

The Infirmities and Liabilities of Christ's Assumed Humanity

Review

1. In our previous study, we examined the nature of Christ in connection with the obligations of His priesthood and came to the conclusion that He had no choice but to assume human nature in its fallen, sinful condition
2. Why? In order to satisfy both requirements of the priesthood
3. In other words, the nature of the requirements of the priesthood dictated on the kind of humanity Jesus had to assume at His incarnation
4. To reiterate: We will never come to a correct understanding of the subject of the nature of Christ, unless we examine it closely in connection with His priesthood
 - a. **Requirement #1:** “taken from among men” with infirmity—the human nature Jesus had to assume at birth had to have its own share of the infirmities and liabilities of the fallen race so that
 - i. He can be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God (**Heb 2:17**)
 - ii. have compassion on those who are ignorant and out of the way (**Heb 5:1-2**)
 - iii. be touched with the feelings of our infirmities and be tempted in all points as we are tempted (**Heb 4:15**)
 - iv. share their sorrows and temptations (**DA 48**)
 - b. **Requirement #2:** He must have something to offer for sin—
 - i. In **Heb 2:9**—we are told that Jesus died for every man, not just for a few
 - ii. As the second Adam, Jesus died as corporate Substitute for the entire human race
 - iii. In order for Jesus to die in the place of every man, Jesus had to assume the nature that was common to every man and which the law condemned to die
 - iv. What nature does every condemned man in common? Sinful, fallen human nature
 - v. The human nature Jesus assumed had to match the nature common to all men who have sinned and therefore condemned by the law, so that He could legally and rightfully stand as their Substitute and bear the guilt and punishment of their sins
 - vi. If Jesus had taken the same sinless nature such as angels possessed, He would have been immediately disqualified to stand as man's rightful Substitute; He would have died for no one else but Himself

5. In **Heb 2:16-17**, Paul not only explicitly states what human nature Christ was required to take, but also the reasons why; it was primarily to satisfy the two cardinal requirements of the priesthood
 - a. He begins by saying in **Verse 16** that Jesus could not have taken the sinless nature such as angels possessed for this would have immediately disqualified Him to the priesthood
 - b. Instead, He took on Him the seed of Abraham, a fallen sinful human being, and had to be made in all things like unto His (sinful, fallen) brethren so that
 - i. **Number 1#**: He could be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to (the first requirement of the priesthood)
 - ii. **Number #2**: He can make atonement for the sins of the people (the second requirement of the priesthood, i.e., offer gifts and sacrifices for sins)
6. **IMPORTANT**: again to reiterate, when investigating the subject of the nature of Christ, we need to follow Paul's example—his lengthy discourse on the nature of Christ as found in **Hebrews 2-5** is given in direct connection with His priesthood
7. In his discussion on the subject, Paul not only states **what** nature Jesus took, but more importantly, the reasons **why**
8. **IMPORTANT**: The Bible clearly states that Jesus partook of the same flesh and blood common to all men with all its flaws, liabilities and weaknesses
 - a. **1 Tim 3:16**—great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh
 - b. **Phil 2:7**—made in the likeness of men
 - c. **Matt 8:17**—Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses (not physical diseases but spiritual, see **Isa 1:4-6**)
 - d. **Rom 1:3**—made of the seed of David, according to the flesh
 - e. **Rom 8:3**—sent in the likeness of sinful flesh
 - f. **Gal 4:4**—made of a woman, made under the law
 - g. **2 Cor 5:21**—made to be sin for us who knew no sin

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

Christ did in reality unite the **offending nature of man** with his own sinless nature, because by this act of condescension he would be enabled to pour out his blessings in behalf of the fallen race. **RH July 17, 1900.**

But our Saviour took humanity, with all its **liabilities**. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured. **DA 117**

