

1. SETTING ASIDE THE CONFUSION
2. THE ACCUSER AND THE LAW
3. WHAT THE BIBLE PLAINLY REVEALS
4. COULD ELLEN WHITE BE ANY CLEARER?
5. BUT DIDN'T ELLEN WHITE SAY?
6. THE DESIRE OF AGES
7. THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST
8. THE SIN DEBATE
9. CAN WE REALLY OVERCOME LIKE JESUS?
10. HOW WAS JESUS DIFFERENT?
11. THE THIRD OPTION
12. CONCLUSION

BY TONY RYKERS

“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 of 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.”  
1SM 244.

# 1. SETTING ASIDE THE CONFUSION

Confusion, confusion, confusion, wherever we turn we find it, for this is Satan's plan to confuse and destroy the people of God.

**“The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing”. ST 80**

It should be no surprise then, that we see confusion abound when the subject of the Nature of Christ is presented, and how easy it is for the learned to confuse, deceive and even lie to the novice with great success. How often I have seen people swayed to erroneous views on this subject; primarily because they have been totally confused by a mass of terms and expressions taken out of context from their true meaning and placed in an exaggerated light to perpetuate error. How important I believe it is that we explain exactly what we mean when we use certain words and terms, and to honestly portray the truth, that we will not be found perpetuating error and confusion.

## What is a Fallen Nature?

What does the word “NATURE” mean in relation to the term “FALLEN NATURE”? This is an important question for us to understand for it gives us a basis and a foundation to work upon. Often words and phrases such as Nature, Character, Overcoming Power, Divinity, The Second Adam, Sinlessness etc. are put together into the theological mix master, blended, and then presented as representing the truths of God. This so often confuses and takes us miles away from what we are really trying to establish, which is what type of nature did Christ have? What is a Fallen Nature? This is the question we need to understand from the beginning, otherwise we will not understand what we are studying. Ellen White explains it for us in the book Education.

**“The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every mans' experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist . . . He can find help in but one power. That power is Christ.” Ed 29.**

A fallen nature is therefore a “Bent” or a “Force” to evil, an inherent power within us that naturally pulls to sin and disobedience, which each generation has inherited from their parentage back to the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It is this bent to evil that has evidently lead all men to fall into sin and become sinners, and thus worthy of death, for “the wages of sin is death.” Rom 6:23.

Therefore, if a fallen nature is a “Bent to Evil” a force which we cannot resist by our own effort, an unfallen nature is therefore the opposite, a nature that naturally is in harmony with the law and will of God.

To find out what type of nature Christ possessed when He became a man and lived among man, this is to be the focus of our study. Whether He had a Bent or force to Evil like us, or if He had Adam's nature before he fell into sin or maybe a nature partly like our fallen nature and partly like unfallen Adam's nature.

One of the main problems of understanding the doctrine of the nature of Christ is that people often do not understand what is being studied, and that is Christ's NATURE. So often people confuse Christ's NATURE with Christ's CHARACTER. Here we must differentiate between the words nature and character.

The word nature is to be understood as something we inherit from our forbears, it is that natural “bent” or “force” to evil that “ is manifested in every man's experience” as we have just noted. Character, on the other hand, is cultivated by our choice and is revealed by our words, thoughts, feelings and actions.

For an example of how we can confuse nature with character I will give the following example. It has been reiterated to me many times that “Christ could not have had our nature because He never sinned, He was sinless, therefore He could not be like us.” This type of statement is a classic example of confusing Christ’s fallen nature with the character He sustained while possessing this fallen nature. Christ inherited the nature of fallen man, but He had the perfect character of unfallen man for He never sinned. This type of confusion has many bewildered. Our focus must be upon His NATURE, and when we have established a foundation upon what type of nature Christ possessed we can then look at the other attributes of Christ, eg. His character, divinity, etc and see how it all ties together in a beautiful line of truth.

My hope is that as individuals, and as God’s people we can honestly and practically study the truth without putting our own biases and ideas into words, statements, Bible and Ellen White quotations; then the confusion should disappear and the beautiful line of truth shine forth from this powerful doctrine. As we come to understand this doctrine as we should we will be able to say with Ellen White

**“The humanity of the Son of Man 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” 1SM 244**

But we must be careful to search honestly and prayerfully for:-

**“In our conclusions, we make many mistakes because of our erroneous views of the nature of our Lord” 7 BC 929.**

This is sadly what I believe many are doing. So let us then make sure our views on the nature of Christ are truth so that our conclusions will not be erroneous, for I believe they will have eternal consequences.

Let us now start from the beginning of the Great Controversy and look at the simple facts about the Nature of Christ. As we do this let us remember that we are studying to understand what type of NATURE Christ had when He came to this earth. This is to be our primary focus. And let us be careful not to jumble every attribute of Christ together eg. His nature, character, divinity etc, for if we do this we will surely obtain a false understanding upon this subject.

## 2. THE ACCUSER & THE LAW.

To understand fully why Jesus came to the earth, and what he was to accomplish in His mission to save fallen humanity, we must go back to the beginning of the Great Controversy in Heaven. Here we find the central pivoting point upon which the whole great controversy balances: The Law of God, the great moral standard for all the universe. Satan's attack from the onset was against the Law of God, for God's law is the foundation of His government in heaven and on the earth.

**“God could not change nor alter one precept of His law in order to save man; for the law is the foundation of His government. It is unchangeable, unalterable, infinite and eternal. 1 SM 240. See also PP 66 & 34**

Thus it was Satan's effort to undermine the foundation of God's Government by attacking His law and claiming that it was faulty, so therefore, there was fault with the Law giver.

**“Satan the fallen angel had declared that no man could keep the Law of God after the disobedience of Adam. He claimed the whole race under His control.” 3 SM 136.**

**“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 law giver.” ST 1-16-1896.**

Satan's accusations against God's law and His governing ability were very strong and quite convincing considering the number of angels that he deceived. (see PP 37.) These accusations needed to be answered for God has given mankind a Law, written on stone with His own finger, and He declares that all are to obey His Law. For death is the result of disobedience. Satan points to this and declares God unjust. He says “You give them a law that they cannot keep and when they fail to keep it you condemn them to death. Therefore you are unjust and unfit to rule the universe.” Satan has always been the accuser of the brethren and also of God. (Rev 12:10). He is also the father of lies. (JN 8:44). Therefore these accusations must be met and answered by God before a watching universe and a perishing world.

**“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.” Romans 8: 3 - 4**

God must answer the lies and accusations of Satan, and this He has done “in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor 4 – 6. For God sent His Son “in the likeness of sinful flesh” “to condemn sin in the flesh,” and to prove Satan's charges to be lies, and that man empowered by God can keep the law and that the law is not faulty, but pure and holy and just and good, and that God is righteous in all His dealings with men and Holy in all His ways.

The only way Jesus could answer the accusations of Satan was to come in sinful flesh, to take our fallen nature, other wise He would have answered no accusations. If Jesus came in Adam's nature before he fell or in a nature that was partly fallen and partly unfallen, Jesus would have accomplished nothing in answering Satan's charges.

It would have in fact added strength to Satan's charges, for it would have seemed to the watching universe as if Satan was right and that God was wrong in binding the Law upon us.

Ellen White makes it plain in the beautiful statement found in Desire of Ages page 24.

**“Satan represents God’s Law of Love as a Law of selfishness He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents with all the woe that has resulted, he charges upon the creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception. As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences. “In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren.” Heb 2 : 17. If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was “in all points tempted like we are” Heb 4 :15 He endured every trial to which we are subject, and he exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. He says “I delight to do thy will, O my God: Yea thy Law is within my heart.” Ps 40 : 8. As He went about doing good and healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God’s Law and the nature of His service. His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the Law of God.” DA 24**

Christ is our substitute and our example in the plan of salvation. If we have anything to bear that Jesus did not, then upon this ground the accusations of Satan still stand and there is still doubt in the universe as to whether God is just in His dealings with men. But praise God, “Jesus came down to the level of those He wished to save,” RH 15 Dec 1896. He has given us an example to follow, and has acquired for us power to obey.

Jesus is our example and we are admonished to follow in His footsteps.

**“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:” 1 Pet 2:21-22**

If Jesus was not like us in nature, how could He possibly be our example? How can we be expected to ever overcome sin as He did? How can we answer the charges of Satan against God and His Law? The answer is we cannot. All we have, if Jesus had a nature completely or partially different from us, is a powerless gospel and accusations that undermine the government of God. If Satan’s charges were that fallen man could not obey the Law of God, then the only way Jesus could give the lie to Satan’s charges was by proving that fallen man could obey the Law of God.

**“We are ever to be thankful that Jesus has proved to us by actual facts that man can keep the commandments of God, giving contradiction to Satan’s falsehood that man cannot keep them. The great Teacher came to our world to stand at the head of humanity, to thus elevate and sanctify humanity by His holy obedience to all of Gods requirements showing it is possible to obey all the commandments of God. He has demonstrated that a lifelong obedience is possible. 3SM 139**

How often I have been amazed at those who over emphasize the substitutionary work of Christ and down play the fact that He is our example and our substitute. These are two vital aspects of the plan of salvation for mankind and for the watching universe. One is just as important as the other. If Christ did not fully descend to our level to take our nature and be our example, Satan would have immediately cried “unfair”, and nothing in the name of justice would have been accomplished. To place Him above our nature in any way is to obscure the amazing victory He gained for us.

The war that Satan began against the Law of God will continue to the end of this earth’s history, and Satan will devise every means to confuse the people of God upon this point.

**“The warfare against God’s Law, which was begun in Heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. D.A. 763**

**“Therefore he (Satan) is constantly seeking to deceive the followers of Christ with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible for them to overcome.” G.C. 489**

Through the false interpretations of the nature of Christ, Satan is deceiving many of the people of God into believing that they cannot keep Gods Law, and through believing this they are giving their allegiance to Satan’s lies against God and His Law. May God forbid that His people would ever be found giving credence to Satan’s lies and be found to be perpetuating error, for God will surely judge these things. Ellen White makes the following statement that should fill those with fear who advocate that Jesus was different from us in His human nature and that we cannot keep the Law of God as He did.

**“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 Law giver. Men who are under the control of Satan repeat these accusations against God, in asserting that men cannot keep the Law of God. Jesus humbled Himself, clothing His divinity with humanity, in order that He might stand as the Head and representative of the human family, and both by precept and example condemn sin in the flesh, and give the lie to Satan’s charges.” ST 1 - 16 - 1896.**

It is my earnest prayer that we will not, as the People of God, be found in agreeance with Satan and his charges against God. But that we will rejoice that Jesus took our nature and proved that we can keep the Law of God, and that Satan has been proved to be a liar and a deceiver.

### 3. WHAT THE BIBLE PLAINLY REVEALS

The first place we should always turn when establishing a doctrinal foundation is emphatically the word of God.

**“Before accepting any doctrine or precept we should demand a plain Thus saith the Lord in it support.” GC 595**

All too often we turn to Ellen White and sadly even other sources, without digging deep into the word of God. This should always be our standard of doctrine, and everything else should be brought to bear to “the law and the testimony.” Isa. 8:20

Not that we should refuse other authors and the inspired writings of Ellen White, but our foundation must always be founded, first, in the word of God.

I once read an article upon this subject that began with “The Bible has virtually nothing to say concerning the nature of Christ. So we must therefore go straight to Ellen White’s writings.” Is this true? Does the bible have virtually nothing to say upon this subject? This I do not believe, for if “the humanity of the Son of God is everything to us.” 1SM 244. surely it must be presented in the word of God for our understanding, as all doctrine is.

#### In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh

**“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.” Rom 8: 3-4**

**“But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: Phil 2 : 7.**

These two statements dealing with Christ’s “likeness,” stand or fall together, for the same Greek word ( Homoioma ) is used in both places for “ likeness.” The word likeness in the Greek means - a form, resemblance, made like to, likeness, shape, similitude.

(Strong’s Comprehensive Concordance) The emphasis is upon Christ’s likeness to us, not His unlikeness. When we read that Christ was “made in the likeness of men.” Phil 2 : 7 we can understand this to mean only one thing, He was made like man, “Christ was a real man.” 1 SM 244 The emphasis is like, not unlike.

When Paul and Barnabas healed the cripple at Lystra, (Acts 14 : 8 - 10) the heathen idol worshippers cried “the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men.” The emphasis of “ likeness” being, they saw men just like themselves. So also in Phil 2 : 7 the emphasis being that Jesus was just like men.

