

The words which most of you will remember, we are considering are to be found in Paul's epistle to the Romans in chapter eight and verses three and four---verses three and four, in the eighth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. *"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, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit."*

***Romans 8:3-4: Three Headings of Importance***

Now I have suggested that the way to divide the two verses---which constitute together, one big statement---is this: **1)** We are told here what the law could **NOT** do. **2)** **SECONDLY**, we are told WHY it couldn't do it, and **3)** **THIRDLY**, we are told **WHAT GOD** has done which the Law could not do---how will God has done what the Lord could not do. And **4)** **FOURTHLY**, ***WHAT*** all this leads to, as far as we who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are concerned.

Now then, we've already considered **1) WHAT** the law could not do and **2) WHY** it couldn't do it; and we are proceeding to consider **3) WHAT** God has done and **HOW** God has done this, which the law could not do. Now here is a great subject because we've got compressed here into this third verse, a great volume of Christian **DOCTRINE** and Christian **THEOLOGY**. There is no verse perhaps which is so packed with doctrine and theology as this third verse.

***Romans 8:3-4: What God Has Done in Sending His Son***

So, considering this particular heading of **WHAT GOD HAS DONE**, it seems to me that this again divides itself up into three sections. **1) ONE**, God has ***SENT*** his son into the world. That's number one. **2)** Number **TWO**, ***WHY*** God sent his son into the world, and **3) THREE**, why it was **ESSENTIAL** that he should do so. Now we are still dealing with the **FIRST** section of this further subdivision.

**1) GOD HAS, *"SENT HIS SON INTO THE WORLD."*** Now that was the main theme last Friday night when we emphasized these points---that it is **GOD** who's done it. Salvation is of God. It isn't man's action; it is God's action, and entirely so. **GOD** has solved this problem. What the **LAW** couldn't do, GOD has done... and God has done it. And **2)** **SECONDLY**, we emphasize this expression, ***'HIS OWN SON'***, his own **ETERNAL** son, his only **BEGOTTEN** son---his son eternally generated, who was with him as the son from all eternity.

***The Incarnation: God Sent His Son in 'The Likeness of Human Flesh'***

Now then that is the point at which we left off last Friday evening, so that now we can go on to the next aspect of this matter of what God has done. He has **SENT** his son. **WHERE** has he sent him? Well, he sent him into the **WORLD**, and that is put here in this praise, ***"IN THE LIKENESS OF HUMAN FLESH."*** Now here is a great and a **STRIKING**---and in many ways a staggering--- statement, and one which is, as I'm going to show you, of extreme importance in connection with the whole doctrine of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and the **INCARNATION**. This is a statement of the **INCARNATION**. God sent his son into this world. The babe of Bethlehem is the son of God. Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal son of God. Very well. We are looking at him. Here he is walking in this world, though he is eternally God's only son; and nothing is more important, obviously, than that we should realize the **TRUTH** concerning **HIM** and concerning his **PERSON**. And this phrase we've got here is one of the ***MOST IMPORTANT*** in the whole of the scripture with regard to just that question of the **INCARNATION** and the **PERSON** of our Lord, because it is a statement that defines our Lord's **PERSON** more closely, more in **DETAIL** than perhaps any other.

Now what I mean is this, there are certain **GENERAL** statements about the incarnation and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Take for instance John 1:14 where we are told, *"The word was made flesh and dwelt among us."* Now you see that's more **GENERAL** than this one. There it is. *"The word was made flesh."* But here we've got, *"Was made in the* ***LIKENESS*** *of sinful flesh."* It's more **PARTICULAR**.

Or take another general one, Galatians 4:4, *"When the fullness of the times was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law."* Quite all right, but he doesn't tell us as much as this phrase here in this third verse of Romans 8.

Take Philippians 2:7, that tremendous statement about the incarnation. There we've got that, *"He made himself of no reputation, and was made in the likeness of men."* Still, you see it's not as **SPECIFIC** and not as **DETAILED** as the phrase that we are looking at tonight.

Then you've got that tremendous statement of it in the first epistle to Timothy in the third chapter and in that 16th verse, *"Great is the mystery of godliness."* You remember*, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."* God was manifest in the **FLESH**. Again, true of course, but **GENERAL** and not as particular and as detailed as our statement this evening.

Then you've got it in Hebrews 2:14. *"For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."* Again, a most wonderful statement, but it isn't as **DETAILED** as our statement this evening.

And then I give you one more, which is in the 10th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews in verse five. *"Therefore, when he cometh into the world, he says, 'Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body has thou prepared me.'"*

Now all of those are statements (and there are others, of course) which remind us of the ***FACT*** of the **INCARNATION**---that the eternal son of God was in this world as a **MAN**. But clearly, that isn't enough! And this phrase that we are looking at this evening tells us **MORE** about it. It defines it still further. It **QUALIFIES** those **GENERAL** statements. What does it do?

***1. The Incarnation Was a FACT***

Well, **1)** the **FIRST** thing it does is this. It reminds us that the incarnation really was a **FACT**. It was a true incarnation. The Son of God did not merely take unto him an appearance of a body. He didn't come with a mere appearance of flesh. No. He literally had a **HUMAN BODY** and a **HUMAN** **SOUL**. The incarnation is a **FACT** and a **REALITY**.

