

The Obligations of Christ's Priesthood

The Importance of the Subject of Christ's Incarnation

1. This study is part of a series of studies on the subject of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, focusing largely on its two-part obligations as found in **Heb 5:1-2** and **Heb 8:3-4**
 - a. taken from among men with infirmity so He can show compassion on the ignorant and out of the way, as He Himself is compassed with infirmity (**Heb 5:1-4**)
 - b. must have something to offer for their sins (**Heb 5:3; Heb 8:3-4**)
2. Again, we are doing these studies because of Paul's admonition in **Heb 3:1** to "consider the apostle and high priest of our profession Christ Jesus"
3. Just so you know, it is hard to consider Christ's priestly work without touching on His incarnation or the nature of His assumed humanity
4. Do you know why? ANSWER: Because the validity and effectiveness of Christ's priesthood depended upon whether or not He took the correct human nature at His incarnation
5. It wasn't enough for Jesus to assume any random human nature that seemed convenient during His birth
6. If Jesus had assumed the wrong human nature at His birth, it would immediately have disqualified Him for the priesthood
 - a. He can have no compassion on the ignorant and out of the way as He never had any share in their infirmities in that assumed nature and therefore was never not "touched with the feelings of their infirmity" (**Heb 4:15**)
 - b. He would have nothing to offer for their sins
7. Now we see why having a correct understanding of the nature of Christ is very serious!
8. Many make the mistake of studying the topic of the nature of Christ as a stand-alone subject, and therefore, they end up coming to the wrong premature conclusions regarding that subject
9. **IMPORTANT:** When the subject of the nature of Christ is seen in light of the obligations of His priesthood, one understands not only what human nature Jesus had to assume at His incarnation, but more importantly, the reasons why

A Valid and Effective Priesthood Needed

10. **QUESTION:** So, what human nature do you think was Jesus required to assume at His incarnation in order to qualify as priest?
11. Again, we always need to always bear in mind that it was extremely important for Jesus to assume the **correct human nature** at the get-go in order to satisfy both obligations of the priesthood
12. We also need to remember that without a **valid** and **effective** priesthood, Christ can really do nothing for us
 - a. He cannot make atonement for our sins as He has nothing to offer (**Heb 2:17; Heb 5:1**)

- i. This means there can be no forgiveness for sin, no acceptance, no adoption, no justification and sanctification, no growth in grace, no victory over sin, no blotting out of sin—nothing!
- b. He cannot help those who have infirmities when they need help because He was never tempted on the same level as they are tempted (**Heb 2:18**)

What the Nature of Christ Was Not

13. To make a long bible study short. . . the nature Christ assumed at His incarnation wasn't and couldn't be sinless human nature at the get-go such as angels have (**Heb 2:16**) and such as Adam had before the fall, as that nature falls short of satisfying both requirements of the priesthood
- a. Sinless nature is not compassed with the "infirmities" which those who are "ignorant and out of the way", are compassed or encumbered with
14. Here's how Ellen White describes sinless 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. **SC 17**

15. In **DA 49**, we are told that it would have been an almost infinite humiliation for Jesus just to take the nature of man when it was still sinless

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**

16. So again, why couldn't Jesus just take sinless nature when He assumed humanity at His birth? Why did He wait until human nature had been ruined and weakened by 4,000 years of sinning?
- a. It would have been so much more **convenient** for Him! Less suffering involved when resisting temptation
 - b. His work of resisting temptation and forming a perfect character would have been a lot **easier**
 - c. His work would have been a lot **safer**—meaning the risk of falling into sin would have been much less than if His nature were weak and fallen, as that nature is much less prone to sinning

Three Serious Objections Against the Sinless View of the Nature of Christ

17. What if we teach that Jesus that took man's nature in its **sinless** condition at birth—then what?
- a. Then we contradict what Ellen White said that Jesus "accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity" (**DA 48**)

- b. We place ourselves in the same camp as the Catholics and Evangelicals who teach that Jesus was “exempt” and was born with a “sanitized” human nature
- c. Most serious of all, we immediately and totally disqualify Jesus from the priesthood

How Christ’s Priesthood Is Ruined by the Sinless Nature Paradigm

18. Let’s examine how the idea that Jesus assumed unfallen, sinless human nature at birth invalidates and makes void His priesthood
19. Recall in Hebrews 5 that there are two fundamental requirements¹ for the priesthood which Jesus Himself laid down through Moses and which He Himself stood by
- a. **Requirement #1 (Heb 5:2)**—He must be taken from among men and have a nature with its own share of the infirmities of the fallen race so that
 - i. He can have compassion on sinners who are “ignorant and out of the way” (Heb 5:2)
 - ii. He can be touched with the feelings of their infirmities (Heb 4:15)
 - iii. He can be tempted in the same way weak sinners are tempted (Heb 4:15)
 - iv. He can know exactly what it means to suffer when struggling with temptations so He can send help (Heb 2:18)
 - v. Be a merciful and faithful high priest (Heb 2:17)
 - b. **Requirement #2 (Heb 5:3; Heb 8:3-4)**—He must have something to offer for sin so that
 - i. He can make atonement for their sins (**Heb 2:17**)
20. The fact is, Jesus had no choice but to take man’s nature in its fallen, ruined, dilapidated condition, in order to satisfy these two rigid requirements of the priesthood

