

The **FIRST** Temptation of Christ

(continued from front page)

greatest pain and anguish Jesus felt in the Garden and on the Cross was a horror that none of us can imagine, which Jesus experienced of being separated from God, the Father for the very first time—an experience that, in His perfect holiness, He no doubt found utterly revolting. However, Jesus embraced that awful experience, for it was the only way to provide salvation from sin and consequently from Hell for you and me. Jesus did not sin nor become a sinner by taking our place, but His identification with our sin was no less real. Because God can have no unity or fellowship with sin, God, in a very real sense, turned His back on His Son.

Back in the wilderness temptation, **Satan offered to Jesus all the kingdoms of the world** if Jesus would worship him. That would suggest that Jesus could receive kingdoms without going to the cross—and that was a thing Jesus would absolutely not do. Satan offers you and me all sorts of stuff which creates a false lottery-winning mentality. Satan tries to convince us that we can have an easier life if we just bypass God's intended plan and purpose for us.

After the resurrection, Jesus confronted Peter, asking him 3 times, **"Do you love Me?"** Peter had gone back to the fishing trade and other disciples followed him. Had they given up on the hopes they had in Jesus? Were they just trying to get a time away for fresh thinking? What an influence Peter seemed to have! What about OUR influence! *Whatever* we do, we must take care not to go away from the Lord, even in the smallest way, and cause others to do likewise. These men caught no fish that night, nor did they recognise Jesus when He called to them from the shore. However, at His instruction they suddenly caught a huge amount of fish. Sin and hopelessness leave us unproductive and hinders us from seeing

Christ. Remember, even apparent worldly "success" is mere emptiness in God's estimation.

So Peter, who had 3 times denied knowing Jesus, is now asked 3 times by Jesus if he loves Him. **It was an unpleasant, but necessary experience for Peter.** Jesus was the Cook, the Communicator, the Commissioner and the Commander! He already had fish cooking when the disciples came to land! He took time to communicate personally with Peter who was to be a new leader. Then Jesus commissioned and commanded Peter to follow HIM and not worry or get side-tracked about what other people are doing.

It is so easy to be the centre of your own life. If we follow Jesus, HE becomes the Centre and Circumference of our life. Jesus settled it early in life to live according to the purposes of God, the Father, with no "short-cuts" and compromises with the world, or Satan or self. Jesus told His disciples, *"As My Father sent Me, so I am sending you!"* There was a Cross for Jesus, and when He talked here with Peter, Jesus informed him that there was also a cross for him! The **FIRST** Temptation of Christ shows us how to take God's way in life. Christ's Way is not a way for cowards. To those who are brave enough to go this Way, Jesus says: *"To him that overcomes, I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, just like I overcame and am set down with My Father in His Throne."* Temptation, Triumph, Throne! Let's settle the question now, and keep it settled forever.

The Da Vinci Code

There is a lorry-load of REAL historical facts by which to test the reliability of Dan Brown's popular book... unless you just like to follow like a herd of cattle.

Check out a vast amount of facts for yourself at this internet site:
www.tektonics.org/davincicrude.htm
 Be ready to read it carefully,
 then let me know what you think.

We meet at Christ Church on the corner of Brent Street and Heriot Road in Hendon at 5:45 pm Sundays. Nearest Tube: Hendon Central. Note the following (anti-evolution) web site for super, up-to-date answers about life, nature, science, dinosaurs, UFOs, etc. www.answersingenesis.org

Registered Charity #1092050

April 2005

A paper for all people everywhere... **Free!**
 and with a personal touch!

The London Christian Standard ...and Provincial

"Lift up a standard for the people." Isaiah 62:10

Gabriel L. Mancino - Editor

421 Watford Way, Hendon London NW4 4TR Phone: 020-8202-0806

The **FIRST** Temptation of Christ

Here are some valuable lessons for us all today!

by Gabriel L. Mancino



The movie, The Last Temptation of Christ, is a film which uses the writer's and producer's fantasy. Other films, TV "specials" and books have recently come to the public attention, usually making Jesus Christ a laughing stock or the Bible suspicious. Those who really want to see and hear Jesus should read the "Gospels" (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) for themselves. **These "Gospels" were already recognised as trustworthy, authoritative accounts** by the followers/disciples of Jesus Christ long before there were any formal Church Councils and long before any of the competitive "fraud-Gospels" were written. This means that no one (not even Constantine!) "changed" or "authorised" the New Testament.