But Rom 8:3 states that He was not just like man in appearance, but like sinful flesh. There is no other way to honestly understand this statement, other than Jesus took our sinful flesh upon Himself. The word flesh means our fallen nature. The word flesh

(sarx) in Greek means - (by impl) human nature (with its frailties - phys or moral - and passions) or (spec) a human being. (Strong’s Comprehensive Concordance). From this it is quite obvious what Paul is emphasizing, that is, Christ’s likeness to us in nature, not His unlikeness, as some would have us believe.

But Paul does not stop here, he gives us the reason why Jesus took our sinful flesh (nature), and that is to condemn sin in our flesh. To show to the world and the watching universe, that Satan’s charge, that man cannot keep the law, was a lie, as we have already looked at, and not only this, but also “ that the righteousness of the law might be



fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit”. Rom 8 : 4. This is where the power of the gospel comes into effect in our lives. Because Jesus took our fallen nature and condemned sin by living a sinless, victorious life, He is now able to fulfill the righteousness of the law in those who fully surrender themselves to Him. He can fulfill His righteous life in the believer’s heart and so we can say with Paul

**“I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me”.**  
**Galatians 2: 20**

All this pivots upon one thing, and that is whether Christ’s nature was “likeness” or as many somehow interpret it unlikeness. Jesus cannot fulfill His victory in us if He was not like us. But because He was like us, He is able to say

**“To him that overcometh (by His power and grace) will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am sat down with my Father in His throne”.** Rev 3 : 21

Salvation is Christ’s victory reproduced in us, thus the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us. Sister White’s comments upon Rom 8:3 bring out the same emphasis of His likeness to us.

**“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.”** 5BC 1124.

**“But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom 8 : 3), He lived a sinless life. Now by His Divinity He lays hold upon the throne of Heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore are we to be perfect, even as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect”.** DA 312.

Christ’s likeness to sinful flesh in Rom 8 : 3-4 is supported very strongly in Heb 2: 14-17.

**“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; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 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.”**

In these four verses we can outline three major characteristics dealing with Christ’s nature.

1. He took the same flesh and blood as all children. Verse 14.
2. He took not the nature of angels, but of Abraham’s seed. Verse 16
3. He was in all things made like his brethren. Verse 17

Again we see the strong emphasis upon Christ being like us in nature, and for two reasons.

1. “That He might be a faithful High Priest.” Christ’s experience of being in human nature, gives Him real ability to help those who are slaves of sin and who desire to be set free. Although He did not sin, He knows by experience the weaknesses and infirmities of humanity, and the power of temptation. Therefore He does not only feel compassion toward the weak, but can also act in compassion for their salvation.

This is also brought to view in Heb 4: 15-16

**“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 therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Heb 4: 15-16**

We have a High Priest that is touched with the “feeling of our infirmities,” He knows the power of temptation, He knows the pull of the flesh, and what it means to struggle against a fallen nature. Praise God! Because of this, we can come boldly to His throne of grace, for He knows and understands the pull of a fallen nature for He has experienced it Himself. We can therefore come boldly to our Saviour, not as a sinner to an impartial God, but to one that is not ashamed to call us brother. One that can show mercy to us and give us grace to help in time of need. See also Heb 5 : 1 -2

2. The second reason is to deliver them that are in bondage to death. verse 15. Jesus took our nature upon Himself to give us an example of a sinless life and to gain the victory for us. The most wonderful truth is, that because of His immeasurable condescension in taking our flesh, and gaining the victory for us, He is now able by faith to live in our hearts (Col 1 : 26 - 27 Gal 2 : 20) and set us free from the bondage of sin.

**“If the Son therefore shall make you free ye shall be free indeed.” Jn 8:36. See also Rom 6: 16 - 18**

His strength is to be our strength, His power is to be our power, His victory is to be our victory, and His life is to be our life. All this could only be gained by Jesus battling on behalf of man as a man; otherwise the victory He won for us would be useless to us. If He was different from us in nature in any way, then the victory He won would be only for those with a corresponding nature, and would not meet the criteria of those He wished to save. He could not reproduce in us something He had not gained the victory in himself. Thus it was vital to the plan of salvation that He took our fallen nature.

These texts speak plainly of Christ’s nature being identical with our fallen natures. Remembering that we are identifying nature not character. Christ’s character was ever pure and holy, for He never in the slightest degree committed sin, but in nature, in the pull of the flesh, or that bent or force that pulls toward sin He was just like us. In this He had to fight the battle as every man must fight.

## The Seed of David

When Christ was born into the human family about 4000 years after Adam sinned, He fulfilled two important prophecies and types. He was the seed of David and also of Abraham ( Mt 1 : 1, Rom 1 : 3, Gal 3 : 16 ) these were His forebears according to the flesh. Christ, by accepting to come as man and take the penalty of man’s sin, inherited exactly the same nature as every child of fallen Adam would receive.

**“I 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 an heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.” DA 49**

The ancestry of Christ is mentioned in Mat 1: 1-17 Lk 3: 23-38 and this is not without reason; Christ was The Promised Seed of Abraham Gal 3:16. He was the one to come through Abraham and David’s lineage. God has recorded this so there could be no missgivings about His parentage. He accepted the great law of heredity, and through His ancestors He inherited a fallen nature just like every child born to the house of David.

## What about Christ’s Divinity

Often people confuse Christ’s divinity and His humanity by blending them together and giving to His human nature a power which man cannot have. Ellen White, in the book *Desire of Ages* often makes the statement of “Christ’s divinity flashing through humanity,” and many seize these quotes and claim that Jesus was different from us, that He was divine and human and thus not the same as we. Is this so? If not, how do we understand the blending of divinity with humanity? When Christ was born into this world He laid aside His divinity and consented to have no power that is not freely available to man, He would rely upon the Father, the same as every man is able to do.

**“He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation and overcame in the strength given Him from God.” DA 24**

The fact that Jesus had no access to divine power other than we have, is also brought out in the following texts.

**“I can of mine own self do nothing: As I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. Jn 5: 30**

**“...The Son can do nothing of himself...” Jn 5: 19**

**“...But the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” Jn 14:10**

Although Jesus was divinity when He came to this earth and was part of the Godhead (Col 2 : 9), He consented to lay aside His power as deity, and to rely upon the Father, by faith, to perform His miracles and to be victorious over sin and Satan.

**“But He rested not in the possession of Almighty power. It was not as the “Master of earth and sea and sky” that he reposed in quiet. That power He had laid down, and He says, “I can of mine own self do nothing” JN 5: 30 He trusted in the Father’s might. It was in faith - faith in God’s love and care - that Jesus rested, and the power of that word which stilled the storm was the power of God.” DA 336**

**“His divinity was hidden. He overcame in human nature, relying upon God for power.” Y1 4-25-1901**

The chart on the next page compares Christ while still in possession of His divinity, to after He laid His divinity aside and was manifest in fallen humanity.

Another prominent verse is John 1:14

**“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.”**

Here we see, once again a direct reference to Christ taking our “flesh” the same “flesh” as Romans 8:3 which is fallen human nature. Again in Galatians we see the same line of truth.

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Gal 4:4-5

Here again we see that Jesus was made like those He wished to redeem.

## Born filled with the Holy Spirit

It has been argued that because Jesus was born filled with the Holy Spirit that He had an advantage over us. Here again we must stress that Christ’s nature is primarily what we are studying. It is true that Jesus was born filled with the Spirit of God, but this was His power and strength so as not to yield to the pull of the flesh, but to gain the victory and to defeat Satan. It is in this that Christ gives us an example, for if we will surrender our selves fully to the working of

### CHRIST’S DIVINITY

Eternal - Isa 9:6, Mic 5:2.

Immortal - 1 Tim 6:16.

Omnipresent (everywhere) Ps 139: 7-8

Omnipotent (all powerful) Ps 147:6.

Omniscient (all knowing) Ps139:4,

Jer 23:24, Hos 7:2, Prov 15:3.

Sinless Nature - Ps 32:4.

His will one with God – Jn 17:5

Could not be tempted - Jms 1:13.

God is a consuming fire to sin - Heb 12:29, Deut 4:24.

Impossible to disobey - Jms 1:13

Used His Deity - Jn 1:1-3.

### CHRIST’S HUMANITY

Begotten Son of God - Heb 1:5, Lk 1 31 – 35.

Mortal - Phil 2:8, Heb 2:14.

Localized - Jn 1:14.

Powerless - Jn 5:19, 14:10.

Grew in wisdom - Jn 8:28, Lk 2:52, DA 71.

Fallen Nature - Rom 8:3.

Independent will - Jn 5:30, Mt 26:39

Tempted in all points - Heb 4:15

Not consuming - Jn 1:4, Lk 9: 53-56.

Possible to disobey - Heb 4:15, 1Pet 2:22, Jn 15:10.

Lay Deity aside - Phil 2:7, DA 336.

**“Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh, clothing His Divinity with Humanity.” ST 4-11-95**

With the Holy Spirit we too will have the same victory over the flesh. For Ellen White has said,

**“To Jesus, who emptied Himself for the salvation of lost humanity, the Holy Spirit was given without measure. So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for his indwelling. Our Lord Himself has given the command, be filled with the Spirit.” Eph 5:18” M.B 21**

Here we must point out that Jesus had to exercise His own will and choose to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never forces. He can only help us if we surrender our wills and choices to Him. Always, when in our Christian walk temptation arises, there is the pull of the fallen nature to wrong, and the voice of the Holy Spirit prompting to right. There is that conscious decision to be made by the will (which is the kingly power to choose right or wrong TE 113 ML 318) Either to submit to the flesh, or to submit to the power of the Holy Spirit. In this Christ was as we are He still had to make a conscious choice; the Holy Spirit could not force Him to obey. This is why Ellen White said that Jesus was an example to children, youth and manhood for we can all yield to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as Jesus did.

It is also worth noting that parents play an enormous part in determining how much the Holy Spirit influences their children. For just as fallen nature is transmitted from one generation to the next, so we can also transmit spiritual promptings to our children. It was in this order that John the Baptist was born filled with the Holy Spirit from birth. Lk 1:15 and also Jeremiah Jer 1:5. These are not isolated cases; for the prophet of the Lord has beautifully told us that.

**“Even the babe in its mother’s arms may dwell as under the shadow of the Almighty through the faith of the praying mother. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. If we will live in communion with God, we too may expect the Divine Spirit to mould our little ones, even from their earliest moments.” D.A 512**

Here we can see that the fallen nature can be influenced and moulded by the Holy Spirit from our earliest moments, largely from the parent’s prayerful intervention.

The major point to clarify here, is that Christ’s nature was not altered in any way by being filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, but that the Holy Spirit was his strength to overcome. And this is the experience that all should have, who surrender their lives to Christ. When we become Christians and are “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,”

Eph 1:13. We still have (as all Christian’s would know) the pull of the fallen nature, having the Holy Spirit in our lives does not eradicate fallen nature, but empowers us to overcome it.

## Christ’s Experience to be ours

It is in this way, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that we are to be so closely related to Christ as to have His experience. Ellen White in

D.A. 363 said that “His experience is to be ours.” In the following scriptures we can see how we are to have Christ’s experience in our own lives.

### 1. His Sufferings:

We are to partake of His suffering 1Pet 4:13, Phil 3:10.

### 2. His Example:

We are to follow His example and follow in His foot steps,  
1 Pet 2:21, Jn 13:15, 1 Jn 2:6.

### 3. His Yoke:

We are to take His yoke upon us, and learn of Him. Mt 11:28-29.

### 4. His Mind:

We are to have His mind. Phil 2:5, 1 Pet 4:1

### 5. His Holiness:

We are to partake of His holiness. Heb 12:10, 1 Pet 1:16

### 6. His Works:

We shall keep His works to the end. Rev 2:26 we shall do His works. Jn 14:12

### 7. His Faith:

The Remnant Church has the faith of Jesus. Rev 14:12, Heb 12:2

8. His Love:

We are to love one another as Christ has loved us. "Continue ye, in my love." Jn 13:34, 15:9, 1 Jn 4:19.

9. His Victory:

We are to overcome as Christ has overcome. Rev 3:21

10. His Nature:

Through Christ we become partakers of the Divine nature. 2 Pet 1:3-4.

11. His Life:

Christ liveth in me. His life is to be manifested in our lives. Gal 2:20, 2 Cor 4:10.

12. His Cross:

We are to take His cross of self sacrifice. Lk 14:27, Gal 6:14.

13. His Spirit:

We are to have the Spirit of Christ. Rom 8:9, Jn 14:18.

14. His Image:

We are to be changed into His image. 1 Cor 3:18

15. His Glory:

The glory that thou has given me, I have given them. Jn 17:22

16. His Glorious Body:

Fashioned like unto His glorious body at the Second Advent.

Phil 3:21, 1Jn 3:2.

17. His Purity:

We are to seek to become pure even as He is pure. 1Jn 3:3.

