

CONDEMNED, BUT NOT GUILTY!

I'd like to begin by reading a few verses in **Romans 5**, but before we do that we need to consider what the apostle Peter said about Paul's writings, because in **2 Peter 3:16** he said in Paul's letters to the churches there are some things that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable explain in a way that they come to wrong conclusions, as they do also with other passages of the Scripture he says, to their own destruction.

So we want to be mindful of this as we read what Paul wrote in **Romans 5:12-19**, because some very serious errors have come from these verses that are leading literally millions of people astray.

Beginning with **verse 12** Paul writes, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law **(that is, until the law was given in written form to Moses)** sin was in the world **(in other words, God's law has always been here, otherwise Adam could not have sinned)**: but sin is not imputed **(or charged against us)** when there is no law."

You see, if a person doesn't know there is a law that points out sin, they can't be guilty of knowingly breaking it. In other words, God doesn't hold it against us if we don't know any better, or if we have had no opportunity to know better. God is fair! In **John 15:22** Jesus said to those who claim ignorance when they knew better, and says, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin." Also **1 John 1:9** says, "If we confess our sins **(that would be known sins, because you can't confess what you don't know)**, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and **(not only that, but)** to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Now, there are some who believe that when a person commits known sin after they have been born again, they cannot be forgiven; that they have sinned against the Holy Ghost and there are no second chances, and I think we ought to consider this for a few minutes, because many people have been troubled with this kind of thinking.

First of all let's notice what Paul writes in **Hebrews 6:4-6**, "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away **(from the truth)**, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves **(who?)** the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame."

You see, the unpardonable sin is all about what we do with Jesus. But boy, O boy, this sure sounds final, doesn't it? And it is final, but of whom do these verses speak? Does it speak

of every person that has accepted Christ and received the free gift of salvation and then afterward sin knowingly? If that's the case, then there are a whole lot of people that are in big trouble, including yours truly!

To answer this question I would say this: did Adam sin knowingly? The answer is yes! Eve was deceived by the serpent, but Adam was not. He knew exactly what he was doing, and he concluded that if Eve was going to die for her transgression, he would die with her. You can read that in *The Story of Redemption, page 36*. And we know also from *The Great Controversy, page 647* that Adam, who knew better, will be in heaven. And there are many other examples in the Bible of others who sinned knowingly and were forgiven. David specifically comes to my mind, and also the prodigal son and the parable of the lost sheep. Also notice this statement in *Evangelism, page 375*, "The Lord calls for a decided reformation. And when a soul is truly reconverted, let him be rebaptized. Let him renew his covenant with God, and God will renew His covenant with him." Now that's pretty clear, isn't it?

And so, these verses in **Hebrews 6** that we just read must be referring to something other than just sinning when one knows better.

The reason I'm sharing these things with you this morning is because I want you to know that there is hope this morning for every kind of sin except one, and that's the sin against the Holy Ghost, or the unpardonable sin, and that's what **Hebrews 6** is referring to. And what is this dreaded sin? In the simplest terms I can think of, it is a sin not repented of, and only the Holy Spirit can bring conviction that can lead to repentance. In most cases the sin against the Holy Ghost is an habitual sin that one has committed over and over again until the Holy Spirit has been grieved away, and as a result, the convicting power of the Spirit has been withdrawn and can no longer be heard by that individual. That's why, in **Ephesians 4:30** Paul says, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Some people have become so hardened in sin that their conscience will never again be disturbed by the sins they've committed. And here's another important point, only God knows when that time has come for an individual. So don't be closing probation upon anyone, or accusing anyone of committing the unpardonable sin, because we don't know when that time comes for any individual who is still breathing.

And so, it's very important to confess our sins when the Holy Spirit convicts us of them so we don't grieve the Holy Spirit when conviction comes, because we don't know but what that may be the last time conviction comes. Every time a person knowingly commits sin it becomes easier to repeat it again, and again, and when we do that it's like playing Russian Roulette with our salvation, because you never know when the Holy Spirit will leave you

to the sin you love more than Jesus and never return. And so, there is danger of our sinning beyond mercy.

