

The
Humility
of the
INFINITE

TMNT
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What is true HUMILITY?

*I suggest that to find a sound definition, we must begin with the best example.
So what better place could there be than THE HUMILITY OF THE INFINITE?*

**HUMILITY
of the Infinite**

B A S I S	<p>A thoroughly honest and realistic self-view.</p> <p><i>The Infinite God is fully aware of His impeccably complete, perfect, holy character.</i></p>
M O D E	<p><u>Feigning</u> neither Superiority nor Inferiority.</p> <p><i>“He knows how we are formed, He remembers we are dust.” (Ps 103:14)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>There is no pretension with God.</i></p>
A C T I O N	<p>Quiet un-presumptuous GENEROSITY to all those of a lower <u>estate</u>.</p> <p><i>This is the story of the Bible.</i></p>

of the Christian

B A S I S	<p>A thoroughly honest and realistic self-view.</p> <p><i>An unworthy sinner who through pure sovereign grace is now a child of God.</i></p>
M O D E	<p><u>Feigning</u> neither Superiority nor Inferiority.</p> <p><i>Practical recognition of the equal <u>status</u> or <u>estate</u> of all mankind.</i></p>
A C T I O N	<p>Quiet un-presumptuous GENEROSITY to all those <u>possibly</u> in greater need than I in some area.</p> <p><i>This is the story of the gospel in action. Un-presumptuous Generosity on the basis of IMBALANCE in CIRCUMSTANCES, with a view to eliminate that imbalance.</i></p>

The character of Humility remains consistent. The degree is different.

(i)
Introduction

Throughout my life as a Christian, and to this day, I have struggled to even put these two words – “HUMILITY” and “INFINITE” – in the same sentence or statement. It grates against my conscience, and I will admit at the outset that I haven’t yet got past the discomfort of this notion. Clearly I have much more yet to learn of our Great and Awesome God.

You may well ask, “*Since you are so poorly adjusted to this topic, why have you dared to venture a presentation?*” This contribution is just a small part, a few pages of over 220 so far, of an assignment I have set myself.

That assignment is to look, throughout the Bible, at God’s expectations of His leaders, as revealed especially in the words of His prophets, sent to bring encouragement to those in leadership through;

- a correctly informed understanding of God, (doctrine),
- warnings about the wrong ways they are going, (reproof),
- reminders of what He expects, (correction), and
- instructions in precisely what to do to be leaders who enjoy His hand of blessing, (training in righteousness).

If the words in brackets sound familiar, that is excellent. The Apostle Paul said these are exactly that for which *All Scripture is beneficial, to thoroughly equip us.* (2Timothy 3:16&17)

One of the very comforting characteristics of our God is His immutability – He is Changeless! If we are going to be, and live as, God’s children, first and foremost our focus needs to be on knowing Him. That is, of course, a progressive process. We never reach the end of that objective down here. However an excellent place to start, **and of optimum importance to return to regularly**, is to realize that, as the Lord Himself told Isaiah, (55:8&9);

*“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,”
declares the LORD.*

*As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are My ways higher than your ways
and My thoughts than your thoughts.”*

It is when we forget this great truth, or because its implications are so profound and all encompassing we begin to miss the need for a change of heart in some particular matter, that we come adrift from the right paths. In terms of tonight’s topic, getting my perspective in order on this absolutely fundamental characteristic of our Awesome, yet to our minds *PARADOXICAL* God, is fundamental to allowing Him to transform me to be like Him. A merely human perspective of God will circumvent progress in Christian life.

1
THE HUMILITY OF THE INFINITE – JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is Prophet, Priest and King all embodied in One, who lived on Earth clothed in flesh, a real human being. We are so very privileged to have Him introduced to us in four gospels, each full of *Good News*, but each from a particular stand-point, preserving the character and life-experience of the writer, and fitting the document to a particular audience.

For tonight it is my intention to draw on all four gospels, but with a special emphasis on what we might title a “***new wine***” approach. We will dare to confront ourselves with the challenges typified by the thoughts in Jesus’ parable concerning fasting, at the end of Luke’s 5th chapter, 34–38;

Jesus answered,

*“Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?
But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them;
in those days they will fast.”*

He told them this parable:

“No-one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one.

*If he does, he will have torn the new garment,
and the patch from the new will not match the old.*

And no-one pours new wine into old wineskins.

*If he does, the new wine will burst the skins,
the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined.*

No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.

