

The Nature Of Christ

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16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

"The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man" (Selected Messages, Book One, page 244).

Why is the humanity of Jesus "everything to us"? Because, as a "real man," He proved Satan a liar on one hand and gave His human brethren reason for hope on the other; God could never have been just and yet able to justify a repentant sinner if Jesus in His humanity had not proved that sin could be conquered, that His law could be obeyed in human flesh.

When Jesus became man, was He only playacting, only sharing man's physical likeness and problems? Not for a moment! Ellen White is emphatic: "Christ did not make believe take human nature; He did verily take it. He did in reality possess human nature. 'As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same' (Hebrews 2:14, KJV)" (ibid., page 247).

If Jesus took human nature in a form different from His contemporaries, why would Ellen White be so emphatic against those attempts to minimize His complete identity with fallen human nature? She seemed unequivocal when she wrote:

"It was not a make-believe humanity that Christ took upon Himself. He took human nature and lived human nature. Christ's life represents a perfect manhood. Just that which you may be, He was in human nature. He took our infirmities. He was not only made flesh, but He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Ellen G. White Comments, SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 5, page 1124).

"He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succor them that are tempted" (Medical Ministry, page 181, italics supplied).

"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" (Review and Herald, December 15, 1896).

"He took upon Himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin" (SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 4, page 1147).

"In taking upon Himself man's nature in its fallen condition, Christ did not in the least participate in its sin" (ibid., Volume 5, page 1131).

"Though He had no taint of sin upon His character, yet He condescended to connect our fallen human nature with His divinity" (Special Instruction Relating to the Review & Herald Office and the Work of Battle Creek, page 13, May 31, 1896)."

"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" (Selected Messages, book One, page 408; for further study: ibid., pages 267, 268)

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 where on thou stands is holy ground." 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. The Youth's Instructor, October 13, 1898.

In contemplating the incarnation of Christ in humanity, we stand baffled before an unfathomable mystery, that the human mind cannot comprehend. The more we reflect upon it, the more amazing does it appear. How wide is the contrast between the divinity of

Christ and the helpless infant in Bethlehem's manger! How can we span the distance between the mighty God and a helpless child? And yet the Creator of worlds, He in whom was the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was manifest in the helpless babe in the manger. Far higher than any of the angels, equal with the Father in dignity and glory, and yet wearing the garb of humanity! Divinity and humanity were mysteriously combined, and man and God became one. It is in this union that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in humanity, we look upon God, and see in Him the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person. The Signs of the Times, July 30, 1896.

This is a great mystery, a mystery that will not be fully, completely understood in all its greatness until the translation of the redeemed shall take place. Then the power and greatness and efficacy of the gift of God to man will be understood. But the enemy is determined that this gift shall be so mystified that it will become as nothingness. The SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 5, page 1113.

We cannot explain the great mystery of the plan of redemption. Jesus took upon Himself humanity, that He might reach humanity; but we cannot explain how divinity was clothed with humanity. An angel would not have known how to sympathize with fallen man, but Christ came to the world and suffered all our temptations, and carried all our grief. The Review and Herald, October 1, 1889.

The doctrine of the incarnation of Christ in human flesh is a mystery, "even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations." It is the great and profound mystery of godliness. Christ did not make believe take human nature,- He did verily take it. He did in reality possess human nature. "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." He was the son of Mary; He was of the seed of David according to human descent. The Review and Herald, April 5, 1906.

He came to this world in human form, to live a man amongst men. He assumed the liabilities of human nature, to be proved and tried. In His humanity He was a partaker of the divine nature. In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God. The Signs of the Times, August 2, 1905.

But our Savior 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. The Desire of Ages, p. 117.

Christ bore the sins and infirmities of the race as they existed when He came to the earth to help man. In behalf of the race, with the weaknesses of fallen man upon Him, He was to stand the temptations of Satan upon all points wherewith man would be assailed. The Review and Herald, July 28, 1874.

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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.

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