Before we get back to **Romans 5**, I'd like to spend a little more time on this subject, because I think it's important, especially for those who may be concerned about whether or not they have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost.

In order to get a clearer understanding of this sin, which is the only unpardonable sin there is, we need to read several passages of Scripture beginning with **Matthew 12:31, 32**. Jesus had just healed a man who was blind and dumb, and the Pharisees accused Him of casting out demons by Beelzebub the prince of devils, and notice how Jesus responded to them, "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men (**what kind of sins can be forgiven? "All manner of sin"**): but the blasphemy (**or evil speaking**) *against* the *Holy* Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come."

When Jesus spoke to the Pharisees in this instance, did He know their thoughts? Of course He did, and He made that evident time and time again as He dealt with various people, and He told them that a house or a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, showing them that His work could not possibly be of the devil; and then He added: "He that is not with Me is against Me; and He that gathers not with Me, scatters abroad."

We see here that there is a marked contrast between "all the people", and the Pharisees. Many of the common people accepted Jesus as the Messiah; but the Pharisees rejected Him. Now, whether Jesus meant to indicate that the Pharisees had already sinned against the Holy Ghost, or whether He spoke to warn them of their danger isn't important for us to know. The important thing to know is that the unpardonable sin is the conscious, willful rejection of Christ by one who has been privileged to know Him intimately, or even if they had the opportunity to know Him intimately but failed to take advantage of it. **Hebrews 9:14** says it was Jesus, "who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." And of course, in **Luke 1:35** the angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest (**which would be the Father**) shall overshadow thee: therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Even though the Holy Spirit and Jesus and the Father are three individual beings of the Godhead, it's impossible to separate them, because it was the Father, through the Holy Spirit, that gave human birth to Jesus. Yet, Jesus existed before that, but not as a human

being, and this was done solely for our benefit, and thank God it was, because otherwise there would be no hope of eternal life.

The verses we read in **Hebrews 6:4-6**, are really very simple, and no one has to be troubled over it, because It does not say that no backslider can be reclaimed; but it does say those who reject Christ cannot be renewed unto repentance; and this is so because **Acts 4:12** says, “neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” If one rejects Christ there is no other way to be saved. And I want you to notice also, that those spoken of as having committed this sin in these verses, have had the richest Christian experience that one can have of knowing the Word of God, of tasting the powers of the world to come, have been fully enlightened, and have had a very close connection with God, and yet they turned their backs upon it all, and of such it says, “it is impossible to renew them again to repentance.” Why? Because “they crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame,” which means they are just as guilty as those who conspired together to hang Him on the cross 2000 years ago. They knew what they were doing and they knew who He was, and they did it anyway. And so, the sin against the Holy Ghost cannot only be committed by those who knew Jesus intimately, but also by those who had multiple opportunities to know Him intimately, but chose not to for whatever selfish reason.

And notice also this important point that many overlook: the text we read in **Hebrews 6** does not say that this kind of sin cannot be forgiven, but that they cannot repent, which makes it the worst possible condition to be in. Of course, they can't be forgiven if they can't repent, because the Bible makes it clear that all who repent will be forgiven. **Romans 4:2** says that it's God that leads one to repentance, and if they reject the One that leads to repentance, then there is no path to repentance, and thus no hope once an individual gets to that point.

Also there's **Hebrews 10:26-29** that speaks of the unpardonable sin, so let's take a look at it. “If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth (**and who is the “way, the truth, and the life? Jesus)**, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins (**and who sacrificed His life for our sins? Jesus)**, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall be thought worthy, who hath trodden (**who**) underfoot? The Son of God, and hath counted the blood (**the blood of Jesus)** of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified (**through Jesus, Hebrews 2:11 says, and count the covenant)**, an unholy thing, and hath done desperate to the Spirit of grace?”

You see, the sin against the Holy Ghost is all about rejecting Jesus and His sacrifice, and not just about grieving the Holy Spirit. Again, the Godhead is one, in that they are all of one mind and one purpose, and that purpose is to stop human beings from going so far into sin that there's no way back.

