

Unique Benefits of the Cross

John 14:28-31

John 14:28–31 (NKJV)

²⁸ You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming *back* to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.

²⁹ “And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. ³⁰ I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. ³¹ But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

Introduction:

The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ are the central truths of the Christian faith. As J. C. Ryle declared more than 150 years ago, Christ’s death is “the *grand peculiarity of the Christian religion*. Other religions have laws and

moral precepts,—forms and ceremonies,—rewards and punishments. But other religions cannot tell us of a dying Saviour. They cannot show us the cross. This is the crown and glory of the Gospel” (J. C. Ryle, *The Cross: A Call to the Fundamentals of Religion* [repr.; Pensacola, Fla.: Chapel Library, 1998], 18; emphasis in original). The cross is at the very heart of all that believers hold dear. In the words of John F. Walvoord:

No event of time or eternity compares with the transcending significance of the death of Christ on the cross. Other important undertakings of God such as the creation of the world, the incarnation of Christ, His resurrection, the second coming, and the creation of the new heavens and the new earth become meaningless if Christ did not die....

In the study of Christ in His sufferings and death, one is in a holy of holies, a mercy seat sprinkled with blood, to which only the Spirit-taught mind has access. In His death Christ supremely revealed the holiness and righteousness of God as well as the love of God which prompted the sacrifice. In a similar way the infinite wisdom of God is revealed as no human mind would ever have devised such a way of salvation, and only an infinite God would be willing to sacrifice His Son.

(Jesus Christ Our Lord [Chicago: Moody, 1974], 153)

Christ's sacrificial death was the ultimate goal of the incarnation. The reason He came (John 12:27) was "to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45) so that through His death He might reconcile sinners to God (2 Cor. 5:18–21). The cross was neither a disruption of the divine plan, nor an accident, but was exactly what God had designed from before time began (2 Tim. 1:9). That is evident from the Lord's repeated predictions regarding His death at the hands of wicked men (Matt. 12:40; 16:4, 21; 17:12, 22–23; 20:17–19, 28; 26:2, 28, 31; Mark 9:9; Luke 17:25; 22:15; 24:6–7, 25–26; John 2:19–21; 3:14; 8:28; 10:11, 17–18; 12:27, 32–33; 15:13; 18:11, 32). His suffering was also foretold by the Old Testament prophets (cf. Ps. 22:1, 16, 18; Isa. 52:13–53:12; Dan. 9:26; Zech. 12:10), John the Baptist (John 1:29, 36), and Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration (Luke 9:30–31).

Christ's once-for-all sacrifice is, of course, central to the life of His true church. Baptism pictures believers' union with Him in His death (cf. Rom. 6:3); in celebrating Communion they "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor. 11:26); in preaching

the gospel they “preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1:23).

Christ’s death brings to life all the rich blessings of salvation. Through His death believers are justified—a legal term meaning “to declare righteous.” Paul wrote that those who place their faith in Jesus Christ are “justified by His blood ... justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus ... who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification” (Rom. 5:9; 3:24; 4:25). God declares repentant sinners righteous because Christ’s death paid the penalty for their sins and His righteousness is imputed to them (Rom. 5:19; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9).

Christ’s death also redeems His people from slavery to sin. “In Him [Christ],” Paul declared, “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7; cf. Rom. 3:24; Gal. 3:13). It was “not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, [that Christ] entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12). “The Son of Man,” Jesus said, “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28; cf. 1

Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18; 2:24; Rev. 1:5; 5:9).

Christ was able to ransom the elect because His death propitiated (appeased, satisfied) God's holy wrath against sin. Paul wrote in Romans 3:25 that "God displayed [Jesus] publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith." Christ was able "to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17) because "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:2; cf. 4:10).

Since God determined that "without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" of sin (Heb. 9:22), it was essential for Christ to die to obtain that forgiveness for believers. On the night before His death, Jesus said, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28). It is through the sacrifice of God's "beloved Son" that "we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13–14). Later in that same epistle Paul wrote,

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which

was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Col. 2:13–14)

John reminded his readers that “if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7; cf. Rev. 7:14).

The death of Christ reconciles all believing sinners to God. To the Romans Paul wrote, “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (Rom. 5:10–11). In 2 Corinthians 5:19 he noted that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them.” He told the Colossians that it pleased the Father “through [Christ] to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross ... He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach” (Col. 1:20, 22).

