

Could Jesus Have Sinned?

I. Introduction

“Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man in one person, and will be so forever”

II. The Deity of Christ

A. The direct Scriptural claims

1. The word God (*theos*) used of Christ

a. John 1:1; 1:18; 20:27-28

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

18 No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained {Him.}

27 Then He said to Thomas, “Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.” 28 Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

b. Titus 2:11-13

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;

c. Heb. 1:8 (quoting Ps. 45:6)

8 But of the Son {He says} , “THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.

d. II Peter 1:1

1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

e. Isa. 9:6 (prophecy of Christ)

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

2. The word Lord (*kyrios*) used of Christ

NB: The word is sometimes used as a polite term of address to a superior. (see Matt. 13:27; 21:30; 27:63; Jn. 4:11). The Greek translation of the OT translated God's proper name Yahweh as Lord (kyrios) 6,814 x's.

- a. Luke 2:10-11
10 And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.
- b. Luke 1:42-43
42 And she cried out with a loud voice, and said, "Blessed among women {are} you, and blessed {is} the fruit of your womb! 43 "And how has it {happened} to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"
- c. Matt. 3:3 (quoting Isa. 40:3)
3 For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!'"
- d. Matt. 22:44 (quoting Ps. 110:1)
44 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT THINE ENEMIES BENEATH THY FEET"?"
- e. I Cor. 8:5-6
5 For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, 6 yet for us there is {but} one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we {exist} for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we {exist} through Him.
- f. I Cor. 12:3
3 Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.
- g. Heb. 1:10-12 (quoting Ps. 102)
10 And, "THOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING DIDST LAY THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF THY HANDS; 11 THEY WILL PERISH, BUT THOU REMAINEST; AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD AS A GARMENT, 12 AND AS A MANTLE THOU WILT ROLL THEM UP; AS A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED. BUT THOU ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END."
- h. Rev. 19:15-16
15 And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

3. Other strong claims to Deity

- a. When Jesus told the Jews that Abraham had seen His day (John 8:57-59; cf. Ex. 3:14)
56 “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw {it} and was glad.”
57 The Jews therefore said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” 59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.
Ex. 3:14 And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”
- b. Jesus’ statement at the end of the Book of Revelation (Rev. 22:13; cf. Rev. 1:8)
13 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”
Rev. 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

4. The use of the title “*the Son of Man*”

NB: This title is used 84x’s in the Gospels and only by Jesus to refer only to Himself.

- a. Matt. 16:13-16
13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He {began} asking His disciples, saying, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?...”
“...16 And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
- b. Luke 9:18
“18 And it came about that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, “Who do the multitudes say that I am?...”
“...20 And He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered and said, “The Christ of God.”
- c. Acts. 7:55-56 (Steven is alluding to Daniel 7:13-14)
55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; 56 and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”
- d. Matt. 26:63-64
63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, “I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.” 64 Jesus said to him, “You have said it {yourself} ; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.”

5. The use of the title “Son of God”

NB: Sometimes “son of God” refers simply to Israel (Matt. 2:15), or to man as created by God (Luke 2:38), or to Christians in general (Rom. 8:14;19, 23). However, there are clear references which point to the Deity of Christ:

a. Matt. 11:25-30

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, “I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from {the} wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes. 26 “Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Thy sight. 27 “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal {Him.} 28 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 “Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 “For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.”

b. Matt. 17:5

5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”

c. I Cor. 15:28

28 And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.

d. Heb. 1:1-3, 5, 8

1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in {His} Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;...

“...5 For to which of the angels did He ever say, “THOU ART MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE”? And again, “I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME”?...

“...8 But of the Son {He says} , “THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.”

NB: He is seen as the unique Son of the Father:

e. John 1:14, 18, 34, 49

“14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth....”

“...18 No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained {Him.}...”

“...34 “And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

“...49 Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.”

