

Why It Was Impossible for the Lord to Sin
Virgin Birth
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Bible Text: Hebrews 4:13
Preached on: Friday, December 22, 2006

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I thank you for your interest on these Sunday evenings in this vast subject, a subject that really we can only feel that we're paddling near the ocean's edge when we look at the mystery of God manifest in the flesh. It really is a humbling thing to be studying, meditating, and to try to preach on this subject. I think it has helped me to do so. I think it has helped my prayer life. It has motivated me to think more highly, more deeply of my Lord and, of course, it is my prayer that this will be your experience as well.

Tonight we come to the mystery of the God-man being [unintelligible] or another term for this is the impeccability of the life of our Lord Jesus. Now that word "impeccability" requires a little bit of definition. It is not only that our Lord Jesus was able not to sin, it goes beyond that, it was that our Lord was not at all able to sin. It was impossible for him to sin. Now I learned this week on radio to the Bible Answer Man that you can lose your audience very quickly in theology. This lady had phoned in and was asking, I really didn't pick up on the question that she had asked and the Bible Answer Man came on with quite a heavy answer and went on considerably at the end of which when he paused, her response was, "Okay," and there was kind of an uncomfortable silence which he didn't explain and she didn't ask him, "Well, could you repeat that and help me to understand it better?" But it was very obvious that he had totally lost her and that his reply was really out the window. It taught me that preachers should apply the KISS method when it comes to preaching even these deep difficult things, KISS meaning "keep it simple, silly." And I would be silly here tonight if I did not try and bring this subject into something of understandable terms.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the Bible teaches the doctrine of the virgin birth. This is the A, B, C, it is the cardinal doctrine of Christianity, and those who have no interest in the supernatural birth will have no interest in his supernatural death. They will have no interest in his supernatural resurrection, they will have no interest in supernatural anything. They will deny it all if they deny that our Lord came into this world in a supernatural fashion. And of course, it is nothing incredible that a supernatural being should have his beginning in this world in a supernatural.

Text 4:15 would be lost, completely lost on the skeptic and the denier of the supernatural. He lists three things in this text that our Lord Jesus is a high priest in heaven, "For we

have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Now that's a double negative. It means that we do have a high priest in the heavens who can be with the feeling of our infirmities. So we have a high priest. We have a man in heaven right now at God's right hand who represents us. A priest represents the people before God. We learn that this person is a sympathizer. He understands. He is touched by our infirmities and whatever your trouble this week or whatever your challenges in the week to come, the Lord is no stranger to them. He understands. He has experienced them all. And the third from this text is that he was free from all sin. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

Now last week, as I may review just for 60 seconds, last week I emphasized the necessity of the human nature of our Lord Jesus, and that his human nature was taken from the substance of Mary. I think you will remember me saying that Mary was not a surrogate mother, that it was not foreign matter that was planted into her womb and she was just the carrier for the gestation period. No, it was of her nature, of her substance. That child was truly the fruit of her womb, as Elizabeth described it. And so that human nature of our Lord Jesus was made of Mary. Now here's the question: if God can produce a sinless Son of Mary by the overshadowing, the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, why was the virgin birth necessary at all? Why could God not have brought forth a child that was sinless by natural conception within Mary's bound, of course, so that by natural conception and the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost which was necessary to preserve any condition of sin from Mary's nature to the nature of the child, that was an essential miracle, why could that not also have been done in the production of this child by natural generation?

Now that gets us scratching our heads and that gets us all wondering what is this virgin birth all about? The key, of course, really is before us here tonight: he had to be apart from sin. Now that does not mean that marriage is sinful, that does not mean that childbearing in itself is sinful, it is something more than that and I bring you to our first main point here: the necessity of the virgin birth. The necessity of a child being born without earthly father, although he did have all the attributes of human nature from his mother. And the problem is something that every one of us have in this meeting tonight, something that you and I were born with: original sin, Adamic sin from the line of Adam transmitted or imputed from father to child.

Now that is a legal transfer and that legal transfer of Adam's sin to everyone of the human race is by everyone born by natural generation, by natural conception and birth, and so by a virgin birth, there was no legal liability of Adam's sin upon the life of our Lord Jesus. His personality was based in his divine nature. He could possess a human nature from his mother, her substance was sanctified in the production of the Savior's human nature, and while he inherited human nature from his mother, he did not inherit personality from Mary and therefore was not chargeable with Adam's sin.

Now see this in a number of a different ways that you might grasp this. A natural conception from husband and wife would have produced another person and that person would be liable to Adam's guilt but the legal guilt cannot be attached to a human nature

as it only belongs or is attached to a human person. What was produced of Mary was the nature of humanity, not a person, and by virtue of the virgin birth of this miraculous conception of the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb, our Lord had none of Adam's guilt transferred to him. He had no original sin. He was sinless. Now are you saying, "Okay," yet? You are following me along? Good. Good.