With the verses we read just read, we also need to remember what it says in **John 6:37**, where Jesus said, "Him that cometh to Me I will **(what?)** in no wise cast out." There is forgiveness for the sins of everyone who comes to the Lord Jesus and abides in Him. There remaineth no sacrifice for sin, only when Jesus is despised and trampled underfoot, and this trampling under foot must be done willfully, with full knowledge of who He is, or for those who had opportunity to know but rejected Him.

Now, we may not know all the whys and wherefores that are involved in the sin against the Holy Ghost, but one thing is certain, no one who is mourning over his sins, and is fearful that he has committed the unpardonable sin, has been guilty of it, because the one who has committed the unpardonable sin is not penitent, and will never again have the opportunity to be so, and that's a very sad thing.

Let's go now to **2 Peter 2:20-22**, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ **(again, Jesus is at the center here)**, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness **(through Christ, like it says of Judas who would have been better off if he had never been born)**, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

When we know the truth and turn from it, there's only one way to go, and that's back to the sins we were delivered from, and not only back to them, but to wallow in them. Of this class the Spirit of Prophecy says, "The Scriptures make it plain that those who once knew the way of life and rejoiced in the truth are in danger of falling through apostasy and being lost. Therefore there is need of a decided, daily conversion to God." ***(The Faith I Live By, page 157)***

What we can conclude from this is that a daily conversion to God is the only way to avoid falling away from the truth, and it's important to note that the road to perdition starts when we begin to neglect our personal devotional life; that's always where it starts; that's always the way we are in danger of going astray. And that should be the major lesson for us today.

Now back to **Romans 5:14**. We kind of took the long way around, didn't we? "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude **(or in the same manner)** of Adam's transgression, who is the figure **(speaking of Adam)** of him **(Jesus)** that was to come. **(So how was Adam a figure of Jesus to come? Adam's sin affected the whole world, didn't it? and Jesus, the second Adam, through His sacrifice and perfect life, also affected the whole world)** Verse 15, But not as the offence **(In other words, Adam's sin, or his offence is not the same as Jesus' sacrifice, because it's the remedy for the offence through God's free gift of forgiveness and salvation)** For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift **(in other words, there is a difference between the gift of the One man and the sin of one man)**: for the judgment *was* by one to **(what?)** condemnation **(that's an important word. Remember it, because we'll be coming back to it)**, for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification. **(or after so many sins, comes the undeserved gift of not guilty)** Verse 17, For if by one man's offence death reigned by one **(Adam)**; much more they which receive **(another important word; we must "receive" the gift for it to do us any good)** much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore **(now comes the conclusion)** Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation **(there's that word again)**; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

So, Adam sinned, and as a result he passed down to each generation, not his sin, but his fallen carnal nature. That's the "condemnation" we receive from Adam, but we are not guilty of his sin, because we weren't there with him in the garden when he sinned! Does that make sense? But even though this is the logical conclusion, there are billions and billions of people who get this wrong. Because of Adam's sin, Catholicism teaches that Adam's guilt passes to all men, and therefore there is "original sin" in every person born into this world, which means we are born guilty according to the papacy. And because we are born guilty, Mary had to have given birth to an immaculate conception, or a conception that was born without a fallen nature, and for her to do that, she too would have to have been born unfallen, as well as her mother and grandmother and on and on. And so, Mary then becomes the immaculate mother, and all these misunderstandings come into play by misinterpreting **Romans 5** and a few other verses of Scripture. The truth is, we are not born sinners, but we have all chosen to sin, that's why in **verse 12** Paul could say, "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And so, "all have sinned" except

One, and that was Jesus Christ, not because He had an unfallen human nature did He not sin, but because He was filled with the Holy Spirit from His birth, and was enabled to say no to temptation after having partaken of our fallen flesh.

So, it's important for us to understand that we are not guilty of sin because of Adam's sin, but rather it's because of his sin that we are all condemned to live our lives in a fallen nature that loves to do wrong, and because we have all yielded to our fallen nature, we have all become sinners in need of a Saviour.