Leon Morris summarized what Christ’s death means for believers in the following list. By His death

1. We are redeemed, Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:19
2. We are made nigh to God, Ephesians 2:13
3. We are reconciled to God, Colossians 1:20, 21; Romans 5:10
4. Jew and Gentile are now made one, Ephesians 2:16
5. We are cleansed, Hebrews 9:14; 1 John 1:7
6. We are justified, Romans 5:9
7. We are sanctified, Hebrews 10:10; 13:12
8. We are perfected forever, Hebrews 10:14
9. We have been purchased unto God, Revelation 5:9
10. The bond that was against us has been nailed to the cross, Colossians 2:14
11. We have boldness to enter into the holy place, Hebrews 10:19
12. We are loosed from our sins, Revelation 1:5
13. We may overcome by the blood of the Lamb, Revelation 12:11
14. By His cross peace with God has been secured, Colossians 1:20
15. His blood establishes a new covenant, 1 Corinthians 11:25
16. His death was to redeem us from all iniquity, Titus 2:14

(The Cross in the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965], 425–26)

As he contemplated all that Christ's death means to believers, Paul could only exclaim, "May it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14), and "I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Because of its supreme significance, it is not surprising that countless words have been written expounding the vast, rich meaning of Christ's death for believers.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12-21* (pp. 131-134). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Review

Even Christ's eleven closest followers, on the eve of the crucifixion, did not grasp the significance of Jesus' death from the divine perspective. All the hopes, dreams, and ambitions of the apostles centered on their Master. They had forsaken everything to follow Jesus, rightly believing that He was Israel's long-awaited Messiah. The disciples expected Him to overthrow the Romans,

restore Israel's sovereignty and glory, and grant them important positions in the restored kingdom (Matt. 19:27; 20:20–21). But they were slowly beginning to understand that when He had predicted His death (see the references above), Jesus had meant exactly what He said.

The Lord had supplied all the disciples' physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. As a result, they loved Him deeply and could not imagine life without their beloved Teacher. They reacted to Jesus' impending death with shock and fear in the face of such an incomparable loss. Knowing what they were thinking, the Lord spent much of His last night with the disciples comforting and encouraging them. He reassured them that although He would no longer be visibly present with them, He would still take care of them. The Holy Spirit, the Helper whom Christ would send, would come to indwell them, empower them, and guide them.

But despite the Lord's promises to them, including the guarantee of His resurrection, the disciples were still severely disturbed, prompting His command to them in 14:27, "Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

Lesson

- I. Simple Love Signified
- II. Saving Faith Verified
- III. Satanic Attempts Mortified
- IV. Supreme Love Amplified

I. Simple Love Signified

²⁸ You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming *back* to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

ηκουσατε οτι εγω ειπον υμιν Υπαγω και ερχομαι προς υμας ει ηγαπατε με εχαρητε αν οτι ειπον Πορευομαι προς τον πατερα οτι ο πατηρ μου μειζων μου εστιν

28 You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.

ηκουσατε οτι εγω ειπον υμιν Υπαγω και ερχομαι προς υμας

'I am going away
Υπαγω

ὕπαγω → πορεύομαι, VI, 566, 30 ff.

1. Outside the Bible this verb, attested from Hom., means a. trans. strictly **“to lead under,”** e.g., **horses under the yoke,** Hom. II., 24, 279 etc., **“to lead from under,”** e.g., out of range, 11, 163, **“to lead someone somewhere,”** before a **court,** Hdt., IX, 93, 3, “to bring, seduce, lead astray to something,” Eur. Andr., 428; Cyc., 507. In the mid. we find χώραν ὑπάγομαι **“to subdue a country,”** Jos. Ant., 7, 307, ὑπάγομαί τινα **“to put oneself at someone’s disposal,”** 5, 339, cf. 12, 398, **in the perf. pass. part. “to devote oneself”** **to the service of Isis, 18, 70.**

Delling, G. (1964-). ὕπαγω. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 8, p. 504). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

John 7:33 (NKJV)

³³ Then Jesus said to them, “I shall be with you a little while longer, and *then I go* to Him who sent Me.

John 8:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.

John 13:3 (NKJV)

³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,

John 14:3 (NKJV)

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there you may be also*.

John 14:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

If he also had “to die” in mind—perhaps in the light of πορεύομαι—he might be basing this on the kind of use found in Mk. 14:21 and par. → 505, 25 ff. The fact that Jesus “goes to God”

through death is also given special emphasis elsewhere in Jn., v. 3:14 with 12:32; 12:32 f.; 13:27, 30–32; → II, 249, 19 ff

Delling, G. (1964–). [ὑπάγω](#). G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 8, p. 506). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

The Context is Jesus giving them reassurance with Him leaving.