*And no-one after drinking old wine wants the new, for **he says,**
‘The old is better.’”*

What does this have to do with the topic “*The Humility of the Infinite*”? Humility is, as we have noted, fundamental to our understanding of God. The challenge is coming to grips with that. If you are anything like me, since childhood you may have been thrilled to ponder Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:25–30. But humility is one of our great God’s characteristic attributes – possibly the most difficult of all to comprehend, and even harder to imitate.

If this is really so, how and where do we observe it? From beginning to end, the Scriptures offer insights into humility. This is visualized in God’s provision of the perfectly suited environment, co-habitation with His own mere creatures, communication, consideration of what is in man’s best interests, forbearance, mercy, grace, pursuit, perseverance and the provision of a very costly, thorough and complete solution to man’s self-made dilemma.

We need to return to our acknowledgement that above all, our old man, the natural, the flesh, can’t comprehend the truly infinite. In short, **OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, AND EQUALLY HIS SON JESUS, ARE UN-CONTAINABLE IN MY OLD, VERY HUMAN, LIFE FRAMEWORK.**

It will take time, but as He patiently works His wonders in me, everything – **every fallen human notion, and every sinful trait, without one exemption** – will need to be made new, to be replaced with accurate knowledge of Him, and with His delightful character.

As long as I am unwilling for that transformation, the process will be slow, painful and repetitious, perhaps as much for those around me as for me. But if I “take His yoke on me, and learn from Him, I will find rest for my soul, because His yoke is a perfect fit, and His burden is light”. But remember, *“He has hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children”*.

John Baptist *“prepared the way”* for Jesus’ entry. John’s ministry started minds thinking in a revolutionary new direction, demanding an about-face – repentance – with a new beginning. His unsettling, extraordinarily humble and non-competitive spirit, if we are listening, will truly *“rattle our cage”*. There is no better place for us to begin our look at Jesus, God’s ultimate *“Prophet like me”*, (and ultimate example of humility), as spoken of so long ago by Moses, (Deuteronomy 18:15), to whom we *“must listen”*.

IF WE DO NOT LET JOHN BAPTIST’S ATTITUDE PREPARE THE WAY in our psyche, we will struggle to let the Spirit of Jesus transform us as He must, if we are to “grow up into Christ”.

This revolutionary, paradoxical aspect of Jesus’ life and teaching will be the principal focus of our present adventure. It will be revolutionary because every thought must be overturned, (2 Corinthians 10:5), and paradoxical because, as we noted at the outset of our study, (Isaiah 55:8&9), our natural self will never think God’s thoughts. (See also Romans 8:5–8)

From its outset, the gospel is set to *“break the mould”* of everything to which we are, naturally, accustomed, and in which we are “comfortable”. If we can grasp the revolutionary nature of “conversion”, from that point on we will begin to be unsettled – sometimes comfortable, but becoming increasingly less comfortable – with what in the past was “normal”. Coming to Christ in repentance and faith is not a matter of adding an insurance policy to our old way of life. We come to Him for salvation not only from Hell, but also, very significantly TO discipleship, to LET HIM TEACH US AND CHANGE US.

While the big picture of what needs to change may be obvious, the “little things” – the less obvious – the hidden, underlying things which make the big picture wrong, will forever surprise us while we live here.

Familiarity with the stories of Jesus may keep us from noticing the obvious.

We must take time to be reminded of a few fundamental realities delivered in the gospels, of the HUMILITY OF THE INFINITE.

Jesus, by Whom all things were made, (John 1:3), often used borrowed items: a feed trough for a cradle, an animal shed for a birth suite, a fishing boat as a podium, a coin to point out the portrait, a donkey to ride into Jerusalem, a purple robe for His mock trial, a tomb, **because death would not be able to hold Him!**

The unseen God became man – human flesh – to be seen, God with us. His arrival announcement was made by angels – what more glorious way would be possible? But where? Not in the capital among “royalty”, not even in the village of Bethlehem, but on the hills outside, to, who would guess, the most unlikely collection of despised “second class citizens”, shepherds. In turn they, uniquely, had the privilege of seeing this great truth for themselves, and passing on the news.

He was born in the little village of Bethlehem, not even Israel’s capital Jerusalem, and not to the King, nor even to a high priest, but to poor parents whose home town was insignificant Nazareth in Galilee. He is the life Giver, who came to die. He is the Creator, conceived in His creature. He holds it all together, yet His body was brutally torn and beaten. He came to His own place and people, but was not recognised, instead being despised and rejected. He volunteered to be killed by, **and for**, those He had given life.