Now here's an important point to keep in mind; even though Jesus was born with a fallen human nature received from his mother, and I'll share a few verses with you in a few minutes that prove that point without question, He was not born guilty of original sin, if He was, then Jesus Himself would have needed a Saviour. But no, instead, Jesus was born with a nature like we have but at the same time He was empowered by the Holy Spirit at His birth. Even though He was God in His own right, He didn't use His divinity to resist temptation, but He did it the way we have to do it, by relying upon a power outside of Himself.

When Jesus was born, He was born with two natures, but we were born with only one. He was born condemned by the fallen human nature inherited from Adam just like us, but He also had the power of the Holy Spirit through the divine nature that we are given when we are born again. The reason we must be born again, like Jesus told Nicodemus, is because there's something wrong with our first birth. When we are born into this world all we have is a fallen human nature, but when we accept Christ into our life we get to partake of His divine nature as it says in **2 Peter 2:4**. Now that doesn't mean we become little Gods, because we can fall away from the truth and be lost as we read earlier, but it does mean that we now have become new creatures with new desires to follow God and resist temptation, because "all things have become new" as it says in **2 Corinthians 5:17**. So, with the aid of the divine nature working within through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can now resist the temptation to sin.

Let me give you an example of the difference between being born sinners, or being born guilty of Adam's sin, and being born condemned to live life with a fallen nature. When we are born, we do inherit things passed down from our parents and grandparents, don't we? There are all kinds of weaknesses and diseases that we may be prone to because of how our parents lived, and they because of the way their parents lived and so on, but we're not guilty for those weaknesses and diseases, because we had nothing to do with it. Nevertheless, we are condemned to suffer with what is passed down to us in this respect, and that's the way it is with our fallen nature, we inherited that from Adam and there's nothing we can do about it, but again, we are not responsible for Adam's sin.

Now, I want to talk a bit about what Paul said in **Romans 5:13**. Paul tells us that sin is not imputed where there is no law; we read that earlier, but Adam sinned, did he not? Then that tells us that there was law at the beginning in the Garden. People like to say the 10 Commandments weren't given until God wrote them on tables of stone with His own finger, but if that were true, then Adam could not have sinned, because where there is no law, there is no sin. Even Satan knew about the law of God in heaven, otherwise He wouldn't have been cast out for violating it. The law was first given in written form at Sinai, but it has always been, and it will always be. The God of heaven is a God of order, and you can't have order without law, we've noticed that in our own nation lately as our laws have been ignored, haven't we? But no, God's law was always here and it always will be, that's why **Isaiah 66:23** tells us we'll be keeping the seventh day Sabbath in the earth made new, which Adam knew about, because the seventh day was set apart as a holy day of rest and worship after six days of creation. And so, the law of God is eternal, because it was written by the One who is eternal, and there's no need for it to change, because God doesn't make mistakes, and **Titus 1:2** says He cannot lie.

Do you know why God has given us His law, other than being a God of order? He gave us His law so that we will see our need of a Saviour; a Saviour that will forgive, and cleanse, and restore us to oneness with Himself. And so, praise God for His law! It's not a yoke of bondage as many think, but a law that sets us free from sin, when through the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells within, we keep it. And **Revelation 22:14** says, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Notice what it says in **Steps to Christ, page 17**, "Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. **(That's what Adam was like)** 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. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed. . . In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him, . . . But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God. Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart. It is not in harmony with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him."

Do you understand now why there can be no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness? The renewed heart finds joy in holiness, but the unrenewed heart does not. The reason Cain killed Able was for no other reason than one was righteous and the

other wicked, and that's all it takes for murder to happen. That's the Cain principle, and it's alive and well today as we see crimes of every description perpetrated upon the innocent. And that's also why there is religious persecution, of which the Bible says will be rekindled in a big way just before Jesus comes.