John 14:27–28 (NKJV)

27 Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. 28 You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.

John 14:1–3 (NKJV)

14 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

ει ηγαπατε με εχαρητε αν οτι ειπον Πορευομαι προς τον πατερα οτι ο πατηρ μου μειζων μου εστιν

If ye loved me (εἰ ἠγαπατε με [*ei ēgapāte me*]). Second-class condition with the imperfect active of ἀγαπαω [*agapaō*] referring to present time, implying that the disciples are not loving Jesus as they should. **Ye would have rejoiced** (ἐχαρητε ἂν [*echarēte an*]). Second aorist passive indicative of χαίρω [*chairō*] with ἂν [*an*], conclusion of second-class condition referring to past time, “Ye would already have rejoiced before this” at Christ’s going to the Father (verse 12).

Robertson, A. T. (1933). [*Word Pictures in the New Testament*](#) (Jn 14:28). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

The disciples were troubled in part because their faith was weak (cf. Matt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20). But beyond that, their anxiety stemmed from selfish shortsightedness. They saw the Lord’s death

only in terms of what would be loss to them, not what would be gain to Him.

The disciples' selfishness prompted the Lord's rebuke, "**You heard that I said to you, 'I go away (cf. 7:33; 8:21; 13:33, 36; 14:2–4, 12; 16:7, 10), and I will come to you' (14:3, 18, 23; 16:22). If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced.**" Since the noblest love does "not seek its own" (1 Cor. 13:5), but rather what is best for its object, Jesus exposed the weakness of the disciples' love, and called them to view the cross from His perspective.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 135). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Philippians 2:1–5 (NKJV)

2 Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. ³ *Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

you would rejoice
because I said, 'I am going to
the Father,' for My Father is
greater than I.

Greater than I (μειζων μου [*meizōn mou*]). Ablative case μου [*mou*] after the comparative μειζων [*meizōn*] (from positive μεγας [*megas*]). The filial relation makes this necessary. Not a distinction in nature or essence (cf. 10:30), but in rank in the Trinity. No Arianism or Unitarianism here. The very explanation here is proof of the deity of the Son (Dods).

Robertson, A. T. (1933). [*Word Pictures in the New Testament*](#) (Jn 14:28). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Jesus comes from the Father (6:46) and returns to the Father (13:1; 16:10, 28; 17:11); he is sent by the Father (5:37; 6:44, 57; 8:18; 12:49; 20:21), does the work of the Father (5:19–20, 36; 10:32, 37), speaks the words of Father (7:16; 8:28; 12:49–50), receives

his commission to give life and to judge from the Father (5:21–22), and has “life in himself” as the Father has it (5:26) because the Father has given it as well as “all things” (3:35; 5:20, 22; 6:39; 13:3; 16:15) to him. These statements cannot be turned around: the Father is not sent by the Son, the Father does not receive a commission from the Son, and so on. Hence, the Father is “greater” than the Son.⁸⁷ In returning to the Father, Jesus returns to the one who sent him after accomplishing the work that the Father has given him. Therefore the disciples should rejoice with Jesus.

Thompson, M. M. (2015). *John: A Commentary* (First edition, p. 317). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

After His humiliation in the incarnation, Jesus longed to **go to the Father**. The reference is to His restoration and exaltation to the Father’s right hand (Matt. 26:64; Acts 2:33; 5:31; 7:55, 56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22). The Son of God left the indescribable glories of heaven, where He experienced perfect fellowship with the Father (John 1:1; cf. 3:35; 10:17; Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Eph. 1:6; Col. 1:13), and became a man (cf. Rom. 8:3–4; Phil. 2:5–8; 1 John 4:2–3). Though He was sinless, He had experienced human weaknesses, such as fatigue (Matt. 8:24), hunger (Matt. 4:2), and thirst (John 4:7). Now He was

returning to the fullness of the glory He had experienced from all eternity in the Father's presence. Jesus expressed His yearning for that glory when He prayed, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You ... Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:1, 5; cf. v. 24).