Heaven’s most significant resident dwelt among men. This was no mere “Prime Ministerial” visit, without notice, and whisked away before any misfortune could befall Him! And even at 30 plus years of age, He would do **only what pleased His Father**.

Why does this excite me? It is **ultimate paradox**, in perfect keeping with the whole Bible story. THE GREAT GOD OF THE UNIVERSE WILL NOT CONFORM TO OUR PROUD EXPECTATIONS. Instead, as ever, He comes to the lowly, to those of a “broken and contrite heart”. Who but God, with His heart of the perfect combination of **grace and justice, might and gentleness, glory and humility**, could fashion such a **simple but profound, efficient but generous, obscure yet effective** way to redeem the wayward, and remake us so we are equipped to willingly submit, to glorify Him?

BROTHERS, SISTERS, IF THIS IS THE WAY THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE IS, IS IT JUST POSSIBLE IT MIGHT BE BETTER THAN THE ARROGANT, SELF-PROMOTING, LADDER CLIMBING, OTHERS DEBASING WAYS AMONG WHICH WE LIVE?

Can we be comfortable in this “old wine-skin” any longer? WILL WE LEARN FROM JESUS?

Even with four gospels, we are told little of the childhood of Jesus apart from the ever so familiar Christmas story just reviewed. But it is worth noting that again it is Dr Luke, the investigator, who affords the one other glimpse into those years. Still in Luke’s “prequel”, chapter 2:41–52 give the account – a family visit to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12 years old.

On the return trip to Nazareth, Joseph and Mary discovered Jesus wasn’t with them. Verses 45–50 take up the story;

When they did not find Him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for Him.

After three days they found Him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

Everyone who heard Him was amazed at His understanding and His answers.

When His parents saw Him, they were astonished.

His mother said to Him,

“Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for You.”

“Why were you searching for Me?” He asked.

“Didn’t you know I had to be in My Father’s house?”

But they did not understand what He was saying to them

This particular journey to Jerusalem, though an annual event for the feast of Passover, may have been the year of Jesus’ *bar-mitzvah*. This is a celebration of “*coming of age*”, and He would have been expected to be able to recite a large portion of the Books of Moses. Such Biblical familiarity would no doubt have provided a sound basis for the questions and answers of which we read in Luke’s account. But can you imagine the insights He, **the Christ, the inspiration for all Scripture**, would have introduced to the minds of “mere human scholars”, some probably with little awareness of the depth of meanings and implications of the Law they “knew” so well?

The amazement of those who heard Him, and the parents’ astonishment at His occupation when they found Him, perhaps tend not to surprise us, knowing His true identity. But these men with whom He discussed had never read Luke 2. One wonders whether some might have been considering a preliminary “call” to become one of them. Or perhaps the tenor of His questions already posed significant challenges to their proud traditions? At the very least, they surely knew this was no ordinary twelve year old.

Yet this One, who at that age already was aware that His Father was God, and understood treasures in the Scriptures which would leave any sage dazed,

(Luke 2 51&52), “*went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them*”, continuing the process of “*growing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men*”. **Jesus understood and lived true humility**. Mary “*treasured all these things in her heart*” – Mary who had heard and would always remember, ponder and treasure her privileged information.

ONLY IF, AND WHEN, WE HAVE BEGUN TO GRASP FIRST THE IDENTITY OF JESUS, AND THEN THE ASTOUNDING HUMILITY DEMONSTRATED BY HIM, THE INFINITE, will we be ready to truly live aright in response to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps the initial humility of true repentance which leads to faith is the reason many of us can remember great joy and relief at “conversion”? Perhaps it is forgetting we are sinners saved by infinite grace, which robs us of that initial joy? How often we need to remind ourselves that the only Man who ever lived consistently true humility was in fact the Eternal, Holy Infinite Son of God! May He, that same One, help us from now on to always read the gospel with an overwhelming sense of a CALL TO HUMILITY, and in complete surrender to His Holy Spirit, with a desire to imitate Him.

In John’s reflective gospel, once again we note a very different perspective. John affords us a unique look at Jesus identity. In fact John offers *Who Jesus is*, as both his **thesis** and the **theme** of his gospel. John began with a declaration – Jesus is God become flesh – and that some eye-witnesses saw and recognized His Awesome, albeit concealed glory. The stories John retold in the remainder of his gospel constitute his evidence that his thesis is the truth, and the key to beginning life, as he declared in 20:30&31.

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book.