NB: He is the One in whom we can trust for eternal life:

f. John 3:16, 36

“16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”...

“36 “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

g. John 20:30-31

“30 Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

5. Statements by the author of Hebrews

a. Heb. 1:1-3

“1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in {His} Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;”

III. Jesus’ Humanity

A. Human weaknesses and limitations

1. Jesus had a human body

a. By outward appearances Jesus had a normal human birth

Luke 1:31; 2:6-7

31 “And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

2: 6 “And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Matt. 1:18, 21, 25

“18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. . .

... 21 “And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins. . .

... 25 and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.”

b. Jesus grew from an infant to a child to adulthood

Circumcised as an infant (Luke 2:21)

“21 And when eight days were completed before His circumcision, His name was {then} called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”

Presented at the Temple (Luke 2:22)

“22 And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord”

Blessed by Simeon (Luke 2:25-35)

“25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him . . .

. . . 28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 “Now Lord, Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart In peace, according to Thy word; 30 For my eyes have seen Thy salvation, 31 Which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Thy people Israel . . .

. . . 34 And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this {Child} is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed — 35 and a sword will pierce even your own soul —to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

The confession of Anna the Prophetess (Luke 2:36-38)

“36 And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. And she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. 38 And at that very moment she came up and {began} giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.”

His growth into childhood (Luke 2:39-40)

“39 And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. 40 And the Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.”

His trip at age 12 to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast (Luke 2:41-52)

“41 And His parents used to go to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when He became twelve, they went up {there} according to the custom of the Feast . . .

. . . 46 And it came about that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them, and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. 48 And when they saw Him, they were astonished; . . .

. . . 51 And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all {these} things in her heart. 52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

c. Jesus became tired like others

John 4:6

“6 and Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.”

Matt. 4:11

“11 Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and {began} to minister to Him.”

Luke 23:26

“26 And when they led Him away, they laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.”

d. Jesus became thirsty

John 19:28

“28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I am thirsty.”

e. Jesus became hungry

Matt. 4:2

“2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.”

f. Even after the Resurrection He showed Himself to have a physical human body

Luke 24:39

“39 “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

Luke 24:30, 42

“30 And it came about that when He had reclined {at the table} with them, He took the bread and blessed {it,} and breaking {it,} He {began} giving {it} to them.”

“42 And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish;”

John 20:17, 20, 27

“17 Jesus said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’”

“20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord.”

“27 Then He said to Thomas, “Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.”

John 21: 9, 13

“9 And so when they got out upon the land, they saw a charcoal fire {already} laid, and fish placed on it, and bread.”

“13 Jesus came and took the bread, and gave them, and the fish likewise.”

2. Jesus had a human mind

a. Jesus learned and increased in knowledge and wisdom

Luke 2:40, 52

“40 And the Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.”

“52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

b. The incident at the Passover Feast at age 12

Luke 2:41-52 (esp. 46-47)

“41 And His parents used to go to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when He became twelve, they went up {there} according to the custom of the Feast . . .

. . . 46 And it came about that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them, and asking them

questions. 47 And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. 48 And when they saw Him, they were astonished; . . .
. . . 51 And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all {these} things in her heart. 52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

c. Self-limitations on His knowledge

Mark 13:32

32 “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father {alone.}”

3. Jesus had a human soul and emotions

a. He experienced anguish and emotional pain

John 12:27

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

John 13:21

“21 When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.”

Matt. 26:38

“38 Then He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.”

b. Jesus showed the whole range of human emotions

He “marveled” (Matt. 8:10)

“10 Now when Jesus heard {this,} He marveled, and said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.”

He “wept” (John 11:35)

“35 Jesus wept.”

He had heart-felt agony in prayer (Heb. 5:7)

“7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.”