In being exalted to the Father's right hand (Ps. 110:1; Luke 22:69; Acts 7:55ff; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22), Christ's ministry would be eternally vindicated by God—His exaltation being the culmination of the Father's approval of His earthly life and death. Because Christ had accomplished the Father's will perfectly, He eagerly looked forward to His Father's heavenly presence, where He would return to full glory. Though the cross would be excruciating, Jesus knew that the Father "[would raise] Him from the dead and [would seat] Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come" (Eph. 1:20–21; cf. Isa. 53:10). As one scholar writes:

When Jesus' self-humbling reached the absolute depths in His shameful death, God the Father decisively intervened. In vindication and approval of the Son's self-humbling, the Father magnificently exalted Him to the highest place in the universe. The Father clearly rewarded His Son for His perfectly obedient life and death.... In exalting Jesus Christ, God the Father vindicated Him. (David J. MacLeod, "The Exaltation of Christ: An Exposition of Philippians 2:9–11," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158/632 [October 2001]: 439, 41)

Jesus' affirmation, **the Father is greater than I**, has been twisted by heretical groups into an incorrect assertion of His inferiority to the Father. After repeatedly asserting His deity and full equality with the Father (e.g., John 5:17–18; 8:58; 10:30; 14:9), Jesus would not have reversed Himself and denied that equality. Thus, the Lord was not speaking here of His essential nature as God, but of His submissive role during His ministry on earth. In essence and being, the Father and the Son are eternally coequal; but in role and function, the Son submitted Himself to the Father's will at the incarnation. Christ's statement reflected the perspective of a humble servant, the role He had assumed during His earthly ministry. "Truly, truly, I

say to you,” He had said earlier in John’s gospel, “the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner” (5:19; cf. v. 30; 4:34; 6:38; 8:29, 42; 12:49; 14:10).

In the incarnation

Christ Jesus ... although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Phil. 2:5–8)

He “was made for a little while lower than the angels,” but now, “because of the suffering of death [He would be] crowned with glory and honor” (Heb. 2:9; cf. Phil. 2:9–11). Having submitted Himself to the Father in death, He has been gloriously vindicated by the Father ever since.

D. A. Carson captures the essence of what it meant to Jesus to return to the Father when he writes,

If Jesus’ disciples truly loved him, they would be glad that he is returning to his Father, *for* he is

returning to the sphere where he belongs, to the glory he had with the Father before the world began (17:5), to the place where the Father is undiminished in glory, unquestionably greater than the Son in his incarnate state. To this point the disciples have responded emotionally entirely according to their perception of *their own* gain or loss. If they had loved Jesus, they would have perceived that his departure to his own “home” was *his* gain and rejoiced with him at the prospect. As it is, their grief is an index of their self-centredness. (*The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 508. Italics in original.)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (pp. 135–137). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

I. Simple Love Signified

II. Saving Faith Verified

²⁹ “And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.

και νυν ειρηκα υμιν πριν γενεσθαι ινα οταν γενηται πιστευσητε

As noted earlier, the disciples believed that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God. In fact, on at least two occasions they had emphatically affirmed that belief. In response to the Lord's query, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matt. 16:15), Peter, as usual the spokesman for the rest, replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16). After many superficial disciples

withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. ... Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." (John 6:66–69; cf. 1:41, 45–49; Matt. 14:33)

But despite their confident testimonies, they still struggled with doubt. That prompted Jesus to rebuke them repeatedly for their lack of faith, and caused them to cry out to Him, "Increase our faith!" (Luke 17:5).

As He had done a short while earlier (13:19), Jesus strengthened that wavering faith by reminding them, **I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.** The disciples understood from the Old Testament that only God can predict the future.

Isaiah 42:9 God said, “Behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things; before they spring forth I proclaim them to you.”

In 46:9–10 He added, “I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’ ” Later in Isaiah God reminded idolatrous Israel, “I declared the former things long ago and they went forth from My mouth, and I proclaimed them.... Therefore I declared them to you long ago, before they took place I proclaimed them to you,” and then explained that He had done so “that [they] would not say, ‘My idol has done them, and my graven image and my molten image have commanded them’ ” (48:3, 5).

In contrast, Israel’s idols were exposed as false gods by their inability to foretell the future; they were unable to answer God’s challenge to “announce to us what is coming; declare the things that are going to come afterward, that we may know that you are gods” (Isa. 41:22–23). Since the false gods, being lifeless and useless, could not predict the future, God said disdainfully to them, “Behold, you are of no account, and your work amounts to nothing; he who chooses you is an abomination” (v. 24).

Therefore when the predictions Jesus made came to pass, the disciples' faith in Him increased greatly. For example, John 2:19–21 records Jesus' prediction of His death and resurrection. Verse 22 then notes that “when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.” In 16:1–3 Jesus predicted that the disciples would face persecution. Then in verse 4 He told them, “But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them.” But despite the Lord's many predictions of His resurrection, the disciples did not fully believe until after it actually happened. John records that it was only when he and Peter found the tomb empty that “he saw and believed. For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead” (20:8–9). The fulfillment of His predictions helped convince the disciples of Jesus' deity, just as He had intended (cf. 13:19 where “He” does not appear in the Greek text, indicating that Jesus was taking for Himself the name of God [Ex. 3:14; cf. John 8:24, 28, 58; 18:5–6]).