18. His Death:

We are to be "planted" in the likeness of His death. Rom 6:3-5,  
Gal 2:20, 2 Tim 2:11.

19. His Joy:

"My joy might remain in you". Jn 15:11.

20. His Temptations:

Heb 4:15 Tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin. Therefore He is able to succor us. Heb 2:18

21. His Likeness to us:

Made in all points like unto His brethren. Jn 1:14, Heb 2:17,  
Rom 8:3-4.

22. One with Christ:

That they may be one in us. Jn 17:21, 1 Cor 6:17.

23. His Light:

Christ said “I am the light of the world.” Jn 8:12. Christ dwelling in the believer’s heart makes them the light of the world. Jesus said “Ye are the light of the world.” Mt 5:14-16.

#### 24. Abraham’s Seed:

All believers are “Abraham’s seed” Gal 3:16, 29. & joint heirs with Christ. Gal 3:29, Rom 8:16-17.

#### 25. Spiritual Marriage:

In Eph 5:30-32 we find that as a man joins in marriage to his wife, the two become one flesh verse 31 & in verse 32 we find that Paul is speaking concerning Christ and the Church. That is Christ and His followers are of one flesh, and that they are to have a relationship that is likened to a marriage relationship. Romans 7:4 brings out this beautiful truth also.

How can Christ’s experience be ours in so many points if He did not come in our nature? How can we be so closely related to Christ as to be spiritually married to Him and be of “one flesh” if He has not identified Himself with fallen humanity by taking man’s fallen nature? How can we truthfully and honestly follow Him as our example in all things if in any way He had an advantage or power that is not available to us? The simple answer is we can’t. The life Christ lived in human nature is just that which God wants us to live in human nature, a life of victory and obedience.

**“As Jesus was in human nature, so God means His followers to be. In His strength we are to live the life of purity and nobility which the Saviour lived.” 8T 289**

### That Holy Thing

A text that is often quoted to advocate that Jesus was different in nature to fallen humanity is Lk 1:35 where Christ is referred to by the angel as “that holy thing.” Some seem to take this as a direct reference that Christ was different in nature to us because He is referred to as “that holy thing”, but this the text does not say. Here again I must stress that we must not confuse Christ’s nature with His character, divinity or any of the other attributes He possessed.

When it is stated that Jesus was born “that holy thing” this could mean a number of points,

1. Christ was holy because He was part of the God Head.
2. Christ was holy because He would never sin.
3. Every first born child was “holy unto the Lord” (Lk 2:23) therefore Christ would be called holy.

This is not a direct reference to Christ having a different nature from us, for it will be noticed that each believer is commanded to be holy also. 1 Pet 2:16. It is in this way, once again, that Jesus is our example, because He was holy we are to be the same, His holiness is to be recreated in us. We can and should by the grace of God be able to be called holy as well, even though we possess our fallen nature. Possessing a fallen nature does not make one unholy. It is only as we yield to that nature that we become defiled and unholy. So with Christ, He could remain holy while in possession of a fallen nature, so long as he maintained the victory over it.

The bible speaks for itself; the evidence is plain when we accept the simple utterances of the scripture. The bible speaks unequivocally of Jesus’ nature. We must as individuals and as a Church Community be very careful not to twist scripture out of context until it says the opposite to what God is trying to teach us.

Many I have talked to upon this subject have stated “I don’t think it matters what I believe concerning the nature of Christ, I just believe in Him as my Saviour.” This, I believe, is a dangerous position, for what we believe upon this subject will ultimately shape and mould our relationship with Christ and our understanding of the gospel. This is why it states in 1 Jn 4:3 & 2 Jn 7, that those who teach that Jesus did not take our flesh are antichrists. For if we do not believe in a Saviour that came down to our level, we take away His power to be our faithful High Priest and our example. He could not also fulfill the righteousness of the law in us and truly make us free from sin.

In a few words, it would take the power of the gospel away, and leave Jacob's Ladder a few rungs short for those Jesus longs to save.



## 4. COULD ELLEN WHITE BE ANY CLEARER?

Ellen White made many statements concerning the nature that Christ had, and its relation to the plan of salvation. It would be impossible here to quote every one of them, so we shall just look at some of the more prominent ones. In the next chapter we shall look at ones that seem to be confusing.\*

The first point we need to clarify is that Ellen White does not contradict herself in what she writes. We must be very careful to use the Hermetical Principal of study that we use when studying the word of God, to compare quote with quote, and not to interpret her writings by our biases, but to let her explain what she believed. I find that almost all the confusion that abounds upon this subject has evolved from taking Ellen White's writings out of their true meaning and teaching what she never believed and never taught, and not honestly comparing her writings in order to come to a correct conclusion.

In some of the strongest statements that Ellen White makes, she uses the words "sinful nature" or "fallen nature," which to the writer's understanding can mean only one things, that in nature Jesus was 100% like us. We must also make it clear from the start that Ellen White in no wise, when speaking with strong words about Christ's nature classed Him with having corruption or sin upon Him in any way. He was ever sinless and undefiled. We must remember that she is talking about Christ's nature only, not his character.

**"He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succor them that are tempted." MM 181**

**"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." RH December 15 1896.**

**"Think of Christ's humiliation. He took upon Himself fallen suffering human nature degraded and defiled by sin." YI 12-20-1900.**

**"The people well knew that in itself the serpent had no power to help them. It was a symbol of Christ. As the image made in the likeness of the destroying serpents was lifted up for their healing, so one made in the likeness of sinful flesh was to be their redeemer." DA 174-175.**

Here Sister White is simply confirming Romans 8:3 "likeness of sinful flesh."

There is also the statements where she states "fallen nature."

**"Notwithstanding that 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 God." DA 112.**

**"It was in the order of God that Christ should take upon Himself the form and nature of fallen man. That He might be made perfect through suffering, and endure Himself the strength of Satan's temptations, that He might better know how to succor those who should be tempted." 4 S.G. 115-116**

**"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." 1 BC 1085**

**“He would take man’s fallen nature.” EW 150.**

All these statements speak for themselves they need no comment. They plainly state what nature Christ had, and that was a fallen nature just like ours. Christ’s nature was a bent or force to evil just like we are born with. He had to overcome in the same manner as we must overcome, by the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and by complete surrender of self, and submission to God.

Other ways Ellen White spoke of Christ’s nature are listed below. It will be noticed that she does not always make direct reference to the word nature, but the emphasis is upon His oneness with humanity and His likeness to us.

**“The weakness of fallen man upon Him.” RH 7-28-1874**

**“Unites His interests with the fallen sons and daughters of Adam.” RH 1-21-1873**

**“Humbled Himself to fallen humanity.” RH 2-24-1874**

**“Bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race.”  
RH 7-28-1874**

**“Reached man where He is.” RH 8-18-74**

**“Linked Himself to the weakness of humanity.”  
RH 4-1-1875**

**“Identified itself with the weakness and wretchedness of fallen man.”  
RH 8-4-1874**

**“The form of humanity with all its attendant ills.” ST 1-4-1877**

**“To the level of man’s feeble faculties.” RH 12-11-1888**

**“To unite the fallen race with Himself.” ST 9-23-1889**

**“An experience in all that pertains to human life.” RH 12-24-1889**

**“To meet fallen man where they were.” RH 7-21-1891**

**“One with the fallen race.” ST 4-25-1892**

**“Bearing the humanity we bear.” MS 21-1895**

**“Passing over the ground which man must travel.” ST 5-27-9**

**“The child of a fallen race.” Letter 19 1901**

**“Down to the level of fallen humanity.” G.C.B. 4-25-1901**

**“Brother in our infirmities.” ST 6-18-1902**

**“Bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh.” ST 9-24-1902**

**“Took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity.” ST 12-03-1802**

**“Stand among men as one of them.” ST 4-29-1903**

**“To stand by the side of fallen beings.” ST 6-03-1903**

**“As a man among men.” ST 12-09-1903**

**“Christ came to be one with humanity.” MS 24 1903**

**“He assumed the liabilities of human nature.” MS 22 1905**

**“He identified Himself with man’s weakness.” MS 49 1907**

**“To live a life like that of every human being.” MS 49 1909**

**“Just that which you may be He was in human nature.”  
Letter 106 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 had been.”  
1 SM 408**

Ellen White speaks freely and openly of Christ’s nature and its relation to us and the plan of salvation. She could not say it any clearer. He simply had our fallen nature, to be our example, to give the lie to Satan’s charges, and to empower us to obey even as He obeyed. The most profound and beautifully written statement that Ellen White has penned upon this subject, is, in the writer’s estimation, found in Desire of Ages page 24

**“Satan represents God’s law of love as a law of selfishness. He declared that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents, with all the woe that has resulted, he charges upon the Creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin; and suffering, and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception. As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences. “In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren.” Heb 2:17 If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was “In all points tempted like as we are.” Heb 4:15. He endured every trial to which we are Subject, and He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. He says “I delight to do thy will, O my God: Yea, thy law is within my heart.” Ps 40:8. As He went about doing good, and healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God’s law and the nature of His service. His life testifies that it is possible for us to obey the law of God. By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of Man, He gave us an example of obedience, as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey.” DA 24**

These statements agree in every way with the word of God just as we should expect to find in a prophet of the Lord. But of course, it couldn’t be that simple. There are those so called contradictory statements which we will

look at in the next chapter. The ones that, when you think you have just started to understand this subject someone says “Hey, but didn’t Sister White say” . . .?

## 5. BUT DIDN'T ELLEN WHITE SAY ...??

As we look at Ellen White's quotations that seem to be confusing we must first understand that Ellen White would in no wise contradict herself. She could not and would not have made the plain statements that we have just read. and then make one that says the opposite. To do this is to undermine faith in her as a prophet and cast a shadow upon her writings.

If we read her statements in context and understand that she uses the same words in different ways we will find perfect harmony in her writings. But if we are not willing to diligently search for the truth, and just hold to our own fanciful ideas of what we hope she said, because it suits our own faulty experience and personal biases, we will never harmonize her writings. And we will make her writings look confused and contradictory.

The first statement that we will examine is one that confused me for a time when I first began to study this doctrine. I understood most of what has already been presented and saw a plain line of truth, then I was shown this statement :-

**“Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people 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.**

**Bro Baker avoid every question in relation to the humanity of Christ which is liable to be misunderstood. Truth lies close to the track of presumptions. In treading upon the humanity of Christ, you need to guard strenuously every assertion, lest your words be taken to mean more than they imply.... 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 a one as ourselves: For it cannot be. The exact time when humanity blended with divinity, it is not necessary for us to know. We are to keep our feet on the rock Christ Jesus, as God revealed in humanity. . . . .**

**The first Adam fell: The second Adam held fast to God and His word under the most trying circumstances, and His faith in His Father's goodness, mercy and love did not waver for one moment. “It is written” was His weapon of resistance, and it is the sword of the spirit which every human being is to use. “ Hereafter I will not talk much with you: For the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me” - nothing to respond to temptation. Not one occasion has been given in response to His manifold temptations. Not once did Christ step on Satan's ground, to give him any advantage. Satan found nothing in Him to encourage his advances. “ Letter written to W.L.H Baker 1895.**

When we read this statement we must first decide between two points.

1. If Ellen White is here advocating that Christ's nature is different to ours, then she is contradicting other plain statements, and therefore is unreliable.

2. Or Sister White was speaking of something else, and that we do not fully understand what the context was behind what she wrote in this letter.

I believe the second option is the right one. I think it is fair to say that, a firm foundation has already been laid from scripture and Ellen White, and that in all honesty we cannot disregard this evidence and dogmatically hold to one or two statements that seem to say something contrary. To do this would be to fall under the same deceptions that the fallen Churches of Babylon have, when they pull a text or two out of context to substantiate their false doctrines. For example, they believe that the thief on the cross went straight to Heaven, and therefore so must we. They base this on one or two texts of scripture, while they totally neglect the rest of what scripture says, which speaks of totally the opposite position. Thus they now have the erroneous doctrine of the immortality of the soul. We must be very careful therefore to lay our foundations first in the scripture and Ellen White, and then try to understand what the more difficult texts and quotations are saying.

This quote has become widely known as the Baker letter. It was written in 1895 to Pastor W.L.H. Baker in Tasmania. This letter has become one of the most controverted letters that Ellen White has written. To get a very thorough and honest analysis of this letter Ralph Larson's book "The Word Was Made Flesh" is a must. Larson gives a very detailed and, I believe honest, understanding of this letter. Here we will just briefly analyze what Ellen White wrote in this letter to Pastor Baker, and how we can understand it in the light of what has already been presented.

