

CHRIST SEPARATED FROM US

The Achille's Heel of a Counterfeit Gospel

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Achilles – according to Greek mythology a hero in the Trojan war between the Greeks and Troy which went on for ten years – had a weak point in his body where he could be attacked.

There's another war that's been going on in the universe for thousands of years. Unless we guard it well, we have a weak point where the enemy of the human race can attack us.

The people of Troy were intrigued by the horse the Greeks left outside the city gates. Against warnings of the elders in Troy, they proposed, „Let's bring this horse inside the city gates and see what it's all about.“ After the horse was inside, Greek soldiers came out of it by night, opened the gates, and took the city by deception.

„The very elect“ stand in a similar danger. The end-time portrayal by Christ in Matthew 24 brings into focus a serious part of the final deception. Jesus told the disciples to „take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many“ (verses 4,5).

The enemy will even appear as an angel of light. Will we know the difference between the true Christ and the false one? This war that's been going on for so long involves the entire universe, and the Trojan horse of deceit that was brought into the garden of Eden was only the beginning of a final sophisticated deception.

We must accept the awesome proclamation made by the three angels of Revelation 14:6-11, plus that of the fourth angel in Revelation 18:2, „Babylon the great is fallen.“ Throughout Biblical history Babylon was never able to help Israel. In the days of the apostles when the church became the *new Israel*, she was required again to be devoted exclusively to the Lord, but there was a constant danger of infiltration from Babylon. The Lord's apostle John was concerned about the root of possible deception:

„Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world” (1 John 4:1-3).

The denial of this truth developed early in the Christian era, and is still with us. Going back in ancient history, we get a picture of what heathen philosophy thinks of God. The philosophers of Babylon focused the pagan understanding of God. The king wanted a description of his dream and what it meant. The wise men said, „It is a difficult thing that the king requires, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh” (Daniel 2:11).

That same paganism puts a wall between the true Christ and humanity. This disclosure in Daniel brings it into focus. The true Christ of the Bible has indeed come to dwell with human flesh. The false one avoids it. “Foreasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14, KJV).

He also, Himself, likewise,—four words, three times emphasized. Why did He do this? To „deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham” (verses 15, 16, KJV). In the Greek, this word for seed is spermatos. The apostle could not be any more specific.

„Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” That’s us. “For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted” (verses 17, 18, KJV; the word "succor" means to help, to relieve).

In Matthew 1 we see a picture of the royal lineage of Christ. In Luke 3 we see a picture of His human lineage, how He became a part of the human family. Some theologians read into a statement in Romans 8

a foreign interpretation: „For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.”

They say that this “likeness” really means unlikeness. If you look like your father or your mother, you cannot escape the likeness. The word cannot mean that you are unlike your parents. The text here is very specific—“likeness of sinful flesh,” “of sin,” “condemned sin in the flesh.” All this, “that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.” We may be prepared to “not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” Then the righteousness of the law can be “fulfilled in us” (Romans 8:3, 4).

When Satan invaded the Garden of Eden and deceived Eve into eating the forbidden fruit, Adam recognized who he was. „This must be the foe against whom we have been warned.” By the divine sentence, she must die, Adam understood. Eve had been deceived. His companion had transgressed the command. There was a terrible struggle in Adam’s mind. Let Eve perish? His wife? The last creation from the hand of God, the woman? But what to do? He resolved to share her fate. If she must die, he would die with her. He took the fruit and quickly ate.

There is a significant parable in this story. Adam took the fruit with his eyes wide open. Why? Because of his love for his bride. He took sin upon himself. The second Adam took sin upon Himself—for the love of His bride. With His eyes wide open to the consequences. In the annals of the human race there has been only one death—the death of Jesus Christ. Everyone else from Adam on down until the Lord comes will have simply “fallen asleep.”

The Lord is waiting for a people to understand what the incarnation means. The deliverance that comes to God’s people in the end is not an arbitrary act of God. It comes because the truth of the gospel has borne fruit. The farmer reaps when his harvest is ready. The Lord reaps when His harvest is ready, when the church has come to spiritual maturity. „For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are” (Hebrews 4:15). How many temptations does it take to make one sin? Ten, a hundred, a thousand? A million temptations can never

produce one sin, yet Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. God calls us to that same high standard, unattainable except by faith.

John 3:16 may be the text that is least understood in God's word in relation to this. "God so loved that He gave." When you give something, is it still yours? The text says specifically, explicitly, God gave. And when God gave Christ, He eternally became the poorer for it. Jesus will never fill the same place He had before He came. That's what He means when He says, God gave. Do you think He became flesh forever? Or was it just for 33 years, and then He went back to glory? If the Father gave Christ, it's for keeps, beloved, forever.

Was He "exempt" from anything if God gave Him? He could not have been. If He lived only a sympathetic, vicarious life with a wall of partition between us, with Christ being always in a little glass museum case, then God did not really give Him. If He did not take real human nature with all its liabilities, God did not give.

If the text is true when it says "only begotten," then nothing was held back. I wonder if your parents can appreciate that? Forever the question was answered, "Can there be self-denial with God?" Christ was God and He assumed humanity and became obedient unto the second death, that He might undergo infinite sacrifice. The Father and the Son were together.

In the human context we get a little picture in the experience of Abraham, when he was ready and willing to offer up his only son. But when the truth of John 3:16 sinks into our thinking, believers in Christ will rejoice as they dwell upon the nature of our Elder Brother.

In the incarnation we have the key to the entire plan of salvation. There is no way we can stop talking about it. It will be the marvel of the redeemed for eternity, that God came down and dwelt in human flesh. You will remember Jesus said that He didn't know when He was coming back. The angels don't know. Why could He make such a statement? He became a member of the human family forever and forever.

The prince of this world came to Christ after His long fast, when He was hungry, and suggested to him to command the stones to become bread But the plan of salvation devised for the salvation of man

provided that Christ should know hunger and poverty, and every phase of man's painful experience. He withstood temptation through the power that man may command by faith. He laid hold on the throne of God, and there's not a man, or woman, or youth who may not have access to the same help through the faith of Jesus. Man may become a partaker of the divine nature.

Christ came to be both our Substitute and our Example, to make known to us that we might be partakers of the divine nature. And how is this? By „having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:4). For this day and for every day henceforth, lay hold of this promise. People may have a power to resist evil, a power that neither earth nor death nor hell can master, a power that may place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame. Divinity and humanity may be combined in them, by faith. Christ joined His divinity to our humanity, that we in our humanity might be joined to His divinity.

„Foreasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death that He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. ... Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:14, 17, KJV). This is the one God gave to us. He is our helper.

May the Lord give us discernment to know the true Christ, so that when the false Christ appears we will know he is false. Unless we are sure of this truth, our Achilles' heel will expose us to a final and hopeless deception. Millions of professed Christians will not be prepared to endure that trial.