The Lord's words, **I will not speak much more with you**, do not signal the end of His discourse, which actually continues through the end of chapter

16. Rather, they are a reminder to the disciples that His time with them on earth was drawing to its close. Jesus was fully aware of all that was to happen to Him; He was never taken by surprise. He knew exactly how much time He had left with the eleven before the servants of the Enemy arrived to seize Him.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (pp. 137-138). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

I. Simple Love Signified

II. Saving Faith Verified

III. Satanic Attempts Mortified

³⁰ I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.

Ουκ ετι πολλα λαλησω μεθ υμων ερχεται
γαρ ο του κοσμου τουτου αρχων και εν εμοι
ουκ εχει ουδεν

This is the second of three references in John's gospel to Satan as **the ruler of the world** (12:31; 16:11; cf. Luke 4:5-6; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 1 John 5:19).

John 12:31 (NKJV)

31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

John 16:11 (NKJV)

11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Regarding this name

The Devil, of course, is not the legitimate ruler of the world, but a divinely permitted usurper. He is the **ruler** of the evil **world** system that is in rebellion against God (cf. 7:7; 8:23; 14:17; 15:18–19; 17:14–16; 1 John 2:15–17; 3:1, 13; 4:4–5; 5:4–5, 19).

Nothing that the ruler of this world may do ultimately challenges Jesus' own claim on the world or the efficacy of his death for the life of the world. As Augustine declares, "The whole world from the heights of the sky even to the depths of the earth is subject to the Creator, not to the deserter, to the Savior, not to the slayer, to the Deliverer, not to the subjugator, to the Teacher, not to the deceiver."

Thompson, M. M. (2015). [John: A Commentary](#) (First edition, pp. 317–318). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

2 Corinthians 4:4 (NKJV)

4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory

of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

Ephesians 2:2 (NKJV)

² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

1 John 5:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway* of the wicked one.

³⁰**for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.**

Jesus saw Satan **coming** in the persons of Judas, the Jewish leaders, and the Roman soldiers, who would shortly arrest Him in Gethsemane.

Jesus had been in conflict with Satan throughout His life. When He was an infant, Satan prompted Herod to try to kill Him, along with the other male children in the vicinity of Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16).

Revelation 12:1–4 (NKJV)

12 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. ² Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

At the outset of His ministry, Jesus “was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan” (Mark 1:13). Nor were Satan’s temptations limited to that initial encounter; they persisted throughout the Lord’s earthly ministry (Luke 4:13; Heb. 4:15), and culminated in Gethsemane (Luke 22:39–46). Satan repeatedly attempted to kill Jesus before the cross by inciting evil men against Him (e.g., Mark 14:1; Luke 4:28–30; John 5:18; 7:1; 8:59; 10:39; 11:53–54; cf. Matt. 21:38).

Finally, in a few short hours, Jesus’ lifelong conflict with the Devil would reach its triumphant climax. Satan would finally succeed in having Him killed, but

in so doing would bring about his own destruction. Far from being Satan's victim, "the Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8) "... that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). The cross marked Satan's ultimate defeat, though the final sentence against him will not be carried out until the end of the millennium. At that point his final assault against God's people will be thwarted, and he will be cast into the lake of fire, where he will be punished for eternity (Rev. 20:10).

30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has **nothing** in Me.

Ουκ ετι πολλα λαλησω μεθ υμων ερχεται γαρ ο του κοσμου τουτου αρχων και εν εμοι **ουκ** εχει **ουδεν**

Jesus' emphatic declaration (there is a double negative in the Greek text) "Satan **has nothing in Me**" explains why the Devil could not hold Him in death. The phrase is a Hebrew idiom meaning that the Devil could make no legal claim against Jesus.

“How could he?” asks **D. A. Carson**, “Jesus is not of this world (8:23), and he has never sinned (8:46). The devil could have a hold on Jesus only if there were a justifiable charge against Jesus. Jesus’ death would then be his due, and the devil’s triumph” (*The Gospel According to John*, 509).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 139). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

John 8:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?

John 15:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Peter 2:22 (NKJV)

²² “*Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth*”;

Hebrews 7:26–28 (NKJV)

²⁶ For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; ²⁷ who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, *appoints* the Son who has been perfected forever.

Hebrews 4:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ 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.

This raises a very important question. If Jesus was tempted and did not sin.....