Now why do I double to say this? Well, because in the very early days of the church this matter caused a great deal of confusion. There were certain ***FALSE* TEACHERS** that arose in the Christian Church who taught that Jesus of Nazareth, the son of God, did not have a **TRUE BODY** (they taught). It was an appearance, a sort of phantom body that the incarnation was never real. He *'appeared'* as a man, but was never **REALLY** man---that the Word was not ***TRULY*** made flesh. But that is a terrible ***HERESY***, and the New Testament is at great pains to tell us and to teach us that that was great **HERESY** and error. Indeed, it can be said that the first epistle of John was probably written primarily to counter that seriously erroneous teaching. That is why, you see, John starts off in that epistle by putting it like this, *"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life."* He starts at once. He is dealing with these people who say that, in a sense, you couldn't **SEE** and you couldn't **HANDLE** with your hands. He is nailing that terrible **HERESY,** which said that our Lord's body was a mere **APPEARANCE**. You see what they went on to say (not that it matters for us tonight) in a sense is this: that he **CAME INTO** this body and **WENT** **OUT** of it at the cross, so that the Son of God didn't really die. He left this phantom body... and all that was on the cross was a mere **PHANTOM**. Now then, this first epistle of John **COUNTERS** that. Now John is so concerned about it that in the fourth chapter of that first epistle, in the first three verses he says this, "*Beloved*," he says, *"believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. Hereby in this way, know ye the spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is* ***COME******IN THE FLESH****, is of God, and every spirit that confesses NOT that Jesus Christ has 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."* Now that is ultimately the ***TEST***, therefore, of whether we've got **TRUE DOCTRINE** or not. You see there were preachers going around, and they appear to have great powers, they appeared to have certain spiritual powers and were able to do wonders and to speak in ecstasies and so on. *"It's all right,"* says John, *"don't judge them by their performances, judge them by their* ***DOCTRINE****. Do they confess that Jesus Christ has truly come in the* ***FLESH;*** *or are they these false teachers who* ***DENY*** *that? It doesn't matter how wonderful they appear nor how many miracles they may appear to work. If they* ***DENY*** *the reality of the* ***INCARNATION****, they are* ***NOT*** *of God. That is the antichrist and the spirit of antichrist."* In other words, the **TOUCHSTONE** by which we should always judge any preacher or any man who claims to have spiritual power and authority is his view of the Lord Jesus Christ, his person. **This *REALITY* OF THE INCARNATION**. Well, there it is. You see, that first epistle of John is devoted to it, but we get it in many other places. Listen to the apostle **PETER**, *"Who his own self,"* he says in the first epistle chapter two verse 24, *"bore our sins* ***IN HIS OWN BODY*** *on the tree."* He was in that **BODY,** and he bore them in the **BODY** on the tree.

But perhaps the most conclusive argument of all is this, that the name that our **LORD** most frequently applied to **HIMSELF** was ***‘THE SON OF MAN'***. He referred to himself as *'the son of man'*. Why? Well, in order to emphasize this fact that he was **TRULY MAN** and didn't merely appear to be a man. It wasn't a sort of ***THEOPHANY***---an appearance of God in human form. He was ***TRULY*** a man, and he had a ***LITERAL*** physical body as we all have... not a phantom. That's the ***FIRST*** thing it reminds us of.

***2) The Incarnation Was in ‘the LIKENESS of Sinful Flesh’***

**2)** **SECONDLY**, it doesn't merely say, you notice, that he sent him *'in the flesh'*. That isn't enough either. These other statements have said that, but obviously it isn't enough just to say that. So, we must go out and notice another negative which is this. He goes out of his way to say that he did **NOT** come in sinful flesh. He says, *"In the* ***LIKENESS OF SINFUL FLESH****."*

Now then, here is an important point. Here again is a ***HERESY***: was the body---the flesh---of the Lord Jesus Christ ***SINFUL***, or was it not? Now, there were people in the early church (as there are people in the church today) who say that our Lord's human nature was **SINFUL**--- exactly as everybody else's is. That he was born of a woman; and therefore, he inherited from her her **SINFUL HUMAN NATURE**, and that our **LORD'S** human nature was a ***SINFUL*** one. They say what happened was this: that though his human nature was sinful, he was able **NOT TO SIN**. He rose above it, he mastered it, and he conquered it; but his nature, they say---his **HUMAN** nature---was actually **SINFUL** like that of everybody else; and they regard his saviorhood, in a sense, as just that: that he **OVERCAME** the sin that is in the whole of humanity; and if we looked at him and seek his help and his aid, he will enable us to do the same thing---and that that is HOW he saves us.

Now, it seems very, very important that we should be **CLEAR** about this. That, I say, is a teaching that has kept on appearing in the church at different times throughout her long history. It is being taught very commonly at the present time. Let me give but one instance of that. The most famous theologian in the world today is probably that great Swiss, Karl Barth. Now that's his view of our Lord's human nature---that it was **SINFUL**; and it is the view held by his followers in this and in every other country. So, that it is important, I say, that we should be clear about this. And that is where this verse you see is so **IMPORTANT**.

