

Could Jesus have failed when He came to earth as a man? In other words, could He have succumbed to sin and as a result all humanity, including Himself, would have been lost? This question has been at the center of considerable debate in God's Church for several years. And although God's people continue to struggle with this issue, the answer may have been with us all along.

Read on...

Did Jesus Risk?

By Dennis Fischer

Dedication



This booklet is dedicated to
Mr. Mardy Ben Cobb, a Texas gentleman
And a man I have been honored to call my friend

Introduction:

Several years ago a very prominent figure in the churches of God gave a message on an issue that has been at the center of some controversy among God's people today. He began by reading an account of Jesus' agonizing in the garden of Gethsemane shortly before His arrest, trial and crucifixion.

Then came Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and He said unto the disciples, Sit you here, while I go yonder and pray. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then he said unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as You will. (Mt. 26:36-39)

When describing what was taking place in the mind of the Messiah while crying out to His Father, this evangelist employed very interesting language. He referred to this specific point in Jesus' life as:

“A MOMENT OF DOUBT”

He then proceeded to explain that when Jesus walked the earth as a man there was no guarantee that He was going to succeed in his mission to redeem His human family from the eternal consequences of sin. In other words Jesus faced a very real possibility of failure.

This now brings us to the question of the day. Could Jesus have fallen short when He came to earth as a man? In other words, could He have succumbed to sin and as a result all mankind, including Himself would have been lost?

Simply put, did Jesus risk?

Those who contend that it was possible for Jesus to fail in His mission to redeem mankind anchor their position on two broad points;

- First, they contend that because Jesus was fully human He must have struggled with His nature just as mankind has since the beginning, and all struggle implies risk.
- Second, they contend that because the scriptures declare that Jesus was tempted just like mankind is, He must have been presented with the prospect of failure just like every human that has ever lived.

The booklet you are about to read addresses these points as well as examines the implication this issue has on all mankind in general as well as God's people in particular. When doing so we will present both arguments and the scriptural evidence each side employs when advancing their case. After presenting one particular argument we will present an opposing view in a “point-counter-point” format. At the conclusion we will then offer what we believe is the answer to this great puzzle.

At this point it is important to understand that we are fully persuaded that both sides of the debate have been embraced by well-intended believers. And although we will take a firm stand on this issue, it is done with a deep respect for those who may disagree. With that said, let's begin with the first argument.

Argument I

Jesus was Fully Human

Those who contend that Jesus risked failure during His incarnation anchor part of their position on the belief that because He was fully human He had all the weaknesses that come with being in this state—including a nature that goes contrary to God—a nature that had to be overcome and brought into subjection. When making this point some invoke the book of Revelation to illustrate the struggle Christ was engaged in.

To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (Rev. 3:21)

Those who advance this position contend that Jesus had to overcome in order to assume His position as King of Kings. They also assert that the very nature of the word "overcome" strongly suggests a great struggle. The Greek word for this term is *nikao* (nik-ah-o) Strong's 3528. It means overcome, conquer, prevail, and get the victory. Each of these definitions implies struggle, and struggle implies risk.

Additionally, at the end of His life Jesus offered words that clearly suggest His earthly walk was not an easy one. However, it could be traveled successfully. The Messiah even likened His journey to the one His disciples faced and exhorted them to be encouraged because the very world that besets them with trials has been overcome by the Messiah.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. (Jn. 16:33)

At this point it is important to know that the world was not handed to the Jesus on a platter. He had to win it—and this required effort. The great victory God's people honor every Passover was won through blood. To suggest that this wasn't a trial with genuine risk appears to be totally inconsistent with the real events surrounding the life of our Savior.

Furthermore, there is nothing in this verse (or any other) suggesting that overcoming does not require intense effort. On the contrary, everything about it strongly suggests that the Messiah had to fight vigorously to overcome the trials set before Him. And the very fact that there was a fight strongly suggests that there had to be the possibility of failure.

