

## LANDMARKS AND LANDMINES-PART 6

### (The Human Nature of Christ)

Before we open God's word once again this morning, I'd like to take just a couple minutes to thank those of you who have supported this ministry. Some of you have done so very faithfully for the past 17 years. It's hard to believe it's been that long, isn't it? Who would have guessed that we would still be here on this sin cursed earth struggling with the temptations of the enemy for so long?

Some of you have sent your tithes and offerings every month like clock work, and some of you have sent your support once or twice a year, but I want you to know that I appreciate every penny. Because of your faithfulness, it has helped us through the years to reach thousands of souls with present truth messages through literature, Bible studies, and the spoken word.

By the way, we've received e-mails and phone calls from several of you telling us about the successes you've had by sharing this "Landmarks and Landmine" series with friends and acquaintances, and I want to encourage you to continue to do that. If we're going to have success in reaching souls for Christ, we've got to put forth a little effort. Jesus said when this gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; then the end will come.

The devil has hundreds of landmines strewn all over the land in an effort to cause as many people as possible to be spiritually destroyed, and in the end physically destroyed. And so, let's continue to work while it's day, for the night is soon coming in which none of us will be able to work. And so thank you once again for helping us do our small part to fulfill the great gospel commission while human probation lingers a little longer.

This morning I'd like to study a subject that's been debated and argued over for centuries, and it's still a very important and hot topic to this day.

On one side of the debate there's the landmine of the devil that has been planted in an attempt to convince people that they can live in sin and still be in a saving relationship with Jesus and thus be ready to be whisked away to heaven when the Lord comes.

And on the other side, God has a landmark of truth that will expose this landmine to our view so we can avoid stepping on it, and thus be kept from a false sense of security.

There's one thing we always want to keep in mind, and it's this; **the main object of the devil** (what did I say?) The main object of the devil is to trick us into thinking that we can break God's commandments and still be saved.

From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it's been Satan's purpose **to overthrow the law of God**; this is the reason he rebelled against the Creator! And even though he and his cohorts were cast out of heaven for doing it (as it says in **Revelation 12:9**), he has continued to do the same thing here upon the earth.

To deceive you and me, and thus lead us to transgress God's law, is the object, or the goal, which he has steadfastly pursued for thousands of years. And the last great conflict that's developing right now between truth and error, between the landmines and landmarks if you will, is but the final struggle of this long-standing controversy concerning the 10 Commandment law of God."

Can we who have a fallen sinful human nature really live a life of obedience to God's law, or will God save us in disobedience because He knows we really can't live life without sinning?

This is the big debate, and believe it or not, the answer to these questions can be found by learning what the Bible says about the kind of human nature Jesus was born with when He entered this world as a babe in Bethlehem. Let's begin with **prayer**, and then we'll take a look at what holy men of old wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. [PRAYER]

First of all let's turn to **Genesis 5:1** to learn what Moses said about how Adam came into this world when he was first created. "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him."

"In the likeness of God" has to do with both physical form and moral character. This means that not only does our creator have two arms, two hands, two legs, two feet, two eyes, and one head, but also that Adam's character was holy and without blemish just like the One who made him. Now this doesn't mean that Adam was God, but that in the beginning his inclination, like God, was only toward righteousness.

Notice how Solomon supports this thought in **Ecclesiastes 7:29**. "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright (just, righteous); but they have sought out many inventions." The word **inventions** has to do with man's moral decline. So, in the beginning man was just or righteous, but after sin entered man produced something that didn't exist before. He invented new ways to sin and new ways to rebel against God.

By the way, do you understand that Jesus is God, and that He was the active agent in the creation of this world and of mankind, the God of the Old Testament that gave the law from Mount Sinai, and the One in who's image Adam was created? Many Christians don't realize how involved Jesus was, and is, in our creation and redemption.

When you think it through, it's only natural that the One who created us was also the One who died for us. In fact, if it was either one of the other two members of the godhead that went to the cross, what would that have said about Jesus and His love for the beings He was responsible for creating? You see; He **had** to be the One to give up all to save the human race, else the plan of salvation would have been flawed, and therefore a failure. But I digress from the subject at hand; perhaps we can study this more deeply another time.