The Selfishness of Fallen Human Nature

9. What did Ellen White mean by man's "**offending nature**" which Christ united with His own sinless (divine) nature? What is the "offending" substance in the man's fallen nature?
10. Also, what exactly did she mean when she said "our Savior took humanity with all its **liabilities?**"
11. What liabilities are not—not referring to the normal **natural tendencies and desires** that God in His wisdom placed within our natures (like hunger, thirst, tiredness, desire for love and happiness); these desires of themselves are **benign** or **harmless** and not necessarily sinful and offensive
12. The term "**liability**" refers to something that places an entity in a **disadvantageous** or **compromised** position
 - a. When someone tells me that I am a "liability" to the group, what exactly does that mean?
 - i. It means I am not an asset to the group
 - ii. I have nothing positive to contribute to the group
 - iii. On the contrary, I put the group at a "disadvantage"
13. In **Heb 5:2**—the liability of the human nature is called "**infirmity**" which those who are (spiritually) ignorant and out of the way all share in common
14. Bottomline, what is the nature of the "offending" substance or "infirmity" or "liability" inherent in fallen, sinful nature and which is not present in sinless nature?
 - a. Selfishness of human nature
 - b. Sinfulness of human nature

Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were **perverted**, and **selfishness** took the place of love. His nature became so **weakened** through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. **SC 17**

15. **Selfishness** or the **bent to self** is the "**offending**" substance in man's fallen nature
16. **The love of self** is the greatest **liability** of fallen nature, weakening it and making it impossible to resist the power of evil
17. Selfishness is the **root** of all human sinning and misery
 - a. **Luke 10:27; Deut 6:5**—If we were not selfish, It would be possible for us to love God with all my heart, and my neighbor as myself
 - b. The young ruler who said he had kept the law all his youth was exposed as a transgressor of the law because he was selfishly holding on to his many possessions
 - c. **Jas 4:1-3**—Selfishness is the reason why we have wars and conflicts among nations, trouble in the family, in society, in the church, everywhere
 - d. We are proud, boastful, impatient, fretful, impetuous, easily provoked, covetous, unkind, rude, dishonest, unforgiving, etc. because we are selfish
 - a. A host of evil character traits are evident in the human experience due to selfishness→self-love, self-pleasing, self-indulgence, self-gratification, self-seeking, self-dependence, self-sufficiency, self-reliance, self-service, self-pity, self-

justification, self-exaltation (pride), self-righteousness, self-worship, self-importance, there's no end to the list . .

18. The great reformer Martin Luther called Self the great pope! *"I am more afraid of my own heart than of the pope and all his cardinals. I have within me the great pope, Self"*
19. Ellen White in vision saw that in the books of record in heaven, selfishness stood at the head of every sin committed!

Another book was opened, wherein were recorded the sins of those who profess the truth. **Under the general heading of selfishness came every other sin.** There were also headings over every column, and underneath these, opposite each name, were recorded, in their respective columns, the lesser sins. **4T 384**

20. **Selfishness** is part of our hereditary nature; selfishness was passed down to each one of us through the great law of heredity
21. In short, all of us are naturally selfish from birth

Selfishness is inwrought in our very being. It has come to us as an inheritance, and has been cherished by many as a precious treasure. No special work for God can be accomplished until self and selfishness are overcome. **LHU 326 (see also SC 17)**

22. Self-love is totally opposed to the heavenly principle of self-sacrificing and self-emptying love

The Carnal Mind and the Infirmity of Fallen Nature

23. What did Paul refer to in **Rom 8:6-7** as the carnal mind which is enmity with God and is not subject to the law of God?
 - a. Human selfishness is opposed to the heavenly principle of self-sacrificing love
 - b. Human selfishness is not and can never be subject to the law of God
 - c. The bent to self or self-will is the carnal mind
 - d. Indulging the carnal mind in opposition to divine love results in death!

