

What was the nature of Christ? Adam before or after the fall?

There has been an ongoing debate over the nature of Christ in the Adventist Church over the years. Because we believe in a holistic nature of mankind (body + breath = being), we need to look at how the Bible speaks to the issue from that perspective.

Yet there is a difference between the physical and the spiritual aspects of our nature, our mind before and after conversion. The challenge here is that Jesus was not “converted” as we think of his nature. Neither was Adam unconverted in a traditional sense. The Bible describes his nature as unfallen (prelapsarian) or fallen (postlapsarian).

The argument that Jesus had a “fallen” nature is impossible to prove by the Scriptures. His body was fallen while at the same time His nature was not. It never was. This hardly sounds like Adam either before or after the fall.

Jesus Was Unique

(John 3:16) For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten (*monogenes*) Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Monogenes (Greek) means unique or different.

(Hebrews 11:17–18) By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten (*monogenes*) son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called

The word *monogenes* denotes a class or stock, more than origin or generation. In Hebrews 11:17–18 it’s evident that regardless of when a person is born into a family, they could form a completely unique sub-class through which something special occurs. Jesus was such a person.

(Colossians 1:18) And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

- Jesus was not the first one resurrected to life. But His resurrection was unique in that it gave Him preeminence, or supremacy.
- Jesus was the firstborn (*prototokos*) in that He was resurrected from the dead, becoming the One through whom all could be raised back to life. By virtue of His resurrection, Jesus has preeminence, being the first and only Source of the new life for others (John 14:19).

(Hebrews 2:17) Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

- We need to be careful interpreting “all things” to mean that He had a nature identical to Adam’s (or ours), either before or after the fall.

The following text helps to clarify:

(Romans 8:3–4)³ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

- Likeness is not sameness. He was like us physically in that He was born in our flesh 4000 years after the fall.
- But it was His spiritual nature that was uncorrupted.

(John 14:30) ...for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.

So how was Jesus unique?

Luke that gives Christ's genealogy, comparing the two (not in the context of Christ's nature).

(Luke 3:38) ...the son of Adam, the son of God.

The following verse speaks to the uniqueness of Adam and Christ related to position within the human race:

(Romans 5:14, 17) Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. ... For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

- Note that Adam was a "type" of Him who was to come. Type does not mean the same, but an example. And certainly not an example of Adam's "transgression."
- Christ was sinless.

(1 Corinthians 15:22) For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

- Through the first Adam (Adam) we receive the inheritance of death. Through the last Adam (Jesus), we receive the inheritance of life.
- Today, we either perish in the first Adam OR by live in the Second Adam.

Power to Overcome as Christ Overcame

(Revelation 3:21) To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

We can only overcome sin and temptation by the grace of God, His divine power working in us.

(2 Peter 1:2-4) ² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

It's not because Christ was identical to us in nature that makes us capable of overcoming temptation as He overcame it (as some suggest). We can only overcome temptation, and sin, by partaking of the divine nature. This is how Christ lived His life, by trusting in His Father and the Holy Spirit who was present in Him. He is our Example.

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(Manuscript Releases 13, p. 18) Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is the second Adam. The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him; he was in the image of God. He could fall, and he did fall through transgressing. Because of sin, his posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience. But Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He took upon Himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity. He was assailed with temptations in the wilderness, as Adam was assailed with temptations in Eden.

(That I May Know Him, p. 95) We need not retain one sinful propensity. ... As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan's temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God.