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# THE DIVINE-HUMAN NATURE OF CHRIST

I. **The nature of Christ is an eternal mystery. It will absorb the attention of the redeemed into the “ceaseless ages of eternity.” As such, it demands our study now, but we must be careful not to be too dogmatic on something we are told is beyond human comprehension.**

a. Christ’s sacrifice, including His incarnation, will be our study for eternity.

If Christ is all and in all to every one of us, why are not His incarnation and His atoning sacrifice dwelt upon more in the churches? Why are not hearts and tongues employed in the Redeemer's praise? ***This will be the employment of the powers of the redeemed through the ceaseless ages of eternity.*** – *Selected Messages, Vol. 3*, p. 187.

b. The humanity of Christ should be studied with humility.

The humanity of the Son of God is *everything to us*. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God. ***This is to be our study.*** Christ was a ***real man***; He gave proof of His humility in becoming a man. ***Yet He was God in the flesh.*** When we approach this subject, we would do well to heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5). We should come to this study with the humility of a learner, with a contrite heart. And the study of the incarnation of Christ is a fruitful field, which will repay the searcher who digs deep for hidden truth. – *Selected Messages, Vol. 1*, p. 244.

c. Even after an eternity of study, the incarnation will still remain, in many respects, a mystery.

Without controversy ***great is the mystery of godliness***: God was manifest in the flesh... - Paul, 1 Tim. 3:16.

The incarnation of Christ has *ever been*, and *will ever remain* ***a mystery.*** – *SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 5*, p. 1128.

II. **Christ was to take man’s nature after the fall.**

a. Jesus would take man’s fallen nature.

[God] condemned sin *in the flesh* [subdued, overcame, deprived it of its power over all who accept that sacrifice]... ( Rom. 8:3-4, Amplified Bible, *emphasis mine*).

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. – *Confrontation*, p. 18.

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 [at Christ’s baptism] declared Him to be the Son of the Eternal. – *Desire of Ages*, p. 112.

Jesus also told [the angels] that they would have a part to act, to be with Him and at different times strengthen Him; that **He would take man's fallen nature**, and His strength would not be even equal with theirs... – *Early Writings*, p. 150.

Though He had **no taint of sin** upon His character, yet He *condescended to connect **our fallen human nature** with **His divinity***. By thus taking humanity, He honored humanity. *Having taken **our fallen nature**, he showed what it might become*, by accepting the ample provision He has made for it, and *by becoming partaker of the divine nature*.--Letter 81, 1896. – *Selected Messages, Vol. 3*, p. 134.

The divine Son of God, who had, with unprecedented self-denial, and love for the creatures formed in His image, come from heaven and *assumed their **fallen nature***... - *Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 3*, pp. 183, 4.

b. Jesus would take man's sinful nature.

The example He has left must be followed. **He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature**, that He might know how to succor those that are tempted. – *SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 7A*, p. 450.

Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God came down to the level of those He wished to save. In Him was no guile or sinfulness; He was ever pure and undefiled; yet **He took upon Him our sinful nature**. Clothing His divinity with humanity, that He might associate with fallen humanity, He sought to regain for man that which by disobedience Adam had lost, for himself and for the world... – *Signs of the Times*, July 30, 1902.

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). – *SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 4*, p. 1147.

III. Christ's nature was neither like Adam's before or after the fall. While inheriting the weaknesses of fallen humanity, He embodied the fullness of the Godhead.

a. Adam might have conquered Satan in Eden.

Christ knew that Adam in Eden with his superior advantages **might have withstood** the temptations of Satan **and conquered** him. He also knew that it was *not possible for man out of Eden*, separated from the light and love of God since the fall, to resist the temptations of Satan in his own strength. – *Confrontation*, p. 45.

b. Adam could have formed a righteous character.

It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. – *Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

- c. Christ's humanity was inadequate to conquer unaided by divine power.

**Christ's humanity alone could never have endured this test**, but His divine power combined with humanity gained in behalf of man an infinite victory. – *Confrontation*, p. 66.

- d. Fallen humanity is in harmony with Satan and at variance with God. It is only through the new birth that God is able to "put enmity" between humanity and Satan.