4. People near Jesus saw Him as only a man

a. The response of His hometown people in Nazareth (Matt. 13:53-58)

“53 And it came about that when Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there. 54 And coming to His home town He {began} teaching them in their synagogue, so that they became astonished, and said, “Where {did} this man {get} this wisdom, and {these} miraculous powers? 55 “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? 56 “And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then {did} this man {get} all these things?” 57 And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his home town, and in his {own} household.” 58 And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.”

NB: Even His brothers didn’t recognize His uniqueness until after His resurrection (John 7:5, “5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him.”)

II. The Uniting of Humanity with Deity

A. The Virgin Birth

1. The Virgin Birth prophesied

a. Matt. 1:22-23

22 Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 23 “BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,” which translated means, “GOD WITH US.”

b. cf. Isa. 7:14

14 “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”

c. Matt. 1:16; Luke 3:23

“16 and to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.”

Luke 3:23 And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being supposedly {the} son of Joseph, the {son} of Eli,

2. The Virgin Birth announced and described

a. Matt. 1:18, 20, 24-25

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, **before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit . . .**

. . . 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; **for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.** . . .

. . . 24 And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took {her} as his wife, 25 and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

b. Luke 1:30-35

“30 And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 “And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.” 34 And Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” 35 **And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.”**

NB: *The doctrinal importance of the Virgin Birth:*

1. *Salvation must come from the Lord and cannot come through human effort*
 - a. *Adam and Eve in the Garden (Gen.3)*
 - b. *The sacrifices of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4)*
 - c. *Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah (Gen. 22)*
 - d. *The Levitical System under Moses (esp. Lev. 16; see also Heb. 10:1-10)*
2. *The Virgin Birth made possible the uniting of full deity and humanity*
3. *The Virgin Birth made possible Christ's true humanity without inherited sin*
 - a. *Luke 1:35 ("therefore")*

"35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God."
4. *Why didn't Jesus inherit a sinful nature from Mary?*
 - a. *The Roman Catholic Answer:*
 - i. *The Immaculate Conception: "Mary is believed to be sinless"*

HOWEVER: Why didn't Mary inherit a sin nature from her parents?
 - b. *The answer from scripture:*
 - i. *The work of the Holy Spirit at conception was such that it prevented the transmission of sin from Mary. (Obviously, there was no possibility of Joseph passing his sin nature on to Jesus because he was in no physical sense the natural father of Jesus. Cf Matt. 1:24-25)*
 - ii. *Matt. 1:18*

"18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit."
 - iii. *Matt. 1:20*

"20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."
 - iv. *Luke 1:35*

"35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God."
- c. *Recognize the anti-supernatural bias behind the rejection of the Virgin Birth*

II. Could Jesus Have Sinned?

The Question:

1. **Peccability:** Jesus could have sinned
2. **Impeccability:** Jesus could not sin
3. ***Posse non peccare vs non posse peccare***
 - A. Jesus was sinless through what were *actual* temptations

1. Heb. 2:18

Heb. 2:18 For since He Himself was ***tempted*** in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

2. Heb. 4:15

Heb. 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been ***tempted*** in all things as we are, yet without sin.

3. Luke 4:1-13 (cf. Also Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13)

1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days; and when they had ended, He became hungry. 3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." 4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'" 5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." 8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" 9 And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; 10 for it is written, 'HE WILL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,' 11 and, 'ON {their} HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" 12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'" 13 And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

B. Jesus was sinless

1. The Temptation of Jesus by Satan

a. Luke 4:1-13 (cf. Also Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13)

1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days; and when they had ended, He became hungry. 3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." 4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'" 5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." 8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" 9 And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; 10 for it is written, 'HE WILL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,' 11 and, 'ON {their} HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" 12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'" 13 And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

2. The silence of the Jews

a. John 8:45-46

45 "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?"

