nature after he sinned happens in a real sense to our nature. When Adam became selfish and depraved in nature, we became selfish and depraved in nature because we were genetically constituted in him.

Something is obviously wrong with our first birth and its inheritance. In order to enter the kingdom of heaven, we must be born again. We are born with a bent to evil, sinful propensities and wrong inclinations. God does not condemn or hold us guilty for this state because He has made provision in the atonement provided by His Son to extend grace to us. His grace covers us and gives us probationary time whereby we are given the opportunity to learn of the plan of redemption. When we come to the age of accountability, we may accept Jesus as Lord and Savior of our life and be born again. Then a new principle of righteousness is implanted in the heart which enables us to be obedient to God. As we are under condemnation and death because of Adam’s disobedience, so our justification is based upon the obedience of the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

10 In summary, what were two consequences to man's nature after the fall?

1. Man then had depraved inclinations, a bent to evil and selfishness, which are the evil propensities.
2. Man also became weakened in physical, mental and moral powers, which are the innocent infirmities.

“Man has fallen. God’s image in him is defaced. By disobedience he is [1] *depraved in inclination* and [2] *weakened in power*, unable, apparently, to look forward to anything but tribulation and wrath” (OFC 285, emphasis supplied).

11 In redeeming man, where did Christ begin His work?

“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. ... Christ was tempted by Satan in a hundredfold severer manner than was Adam, and under circumstances in every way more trying” (YI June 2, 1898, emphasis supplied).

“Christ came to the earth, taking humanity and standing as man’s representative, to show in the controversy with Satan that man, *as God created him*, connected with the Father and the Son, could obey every divine requirement” (ISM 253, emphasis supplied).

“*He vanquished Satan in the same nature over which in Eden Satan obtained the victory*” (YI Apr. 25, 1901, emphasis supplied).

“He was assailed with temptations in the wilderness, *as Adam was assailed with temptations in Eden*” (7ABC 447, emphasis supplied).

Note: Christ came to this world and took upon His divine nature our fallen, sinful nature after 4,000 years of deterioration and sin. He came to show us how to overcome in that nature. Not only did He show us how to overcome,

but now He proposes to live His life in us through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. In His spiritual nature, He was free from the corrupt propensities so common to human nature, and in this way began where the first Adam began. He was totally sinless as Adam was in the Garden of Eden and remained so during his earthly sojourn. Jesus came to the world with the law of God written upon His heart, and lived a life fully surrendered to the will of His Father. Never for one moment did He live separated from His Father until that fateful day when He hung upon the cross of Calvary for you and me.

12

In what way did the inheritance of Jesus differ from man? How was this possible?

“Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: ‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared* for Me’” (Hebrews 10:5).

*Prepared: *Strong’s Concordance* Gr. #2675, meaning to complete thoroughly, (make) perfect, fit or adjust, restore and Gr. #739 complete: perfect.

“His birth was a miracle of God; for, said the angel, ‘Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. ... Then said Mary unto the angel, how shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, 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.’ *These words do not refer to any human being, except to the Son of the infinite God*” (5BC 1128, emphasis supplied).

“As the sinless One, *His nature recoiled from evil*” (2T 202, emphasis supplied). God has to put enmity into our hearts because it is not naturally there. (See Genesis 3:15.)

“Children inherit inclinations to wrong” (1MCP 144). Jesus did not inherit one inclination to wrong.

“No man receives *holiness as a birthright*” (ST Dec. 17, 1902, emphasis supplied).

Two essential prerequisites for holiness are to have the law in the heart and to be in perfect submission to the will of God. Such Jesus had, for we read in Psalm 40:8, “I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart.”

Note: Jesus was in agreement with His Father from the moment of conception and throughout His life on earth. Even His early childhood was marked by perfection. “With deep earnestness the mother of Jesus watched the unfolding of His powers, and beheld the impress of perfection upon His character” (DA 69). Since “*the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character*” (5T 310, emphasis supplied), this means that His thoughts and feelings were perfect, even as a child.

13

In what way was Christ’s nature unique?

