

SANCTUARY STUDIES

LESSON #2

THE NATURE OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

All italics are in the original text. All other emphases are the authors unless noted. All Scriptures are from the K.J.V. Bible unless stated otherwise.

Some might ask, how does the nature of Christ have anything to do with the sanctuary? It has everything to do with His mediation between us and His Father. If Christ is not human, He would have no understanding of our needs and could not adequately be our mediator before the father in heaven. If Christ is not just like us, if He could not experience our feelings, disappointments, and hardships then how can He make a valid mediation of our predicament and properly feel our desperate need of salvation from sin. He would not know our real experiences in life. If He had no experience with our fallen nature, He could not know our helpless condition or our terrible battle with sin. He could not properly represent us before the throne of God?

Hebrews 4:15. “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.”

Let us pray:

Holy Father, grant us Thy holy spirit that we may receive the things of truth revealed in your Word. Please forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Save us at last, I pray in the name of Jesus, Your Son. Amen.

To understand the nature of Christ it is important to establish His human parentage.

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

Matthew quotes this verse thus:

Matthew 1:23. “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.**”

DA 48:5. “It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam, **He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors.** He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give **us the example of a sinless life.**” {DA 48.5}.

Galatians 3:16. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, **which is Christ.**”

NOTE: If Christ's mind is within then this promise holds that as many as have Christ's mind to them the promise to Abraham's seed will be confirmed because Christ mind is, in reality, within that person. So, the promise to Abraham is fulfilled to all who have Christ's mind within.

We see also in Galatians 3:16 that Christ was a descendant of Abraham.

2nd Timothy 2:8. “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.”

NOTE: David was also in Christ's lineage. What a sinner he was! There were many others of whom all are sinners just like you and me. This proves that Christ had the same nature as we all have. For the lineage of Christ please see Luke 3:23-38.

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Hebrews 2:11. “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is **not ashamed to call them brethren.**”

NOTE: Because we have the mind of Christ we are “all of one”. We have Christ dwelling within us therefore the promise in Galatians 3:16 “to Abraham’s seed” (Christ) was the promises made. This will also include all in whom Christ dwells. 1st **John 3:2; 4:17.**

In Hebrews 2:9 Jesus “was made a little lower than the angels.” In verse 14, Jesus was a partaker of “flesh and blood” just like us. In verse 16, He “took on Him the seed of Abraham” not angels. In verse 17, He is “made like unto His brothers” in all things.

That covers every aspect of human life that we are subject to. It leaves no situation or any experience of our life that was not also part of Christ’s experience. That includes the experience of having the same fallen nature that we inherit from Adam.

“All of one” does not allow for any difference to exist between our feelings and His, between our ability to overcome sin and His, our battle with temptation and His.

Christ could have sinned, or was that an impossibility as some believe? We can find the answer in the book Desire of Ages

DA 117:2. “Many claim that it was impossible for Christ to be overcome by temptation. **Then He could not have been placed in Adam's position; He could not have gained the victory that Adam failed to gain.** If we have in any sense a more trying conflict than had Christ, then He would not be able to succor us. **But our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured.**” {DA 117.2}.

NOTE: This makes perfect sense to me. If this whole thing about Christ becoming a man and being tempted was just a ruse, then I really don’t have a Saviour and Satan would certainly claim Christ’s sacrifice as insufficient for mine and your salvation!

Hebrews 2:14. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might **destroy him that had the power of death**, that is, the devil.”

5 BC 1082:2, 3. “In Christ, divinity and humanity were combined. Divinity was not degraded to humanity; divinity held its place, but humanity, by being united to divinity, withstood the fiercest test of temptation in the wilderness. The prince of this world came to Christ after His long fast, when He was an hungered, and suggested to Him to command the stones to become bread. But the plan of God, devised for the salvation of man, provided that Christ should know hunger, and poverty, and every phase of man's experience. **He withstood the temptation, through the power that man may command. He laid hold on the throne of God, and there is not a man or woman who may not have access to the same help through faith in God. Man may become a partaker of the divine nature; not a soul lives who may not summon the aid of Heaven in temptation and trial. Christ came to reveal the source of His power that man might never rely on his unaided human capabilities.** {5BC 1082.2}.

“Those who would overcome must put to the tax every power of their being. They must agonize on their knees before God for divine power. Christ came to be our example, and to make known to us that we may be partakers of the divine nature. How? -By having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Satan did not gain the victory over Christ. He did not put his foot upon the soul of the Redeemer. He did not touch the head though he bruised the heel. **Christ, by His own example, made**

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it evident that man may stand in integrity. Men may have a power to resist evil--a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame. Divinity and humanity may be combined in them (RH Feb. 18, 1890). {5BC 1082.3}.

7BC (BIBLE COMMENTARY) 907:5, 6. On Colossians 2:9, 10. "Dwelling upon Christ's character.