Priestly Requirement #1 Unfulfilled If Jesus Came in Sinless Flesh

21. If He came to earth with sinless nature, He would have failed to satisfy the first requirement of the priesthood, which says He had to be taken from among men with infirmity
- a. He would have failed to receive His own share of the undesirable nature-based “infirmities” which those “who are ignorant and out of the way” possess
 - b. As He would have had no infirmities of nature to reckon with like we all do, He wouldn’t be able to “share our sorrows and temptations”
 - c. Without those inherent infirmities, His assumed sinless human nature and the nature of the people He came to save would have been vastly different and **worlds apart**
 - d. His nature would have been **superior**; therefore Jesus would have had a great **advantage** over His weak brethren in their battle against temptation
 - e. With an assumed nature untainted with any moral weakness, Christ’s temptations would not have reached the same level of **intensity** as our temptations; they would be far less intense
 - f. Furthermore, possessing sinless nature would not have given Him the ability to fully understand what men with infirmities of nature go through when tempted;

¹ Actually three requirements: the third one having to do with being of the tribe of Levi. This requirement however was bypassed in the case of Jesus through a change in the law of the priesthood so that He could qualify for the priesthood even though He came from the tribe of Juda (See Heb 7:13-14). This effectively reduces the qualifications to the priesthood to just two, instead of three.

therefore He would not have been able to be “*touched with the feelings of their infirmities*” and unable to sympathize with them in their struggles against sin, having encountered no such experience of His own (**Heb 4:15**)

- g. That being the case, it would also be difficult for Him to become a merciful and compassionate High Priest and succor those who are tempted (**Heb 2:15-18**)
- h. He couldn't be our Example of a sinless life

Priestly Requirement #2 Unfulfilled If Jesus Came in Sinless Flesh

- 22. If Jesus took the sinless nature of Adam during His incarnation, He would have failed to satisfy the second requirement of the priesthood as well, which says He “must have something to offer for the sins of the people” (**Heb 5:2; Heb 7:27; Heb 8:3-4**)
- 23. What is the nature of this offering Jesus presents before His Father as “gift and sacrifice” so we can receive favors and benefits from Him like pardon and acceptance, justification and sanctification? (**Heb 10:5, 10; Heb 9:12**)
- 24. On the cross, Jesus died to pay the price of our sins so they can be remitted and we can be reconciled to God and gain His favor
- 25. The broken law required our death (**Rom 6:23**), but Christ came forward as our Substitute and took our place on the cross and through His substitutionary dying, what benefit do we get? What has the substitutionary death of Jesus achieved for us?
 - a. In Christ, we have satisfied the claims of the law which demands our lives
- 26. This is obviously and absolutely good news! We don't have to go to the lake of fire!
- 27. But there's just one problem

Christ Our Rightful and Equivalent Substitute

- 28. Substitution in the normal **dictionary** sense is not problematic; for example, appointing a substitute teacher is perfectly legal;
- 29. But appointing someone to suffer the punishment of another is illegal; no court of law anywhere in the world allows an innocent individual apart from the perpetrator of a crime himself to suffer for the crime committed
- 30. Neither does God (**Deut 24:16; Eze 18:4**)
- 31. Divine justice will not allow an innocent individual to suffer the penalty of the allotted to guilty
- 32. But some may say, isn't this exactly what Jesus did for us?
- 33. Was Jesus exempt from this principle? Did the Father give Him a pass so He can save us from the punishment we deserved? What does this scenario make the Father and His Son look like?
- 34. Before Jesus could do anything to save us, He had first to qualify Himself as our legal and equivalent Substitute. How did He do that?
- 35. **Heb 2:17** says Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren not only so He can be a merciful and faithful high priest, but so that He can make atonement for the sins of the people
- 36. Jesus had to be made in all things like unto His brethren before He can make atonement for their sins; in other words, before He can offer gifts and sacrifices for their sins
- 37. Jesus had to first assume the very same nature common to all of mankind in its fallen sinful condition in order that it can be said that He was all things like unto His brethren

38. When He assumed our sinful flesh at His incarnation, what exactly happened?
- He not only because like us,
 - He not only become one of us,
 - but He became us!
 - He became us! (**Heb 7:26**)²
39. In other words, in taking sinful, fallen humanity upon Himself
- Jesus not only assumed a human nature identical with ours
 - Jesus not only identified Himself with us
 - Jesus rightfully assumed our identity (**Heb 2:11**)
40. Only then could Jesus be rightfully punished for our sins
41. Only then could it be rightfully said that His death was tantamount to the death of all (**2 Cor 5:14**)
42. If Jesus had taken the sinless nature of Adam, where would that have taken Him? Nowhere! He would not have equivalented Himself as our rightful Substitute and His atoning death would have been his death to Himself alone, not for anyone else; His death would not have included us!
43. Under that circumstance, it would be incorrect and illegal for us to claim Christ's death as our own death to sin by faith
- We would have no right to say "I am crucified with Christ" (**Gal 2:20**)
 - We would have no right to claim that "we died through the body of Christ" (**Rom 7:3**)
44. Those who teach that Jesus took Adam's sinless nature during His incarnation do not realize that this position of theirs **IMMEDIATELY disqualifies** Jesus from the priesthood because it fails to satisfy the second cardinal requirement of the priesthood—He must have something to offer for the sins of the people
45. They fall into that rut because they do not see the vital connection between the subject of the incarnation of Christ and His priesthood

The Golden Chain of Christ's Humanity

46. Now you know why it is absolutely important to study the subject of the nature of Christ in connection with His priesthood in the heavenly sanctuary

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**

² For such a high priest became us—MKJV
 For such a chief priest did become us—YLT
 For such a high priest became us—RV
 For such a high priest became us--ASV

47. Why is Christ's humanity everything to us? It validates His priesthood which is the means by which all the blessings of the new covenant are brought within our reach
48. Christ's powerful work as High Priest guarantees the fulfillment of the promises of the new covenant in our Christian experience