It is worth noting first that this letter was a private unpublished letter, and that Ellen White has stated that we look to her published word to ascertain her beliefs upon doctrine (5T 696). Not that her unpublished private letters and writings are not worth reading. But it must be pointed out, that, as in the case of the Baker letter she was addressing a certain individual's problems, of which we are not exactly sure what they were, so therefore we do not know exactly what the context is in which she is correcting him.

To try to understand what Baker's problem was we will note a few points from Ellen White's letter to him.

1. "Let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such as one as ourselves; for it cannot be."
2. "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."

Here are two points that give us strong evidence of what Pastor Baker's doctrinal problem was.

The first point Sister White makes is a warning "of making Christ altogether human such as one as ourselves." The second is that Pastor Baker was leaving impressions upon minds that Christ in some way was corrupted by sin.

She also spoke other strong sentences to Pastor Baker concerning Christ having never sinned.

"The first Adam fell: The second Adam held fast to God."

"Did not waver for a moment"

"Hath nothing in me"

"Nothing to respond to temptation."

"Not once did Christ step on Satan's ground"

"Satan found nothing in Him"

From all these points it is obviously clear that Baker had taken the humanity of Christ to the extreme and that Ellen White's letter to him was a warning to him; not to tell him that Jesus had a different nature than us, for she said to him,

“He took upon Himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted.”

But to warn him that he was going too far, and that whatever he was advocating was leaving the impression that Christ had some corruption in His life. It is in this context that Ellen White said to Baker.

“He could have sinned, He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity.”

This brings us to that nasty word “Propensity.” Many have advocated that Christ was different from us because we have propensities to sin and Christ did not. To understand this problem we must first note that Ellen White used the words passions and propensities in different ways. She also uses the word nature and character in different ways. \*See appendix  
Ellen White in the two following statements speaks of two types of propensities.

**“Our natural propensities must be controlled, or we can never overcome as Christ overcame.” 4T 235.**

**“He could have sinned, He could have fallen but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity.”  
Baker Letter.**

Here we see two types of propensities, the “natural propensities” that bent to evil which we all inherit, and the “evil propensities” that we develop when we fall into sin and develop sin habits. The crucial point is that an evil propensity develops from our inherited bent to evil when we yield to temptation. Jesus never developed such evil propensities. He always maintained the victory over His inherited nature.

It is in this way, I believe, that Ellen White was speaking to Pastor Baker when she said Jesus had no evil propensities. Especially due to the fact that Baker was advocating that Christ somehow had corruption upon Him. She was simply stating that He never developed any habits of sin. That He was ever pure and holy, free from corruption.

## Passions

This is another word that is used to confuse the novice and those who may not have read Ellen White's writings upon this subject enough.

I am constantly amazed at the dishonesty of those who show only one of Ellen White's statements upon this subject of “passions,” and do not give a balanced view, which if done, would simply explain this so called evidence that Jesus was different from us in nature.

As was stated in the previous section Ellen White used words in different ways. This is exactly what she does with “passions.” The two following quotes plainly show this point

**“He was a mighty petitioner, not possessing the passions of our fallen nature, but compassed with infirmities, tempted in all points like as we are.” 2T 509**

**“Though He had all the strength of passion of humanity, never did He yield to do one act which was not pure and elevating and noble.” In Heavenly Places 155.**

At first glance these two statements seem to contradict themselves. But here we see the same problem as with propensities. Ellen White is using the same word to describe two aspects of passions, one we inherit, one we

develop when we fall into sin. In the first quote she states He did not “possess” our passions and in the second quote she states He had all the “strength” of our passions. Jesus had the “strength” of our passions through the pull of the fallen nature, but did not “possess” our passions for He never yielded to sin.

If we do not understand these quotes in this light, Ellen White becomes confusing and makes no sense. Ellen White was either using the same words to describe two different aspects of passions and propensities or she is simply contradicting herself.

## Vanquished Satan in Adam’s nature?

Another quotation that people tend to get hung up on is one found in the Youth Instructor April 25 1901.

**“Christ . . . vanquished Satan in the same nature over which in Eden Satan gained the the victory. The enemy was overcome by Christ in His human nature. The power of the Saviour’s Godhead was hidden. He overcame in human nature, relying upon God for power. This is the privilege of us all. In proportion to our faith will be our victory.”**

The first part of this statement is often confused by people to mean that Christ had the unfallen nature of Adam, and not the fallen nature of man. But it is apparent that Ellen White is here contrasting human nature with divine nature, and not contrasting different aspects of human nature. If Christ took the nature of unfallen Adam and not the fallen nature you and I inherit, it would be useless for her to say “He overcame in human nature relying upon God for power. THIS IS THE PRIVILEGE OF ALL.” It would be useless to argue that to overcome in the nature of the unfallen Adam is the privilege of us all, for this is not possible. The context of this statement is that Christ won the victory over Satan in human nature not divine nature. “The power of the Saviour’s Godhead was hidden.” Christ vanquished Satan as man, not as God.

I have found in all of the Ellen White quotes that seem to contradict the fact that Jesus had our nature, there is a misunderstanding of the way Ellen White uses certain words. Therefore we must be ever so careful to honestly compare her writings and search out what she really is stating, and not just hold onto particular statements because they fit our beliefs. It is also worth noting that she never actually stated that Christ had the nature of unfallen Adam or a nature half like Adam and half like us. But she many times plainly states that He took our fallen nature. Let us be careful then not to jump to any conclusions when we read statements that seem contradictory, but to earnestly and honestly study to know exactly what Ellen White is writing about.



## 6. THE DESIRE OF AGES

In this chapter we will look at the beautiful line of truth upon this subject as presented in the greatest book, apart from the Bible, that was ever written - The Desire of Ages. I believe, that to get a continuous line of truth upon this subject and know what Ellen White really advocated, the Desire of Ages is second to none.

I suggest to anyone that is confused about the nature of Christ and related subjects, to simply read the Desire of Ages prayerfully and honestly, and the confusion, I believe, will be gone.

The statements below are listed as they come in page sequence.

**“Satan represents God’s law as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents, with all the woe that has resulted, He charges upon the Creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering, and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception. As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences. “In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His Brethren” Heb. 2:17. If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was “in all points tempted like as we are.” Heb 4:15. He endured every trial to which we are subject. He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. He says “I delight to do thy will, O my God; Yea thy law is within my heart.” Ps 40:8 As He went about doing good and healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God’s law and the nature of His service. His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God. By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey.” Page 24**

**“The child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God “manifest in the flesh.” 1 Tim 3:16.” Page 24.**

**“But in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken.” Page 25**

**“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.” Page 49**

**“Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life’s peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss.” Page 49**

**“Jesus was placed where His character would be tested. It was necessary for Him to be constantly on guard in order to preserve His purity. He was subject to all the conflicts which we have to meet, that He might be an example to us in childhood, youth and manhood.” Page 71.**

**“Notwithstanding the humiliation of taking upon Himself our fallen nature, the voice from heaven declared Him to be the Son of the Eternal.” Page 112.**

**“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 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. 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." Page 117.

"Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness, and by his false insinuations to ensnare all who trust in God. And by passing over the ground which man must travel, our Lord has prepared the way for us to overcome." Page 122-123.

"He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us."  
Page 123

"In taking upon Himself humanity, our Saviour unites His interests with those of the fallen son's and daughter's of Adam, while through His divinity He grasps the throne of God." Page 143

"The people well knew that in itself the serpent had no power to help them. It was a symbol of Christ. As the image made in the likeness of the destroying serpents was lifted up for their healing, so one made "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3) was to be their Redeemer."  
Page 174-175

"As His representatives among men, Christ does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save. Christ took upon Himself humanity, that He might reach humanity." Page 296

"The Saviour's life of obedience maintained the claims of the law, it proved that the law could be kept in humanity. And showed the excellence of character that obedience would develop. All who obey as He did are likewise declaring that the law is "holy, and just, and good." Rom 7:12". Page 309.

"Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the top-most round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3) He lived a sinless life. Now by His divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore are we to be perfect, even as our "Father in heaven is perfect." Page 311-312

"The Elder Brother of our race is by the eternal throne. He looks upon every soul who is turning his face toward Him as the Saviour. He knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our wants, and where lies the strength of our temptations; for He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Page 329

**“As one with us, a sharer in our needs and weaknesses, He was wholly dependent upon God, and in the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trial.” Page 363**

**“So fully was Jesus surrendered to the will of God that the Father alone appeared in His life. Although tempted in all points like as we are, He stood before the world untainted by the evil that surrounded Him. Thus we also are to overcome as Christ overcame.” Page 389**

**“Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, fear not; I am with you. . . I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive cord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live.” Page 483**

**“Though He was the Son of God, yet He had taken human nature upon Him, and He was moved by human sorrow.” Page 533**

**“He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was.” Page 664**

**“With the golden chain of His matchless love Christ has bound them to the throne of God. It is His purpose that the highest influence in the universe, emanating from the source of all power, shall be theirs, they are to have power to resist evil, power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master, power that will enable them to overcome as Christ overcame.” Page 680**

## 7. THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST

How was Jesus Tempted?

Paul in the Book of Hebrews makes the simple statement:

**“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.**

The first question that comes to view from this text is this. If Jesus was tempted like we are tempted - in all points - how are we tempted? Where do our temptations arise from? What is the source from where the enticements to sin arise? The answer to this question is found in the Book of James.

**“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth 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 bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” Jms 1: 13-15.**

The first point to notice is that we are not tempted by God, God does not tempt any man. Temptation comes from our own fleshly lusts, from our fallen nature, that “bent or force to evil.” This is the primary root for all our temptations. For Jesus to be tempted in all points like as we are, it is imperative that His temptations arise from the same source that our temptations arise. If Christ did not have the fleshly pull of our fallen nature, that inherited bent or force to evil, Then there is no way He could be tempted in all points like as we are. If He did not partake of our fallen nature His temptations would be nothing like ours. Being tempted in all points like as we are must mean He was tempted in the ways in which we are tempted. Are not our temptations basically self, pride, presumption, and the other desires that come from our fallen natures? Do we not fall because of the inner desires that lead us astray? If Jesus did not have any of these, could it really be true that He was tempted in all points like as we are?

**“The enticements which Christ resisted were those that we find so difficult to withstand.” D.A. 116**

**“He was made like unto His brethren, with the same susceptibilities, mental and physical. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” RH Feb 10 1885**

There is no other way that Christ could have been tempted to the enticements that we find so difficult to overcome, except through the pull of the fallen nature.

**“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.” 1 SM 408**

The temptations that Christ faced were real and powerful, but it must be pointed out that temptation is not sin. It is only as we yield to temptation that it becomes sin. (Jms 1:15). In this way Christ was just like us, His temptations came through the pull of the flesh. But unlike us, He never yielded to temptation, therefore temptation never conceived and became sin.

In Hebrews 4:15 we are told that Christ was tempted in all points as we are, but not in all temptation as we are. Christ could not be tempted in every individual temptation ever known to man, for even as individuals we are

not all tempted the same. For example, I have never been tempted to smoke cigarettes. I have always seen this habit as a filthy waste of time, money and health. But obviously others have been tempted and have succumbed to the temptation. Married couples without children do not have the same temptations that face those with children. Men do not face the same temptations as women do in many respects, and the list could go on and on. Our temptations rely upon time, place, and circumstance, which in the history of this earth differs from generation to generation. We all experience different temptations, not unique temptations, but different according to our circumstances.

Let me suggest that there are three main “points” from which our temptations arise. These three main “points”, I believe are the three temptations Christ faced in the wilderness, when tempted of Satan forty days and forty nights. (Mat 4:1-11) It was here that Christ met our temptations in the fullest strength and subtlety that Satan could conceive. And by gaining the victory in “appetite, upon the love of the world, and upon that love of display that leads to presumption.” DA 117. Christ gained the victory over every temptation man would ever meet, for all our temptations arise from these three. Jesus was not only tempted here but was severely plagued continually by temptation during His mission to save mankind. That is why He was in continuous communion with His Father, this is why He spent whole nights in prayer, His experience was real and living.

**“He (Christ) knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our wants, and where lies the strength of our temptations; for He was, in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin.” MH 71**

Jesus, not knowing every particular temptation by experience, does know what the strength of our temptations are, for He has experienced the same pull of the flesh in a corresponding temptation. It was not the actual act that was vital for Christ to have experienced, but the strength of the pull of the flesh. For example a smoker, drinker and drug addict have three separate and distinct sin problems, but each could understand the other’s experience in the sense of the pull of the flesh, and how hard it is to resist the enticements to their habits; though they are all different. Christ was never a slave to any of these habits, but He did experience a similar temptation when He fasted forty days and forty nights. The pull of the flesh would have been similar if not far more powerful, as His body was craving for food with an extremity that would put any drug user to shame.