Was it because he was unable to sin and could not or was it because he could sin and did not.

It is a very important question.

Because since the Bible clearly declares that He was tempted

If he could not sin, then how could he be tempted?

The Bible says

James 1:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God **cannot be tempted** by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

μηδεις πειραζομενος λεγετω Οτι απο του Θεου πειραζομαι **ο γαρ Θεος απειραστος εστιν κακων** πειραζει δε αυτος ουδενα

God cannot be tempted.

cannot be tempted

apeirastos: untried, untempted

Original Word: ἀπείραστος, ον

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: apeirastos

Phonetic Spelling: (ap-i'-ras-tos)

Definition: untried, untempted

Usage: untried, inexperienced, untempted, incapable of being tempted.

551 apeíastos (from 1 /A "not" and 3985 /peirázō, "susceptible to enticement, allurements") – properly, unable to be tempted, lacking the very capacity to be enticed by evil or influenced by sin.

551/apeirastos ("**untemptable**"), only occurring in Js 1:13, refers to God's nature as incapable of being tempted, i.e. He can not be wooed (enticed) by sin. [551 (apeíastos) is also used in ancient secular Greek meaning "incapable of being tempted" (L-S). Theologians connect this to the "impassability of God."]

Jesus was God, so how can he say he was tempted if he was truly God.

The answer lies in the Incarnation. and the Hypostatic Union.

Jesus was born into this world and took on Human Flesh. He was born 100% man, He was truly Human and at the same time was truly God.

100% Man and 100 % God.

The Bible refers to Him as the Second Adam. (I Cor. 15:45-49)

He came as a human so he could live a perfectly righteous life and accomplish what the 1st Adam did not do. Then He died a perfect Death to Save us from what Adam did do.

Now Theologians generally fall into 2 camps

1. **Peccable** Able to sin RC Sproul Sinclair Ferguson

2. **Impeccable** Not able to sin John MacArthur, Charles Ryrie.

Those who argue the **Impeccable view**. Say that it is clear that Jesus did not sin. It is also clear that Jesus stated that he only did what the Father showed him what to do John 5.

And that the Union of the Divine and Humanity of Christ would have prevented him from having the ability to Sin.

Those who support impeccability point out that it relates to the union of the divine and human natures in the one person so that even though the human nature was peccable, the person was impeccable. It could not be otherwise with a person who has all power and a divine will.

Ryrie, C. C. (1999). [*Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*](#) (p. 304). Chicago, IL: Moody Press.

But some would say that he could have never been genuinely tempted.

Ryrie argues at this point that the genuineness of the temptation is not diminished even though he could not sin as the God man, because the temptation would have been towards his humanity which he would have felt, or experienced.

He compares it to a large tanker ship that is being attacked by a wooden row boat. Although it is impossible for the row boat to sink the the ship or to cause real damaged. It nevertheless would have experienced it.

Those who argue the **Peccable view** (ability to sin) also clearly affirm that Jesus never did sin in thought or deed. He fully obey the law of God.

However for Him to be the Second Adam and to be genuine human being in a pre fall state with no sinful nature then He would have to have had the ability to sin.

“Those who support peccability reason that if He could not have sinned then His temptations were not real and He cannot serve as a truly sympathetic High Priest. In other words, peccability requires a constitutional susceptibility to sin.”

Ryrie, C. C. (1999). *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (p. 304). Chicago, IL: Moody Press.

Hodge represents the peccability viewpoint.

“Temptation implies the possibility of sin. If from the

constitution of His person it was impossible for Christ to sin, then His temptation was unreal and without effect, and He cannot sympathize with His people.”

Ryrie, C. C. (1999). *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (p. 304). Chicago, IL: Moody Press.

Sinclair Ferguson points out a flaw in the Ship analogy that Ryrie uses. He makes the point that Christ humanity was true humanity and not superhuman.

True men are always row boats not super tanker ships

The Fact that Jesus was God should not mix with his Humanity, or else He is not truly man. He is Super man.

“Best theologians, past and present, have been divided on the question of whether Jesus could have sinned. I believe that since Jesus was fully human, it was possible for him to sin. Obviously, the divine nature cannot sin. But if Christ’s divine nature prevented him from sinning, in what sense did he obey the law of God as the second Adam? At his birth, Jesus’ human nature was exactly the same as Adam’s before the fall, with respect to his moral capabilities. Jesus had what Augustine called the

posse peccare and the *posse non peccare*, that is, the ability to sin and the ability not to sin. Adam sinned; Jesus did not. Satan did everything in his power to corrupt Jesus and tempt him to sin. That would have been an exercise in futility had he been trying to tempt a divine person to sin. Satan was not trying to get God to sin. He was trying to get the human nature of Christ to sin, so that he would not be qualified to be the Savior.

