"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist," (1 John 4:3)

is and the second

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same...For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest...For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." (Hebrews 2:14-18)

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;" (Hebrews 5:7-9)

Our challenge is to use the verses presented in this issue, along with any other pertinent scripture, as the basis for our belief system regarding the nature of Christ. This exercise may not answer all of our questions, but it should prevent us from drawing any conclusions that are not clearly supported in the Word of God.

As we read through these verses we should have learned nothing that would support the idea that he was in some way more capable than we are to overcome sin. Jesus, a mortal man bearing our own nature, was tempted as we are, but he did not sin. This fact should encourage us in our own struggle to overcome the flesh.

We found nothing that indicated that Jesus was not representative of mankind, there was no scripture to suggest that he was somehow exempt from the condemnation that we bear, or that he was "good" or clean. It would be contrary to the Bible to profess that in any sense, he did not come "in the flesh" exactly like us.

We would in like manner be unwise not to acknowledge that Jesus was the Son of God. We may not be able to explain what special characteristics or qualities he had from his Father. We know only from the Bible that he was made of a woman, that he was tempted as we are, he had to grow in wisdom, learning obedience through suffering and he suffered death. Natural men are born with many gifts, some being considered genius in their particular field. Jesus was perhaps a genius in his ability to read, understand, remember, and apply the Holy Scriptures in his life. It seems reasonable to conclude that he was provided no physical advantage in his struggle with the flesh, other than the strength that he obtained by having the Word written in his heart. The record clearly indicates that it was his absolute trust in God, along with his understanding and instant recall of the scriptures that made him strong against sin, an example that we should all attempt to apply to our own lives.

--

Free copies of back issues of Things Concerning are available from the Advocate Publications office and from **OUR WEB SITE: www.christadelphian-advocate.org**

LOCAL CONTACT:

Send all Correspondence to:

"Things Concerning"

27 Delphian Rd

Springfield, VT 05156
e-mail: jimillay@sover.net

Things Concerning

The Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ

Volume 6 No 3 E3-03

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same..." (Heb. 2:14)

The Nature of Christ

Jesus was obviously a special person who was able to accomplish something that no other mortal man has ever done. He overcame the desires of the flesh, avoided any personal acts of sin and managed always to do his Father's will, not his own. His accomplishment in offering his own life as a representative sacrifice for sin is so incredible that we can not help question his nature. Was he exactly like we are? Or did he have some special characteristic or quality?

The speculation on this question has contributed to great controversy, even among those who profess to know the Truth of the Bible. As we reflect on the history of these controversial views on the nature of Christ, it becomes painfully apparent that most of our difficulties are developed around the speculations and opinions of men. It has become our own conviction that no matter how expert they may appear, the opinions of men are subject to bias and they often base their interpretations on their need to support a traditional view.

How do we sort through the many opinions and find the Truth on this subject? There is only one option. We must adhere strictly to the Word of God and its revelation. When considering the nature of Christ, we would be wise to base our belief and conviction strictly on what has been written in the Word of God, without the amplifications of men.

His Birth

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

"The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus...The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God." (Luke 1: 30-31; 35 NRSV)





"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," (Gal. 4:4)

From the Beginning

What are we told in the Bible? First of all we know that the sentence on the serpent (in the Garden of Eden) included a prophecy: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. 3:15) This prophecy was about a future solution to the curse of sin and death, and it reveals that it would be a descendant of the woman that would eventually destroy the seed of the serpent. This information should put away any ideas that Christ existed before the creation. The Scriptures later verify that the redeemer would be born of a woman; "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4-5)

There are many prophecies relating to the coming of this descendant of the woman, who would also be the Son of God. For our purposes we will mention some of those that add specific information about the nature of Christ

"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:" (2 Sam. 7:12-14)*

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

"And there shall come forth <u>a rod out of the stem of Jesse</u>, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And <u>shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD</u>: "(Isa. 11:1-3)

"For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and <u>as a root out of a dry ground</u>: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; <u>a man</u> of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was <u>wounded for our transgressions</u>, he was <u>bruised for our iniquities</u>: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and <u>with his stripes we are healed</u>." (Isaiah 53:2-5)

* This information is complemented in the New Testament. "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was <u>made of the seed of David according to the flesh</u>; And <u>declared to be the Son of God</u> with power, according to the spirit of holiness, <u>by the resurrection</u> from the <u>dead</u>:" (Romans 1:3-4)

"But we see Jesus, who was <u>made a little lower than the angels</u> <u>for the suffering of death</u>, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, <u>to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings</u>." (Hebrews 2: 9-10)

The New Testament Record

In the New Testament, we have some very specific information about the nature of Christ. The challenge is to read these words without editorial comment, listening only to the Scriptures, as they describe the details of this man and his nature.

"And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary...And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JE-SUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:26-35)

"And when the days of <u>her purification</u> according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, <u>Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord</u>;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." (Luke 2: 22-24)

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, <u>filled with wisdom: and the</u> grace of God was upon him." (Luke 2:40)

"And Jesus <u>increased in wisdom and stature</u>, and in favour with God and man." (Luke 2:52)

"And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matt. 19:16-17)

"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: <u>for my Father is greater than I.</u>" (John 14:28)

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" (1 Tim. 2:5)