If that were **TRUE**, the apostle would've said here, *"God sending his own son in sinful flesh and for sin, condemns sin in the flesh."* He goes out of his way ***NOT*** to say that. He says, *"In the* ***LIKENESS*** *of sinful flesh."* Why does he trouble to do this? Well, because he's anxious that we should realize that our Lord's human nature was ***NOT SINFUL***. Now, is this an isolated statement? Certainly not. Listen to some **OTHER** statements. You remember the Archangel Gabriel announcing the birth of our Lord to Mary. You'll find it in the first chapter of **Luke's** gospel, and I want to call attention particularly to what he said to her in verse 35 where he puts it like this, (but the whole context is important). Mary, you remember, having been told about this wonderful son whom she's to bear couldn't understand it, and she said to the angel, *"How shall this be, seeing that I know not a man?? The thing's impossible,"* said, Mary, *"I'm a virgin*. *How can I bear a son? I've never known a man. I'm a virgin."* Then verse 35, *"The angel answered and said unto her, 'The Holy ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee.' Then listen. 'Therefore, also that* ***HOLY THING*** *which shall be born of thee shall be called the* ***SON OF GOD****.'"* What a description of our Lord. What a description of that baby*,* ***'THAT HOLY THING'***. Why does he call him that? Well, because he is ***HOLY***. There was ***NO SIN*** in him. He's unlike every other babe that's been born into this world. Here is the only babe which you can say is ***HOLY***, *'that holy thing'*, entirely free from sin altogether... different from all others.

But there are **OTHER** statements that confirm this. Now the whole **DOCTRINE** of course of the ***VIRGIN BIRTH*** is involved at this point. His birth is unique there. We've been told that his conception is unique. Though she's never known a man, though she is not going to know a man, she's going to bear a child. How is the child conceived?? *"The power of the highest shall overshadow thee."* That's the answer.

 Now this is not simply stated in **LUKE**... in Luke's gospel. You've got it also in the gospel according to **MATTHEW**. Listen to Matthew 1:18. *"Now, the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."* Joseph isn't the father, they'd not come together. She's found to be with a child of the Holy Ghost. There's the **SAME** thing again. And verse 20, Joseph is reprimanded. He'd thought to put her away, you remember. But he's told this: *"Joseph thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."* So that in those two verses---18 and 20---in the first chapter of Matthew's gospel, you've got these specific statements which are here to tell us that he has been **CONCEIVED OF THE HOLY GHOST**. The Holy Ghost has, as it were, supplied **THE GERM OF LIFE**. Here is something that has never happened before... has never happened afterwards. Here is a ***UNIQUE*** birth something altogether in a category on its own. Now this is very important **DOCTRINE**. Obviously, the scriptures wouldn't take the trouble to supply us with these statements unless they were of **GREAT IMPORTANCE**.

So, what we are taught in these statements is---and let me give you some others, before I sum it up for you. Take the apostle Paul's way of putting it in 2 Corinthians 5:21. *"He has made him to* ***BE SIN*** *for us, who knew* ***NO SIN****, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* He knew ***NO*** sin. He not only didn't commit sin, there was ***NO SIN*** in his nature. He never knew it in an experimental sense. He never knew it as having it in his nature as a pollution, even. It was always **OUTSIDE** it. There's a great statement of it. Then take that verse, which we read at the beginning, Hebrews 4:15. *"For we have not an high priest, he says, which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but one who was tempted in all points like as we are, (yet)* ***WITHOUT SIN****."* Now, that's not a good translation at all. It's almost a misleading translation. It should be translated like this: *"Tempted in all points according to our* ***LIKENESS****,* ***APART*** *from sin."* Now that's another **EXACT STATEMENT** of our phrase here in Romans 8:3. Here it's put, *"In the* ***LIKENESS*** *of sinful flesh."* There it is put, *"According to our likeness,* ***APART*** *from sin,"* which means, of course, that he is ***LIKE*** us, ***APART*** from the sin. In other words, he is in the ***LIKENESS*** of sinful flesh. It isn't sinful. It's **APART** from sin, but it is in the ***LIKENESS*** of that---the very self same statement that we are considering. But then there's another very wonderful statement of it in Hebrews 7:26, *"For such a high priest became us, who is Holy, harmless undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens."* Now you notice the description of him. He's got to be **HOLY** and **HARMLESS** and **UNDEFILED**, separate from sinners. In other words, he is ***PERFECT***. He is ***WITHOUT* SIN**. There is no blemish in him in any respect at all. And there, of course, you've got the same thing once more in the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews in verse 14, where we read this, *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself* ***WITHOUT SPOT*** *to God---without spot to God---purge our souls... purge our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God,"* which links up of course with what Peter says in his first epistle, first chapter, verse 19. He says, *"We are saved not with silver and gold, but what with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without* ***BLEMISH*** *and without* ***SPOT****.”* And, of course, when you go back to the Old Testament, you will find the regulations laid down about the lamb that was to be taken and to be sacrificed, and the point is always made that there must be **NO BLEMISH** in it. Why was that to be true of the **TYPE**? Well, because it was to be true of the **ANTI-TYPE**. They couldn't take a lamb which had got a blemish. That wasn't accepted. It had to be a lamb, which as long as they could tell was absolutely perfect without any blemish whatsoever to typify the fact that when the **LAMB OF GOD** came, he'd have **NO BLEMISH** at all. Well, if he's got a **SINFUL** nature, he has got a very great **BLEMISH**!! His nature is **POLLUTED**.