By resisting this one temptation, Christ in a very real sense can understand the pull of a drug addict, smoker, drinker or any other powerful temptation that may beset man. It is the strength of the pull of the flesh that was vital for Christ to overcome; He was to prove that however strong the pull of the flesh is - in whatever form it may manifest itself - we can have the victory over temptation as Christ did, by His grace and power. We must remember that:

“If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. He endured every trial to which we are subject.” DA 24

Jesus had to bear every thing that we do. He had to endure our temptations. If He did not endure temptation as man must, with the same power that is available to us then once again Satan would have cried foul and represented the victory gained for us as insufficient. For Christ could not reproduce his victorious life in us if he has not gained that victory in our fallen nature

## His Temptations Far Greater Than Ours!

We must also realize that Christ was not only tempted in all points as we are, but that He was tempted far greater than we ever will be.

**“Never will man be tried with temptations as powerful as those which assailed Christ . . . Christ’s example is before us. He overcame Satan, showing us how we may also overcome.” 4T 45.**

“The life of Jesus was a life in harmony with God. While He was a child, He thought and spoke as a child; but no trace of sin marred the image of God within Him. Yet He was not exempt from temptation. The inhabitants of Nazareth were proverbial for their wickedness. The low estimate in which they were generally held is shown by Nathaniel’s question, “Can there be any good thing come out of Nazareth?” John 1:46 Jesus was placed where His character would be tested. It was necessary for Him to be constantly on guard in order to preserve His purity. He was subject to all the conflicts which we have to meet, that He might be an example to us in childhood, youth and manhood.

Satan was unwearied in his efforts to overcome the child of Nazareth. From His earliest years Jesus was guarded by heavenly angels, yet His life was one long struggle against the powers of darkness. That there should be upon the earth one life free from the defilement of evil was an offense and a perplexity to the prince of darkness. He left no means untried to ensnare Jesus. No child of humanity will ever be called to live a holy life amid so fierce a conflict with temptation as was our Saviour.” D.A. 71.

Christ was tempted beyond the limits that we could ever be. In doing this, He has forever silenced every excuse we could ever have for sinning.

It is also worth noting that Christ’s temptations involved Him in suffering.

**“For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Heb 2:18.**

In what way did Christ’s temptations cause Him suffering? Christ suffered when He was tempted because when we resist temptation it causes us pain and suffering for we are striving against our fallen nature. “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.” Gal 5:17. There is a spiritual warfare between the powers of good and the powers of evil. For both are striving for the mastery over our being. When we resist temptation it causes us suffering, for our natural bent is toward sin, to resist, is like a drug addict resisting the power of his drug addiction; there is a striving as for life and this causes pain and suffering. In this way, once again Christ’s temptations must come via His fallen nature. Or how could He really be able to succor those who are tempted? Because He knows what we are experiencing. He knows our sufferings and knows our sorrow and pain, for He was tempted in the same manner, and He knows what it is to strive against a fallen nature.

**“In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Heb 2:18. Christ alone had experience in all the sorrows and temptations that befall human beings. Never another of woman born was so fiercely beset by temptation; never another bore so heavy a burden of the world’s sin and pain. Never was there another whose sympathies were so broad or so tender. A sharer in all the experiences of humanity, He could feel not only for, but with every burdened and tempted and struggling one.” Ed 78.**

The main point we need to focus on is the fact that for Christ to be tempted in all points like as we are, He must have had the capacity in His being to be able to be tempted as we are. This capacity could only be possible if Christ had our fallen nature, for this is the source of our temptations. If we make His nature anything but what our nature is, then we destroy the possibility of Christ being tempted as we are, for our temptations come through our fallen nature.

When Christ was upon earth He was in constant danger of falling into sin as we are. Jesus had to meet the battle as we do, and with even stronger temptations than we will ever meet. He must:

**“Fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it at the risk of failure and eternal loss” D.A. 49.**

**“Had the head of Christ been touched, the hope of the human race would have perished. Divine wrath would have come upon Christ as it did upon Adam. Christ and the Church would have been without hope.”  
ST 6-9 - 1898.**

Here we see the incredible sacrifice of Christ and the risk He took for our salvation. He not only came to take upon Himself our fallen nature and meet our temptations, but He did this with the risk of being lost with the human race. If Christ fell into sin, “He would be identified with Satan’s kingdom and would never more be one with God.” DA 687. When we understand the principals of what Christ has done for our salvation, our hearts will fill with wonder and awe at the heighth and depth of the love of God, and we will be able to exclaim with Ellen White “Herein is love” Wonder, O Heavens! and be astonished, O Earth!” DA 49.

## 8. THE SIN DEBATE

### What is Sin?

What is sin? This is the question that is vital to our understanding of the nature of Christ and our understanding of the gospel. We are told in scripture that “the wages of sin is death” Rom 6:23, and that the gospel, the good news, is all about how we can be saved from sin and its penalty - death. But before we can be saved from sin we must first know what sin is. For how can we be saved from something if we do not know what we need to be saved from.

There are basically two definitions of sin in Adventism today. Depending upon which definition we accept will depend our understanding of the gospel and the plan of salvation; for no doctrine that we accept stands alone. All doctrine is knit together in some way, and each has a bearing upon the other. If we have a false understanding of sin it is inevitable that we will have a false understanding of the nature of Christ and how He will save us from sin.

Is sin a choice? Or is sin what we are because we have a fallen nature? These are the two contending questions with which we have to deal. We will briefly look at both of these points and their implication upon the plan of salvation.

#### Sin as Choice.

The vital question is, what is the nature of sin for which we are guilty and receive the penalty of eternal death? We must know where our guilt comes from, then we can co-operate with Christ in the gospel work to ERADICATE THIS GUILT and CONDEMNATION. Ellen White said

**“To be redeemed means to cease from sin” R.H. Sept 25 1900**

If to be saved means to cease from sin, it is imperative that we know what sin is, else how will we know what we need to cease from? If sin is not choice how can we possibly understand Ellen White when she states that we need to cease from sin? See also 1 Jn 3: 6-7. If sin is our fallen nature, then how can we possibly cease from our nature when this will be with us until Glorification? We must understand that our fallen nature and all that it entails is not sin, but that it is the RESULT of sin. Sin is simply the transgression of God’s law. Our fallen nature and all the complexities that are entailed with it are the result of sin, but they are not the definition of sin. It is through the pull of our fallen nature that we yield to temptation, but not until we succumb to temptation and transgress God’s law are we counted a sinner.

**“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: For sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 Jn 3:4.**

**“For by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Rom 3:20**

**“Because the law worketh wrath, For where no law is, there is no transgression.” Rom 4:15**

**“But sin is not imputed when there is no law.” Rom 5:13**

**“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; For I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet.” Rom 7:7.**



Here we see a simple but comprehensive line of truth, that “Sin is the transgression of the law.” This may seem too simple for some to accept but this is the only definition of what sin is in the bible. Ellen White reinforces these texts when she states:

**“The only definition we find in the bible for sin is that “sin is the transgression of the law. 1 Jn 3:4” 1 SM 320**

**“Sin is the Transgression of the Law.” This is the ONLY definition of sin. Without the law there can be no transgression. “By the law is the knowledge of sin. The standard of righteousness is exceeding broad, prohibiting every evil thing.” BC 7-951.**

**Christ died to make it possible for you to cease to sin, and sin is the transgression of the law.” RH Aug 28 1894.**

It is this definition of sin - the transgression of God’s law - for which we are condemned to eternal death. For it is not until we are drawn away by our own lusts and yield to temptation that we conceive sin, and once sin has conceived, it brings forth death. “For the wages of sin is death.” Rom 6: 23. Jms 1: 14-15 brings out this simple understanding.

**“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” Jms 1: 14-15.**

Notice that before we are condemned sinners, we must conscientiously yield to the lust of our fallen natures, “the lust must conceive” before it brings forth condemnation and death. We have a choice either to be enticed and drawn away into sin or to resist temptation and have victory. Sin develops from yielding to the pull of the fleshly lusts and desires, but the desires themselves are not sin. Temptation is not sin! It is in this way that sin is choice. We must realize that sin is our own responsibility. We do not inherit guilt, condemnation, or sin. We inherit a fallen nature which will inevitably (without the grace of God to sustain us) lead us into sin, but not until this time are we counted a sinner or receive condemnation and guilt.

In Eze 18:20 we see the principal of sin being our own responsibility:

**“The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” Eze 18:20**

It is the soul that sins that receives condemnation, guilt and the penalty of death. It is our responsibility, “The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son:” We are responsible for our actions and choices, and for these we will receive the just recompense of reward. We do not, as children, youth, or adults receive condemnation and the penalty of death from our parents and Adam. Not until we participate in their sins have we any guilt or condemnation.

**“It is inevitable that children should suffer from the consequences of parental wrongdoing, but they are not punished for the parent’s guilt, except as they participate in their sins. It is usually the case, however, that children walk in the steps of their parents. By inheritance and example the sons become partakers of the father’s sin. Wrong tendencies, perverted appetites, and debased morals, as well as physical disease and degeneracy, are transmitted as a legacy from father to son, to the third and fourth generation.” PP 306.**

In Ezekiel 18: 1-4 we see that the children of Israel had the same misunderstanding of sin and guilt that many have today. In chapter 18 of Ezekiel God plainly shows them that they are wrong in their understanding of this doctrine.

**“The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion anymore to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine: As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Eze 18: 1-4.**

God does not punish the children of the wicked or count them guilty or condemned unless they partake of their parent’s sins. The underlying principal is that “The soul that sins, it shall die.” We shall find ourselves in the lake of fire for no other reason, than for our transgression of God’s law.

## Sin as our Nature.

There are many different ways that this interpretation of sin is presented. Some state we inherit Adam’s guilt. Some state that we are born separated from God, others still, that we are guilty of sin by just being born into the fallen race. But the underlying conclusion of these statements is, that in some way sin is more than just transgression of the law, it is also part of our nature - that we are some how guilty or condemned because of being born into the fallen race.

The general terminology for this definition of sin is “original sin.” The doctrine of original sin is basically this: that because of Adam’s fall his posterity are partakers of his guilt and condemnation, and therefore stand in need of immediate redemption at birth. Many do not use the term “original sin,” and some even state that they do not believe in the doctrine of “original sin”. But the principals they advocate are the same - that we stand in need of redemption as soon as we are born, and that sin is not just what we do but what we are.

In this understanding of sin, sin is defined as something that we inherit, and not part of our choice and our responsibility. Therefore the conclusion is that because sin is basically our nature which we are to possess until glorification, how can we possibly fully overcome sin? It is just naturally part of us. Therefore the gospel message has a totally different perspective depending upon our understanding of sin.

This is where the sin debate is so pertinent to the subject of the nature of Christ. For those who believe that we are born sinners, and that because of our nature we are some how contaminated with sin and guilt, have a major problem. For if Christ had a nature identical to ours, and was man just like us, He would be a sinner! Therefore they desperately try to make Christ’s nature somewhat different to fallen man, to substantiate their erroneous views.

This is why our understanding of sin is vital. For if sin is the transgression of God’s law, and we receive condemnation and guilt only when we transgress that law; Christ could take our fallen nature, and at the same time receive no guilt or condemnation. In fact, the greatest evidence we have to prove that sin is choice and not nature, is the fact that Christ took our fallen nature and was pronounced sinless. He received no guilt or condemnation from partaking of fallen nature, and so it is with every child of humanity. It is only as we yield to the temptations of our fallen nature that we become contaminated with sin, guilt and condemnation.

## The Two Gospel’s

The underlying fact is that both definitions of sin have two totally different gospels that go with them. We will briefly look at both definitions of sin and the gospel that is ultimately shaped from each definition. (Remember, the premise that we begin with must be followed to its logical conclusion.)

### Sin as Nature:

If we define sin as part of our nature, something that we inherit from our forbears, we must define Christ's nature to be some how different to the rest of mankind, else He would be a sinner and need a Saviour himself. Since Christ was different from us in nature, then it would be foolish to state that we can overcome sin as He did. So then we must conclude that it is not really possible for us to have victory over sin as Christ did. Thus He is presented as our substitute, much more than our example. This gospel is focused upon justification. Sanctification is really focused upon as something that we cannot fully attain. Therefore perfection of Christian character is presented as something that we cannot possibly achieve.

### Sin as Choice:

If we define sin as "the transgression of God's law," and that we have a choice; that sin is our responsibility. Then Christ is well able to take man's fallen nature and not receive any guilt or condemnation. He would give mankind an example to follow, (1 Pet 2:22) as well as pay the price of sin for all mankind. By having done this He is now able to forgive the repentant sinner of his sin, live his victorious life in us, and empower us to overcome sin as He did. In this understanding of sin He is as much our example as He is our substitute. Justification and sanctification are equal powers in the plan of salvation. Perfection of Christian character in this gospel becomes a very real goal, for Christ has set the example and has acquired for us power to obey.