"In Christ dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily. This is why, although He was tempted in all points like as we are, He stood before the world, from His first entrance into it, untainted by corruption, though surrounded by it. Are we not also to become partakers of that fullness, and is it not thus, and thus only, that we can overcome as He overcame?" {7BC 907.5}.

NOTE: I want to talk about a side issue for just a minute because I think it is very important to our understanding of how Christ had no propensity for sin in His life.

The quote states that Christ stood before the world **"From his first entrance into it, untainted by corruption"** or sin. When was Christ's first entrance into the world? Answer; at his conception in Mary's womb! Christ had existed with His father since His being brought forth in eternity past. That means He was pre-existent with the Father before His conception. And before His conception he made a full commitment to obey the Father's will implicitly. This conception was Christ's rebirth as a human being with all the inherent liabilities common to all of us. **"All the fullness of the Godhead"** dwelt in Christ at that time! In other words, He was filled with the spirit of His Father from His conception.

We know that in the presence of the divine all sin is consumed! It follows that all the inherited propensities for sin that were the result of inheritance were

consumed by the spirit of the Father at Christ's conception. This makes sense because we are told that Christ had no evil propensities toward sin.

13MR 18:1. "Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is the second Adam. The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him; he was in the image of God. He could fall, and he did fall through transgressing. Because of sin, his posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience. But Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. **He took upon Himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity.** He was assailed with temptations in the wilderness, as Adam was assailed with temptations in Eden. {13MR 18.1}.

NOTE: The law was a delight to obey for Christ. That makes the law easy to keep holy.

Psalms 40:7, 8. "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

NOTE: The law is a copy of the Father's mind and will and character. This is the new covenant that is written in the heart and mind.

RH September 27, 1881:17. "The law of God given from Sinai is a copy of the mind and will of the Infinite God. It is sacredly revered by the holy angels. Obedience to its requirements will perfect Christian character, and restore man, through Christ, to his condition before the fall." {RH, September 27, 1881 par. 17}.

Philippians 2:5. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

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NOTE: When we allow this mind of Christ to be within the fulfilling of the new covenant promise to God's people is realized. From that point forward the child of God receives the fullness of the divine mind or law of God and they cease to sin. It becomes a joy and a pleasure to obey the divine law just as it was for Christ. In the same way that Christ was born with fallen human nature we are born again with the divine nature of God within our mind, the new covenant is written there and God's seed remains within!

1st John 3:9. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

NOTE: Just as Christ was filled with all the fullness of God so is the born-again Christian filled with that same fullness! What marvelous help God has provided for the accomplishment of His will within each of us. If you are not experiencing this joy of keeping the law of God, you have not truly been converted. You need to surrender to God and plead for conversion.

Revelation 3:19, 20. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. **Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”**

I hope this little side venture has helped you to understand about the inherited and also the evil propensities of sin. “Now let us return to the theme of our study, The Nature of Christ.”

“We lose much by not dwelling constantly upon the character of Christ” (MS 16, 1890). {7BC 907.6}.

Hebrews 2:14. Last part. “That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

NOTE: Christ was innocent, but Satan caused his death anyway. The law states, “Thou shalt not kill”.

Satan is guilty of innocent blood therefore he must pay the penalty—death.

Hebrews 2:17. “Wherefore in all things it behoved 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.**”

NOTE: For “reconciliation” there must be atonement because reconciliation is a product of the atonement.

“In all things” this requires that Christ must be made just like the human race. There can be no difference between us and Christ. Though He was just like us in every particular yet His experience was not the same as our experience because He had never committed a sin. Therefore, He had no cultivated propensity for sin. We have all experienced sin which produces cultivated propensities for sin. We commit sin and enjoy it which creates a desire to repeat the sin. This is cultivated tendencies or propensities for sin. This Christ did not experience because He never sinned. There is no evil propensity to commit sin until you have experienced the wrong act. Christ's fallen nature, His flesh, desired sin, but Christ conquered the flesh by His union with the Father, by the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwelling in Him. That same fullness of the Godhead dwelling in us will also destroy the evil propensity for sin within each of us. This is manifested at conversion and rebirth.

John 3:3. “Jesus answered and said unto him, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**

5BC 1082:4 (Isa. 53:6; 2nd Cor. 5:21). **The terrible consequences of transgression.**

YI July 20, 1899:10. “Unless there is a possibility of yielding, temptation is no temptation. Temptation is resisted when man is powerfully influenced to do a wrong action; and, knowing that he can do it, resists, by faith, with a firm hold upon divine power.”