Weakness of the flesh

Advocates of this position also assert that because Jesus came in the flesh He had all the weaknesses that come with being physical. For example: Jesus could tire and even become exhausted. He could suffer hunger and thirst as well as pain. Furthermore, all the love and mercy He possessed could not insulate Him from the excruciating agony He would experience at the end of His life. His body was literally going to be ripped apart in a brutal ritual called "scourging." He was then going to be crucified and ultimately bleed to death. This being the case, He unquestionably had to bring His body into subjection in preparation of His sacrifice. In other words, He had to discipline Himself. He was not simply a robot that could be programmed. He was a real member of the human family. Furthermore, the scriptures warn against thinking otherwise. Consider the words of the apostle John.

And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (1 John 4:3)

Summary:

The point made in this argument is very credible and one worthy of respect. The truth of the matter is that Jesus was fully human. He was born of a woman. He was called the son of man, and His death

stands as incontrovertible proof that He was mortal—He could die. As a man in the flesh it is reasonable that He would have to deal with all the issues of the flesh including its pulls. But can a case be made proving that despite His humanness there was more to this man that overcame the world. What follows is an opposing view.

An Opposing View

Although Jesus was very human He was also God manifested in the flesh. Furthermore, the scriptures bear this out. When describing the pre-incarnate state of Christ, the apostle John specifically identifies Him as God. Notice how he introduces the gospel bearing his name.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (Jn. 1:1-5)

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (Jn. 1:14)

The Creator of the universe

Notice that John credited the "Word" as the maker of all things. But who is this "Word" that made everything that exists? The apostle Paul provides the answer in his epistle to the church at Colosse.

For by Him [Jesus Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. (Col. 1:16-17)

Further evidence that the Messiah was God in the flesh is borne out in the angelic announcement of His birth to Joseph. In it the angel quotes the great prophet Isaiah (Isa. 7:14).

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Mt. 1:20-22)

This is a very affirmative statement. Notice that the angel did not qualify his words. He did not say "he shall save his people from their sins provided He lives a sinless live." There was no doubt or hesitation in his words. Matthew then records the following.

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (Mt. 1:22-23)

Not only do the prophets affirm that Jesus was God but Jesus actually acknowledged His own divinity. When speaking to the religious leaders of His day He declared that He was the "I am" of the Old Testament (Jn. 8:58). He also referred to Himself as "The Lord of the Sabbath" (Mt. 12:8).

Jesus was acutely aware of who He was and this understanding was borne out in the things He did: Jesus could discern hearts and read the intentions of men. He not only had power over the forces of nature, but He could cast out evil spirits, heal the sick, raise the dead and even forgive sin.

The point here is really quite simple. Although It is true that Jesus was fully man. it is equally true that He was fully God, with all the moral qualities of the Creator. Those qualities are the virtues that defined who Jesus was and that empowered Him to overwhelm sin when it presented itself to Him. But there is more.

An Immutable God

Here is something to consider about Jesus the man. The scriptures tell us that even during His earthly life He was immutable. In other words, He never changed. The book of Hebrews indicates that Jesus Christ "is the same yesterday today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). But what could this be referring to? What was it about Him that never changed or never changes? It certainly wasn't His composition. That most definitely did change from His pre-incarnate state to His fleshly state. After all He wasn't flesh prior to His physical birth and He wasn't spirit during His physical life. That being the case, what was it about Him that remained permanently fixed? There can be only one answer. The thing that remained the same was His moral core. In other words, when Jesus walked the earth as a man He saw sin exactly the way He saw it as the Great God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To Him it was disgusting. There was nothing appealing about it. Absolutely NOTHING.