As we just read a moment ago, it was Moses who testified that the first man created came into the world "in the likeness of God." But how did Jesus come into the world? Well, let's take a look at what the apostle Paul said about the birth of Christ and whether or not it was different from that of Adam.

**Romans 8:3 & 4** "For what the law could not do," You see the law cannot save you. It cannot forgive you and it cannot give you the power to obey. But it does have the power to show us what sin is and condemn us for breaking it. "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:" Now to condemn sin in the flesh means to live life without sin in sinful flesh. That's what Jesus did and that's what He gives us power to do if we are willing to die to self and live through Him. Verse 4 say, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

So, Paul testifies that Jesus was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh", and no matter how you cut it, that's different than the way Adam was made, isn't it? Regardless of what one believes about the human nature of Christ, I think everyone would have to at the least admit, after reading these two verses, that something

was different between the way Adam came into this world and the way Jesus came into this world. The Bible says, what the Law could not do, because human nature was weak, God did. Isn't that something? God condemned sin in human nature by sending Jesus, who came with a nature like our sinful nature to conquer sin, and in the end to finally do away with it completely.

But why did He have to do it with a fallen sinful human nature rather than a righteous unfallen human nature like Adam had before he sinned? Well, it's because that would not have been a bit helpful to us in **our** battle with temptation and character development. And besides, how could Jesus be our example in overcoming sin if He had a different human nature than we have? If He had, His example for us to follow wouldn't hold water, because He would have had an advantage over us. It would be like me telling my 7-year-old grandson to reach up and touch the ceiling; just like papa can do, it couldn't be done!

By the same token, if Jesus had to have an **unfallen** human nature to be successful in His battle against the temptation to sin, we could never hope to be successful with a **fallen** nature! Do you see? If our understanding is that Jesus was different than we are in this respect, then why would we even try to live in obedience to God's law, or even think it was necessary? If Jesus could not live without sinning with a fallen human nature, what makes us think we could do something that even He couldn't do?

But, someone says, when we accept Christ as our Saviour, His **sinless** life stands in the place of our **sinful** life and thus by God's grace we receive eternal life. And this is absolutely true, but there's more to the gospel than just being declared righteous when we accept Christ. We must also be made righteous! We are justified when we first come to Christ, but there's more to our salvation; we must also be sanctified, or made holy through obedience to the truth so we can remain in a justified state. You can read that in **John 17:17**

Let me give you a personal experience of how this works, or how this happens. Before I came to Christ, all I had was a fallen sinful human nature that was inclined toward sin; in fact, this is the way it is for everyone that has ever been born into this world. But when I came to Christ and accepted Him into my life, I partook of His divine nature, as it says in **2 Peter 1:4**.

Partaking of the divine nature is what it means to be born again! When we receive Christ, we receive a new nature, His divine nature. And so, now I have two natures, one sinful, the other divine; one fallen, the other unfallen; and so now I have a choice as to which one I'm going to follow and obey. And as I follow and obey the divine, I am sanctified by the truth. Does this make since so far?

When I decide to do what God wants me to do, there's a transmission of power to obey that comes through the Holy Spirit, and every time I do this I'm being Christlike; and so sanctification, or holiness is a process that will continue on as long as I am here on this earth.

Let's take a look at a couple verses in the Bible that will help us better understand this point. **1 Peter 1:23** "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." And according to John 1 verses 1 and 14, Jesus is the Word made flesh. And so He is the incorruptible seed we get when we are born again.

You see, it's not our human nature that becomes incorruptible; our fallen nature remains fallen, or corruptible, and it will be until the Lord comes, according to **1 Corinthians 15:52-54**, but when we receive the divine nature, that's when we're born again, because that's the incorruptible seed that creates the new birth.

The reason we must be born again to receive salvation is because there's something wrong with our first birth! We need another nature in order to combat the cravings of the fallen flesh we were first born with. The divine nature doesn't automatically replace, or overtake the fallen human nature, but it gives us the opportunity to make a better choice, and with the power of the Holy Spirit behind it, it can then empower us to victory over sin.

**1 John 3:9** elaborates on this further and gives us a little more information. "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."

Now this doesn't mean that our power of choice to choose sin is taken away from us; it simply means that so long as the divine seed that was planted in our hearts remains in us, we will not continue to sin, because Jesus and sin cannot abide in the same heart at the same time.