### The Two Deaths

We must not confuse the results and effects of sin with sin its self. "Sin is the transgression of the law." - This is sin. But the results and effects of sin that are all around us are not sin in themselves, they are the result of man transgressing God's law.

Below is a list of some of the effects of sin upon this world.

1. We now have a fallen nature.
2. We do not now have face to face communion with God,
3. We feel pain
4. Our faculties are weakened
5. Thorns and thistles - an effort to produce food
6. The animal kingdom - wild and untamed
7. Innocent creatures die
8. Trees and plants die
9. General corruption of planet earth

It will be noticed that all these points are not sin but are the results of sin.

This brings us to a question that has been put to me on a number of occasions. Why do newborn babies die if they are not guilty of sin? For if the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23), and they have committed no sin, they should not die, should they? To answer this question we will look at it in two ways. The first is that as we have just looked at, there are results and effects in this world which are the result of sin, but which are not sin in themselves. Trees and plants die, fish and animals die, birds and insects die, all the results of sin, the result of transgressing God's law. So it is also that newborn babies without guilt and condemnation may die. Not because of their guilt from being born into this world, but from the simple fact that the results of sin are felt also by innocent parties.

It must also be noted that there are two deaths, the "first" and "second" deaths (Rev 20:6) The first death is to a large degree a result of sin, for "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb 9:27) But the second death will be the penalty for sin. This is where the wages of sin is meted out; which is eternal destruction. (Rev 20) The first death is represented as a sleep, the second as eternal destruction.

It is in this way that innocent babies may die. They do not have to have guilt upon them to be able to die the first death. But from the results and effects of sin upon this world they may meet their fate at a very early age.

## “For whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin”

Paul in Rom 14:23 states “For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” There are those who advocate that this is a different, deeper, definition of sin; than sin just being the transgression of the law, that those who have not faith are naturally counted as sinners. But is this the case? What is this text really saying? Is the bible giving another definition of sin here? Or can we interpret this text in harmony with 1 Jn 3:4?

The simple fact is that when we do not have faith we commit sin - which is the transgression of the law. This is simply what the text is saying. We are told in 1 John 5:4

**“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 Jn 5:4**

When we are born again and have faith in a living Saviour, we have power to overcome this world of sin - by faith, for faith is our victory. But those who have no faith will commit sin, for their thoughts are continually of self.

## Judged by the Law

As we have seen in previous chapters the whole great controversy evolves around the law of God. At the end of the Great Controversy there will be the saved and the lost, and each group will be determined by their relation to the law of God. For in the judgment our characters will be compared to the law of God and this will decide our eternal destiny. The focus of the judgment will not be upon our fallen nature or what our bent to evil was, but whether we have “overcome” sin in thought, word, and action by having Christ dwelling in our hearts. It is this for which we will be clothed in white raiment “and have our names retained in the book of life, and it is this for which Christ will confess our names before the Father and the angels. (Rev 3:5) We shall be judged by “the perfect law of liberty” (Jms 1:25 2:12) for transgressing this law is what sin is. It is this for which we will lose eternal life, not because we were born with a fallen nature, but because we have not allowed Christ to fulfill the righteousness of the law in us. (Rom 8:3) The lost will have rejected His grace and persisted in sin, therefore they shall hear the words, “I never knew you: depart from me ye workers of iniquity.” Mt 7:23.

What is the reason for which we will lose eternal life? This is what we need to focus on. We can get bogged down with all the fine details of trying to explain our fallen natures, and where sin arises, but the simple fact is that “sin is the transgression of the law” and it is this for which we will be eternally lost.

For me the question of what sin is; is simple:

**“The ONLY definition we find in the bible for sin is that “sin is the transgression of the law.” 1Jn 3:4” 1SM 320**

## 9. CAN WE REALLY OVERCOME LIKE JESUS?

Since Jesus was like us in the fact that He took our fallen nature and overcame sin in our fallen humanity, the question ultimately arises - can we really overcome sin as Christ did? Can we truly have victory over the sins that so easily beset us? The answer is definitely YES!

How often I have been in a Sabbath School class, or just in private conversation when this subject has come up. How I have been amazed that people can seem to talk for hours about - how it is our nature to sin and how difficult it is for us to overcome, and focus upon our inabilities and weaknesses. But why do we focus on these things when we have a living Saviour and an all powerful God? Why do we drag the power of the gospel in the mud and deny what Christ is longing to do for us, and in us. We need to talk not of our impossibilities, but of God's possibilities. For "with men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible." Mk 10:27

**For God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Eph 3:20.**

But if we do not have enough faith to believe that He is able to do this, we will never find it a reality in our lives. For "according to your faith be it unto you." Mat 9:29.

**"He who has not sufficient faith in Christ to believe that He can keep him from sinning, has not the faith that will give him an entrance into the kingdom of God." RH Mar 10 1904.**

Let us then talk faith, and praise God for what He will do in us if we will allow Him. Let us put away our pessimism and unbelief, and take hold of the strong arm of the Lord.

### What the Bible States.

It must be pointed out before we look at what the bible and Ellen White state upon this subject, that Christ is our victory and He is our righteousness. Let us glory only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Gal 6:14) We need to remember that as we read statements from the bible and Ellen White, that we overcome not by our own strength, but only by the power of Christ dwelling in our hearts. It is by the grace of God only that we are forgiven and have victory over sin! Our own works will gain us no merit. It is Christ in us which is our hope of glory. (Col 1:27).

The first place we will begin with is the strength of temptation. Does God allow temptations to come upon us that we cannot withstand?

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1Cor 10:13

If God does not allow us to be tempted above what we can withstand, and always provides a way of escape so that we can bare the temptation: Why do we have so many Christians stating that complete victory is not possible? Do we believe God's Word and have faith in Him? If so, how can we dishonor Him by our lack of faith and trust.

We must as a Church and as individuals stop interpreting the gospel according to our faulty experiences, and accept what God has stated. For God has promised that no temptation will come to us that makes it inevitable for us to sin. It is our own wrong choices that lead us into sin, and by a lack of faith and full surrender to Christ. 2 Peter 2:9 says "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations," and if the Lord knows how to deliver us from temptation, then surely there is no need for us to yield to temptation.

A text that has already been previously quoted is 1 Pet 2:21-22.

**“For even hereunto were ye called: Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:” 1 Pet 2:21-22.**

Here once again we see the importance of Christ taking our nature upon Him and giving us an example of a sinless life. In doing this He has not only provided a way of escape for every repentant sinner; but He has actually put His Word to the test and proved that we can overcome by the power of God in our lives. As long as we continually submit our will to Him, and live by faith, we can have victory over sin as Christ did.

Other texts that speak victory to us

**“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” Jude 24**

**“Go, and sin no more. Jn 8:11**

**“Awake to righteousness, and sin not.” 1 Cor 15:34**

**“Jesus answered them, verily, verily I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house forever: But the son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Jn 8:34 - 36.**

For this is what Christ came to do - to set us free. He came to die in our place, for the penalty of our sins, and also to set the captives free (Lk 4:18 Isa 61:2 Isa 42:7 2 Tm 2:26). For all who have committed sin have become servants and slaves of sin and have lost control over their being. (Rom 6:16 2Pet 2:19 Jn 8:34). It is a major part of the plan of salvation that we receive power to regain control over ourselves, and be set free from the bondage of sin. In fact Ellen White states this to be our greatest triumph:-

**“The greatest triumph given us by the religion of Christ is control over ourselves.” 4T 235.**

The most profound statement upon having victory over sin is found in 1John 5:5-10

**“And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that commiteth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil: 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. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. 1Jn 3:5-10.**

“Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.” The simple fact is that if we abide in Christ we will not commit known sin. We will not be sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting, continually having no victory over conscious sin habits in our lives. But our lives should “be like His, a series of uninterrupted victories.” DA 679.

But we must remember that when we read this passage of scripture that it was the same John that wrote;

**“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” 1 Jn 2:1**

We need not go into despair because of our failings. The standard is victory, but as we all know this doesn't always happen. If we are surprised or deceived into sin, let us flee to our Saviour who ever liveth to make intercession for us. (Heb 7:25)

**“If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” How careful is the Lord Jesus to give no occasion for a soul to despair. How He fences about the soul from Satan’s fierce attacks. If through manifold temptations we are surprised or deceived into sin, He does not turn from us and leave us to perish. No, No, that is not our Saviour, Christ prayed for us. He was tempted in all points like as we are; having been tempted, He knows how to succor those who are tempted.” BC 7 948.**

But we must remember that this does not excuse our sin. The Christian experience is not to be one of sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting; but that of victory.

**“Many who profess the faith know not what true conversion is, they have no experience in communion with the Father through Jesus Christ and have never felt the power of divine grace to sanctify the heart. Praying and sinning, sinning and praying, their lives are full of malice, deceit, envy, jealousy, and self - love. The prayers of this class are an abomination to God. True prayer engages the energies of the soul and affects the life.” 4T 534 - 35.**

We may as true Christians be surprised or deceived into sin occasionally, but there is a difference between struggling against sin and falling occasionally by taking our eyes off Christ, and continually falling into sin time after time.

In the Book of Revelation there are eight precious promises made to those who are overcomers. (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28, 3:5, 21 21:7). The most profound of these, made by Christ himself is Rev 3:21:

**“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with the Father in his throne.” Rev 3:21**

Christ is our example in overcoming sin and we are to overcome as He did. Once again we can see the close tie that Christ has with us in taking our fallen nature. For if Christ was different from us, how could he possibly state that we need to overcome as He did.

In Rev 21:7 is the beautiful promise:

**“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” Rev 21:7**

It is very plain throughout all scripture that victory over sin is not only possible but needs to be a reality in our lives. For the plan of salvation is not just forgiveness for sin, but also the eradication of sin in the believer's life. Paul states in Rom 2:13:

**“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Rom 2:13**

Not that we must earn our salvation by our works; but those who are truly justified by faith will be doers of the law. They have Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith and it is no longer they that live but Christ that lives in them. (Gal 2:20). Every person that has been truly converted and has a living experience with Christ, will not be just a “hearer of the law, but also a doer of the law.” For Christ is “fulfilling the righteousness of the law in their hearts.” (Rom 8:4) They are having the justification and sanctification experience. For if we do not allow Christ to sanctify our hearts by obedience to the truth, we lose our justification experience.

The battle is between the spirit and the lusts of the flesh:

**“This I say then, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.” Gal 5:16-17.**

**“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you, now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Rom 8:9**

**“For as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the son’s of God.” Rom 8:14**

Our fallen natures are continually trying to pull us to wrong. But if we walk “after the spirit and not after the flesh” (Rom 8:1) we will have victory. We need not fall time and time again, for scripture most assuredly declares that we can have continual victory. And that we not only can, but must have victory, for this is necessary to our salvation.

“Christ came to this earth and lived a life of perfect obedience that men and women, through His grace, might also live lives of perfect obedience. This is necessary to their salvation.” RH Mar 15 1906

## Ellen White Statements.

Ellen White makes many statements concerning victory over sin and how Christ is our example in this victory. (Many we have already seen in previous chapters.) We will here look at some more very definite statements that point to victory over sin.

**“We can overcome. Yes; fully,entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him.” 1T 144**

**“The Saviour took upon Himself the infirmities of humanity and lived a sinless life , that men might have no fear that because of the weakness of human nature they could not overcome. Christ came to make us partakers of the divine nature; and His life declares that humanity combined with divinity, does not commit sin.” MH 80**

**“God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and he has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. The tempter’s agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christ-like life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God. The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be perfect in their life.” DA. 311.**

**“Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul may be kept free from sin, for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command.” 1SM 394**

**“Christ died to make it possible for you to cease to sin.” RH 8: 28 – 1894.**



## Sinlessness

**“Every one who by faith obeys God’s commandments, will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression.” HP. 146.**

**“He (Christ) came to this world and lived a sinless life, that in His power His people might also live lives of sinlessness. He desires them by practicing the principles of truth to show to the world that God’s grace has power to sanctify the heart.” RH April, 1902**

**“Those only who through faith in Christ obey all of God’s commandments will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression. They testify to their love of Christ by obeying all His precepts.” BC 6 1118.**

## How Christ Overcame

Christ overcame sin as a man. It was only by continual strength gained from the Father that Christ was enabled to have continual victory over sin, and this privilege is granted to us all. For Christ came:-

**“To show sinners that in His strength they too, can obey God’s holy precepts, the laws of His kingdom. It was from the Father that Christ constantly drew the power that enabled Him to keep His life free from spot or stain of sin. It was this power that enabled Him to resist temptation.” RH July 4, 1912.**

**“He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation and overcame in the strength given Him of God.” D.A 24.**

## What’s Our Problem Then?

It is absolutely obvious that the bible and the spirit of prophecy teach that victory over sin is not just a reality, but a necessity in the redemption of man. All the fullness of the power of God, and all heaven is available to the believer to keep him from sinning; we have no excuse for sin. (D.A 311)

If all this is available to us as believers in Christ, then what is our problem? Why do so many among us believe that victory over sin in this world is not a reality? Why do we hear so many say “I sin every day.” “I’ll sin till Jesus comes” “I can’t help but sin,” etc, is it not from a lack of faith in what God can do? Is it not from a lack of total surrender to Christ, and allowing Him to work in us, “to will and to do of His good pleasure.” (Phil 2:13) And what about effort on our behalf? The Holy Spirit will not force any to have victory. Do we make any effort to overcome sin? Do we, “Resist unto blood?” (Heb 12:4) We must remember that to overcome like Christ we must suffer and struggle against sin as He did, (Heb 2:18) and with every victory we will grow stronger to resist the next. But every time we sin and make excuses for our deformities of character, our faith grows dim, and victory becomes less and less a reality in our lives.