The answer lies in the origin of His human nature. It was absolutely unique on two accounts. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and His Father was the God of Heaven. His human nature was especially prepared by God to fulfill His mission. He could not be all that man needed if He was not exempt from the sinfulness of human nature. Jesus has a very unique nature in order to allow Him to be both our sinless substitute and our sympathetic example at the same time.

“Prepared” in the original Greek means to make perfect. Jesus had to be custom-made because He had to be the perfect sin offering—the perfect sinless substitute.

Jesus was the second Adam. God formed the first Adam from the substance of the earth, and he was to be the head of a new creation. Likewise, for the second Adam, God prepared a body from the substance of the virgin’s womb. Though His humanity was created and derived its substance from His human parent, it was nevertheless a body prepared or made perfect by God. Jesus was a unique new creation. “*His human nature was created*” (3SM 129, emphasis supplied).

14

Which aspect did Christ not assume when He took upon Himself man's nature?

Jesus did not have the depraved inclinations, a bent to evil and selfishness which are the evil propensities of man.

“For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*” (Hebrews 7:26, emphasis supplied).

“The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.” (John 14:30) “*Satan found nothing in Him to encourage his advances*” (5BC 1129, emphasis supplied).

“He was born *without a taint of sin*, but came into the world in like manner as the human family” (7ABC 453, emphasis supplied).

“Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to, corruption rested upon Christ” (5BC 1128).

“*Christ did not possess the same fallen disloyalty we possess*, for then He could not be a perfect offering” (3SM 131, emphasis supplied).

“Men are selfish by nature” (RH Jan. 6, 1891). “Selfishness is sin” (ST April 13, 1891). Yet of Christ it is said, “In His life Jesus of Nazareth differed from all other men. ... In His bosom existed the purest love, *free from every taint of selfishness and sin*” (1MCP 182, emphasis supplied).

“He [Christ] was to take His position at the head of humanity by taking the nature but *not the sinfulness of man*” (7BC 925, emphasis supplied).

“Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set *Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin*. He is the second Adam. The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him; he was in the image of God. He could fall, and he did fall through transgressing. Because of sin his posterity was born with inherent propensities of

disobedience. But Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He took upon Himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity. He was assailed with temptations in the wilderness, as *Adam was assailed with temptations in Eden*” (7ABC 447, emphasis supplied).

“Christ was not insensible to ignominy and disgrace. He felt it all most bitterly. He felt it as much more deeply and acutely than we can feel suffering, as *His nature was more exalted and pure and holy than that of the sinful race for whom He suffered*” (TMK 339, emphasis supplied).

15 Which aspect of man’s sinful nature did Jesus assume?

Christ took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature; a nature in its deteriorated condition, weakened in power. In other words, Christ took upon Himself our innocent infirmities.

“In taking upon Himself man’s nature in its fallen condition, Christ did not in the least participate in its sin. *He was subject to the infirmities and weaknesses by which man is encompassed ...* . We should have no misgivings in regard to the perfect sinlessness of the human nature of Christ” (16MR 116, 117, emphasis supplied).

“Christ, who knew not the least taint of sin or defilement, *took our nature in its deteriorated condition*” (AG 165, emphasis supplied). “He took our infirmities” (5BC 1124).

“For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; *and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity*. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation” (DA 117, emphasis supplied).

“It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man’s nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence

in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life. ...

“He [The Father] permitted Him to meet life’s peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss” (DA 49).

Note: Even though He was sinless, Jesus was just as weak as the race was after 4,000 years of degeneration. His nature was like Adam’s only as far as His sinlessness was concerned. In every other aspect, it was just like our nature. He completely understands our thoughts and feelings but certainly not by participating or having our degenerate impulses and our natural bent toward evil. Christ’s human infirmities made His dependence upon the strength gained through prayer and connection with His Father an absolute necessity. In depending upon divine strength, we too, are enabled to live a life of holiness.

16

What are the three categories of temptation which overcame sinless Adam and with which Satan tempted Christ in the wilderness?

“For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 John 2:16). The lusts of the flesh is sensualism, the lust of the eyes is materialism and the pride of life is egotism.