Just before entering His public ministry (which lasted 3 years), Jesus went into the wilderness, fasted 40 days and was tempted by the devil himself. This is where **the FIRST Temptation of Christ took place**, and we all may learn some

practical lessons for personal living from what happened.

Many refer to "Palm Sunday" as the occasion of Christ's "Triumphant Entry," when He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey among the praises of the crowd. I believe Christ already had a "triumphant entry" when He defeated Satan in that wilderness temptation. The Bible says that Jesus entered into and departed from that wilderness experience *"in the power of the Holy Spirit."* THAT is the way of true success! What a way to enter the ministry!

Jesus laid the foundation for this success long before the wilderness temptation. We may read where, at age 12, He asks His mother, Mary, *"Why have you looked for Me? Didn't you know that I must be about My Father's business?"* In other words, Jesus had settled the question, early on, as to the motivation of His life and work. Christ's victory over Satan in the wilderness further declared before the eyes of the unseen world of angels and demons just how settled His direction and objective was!

People talk about "temptations" which supposedly came upon Jesus as He was in the Garden of Gethsemane and then also on the Cross. Certainly, Jesus was both human and Divine. His humanity is seen, for example, when He was tired and when He was hungry. I would suggest that the

(continued on back page)

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and forever"
 Sharing Christ here in London for over 22 years.
 Front page: Christ's wilderness experience. Inside article: Man's wilderness experience. There is much to learn from both!

The Supreme Sympathy

A Bible study of the love of God
and plan of God for us all

by
Gabriel L. Mancino



The shortest verse in the Bible is in John chapter 11 and is only two words long: **“Jesus wept.”** These words are found in the story of the death of Jesus’ friend, Lazarus, who lived with his two sisters, Mary and Martha, in Bethany, a town near Jerusalem. We mentioned in the front page article about the humanity of Jesus. Here we see another example of His humanity. But in His humanity, we also see the sympathy of God. Make no mistake about it—if you wish to see what God is like, look at Jesus.

Among the many Bible verses which speak of God’s feelings of love and compassion for us all, we find in Hebrews chapter 4 verse 15, *“For we do not have a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin.”* Please note in that verse that **temptation** is not **sin** unless it is yielded to. The verse just before and just after verse 15 are extremely encouraging as well.

It has been said that **with God there are no half-way measures and no half-way cures.** God cares about us and He wants us to “make it **all the way!**” Jesus spoke of the ridicule a person would receive who started building a building, but was unable to finish it because they had not planned ahead. God had planned for the Hebrew people under Moses not only to *escape* Egypt and slavery, but also *enter* the Land which He had promised them. The Bible says *“He brought them OUT that He might bring them IN,”* and yet that story is a perfect illustration of what God purposes for us all, **and in that story we see God’s patient sympathy over and over again.** The spiritual truth from this actual history is that God wants us all to leave our life of sin, and enter His Promised Land of holiness now, and Heaven in the end.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 10, St. Paul speaks about this historical event, and says that the Hebrew crossing of the Red Sea was an illustration of water baptism. Paul adds that all those Hebrews ate of the same “*spiritual meat*” and drank the same “*spiritual drink*.” The meat and drink would be like the bread and the wine of what

we call The Lord’s Supper. However, starting with verse 5, Paul adds, *“But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.”* St. Paul also mentions other things done in that wilderness that we must absolutely not copy. Chapters 3 & 4 of the Bible book called Hebrews also refers to this important part of Israel’s history, because it has so much meaning for us all!

Did you notice? They escaped Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea and they were fed and watered by God, yet that was NOT enough. The purpose of *escape* was to *enter!* But, as we read above, many of them died, and it was all because unbelief toward God which resulted in rebellion against God. Here we see the awful nature of unbelief, and what it can do. For these people it caused them to stop at the very edge or border of the Promised Land! To be close is not enough.

