

WHO BROUGHT YOU INTO THE WORLD?

By Paul Penno Jr.

August 24, 2014

Maybe you've heard someone say that your mother and father brought you into the world. They had a part in it, they cooperated with God in doing it, but the One who brought you into the world was God Himself. Your father and mother knew nothing about how to make you!

The Bible says to your father and mother, "You can no more understand what [God] does than you understand how new life begins in the womb of a pregnant woman" (Eccl. 11:5). If He "makes all things," that means He made you!

And who is God? He is the Father also of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that means straight off that God has intended you to be a brother or a sister of Jesus Himself. You are a very important person. And that means that you want to do and say things that are right. God Himself gave you that desire.

Here are some neat words that you can say to God. They are a prayer that anyone can say to Him; you can make them your prayer tonight before you go to sleep:

"You created every part of me; You put me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because . . . all You do is strange and wonderful. I know it with all my heart. When my bones were being formed, carefully put together there in secret, You knew that I was there—You saw me before I was born. . . ." (Ps. 139:13-16).

If you can't sleep at night, start thinking about how God fitted every nerve in your body and in your brain before you were born. You are more complex than any computer anyone has ever made. If your father had red hair, more than likely you have red hair. Why? No one knows. Tiny little things that no one has ever seen are passed on from father and mother to the child, all of it somehow in what we call the DNA. It makes each of us different.

Can you imagine a cord that no one can see that stretches all the way back through your parents and grandparents on and on to Adam and Eve, our first parents on earth? That's our DNA; and little threads smaller than a spider's web are added to it by each new father and mother along the way. But God knows every tiny little nerve cell that went into making you what you are.

When Jesus was born as a Baby, was He a part of that mysterious cord that no one can see—our DNA?

Or did God start from scratch when Jesus was to come into the world as our Savior and make a new Baby like He made Adam in the beginning—out of the dirt in the ground? Remember, the Bible says, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground" (Gen. 2:7). Is that how God formed Jesus as a Baby? Or did His mother conceive Him in her womb with all the DNA we have all inherited from the fallen Adam? And did Jesus grow as a tiny baby there for nine months until she was ready to give birth to Him?

The Bible tells us "Yes." Jesus was conceived in the womb of a woman named Mary. She was a

virgin, that is, she had never slept with a man. Her Baby had no earthly father such as everyone else in the world has had. But except for that, Jesus took part in all that same DNA that we inherit from our parents all the way back to Adam. (You can read about it in Romans 8:3, 4 and Hebrews 4:14, 16.)

The Bible says that just as “the children . . . are people of flesh and blood, Jesus Himself became like them and shared their human nature” (Heb. 2:14). It also says “that He had to become like His brothers in every way, in order to be their faithful and merciful High Priest in His service to God, so that the people’s sins would be forgiven. And now He can help those who are tempted, because He Himself was tempted and suffered” (vs. 17). That means that as a Child, Jesus knew how you feel. When He fell down and skinned His knees, that hurt just as much as it hurts for you.

It also means that He was just as much tempted as you are tempted to be selfish, but He never gave in to that temptation. He is the only Baby ever to grow up to be a Boy who was never selfish. Often as a Child He would give His own lunch to someone who was hungry. He looked just like you—no one would have guessed by looking at Him that He was the Son of God! The difference between Him and you and me is that He was God in human flesh, and the Bible says that always “God is love” (1 John 4:8). What was different was His character.

God made the everlasting covenant with the Descendant of Abraham. “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made” (Gal. 3:16). The Father and the Son made mutual promises to one

another to redeem the sin-fallen race. The Father made the ultimate sacrifice of giving His Son to the world (John 3:16). The Son promised to take our humanity and become the Surety for the race. He would meet the demands of the broken law on behalf of those who in their powerless state could not do it for themselves.

The majority of “Christians” have given the world a misunderstanding of Christ. The Apostle John writes warning of such false teachers who perpetuate the idea of a false christ: “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh [*sarx*] is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist” (1 John 4:3). John says that these false teachers deny Christ “come in the flesh” and thus the source of their teaching is inspired by the “antichrist.”

The denial of Christ come in flesh makes Him so far distant from our problem that we have no Saviour from sin. He might as well be separated from us by the vast universe. He then becomes the Christ of the stained glass windows in the church. So holy and distant that He does not identify Himself with sinners, much less call them “brethren.”

The “Christians” who purport to be the appointed “vicar” of Christ on earth teach what is known as the “Immaculate Conception.” This pertains to the Virgin Mother who was conceived by her mother, Anne, without sin. Thus the DNA hereditary line of sin was not past on from Anne to Mary so that she could be a pure vessel through which Christ

entered the human family. Hence, He was not tempted thoroughly like we are.

Many Protestants grant Jesus a similar exemption from our fallen state by insisting that if He had come with a fallen human nature He would have been sinning from the start. Therefore, He couldn't be the Perfect Lamb slain on behalf of sinners if He was a sinner Himself.

So it is taught that Jesus came as the second Adam and began where the first Adam started, in a sinless nature. As the pre-Fall nature of Christ view goes, it takes into account that He entered the world four thousands years after Adam. Of necessity, He came in man's weakened physical state into a world ravaged by the effects of evil.

