



9. Don't Be Confused: The True Christ versus the False Christ

"I thought there was only one Christ!" many say. Yes, there is only one true Christ. But from the beginning, Lucifer's great ambition has been to be "like the most High," even to exalt his throne above Christ's (see Isaiah 14:12-14; Lucifer became Satan). He is learning how to make himself into a counterfeit Christ!

As time has gone on for thousands of years, he has become very clever at his job. His great ambition is to masquerade as Christ. His satanic soul desires nothing so much as to see mankind bow before him, yielding to him the devotion that they would otherwise yield to his hated rival, Jesus.

Is it possible that he will succeed as the false Christ? We all know how clever some human beings are at imitating others by voice, mannerisms, even appearance. The vast movie industry is built on this technique. Are men more clever than Satan? Several scheming home-study enthusiasts have successfully masqueraded as qualified physicians for years, one forging the diploma and certificates of a genuine medical namesake thousands of miles away.

If Satan is so clever at teaching humans how to masquerade, how nearly perfect is he in pulling off his own grand scheme?

You might even find that Satan has already tried to work his deceptive schemes on you.

What the Bible Says About the False Christ

1. *Is Satan already beginning to succeed as a false Christ? 1 John 2:18.*

ANSWER: "Even now there are many _____; whereby we know that it is _____."

"Antichrist" is from a Greek word which means "one who takes the place of Christ." Obviously no one can truly take His place; therefore these are false Christs.

2. *Who did Jesus foresee would arise to try to deceive His people? Matthew 24:5,23,24.*

ANSWER: "For there shall arise _____ and _____"

3. *What has always been Satan's great work? Revelation 20:8, 10 (compare John 8:44).*

ANSWER (in one word): He _____ them.

4. Read how ancient Israel was terribly deceived by a false christ. What was the name of the false god they worshipped in Elijah's day? 1 Kings 16:30, 32 and 18:18,19.

ANSWER: Ahab "reared up an altar for _____." "Ye have _____ the _____ of the Lord, and thou hast followed _____."

"Baal" was a word that simply meant "husband" or "Lord." As the centuries went by, it was not easy for Israel to distinguish between the true worship of the Lord and that of the neighboring nations. Baal-worship was a clever counterfeit of the worship of the Lord of Israel. Temples looked much the same, and rituals were copied. The people gradually lost the distinction. Elijah was keen to grasp the significance of what was happening.

5. Where did Baal-worship rear its head in Jerusalem in Jeremiah's day? Jeremiah 7:9,10, 30.

ANSWER: _____.

6. It is obvious that a false christ deceives people with false teachings long before he actually masquerades personally as a counterfeit. What tragic mistake did the Jews make without realizing it? John 8:42-47.

ANSWER: _____.

For centuries the Jews had been expecting the Messiah to come. When He finally came, they put Him to death because they did not know how to distinguish the true from the false! Paul warned the Corinthians to be careful, because to a careless observer there would be little apparent difference (see 1 Corinthians 10:20, 21).

How to Tell the Difference

7. The false christ represents Jesus dying on the cross in order to make the Father be nice to us. He represents God as being cold and indifferent to us, and Christ as satisfying His vengeance by suffering in our stead. What does the Bible teach about the true Christ and His atonement? John 3:16,17.

ANSWER: The Father Himself "so loved the world, that He _____
_____."

"This great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father's heart a love for man, not to make Him willing to save. No, no! 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.' John 3:16. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.' 2 Corinthians 5:19. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption." *Happiness Digest*, pp. 3, 4.

8. A false christ cannot be truly tempted as we are, and therefore does not know how we feel. He is represented as taking a different kind of human nature than we have. Thus the false christ cannot truly save us from our sins. He can only condone our sins or pardon them, while

we continue in them. In contrast, what kind of human nature did the true Christ take? Romans 8:3,4.

ANSWER: "God sending his own son in the _____
that the _____ of the law might be fulfilled in _____."

9. How fully was the true Christ tempted like us? Hebrews 4:15.

ANSWER: "[He] ... was _____,
yet without sin."

When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, he lost his connection with God. His very nature became evil. When he fell, the human race fell; we were all "in Adam," we are Adam. That's the name that covers all of us. We have his sinful nature. But Christ came to redeem the human race. He did not come to redeem the unfallen, sinless Adam, but the fallen, sinful Adam—which means us.

Therefore He had to take upon Himself our fallen, sinful nature, in order to reach us where we are. He came to conquer sin, to put an end to it. Therefore He had to meet the problem where it had taken root—in our fallen, sinful human nature. He could not redeem what He did not assume. In order to elevate fallen man, Christ must reach him where he was. He took human nature, and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He, who knew no sin, became sin for us. He humiliated Himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might be qualified to reach man, and bring him up from the degradation in which sin had plunged him.

10. A thought question: If there was any sin on which Christ had not been tempted, could He "succor" or help us overcome in that same temptation? Read Hebrews 2:17,18 carefully, and give your answer:

ANSWER: _____.

We have seen how the apostle John speaks of "Antichrist" as having come already. Here is an example of how a "christ" who did not truly take our flesh darkens the truth of salvation by a confusing smog of false doctrine—the doctrine of the "immaculate conception." Millions of people believe that the Virgin Mary was not only conceived immaculate, but she was without the smallest actual sin throughout her life. She was incapable of sinning, they say. In this way, she gave her Son a sinless nature, different from ours.

But a "christ" who took a different kind of "flesh" or nature than what we have cannot save us from sin. Fulton Sheen (a Catholic bishop) shows why the dogma of the "immaculate conception" is so necessary for the Catholic "Christ." He cannot conceive how a Saviour could come, as Paul says, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," without giving in to temptation. Let us see what he says:

"Had Infinite Purity chosen any other port of entrance into humanity but that of human purity [Mary's so-called immaculate nature] it would have created a tremendous difficulty—namely, how could [Christ] be sinless, if He was born of sin-laden humanity? If a brush dipped in black becomes black, and if cloth takes on the color of the dye, would not He, in the eyes of the world, have also partaken of the guilt in which all humanity shared? If He came to this earth through the wheat field of moral weakness, He certainly would have some chaff hanging on the garment of His human nature."

In this lesson we see how the true Christ was born of sin-laden humanity, yet He never sinned; how this "brush" was "dipped in black," yet never became in the least

sullied with our sin; how this "cloth" was dipped in our human "dye," yet never took on the color of our sin; how He passed "through the wheat field of moral weakness," without the slightest amount of "chaff hanging" on the garment of His human nature." This truth of Christ's victory is the New Testament teaching of "righteousness of faith."

11. *The idea that Christ could not sin is foreign to the Bible. If that were true, how could He have been truly tempted? How terribly did Jesus suffer temptation? Hebrews 5:7-9. (The reason He did not sin is that He chose not to sin.)*

ANSWER: He prayed with "strong _____ and _____ unto Him that was able _____.

12. *What shows that our Saviour suffered the same constant conflict with self that we suffer, yet was constantly victorious over self? John 5:30, last part: compare John 6:38.*

ANSWER: "For I came down from heaven, _____.

13. *What glorious good news does the gospel bring to us? Hebrews 7:25.*

ANSWER: "Wherefore _____ to save them to the _____ that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to _____ for them."

Temptation is resisted when one is powerfully influenced to do a wrong action, and knowing that he/she can do it, resists by faith, with a firm hold on divine power. This was the ordeal through which Christ passed in order to save us from sin.

14. *Do you invite Christ to save you from all sin? _____*

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7 "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17