This is [unintelligible], the key to it is that sin is attached to a personality. Christ got his personality from heaven when he was born of God. He got his human nature from his mother but that does not carry the liability of original sin. Now book, chapter and verse for this is essential to us in John 1:14, because we're going to get this from the Bible and not just merely from our minds. John 1:14, "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." The Word is the second person of the Trinity. Notice I said person of the Trinity. The second person of the Trinity was not joined to another person and I spent a lot of time last week and a part of the week before explaining that this is not a union of two persons but a union of two natures. One person. The personality came from heaven. He was joined in Mary's womb, brought together in union in human form a divine person taking a human nature, and therefore the personality is not of Adam but the personality is of God.

The next verse that I would turn to is Romans 8:3 which will throw some light on this subject. Romans 8:3, "And 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." God sending his own Son in the likeness of flesh. So there is that union of a divine person with human nature.

The third passage is Philippians 2:6 to 8. Philippians 2:6, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." That's his personality, the second person of the Trinity. Everything that God the Father was, he possessed. "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." At verse 8, "being found in fashion as a man." You'll notice in verse 8 he did not take the personality of a man, he took the nature of a man and therefore had no earthly father. Having no father, no personality that linked him to Adam, his personality linked him to God and he was the Son of God. So here is language of one who already existed as God and now takes a human nature. There's no guilt transferable to a divine person who is the Son of God.

Now I wish that I could give you some earthly example to try and set up some parallel how we could show one is like the other, but there is no other example existing in God's creation. This is so unique, so supernatural, that in all of God's created world there is no other comparison available to us. And such is this wonder of the virgin birth that you have the greatest theologian of the New Testament, the Apostle Paul saying, "Great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh." And there we leave the necessity of the virgin birth. It was absolutely necessary and even though God by a miraculous process could bring forth a human nature of Mary's nature and make it sinless by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, it was necessary that he be the Son of God, not the son

of man. He's the Son of God, not the son of a human man, and therefore that sinlessness at original sin is avoided by the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus.

Now we move on in this aspect that he was apart from sin, that it was absolutely impossible for our Lord to sin. Because the divine nature was the basis of his person, the Lord Jesus never acted alone as a human nature apart from his divine personality. The divine nature was always there and controlling. Now again, this is the importance of making the vast distinction between nature and personality. He had a human nature but divine, God-like, [unintelligible] personality and, of course, it's vain to say what the human nature of Christ would have left to itself because it never could be left to itself. Once that union took place, once that God-man was brought together in the womb of Mary, there was never a moment, never a second when the human nature was left to itself without the divine personality controlling the human nature. It was an impossibility.

I want to read to you what Dr. Kearns has written in his theological dictionary on the section "The Impeccability of Christ." "It is vain to say what the human nature of Christ could have done if left to itself. The fact is, it was not and could not be left to itself. The complex person of Christ could do nothing that was detrimental to the glory of the infinitely holy Son of God. The divine nature could never be a party to sin." Now if you get that picture in your mind, you would never have the divine nature or the divine personality standing by as an observer allowing the human nature of the Lord Jesus to enter into willful sin. That is unthinkable and it is impossible.

Now that's only part of the answer. Because of this unique union of a human nature, a sinless human nature with a divine person, it was impossible for that divine person to stand by and allow the human nature to enter into anything like sin. But that's only part of the answer. The next part of this answer, it was impossible for our Lord to sin, is that his human nature had nothing in it that responded to temptation. It was holy, harmless, undefiled, perfect human nature.

Now just a few Bible verses. I don't want to go through a message where it's all thinking and reasoning without Bible texts to back up what we're saying here. Let's turn to John's gospel to chapter 8, verse 29. John 8:29. Here is in the life of the Lord Jesus a very clear statement of the sinless life of our Lord Jesus, just to establish that fact. He lived a sinless life. Now I don't know of anybody that would call themselves Christian in the age of conservative orthodox believing that Christian, there are liberals that are modernists and there are those Bible skeptics that will oppose these things but anyone that calls themselves a Bible believer that doesn't think that our Lord Jesus was sinless, but I believe the Bible goes further to say that our Lord was not only able not to sin but he was not able to sin.

Now this verse says, "for I do always those things that please him," and then John 8:46, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Has anyone seen me sin? Anyone heard me sin? Anyone that can allege any transaction of sin? Not a person could bring that forth at all. Then back in John's gospel, 14, to verse 30. Sorry, chapter 14, verse 30. Let me make the chapter clear here. John 14:30, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of

this world cometh," that's the devil, Satan, "the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." In other words, Satan comes to tempt the Lord Jesus but he can find nothing in him where he will respond to his temptations.