The question we must ask ourselves is this, do I find joy in holiness? That's a simple question, but the way we answer means life or death. If the answer is no, then I must be converted and born again. But you say, "I accepted Christ 20 years ago and I found joy in holiness for a while, but I'm not finding that joy in holiness anymore, and I find it hard to spend time with God and find happiness in what He tells me in His word." Friends, being born again is not a onetime experience. As we read earlier, we must be born again daily; we must make the decision to die to self daily; we must be baptized anew with the Holy Spirit daily; we must be converted daily, we must develop habits of devotion to God and daily surrender our fallen will to His perfect will, daily!

In **Romans 5:15-17** we read that the gift of salvation is for all, but it must be received before it can have any saving effect upon our lives. By the way, this truth destroys the doctrine of predestination, where some are destined to be saved while others are destined to be lost. No friends, Jesus died for all, and all can be saved if they chose to be saved, but in order for that to happen, forgiveness and power to live a joyous Christian life must be received. Christ shed His blood for all, but all must accept it personally. We must receive that gift as our very own. Gifts are free, are they not? But we must accept the gift. If someone gives me a birthday present and I don't accept it and open it, what good is it? Gifts won't benefit us unless we receive the act of love from the One who gave it, and unless we do, it can never truly be ours.

Ephesians 2:8, 9 is very clear when it says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is (what?)* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." We have to receive the gift friends! Only then can it do for us that which it is designed to do.

Romans 8:3 is very clear when it says, "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." Every time you see the word "flesh" in the Bible, when referring to human flesh as opposed to animal flesh, it means, "Carnal" flesh, and **verse 7** says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." That's the kind of flesh that Jesus had, and it's the same kind of flesh that we have, that's our condemnation.

Jesus was born with the same condemnation that came down from Adam, a fallen human nature like we have, but He never gave in to it, because He had a different Father than we

had, but even though that is true, we can be adopted by the Father Jesus had when we partake of His divine nature. The second Adam could have failed but thank God He didn't. Just as condemnation came to all men, so the gift came to all men as well. Justification, or pardon, is a gift that extends to the whole human family.

So where did this idea of "original sin" come from in the first place? Well, it came from the devil originally, but he used a man by the name of Augustine, a Catholic theologian from the third century who taught that all men are born guilty of Adam's sin, and because of that they were born with his guilt, and so in order for Christ to be our Saviour and not in need of a Saviour Himself, according to Augustine, there had to be an immaculate conception. And so, because of the false idea that Jesus had to have an unfallen human nature, Mary herself had to be free from original sin. But since we are not born guilty, nor was Christ, He did not have an immaculate birth. It was miraculous, but not immaculate. And so, because of this false idea Mary becomes our mediatrix in heaven where she prays for us and intercedes on our behalf, making her a mediator between us and Christ by asking Jesus to bestow blessings upon us. And so, these are some of the crazy ideas that come from Augustine's misunderstanding of original sin.

Now let me back up a minute and repeat some of what I already said, because that's how we learn. Even the apostle Peter wrote to those of like precious faith that he was not going to be negligent about repeating things they already knew and were established in the present truth. So please indulge me for a few minutes. The "original sin" doctrine teaches that when a human being is born into this world, he or she inherits the sin of their parents. Starting at the beginning, this of course would be Adam. But the truth is, we do not inherit the sin of our parents or of Adam, but we do inherit something, and what would that be? We inherit their sinful nature, and there is a huge difference between that and being a born sinner by inheriting their guilt!

Like most false Bible doctrines, the confusion comes when one misinterprets texts like **Romans 5:12-19**, which we already read, and also **Ecclesiastes 7:20**, so let's take a quick look at that one. "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not," and that's true, but it's because we have chosen to follow our condemned fallen nature and not because we are guilty of someone else's sin. And **Romans 3:23** says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Now, while these texts tell us that this is the way that all the world has gone, they do not teach that we are born sinners or that we inherit the sin of our parents. God would have us know that sin doesn't come through bloodlines; it comes from transgression, and transgression requires a choice.