“In the wilderness of temptation Christ met the great leading temptations that would assail man. There He encountered, singlehanded, the wily, subtle foe, and overcame him. The first great temptation was upon appetite; the second, presumption; the third, love of the world. Through the gratification of the taste ... the mind is unbalanced. Its higher, nobler faculties are perverted to serve animal lust, and the sacred, eternal interests are not regarded. When this object is gained, Satan can come with his two other leading temptations and find ready access. His manifold temptations grow out of these three great leading points” (4T 44, emphasis supplied).

Note: There are three main categories of temptation. Every single temptation known to the human race can be put under one of these three headings listed above.

Not only in the wilderness was Jesus tempted by the evil one, but in every moment of His earthly life, He was pursued by Satan with a dogged determination to entice him to sin. Satan tried his utmost to cause Jesus to depend upon His divine power to save Himself thus breaking His trust and dependence upon His Father.

“With the terrible weight of the sins of the world upon Him, Christ withstood the test upon appetite, upon the love of the world, and upon that love of display which leads to presumption. These were the temptations that overcame Adam and Eve, and that so readily overcome us” (DA 116).

17 How could Christ be tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin?

“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).

“He was unsullied with corruption, a stranger to sin; yet He prayed, and that often with strong crying and tears. He prayed for His disciples and for Himself, thus identifying Himself with our needs, our weaknesses, and our failings, which are so common with humanity. He was a mighty petitioner, not possessing the passions of our human, fallen natures, but compassed with like infirmities, tempted in all points even as we are. Jesus endured agony which required help and support from His Father” (2T 508, 509).

Note: There is a vast difference between having strong, human passions and appetites in perfect submission to the higher faculties of the mind as God gave them and intended them to be enjoyed versus having sinful, perverted, inordinate passions at war with the higher faculties of the mind or even worse, in control of them. The latter we call carnal, fleshly lusts.

The question still remains: How could Christ with unperturbed, sinless appetites and passions know what it was like to be tempted in all points as we are? We have inherited and cultivated perverted, sinful appetites and passions. He was not a man of like passions, as inspiration so clearly states.

We are tempted when Satan entices us to use our inherent, carnal nature to meet our needs, whereas Jesus was tempted to meet His needs by resorting to His inherent, divine nature as seen in His temptations in the wilderness. This was a much greater temptation because He had the divine power to deliver Himself from sin and suffering, but instead Jesus chose to depend upon His Father in Heaven for strength to keep Him. He humbled Himself so that He could be our example of dependence upon our heavenly Father in order to live the victorious Christian life.

In summary, the strength of His temptation centered around the inclination to live His life by relying on His own divine power whereas you and I are tempted to employ the power of our carnal nature to meet our needs.

Jesus did not come to the temptations in the wilderness the same way we do, with a perverted, sinful appetite. He came to that experience by having that which was innately His—a sinless nature—so stressed by the circumstances of His long fast and spiritual encounter with Satan, that it was equal to the most perverted appetites and passions of man.

18 **Why was it necessary for Christ to endure a 40-day fast in order to be our example in overcoming every sin to which man is exposed?**

Through fasting, Christ's normal, sinless, unperturbed human appetite had to be rendered as intense in its demands for gratification as the most perverted and depraved appetite could be. The length of the fast is one of the clearest indications of the degree of perversion.

Note: Christ had to suffer 40 days without food before His sinless human appetites and passions would approximate, and be so intensified and augmented, that they were equivalent to the most degraded and perverted of fallen human nature. Only thus could He experience the depth of perverted appetites and passions. He then was qualified to be our sympathetic High Priest because He was tempted in all points as we are.

In the wilderness, Jesus proved that even fallen man, no matter how degraded in his powers or depraved in their function, no matter how limited his human strength or powerful his sinful appetites and passions man may overcome in the strength of his God.

“Jesus withstood the temptation, through the power that man may command. He laid hold on the throne of God, and there is not a man or woman who may not have access to the same help through faith in God. *Man may become a partaker of the divine nature*; not a soul lives who may not summon the aid of Heaven in temptation and trial. Christ came to reveal the Source of His power, that man might never rely on his unaided human capabilities” (1SM 409, emphasis supplied).