Now I discovered this illustration. You throw a match into a barrel of gunpowder, you'll get a mighty response. You'll have an explosion on your hands and that's like temptation to sinners. When you tempt a willful sinner who is depraved and carnal and you bring to them that match of temptation, they'll respond in a sinful manner. But you strike a match and put it into a barrel of water, there's nothing in that barrel to respond, to ignite, to set off an explosion. And when you come to tempt the Son of God, the sinless supernatural Son of God, there is no sin in his nature that would respond to the temptation of Satan or of any other. "The prince of this world cometh, and he findeth nothing in me." He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate for sinners, therefore he could not sin because there was nothing in his nature that would respond to sin.

Now this temptation of the Lord, though very real, was always destined to fail. Every time our Lord was tempted, it was not, well, now we've got to watch this to see what's gonna happen. Our Lord, the scales might tip and when Satan comes to tempt our Lord Jesus, it's possible that Satan might somehow or other deceive or betray or by some means lure our Lord into sinning like when he did in the wilderness. Was it possible as our Lord was taken into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, that he could be overcome by that temptation? No, it was not possible and yet it was real temptation. Some argue back and say, "Well, if it was not possible for him to be overcome by temptation, then it wasn't real temptation." Well, our answer would be to that: what about a small army? Can a small army go out attack a large army and wreak havoc and seek to do damage? But is there any possibility of the small army overcoming the large? Could you imagine our Canadian army if some fool politician decided to declare war on the US and with the few resources that we have in the military of Canada and declaring war on the United States of America and all their weapon power? They could blow Canada off the map. Now it might be possible for a few incursions to get over the border and do a little bit of damage here and there but it wouldn't last long. It would soon come to an end. And although it's impossible for a small army to defeat a large, large army, it doesn't make the temptation any less real. It's real but it's an impossible attempt, isn't it?

So every attempt against our Lord Jesus to tempt him to sin was an impossible attempt yet it was very real. To say that our Lord's temptation was not real because he couldn't be overcome would be like saying gold in a truly pure form cannot be tested. Gold that, I'm not even sure if it's possible to have 100% purity in gold, I'm not up in metallics and alloys and all those things, but if gold is 100% pure, it can still be tested. It can still be tried. And our Lord Jesus who was perfect, sinless humanity could still be tried, could still be tested, but he could never fail.

So we believe in the Bible doctrine that our Lord Jesus was not only able not to sin but he was not able to sin. It was impossible for him to be overcome by sin and this makes him a mighty, mighty Savior and succorer in anytime of our trouble because our Lord Jesus who was almighty on earth, the God-man, is now our high priest in glory and he's

triumphing for us now, and as we read here in Hebrews 4, if I bring you back to these verses, we have therefore a great high priest in heaven which can't be touched with the feeling of infirmities and we're exhorted in verse 16, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy." And because our Lord is impeccable, he is always mighty against sin, he's the one that we must go to in our hour of temptation.

Let me put it this way: if you thought for one moment that the Lord Jesus at any stage in history of his life was on the balance in the hour of temptation and he was ready to teeter into defeat and failure, that our Lord Jesus through his 33 years on earth lived with a struggle against sin, a struggle to some degree against sin and its temptations and its lusts, and you thought that that person who came to be the Mediator, the Savior, the Deliverer was living all those years in a sense of struggle, how could you go to him seeking help in your struggle against sin? How could you appeal to him for strength against your own fleshly nature or Satan's temptations or the struggles that you have in this fallen world, how could you call on him to succor you, strengthen you, if you thought that through his life he was living himself in a constant battle and with the question mark that he may not make it all the way to the end without falling into sin? That would terribly deplete our understanding and our view of the victory of our Lord Jesus.

I was going to close tonight with a whole series of areas in which the Lord was triumphant. I don't have time to do that. I think you know tonight that our Lord went to the cross and offered a sinless sacrifice and his blood defeated because it was sinless, and that's why in the hours and days right up to Calvary, the attack was against our Savior to defeat him. The garden of Gethsemane. The hours of torment that he went through. It was an awful hellish attack against our Savior but we know that that was a mighty, mighty Savior overcoming and defeating every opposition, and on the cross he was the spotless Lamb. He knew no sin. He did no sin. And upon that spotless Lamb was laid the sin of the world, our sins. And he is the unquestionable, undoubted victor over all sin.

So the writer of Hebrews could certainly say that he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. I have looked at this verse and I have come to the conviction this is not only that he got the victory over all sin but that in his nature he was tempted in all points, in his nature there was nothing to respond to sin. Absolutely nothing. And therefore he is to us the sinless, triumphant, victorious Redeemer who came into this world and lived in our place and died in our place and now intercedes at God's right hand and his precious blood is available, and you read in Revelation that they overcame Satan by the word of their testimony and by the blood of the Lamb. That's how we overcome the devil, by the blood of the Lamb. Your are facing temptation and struggles with lust and Satan and sin, plead the blood. Plead the power of that blood in your own life and you will gain the victory through the grace of the Lord Jesus. All of this comes from the virgin birth. All of this comes from his essential sinless nature and the benefits come to us endlessly through [unintelligible].