We may fall, and I dare say we will fall, in our Christian experience and our struggle with sin. But if we continually fall upon certain sin problems and never really have victory, we do not have that living connection with Christ.

For example, in the years before I was a Christian; I had a sin problem in swearing and cursing. This was a daily habit. Although in the passed twelve years of my Christian walk I have fallen twice in this sin problem, I have had many, many victories. But losing my hold upon Christ and falling twice in eight years (not that there is any excuse for my sin) is a different experience than if this was still happening daily or weekly, and I was never gaining true victory. We may fall upon our faces at times, but we must by God’s grace get up and claim His promises and go on to victory. For He has promised to work in us if we will fully surrender our will to Him. But

sadly many fall upon their face and never seem to get back up. They grovel around in the mire making excuses that Christ will still cover them while they keep sinning, and “Satan deceives many with the plausible theory that God’s love for His people is so great that He will excuse sin in them.” PP 522

**“While God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ’s righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul.” 1 SM 366.**

## Back to Satan’s Accusations

As we have well noted, Satan’s accusations were that God’s law could not be kept. And does it not seem strange that we have those among us who claim the same accusations? How can we possibly honour God when we state that we “sin every day,” and “that we cannot fully overcome”? Are we not agreeing with Satan when we state such things?

Although Christ has answered Satan’s accusations by taking our nature and keeping God’s law perfectly, he needs to reproduce His character in us to fully vindicate His law. For would it not seem strange if Satan’s accusations were that we cannot keep God’s law, and none but Christ ever did? Would this not leave doubt in the minds of unfallen beings that maybe Satan’s accusation is right? This is why Ellen White makes this well known statement:-

**“The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honour of God, the honour of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people” D.A 671**

The honour of God and of Christ is involved in our victory over sin. It is for this reason I believe that the remnant will have a special part to play in the vindication of God and His law. Not that God needs man to vindicate Him; for He has done this in His Son, Christ Jesus. But to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that His law is holy, just and good; and can be obeyed by all His creatures. God will raise up a remnant among the final generation, (the weakest of all generations physically, mentally, and morally) the 144,000, and be able to point to them and state “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev 14:12)

“They will reflect the image of Jesus fully.” EW 71 And any accusation by Satan or any other being will forever be groundless. For this special group (and others of all ages who have perfected Christian characters) will stand forever as living proof that God’s law can be kept.

We must remember that God does not ask us to be perfect, but commands that we be perfect as He is perfect (Matt 5:48). But let us remember that every command of God is a promise of what He will do for us if we will submit to Him. (DA 311)

The simple fact is that because of what Christ has done in taking our nature and living a sinless life, we have no excuse for sin. We may struggle, and sometimes fall into sin, but we must learn from our mistakes and go on to victory. We are the people “God has called to be the depositories of His holy law and to vindicate His character before the world.” (5T 746). Let us then stand firm upon the rock Christ Jesus and live up to the high calling wherewith we have been called.

I cannot claim absolute perfection, and state here that I do not fall at times. But I can state, that if I continue in sin and do not allow Christ to live in my heart and work victory in me according to His good pleasure; I will not enter the pearly gates and enter into the joy of Heaven. For “Blessed are they that do His commandments, (through God’s grace) that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” (Rev 22:14) If we do not allow Christ to take sin away from us now, He cannot take it away in Heaven. see AH 16

Dear brother or sister, where ever you are or whatever your situation is, no matter how strong sin maybe in your life, Jesus can set you free. He has set the example and gained the power. If we will but submit to Him we can

be “confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil 1:6) Let us be confident then and take hold of the strong arm of the Lord. The choice is yours! Let us ever remember:-

**“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:” Heb 12:14.**

## 10. HOW WAS JESUS DIFFERENT?

Was Jesus different from us in any way? This is a question that people often get stuck on. “Surely Jesus must have been different, He never sinned, He is the Son of God, He was ever pure and holy and we are all sinners; He must have had something different from us” This type of statement has often been reiterated to me. But what is the answer to this?

For most people this can be a difficult hurdle to cross, for the answer is a yes and no answer.

Yes! Jesus was different from us. In many ways Jesus was not like us. For example, Jesus was the Creator, He was divine. He was also sinless and pure, but we must remember that we are studying the NATURE of Christ, this is our focus.

The main focus is upon whether Christ was different in nature to us, and whether we can, or cannot, attain to victory over sin as He did in His life. In this Christ was not different to us, and it is this that we must focus upon.

It must be made very plain as we look at how Jesus was different, that every attribute of character that Christ had in His humanity, and the perfect life that He lived is accessible to all who will surrender everything to God. Christ was completely filled with the Holy Spirit and in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; but are we not to be partakers of this also?

**“For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power.” Col 2: 9-10.**

**“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 in to 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?” 7 BC 907.**

The difference between Christ and man was not that Jesus had a different nature to us, but that he never sinned by yielding to the pull of that fallen nature. The reason He never sinned is because He always had a sanctified human will. His will was always surrendered to His Father; His choice was always “nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.” (Luke 22:42)

**“Jesus Christ is our example in all things. He began life, passed through its experiences, and ended its record, with a sanctified human will. He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet because He kept His will surrendered and sanctified, He never bent in the slightest degree toward the doing of evil, or toward manifesting rebellion against God.” ST 10-29-1894.**

This is simply the only difference between Christ and ourselves. His will was always sanctified and thus He never sinned. Ellen White makes it very plain what the difference was between Jesus and ourselves when she stated:-

**“Jesus was sinless and had no dread of the consequences of sin. With this exception His condition was as yours. You have not a difficulty that did not press with equal weight.” Letter B-17 1898.**

From what we have seen I believe we can isolate four points in which Christ was different from us.

1. He at all times had a sanctified human will.

2. He never yielded to sin.
3. He had no condemnation because He never sinned, and thus He had no dread of the consequences of sin.
4. Because Christ never sinned He therefore never developed any “evil propensities”.

I believe that these are the only exceptions where Christ was different from us in His humanity, and it will be noticed that these four points all have to do with victory over sin in some way.

But are we not also through His merits to be partakers of His experience? Can we not through Christ have an experience in these four points as He did?

1. Through Him we can have a sanctified human will. For when our wills are united to God they become “Omnipotent.” See C.O.L. 333
2. Although we have sinned, He can blot out our record of sin and empower us to have victory over sin in our lives; as we have noted in the previous chapter.
3. We can also have no dread of the consequences of sin in our lives. For “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1. For Christ has died in our place and thus the consequences of sin have been removed from those who have faith in Him.
4. Although we have sinned and developed evil propensities in our lives; we can by His wonderful saving grace have victory over all “evil” or “sinful” propensities, for we have the wonderful promise - “We need not retain one sinful propensity.” 7BC 943.

Here we have seen the difference between Christ and ourselves, and that difference can be summed up in one point: - That Christ never sinned and we have.

Paul brings out this simple difference in Heb 4:15 when he stated that Jesus “was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin.”

## Took Nature of a Converted Christian

It has been stated by some that Christ’s nature was that of a converted Christian, not that of an unconverted man. But is this so? Was Christ’s nature that of a converted man? The answer to this can be confusingly dangerous, and we need to ask people exactly what they mean when they make this statement. I have found that there can be a different understanding on words when this statement is discussed and that we can be stating the same conclusions from different perspectives.

The answer to this statement is also another yes and no answer. Christ’s nature was like that of a converted man but it was also like that of an unconverted man; for both have the same fallen nature. It makes no difference to us whether we are unconverted or converted; we still possess a fallen nature. So to state that Christ had the nature of a converted Christian, can, I believe be misleading. For it can place an emphasis that Christ’s nature was slightly different from the nature we inherit, which is not so.

All those who have had a conversion experience would know that their fallen nature, that bent or force to evil, is still their after conversion. The nature doesn’t change but the power of God in our lives does. We are charged with divine nature when we are converted, and we have power to be set free from sin and to overcome the hankerings of our fallen nature.

In this way we can say that Christ had the experience of the converted man, but at the same time He still had that inherited fallen nature that all men inherit.

In discussing the type of points that are in this chapter we are all liable to be misunderstood by the way we may state sentences, or by the words we use. Let us then make sure we know what others are saying and not just presume we know.

## 11. THE THIRD OPTION

It has been generally understood in the past that there were two sides in the controversy over what type of nature Christ had, and they are:-

1. That Christ took the nature of Adam before He fell thus He had an unfallen nature.
2. That Christ took the nature of Adam after He fell thus He had a fallen nature.

It is these two different understandings of the nature of Christ that have been striving for the mastery, one against the other, for the past thirty to forty years amongst the people of God.

In the writer's understanding the first option, that Christ took the nature of unfallen Adam, has never been viable. There is not one Ellen White statement, not one Bible text that can be honestly used to uphold this view. But there are many that uphold the position that Christ took our fallen nature, that he took the nature of those he wished to save, which was not that of unfallen Adam but of fallen humanity.

These two understandings have been the two basic positions that have been presented to God's people. But there is now another option, "The Third Option" as it has been called by some, and it is the purpose of this chapter to look at this option, what it is, and to ascertain whether it is truth or not.

What is the Third Option?

The third option is the idea that Christ took part of the unfallen nature and part of the fallen nature which makes Him not "exactly like Adam before the fall nor exactly like us. In other words He was unique."<sup>1</sup> It is stated that "the fall had two basic consequences:

1. "innocent infirmities" 2.
2. "sinful propensities." 2.

Innocent infirmities are interpreted to be "characteristics as hunger, pain, weakness, sorrow and death"<sup>3</sup>.

Sinful propensities are interpreted to "refer to proneness or tendencies to sin."<sup>4</sup>

In summarizing this it is proposed that "Adam had neither innocent infirmities nor sinful propensities. We, on the other hand, were born with both. But Christ took the first (innocent infirmities) but not the second (sinful propensities)."<sup>5</sup>

In summary, the third option is, that Christ had only "innocent infirmities" which means He was subject to pain, hunger, weakness, sorrow, etc. But that He did not have that inherited bent or force within His nature that naturally pulls to sin. But is this so? Did Christ just have "innocent infirmities" and not our inherited bent to sin? If He did, what Biblical, and or, Spirit of Prophecy evidence do we have to support this theory? To answer these questions and the question of whether this theory is correct we will look at it in a point form.

1. **TEMPTATION:** In chapter seven it was noted that temptation arises through our fallen nature, this is the primary source of all our temptations. For Christ to be tempted in all points like as we are, He must have our fallen nature, for without this He would not have the capacity in His being to be tempted like us.

If Christ took only the so called “innocent infirmities,” how could He possibly be tempted like us? How could He possibly state that He knows “where lies the strength of our temptations”? (MH 71) The fact is, that instead of being tempted in all points like us, He would be tempted nothing like us. “The enticements which Christ resisted were those that we find so difficult to withstand” (DA 116). This would in no wise be possible if Christ had only “innocent infirmities.”

2. VICTORY OVER SIN: Tying in with temptations is victory over sin. How can we overcome as Christ overcame (Rev 3:21), if Jesus only had “innocent infirmities.” To my understanding it is not possible for Christ to be our example in all things, unless He had our fallen nature. He must have the same inner pull to sin as we do from our fallen nature to be a living example, and to show us how we can overcome sin.

3. SATAN’S ARGUMENTS: Another question we need to ask ourselves if we are going to accept the third option is, what about Satan’s charges against God and His law? Would Christ have proved anything against the accusations of Satan if He had only “innocent infirmities?” Would Christ have achieved all that the plan of salvation demands? For the redemption of mankind requires that Jesus come down to the level of those He wished to save. He must condemn sin in the flesh (Rom 8:3) and by having just “innocent infirmities” He could not possibly achieve this objective.