First of all, many people have no idea how the Bible defines sin, and if you would take the time to interview people on the street, you would get all kinds of different answers, but

the Bible gives only one, and it's found in **1 John 3:4** where it says, "Sin is the transgression of the law," and that's the 10 Commandment Law! If we violate any one of the 10 Commandments we come under the death sentence, because **Romans 6:23** says, "The wages of sin **(or the penalty for transgressing the law)** is death," and that's not the death that all men die, but eternal death from which there will be no resurrection. And the only way to be released from that death sentence is to accept the fact that a perfect man with a nature like ours, in the person of Jesus Christ, has agreed to take our punishment, and that's what He did on the cross of Calvary. Those who accept it are pardoned, or justified, and those who don't will have to suffer for their own sins, it's just that simple!

And think about this for a minute; if we are guilty of Adam's sin, because that's where it all started as far as this world is concerned, then that would mean that all people born into this world are guilty of sin based upon a fallen human nature, and if that were true, then Jesus was also guilty of sin, unless of course you believe the false doctrine that Jesus was born into this world by an immaculate conception by a woman who herself had an immaculate conception. Do you see where this all leads? One falsehood always gives birth to another, but the Bible is very clear in **Hebrews 4:15** that Jesus was without sin, and if He wasn't, then how could He be our Saviour? Because it's impossible for one sinner to save another sinner.

Let's go to another Scripture in **Hebrews chapter 2**, because it's very important we understand that in His humanity Jesus was like us, in that He had a fallen human nature. **Hebrews 2:14-18** "Forasmuch then as the children **(that's us)** are partakers of flesh and blood, he **(Christ)** also himself likewise took part of **(what?)** the same **(now what does the word "same" mean? It means identical or not different, or conforming in every detail)**; 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 **(or truly)** he **(Christ)** took not on *him the nature of angels* **(that would be the nature of holy angels)**; but he took on *him* **(what?)** the seed of Abraham. **(Now tell me, did Abraham have a fallen nature? Yes he did; he inherited it from Adam just like we did, and he could not give to his descendants, of which Jesus was a part, something he didn't possess)** Wherefore in all things **(in what? "all things")** it behoved him **(Christ)** 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. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted **(through His fallen human nature)**, he is able to succour **(or come to the aid of)** them that are tempted."

Isn't it comforting to know that Jesus was like us on the human side, except for sin? But it would not be comforting to know that Jesus was able to resist temptation in an unfallen

human nature, because we don't have one of those. In other words, Jesus knows what we go through in order to resist temptation, and aren't you thankful to have a Saviour and a judge like that?

Now, before we leave this thought I want you to understand another very important point. **Verse 18** says Jesus "suffered being tempted," and my question to you is this, how did Jesus suffer being tempted? Have you ever thought about it? He suffered being tempted because He had a nature the same as ours, and He suffered by not giving in to it. You see, our fallen nature wants to be satisfied, but Jesus never satisfied it by yielding to it. And we need to understand also that temptation is not sin, but yielding to temptation is sin. But wait a minute, doesn't **James 1:13** say that God cannot be tempted with evil? And wasn't Jesus God? Yes, but we must also remember that He was human in every respect, and His fallen humanity could be tempted, and it was!

Now, I am well aware that we must be careful, exceedingly careful how we dwell upon the human nature of Christ. When writing to a brother Baker, Ellen White wrote the following, "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. **(And I'm not going to try to explain it any more than I've already tried)** The incarnation of Christ has ever been, and will ever remain a mystery."

So, we need to keep these things in mind, but it's not a stretch to say that Jesus had a fallen human nature like ours, because that's what we just read in **Hebrews 2**. And the Spirit of Prophecy is crystal clear about this as well. I could read you several statements about this, but one should suffice, and then we'll move on. **Review and Herald, September 29, 1896**, "Christ, the spotless Son of God, honored humanity by taking upon himself fallen human nature. A suffering, tempted man, beset by Satan's devices, his divinity clothed with humanity, he so lived on this earth as to show, by his perfect obedience to his Father's will, what humanity could become by partaking of the divine nature." By the way friends, this means that sin is not the only option for those who have partaken of the divine nature. Jesus is not only our Saviour, but He is our example, in that we can resist temptation just like He did.

Ezekiel 18:20 gives us good council about this matter of original sin, in fact it would be good to read the whole chapter, but **verse 20** will be sufficient to show the error about this false doctrine. **Verse 20** says, "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."