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

Matthew 3:13–17, Mark 1:9–11 and Luke 3:21&22 tell the story of Jesus’ baptism, which to John Baptist was an enigma. Why would the spotless *Lamb of God* need to be baptized, signifying repentance? Jesus’ reason is significant, amounting once more to the **humility of the infinite**. John recounts that event as that which confirmed to John Baptist that he was indeed making his declarations about the correct man, (1:31–34).

But why did only some see Jesus’ GLORY? Matthew 11:27 says;

“All things have been committed to Me by My Father.

No-one knows the Son except the Father,

and no-one knows the Father except the Son

*and **those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him**”.*

To comprehend the things of God, and to **behold His glory**, are grace gifts.

The key we slow-to-learn humans need is the new set of eyes the Holy Spirit of God gives. (Check Romans 8:5–8; 1 Corinthians 2:14)

How then can one begin to see with these eyes and comprehend with the new heart? How indeed can a just God hold us responsible for not responding positively to Him, if that is only possible by special Spiritual revelation? You may struggle and squirm within when you read, for instance, Jesus' reason given in response to the disciples' enquiry "*why do You speak to them in parables?*" His response is essential reading, if we are to even come near putting these awkward questions to rest. But the key is clear in the Gospels.

What did it take for the Master Teacher to transition from parables, (veiled teaching), to explanation, (clear teaching)? In each of the three gospel accounts of the sower parable, **all it took was a question.** Combined, the implications of the question are "why parables" and "what does this one mean"? What it took was an elevated interest, an inquiring "mind of the heart", and time to listen. DO I – DO YOU – HAVE THESE?

The descriptive definition contained in the parable of the sower, along with its explanation, has great significance. That response, in Matthew 13:10-23, Mark 4:10-20 and Luke 8:9-15, firmly links parables with the problem of calloused hearts, (as described in Isaiah 6:9&10), and signals a desperate and dire need for thoughtful and enquiring "seeing" and "hearing". Hebrews 11:6 adds great New Testament relevance in this context;

Without faith it is impossible to please God,

because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists

AND that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

Remember, (Hebrews 11:1), "*faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*" The KJV translation gives us a helpful perspective on the two elements this verse describes;

"the SUBSTANCE of things hoped for" and

"the EVIDENCE of things not seen"

God, in His great grace, provides for us generous glimpses of the very things for which the heart of man yearns – peace, rest, contentment, joy – just as Jesus did in His miracles and teaching. What will we do with those glimpses of SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCES? Will we respond with diligent seeking?

In these days of listening with mind disengaged, and simply adopting the popular line of opinion, the question I must answer is, "Am I just like the world? Or will I take the time to ask what this means?" God's eyes are on us, His ears attentive to our cries, His response, when we truly want to know, is gracious and often immediate.

We should ask, "In this present moment, IS THERE ANYTHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN HEARING WHAT MY LORD HAS TO SAY?" Perhaps we might ask it as; "Is my life too full, to stay in His presence until I get it?"

Remember Martha and Mary, on an occasion of the Lord's visit to their home. (Luke 10:38-42) DOES MARY'S ATTITUDE TYPIFY MY APPROACH TO THE HOLY WORD OF GOD? Then, IF IT DOES NOT, WHY NOT?

These pages of background, though many words, are merely concepts and insights of the gospel which are too easily overlooked and circumvented to be ignored. Here God's call goes out for us, as His redeemed, set apart community, to ALL HUMBLY UNITE UNDER ONE HEAD, responsive to the leadership He gives. The Church of Jesus Christ is to be, (as was Israel in Exodus 19), CHOSEN OUT OF THE WORLD, ROYAL PRIESTS, a HOLY NATION WHICH BELONGS TO GOD, to DECLARE HIS PRAISES in and to a lost world. (1 Peter 2:9) In reality each of us is a **leader**, but as we grow up into Christ, our way of life will become more like the perfect way of Jesus' humility. (Check Ephesians 4:1–13)

The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, in the gospel accounts of Matthew, (4), Mark, (1), and Luke, (4), follows immediately after His baptism. This occasion, along with the other times of testing of Jesus, holds significant lessons for us. As a child I often wondered that the devil would even bother trying to tempt Jesus, who would, (and perhaps could), never sin. Yet the reality is that He came not just like a man. Jesus **was and is a real man**, God in human flesh. A clear understanding of this matter is possibly best offered in Hebrews 2:10–18, especially 17&18;

For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God,

and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people.

Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.

These two verses answer the temptation question, and provide three sound reasons Jesus had to be "*made like us*".

