

Fact Sheet for “Who Was Jesus?”

Pastor Bob Singer
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I have often said that we all sin. What I mean by that is that we all are tempted to sin and we have the very real possibility of giving into that sin at any time in our lives. We are never free from temptation, but Christians who have gained a measure of spiritual maturity have learned to resist those temptations when they come (1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 6:13). Christians know when we choose to sin. The Holy Spirit takes care of that. We know when we have failed to endure temptation. We feel dirty and ashamed. We know what is needed is 1 John 1:9. When we do choose to sin we often have different ways of giving ourselves permission to give in to temptation. We can blame others. We can blame a supposed psychological condition. We can blame a pattern of addiction. We can just ignore God and go for what we want. But what do you do with Romans 6:5-14? Is this passage true or not? I once heard a Christian counselor speak on this passage who said, “Don’t ever let a Christian get away with telling you that they can’t help but sin.”

Last week I spoke of four current challenges to the doctrine of the inerrancy of scripture (homosexuality, evolution, egalitarianism, and personal sinful choices). Romans 6 exposes our personal sinful choices. Is it tough to resist temptation? You’d better believe it.

Now, what does Christmas have to do with resisting temptation? Take another look at Jesus. Now Jesus is the 2nd person of the Trinity, God the Son. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all have the same attributes, the same essence. And at the same time there is an order in the Trinity (Matthew 28:19). When Gabriel spoke to the virgin Mary and said...(Luke 1:35)... Jesus took on humanity there. From that time on Jesus has two complete natures—one fully human and one fully divine. Prior to that point He only had a divine nature. Theologically this is called the “hypostatic union”.

ESV Hebrews 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature (ὕποστασις hu-po'-sta-sis, *essence*), and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

We learn from Philippians 2 more about Jesus when He walked this earth.

ESV Philippians 2:5-11 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form (μορφή, *form*) of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied (κενόω ke-no-o, cf. “kenosis”) himself, by taking the form (μορφή, *form*) of a servant, being born in the likeness (ὁμοίωμα, *likeness*) of men. ⁸ And being found in human form (σχῆμα, New American Standard “*appearance*”), he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

But here's the question. During the time Jesus walked this earth what does it mean that Jesus emptied Himself? Could Jesus ever cease being God? Never! Could Jesus sin? That is a contradiction in terms. A better question is, "Why didn't Jesus sin?" Was it because He was God?

He was certainly tempted to sin, and felt that just like we do (Hebrews 4:15). Did He choose not to sin from His divine nature or from His human nature? Consider this passage from when Jesus was 12... (Luke 2:52). How can God increase in wisdom? Jesus was obviously increasing in wisdom in His human nature. What we see here was evidence of the emptying seen in Philippians 2.

Consider Acts 10:37-38 and Isaiah 11:1-2 also. How can God be empowered by God? The answer... in His humanity.

Here's the point. Jesus resisted sin perfectly, not from His divine nature but from His human nature...

through reliance upon the Holy Spirit,
through Scripture (consider His responses when
tempted by Satan),
and through choice.

God calls us to do the same in the face of temptation.

God has broken our slavery to sin (Romans 6).

God the Holy Spirit indwells Christians, and we can rely on His help in resisting temptation.

God has given us His Word.

God has given us choice.

This year when you worship of the child born in Bethlehem think about His perfect record of resisting temptation.

Think about what this means for you.

Commit yourself to maturity in Christ.