This verse tells us plainly that only the one who commits the sinful act bears the guilt. And so again, guilt does not come through inheritance, it comes when we, of our own free will, choose to yield to temptation.

Now let's think this through for a minute. Are babies guilty of sin? And do they need to be baptized like the Catholics do in order for their sins to be wash away? The answer is yes if we believe in the doctrine of original sin. But no, they are not guilty of inherited sin. Why? Because **James 2:10** says, "To him that knows to do good and doesn't do it, to him it is sin." Do infants and small children know what sin is? No! Then to them sin is not imputed as Paul says. Every child has to reach the age of accountability before they become guilty of sin; they have to deliberately choose to do wrong knowing it's wrong before they can be blamed, and that age is different for every child. How then can children that unknowingly commit sin be saved?

A good example is found in **Exodus 12**. I'm sure you'll remember the story. During the Passover, when the death angel came into the land of Egypt, all the houses of the parents that put the lamb's blood all around on the door frame saved all the first born in that family, and no doubt many of those houses had infants and small children, don't you think? And so, what was it that saved those children who had not yet reached the age of accountability? It was the faith of the parents, was it not? But what about the children of the Egyptians parents that had no faith in the God of heaven and didn't put the blood on the door post? Were they eternally lost? Or did God have some kind of plan to save them?

Notice what it says in ***Selected Messages, book 3, pages 313, 314***, "I had some conversation with Elder [J.G.] Matteson in regard to whether children of unbelieving parents would be saved. I related that a sister had with great anxiety asked me this question, stating that some had told her that the little children of unbelieving parents would not be saved.

"This we should consider as one of the questions we are not at liberty to express a position or an opinion upon, for the simple reason that God has not told us definitely about this matter in his Word. If he thought it was essential for us to know, he would have told us plainly.

"The things he has revealed are for us and for our children. There are things we do not now understand. **(Like the incarnation of Christ that we read about)** We are ignorant of many things that are plainly revealed. When these subjects which have close relation to our eternal welfare are exhausted, then it will be ample time to consider some of these points that some are unnecessarily perplexing their minds about."

So, we cannot say whether in every instance children of unbelieving parents will be saved or lost, can we? But I want you to notice something else the prophet wrote in *The Youth's Instructor, April 1, 1858*, "As the little infants come forth immortal from their dusty beds, they immediately wing their way to their mother's arms. They meet again nevermore to part. But many of the little ones have no mother there. We listen in vain for the rapturous song of triumph from the mother. The angels receive the motherless infants and conduct them to the tree of life."

It seems clear enough that there will be babies in heaven that had unbelieving parents, doesn't it? But at the same time we cannot say that every one of them will be there for reasons only God knows. But those who may be lost, I think we can safely say that they will not have to suffer but will simply be as though they had never been, and again, only a loving God knows why that would be.

Now what about the little children of believing parents, will they all be saved? *Selected Messages, book 3, page 313, 314* goes on by saying, "I know that some questioned whether the little children of even believing parents should be saved, because they have had no test of character and all must be tested and their character determined by trial. The question is asked, "How can little children have this test and trial?" I answer that the faith of the believing parents covers the children, as when God sent his judgments upon the first-born of the Egyptians.

"The word of God came to the Israelites in bondage to gather their children into their houses and to mark the doorposts of their houses with blood from a lamb, slain. This prefigured the slaying of the Son of God and the efficacy of his blood, which was shed for the salvation of the sinner. It was a sign that the household **(the who? The whole household)** accepted Christ as the promised Redeemer. It was shielded from the destroyer's power. The parents evidenced their faith in implicitly obeying the directions given them, and the faith of the parents covered themselves and their children. They showed their faith in Jesus, the great Sacrifice, whose blood was prefigured in the slain lamb. The destroying angel passed over every house that had this mark upon it. This is a symbol to show that the faith of the parents extends to their children and covers them from the destroying angel. . .