When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil, and he was in **harmony, and not at variance**, with Satan. **There exists naturally no enmity between sinful man and the originator of sin**. Both became evil through apostasy. – *Great Controversy*, p. 505.

- e. Christ's nature was at variance with Satan and in harmony with God. He hated sin with a perfect hatred.

The enmity put between **the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman** was supernatural. **With Christ the enmity was in one sense natural; in another sense it was supernatural, as humanity and divinity were combined**. And never was the enmity developed to such a marked degree as when Christ became an inhabitant of this earth. **Never before had there been a being upon the earth who hated sin with so perfect a hatred as did Christ**. He had seen its deceiving, infatuating power upon the holy angels, and all His powers were enlisted against it. – *Selected Messages, Vol. 1*, p. 254.

- f. Christ, unlike Adam, inherited the physical, mental and moral degeneracy of the race.

In the desolate wilderness, **Christ was not in so favorable a position** to endure the temptations of Satan **as was Adam** when he was tempted in Eden. The Son of God humbled Himself and **took man's nature after** the race had wandered four thousand years from Eden, and from their original state of purity and uprightness. Sin had been making its terrible marks upon the race for ages; and **physical, mental, and moral degeneracy prevailed** throughout the human family. – *Confrontation*, p. 31.

**What a contrast** the second Adam presented as He entered the gloomy wilderness to cope with Satan single-handed. Since the fall, the race had been **decreasing in size and physical strength**, and **sinking lower in the scale of moral worth**, up to the period of Christ's advent to the earth. **In order to elevate fallen man, Christ must reach him where he was**. He took human nature, and bore the **infirmities** and **degeneracy** of the race. **He who knew no sin became sin for us**. He humiliated Himself to the **lowest depths** of human woe, **that He might be qualified to reach man** and bring him up from the degradation in which sin had plunged him. – *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Satan had pointed to Adam's sin as proof that God's law was unjust, and could not be obeyed. In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam's failure. **But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him**. He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings. It was **not thus with Jesus** when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been **decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth**;

and *Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus* could He rescue man from the *lowest depths of his degradation...* He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured. – *Desire of Ages*, p. 117.

g. Christ accepted the working of the law of heredity.

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. – *Desire of Ages*, p. 48.

a. Christ took real humanity, but His divinity was not degraded to humanity.

Christ did not make believe take human nature; he did verily take it. He did in reality possess human nature. – *Review & Herald*, April 5, 1906.

Letters have been coming in to me, *affirming that Christ could not have had the same nature as man, for if He had, He would have fallen under similar temptations. If He did not have man's nature, He could not be our example. If He was not a partaker of our nature, He could not have been tempted as man has been.* If it were not possible for Him to yield to temptation, He could not be our helper. It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the battles as man, in man's behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature. 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. – *Selected Messages, Vol. 1*, p. 408.

#### IV. Christ's human nature was sinless, devoid of any evil propensity or taint of corruption.

a. Christ's mother was a fallen human being; His father was the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1:35). The Holy Spirit guided His life from birth to death (Lk. 3:22).

b. Christ's human nature was "perfectly sinless."

We should have no misgivings in regard to the *perfect sinlessness of the human nature of Christ.* --The Signs of the Times, June 9, 1898. – *SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 7A*, p. 454.

c. Christ's sinless nature recoiled from evil.

He is *a brother* in our infirmities, "in all points tempted like as we are;" but *as the sinless one His nature recoiled from evil.* – *Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

d. Christ's nature did not for one moment have an evil propensity.

*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. – *SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 5, p. 1128.*

e. In His human nature Christ maintained the purity of His character.

With His human arm, Christ encircled the race, while with His divine arm, He grasped the throne of the Infinite, uniting finite man with the infinite God. He bridged the gulf that sin had made, and connected earth with heaven. **In His human nature He maintained the purity of His divine character.**--The Youth's Instructor, June 2, 1898. – *SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 7A, p. 454.*

f. In His fallen human nature, Christ did not in the least participate in sin; His nature was sinless.