So, all these statements work together, you see, to substantiate this claim which is made in the verse that we are looking at this evening... that our Lord's **HUMAN NATURE** was ***NOT* SINFUL**, but that it was **LIKE** our sinful nature. And if you want one other, you'll find it in the first epistle of John, again, chapter three and verse five, *"And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is* ***NO SIN****.”*

***The Doctrine: Jesus Took Our Human Nature, But Had No Sin***

Now then what is the **DOCTRINE**? Well, I can put it to you in this form: that our Lord in the incarnation took unto him a human nature that had been rendered **FREE FROM SIN**. Now it's very interesting that the Roman Catholics at this point are not only right, but in their anxiety to be right, go so far as to say something that is wrong. What is it they say? Well, in their great anxiety to safeguard this fact---that our Lord's human nature was not sinful---they go so far as to say that the human nature of the virgin Mary was not sinful. That is what is called *'the doctrine of the immaculate conception'*. Now, I find people very often think that when they hear about the doctrine of the immaculate conception, that it's simply a statement of the fact that our Lord's nature was free from sin. That isn't what it means at all. The immaculate conception, as taught by the Church of Rome, says that the human nature of **MARY** was **SINLESS**, and there is not an iota of evidence to support that in the whole of scripture, not an iota.

Mary was **HUMAN** like everybody else. Her human nature was most definitely and decidedly ***SINFUL***. She is a descendant of Adam, like everybody else is a descendant of Adam, and she has received the polluted, fallen human nature that ***EVERYBODY*** born into this world has received as the result of Adam's transgression. The apostle has proved that to us in chapter five of this epistle to the Romans very well. Then what is the teaching? Well, the teaching is this: not that Mary had been rendered sinless, but that **PORTION** of Mary---that cell out of Mary, which was to be developed into the body of the son of God---that ***THAT*** was cleansed from sin, and that ***ONLY***. So that Mary remained sinful, but this **PORTION** that she transmits to her son has been delivered---set free---from sin; and it is to that the son of God is joined. ***THAT*** is the **HUMAN NATURE** that he takes unto **HIMSELF**.

It's a **MIRACLE**, of course; and we are told specifically that it is a **MIRACLE**. It was because she didn't realize that a miracle was to happen that Mary stumbled at the announcement of the Archangel Gabriel, and His reply is, *"Don't try to understand this; but the power of the highest shall overshadow thee, the Holy Ghost will come upon thee. You're going to conceive of the Holy Ghost. He has power to work this cleansing, so that the body and the human nature of the Son of God shall be entirely* ***FREE FROM SIN****."* So, we ***REJECT*** the doctrine of the immaculate conception. But we ***ASSERT*** with all our power and all we have the doctrine that the **HUMAN** **NATURE** of the Son of God was entirely **FREE FROM SIN**. "But **WHY** should anybody ever want to doubt this," you say. "WHY should they say that the Lord's human nature was **SINFUL**? And what they try to say of course is this: that they can't see how he could be tempted **TRULY** unless this was **TRUE** of him. They feel that it is essential to the fact that he should have been liable and subject to temptation **AS *WE* ARE**. Well now, the reply to that of course is again simply Hebrews 4:15, *"Tempted in all points like as we are, apart from sin."* Tempted ***TO*** sin, but there was ***NO* SIN** in him. He was tempted in ***EVERY*** way like we are, but there was ***NO SIN*** in him---sin ***APART***, if you like… ***APART*** from sin. But not only that, it is entirely a **FALLACY** to say that we cannot be tempted unless there is something within us that **RESPONDS** to it, because, after all, Adam---when he was tempted---had **NOT** got a sinful nature!!! Adam, when he was tempted, had a **PERFECT** human nature. He was tempted---Adam and Eve were tempted---in a state of **PERFECTION**, so that obviously a temptation can have **FORCE** and **POWER**, though the nature is ***NOT* EVIL**. And that really is an answer sufficiently in and of itself. I wouldn't hesitate to assert this: that our Lord knew the power of temptation in a way that no human being has ever known it. The devil brought out all his reserves. He brought out all his subtlety, he put it as attractively as he could. We see it in the three temptations in the wilderness. He undoubtedly came back many another time and brought all his power of deception to bear upon him; but our Lord did not fall. But he felt the **POWER** of temptation. He had a view of the subtlety of the devil and sin and evil in **TEMPTATION** such as you and I can never know. That then is the answer to that. But furthermore, what these good friends seem to me to miss is this: can you conceive of the godhead combining in one person with sin, with **SINFUL** human nature? The thing is inconceivable! That this divine eternal nature---for he is God, eternal God the son. How can that possibly **COMBINE** in one person with a **SINFUL** human nature? The thing doesn't bear thinking about. It is quite inconceivable!