Was He vulnerable? YES! But His character knew how to deal with it. Was His flesh weak? YES! But His virtue was pristine. It was infinitely perfect. Furthermore, sin is a spiritual war, not a physical one. And there was never a human being who was better equipped to fight it. Jesus had all the tools to succeed, and He knew exactly how to use them. When He prayed it was with passion and confidence. When He fasted His heart never considered giving in to the flesh. Jesus was perfect and there was never a moment in His life when it appeared that was going to change.

Argument II Jesus was Tempted like We Are

Perhaps the most popular argument offered by those who believe Jesus faced the real possibility of failure is the fact that the Bible states He was tempted like we are.

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. (Heb. 4:15)

Earlier the author of Hebrews explained that being tempted enabled Christ to better identify with the struggles man faces in his battle against sin. As a result He would be better equipped to extend mercy to others as well as to comfort them.

Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. (Heb. 2:17-18)

Those who believe that Jesus faced genuine risk in His life argue that just as sin is very real to us, it was very real to the Messiah. He fought against it and the fight was not some walk in the park. For example, Jesus was so spent after being tempted by Satan in the wilderness that angels were dispatched from heaven to minister to Him (Mt. 4:11).

Others have contended that if Jesus suffered real temptation as we do, and we can sin, then it would seem inconceivable that there was no possibility of failure on His part. Furthermore, some advocates of this view argue that if it was impossible for Him to fail, how can He truly understand our failings? With that said, there are those who see this much differently.

An Opposing View

It is true that Jesus was tempted in all things, but what does that mean? Although many argue that Jesus felt an attraction to sin just as man does, this couldn't be the case. At every moment in His life He rejected sin without hesitation. He did so because he saw it for what it really was. Sin is evil and destructive. The Bible likens it to vomit (Pro. 26:11). There was never a second in the Messiah's life that He failed to understand that fact.

Furthermore, He knew that he would bear the penalty for all sin. Imagine having that understanding. Imagine knowing what sin would cost you. Clearly there was nothing about it that was the slightest bit attractive to Him.

A Mistake in understanding

The mistake many people make when quoting Hebrews 4:15 is in failing to understand that a temptation that presented itself to Jesus is one thing, how He processed it is another thing altogether. In other words, although sin came to Him as it comes to us, Jesus never saw it as we do. That is why his life was flawless.

To better understand this point it is important to grasp what the word "tempted" means. This word as recorded in Hebrews 4:15 comes from the Greek word *peirazo*. It can have several meanings including "scrutinize," "test," "examine" and "prove." It also can mean, "entice." The question for us to answer is what definition is most applicable with respect to Jesus' life? Here is the answer. The Messiah was clearly tested and proved. But was He ever enticed? In other words is there any evidence that Jesus saw sin as appealing. The answer is no. In truth there is no hint that he ever grappled over sin like we do. Even when he was "tempted" in the wilderness by Satan, He never hesitated in responding. This is because he was totally tethered to His Father in heaven. Now consider what the apostle James wrote about God being tempted. Remember, Jesus was God in the flesh.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. (Jas. 1:13-15)

This is a HUGE point

In order for sin to be enticing, in order for it to have appeal one must have lust. Lust is a sinful state that acts as the conduit through which temptation looks good. Once you have lust, in other words: once lust has been conceived in you, you will see sin differently. At that point it becomes enticing. It looks good. Now ask yourself the following

- Do you think sin ever looked good to Jesus?
- Do you think it was enticing to him?
- Do you think lust was conceived in Him?

Putting these verses together it is clear that Jesus was tested and proved, but never enticed. Furthermore, the Messiah's life revealed that His perfect virtue was the only way sin could be undeniably overcome. But how was He able to do it when no one else ever could?

An Interesting Illustration

When I was in high school I played baseball on our school team. Several times a week we would take batting practice at a local batting cage. Actually, there were several cages each with a machine calibrated to throw at a specific speed (60, 70, 80 MPH). However, there was one cage at the very end that was calibrated to throw a ball 100 MPH. That is faster than all, but a few pitchers in baseball history.