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This was the ordeal through which Christ passed. He could not have been tempted in all points as man is tempted, had there been no possibility of his failing. He was a free agent, placed on probation, as was Adam, and as is every man. In his closing hours, while hanging on the cross, he experienced to the fullest extent what man must experience when striving against sin. He realized how bad a man may become by yielding to sin. He realized the terrible consequence of the transgression of God's law; for the iniquity of the whole world was upon him." {YI, July 20, 1899 par. 10}

NOTE: I can hear Satan's argument with the Father: "Yes, Jesus lived a perfect life, but no one else can do that. Not one person can overcome like Christ. You cannot save any of the human family until you have proved that fallen man can live without sin!" And so, we are warned of a time of trouble such has never been since creation. Satan will accost God's people severely because the continuation of his kingdom and life depends on keeping the family of Adam from gaining victory over sin.

Satan has great power to deceive and to hold us fast in his prison. But praise God, He has given Christ all power in heaven and earth, so Satan may have great power, Christ has all power, and that power is shared with the penitent sinner for the purpose of gaining victory over sin and Satan.

I have heard people say that it is impossible to overcome all sin. Please do not say that because that is giving Satan more power than what the Father gave to Christ. That just is not so.

Matthew 28:18. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Romans 8:3, 4. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for

sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Hebrews 2:18. "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

DA 24:2. "His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God." {DA 24.2}

NOTE: "The righteousness of the law," righteousness means right doing or obedience. Jesus Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh to demonstrate that the power of divinity combined with humanity can obey the law of God. Man can become righteous through this connection with the divinity of Christ. He came to give us an example that we must follow. Yes! He was a real man, and combined with the Father, He conquered sin by the same means available to you and me!

1st John 4:2, 3. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:"

NOTE: The word "flesh" Strong's word #G4561 in the Greek Dictionary of the New Testament defines "(by implication) human nature (with its frailties [Physical or moral] and passions), or (specifically) a human being. ...flesh (fleshly)." Parenthesis in original.

You can see that this definition is definitely referring to a fallen nature. Let's continue in verse 3:

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

NOTE: This is telling you that if you believe that Christ does not have fallen nature you are against Christ and therefore are called "Antichrist." We can supply the phrase "fallen nature" in place of "flesh"

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in these two texts and notice the impact on the understanding.

1st John 4:2, 3 paraphrased. “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in **fallen nature** is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in **fallen nature** is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

2nd John 7. “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. (Fallen nature) **This is a deceiver and an antichrist.**”

NOTE: The topic of the nature of Christ must have been in controversy in apostolic times just as it is today. John’s statement of not accepting Christ’s fallen nature as being Antichrist makes it clear what one believes on this matter is crucial. What one believes on this issue determines salvation!

Pay attention to the following statements made in the Spirit of Prophecy concerning Christ’s nature.

RH February 24 1874:25. “What love! What amazing condescension! **The King of glory proposed to humble himself to fallen humanity!** He would place his feet in Adam's steps. **He would take man's fallen nature and engage to cope with the strong foe who triumphed over Adam.** He would overcome Satan, and in thus doing he would open the way for the redemption of those who would believe on him from the disgrace of Adam's failure and fall.” {RH, February 24, 1874 par. 25}.

YI December 20 1900: “Think of Christ's humiliation. **He took upon himself fallen, suffering human nature,** degraded and defiled by sin. He took our sorrows, bearing our grief and shame. He endured all the temptations wherewith man is beset. **He united humanity with divinity:** a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh. **He united himself with the temple.** “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,”

because **by so doing he could associate with the sinful, sorrowing sons and daughters of Adam.**” {YI, December 20, 1900 par. 7}.

DA 112:2, 3. ““This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” {DA 112.2}

“These words of confirmation were given to inspire faith in those who witnessed the scene, and to strengthen the Saviour for His mission. Notwithstanding that the sins of a guilty world were laid upon Christ, **notwithstanding the humiliation of taking upon Himself our fallen nature,** the voice from heaven declared Him to be **the Son of the Eternal.**” {DA 112.3}.

NOTE: There are many (over 600) statements in the Spirit of Prophecy concerning the nature of Christ, here are some of them for further study:

EARLY WRITINGS 150.

DESIRE OF AGES 24, 25, 48, 49.

SELECTED MESSAGES BOOK #1 408, 409, 246.

MEDICAL MINISTRY 181.

NOTE: It is very evident that Christ came in the flesh (fallen nature) just as you and I. Some argue that Christ was different or that He had some advantage in the battle over sin. This argument just is not so! Those clamming this are misinformed. Those who are honest in their mistake will immediately reverse their course of belief. If the truth is persistently rejected are those not followers of Antichrist, or at least deceivers of themselves? You decide. It is no wonder that Ellen White counsels us to be very careful how we handle the subject of the nature of Christ!