And then add to that this **FINAL ARGUMENT**. Our Lord, according to the teaching of the scripture, did not come into the world simply to **CLEANSE** that first humanity that had been created in Adam. He came to bring in a **NEW** humanity. That is why you see Paul in 1Corinthians 15 puts it like this: the ***FIRST*** man and then the ***SECOND*** man. *"The* ***FIRST*** *man is of the* ***EARTH****, earthy. The* ***SECOND*** *man is the Lord from* ***HEAVEN****."* Now this is the most important point to me. What God has done in Christ is to start a ***NEW RACE***, a new humanity, which has its link with the old humanity in this portion that was taken from Mary, which was rendered **FREE** from sin. So that in a sense you can say it is still the ***OLD*** humanity, yes, but it has been so **CLEANSED** that it can be the start of a ***NEW*** humanity; so that Jesus Christ is the ***SECOND*** man. Adam was the ***FIRST*** man---Adam was the head of a human race. Jesus Christ is the head of a human race---the ***SECOND*** man. Here is the first-born amongst many brethren. Here is God starting, I say, a **NEW** pattern, a **NEW** race, as it were, of men, a **NEW** humanity. That link with the **OLD**, but something which is essentially **NEW**. And as we bear that in mind, I think we see how utterly important it is that we should realize that his nature **WASN'T** sinful. When God made the ***FIRST*** man, he made him ***PERFECT***. Adam's human nature was ***NOT*** a sinful human nature. The man---the ***FIRST*** man that God brought into being---was entirely ***FREE FROM SIN*** in every respect. So was the ***SECOND***! If you say that Christ's human nature was sinful, you're in a sense making him a **LESSER** man than the ***FIRST*** man---less perfect, less complete---which is again unthinkable. Not only that, you've got to look at it in this way. As I was saying, I think it was last week, what makes this salvation of ours so **CERTAIN** and **SURE** is this: that it **CANNOT** fail. It cannot fail. Sin doesn't enter in here as it entered into the first; it **CANNOT** enter in. And that is because the eternal son of God has taken unto himself this **HUMAN** nature, and he bears it through, spotless and perfect, without ever **FALLING** and without any trace of **SIN** in any connection belonging to it.

***Jesus' Flesh Was Sinless, But It Did Possess Our INFIRMITIES***

Very well then. So, the apostle emphasizes here that he **DIDN'T** come in sinful flesh; but he does go out of his way to say that he came in the ***LIKENESS*** of sinful flesh, and there is a **POSITIVE** element in this--- and the positive element is a very valuable one. It means this, he had a **TRUE** **FLESH**. He was **TRULY HUMAN**. His human nature was not an appearance, it was a **REALITY**. He was **TRULY** a man. He had a rational soul like very one of us has, but it WASN'T sinful in any way at all; but it was ***LIKE*** our sinful human nature in **CERTAIN RESPECTS**. In **WHAT RESPECTS.** And the answer seems to be this inevitably: that though his human nature was ***NOT*** in itself **SINFUL**, it did have some of the **CHARACTERISTICS** that belong to our human nature as the **RESULT** **OF** **SIN**. What do I mean? I mean something like this. Sin not only **POLLUTES** human nature, it brought into it certain ***INFIRMITIES***. Now Adam, before he fell, had no infirmities at all. Adam was perfect. He didn't know fatigue, he couldn't have been ill. He was innocent and he was without sin. But as the ***RESULT*** of his sin and his fall, he not only became **SINFUL** and **PERVERTED** in his nature, certain ***WEAKNESSES*** entered into his life and they have been transmitted ever since. Now the Bible makes it very clear that our Lord had some of these ***INFIRMITIES***.

Now **INFIRMITIES** are ***NOT* SINFUL** in and of themselves. What am I thinking of? Well, I'm thinking of fatigue, tiredness, weariness, pain, sorrow, grief, disappointment, the capacity to weep. **ALL THOSE** were evident in our Lord. Let me give you some others. We read about him at the end of the second chapter of gospel of Luke, two statements like this. First of all, verse 40, "And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." Then verse 52, *"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature."* You see, he was able to grow in **WISDOM** and **STATURE** and in **FAVOR** with God and men. Yes, and **ALSO**---as we've seen again in Hebrews 4:15---he now was ***SUBJECT TO TEMPTATION***. James tells us that God not only does not tempt, but **CANNOT** be tempted. And if our Lord had not become truly human---if he hadn't **REALLY** become a man---he wouldn't even be subject to **TEMPTATION**. But he **WAS** subject to temptation. Yes, because he came in the ***LIKENESS* OF SINFUL FLESH.**

And then, you notice, those other remarkable statements which are made about him in that portion we read at the beginning in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, *"Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way, so that he himself* ***ALSO*** *is compassed with* ***INFIRMITY****,"* and this is true of the son of God. He is compassed with ***INFIRMITY***. You see, we **HAVE NOT** an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our ***INFIRMITIES***. Why not? Well, because he **KNEW** these infirmities himself. He **KNEW** what it was to be compassed with certain infirmities. He was not aware of certain things. You take that instance of the barren fig tree; he obviously **DIDN'T KNOW** that it hadn't got fruit on it. He says about the day of the second coming that he **DOESN'T KNOW** it. Not only does no man know the time of the second coming, he says even the **SON** doesn't know it... only the father. Now these are parts and indications of this ***INFIRMITY***, so that this fifth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews sheds great light upon this phrase that we are looking at in Romans 8:3 this evening.

