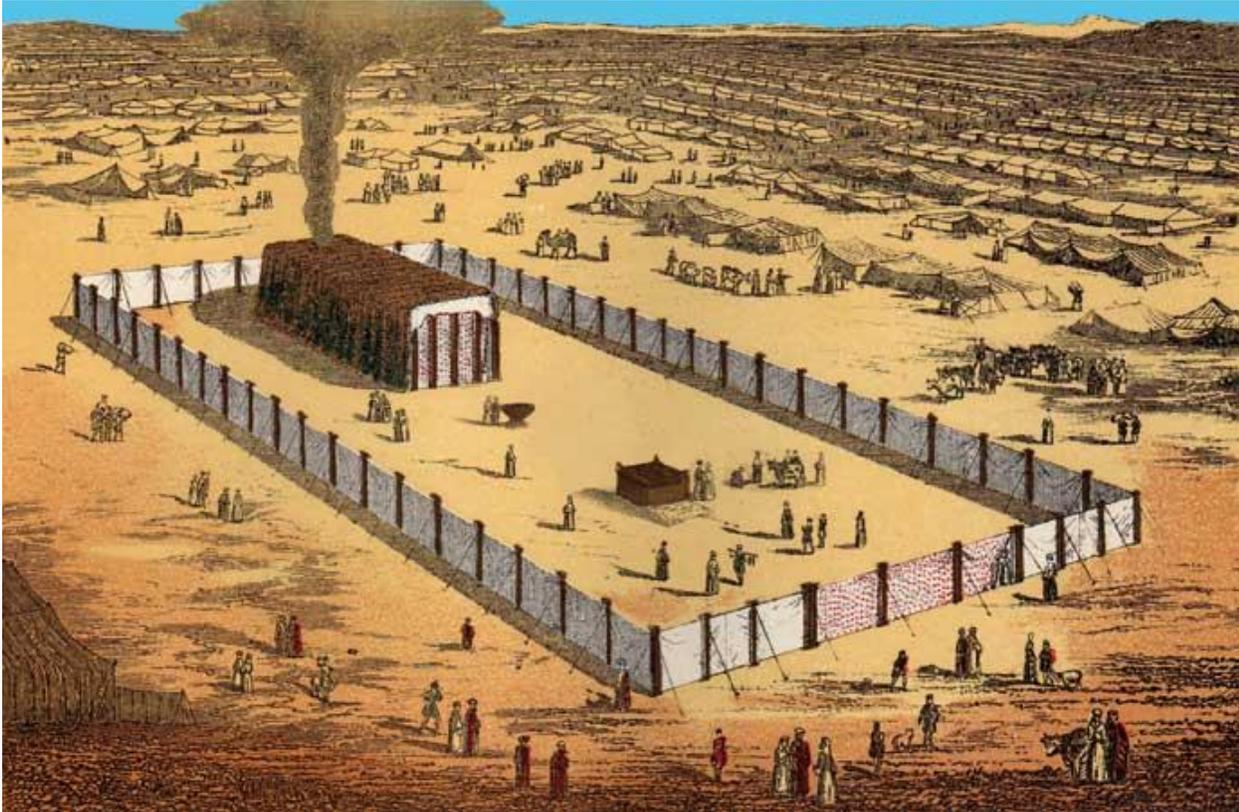


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THE NATURE OF CHRIST



HEBREWS 2: 1-18

Introduction

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. It has to do with His right to be our mediator in the Heavenly Sanctuary. If Christ were not just like you and I, if He could not experience our feelings, and disappointments, then how would He be able to understand our predicament and make a valid mediation for us before His Father. He wouldn't know our real experiences of life. If He did not have our fallen nature He could not feel our hopeless condition or our terrible battle with sin. How could He truly represent us before the throne of God? He could not be a real

mediator between His Father and us. He had to "be touched with the feelings of our infirmities." Heb. 4:15 "For we have not a 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. We know you will answer this prayer because we ask it in the name of your son, Jesus. Amen.

To understand the nature of Christ it is important to establish His human parentage. In Isaiah 7: 14 we are told, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his

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name **Immanuel.**” How does Matthew quote this verse? Mat 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.**” In the book **DESIRE OF AGES**, P. 49, we are given this understanding: “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: We here that Christ was of 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 His lineage. What a sinner David was! There were many others of whom all were sinners just like you and I. see Luke 3: 23-38 for Christ's lineage.

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.**” (emphasis mine).

In Heb. 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, Jesus “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 experience. That includes the experience of having our fallen nature.

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

Could Jesus have sinned or was that an impossibility for Him to fall. We find the answer in a book on the life of Christ called **THE DESIRE OF AGES** on page 117: 2 it says:

“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} (Emphasis mine).

NOTE: This makes sense to me, because if this whole thing about Christ becoming a man and being tempted was just a ruse, then I don't have a Saviour and Satan would definitely clam Christ's sacrifice as insufficient for mine and your salvation!

Hebrews 2:14, tells us that “the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.”

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In **5 Bible Commentary P. 1082: 2, 3.** We are told “His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the pattern.