3. The Apostle John

a. John 8:12

12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

b. John 8:29

29 "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."

c. John 15:10

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.

d. John 18:38

38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him.

e. I John 2:1

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

f. I John 3:5

5 And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

4. The Book of Acts

- a. Acts 2:27
27 BECAUSE THOU WILT NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR ALLOW THY HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.
- b. Acts 3:14
14 “But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,
- c. Acts 4:30
30 while Thou dost extend Thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy holy servant Jesus.”
- d. Acts 7:52
52 “Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become;
- e. Acts 13:35
35 “Therefore He also says in another {Psalm,} ‘THOU WILT NOT ALLOW THY HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.’

5. The Apostle Paul

- a. Romans 8:3
3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God {did:} sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and {as an offering} for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,
- b. II Cor. 5:21
21 He made Him who knew no sin {to be} sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

6. The Book of Hebrews

- a. Hebrews 4:15
15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as {we are, yet} without sin.
- b. Hebrews 7:26
26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;

7. The Apostle Peter

- a. I Peter 1:19
19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, {the blood} of Christ.
- b. I Peter 2:21-22
21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;
- c. I Peter 3:18

18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, {the} just for {the} unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

C. The Logical Arguments over whether Jesus could have sinned?

1. If Jesus was truly tempted—like in fact both sides affirm—then doesn't this imply that He could have sinned? Peccability is here viewed as a necessary deduction from temptability (i.e., temptation implies the possibility of sin)

RESPONSE:

- a. The reality or not of a temptation does not lie in the nature of the person being tempted but rather in the temptation itself. The temptability of Jesus does not necessarily imply that He was susceptible to sin. We can conceive that a row boat can in fact attack a battleship, but the row boat can never prevail against the battleship. (Why? Because the resources of the battleship are insurmountable)
2. Some suggest that if the temptations of Jesus were not real then Jesus cannot truly sympathize with His people—with our weaknesses.

RESPONSE:

- a. The Bible clearly affirms both that Jesus was genuinely tempted (Matt 4; Luke 4) and that He can in fact “sympathize” with our weaknesses (Heb 4:15).
- b. While the temptations of Jesus were not exactly parallel to our temptations He was tried through His human nature as we are. Hebrews 4:15 affirms that Jesus was tempted “in all things as we are” and this means that He experienced every category of temptation we can experience but He never sinned
- c. The fact that Jesus had no sin nature (the virgin birth ensured this) means that He was tempted from outside not from within. The temptations were nevertheless real and rendered Him able to “sympathize” with our weaknesses. We could also affirm that by virtue of Jesus’ omniscience He has perfect knowledge of our human condition and is thereby fully capable of sympathizing with our weaknesses.

- d. I would also argue that Jesus was most likely tempted far beyond the limits of what any mortal person will ever be tempted. This fact ensures that He can sympathize with our weaknesses because we will never be tempted to the extent that Jesus was tempted.

D. My response to the question:

1. What scripture clearly affirms
 - a. Christ never actually sinned (See above)
 - b. Jesus was tempted by what were *actual* temptations.
 - c. God cannot be tempted with evil (James 1:13)
2. With the clear statements of scripture as a foundation, what can we infer with reference to a possible answer? (This is Wayne Grudem's analysis, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, pp. 538-539)
 - a. Jesus' human nature was such that, if it had not been united with His divine nature (like in fact it was, however) He would have been *able* to sin (because He would have been like Adam and Eve—fully human, perfect but fallible, i.e., *able* to sin).
 - b. During the period of Jesus' incarnation His human nature never existed apart from union with His divine nature. From the moment of conception they always existed united in one person.
 - c. It appears that Jesus experienced some things in only one of His natures; However, a moral act (or, more to the point, a potentially *im-moral* act) apparently would have been an act of both natures.
 - d. If Jesus as a person had sinned, God would have sinned, and this is an impossibility. (N.B. What this actually means is that Jesus—the two natures in one person, fully God and fully man—either was *not fully God* or *could not have sinned*.)
 - e. Therefore, if the question is whether it was *actually possible* for Jesus to have sinned, we are led to conclude that the answer is no; The union of the two natures would have prevented it.