Of course everyone on the team wanted to test their skill against it. Unfortunately, we were no match for it. The ball came so fast it was actually difficult to see. However, you could hear it and the sound was frightening.

One afternoon a major league player was at the cage with his son. After watching us flail away in total futility he volunteered to demonstrate how it's done. He then stepped in and proceeded to drive every pitch deep into a screen at the back of the cage. It was simply amazing watching him make something so difficult look so easy.



George Kenneth "Ken" Griffey aka "The Kid" hit 630 home runs in his illustrious career and is recognized as one of the greatest players in the history of the game.

At this point it is important to understand that every pitch came at the professional the same way it came at me and my teammates. There was absolutely no difference. However, the professional crushed every one of them while we never came close to a hit.

So what was the difference? The answer should be obvious. The professional possessed the skill necessary to do what seemed impossible. This does not mean that it was easy for the professional, for indeed it required great skill and focus. However, he possessed those tools and the results made that very clear. One of my teammates made a comment as the professional stepped out of the cage. He said, "If I had your skill I could hit those balls too." The pro replied, "Every one of them."

The point to this illustration should be obvious. Sin came at Christ just as it comes at God's people. However, the Messiah was able to overcome it because of something in Him. What was it? Read on...

How did He do it?

Virtually everyone with an opinion on this issue agrees that Jesus led a sinless life. In other words, He prevailed in His fight against sin. Furthermore, there isn't a hint in the scriptures that suggests the

outcome would be any different. With this said, it is fair to ask: What did Christ have, that we don't, that made victory so certain? The answer was provided by the apostle John.

For he whom God hath sent speaks the words of God: for God gives not the Spirit by measure unto him. (Jn 4:34)

Jesus was not only conceived by the Holy Spirit. He had the full measure of God's spirit. And because of that, Jesus Had Perfect Righteous Character. He had a mind that was totally committed to righteousness and totally tethered to His Father in Heaven. Never once did He struggle with that. Never once was God not TOTALLY real to Him. In other words, His mind was perfect. It was flawless. Furthermore, there is a reason that this truth is so important to us. That reason was provided by the apostle Paul in his letter to the church at Philippi.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (Phil. 2:5)

The mind that Paul was speaking of was the one that overcame this world. Now consider the following: If it was possible for Jesus to fail with that mind, then it is also possible for God's people today to fail with it as well. Consider the implications of such a thing.

Imagine asking God if it was possible to fail in our Christian walk if that walk was totally driven by the mind of Christ. What would He say? "Yes, but it's your best shot." Not hardly.

The scriptures reveal that every time we overcome sin it is not us but Christ in us that does it. Furthermore, we have His promise that if we yield ourselves to Him, He will not fail us.

Do you hear those words? HE WILL NOT FAIL US.

In other words, there isn't a chance of failure when His mind is driving our lives.

The Conclusion of the Matter

Perhaps the most compelling argument in this debate is that Prophecy Already Declared Jesus' victory. In other words, God ordained His success. Consider what the scriptures say about the Messiah and His destiny beginning with His kingdom.

Throughout the Old Testament, God's Millennial Kingdom is described in great detail. Ruling over that Kingdom is none other than Jesus Christ. If it was possible for Him to fail, then it was also possible for every prophecy regarding God's Kingdom to fail. This is because every one of them was predicated on Jesus' success as the Christ.

The ramifications of Jesus risking failure goes far beyond His, or even mankind's future. It would call into question God's power and authority over His creation, both physical and spiritual. Fortunately, that is not the case and we have God's word on it.

At this point, it is important to understand something about the infinite God of the Bible. The scriptures reveal that God's ability to plan and to carry out His plans is something that sets Him apart from every being in existence. The great prophet Isaiah once wrote that God's power extends far beyond simply creating the universe. God also has authority over the very destiny of this creation. At one point, Isaiah actually quotes God Himself regarding His absolute SOVEREIGNTY over the future and His ability to accomplish what He sets out to do.