4. ELLEN WHITE AND THE BIBLE: If the third option is a viable position to accept concerning the nature of Christ, why do we not find it explained in the Word of God and the writings of Ellen White? There is not one text in the bible that upholds this view. And Ellen White nowhere in her writings expressed that Christ had only “innocent infirmities.” We must demand a plain thus saith the Lord before we accept any line of thought or doctrine. If we accept the idea that Christ had only “innocent infirmities” we end up with conflicting statements everywhere. But if we see the fact that Christ took our nature, all Bible and Spirit of Prophecy statements harmonize perfectly.

5. “NATURE”: It has been stated that Christ was neither like Adam before the fall, nor like us, but that He was “unique.”<sup>6</sup> Was Christ unique? Yes! But not in the area of nature, but that of sin. Christ was unique in the fact that He never sinned, but He was not unique in His nature. For He inherited a nature just like you and I inherit, and we must remember that it is “nature” that we are studying.

6. PROPENSITIES: Here again we must focus upon propensities. The second consequence of the fall is said to be “sinful propensities,” which is interpreted to be “proneness or tendencies to sin.”<sup>7</sup> It is stated that Christ did not receive this part of our nature, but I ask the question why? If “sinful propensities” is just a tendency, proneness, or bent to sin why could Christ not have this in His nature like us? We are not condemned as sinners for having a bent to sin, it is only as we yield to that bent that we are counted a sinner.

We must remember here that there are two types of propensities “natural propensities” and “evil propensities” (see page 34 -35). Christ inherited the “natural propensities” which we all inherit as part of our fallen nature, but He did not have “evil propensities” which are developed by yielding to sin.

Without “natural propensities” (which is a tendency or bent to sin) how could Christ be tempted. Temptation is only a temptation when we have a pull within us to do wrong, otherwise it is no temptation at all, and for Christ to be tempted in all points like as we are, He must have these “natural propensities” inherited in His nature just as we do.

The question that puzzles me often, is why do many seem to be forever trying to evade the simple facts? Why do so many go to any length to try to make Christ’s nature anything but what it was, and that is a fallen nature, or as Ellen White has strongly stated a “sinful nature.”



The simple fact is that there are not three options upon the nature of Christ, but only one option, and that option is just what the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy plainly declare - That Jesus had a fallen nature. This is the only option available to us if we are going to balance the inspired writings.

1. Roy Adams – “THE NATURE OF CHRIST pages 68-69
2. IBID.
3. IBID.
4. IBID.
5. IBID.
6. IBID.
7. IBID.

## 12. CONCLUSION

### Summary of Points

Below is a summary of the main issues that have been presented. These points are the main issues I believe we must consider when studying this subject.

1. We need to understand exactly what we are studying; and that is the NATURE of Christ. This must be our primary focus. Chapter 1
2. We need to be very careful not to confuse the different attributes of Christ, and confuse His humanity with His deity, or His character with His nature. Chapter 1
3. We must be careful to explain what we mean when using strong statements such as “absolute sinless,” “100% like us,” “nothing like us,” sinlessness, etc. Chapter 1
4. We need to be honest with ourselves and accept what God has stated. Chapter 1
5. A fallen nature means a “bent or force” to sin. Chapter 1
6. The whole great controversy evolves around the law of God. Chapter 2
7. Satan’s accusation was that man cannot keep God’s law thus there is fault with the law giver. Chapter 2
8. Jesus had to take man’s fallen nature to prove that Satan’s charges against the government of God were false. To prove that man, with a fallen nature can keep God’s law perfectly. Chapter 2
9. The bible plainly states that Jesus had a fallen nature. Chapter 3
10. Ellen White plainly states that Jesus had a fallen nature. Chapter 4
11. Difficult Ellen White statements, can be easily reconciled when read in context and compared with her other writings. Chapter 5
12. Although Christ had divinity, He laid His divinity aside and clothed Himself with humanity. Chapter 3
13. Jesus did not use His own divinity, all the works done were done by faith in the Father. Chapter 3
14. Christ’s experience is to be our experience Chapter 3
15. Ellen White used the words character, nature, passions and propensities in different ways. Chapter 4
16. The book The Desire of Ages (Ellen White’s greatest published work) plainly reveals her understanding of the nature of Christ. Chapter 6

17. For Jesus to be tempted in all points like as we are His temptations must come from the same source as ours; which is through our fallen nature. Chapter 7
18. Christ's temptations were real. Chapter 7
19. Christ was tempted far greater than we ever will, so that there would be no excuse for us to sin. Chapter 7
20. Sin is simply the transgression of the law 1Jn 3:4. This is the only definition of sin. Chapter 8
21. Sin is a choice and not our nature. We are not counted a sinner because we have a fallen nature. But we are counted a sinner because of our own sin. Chapter 8
22. Different understandings of sin lead to different understandings of the gospel, and how we are saved. Chapter 8.
23. We can overcome all sin in our lives by God's grace and power dwelling in our hearts by faith. Chapter 9
24. Jesus was our example in all things. Chapter 9
25. Jesus was different from us in four points, but those four points have to deal with victory over sin. Chapter 10
26. There is no third option, but only one option, and that is, that Christ had a fallen nature just like you and I inherit. Chapter 11

## Does it really Matter?

The underlying question that we need to ask ourselves after all we have studied in this book is; does it really matter? Will what we believe upon the subject of the nature of Christ affect our salvation in any way? The answer I believe is a definite Yes! For whatever we believe doctrinally, must become part and parcel of our spiritual makeup. Just as food becomes part of our flesh and blood, so too, will the spiritual food become flesh and blood in the Christian's experience. In these last days when God is pouring forth light from His Holy Word to prepare a people for the Second Coming of Christ, and deception is upon us at every hand, we cannot afford to have an "I just believe in Jesus mentality." We must sink our shafts deep into God's treasure chest of truth and know what we believe upon the plan of salvation, for if we do not, we will be swept away by the delusions of the last days.

We have been told that there will be a mighty shaking among the people of God just before the second coming, the wheat and tares will be separated, and that this shaking will begin with false doctrine.\*

**“When the shaking comes, by the introduction of false theories, these surface readers, anchored nowhere, are like shifting sand.” TM 112.**

It will be noticed that it is false doctrine that will shake the Church, and if we do not have our souls anchored to Christ by a foundation riveted to the word of God WE WILL BE DECEIVED.

\* see appendix

It has already been noted in Chapter 8 that whatever we choose to believe upon this subject will ultimately shape our perception of the saving power of the gospel. It is for this reason alone that I feel so strongly about this subject. It is not a matter of presenting what one believes upon this subject for the sake of winning the argument, but it is a matter of salvation. For it is this doctrine and the doctrines that are tied in with it (what is sin, victory over sin, the judgment, and the sanctuary message) that is the separating wedge between the “New Theology” and “Historic Adventism” as they have been named. It is this doctrine that will decide, in an indirect way, the destiny of many of God’s people

If we believe that Christ was different from us in His human nature, and that we cannot have His victory in our lives, I fear that we will lose salvation; not because we may have believed wrongly, but from the fact that through believing false doctrine we will have formed a pseudo relationship with Christ, and will not have had the power of the gospel in our lives. We must realize that the gospel is the POWER of God unto salvation, (Rom 1:16) and that “the gospel is to be presented, not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life.” MH 99

Unless we have this living power in our lives we will be taken captive by false doctrine

**“Unless divine power is brought into the experience of the people of God, false theories and erroneous ideas will take minds captive, Christ and His righteousness will be dropped out of the experience of many, and their faith will be without power or life.” RH 9-3-1889.**

This is sadly what has happened to many among us today. They have not that “Christ in you” experience. The power of the gospel has not become a reality in their lives and thus they latch onto false doctrine to justify their position. Let us ever keep in mind that:

**“God is now sifting His people, testing their purposes and their motives. Many will be but as chaff - no wheat, no value in them.” (4T 51)**

Brothers and sisters we need to ask ourselves seriously, am I among the wheat? Do I have a living experience with Christ? Is He really dwelling in my heart? Or am I just a tare in the Lord’s vineyard? Is my experience with Christ real? We must think very seriously upon these things; and make our calling and election sure. For time is short and Satan is trying to deceive even the very elect.

We need to ever keep in mind the frightening fact that many of God’s people will be lost.

**“I saw that many professed Sabbath keepers will come short of everlasting life. They fail to take warning from the course pursued by the children of Israel and fall into some of their evil ways. . . I saw that many would fall this side of the kingdom. God is testing and proving His people, and many will not endure the test of character, the measurement of God. Many will have a close work to overcome their peculiar traits of character and be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, unrebukable before God and man.” 1T 608**

**“I have tried in the fear of God to set before His people their danger and their sins, and have endeavored, to the best of my feeble powers, to arouse them. I have stated startling things, which, if they had believed, would have caused them distress and terror, and led them to zeal in repenting of their sins and iniquities. I have stated before them that, from what was shown me, that a small number of those now professing to believe the truth would eventually be saved, not because they could not be saved, but because they would not be saved in God’s own appointed way. The way marked out by our divine Lord is too narrow and the gate too strait to admit them while grasping the world or while cherishing selfishness or sin of any kind. There is no room for these things; and yet there are but few who will consent to part with them, that they may pass the narrow way and enter the strait gate.”**

**2T 445-446**

These are not always nice points to dwell upon, but we need, as the people of God, to face reality for eternity is just upon us. The sad fact is that many of those who profess faith in God and The Three Angel's messages will be lost, and how easy it is for us to always think that these statements fit someone else. But the point is, maybe they fit our experience.

The great question is, why will many in the Church be lost? What is the underlying reason for this? We have been told that "the curse causeless shall not come". (Prov 26:2) There is a reason for this sad state that many will be found in. The simple reason is that:-

**"False doctrine will sap the foundations of many. Because they have not learned to discern truth from error." 2SM 58.**

If we hold onto false doctrines and false theories in this time, when God has allowed great light and privileges to come to His people, our foundations will be only sand and our experience faulty.

False doctrine, such as Jesus was different in nature to us is really just a long winded effort of Satan to try to get God's people to believe that they cannot really overcome sin. For Satan "is constantly seeking to deceive the followers of Christ with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible for them to overcome." (GC 489) Satan knows, that if he can deceive God's people into believing that they can be saved while they are living in sin; he knows they will never learn to exercise enough faith in Christ to give them true victory. When their names come up in the judgment and their lives are compared to the law of God; if they have not had victory according to the light that has rested upon them, they will be found wanting. They will have been deceived.

It is truly my earnest prayer that we, as God's people, will think seriously upon these things. We need to study for the truth as for our lives, that we may find that Jesus, in taking our nature, truly is the "golden chain that binds our souls to God." (1SM 244). He is the chain that binds heaven and earth. God forbid that any of His professed followers be found advocating teachings that would sever this chain in any way.

The simple fact is that Christ, in coming in humanity, took our fallen nature. For me this is one of the great wonders of the plan of salvation, that divinity would take on fallen humanity with the risk of failure and eternal loss, is beyond the comprehension of the highest human thought. For truly "unto us a son is given" (Isa 9:6) Given not in pretense, but in reality; for He has taken humanity upon Himself, not just when He came to this world, but for all eternity will He be identified with us (DA 25). Let us then praise His holy name and give glory to Him, for:-

**"Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever." Rev 5:12-13.**

## APPENDIX

Page 36. The statements below reveal that Ellen White used the word "nature" to mean "character" in certain places.

"The transformation of character must take place before His coming. Our natures must be pure and holy." O.H.C. 278

"Every element of the nature must be purified and vitalised". 7BC 940

"The christian life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature." DA 172

(The foolish virgins) “Have not fallen upon the rock Christ Jesus and permitted their old nature to be broken up”. COL 411.

“When Christ abides in the heart, the whole nature is transformed”. SC 43

“The word destroys the natural earthly nature and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus.”

It is quite obvious that Ellen White is not stating here that the fallen nature is to be eradicated, this will not happen until glorification. (1 Cor 15:52-53). She is simply using the word “nature” to mean character in certain places. Character is cultivated by our choice, and is revealed by our words, thoughts, feelings and actions. This cultivated character stands in contrast and is distinct from the inbred and inherited nature.

Page 84. There are three stages in the shaking that is going to take place among the people of God. They are :

Stage 1. False theories : 1Tim 4:1 TM 112 5T 707 6T 332 EW 50.

Stage 2 The strait testimony : Eph 5:25-26 EW 270 1T 186

Stage 3. The storm of persecution : Mich 7:5-6 GC 608 5T 136 5T80-81 1T 608-609 2SM 380.