19

How significant was Christ’s experience in the wilderness, especially for the final generation?

Our Lord proved beyond controversy that with enabling grace we may overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil. He overcame sin in the same way that we must overcome, by depending upon the power of God that is available to us.

“Christ in the weakness of humanity was to meet the temptations of one possessing the powers of the higher nature that God had bestowed on the angelic family. But Christ’s humanity was united with divinity, and in this strength He would bear all the temptations that Satan could bring against Him, and yet keep His soul untainted by sin. And this power to overcome He would give to every son and daughter of Adam who would accept by faith the righteous attributes of His character” (7BC 927).

“Christ declared of Himself: ‘The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me’ (John 14:30). Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father’s commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. *This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble*” (GC 623, emphasis supplied).

20 How did the mind of Jesus differ from the mind of sinful humanity?

Christ was born with His heavenly Father’s sinless character, with His law written upon His heart, just as He had in heaven (see Psalm 40:6-8). The difference is that on earth His sinless and holy character was connected to a body of clay, which was weakened by the sins of humanity for four thousand years.

Note: Man’s thoughts and feelings have been defiled due to the sinful tendencies and desires that we have both inherited and cultivated. All our positive and negative experiences are stored in the subconscious mind which the enemy can use to tempt us to sin again and again. This is why we find ourselves often reacting in imperfect ways, such as responding impatiently, having fear and anxiety, getting angry or having lustful thoughts. Only as we allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to us what is yet hidden from our view can we see what God sees and pray to be completely cleansed of all moral defilement.

“These dear children received *from Adam an inheritance of disobedience, of guilt and death*” (13MR 14, emphasis supplied).

Jesus did not have such inclinations to think evil thoughts, for He came from heaven with the perfection of His Father. His mind was never defiled by sinful thoughts, feelings or lusts; otherwise, He would have been a sinner. All others born into this world have the heavy burden of the sins which their parents have passed on to them as well as the sins which they have personally indulged in.

“We must remember that *our hearts are naturally depraved* (AG 258, emphasis supplied). Selfishness is the essence of depravity” (RH July 25, 1908).

How can anyone think that Jesus had desires to think unholy thoughts, feelings and lusts of the flesh while at the same time being fully connected with His Father’s heart? Humanity has never experienced the full cleansing of their own evil, lustful thoughts; therefore, some assume that He was just like them. No, that can never be! Jesus cannot be judged on the basis of what sinful man experiences.

21 What is man’s only hope of having the mind of Christ?

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). Allow Jesus to control your every thought and imagination.

With every temptation to satisfy His physical, mental, or emotional needs and relieve the suffering that Satan was constantly bringing upon Him, Jesus did not rely upon His divinity. The only hope Jesus had of maintaining His perfect character was to be in constant communion with, and reliance upon, His Father. Never once did He lose connection with or reliance upon God.

Note: Praise God! Jesus offers this same gift of purity of thoughts, feelings, inclinations and motives to you and me. He says to each one of us, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden” (Matthew 11:28). With the burden of your sins upon your heart and mind, I will give you rest, peace, joy and eternal life with Me.

22 Why is a correct understanding of the nature of Christ pivotal to those called to be among the 144,000?

There are many among Christian circles who believe that Christ had the same inclinations to sin, the same impulses arising from within Him to do wrong, but trusted in His Father for victory. They do not

consider these to be sinful because they believe that although He had these inclinations and impulses, He always relied upon His Father to keep Him from sin. On the basis of this reasoning, they conclude that as long as they do not give in to these wrong desires by engaging in sinful behavior, their soul temple does not need to be cleansed.

Unfortunately, these individuals will not be prepared for the close of probation. Our sinful inclinations, impulses and desires must be cleansed and blotted out by the blood of Jesus before He puts the censor down and proclaims, “He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still” (Revelation 22:11). These will be the 144,000. There must, like Christ, be nothing in us that responds to sin. We cannot greet a holy God unless we are purified within.