At the same time, Christ was uniquely sanctified and ministered to by the Holy Spirit. In order to sin, a person must have a desire for sin. But Jesus' human nature throughout his life was marked by a zeal for righteousness. "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me" ([John 4:34](#)), he said. As long as Jesus had no desire to sin, he would not sin. I may be wrong, but I think it is wrong to believe that Christ's divine nature made it impossible for his human nature to sin. If that were the case, the temptation, the tests, and his assuming of the responsibility of the first Adam would have all been charades. This position protects the integrity of the authenticity of the human nature because it was the human nature that carried out the mission of the second Adam on our behalf. It was the human nature uniquely anointed beyond measure by the Holy Spirit.

Excerpt from R.C. Sproul's, *Truths We Confess: A Layman's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith (Volume 1)*

Shedd correctly observed: “Consequently, Christ while having a peccable human *nature* in His constitution, was an impeccable *Person*. Impeccability characterizes the God-Man as a totality, while peccability is a property of His humanity.”

Ryrie, C. C. (1999). *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (pp. 305–306). Chicago, IL: Moody Press.

- I. Simple Love Signified
- II. Saving Faith Verified
- III. Satanic Attempts Mortified

IV. Supreme Love Amplified

³¹ But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

αλλ ινα γνω ο κοσμος οτι αγαπω τον πατερα
και καθως εντειλατο μοι ο πατηρ ουτως
ποιω εγειρεσθε αγωμεν εντευθεν

Far from marking His defeat at the hands of Satan, Christ's death was the ultimate proof to **the world** of His **love** for **the Father**. Jesus had just emphasized that the essential test of love is obedience (vv. 15, 21, 23).

John 14:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments.

John 14:21 (NKJV)

²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

John 14:23 (NKJV)

²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

Notice how in this text that the Love that is express in between the Son and Father. The Desire

is that the World would see the Love the Son has for the Father.

The Father decrees the Death of Christ

Christ obeys the Father because of the Love He has for the father.

The Spirit applies the Fathers decrees and the Sons work.

The emphasis here is not on the love of Jesus for his Disciples, Nor is it the love of Jesus for Sinners. But rather the inner Trinitairian love.

What motivates the Son is the the Love of the Father. What moves the Son is the Glory of the Father.

Salvation is a benefit of the Love relationship of the Father and the Son.

Remember

John 6:37–39 (NKJV)

³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

It puts the emphasis where it should be emphasized. That this whole work of Redemption is about the Glory of God, not the comfort of man. Its not man centered. Its God centered.

He would demonstrate His love for the Father by doing **exactly as the Father commanded** Him.

John 4:34 (NKJV)

³⁴ Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

John 10:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”

John 12:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

John 18:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?”

Matthew 26:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

Philippians 2:5–8 (NKJV)

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the cross.

Ironically, the very rebellion and sinful self-centredness that damns the world, that makes the world the world, is overthrown by the obedience and self-sacrificing love of the Son, who thereby not only displays what a proper relation to God consists in, but is vindicated and wins release and redemption

for those the Father has given to him. The world itself will learn this—either when men and women discover the truth and cease to belong to the world, or at the time when ‘every knee [shall] bow ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father’ (Phil. 2:10–11).

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 509). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

The phrase **get up, let us go from here** signals an obvious transition in the narrative. At this point Jesus and the disciples evidently left the upper room and began walking through Jerusalem, headed for Gethsemane. While they walked, Jesus continued His teaching. (John 18:1 does not describe the Lord and the disciples leaving the upper room, as some think. It refers to their leaving the city of Jerusalem and crossing the Kidron valley, east of the city. Gethsemane lay across the valley on the slopes of the Mount of Olives.)

The sum of all that Jesus’ death meant to Him was joy; it was “for the joy set before Him [that He] endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). The path to that eternal joy led through suffering. John Piper writes, “First the agony of the cross, then the ecstasy of heaven. There was no other way.... The passion of Christ did not merely

precede the crown; it was the price, and the crown was the prize. He died to have it” (*Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came to Die* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2006], 114, 116–17).

Having triumphed over death, Jesus has returned to the glory that He had from all eternity in heaven (Luke 24:26; John 13:31–32; 17:1, 5; Phil. 2:8–9; Heb. 2:9) at the Father’s right hand (Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 1 Peter 3:22). There He receives forever the unceasing and undiminishing praise of the “living creatures and the elders” (Rev. 5:11), who cry out “saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing’ ” (v. 12)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 140). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Hodge represents the peccability viewpoint. “Temptation implies the possibility of sin. If from the constitution of His person it was impossible for Christ to sin, then His temptation was unreal and without effect, and He cannot sympathize with His people.”