*"He came in the* ***LIKENESS*** *of sinful flesh."* You looked at him and he appeared to be **FRAIL**. He was **TIRED**; he was **WEARY**. We read in the incident of the woman of Samaria that when the disciples had gone to buy provisions, he sat by the side of the well because he was **TIRED**. He seems to have been **MORE** tired than they were. Now that's an ***INFIRMITY***. So, *"He came in the* ***LIKENESS*** *of sinful flesh."* His flesh wasn't sinful, but it was like it in these particular respects.

***3) WHY the Son Had to Come in "the Likeness of Human Flesh"***

Now then let me ask a ***FINAL* QUESTION**. **WHY** was this ***ESSENTIAL***? **WHY** did he have to come in this particular way? Why did God send his son into the world in the ‘***LIKENESS*** *of sinful flesh'*? And the answer is this: that man is ***MAN***, and that God sent his son to save ***MAN***; and therefore, in order to save ***MAN***, he has to become ***MAN***.

Now this is put best of all in the second chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews**. 1)** ***FIRST*** of all, in verse nine he says, *"We do not see yet all things put under* ***MAN****, but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death* ***FOR EVERY MAN****."* There's the **FIRST** statement of it. But **2)** take verse 11, *"For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of* ***ONE****, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them* ***BRETHREN****."* Now these verses are tremendously **IMPORTANT**. Take the 10th verse before that, *"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---the leader of their salvation, which is Jesus Christ---perfect as a captain through sufferings. And, you see, in order that he might do it through sufferings, he that sanctified and they were sanctified of all of* ***ONE****, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them* ***BRETHREN****."* He's got this **HUMAN NATURE** that they've got! Very well, there's another statement of it; but **3)** then go on to verse 14, *"For as much then as the children are* ***PARTAKERS*** *of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise* ***TOOK PART*** *of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil."* Because you and I have got **FLESH AND BLOOD**, in order to save us, he's got to take on him **FLESH AND BLOOD**. That's the argument. And then, **4)** look at verse 16 and 17, *"For verily,"* he says, "*he took not on him the nature of angel, but he took on him the* ***SEED OF ABRAHAM****, wherefore, in all things it behooved 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, for in that he himself hath suffered being* ***TEMPTED****, He is able to succor them that are* ***TEMPTED****.”*

***A) As a MAN, He Had to Keep and Honor the LAW***

Now let me try to expound all this to you. ***WHY*** did he have to come in the likeness of sinful flesh? **A)** He had to keep and to honor the ***LAW***. Man is under the law, and he has broken it, and therefore, the law **CONDEMNS** him. And before men can be reconciled to God, he must **KEEP** the law---He must bear its **PUNISHMENT**, He must actively **OBEY** it. Jesus Christ came into the world to be our **REPRESENTATIVE** to do that for us. Man can't do it. Man had **FAILED** to do it. *"There is* ***NONE*** *just, no not one.* ***ALL*** *have sinned and come short of the glory of God; the whole world lies* ***GUILTY*** *before God."* I'm quoting from the third chapter of the epistle to the Romans. Now then, man can't do it. God can't do it---what the law could not do, God sends his son. What for?? to be our ***REPRESENTATIVE***. What's he got to do as our representative. He's got to ***KEEP* THE LAW**. Very well then, he must be **BORN UNDER IT**. That means he's got to become a ***MAN***. He's got to take on **HUMAN NATURE**. He couldn't keep and honor the law for us unless he had done this.

***B) As a Man, He Had to Bear Man's GUILT***

Not only that, **B)** this ***GUILT*** has got to be born, and how can he bear the guilt unless he is likened to us, as this man argues. So, in order to take our **SINS** and our **GUILT** upon him and to bear their **PUNISHMENT**, he had to take on **HUMAN NATURE**.

God as God couldn't do that; the ***SON*** had to become ***INCARNATE***! Before he could do that, he has to be **PARTAKE** of flesh and blood as we are. He must be a man to be man's representative... to be the start of this new humanity. As sin had been committed in the **BODY**, so it must be punished in the ***BODY,*** which is the next phrase in, *"The likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the* ***FLESH****,"* not in theory, but in the ***BODY*** of his own son. Alright, that's the second point.

***C) As a Man, He Could Impart to Us a NEW NATURE***

**C)** Third point, before he can save us, he must not only do all that, but he must give us a ***NEW* NATURE**. We need to be made **PARTAKERS** of the ***DIVINE* NATURE**, And the only way in which that becomes possible is this: that he has done that to human nature--- He's taken it unto **HIMSELF** and he's able to give it to ***US***. If he had not become ***INCARNATE***, we could never have become ***PARTAKERS*** of the ***DIVINE* NATURE** and the sons of God.