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: (Isa. 46:9-10)

Later in Isaiah God again explains his power over the pronouncements He makes. There He declares that His word always accomplishes what it was sent out to do.

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (Isa 55:11)

With that said, consider just some of His prophecies concerning His Millennial kingdom and its King. As you read these great promises from God Almighty it is important to understand that none of them would come to pass without the unqualified success of the Messiah. Then ask yourself a question. Do you believe that God ever thought Christ's failure was a possibility?

Christ will rule

- Christ will establish God's government on earth. (Zech. 14:9)
- He will judge with righteous judgment. (Isa. 11:4-12)
- He will reign from Mount Zion. (Mic. 4:1-4)
- Jerusalem will be "the throne of the Lord" (Jer. 3:17)
- "Israel will dwell in their own land." (Jer. 23:3-8)
- Israel and Judah united from captivity (Jer. 33:7-9)
- God's kingdom will fill the whole earth. (Dan. 2:35; Mic. 4:1-2)
- God's word will come from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Mic. 4:1-2)

The Saints will share rulership with Christ

- The saints shall possess the kingdom. (Dan. 7:18)
- Judgment was given to the saints. (Dan. 7:22)
- The saints shall come with Christ. (Zech. 14:4-5)
- King David will be the King over Israel (Ezek 34)

Understanding will be everywhere

- The knowledge of God will be available
- As the waters cover the sea (Isa. 2:1-2; 11:9; Mic. 4:1-2)
- "A pure language" (Zeph. 3:9)
- "I will put a new spirit in you." (Ezk. 11:19-20)
- "To keep His law" (Ezk. 36:33-35)

World peace will be achieved

- Swords into plowshares (Isa. 2:4)
- "My people shall dwell in peaceable habitations" (Isa. 32:18)

Prosperity will abound

- Desert will blossom like a rose (Isa. 35:1; 41:17-20)
- Israel will blossom and fill the face of the world with fruit (Isa. 27:6)

- "The earth shall be fat and plenteous." (Isa. 30:23; 33:15)
- "The plowman shall overtake the reaper." (Amos 9:14; Jer. 31:12)
- "They shall build houses and inhabit them." (Isa. 65:21)

Health will be in abundance

- The blind and the deaf shall be healed. (Isa. 35:5)
- The lame shall leap and the dumb sing. (Isa. 35:6)

Tame Animals

- The lion shall eat straw like an ox. (Isa. 11:6-9)

Happiness will abound

- The Lord shall wipe away all tears. (Isa. 25:8)
- Sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isa. 35:10)
- Children shall play in the streets (Zech. 8:5)
- No more sorrow (Jer. 31:12-14)
- Joy in the cities (Zech. 8:4-5; Jer. 33:10)

Here is something to think about

Imagine asking God when He inspired Isaiah to write of the Messiah's righteous judgment over the nations (Isa. 11:1-5), if there was a chance that this judgment would never take place because Jesus succumbed to sin. In other words, "Father, could you be wrong here? Is it possible that Jesus fails?" Or, imagine asking God when He inspired Zechariah to write that Christ would be king over all the earth (Zech 14:9) or when He inspired Micah to prophecy that the Messiah would reign from Mount Zion (Micah 4:1-4), if there was a chance that these great promises would never take place because Jesus succumbed to sin. In other words, "Father, could you be wrong here?" What do you think He would say? Do you think He would say, "Well I suppose it is possible. After all, Jesus could fail."?

Or does this sound more like His response?

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Isa. 46:9-10

Or Perhaps He would say,

So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (Isa, 55:11)

The Ramifications of Failure

The ramifications of Jesus risking failure goes far beyond His, or even mankind's future. It would call into question God's power and authority over His creation. It would not only put His plan for mankind at risk. It would put everything for all eternity at risk. If it was possible for God's word to fail when it was first uttered, then it is possible for it to fail today.