(2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 5:7–10 will also be helpful)

Rather than simply note that Jesus, in response to temptation, referred in each case to the Scriptures, let's look in a bit more detail, at the elements of temptation, and the possible rationale behind the choices of response.

There is a striking similarity between the devil's temptation of Jesus and the way he approached and deceived Eve in the garden.

In both situations, the same few elements are present. There is a question of comprehension of God's intension in His word, a slur on His love and fairness, and a direct lie. In respect of the lie though, we need to remember that the devil's favoured form is part truth which appears to rationalize a particular choice of behaviour.

The evil one began, in Jesus' case, with an attempt to cause doubt of the reality, but with a twist – *If You are really God's son, then You have authority to satisfy your hunger*. Jesus' primary objective was the will of the Father, and that will is known only through *“every word that comes from His mouth.”* In context there is a deeper significance to that quote from Deuteronomy 8:3. The occasion of that statement was the explanation of God's reason for the daily giving of the manna to His people in the wilderness – *to teach them the lesson of complete trust in His promise to meet their daily needs daily*. (Jesus, teaching how to pray, taught to ask God to *“give us this day our daily bread.”*) Effectively Jesus' reply declares that, regardless of His identity, and regardless of His power to create bread out of stones, The Father's word, the Father's timing, and the Father's utter trustworthiness, are the elements which matter. How consistently is the “old wine” of my significance more attractive?

Next, (in Luke's record), the devil led Jesus to a high vantage point to view all the Kingdoms of the world. Here is the part truth. In one sense the Kingdoms of the world are, in fact, under the dominion of Satan, in that when Adam sinned, he surrendered the key to the dominion God had entrusted to him. (Refer to Ephesians 2:1&2; Hebrews 2:14; Acts 10:38). But, of course, that dominion entrusted originally to Adam was a trust from the Sovereign of the Universe. Thus after surrender and transfer, everything is still answerable to the same Sovereign. Satan's dominion is partial and very temporary.

This temptation offered Jesus that which the devil could never, nor would ever really give – *“all the kingdoms of the Earth”*, via a *short-cut*. The Father will subject them all to Jesus anyway, but only after His completion of the Father's perfect will. (1 Corinthians 15:25–28; Hebrews 2:5–9; Revelation 11:15)

HOWEVER, note that Jesus did not engage the devil in theological debate of technicalities. Rather His response to this temptation also exhibits a deep rationale firmly established in implicit, non-negotiable, *“fear and serve ONLY God”*. (Deuteronomy 6:13) Even the logic of worship of only the Ultimate Sovereign is not debated, but rather simply stated.

As children of God, and even more especially as those entrusted with leading others to or for God, we need to carefully guard ourselves against disastrous temptations to enter into debate with the devil's part truth, when God's clear intention leaves no room for further discussion.

Such attempts at power-plays with the devil lead inevitably to tragedy. Yet, for many of us, the “old wine” of potentially winning an argument is near irresistible.

This example of the Son of God, once again, is for our instruction in **humility** and **obedience**. Jesus is the only one fully qualified to debate the issue, but He chose not to do so. James, in 4:7, succinctly summarised this for us, tabulating a simple two step process which has a clear outcome. The moment I presume the capacity to out-theologize or out-strategize the Devil, I have already lost. His theology will be far superior to mine, and he is well able to “masquerade as an angel of light”, (2 Corinthians 11:14). Any of his smart, deceiving servants may be able to outsmart me if I choose to debate rather than simply obey in faith. Remember, often temptations will come via an agent of the devil – perhaps even a trusted friend, him/herself deceived or misled at the time. But as James said in 1:14;

“Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.”

But of course, it is not only the temptation to debate the unnecessary which is in play here. The real “bait” is reaching or achieving a personally desired outcome – through disobedience. For us, the “old wine” of reaching our goal via dubious means is all too often the automatic response. What convenient “short-cut” to a cherished outcome might be effectively employed to “entice” me to overlook the plain teaching of Scripture, and rationalize getting God's end by Satan's means? THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR HUMBLE OBEDIENCE.

The third temptation in Luke's gospel carries perhaps the greatest and most important warning for leaders in the service of God – the temptation to employ celebrity status to gain a following. One of the most significant lessons from Jesus throughout the gospels is in fact that gaining a *celebrity following* was **absolutely never His desire**. He strove relentlessly and systematically to avoid it, often asking people not to tell anyone what He had done, asking even His disciples not to tell anyone He is Christ, (Matthew 16:20; 17:9).