The Liabilities and Infirmities of Christ's Assumed Humanity

24. We have at length examined the nature of man and its inherent liabilities and infirmities; it's time to look at the nature Christ at His incarnation
25. **Matt 8:17**—says that Jesus took or assumed our infirmities and sicknesses in Himself
26. **Heb 4:15**—He was made in all things like unto His brethren
27. **Phil 2:7**—He humbled Himself, took the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men
28. Because Jesus possessed the exact same make-up in His assumed humanity as ours with all its liabilities, infirmities and offending characteristics, what did His daily struggle look like?
 - a. Jesus found Himself constantly battling against the tendency to please self

Jesus emptied Himself, and in all that He did, **self** did not appear. He subordinated all things to the will of His Father. When His mission on earth was about to close, He could say, “I have glorified Thee on the earth.” **MB 14**

- b. Jesus discovered that in order to obey the will of His Father, He had to subdue His assumed human will because it was naturally opposed to His Father’s will—“Not my will, but your will be done”
- c. Jesus found Himself constantly needing to struggle against a rebellious, self-centered will that was naturally opposed to the will of His Father

The **human will of Christ** would not have led him to the wilderness of temptation, to fast, and to be tempted of the devil. It would not have led him to endure humiliation, scorn, reproach, suffering, and death. His **human nature** shrank from all these things as decidedly as ours shrinks from them. He endured the contradiction of sinners against himself. The contrast between the life and character of Christ and our life and character is painful to contemplate. What did Christ live to do? It was the will of his heavenly Father. Christ left us an example, that we should follow in his steps. Are we doing it? **ST October 29, 1894, par. 9**

- 29. If His assumed human nature were sinless there would be no bent to self to reckon with, no selfish inclinations to bring to subjection; no struggle against a human mind which is self-centered and at enmity with God
- 30. If Jesus assumed sinless nature, there would have been no conflict, no enmity between His assumed human will and the will of His Father; instead of enmity, there would only be harmony

Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and **in harmony** with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. **SC 17**

- 31. The risks Jesus took by uniting His sinless divine nature with man’s offending nature are too much to contemplate! They are mind-boggling!
- 32. Yet, it was a necessary unavoidable step He had to take in order to understand the strength of our temptations, understand our struggles and share our sorrows as our most compassionate, merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God

The Sinfulness of Human Nature

- 33. Now, remember that the second requirement of the priesthood stated that Jesus must have something to offer for sin (**Heb 5:1; Heb 8:3-4**)
- 34. For Jesus to have something to offer, He had to become an offering for sin or a sin offering and laid on the altar of sacrifice
- 35. Jesus, who had no sin of His own, became a sin offering by being made sin
 - a. **2 Cor 5:21**—He was made to be sin for us who knew no sin
- 36. How was Jesus made to be sin for us who knew no sin and when?
 - a. At His incarnation when He assumed the sinfulness of our fallen nature

37. David admitted that sin and therefore guilt are involved with being conceived and born with a sinful fallen nature
- (Ps 51:5—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; in sin did my mother conceive me")
 - The sin acquired at conception has nothing to do with personal sins committed later on in life
 - The moment Jesus partook of our flesh and blood and made in all things like unto His brethren He was made to be sin for us
 - In other words, the moment Jesus was made in the likeness of men, He not only partook of the **selfishness in man's nature**, but also acquired **the sinfulness of man's fallen nature**
 - Being made sin for us who knew no sin meant more than just imputing our personal sins on Jesus by confession; it also meant imparting the sinfulness of our nature to Him at His incarnation
38. Therefore, when Jesus took humanity with **all** its liabilities (**DA 117**), it meant more than just assuming all the weakness built into fallen nature because of selfishness; it also included its sinfulness and condemnation
39. Where does the sin and condemnation acquired at conception and birth come from?
- The origin of the sin acquired at conception and birth is Adam, the father of the human race

As related to the first Adam, men receive from him nothing but guilt and the sentence of death.
CG 475