The bottom line is this: Jesus' life was not about risk. It was not about doubt. It was about how God's plan for mankind was NEVER in doubt. His life reflected how sin could be overcome. Furthermore, not only did Jesus' perfect righteous character assure Him of success, it assures us of our success. Not only did the great prophecies proclaim in advance a Great kingdom that will be ruled over by Christ as the King of kings. They also declare how we will be a part of that kingdom.

Further Evidence

We have read that God's word has made numerous pronouncements about a future Kingdom. But is there historical evidence that God's word regarding Christ's incarnation 2000 years ago came to pass exactly as He said it would? The answer is YES. In his book *All About the Bible*, Sidney Collette made the following observation about the reliability of God's word concerning the Messiah.

"There are no less than 333 prophecies in the Old Testament which center in the person of the Messiah – every one of which, in relation to His earthly life has been fulfilled to the letter." (All About the Bible, p. 84)

Consider just some of those prophecies.

Old Testament Prophecies Concerning Jesus Christ

Prophesied	His Birth and Childhood	Fulfilled
Jer. 23:5-6	He would be a descendent of David.	Lk. 1:32-33
Mal. 3:1	He would be preceded by a forerunner (John the Baptist).	Lk. 1:17
Isa. 7:14	He would be born of a virgin.	Mt. 1:23
Mic. 5:2	He would be born in Bethlehem.	Mt. 2:5-6
Jer. 31:15	Children would be slaughtered.	Mt. 2:18
Hos. 11:1	He would flee to Egypt.	Mt. 2:15
Isa. 9:1-2	He would live in Galilee.	Mt. 4:15
Isa. 11:1	He would live in the city of Nazareth.	Mt. 2:23
Prophesied	His Life and Teachings	Fulfilled
Psa. 69:9	He would cast the moneychangers out of the temple.	Jn. 2:13-17

Isa. 61:1-2	He would preach the gospel.	Lk. 4:18
Psa. 78:2	He would teach by parables.	Mt. 13:35
Isa. 53:4	He would heal people.	Mt. 8:17
Zech. 9:9-10	He would enter Jerusalem on an ass.	Mt. 21:5
Psa. 118:25-26	People would cry out to Him, "Hosanna!"	Mt. 21:9
Psa. 118:22-24	He would be rejected.	Mt. 21:42
Zech. 11:12	He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver.	Mt. 27:9
Psa. 41:9	He would be betrayed by one with whom He shared a meal.	Jn. 13:26
Propesied	His Crucifixion	Fulfilled
Psa. 22:16	He would be crucified.	Lk. 23:33
Psa. 34:20	None of His bones would be broken.	Jn. 19:36
Isa. 53:12	He would be crucified with malefactors.	Lk. 23:33
Psa. 22:18	Soldiers would gamble for His garments.	Jn. 19:24
Zech. 12:10	His side would be pierced.	Jn. 19:37
Psa. 22:1	He would cry out, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"	Mt. 27:46
Psa. 22:2	Darkness would cover the earth.	Mt. 27:45
Psa. 22:16	His hands and feet would be pierced.	Lk. 24:39-40

Psa. 22:6-8	He would be mocked on the cross.	Mt. 27:43
Psa. 69:21	He would be given vinegar and gall.	Mt. 27:34

Prophe­sied	His Burial and Resurre­ction	Fulfilled
--------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------

Isa. 53:9	He would be buried by a rich man.	Mt. 27:57-60
Jonah 1:17	He would be in the grave three days and three nights.	Mt. 12:40
Psa. 16:10	He would be raised from the dead.	Mk. 16:6
Psa. 68:18	He would ascend to His Father in heaven.	Acts 1:9-11
Psa. 110:1	He would sit on the right hand of the Father.	Acts 7:56

The Mystery Solved

In light of the evidence that fills the pages of God's word it seems very apparent that there was no chance that Jesus could fail in His walk as a member of the human family. On the contrary, the overwhelming evidence declares that everything about Jesus' life was ordained by God Almighty Including His Success. Furthermore, His life stands as proof that sin can be overcome when His mind governs our minds.