On the other side Shedd wrote:

It is objected to the doctrine of Christ’s impeccability that it is inconsistent with His temptability. A person who cannot sin, it is said, cannot be tempted to sin. This is not correct; any more than it would be correct to say that because an army cannot be conquered, it cannot be attacked. Temptability depends on the constitutional *susceptibility*, while impeccability depends on the *will*.... Those temptations were very strong, but if the self-determination of His holy will was stronger than they, then they could not induce Him to sin, and He would be impeccable. And yet plainly He would be temptable.

B. The Nature of Christ’s Testings

That His tests were real goes without saying. They happened, so they were obviously real. Actually the particular tests Christ experienced were suited to a God-man. No ordinary man would ever be tempted to try to turn stones into bread, but the God-man could have done that. No sane man would be seriously tempted to prove his messiahship by jumping off a high place expecting to land unharmed. No man would take seriously an offer from Satan to give him *all* the kingdoms of this world—perhaps a corner of some kingdom, but not all. So these were tests designed to test a God-man in a way no other has ever been tested.

Though the particular tests were out of the ordinary experience of human beings, the areas of testing that they represented were common to all people. All sinful desires can be classified as either lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes, or the boasting about possessions (or a combination thereof, 1 John 2:16). The tests that Satan put the Lord through fall into those three categories (Matt. 4:1–11).

When the writer to the Hebrews said that our Lord was tested in all (*kata panta*), he couldn't mean that He experienced every test that people experience (Heb. 4:15). He was, for example, never tested to misuse television. But He did experience tests tailor-made for a God-man that fell into the same categories into which all tests fall, including ours. And the reason He could be tested at all was that He had a human nature, for God is not tempted with evil (James 1:13). He was tested, the writer continued, "according to likeness." In other words, the fact that He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh allowed Him to be tested. Yet there was a major difference between His humanity and ours. He was "without sin." He had no sin nature and He never committed a single sin. Still that does not mean that His humanity was impeccable. It was peccable, though it never knew sin. But the person of the God-man was impeccable.

Shedd correctly observed: "Consequently, Christ while having a peccable human *nature* in His constitution, was an impeccable *Person*. Impeccability characterizes the God-Man as a totality, while peccability is a property of His humanity."

C. The Results of Christ's Testings

1. *Sensitivity*. He became sensitive to the pressure of testing. He experienced it with emotions and powers we cannot understand.
2. *Example*. He furnishes us an example of victory over the severest kinds of tests.
3. *Understanding*. He can offer sympathetic understanding to us when we are tested.
4. *Grace and power*. He can also provide the grace and power we need in times of testing. People who have experienced the same problems we might have are sensitized and sympathetic, but often they can do little or nothing about our problems. He can do something and offers us grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16). Only a God-man High Priest can do both—sympathize because He was genuinely tested and empower because He is God.

D. An Illustration

When I first began to teach at the seminary level, I was appalled at the number of misspellings I found in students' tests. Early in my career I gave an exam to a class of probably no more than twenty students that expected the word *Gethsemane* in one of the answers. Believe it or not, that class misspelled that word eight different ways! That

is not easy to do even deliberately. *Deity* and *millennium* were other words commonly misspelled. Remember, these students were college and university graduates.

When I visited my family home the first Christmas vacation, I found myself one evening socializing with a group of public school teachers. They were members of a Bible class my father had taught for years, and many of them had been my teachers in my early years. Of course they were interested in how I liked teaching. When I complained about misspellings, I struck sympathetic chords in almost all of them. I complained about *Gethsemane*. They complained about *neither* or *cat* or other much simpler words that seminary students are never tempted to misspell. My students' temptations to misspell were particularly related to theological words. The particular words were suited to the different levels of students. But the area was the same—misspelling words each group should have known. Because we shared a common problem area, we could sympathize genuinely with each other.

It would be true to say that every student in my class was truly tested with respect to the correct spelling of Gethsemane. Those who knew it passed the test, but the test was there for all to take. We have a High Priest who can genuinely sympathize because He was really tested with tests peculiar to a God-man. He did not sin and He could not have sinned. He was and is holy, innocent, and undefiled, God's spotless Lamb.

Ryrie, C. C. (1999). [*Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*](#) (pp. 304–307). Chicago, IL: Moody Press.