- The guilt and sentence of death we receive from Adam at birth has nothing to do with being judged guilty of his disobedience; this is the Catholic heresy of **the original sin**
 - Rather, it is the sin, the guilt and the sentence of death acquired simply from inheriting his sinful, selfish nature
40. Now, Jesus was not exempt from this; we are told that He "accepted the results of the workings of the great law of heredity" (**DA 49**)
41. Therefore, Jesus was made to be sin for us the moment He assumed our sinful nature, even before our personal sins were laid on Him by confession
42. **Rom 8:3**—reminds that Jesus had "sin in the flesh" to contend with
43. What is this "sin" that was in His flesh or in His human nature?
- It is referring to the same sin and iniquity David, and all men for that matter, acquired the moment he was conceived and born (**Ps 51:5**)
 - It involves guilt and the sentence of death because it is not subject to the law of God (**CG 475**)
44. The question is, why did Jesus, the pure and holy Son of God allow Himself to stoop so low as to unite His divinity to the offending nature of man?
- This was only way to redeem man from the guilt and condemnation and the sentence of death
45. When Jesus offered Himself at Calvary as our Substitute sin offering, we were freed from the condemnation and sentence of death for been born with a sinful nature (**Rom 5:18**)

46. No one is held accountable and guilty for having inherited from Adam a sinful nature because Jesus was willing to take that same nature as our Substitute and offer it as sacrifice at Calvary, thus satisfying the claims of the law on our behalf

I am lost in Adam but restored in Christ. **SD 120**

47. IMPORTANT: If Jesus never humbled Himself and assumed the same identical fallen sinful nature to begin with, if Jesus took sinless nature, we would have remained lost in Adam with no hope of salvation! Never mind the personal sins we commit later in life

48. It's amazing and beyond comprehension when we think about what Jesus was willing to go through in order to save us from sin and its guilt and power.

49. Jesus was willing to stoop low and dive into the depths of that stinking spiritual "dumpster" we were all in, in order to give us a better existence

50. He was willing to unite Himself with our offending nature knowing that sin, guilt, condemnation and the sentence of death would be His in the process

51. Again, let us close this study with the following profound words:

The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man; He gave proof of His humility in becoming a man. Yet He was God in the flesh. When we approach this subject, we would do well to heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus 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**

Dealing with Difficult Passages

Dealing with Objections

Christ's perfect humanity is the same that man may have through connection with Christ. As God, Christ could not be tempted any more than He was not tempted from His allegiance in heaven. But as Christ humbled Himself to the nature of man, He could be tempted. He had not taken on Him even the nature of the angels, but humanity, perfectly identical with our own nature, except without the taint of sin. A human body, a human mind, with all the peculiar properties, He was bone, brain, and muscle. A man of our flesh, He was compassed with the weakness of humanity. The circumstances of His life were of that character that He was exposed to all the inconveniences that belong to men, not in wealth, not in ease, but in poverty and want and humiliation. He breathed the very air man must breathe. He trod our earth as man. He had reason, conscience, memory, will, and affections of the human soul which was united with His divine nature. 16MR 181.4

Our Lord was tempted as man is tempted. He was capable of yielding to temptations, as are human beings. His finite nature was pure and spotless, but the divine nature that led Him to say to Philip, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" also, was not humanized; neither was humanity deified by the blending or union of the two natures; each retained its essential character and properties. 16MR 182.1

But here we must not become in our ideas common and earthly, and in our perverted ideas we must not think that the liability of Christ to yield to Satan's temptations degraded His humanity and He possessed the same sinful, corrupt propensities as man. 16MR 182.2

The divine nature, combined with the human, made Him capable of yielding to Satan's temptations. Here the test to Christ was far greater than that of Adam and Eve, **for Christ took our nature, fallen but not corrupted, and would not be corrupted unless He received the words of Satan in the place of the words of God.** To suppose He was not capable of yielding to temptation places Him where He cannot be a perfect example for man, and the force and the power of this part of Christ's humiliation, which is the most eventful, is no instruction or help to human beings. 16MR 182.3

4 hebrew words for sin