With that said we offer one final piece of evidence that should put this debate to rest. It took place over five hundred years before the Messiah walked the earth as a man and involved the dream of a powerful king.

Over one hundred years after the nation of Israel was routed by Assyria, the southern kingdom of Judah met with a similar fate. They were defeated and led into captivity by the great Chaldean Empire under the rule of King Nebuchadnezzar. During this captivity, certain young Jews were taken to Babylon to serve at the pleasure of their new king. These men were chosen because of their extraordinary knowledge and wisdom (Dan. 1:3-4). This "Babylonian captivity" is described extensively in the book of Daniel.

A Troubling Dream

At one point while these captives were in Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar had a very troubling dream, causing him considerable distress. To remedy this problem, he summoned the leading magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers throughout his kingdom and demanded that they explain what his dream

meant. In order to be sure this religious “brain trust” wasn’t simply guessing at their interpretation, Nebuchadnezzar would not disclose what the specific dream was. He actually informed his religious advisors that the dream was “forgotten.” However, despite this lapse in memory, he insisted that these wizards conjure it up again and explain its significance. In other words, the king wanted these men to explain what the dream WAS, as well as what the dream MEANT. Failure to accomplish this task would constitute a capital offense and would result in their death.

Suffice it to say, sheer panic filled the heart of virtually every soothsayer in Babylon. If they couldn’t figure out what Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was, they would find themselves on the wrong end of an execution. These men knew all too well that their king was not simply issuing an idle threat. He was serious. “Dead” serious.

When word of the king’s decree reached the Jewish captive Daniel, he appealed to Nebuchadnezzar to be patient and promised that shortly he would tell the king both the dream and its meaning. But how would he do such a thing?

Clearly, this was going to be a daunting task. But Daniel had extraordinary resources, not the least of which was God Almighty. He immediately informed his fellow Jewish exiles of the king’s decree, and appealed to them to ask God to reveal his dream, so that they would not suffer at the hands of the royal executioner (Dan. 2:17-18). The scriptures indicate that God heard their prayers and made known the king’s secret to Daniel in a dream of his own. Daniel then acknowledged God as the Source of all wisdom as well as the One who reveals every mystery.

. . . Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: And He changes the times and the seasons: He removes kings, and He sets up kings: He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He reveals the deep and secret things: He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him. I thank you, and praise you, O thou God of my fathers, who has given me wisdom and might, and has made known unto me now what we desired of you: for you have made known unto us the king’s matter. (Dan. 2:20-23)

Shortly after his prayer, Daniel appeared before Nebuchadnezzar and informed him that only the true God could do what the king had demanded. He then told him that such a God does exist and that He would now make known to Nebuchadnezzar both the dream and its meaning.

At this point, Daniel described the king’s dream in striking detail. He began by informing him that the dream was prophetic and revealed a picture of world events that would come to pass down through the centuries.

As for you, O king, your thoughts came into your mind upon your bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and He that reveals secrets makes known to you what shall come to pass. (Dan. 2:29)

Nebuchadnezzar must have been stunned as he listened to Daniel reconstruct every facet of his vision. No detail was omitted, including where the king was when the dream first came to him. The precision of Daniel’s words left no doubt that his God was real and that He was aware of man’s most private thoughts and intimate secrets.

The Interpretation

Daniel began by explaining that the image in the king’s dream symbolized a series of kingdoms that would rule the earth. The first kingdom, pictured by the head of gold, was Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon. In Daniel’s words, “You are this head of gold” (Dan. 2:38). He then informed the king that other rulers and nations would follow the great Chaldean empire. These kingdoms would be inferior to Babylon, but would nevertheless be great in their own right.