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.** (Whatever power Christ possessed we also have access to) 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 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.” {5BC 1082: 3} (Emphasis mine).

7 B.C. (Bible Commentary) P. 907 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}

“We lose much by not dwelling constantly upon the character of Christ” (MS 16, 1890). [7 B.C. P.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 killed Him anyway. The law states, “Thou shalt not kill” (murder). Satan is guilty of innocent blood therefore he must pay the penalty—death.

Hebrews 2: 17.

“Wherefore **in all things** it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren.”

NOTE: “in all things”, are you tempted from the outside? So was He. Are you tempted on the inside? So was He. But, you might say, you would have to experience sin in order to be tempted on the inside. Well, Jesus was made

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sin for us. That means that our experience in sin was put into Him, that is, the flesh was clamoring for gratification, He did not succumb! Can you remember the first time you were tempted to commit the sin that so easily besets you? There was not evil propensity to commit that sin until you had experienced that wrong act. After that you had an evil propensity to do it again because you enjoyed it. This propensity Christ never had because He never submitted to a wrong act. Christ's 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 fullness dwelling in us will destroy the evil propensity for sin within each of us.

5 B.C. 1082 (Isa, 53: 6; 2nd Cor. 5: 21). The terrible consequences of transgression.

“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. 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 upon 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 consequences of the transgression of God's law; for the iniquity of the whole world was upon Him” (YI July 20, 1899). {5BC 1082.4}.

NOTE: I can hear Satan's argument with the Father: “Yes, Jesus lived a perfect life,

but no one else can, neither will there ever be any who can live a sinless life. You cannot save any of the human family until you have a sample of many who prove that they have turned from me and are living without sin. I must be allowed to tempt and harass them as never before.” And so we are warned of a time of trouble such has never been since creation! The Father declares that perfection is the only means of entrance into heaven.

This is the criteria that keeps Satan's kingdom alive today. He knows this, therefore Satan must keep the Christian from victory over sin! Satan has great power to deceive and hold us fast in his prison. Praise God, He has given Christ all power in heaven and earth, so Satan has great power but Christ has all power, and that power is shared with us for the purpose of victory over sin. I have heard people say that it is impossible to overcome sin! Please do not say that because when you say that you are in essence ascribing more power to Satan than what God has given to Christ. That just isn't so.

Hebrews 2: 18. “He (Christ) is able to succor them that are tempted”

Desire of Ages, P. 24.

“His (Christ's) life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God.”

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.”

NOTE: “The righteousness of the law,” righteousness means right doing or obedience. Jesus Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh

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so that He might demonstrate that the power of Divinity combined with our humanity can obey the law of God. Man can follow righteousness. Christ 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 power 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: 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.”

In verse 2 it reads “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus is come in the flesh is of God.”

NOTE: the word “flesh” Strong’s word #4561 in the Greek Dictionary of the New Testament defines it “(by implication) human nature (with its frailties [Physical or moral] and passions), or (specifically) a human being. . . .flesh (fleshly).” Would you agree that this is a definition of fallen nature?

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 anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and **even now already is it in the world.**”

NOTE: It would seem that if you believe Christ does not have fallen nature, then you are against Christ and called “Antichrist.” Let’s use the supplied words “fallen nature” in place of “flesh” in these two text and see the impact.

1st John 4: 2, 3. “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.” (EMPHISIS MINE).

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.” (Emphasis mine).

NOTE: It seems that the issue of the nature of Christ was a topic of discussion in apostolic times as well. John’s statements about those not accepting Christ’s fallen nature as being Antichrist, makes it clear that it does matter a lot concerning what one believes on this subject. In fact it is a very critical subject concerning salvation!

Here are a few statements, of which I promised, from the Spirit of Prophecy concerning Christ’s fallen nature.

“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**}

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“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 Dec. 20, 1900.**) **{4BC 1147.4}.**

"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 other statements in the Spirit of Prophecy concerning the nature of Christ, here are some for further study.

EARLY WRITINGS P. 150.

DESIRE OF AGES PP. 24, 25, 48, 49.

**SELECTED MESSAGES BOOK 1
PP. 408, 409, 256.**

MEDICAL MINISTRY P. 181.

NOTE: It is very evident that Christ came in the flesh (fallen nature) just as you and I. Some would contend that Christ was somehow different or that He had some advantage in the battle over sin. This is not so! Those clamming this are misinformed. Those

who are honest in their mistake will immediately reverse their course. Those who refuse, are they not antichrist or at least deceivers? You decide for yourself. No wonder Ellen White counsels us to be very careful how we handle the subject of the nature of Christ. Let us pray:

Father, I thank you for your holy spirit's guidance in our study today. Give us the ability to accept truth and assimilate it into our very being. I ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Your brother in Christ

Virgil

ADDENDUM

**SELECTED MESSAGES BOOK 1,
PP. 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. Stan'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. In assuming humanity Christ took the part of every human being. He

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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. 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). 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 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. 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? 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, then 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!

Strong's word #4561 **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
 - 3) a living creature (because possessed of a body of flesh), whether man or beast

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4) the flesh, denotes mere human nature, the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God.