"Christ blessed the children brought to Him by the faithful mothers. He will do this now if **(an important word)** if mothers will do their duty to their children and teach their children and educate them in obedience and submission. Then they will bear the test and will be obedient to the will of God, for parents stand in the place of God to their children."

Now, back to our topic of “original sin” for the last few minutes we have together. While we do come into this world with a fallen nature, we do not need to sin if we have partaken of the divine nature, that’s the beauty of the gospel. Sin is a choice, and it’s the divine nature that gives us that choice. Before that happens, sin is going to happen, because our first birth has no power to resist. But if we have become partakers of the divine nature, the devil has no power to cause us to sin. He can tempt, but that’s as far as he can go, and it’s up to us then to resist through the power that is in us because of the new birth experience.

1 Corinthians 6:19 says, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is (what?)* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” You see, as long as you have the Holy Spirit “in you,” you have the power to resist. But, if we choose not to obey what we know, then we lose the power, because **Acts 5:32** says, God has given the Holy Spirit to them that **(do what?)** obey Him.”

In **2 Peter 1:4** the Bible tells us that through the promises of God we can become “partakers of the divine nature **(and)** escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust,” or a longing, through our fallen nature, for that which God forbids. There are many preachers today who leave their flocks with the hopeless thought that they will be sinning until Jesus comes, but Peter here says No! We do not need to remain in a sinful condition. We can become a partaker of the divine nature and be a victorious Christian. We don’t have to be held captive to false teachings such as the “Original Sin” doctrine that teaches that Jesus was born through an immaculate conception and an unfallen human nature and that’s the way He was able to live a life without sin. No, that’s not the way it is. That is a teaching that will lead us to perdition.

Listen to what Pope Pius IX, speaking ex cathedra, meaning that the pope speaks infallibly on matters of faith and morals under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which is not true, but anyway this is what he said on the 8th of December 1854. “By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority **(you see, that’s where they go wrong)**, we declare, pronounce, and define, that the doctrine which holds that the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of HER conception, by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved free from all stain of original sin **(that’s what they say about Mary, and so she becomes the immaculate conception)**, has been revealed by God, and, therefore, is to be firmly and steadfastly believed by all the faithful.

“Wherefore, if any shall presume, which may God avert, to think in their heart otherwise than has been defined by us **(there’s the problem again)**, let them know, and moreover understand, that they are condemned by their own judgment, that they have made

shipwreck as regards the faith, and have fallen away from the unity of the Church.” This was from a book called, “**Catholic Belief,**” page 214.

And in the same book, **pages 216, 217** it speaks of Theodore, patriarch of Jerusalem, who said in the second council of Nice, that Mary “is truly the mother of God, and virgin before and after childbirth; and she was created in a condition more sublime and glorious than that of all natures, whether intellectual or corporeal,” which means “bodily.”

And this is what Cardinal Gibbons has to say about Mary in **Faith of Our Fathers, pages 198, 199**: “We affirm that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word of God, who in His divine nature is, from all eternity, begotten of the Father, consubstantial with Him (meaning “of the same substance,” which gives Catholics the false teaching of the Trinity, but we don’t have time to go into that), was in the fullness of time again begotten, by being born of the virgin, thus taking to himself from her maternal womb a human nature of the same substance with hers. (That would be unfallen)

“As far as the sublime mystery of the incarnation can be reflected in the natural order, the blessed Virgin, under the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, by communicating to the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, as mothers do, a true human nature of the same substance with her own, is thereby really and truly His mother.”

Now, let’s quickly compare what they say, “by their own authority” to what the Bible says. **1 John 4:2, 3**, “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit (person) that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (and remember, this word flesh means carnal, or fallen flesh) Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the (fallen) flesh is not of God, and this is that spirit of (who?) antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

And John doubles down on this in, **2 John 1:7**, “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 in **verses 10, 11** he puts an exclamation point on it by saying, “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”

The testimony of Scripture is clear friends, Christ was born with fallen flesh, and that is an assurance to us, that although fallen, God can bring forth from us “the fruits of righteousness” and that we can become like Him in character. May He be found in every one of us as **Galatians 4:19** says, that He is to be “formed in you.” May this be our experience.