***D) As a Man, He Can Be Our Faithful HIGH PRIEST***

**D)** Fourth, as there is argued out so wonderfully there in Hebrews four and five, this is the ***ONLY*** way whereby he could become our sympathetic **HIGH PRIEST**. Do you know if he hadn't done this, we wouldn't be able to **PRAY**. Who are we to ascend into the hill of God? Who are we to go into the **PRESENCE** of the eternal God, who is a consuming fire? No, no. There's only ***ONE*** way whereby I can **PRAY** and go into the **PRESENCE** of God with confidence. It is this: *"That we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our* ***INFIRMITIES****."* No, no. He's come in the ***LIKENESS* OF SINFUL FLESH**. He was made flesh. He's clearly ***MAN*** and he's lived in this world. He **KNOWS**; he can **BEAR** with us. He can **SYMPATHIZE** with us; he can **STRENGTHEN** us. He's a sympathetic high priest because he came in the ***LIKENESS*** of sinful flesh. He knows what it is to be weary and tired, hungry and thirsty. He knows what it is to be disappointed in his friends. He knows what it is to feel grief and sorrow. He knows what it is to **WEEP**. Thank God he came in the ***LIKENESS*** of sinful flesh. It makes him our sympathetic high priest.

***E) As a Man, He Conquered DEATH***

And then listened to this. **E)** If he hadn't come in this way, he could never have ***CONQUERED DEATH*** for us! before death can be conquered, a human nature must be able to go through it and come out the other side. He's done it. He is the **FIRST-BORN** amongst many **BRETHREN**; or, as the apostle Paul put it in preaching to Agrippa and Festus and their wives, *"That he should be the* ***FIRST*** *to rise from the dead."* Here is a ***NEW* MAN** that's conquered death and left it behind **FOREVER**. He dies no more, as Paul has told us in chapter six in verse 10 of this epistle to the Romans. Yes, and because he has done it, we can be SURE of our resurrection. He puts it in 1 Corinthians 15:21 in this way, *"For since by* ***MAN*** *came death, by* ***MAN*** *came also the resurrection from the dead."* If it's ***MAN*** who has gone **DOWN**, it's a ***MAN*** who must go **UP**. Therefore, he had to become ***MAN***. ***That's the argument.***

***F) As a Man, He Had to SILENCE the Devil***

 And that brings me to **F)** my **LAST** reason, which is this, the sixth. This is the ***ONLY*** way to **SILENCE** the devil to all **ETERNITY**. What do I mean? I mean something like this. Ever since the fall of man, the devil has been taunting God. He said, *"You made man in your own image. Look at him. I've got him. I've* ***MASTERED*** *him. What can you do about it? Your great* ***PLAN*** *has gone* ***WRONG****.”*

Now if God had saved men by any **OTHER** means or method, save the one that he's adopted, the devil could ***NEVER*** have been silenced. If great spiritual power were given from heaven, the devil would say, "Yes, but that isn't fair. You see it isn't ***MAN***. If he came down on earth he couldn't stand. I'd tempt him and I'd get him down." Very well. God sent his **OWN SON**, "In the ***LIKENESS*** of sinful flesh. He made him under the **LAW,** made of a **WOMAN**, made under the **LAW**." He is subject to ***TEMPTATION***. The devil was given a full opportunity, but he ***FAILED***. there stood before him one whom he regarded as a **MAN** only, and he could find nothing in him; and he ***FAILED*** to trap him. He ***FAILED*** to ensnare him. He ***FAILED*** to drag him down. He's ***DEFEATED***! So that it's argued, therefor, in Hebrews two, you see, *"For as much, then, as the children are* ***PARTAKERS*** *of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise* ***TOOK PART*** *of the same, that through death he might* ***DESTROY*** *him that had the power of death... that is the devil."* The devil is ***SILENCED*** once and ***FOREVER***.

Man is, in Christ, ***RESTORED*** unto the image of God and will be made finally ***PERFECT*** and ***COMPLETE***. You see---you remember, don't you--- how Paul argued there in chapter three, verse 26, he says, *"Whom God has set forth to be a* ***PROPITIATION*** *through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be* ***JUST*** *and the* ***JUSTIFIER*** *of him, which believeth in Jesus."* That means that the devil has got **NOTHING** to say. ***MAN*** it was that sinned. Very well, it is ***MAN*** that must be punished. ***MAN*** sinned in the **FLESH**. **SIN** must, therefore, be **PUNISHED** in the **FLESH**; and God has done it. Jesus Christ was ***MAN***. The **SINS** were laid upon him. They were dealt with in his ***BODY***. The devil is ***SILENCED***. He's got **NOTHING** to say. God is **VINDICATED**... God is ***JUST***. But at the same time, he can now ***JUSTIFY*** all who believe in Jesus. But you see, if it had been done in any way **EXCEPT** this way, which is that Christ has been sent in the ***LIKENESS*** of sinful flesh, the devil could be saying all along, "Ah, but wait a minute, it all happened in the **BODY**. It happened in ***HUMAN NATURE***, and you've got to deal with it in ***HUMAN NATURE***. He can't say that now, because it ***HAS*** been dealt with in ***HUMAN NATURE***, and there is no condemnation. The devil is **SILENCED**. So that Paul, later on in this eighth chapter is able to say, *"Who shall bring anything against God's elect? Who shall bring any charge against them?"* **NOBODY**!! There is nobody anywhere in heaven or in Hell or anywhere else that can bring any charge whatsoever... ***NONE***. Because it is **GOD'S** work. *"It is* ***GOD*** *that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that* ***DIED****, yea, rather that is* ***RISEN*** *again, who is even at the right hand, who also maketh intercession for us."*