And after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: for as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all things: and as iron breaks all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. (Dan. 2:39-40)

History reveals that God's word, through Daniel, had pinpoint accuracy. Great world-ruling empires fell just as he had predicted. The Babylonian empire was ultimately conquered by a less sophisticated Medo-Persian kingdom under the leadership of Cyrus the Great and King Darius. However, this kingdom would also fall and eventually be supplanted by the Greco Macedonian empire under the rule of Alexander the Great. His empire would extend its influence to all the known world, just as Daniel had said. Finally, as powerful as Greece was, it too would fade into the pages of history and be replaced by the Roman empire under the rule of the Caesars.

The Greatest Kingdom

But Daniel wasn't finished interpreting the king's dream. He would now reveal the true identity of the rock that would destroy the last generation of these kingdoms. This generation was symbolized by the feet of this great image. These feet were made of a mixture of iron and clay and were an extension of the Roman Empire. This "resurrected" Roman Empire would exist in the very last days of man's reign on earth and exert tremendous influence throughout the world.

Daniel explained that at this time, God Himself was going to subdue all the kingdoms of the earth and set up a Government that would be presided over by a Great Deliverer. Furthermore, unlike its predecessors, this new Government would never be destroyed.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the Great God has made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter... (Dan. 2:44-45)

The stone that was "cut out without hands," is none other than Jesus Christ. The scriptures reveal that it is He who will subdue all the nations of the earth when He returns to establish God's Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 11:15). At that time, the misery and suffering created by a world that believes it can decide for itself what is "good" and what is "evil" will be replaced by a Government that will judge righteously. This was the message Daniel proclaimed to this "head of gold." However, there was one more thing he would declare.

"The Dream is Certain"

At the end of his meeting with the king, Daniel made one final pronouncement concerning what he had just spoken regarding Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The words that would follow leave no doubt that Nebuchadnezzar's nocturnal vision was inspired by none other than God Himself – for it would reveal how the Great Creator and Sustainer of the universe would accomplish a critical part of His Plan for man. As Daniel prepared to leave, he indicated that what Nebuchadnezzar had witnessed in the privacy of his bedchamber would play out publicly for the entire world to see. He then informed the king that the dream was a one hundred percent certainty. It was going to happen and nothing was going to stop it.

"And the dream is certain and the interpretation thereof is sure." (Dan. 2:45)

Here, God is revealing a profound truth through His servant Daniel. He is declaring that the Great Kingdom He envisioned before the world began is an absolute certainty. No power in the universe can stop it from coming into being.

God was not speculating when He inspired this Jewish captive to utter these words. Every syllable reflected His intention concerning how human history would play into His hands. With this in mind, consider the implication of Daniel's declaration. Imagine all the things that would have to come to pass in order for this dream to play out just as Daniel had said. Not only would these great nations have to rise and fall, but Jesus Christ Himself would have to succeed in His mission on earth. He would have to overcome the world and live a sinless life.

While man may argue if Jesus risked failure when He walked the earth as a man, God clearly never considered that as a possibility. His words through Daniel are unqualified:

“the dream is CERTAIN and the interpretation thereof is SURE.

A Final Thought

Finally, it is very important to understand that the words you have just read are not intended to suggest that life was easy for the Messiah, for indeed it was not. Jesus paid dearly to redeem us from the consequences of our own sin and to reconcile us back to the Father (Ro. 5:10). The price was His own blood

Jesus lived a pristine life and suffered a brutal and agonizing death. But never once did He doubt. And those who believe otherwise are simply mistaken. His words in the garden of Gethsemane were not driven by the possibility of failure. On the contrary they were driven by His realization of success because He knew what was going to happen.

What He was saying in effect was, “Father I love you. And I will do anything you desire. However, if it is possible to accomplish that desire another way I would like to do so. But remember this: I love you and it is your will I seek.”