UL (The Upward Look) 48:4, 5. “In the smallest as well as the largest matters, the first great question is, what is God's will in the matter; for His will is my will. ‘To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams’ (1 Samuel 15:22). Who is he that

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will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? **One man may be required by God to do a work and stand in a position that is peculiarly trying and taxing. The Lord has a work for him to do and he risks his life, his future eternal life, in standing in that place.** This was the position Christ occupied when He came to our world, entering into conflict with the rebel leader of the fallen angels. God devised a plan, and **Christ accepted the position.** He consented to meet the foe singlehanded, **as every human being must do.** He was provided with all the heavenly powers to aid Him in this great conflict; **and man, if he walked in the way and will of God, is provided with the same keeping power.** The same heavenly intelligences minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation, **that they may overcome every temptation, great or small, as Christ overcame. But anyone who places himself in a position of peril from any motive but obedience to the will of God will fall under the power of temptation.**" {UL 48.4}.

Let us pray:

Father I thank You for Your holy spirit's guidance in our study. Please give us the ability to accept truth and assimilate it into our very beings. Please forgive our sin of unbelief and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I ask this in the name of your only begotten Son, Jesus. Amen.

Your brother in Christ

Virgil Prindle

ADDENDUM

SELECTED MESSAGES BOOK #1 252, 253.

BY ELLEN G. WHITE.

"After the fall of man, Satan declared that human beings were proved to be incapable of keeping the law of God, and he sought to carry the universe with him in this belief. Satan's words appeared to be true, and

Christ came to unmask the deceiver. The Majesty of heaven undertook the cause of man, **and with the same facilities that man may obtain,** withstood the temptations of Satan as man must withstand them. **This was the only way in which fallen man could become a partaker of the divine nature.** In taking human nature, Christ was fitted to understand man's trials and sorrows and all the temptations wherewith he is beset. Angels who were unacquainted with sin could not sympathize with man in his peculiar trials. Christ condescended to take man's nature, and was tempted in all points like as we, that He might know how to succor all who should be tempted. {1SM 252.1}

In assuming humanity Christ took the part of every human being. He was the Head of humanity. A Being divine and human, with His long human arm He could encircle humanity, while with His divine arm He could lay hold of the throne of the Infinite. {1SM 252.2}

What a sight was this for Heaven to look upon! Christ, who knew not the least taint of sin or defilement, **took our nature in its deteriorated condition.** This was humiliation greater than finite man can comprehend. God was manifest in the flesh. He humbled Himself. What a subject for thought, for deep, earnest contemplation! So infinitely great that He was the Majesty of heaven, and yet He stooped so low, without losing one atom of His dignity and glory! He stooped to poverty and to the deepest abasement among men. For our sake He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. "The foxes have holes," He said, "and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20). {1SM 253.1}

Christ submitted to insult and mockery, contempt and ridicule. He heard His message, which was fraught with love and goodness and mercy, misstated and misapplied. He heard Himself called the prince of demons, because He testified to His divine Son

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ship. His birth was supernatural, but by His own nation, those who had blinded their eyes to spiritual things, it was regarded as a blot and a stain. **There was not a drop of our bitter woe which He did not taste, not a part of our curse which He did not endure**, that He might bring many sons and daughters to God. "{1SM 253.2}

NOTE: If there is "**not a part of our curse which He did not endure**" then He had to have **fallen nature** because that is a part of our curse. Let's continue.

"The fact that Jesus was on this earth as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, that in order to save fallen man from eternal ruin, He left His heavenly home, should lay in the dust all our pride, put to shame all our vanity, and reveal to us the sin of self-sufficiency. Behold Him making the wants, the trials, the griefs and sufferings of sinful men His own. Can we not take home the lesson that God endured these sufferings and bruises of soul in consequence of sin? {1SM 253.3

Christ came to the earth, taking humanity and standing as man's representative, to show in the controversy with Satan that man, as God created him, connected with the Father and the Son, could obey every divine requirement. Speaking through His servant He declares, "His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). It was sin that separated man from his God, and **it is sin that maintains this separation.**" {1SM 253.4}

NOTE: If it is sin that maintains our separation from God, then, when sin is overcome in our lives the separation between ourselves and God will be ended. That glorious robe of light, lost in Eden, will be restored once again just prior to Christ's second coming!

Definition of flesh in Strong's

Word #G4561 SARX (FLESH)

Thayer's Definition:

1. Flesh (the soft substance of the living body, which covers the bones and is permeated with blood), used of both man and animals.
2. The body
 - A. The body of a man.
 - B. Used of natural or physical origin, generation or relationship; born of natural generation.
 - C. The sensuous nature of man, "the animal nature".
 - 1) Without any suggestion of depravity.
 - 2) The animal nature with cravings which incite to sin.
 - 3) The physical nature of man as subject to suffering.
 - 4) A living creature (because possessed of a body of flesh), whether man or beast.
 - 5) The flesh, denotes mere human nature, the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God.