But it is not this implication of the temptation to which Jesus responded to the devil, but rather to the foolish and dangerous *“putting the Lord to the test”*. The masquerading *“angel of light”* is very familiar with the Scripture, and able to quote word for word, always with that deceptive twist.

The beautiful Psalm quoted does contain the words, but not the context. It does not contain the kind of unconditional promise the words may apparently imply when viewed in isolation, out of their proper context. Twice in this Psalm, promises are contextualized conditionally;

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty”, (91:1), and

“If you make the Most High your dwelling — even the LORD, who is my refuge— then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent”. (9&10)

It takes little imagination to see such foolish “testing God” behaviours within certain cults or sects today, as for instance choosing to deliberately handle deadly cobras to prove God is with me. But it is very possible there will arise “not quite so obvious” situations in the life of the normally very dedicated and industrious servant of God. There will be many devious ways we potentially can be allured into “thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought”.

Whenever I ask, or expect God to do for me that which promotes “**me**”, and would also require God to participate in my foolish unnecessary fantasies, I am “putting God to the test”. There are few enticements more attractive to the “old man” than being held high, praised or flattered. And the deceiver is well able to make such enticements **look like** they will ultimately be for God’s glory.

I MUST AVOID THIS AT ALL COST.

As we can observe in all of these temptations of Jesus, He was, first and foremost, submitted to the Father. His resistance of the devil was in that context – a direct result of His submission to God which evidenced itself in absolute reverence for every word of God. The devil’s departure was not immediate, (at first resistance), but was certain. We also may have to submit and resist for an extended time before the devil will flee from us, but submit and resist we must, if we would follow our Lord.

There are two more points here we ought to briefly consider. Firstly Luke’s gospel (4:1&2) informs us that Jesus was ***“led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.”*** All three of these highlighted matters are significant for us. It was God’s Spirit who took Jesus to the desert, to be tempted. His testing was not just three brief temptations, but forty days of it, tested on all points, and He was fasting.

Secondly Luke 4:13 advises that ***“When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left Him until an opportune time”***.

This occasion, (recorded in three gospels), may be the only time we are told specifically that Jesus was tempted by the devil. But we may be sure that in His life He faced all the normal temptations experienced by us. We also have many occasions recorded, during His ministry, when Pharisees, Saducees and Lawyers tested Him and tried to trick Him with “hard questions”.

We have already considered Hebrews 2:17&18, in the context of Jesus being made ***“like His brothers”*** for the purpose of being tempted. We suggested at that point two other Hebrews readings which also afford us very significant insights into otherwise unknown aspects of Jesus testing. It was thorough, so we can know He is a High Priest familiar with all our temptations, ***yet was without sin***, (4:14&15). And, (5:8&9),

“Although He was a son, He learned obedience from what He suffered and, once made perfect, [complete, accomplished], He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him”.

JESUS HAD TO COMPLETE AND PASS THE FULL TEST APPORTIONED TO HIM, TO BECOME OUR SALVATION AND OUR EXPERIENCED, COMPASSIONATE GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

Perhaps more than in any other example, this example typifies the HUMILITY OF THE INFINITE. That is precisely where the Apostle Paul begins his hymn of praise for Jesus, in Philippians 2:5–11 – the **voluntary humility** of the One who ***“did not consider equality with God something to be grasped”***. This completes the picture so magnificently confirmed in Paul’s letter to the Colossians 1:15–20, and in the letter to the Hebrews 1:3–9. In His HUMILITY, yes even in that, the Son is the exact image of the Father, Who is pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him in bodily form, AND that attitude or mind is precisely what He wants to reproduce in us.

Finally, just a brief glimpse into the glorious future, but with a little reality check thrown in to shake up our false notions yet a bit more. It is tempting, when we think of Jesus returning *In Power and Great Glory* to take up His throne, to do so with our worldly visions of power and great glory. For two quick snapshots of that era, let’s look at Revelation 5:1–10, and 22:1–5.

Jesus’ greatest glory was best manifested in His humility, when as *“The Lamb of God”* He ***“took away the sins of the world”***. Even when the Apostle Paul assures the Christians regarding Jesus’ bringing relief to His own when He returns “in blazing fire”, (2 Thessalonians 1:5–11), informs us how this will be achieved; (2:8); [The man of lawlessness] ***“the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of His mouth and destroy by the splendour of His coming”***.

Fittingly, the final vision the Apostle John leaves us with is a vision of His servants serving Him and seeing His face – at ***the Throne of God and of***, [no, not the Lion, but] ***the LAMB!***

SUCH IS THE HUMILITY OF THE INFINITE!