However, if we choose not to abide in Christ, (and we're always free to make that choice), sin is going to happen, because that's all the fallen human nature can do when the divine nature is ignored. And whenever we do what our fallen nature wants us to do, we must repent and confess our sin in order for the divine nature to once again have access to our heart.

In other words, whenever we sin, and sin is defined as transgressing any one of the 10 Commandments, according to **1 John 3:4**; whenever we sin, we must be born again, again in order for Jesus to once again abide. I think this point can be a bit difficult to grasp, and that's probably why it's hard for some people to comprehend, but it's absolutely necessary for a proper understanding of how our salvation is accomplished. Take the time to read John 15 and that should help some.

All right, let's take a look now at a few other Bible texts that show clearly that Jesus had a human nature exactly like ours.

**Hebrews 2:9-11, 14-18** "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. [And by the way that's the second death he tasted for every man, for you and for me.] For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified [that's us] are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren," Now skip down to verse 14. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; [not just humanity, but fallen humanity] 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;" In other words, He didn't come to help the angels. The death of Christ was not for the angels' benefit, but for ours. And so "he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." Let me ask you a question, did Abraham's offspring have a fallen nature? Absolutely. And so He took on that same seed. "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."

The only way that Jesus could reconcile us to God was to succeed in the same nature that we fall in. He had to have victory over sin in the same nature that sin defeats us. That's the only way that reconciliation could take place between God and sinners.

You see, the suffering of Christ was not on the cross alone; He suffered His whole life through "being tempted" it says. In other words, whenever temptation came to Christ, He caused His sinful human nature

to suffer by not giving in to it. And similarly when we obey what the divine nature wants us to do, we cause **our** fallen nature to suffer because the fallen and the divine are opposed to each other.

Notice what it says in **1 Peter 4:1** “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;”

Do you get it? If we’re not causing our fallen flesh to suffer, that means we’re giving in to sin! And if we’re giving in to sin, we’re not being sanctified by the truth, and therefore we are negating that part of the gospel that will bring our character into conformity to God’s will.

You see friends, if the devil can convince you that Jesus was different in His humanity than you are, then it’s not hard for him to take you to the next step and also convince you that Jesus was able to live the kind of life that’s impossible for you to duplicate.

If you can become convinced that you cannot overcome sin, you won’t! It’s just that simple. If you don’t believe you can stop sinning by choosing, with the aid and power of the Holy Spirit in your life, to follow the divine nature you partook of when you allowed Jesus into your life, you won’t! If you don’t think it’s possible or even necessary to live life the way Jesus lived it, you won’t!

I don’t know how else to say it in order for you to better understand how important this is to your eternal salvation. We must walk as Jesus walked, and God has supplied everything we need to be able to do that. If we are willing to be crucified with Christ, as it says in **Galatians 2:20**, we will be dead to our fallen nature, and dead people can’t sin, can they? No! It’s only as we allow self to be resurrected that we get in trouble.

We must “awake to righteousness and sin not”, as the apostle Paul said in **1 Corinthians 15:34**. We can and must if we plan on spending eternity with the redeemed of all ages.

Let’s take a quick look at a couple verses in the Bible that speak of walking after the example of Christ.

**1 John 1:6, 7** “If we say that we have fellowship with him [Jesus], and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

**1 John 2:6** “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” Did Jesus walk in sin? Absolutely not! And we must do the same.

**1 Peter 2:22-23** “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: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” And so Jesus is our perfect example of patience in suffering and in not sinning.

**Romans 13:13 & 14** “Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness,” Here are a couple antiquated words that mean co-habitation or unrestrained sexual passion. We’re not to walk that way. “Not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

If we put on the Lord Jesus Christ; if we are wearing His robe of righteousness; if we partake of His divine nature, we’re going to walk honestly, and in the full light of day just like He did.

I think most Christians today understand and believe that Jesus is our Substitute; they don't have any problem with that, but what they don't seem to realize or accept, is that He's also our example, and examples are meant to follow; they're meant to be imitated or copied—that's what they're for; and Jesus never asked us to do anything that it's not in our ability to accomplish through His strength.