Up to this point, Jesus’ blood has covered for our wrong motives, inclinations, impulses and tendencies. These are considered sins of ignorance. However, these cannot remain when Jesus steps out of the sanctuary and no longer pleads His blood. The righteousness of Jesus will never cover for any conscious or unconscious moral defilement. As we seek Him, He has promised to reveal whatever is in our characters that must be cleansed before He returns.

“The work of restoration can never be thorough unless the roots of evil are reached” (5BC 1152). “Many have to battle against strong hereditary tendencies to evil” (MH 173). We can praise God that Jesus is able to reveal the roots of our sins and cleanse our sinful inheritance as well as our cultivated sins.

Without holiness no one can see God (see Hebrews 12:14). Holiness is agreement with God on every point of our lives including behavior, thoughts, feelings, desires, tendencies, inclinations, motivations and impulses. Jesus is able to bring His people to the place where the things they once loved and desired they now hate on the deepest level of their hearts and minds. He is able to reveal the corruption in the subconscious mind that is the spring or source of our wrong thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

“There is not an impulse of our nature, not a faculty of the mind or an inclination of the heart, but needs to be, moment by moment, under the control of the Spirit of God” (MYP 62).

“Everyone who by faith obeys God’s commandments will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression” (HP 146, emphasis supplied).

Why is it important that God will have such a people? Because God will be vindicated that He is able to bring the human race back to moral and spiritual perfection of where the human race began. Praise God that He will have such a people!

Your Commitment to Jesus

Believing that Jesus is our sinless substitute and our sympathetic, valid example, it is my desire to cooperate with Him in the complete cleansing of my soul temple, by relying on His power and strength as He relied upon His Father while on earth.

Your Response

Notes

Key to Abbreviations of E. G. White Book Titles

AG.....	<i>Amazing Grace</i>
BEcho.....	<i>The Bible Echo Periodical</i>
DA.....	<i>The Desire of Ages</i>
Ed.....	<i>Education</i>
GC.....	<i>The Great Controversy</i>
GW.....	<i>Gospel Workers</i>
HP.....	<i>In Heavenly Places</i>
LHU.....	<i>Lift Him Up</i>
MH.....	<i>The Ministry of Healing</i>
MYP.....	<i>Messages to Young People</i>
OFC.....	<i>Our Father Cares</i>
PP.....	<i>Patriarchs and Prophets</i>
RH.....	<i>The Review and Herald Periodical</i>
SC.....	<i>Steps to Christ</i>
SD.....	<i>Sons and Daughters of God</i>
ST.....	<i>The Signs of the Times Periodical</i>
TMK.....	<i>That I May Know Him</i>
YI.....	<i>The Youth's Instructor Periodical</i>
7ABC.....	<i>The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7A</i>
1BC.....	<i>The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 1</i>
5BC.....	<i>The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 5</i>
6BC.....	<i>The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 6</i>
7BC.....	<i>The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7</i>
1MCP.....	<i>Mind, Character, and Personality, Volume 1</i>
13MR.....	<i>Manuscript Releases, Volume 13</i>
16MR.....	<i>Manuscript Releases, Volume 16</i>
1SM.....	<i>Selected Messages, Book 1</i>
3SM.....	<i>Selected Messages, Book 3</i>
2T.....	<i>Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2</i>
4T.....	<i>Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4</i>
5T.....	<i>Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5</i>

“Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free!”

This Study Guide is number six in a series of twelve.

Study Guide 1—“Watchman, What of the Night?”

Study Guide 2—“For Such a Time as This”

Study Guide 3—“My Sheep Hear My Voice”

Study Guide 4—“Then Shall the Sanctuary be Cleansed”

Study Guide 5—“The Hour of His Judgment has Come”

Study Guide 6—“Holy, Harmless [and] Undeiled”

Study Guide 7—“That Your Sins May Be Blotted Out”

Study Guide 8—“And the Earth was Illuminated with His Glory”

Study Guide 9—“These Follow the Lamb Wherever He Goes”

Study Guide 10—“He Who is Holy, Let Him be Holy Still”

Study Guide 11—“You Are My Hiding Place”

Study Guide 12—“The Cleansing of Our Soul Temple”

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