Just look at one of Jesus’ disciples named Judas. He was the one who was a traitor and brought the soldiers to capture Jesus. Later, in the book of Acts, Peter refers to Judas and says, *“Judas obtained part in this ministry from which he fell.”* Notice! Judas only obtained part! The Hebrew people only went part way, too! But Jesus had patient sympathy and love even for Judas—twice extending him opportunity to turn from his evil doing.

In Hebrews chapter 4 (mentioned above) we see **two “active agents”** that were to help those people *escape* and *enter*: **God’s Word** (verse 12) and **man’s will** (verse 11). In verse 11 it says *“Let us labour, therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”* Another translation

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

says, *“Make every effort”*—another says *“Make haste, hasten!”* That last one sounds like the very words of **Joshua and Caleb**—two young men of faith who tried to encourage the Hebrew people to believe God and go into the Land of Promise. Unfortunately, the crowd won on that decision day, but Joshua and Caleb won out in the end, because though they were hindered from entering that original day, they still entered 40 years later after all the others had died in the wilderness. **God’s Word and man’s will must work together or we will fail.** This is why it says *“but the word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith by them that heard it.”* Yet even in that wilderness, God demonstrated tremendous patience and love for those rebellious Hebrews.

There are two more “active agents” God Himself provides: the Holy Spirit and each other. God’s Holy Spirit is faithful to prompt each of us to obey Him, love Him and escape sin and Hell. Beside God’s Spirit prompting us, we can also try to prompt each other to enter in just **like Caleb and Joshua** did. Be sure of this, we are either having a steady influence on those around us to take God seriously or otherwise a steady influence to play around, disbelieve God and go to Hell. **Another priceless “agent”** in this matter is *the time element.* Each of the verses that mentions the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 3 says **“TODAY”!** One verse says, *“While today lasts, don’t make your heart hard.”*

Judas lost his opportunity even though he had *“obtained part in the ministry.”* But after Jesus was taken by the soldiers and later crucified, one of the two thieves who were also crucified alongside Jesus opened his heart to the Lord in that last moment. To him, Jesus said *“TODAY you will be with Me in paradise.”* **What Supreme Sympathy,** even in His horrible agony Jesus extends hope and forgiveness. That “thief” is the only example in the Bible for such a last-minute entrance into God’s rest, so don’t make such a foolish gamble. Many people die with no time or inclination to pray seriously. This is why the Bible always says **TODAY.** Even *this* is an example of **Supreme Sympathy** toward us, because God knows how much people wait and

rationalise and even play around with time and eternity. **What Supreme Sympathy,** that Jesus calls out to us who, in our own ways, can too often be like Judas or the ancient Hebrews!

The Sympathy and the Seriousness of Jesus toward us is the same. In Revelation chapters 2 & 3 Jesus says “Repent or else!” In Hebrews 3 & 4 God says “Enter or else!” Both of these are a clear message to us all today. Opportunity comes to us regarding many things in life and work, and we either seize it or lose it. The same is true about ourselves as we relate to God. **Be sure of this:** God doesn’t want ANY person to go to Hell. **But be also sure of this:** God will never force ANY person to love, believe and obey Him, and thereby go to Heaven. God never forced anyone to enter Noah’s Ark, and God is the same today. He is a God of *courtesy*, as well as a God of *compassion.* We see this *courtesy and compassion of God* perfectly as we look at Jesus, dealing with the crowds and dying on the Cross. And now He says, *“Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any hear My voice and open, I will come in!”* **What Supreme Sympathy!**

I Am What I Am

I was thinking of these words of **Popeye the Sailor**, when 20 minutes later a bus passed by using the same words for an advert! Long before the advert or even Popeye, St. Paul said, *“I am what I am by the grace of God.”* Most people cover up what they really are—even from themselves—or perhaps they try to compensate by being violent or arrogant about it. Sin brings God’s condemnation with it—whatever kind it is—and the Bible tells us clearly what sin is! But God also has a Cure, and that Cure, provided and offered to us *“by His grace,”* can make us into new people. As youngsters, we would sing in silliness, *“I’m Popeye the sailor man, I live in a garbage can...”* Well, ALL sin is garbage, no matter how “pretty” you try to make it. But when we give ourselves to God, He changes us from glory to glory *“by His grace!”*