It happened in this way. God sent his son in the ***LIKENESS*** of sinful flesh for those reasons. And the **GREATEST** of all is the last God's glory is **VINDICATED**. God's honor, God's justice, God's righteousness is revealed, manifested, glorified for all eternity because his son came in the ***LIKENESS* OF SINFUL FLESH**... as ***MAN***, for ***MAN***. He did the **WORK** and did it perfectly: and God is, *"****JUST*** *and the* ***JUSTIFIER*** *of him that believeth in Jesus."*

Let us pray. “Oh Lord our God, we come again before Thee to offer a wondering praise and thanksgiving. Oh Lord, we've been looking into the infinities. Great is the mystery of godliness. How we bless and praise thy great and holy name for it. That thy ways are not our ways, nor thy thoughts our thoughts. Oh God, we thank Thee that thou dost allow us to look into these things. We thank thee for thy word. We thank thee for this particular statement we've looked at tonight: that he came in ***'THE LIKENESS OF SINFUL FLESH'***. Oh, we bless thy name for the comfort of knowing that our high priest is of such a nature and a character that he was in this world that he endured. He was tried and tempted, buffeted, taunted. Oh God, we thank Thee that He, such a one, is at thy right hand, and that, therefore, we can come with boldness to the throne of grace to obtain mercy... to find mercy and obtain grace to help in time of need. Oh Lord, bless these truths to us, we pray Thee, more and more. Enable us to see them, to rejoice in them, to rest upon them, to pray on their basis, and ever to be well- pleasing in thy most holy sight. Hear us, oh Lord, as thus we offer our thanksgiving. And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship and the communion of the Holy Spirit abide and continue with us, now this night throughout the remainder of this our short, uncertain, earthly life and pilgrimage, and until we shall see him as he is, be made like Him and glory throughout eternity in his presence. Amen.”

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 **Sermon Outline**

1. Amazing! ***The doctrine of the incarnation***. There is much we can know about it. Romans 8:3-4 tells us what God has done to bring about our salvation: **He has sent His own Son into the world in "*the likeness of human flesh*."**
	1. It was **a true incarnation**. He had a real human body.
	2. Christ’s body **was *sinless* flesh**. But He came in **the *LIKENESS* of sinful flesh**.
		1. Jesus is holy and therefore **could not reside in sinful flesh**! (Luke 1:35)
		2. Jesus was born of a virgin; therefore, the germ of life was supplied by the Holy Spirit. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18)
	3. Jesus, in the incarnation, took unto Himself human nature **that had been *rendered sinless*!**
		1. Mary wasn’t sinless, **but the germinal cell that was to be developed into the body of the Son of God was *cleansed from sin*!**
		2. If Christ’s flesh had been sinful, He would have been less than Adam because Adam was created without sin!
	4. He was in the ***likeness* of our flesh**, in that, though He was sinless, **He bore our**

**weaknesses and infirmities**. He could still experience intense temptation even though He was sinless. Adam too was tempted even when he was still sinless.

1. Why did Christ have to come in the likeness of sinful flesh?
	1. As a man He had **to keep and honor the Law**. A human had to actively keep the Law, yet bear its punishment in order to save men.
	2. Our sins and guilt had to be borne by Him as a man **so that our punishment could be meted out in righteousness**. Sin committed in human flesh must be punished in human flesh.
	3. Our salvation would require us to be **partakers of a new nature**. We receive from the last Adam (Jesus) who has human AND divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4)
	4. By taking on our nature, Jesus could effectively become a ***sympathetic high priest*** for us. He knows our frailties. (Hebrews 4 and 5)
	5. Death had to be conquered; and **it could only be conquered by a human experiencing it, coming out victorious on the other side**, and leaving it behind forever. Jesus’s victory over Death guarantees OUR resurrection.

(1Corinthians 15:21)

* + 1. The devil failed to ensnare or drag down Jesus, even though he tempted Him. By mastering Satan, Jesus, as God and man, silenced him. The devil defeated the first Adam, but he himself was defeated by the last Adam!
		2. Man, “in Christ”, is **restored into the image of God** and will ultimately be made perfect and complete by God’s sanctification process.
1. **It was a man that sinned and a man, the Lord Jesus Christ, was punished**. Our sins were laid upon Him and they were dealt with in His body. The devil has been silenced and God has been vindicated.
	1. **God is just, but at the same time He can now ‘justify all who believe in Jesus**! Because sin has been dealt with in human nature, there is now no condemnation for the believer, for those who are ‘in Christ’.
	2. God's glory, honor, and justice are vindicated and His righteousness is revealed! **He is *just* and *the justifier* of those who by faith believe in His Son.**