**In taking upon Himself man's nature in its fallen condition, Christ did not in the least participate in its sin.** He was subject to the infirmities and weaknesses by which man is encompassed... And yet He "knew no sin." He was the Lamb "without blemish and without spot." . . . **We should have no misgivings in regard to the perfect sinlessness of the human nature of Christ.**--The Signs of the Times, June 9, 1898. – *SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 7A, p. 455.*

He was *unsullied with corruption, a stranger to sin*; yet He prayed, and that often with strong crying and tears. He prayed for His disciples and for Himself, thus identifying Himself with our needs, our weaknesses, and our failings, which are so common with humanity. He was a mighty petitioner, **not possessing the passions of our human, fallen natures**, but compassed with like infirmities, tempted in all points like as we are. Jesus endured agony which required help and support from His Father.-- Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 508. – *SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 7A, p. 454.*

V. Guard carefully and strenuously how you present the humanity of Christ.

**Avoid every question in relation to the humanity of Christ which is liable to be misunderstood.** Truth lies close to the track of presumption. In treating upon the humanity of Christ, you need to **guard strenuously every assertion, lest your words be taken to mean more than they imply, and thus you lose or dim the clear perceptions of His humanity as combined with divinity.** His birth was a miracle of God. . . . **Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to, corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption.** He was tempted in all points like as man is tempted, yet He is called "that holy thing." It is a mystery that is left unexplained to mortals that Christ could be tempted in all points like as we are, and yet be without sin. **The incarnation of Christ has ever been, and will ever remain, a mystery.** That which is revealed, is for us and for our children, but **let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such an**

***one as ourselves; for it cannot be.***--The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, pp. 1128, 1129. --  
*SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 7A, p. 448.*

## VI. Christ's supreme temptation was to rely upon self, i.e., His own divine nature.

- a. It was as difficult for Christ not to depend upon his divine nature (self) as it is for us not to depend on our human nature (self).

It was a difficult task for the Prince of Life to carry out the plan which He had undertaken for the salvation of man, in clothing His divinity with humanity. He had received honor in the heavenly courts and was familiar with absolute power. ***It was as difficult for Him to keep the level of humanity as for men to rise above the low level of their depraved natures and be partakers of the divine nature.*** -- *Confrontation*, p. 85.

- b. Keeping His glory veiled was a severe trial to Christ.

*To keep His glory veiled* as the child of a fallen race, ***this was the most severe discipline to which the Prince of life could subject Himself.*** Thus He measured His strength with Satan. He who had been expelled from heaven fought desperately for the mastery over the One of whom in the courts above he had been jealous. What a battle was this! No language is adequate to describe it. But in the near future it will be understood by those who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony (Letter 19, 1901). -- *SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 5, p. 1081.*

- c. It was a great temptation at times for Christ to flash forth His divine power.

Christ suffered keenly under abuse and insult. At the hands of the beings whom He had created, and for whom He was making an infinite sacrifice, He received every indignity. And He suffered in proportion to the perfection of His holiness and His hatred of sin. His trial by men who acted as fiends was to Him a perpetual sacrifice. To be surrounded by human beings under the control of Satan was revolting to Him. And *He knew that in a moment, by the flashing forth of His divine power, He could lay His cruel tormentors in the dust. This made the trial the harder to bear.* -- *Desire of Ages*, p. 700.

## VII. Christ's purpose in taking upon Himself our humanity was to become the new representative head of the race, in order to prove Satan's charges false, demonstrating in Himself what humanity may become when combined with divinity.

Satan declared that it was ***impossible*** for the ***sons and daughters of Adam*** to ***keep the law of God***, and thus charged upon God a lack of wisdom and love. If they could not keep the law, then there was fault with the Lawgiver... Jesus humbled himself, clothing his divinity with humanity, ***in order that he might stand as the head and representative of the human family, and by both precept and example condemn sin in the flesh, and give the lie to Satan's charges.*** He was subjected to the ***fiercest temptations*** that human nature can know, yet he sinned not; for sin is the transgression of the law. By faith he laid hold upon divinity, ***even as humanity may lay hold upon infinite power through him.*** Although tempted upon all points even as men are tempted, he sinned not. ***He did not surrender his allegiance to God***, as did Adam. -- *Signs of the Times*, January 16, 1896.