Jesus not only died in our place, but He also showed us how to live in fallen flesh, and planted His divine seed in our hearts and sent the Holy Spirit to give us the willingness and power to walk in His foot steps and to become like Him in character.

But the enemy of our souls comes along and suggests that this sounds good, but it's impossible to perform. And I say BALONY! But too many times we believe him over God, don't we? But this must change friends, if we would follow the example of our Savior, because it's part of His plan for our restoration.

Time's getting away from us here, so we better move on because I want to hit one more important point before we finish.

This whole idea of Jesus having a fallen human nature is something the apostle John felt was extremely important and he commented on it several times. Notice what it says in **1 John 4:1**. "Beloved, believe not every spirit," The word **spirit** here doesn't mean some ghost or whatever. It means simply breath or current of air. In other words, don't believe every person who's breathing, "but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

John is telling us here **not** to believe all who claim to have the Holy Spirit, but test them to find out if the spirit they have comes from God. There are many people today that claim to have the spirit of Christ, but we're not to just take their word for it, but test what they say to see if it agrees with the Spirit that inspired those we know are true prophets; that is, those who wrote the Bible. Compare what they teach with what the Bible says! That's the way to do it.

And then in **verses 2** it says, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

John makes it very clear here that if people tell you that Jesus did not come in the flesh; they're of another spirit. Now this is warning us about more than the fact that Jesus became a human being—flesh and blood, but that He became a certain kind of human being.

If you go to a concordance for a definition of the Greek word "flesh" you'll find something very interesting: you'll find that it means, (and this is a quote) "human nature with it's frailties and passions; carnal or fleshly", unquote. And of course, fleshly or carnal embraces the lower corrupt nature. And so, this is telling us in no uncertain terms that Jesus had a fallen human nature just like every other human being that was born into this world. And if someone teaches contrary to this, they are "antichrist"; they are against Christ! So if someone comes along and tells you that the only reason Jesus was able to live a sinless life was because He had an unfallen human nature, you can know that what they are saying is against what the gospel of Christ teaches.

By the way, every time you read the word "flesh" in the New Testament, it means "carnal" or fallen sinful flesh. I think there are two times it refers to animal flesh, but every other time to fallen human flesh. And



so, you'll want to take that into consideration whenever you read the word flesh in the New Testament. It means fallen, sinful flesh.

Go also to **2 John 7** "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." And then **verses 10 & 11**, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: [Why?] For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

Are you beginning to see how important it is for us to understand these things? Don't invite them into your house as an honored guest or bid them "God speed"; that is to say, "be well" and prosperous in what you're doing. If we do, we are as guilty as they are for preaching another Jesus and another gospel as the apostle Paul said in **2 Corinthians 11:4**.

If we know a person is teaching this falsehood, we have an obligation to warn them and even disassociate ourselves from them if they refuse to accept the truth on this point. It's really quite important, because we don't want to be guilty of being classed with "antichrist."

Let's take a look at a couple more verses before we close: **Hebrews 4:14 & 15** "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;" Did unfallen Adam have any infirmities regarding his nature? No. He had no feebleness, no weakness of body or mind and his nature was unaffected by sin. But Jesus, dear friend, accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. And so Jesus can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. "but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

What a wonderful Savior we have; One who was willing to leave the heavenly courts to come down to this sin cursed earth and live life the way we have to live it. To take upon Himself our fallen human nature and never give in to the lusts of the flesh, not even once, thereby not only saving us from the penalty of sin by dieing the death upon the cross that we deserve to die, but giving us an example that we too can follow in His steps and live a victorious Christian life by partaking of His divine nature.

Once we understand this, **verse 16** tells us what to do when we need divine help in order, like Jesus, to resist temptation "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Our loving Father in heaven, we come to you very humbly this morning to thank you for offering salvation full and free. Please accept our gratitude for allowing us to be called the children of God. It's only because of your great sacrifice in our behalf that we are able to come boldly unto your throne of grace this morning to obtain mercy for those times when we have not obeyed your voice and grace to help during our greatest time of need. We're thankful too for the clarity of your word and that Jesus was willing to take upon Himself our fallen human nature that we might have the power to walk, even as He walked. May we see the importance of partaking of your divine nature and obey the promptings of your sweet Spirit that we might be more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Thank you for hearing and answering our prayer this morning, in Jesus name, amen and amen!