

## In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh

(Rom 8:3-4)

- Remember that the context here is Paul summarizing his argument on justification by faith begun in ch 3
- I. Rom 8:3-4- Paul is describing:
  - A) What the law could not do
  - B) Why it could not do it
  - C) What God did about this
  - D) What is the result of God's action
- II. "Likeness of sinful flesh"
  - A) This does not mean simply "appearing" as flesh (as in O/T theophanies)
    - 1. This was part of the Gnostic heresy being promoted during the 1<sup>st</sup> century
    - 2. John's 1<sup>st</sup> epistle is said to be written against this heresy
      - i. Compare 1 John 1:1-2 & 1 John 4:1-2
  - B) Rom 8:3- This statement goes far beyond those other statements in scripture concerning the human body of the Lord Jesus Christ:
    - 1. John 1:14- "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us"
    - 2. Gal 4:4- "Made of a woman, made under the law"
    - 3. Phil 2:7- "Made in the likeness of men"
    - 4. 1 Tim 3:16- "God was manifest in the flesh"
    - 5. Heb 2:14- "He likewise took part of the same (flesh and blood)"
    - 6. Heb 10:5- "A body Thou hast prepared Me"
    - 7. 1 Peter 2:24- "His Own body"
  - C) Not "in the flesh" only, nor is it "in sinful flesh" but Paul goes out of his way to say "in the likeness of sinful flesh"
    - 1. 2 Cor 5:21- Christ did not have sin as a nature
      - i. Paul does not mean as the Modernists teach today that Christ had sin, but was able to overcome and overpower it, and can help us do the same
  - D) Luke 1:35- "That Holy Thing" & "Son of God"
    - 1. Matt 1:18-20- Christ was altogether separate from sin by means of His unique conception
      - i. Heb 4:15- "Like us in every way, yet without (wholly apart from) sin"
      - ii. Heb 7:26- "Holy, harmless, undefiled"
      - iii. Heb 9:14- "Without spot"
      - iv. 1 Pet 1:19- "Precious blood without blemish or spot"
        - a) Lev 17:11 & 14- "The life is in the blood"
        - b) Gen 2:7- Life breathed into Adam by God's Holy Spirit

#### E) Error of Mariology

1. Catholicism, perhaps in an effort to protect His deity, went too far with the process of His holy conception
  - i. They say in order to produce a sinless son, Mary had to be sinless
  - ii. But their logic gives away their motive, for if that were true, then Mary's mother would need to be sinless, and then hers, and so on
    - a) But the real motive was to install the pagan worship of the Queen of Heaven
2. It's not that Mary had to be sinless, but the 1 egg/cell must be
  - i. Woman is created so that no blood ever gets in the actual egg from the woman
  - ii. The blood is created from the germ that is in the sperm, and the blood forms completely within the embryo
  - iii. The mother's blood and the blood of the fetus never mix
    - a) Example of the tabernacle and the holy of holies

#### III. How was Christ in the "likeness" of sinful flesh?

##### A) Many teach that if He was without sin, then He could not be truly tempted

1. But Adam's temptation disproves this
2. Temptation itself is not sin
  - i. Temptation in its most basic form is simply taking the natural desires and needs of the body and pushing them beyond their normal capacity
3. If Christ was made without sin, then He was inferior to Adam in his creation
4. If Christ had sin, our salvation was not certain

##### B) "Likeness of sinful flesh"- Adam's sin brought certain infirmities and limitations on the flesh of man

1. These are not sin themselves, but the result of the curse
  - i. Just as Christ lived on the "cursed earth", He also lived in the "cursed flesh"
  - ii. He suffered hunger, thirst, pain, suffering, sadness, disappointment, betrayal, grief
    - a) He also had limitations in His knowledge of all things
    - b) Luke 2:40 & 52- "He grew in wisdom and stature"
2. God cannot tempt with evil, neither be tempted
  - i. But He did take upon Him flesh that could

##### C) "Faithful High Priest"

1. Heb 5:1-2- "He was touched with the feelings of our infirmities"
2. Heb 2:17-18- "Able to succor" the saints

##### D) Re-conciliator

1. Heb 2:9-14- He must have the SAME body as us to fulfill redemption
  - i. He must be in the same "currency" to reconcile

#### IV. Why “in the likeness of sinful flesh?”

- A) He had to keep the law, and so must be “under the law” in the flesh, as no other creature could be, angels included (Rom 3:19-20)
- B) He must bear our guilt, and that requires sin to be punished in the body (Gal 4:4-5)
- C) He must impart the divine nature to us, so He must Himself 1<sup>st</sup> be joined unto flesh (2 Pet 1:4)
- D) He must be a sympathetic High Priest
- E) He must die, and that requires a body of death
- F) He must be resurrected in the fleshly body to condemn death (1 Cor 15:21)
- G) He must overcome the devil in the same way in which Adam failed in order to “triumph over him,” otherwise God’s original plan failed
  - 1. If He had won the victory in His deity, then Satan would have had legal recourse to accuse or defame God
  - 2. Rom 3:25-26- But Christ fully and forever “justified God”