But this begs the question whether we need a Saviour who is like Adam before the Fall, or do we need a Saviour from sin in our fallen condition. We are not only tempted from without by a thoroughly tainted environment, but most certainly from within our own selves. Do we have such a Saviour from sin who came all the way down to where we are at?

How near the Saviour came to us in our fallen condition is indicated by the following words: "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law" (Gal. 4:4, 5). "To redeem" means a price was to be paid to those who sold themselves in slavery to sin by being "under the law." "Under the law" means disobedience to the law. So they were sitting condemned on death row expecting what was due them. They had worked for pay and "the wages of sin is death."

Christ was "born of a woman" Mary. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary. The angel informed Mary that she would give birth to "that holy thing . . . the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). He was born "holy" with a Divine will. He had a Divine "mind." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

He took from His mother Mary our fallen human condition. This is what Paul indicates when he writes "born under the law." Jesus experienced that inner tension throughout His earthly sojourn between what God wants and what He wanted. "He was tempted in all points like as we are."

This means He came into this world like every one of us come into the world. He was born into a home environment with a mother, father, and siblings, and community who were sinners. They couldn't help but expose Jesus to their patterns of thinking and constant temptations to rebel against God's will. Their minds interacted with His mind.

Jesus' partook of human nature because He was exposed to the "*action of mind on mind.*"¹ Fallen human nature is not a DNA biological inheritance. Jesus knew the inner conflict of wanting things His

¹ "To a large degree Satan has succeeded in the execution of his plans. Through the medium of influence, taking advantage of the *action of mind on mind*, he prevailed on Adam to sin. Thus at its very source human nature was corrupted. And ever since then sin has continued its hateful work, *reaching from mind to mind*. Every sin committed awakens the echoes of the original sin." Ellen G. White, "The Warfare Between Good and Evil," *The Advent Review And Sabbath Herald* (April 16, 1901), par. 5.

own way. He was tempted on every principle of the ten commandments.

This was God's will for Jesus. We read that "God" sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). Taking upon Himself our fallen nature did not mean He had a sinning nature for the text says He "condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). It was no sin for Jesus to be tempted a thousandfold. He always responded with a "no" to rebellion against God. He never harbored any "enmity" against God. Tempted though He was, "yet" He was "without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

If the human nature had asserted "self," it would have been in rebellion against God's will. The only other alternative was for Christ to continually deny "self" or crucify it. The ultimate denial of self was its condemnation on the cross. It was a prearranged agreement between the Father and the Son of God the Sin-bearer must die identified with sinners. "The faith of Jesus" is His self-denial in obedience to God's will. Therefore, we are saved by the "faith of Jesus." This Divine sacrificial love demonstrated in our human flesh is the atonement.

Is it really important that we understand what kind of nature Christ took when He became a man? If so, why?

Yes, because that is the only way we can distinguish between the true Christ and the counterfeit false christ: "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the

flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist" (1 John 4:2, 3).

What does that Bible word "flesh" mean? Unfallen and sinless? Or fallen and sinful?

The word is *sarx* (Greek), which means the same fallen, sinful flesh that all mortal mankind have by nature. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh [*sarx*], on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh [*sarx*]" (Rom. 8:3). That word "likeness" cannot mean unlike, for Paul uses the same phrase when he says that Christ was "made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). He was truly man, not a plastic resemblance. His perfect character of sinlessness was manifested in our sinful flesh or nature. He had a "self" as we have a self, but whereas we have been selfish, He denied self (John. 5:30; 6:38).

In His incarnation, was Christ a re-created man like the sinless Adam, or was He "made" to be a genetic descendant of the fallen Adam?

"Jesus Christ our Lord . . . was born of the seed [sperm, Greek] of David according to the flesh" [*sarx*] (Rom. 1:3). "From [David's] seed [*sperm*], according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus" (Acts 13:23). "He took on him the seed [*sperm*] of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16, KJV). Christ's favorite expression concerning Himself was "son of man," taken from the Hebrew *ben-'adam* as so often used in Ezekiel. "Jesus, who took upon Himself not the nature of angels, but of the human race after four thousand years of sin had left their stamp of degeneracy, is prophetically designated

‘Son of ‘*enash*’ (collective for the whole human race)” (*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 580).

But didn’t Christ have a sinless nature? Yes. But He *took* our sinful nature: “As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, . . . made like unto his brethren” (Heb. 2:14,17, KJV). All the temptations that overwhelm us through our “flesh and blood” He met and overcame. He knew the strength of all those enticements, “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (4:15).

Is there a practical value to this that makes it worth the present controversy?

Christ “condemned sin in the flesh, 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” (Rom. 8:3, 4). “In all things He had to be made like [not unlike] His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation [reconciliation, KJV] for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid “those who are tempted” (Heb. 2:17, 18).

We must remember that temptation is not sin unless it is yielded to; some apparently believe that if Christ suffered temptation then He must have sinned. Not so: “We do not have a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like [not unlike] as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy,

and find grace to help in time of need” (4:15, 16, KJV). The human race needs that “help.”

“*Practical value?*” It makes all the difference between our *overcoming* temptation or *being overcome by it*. Denying and suppressing this glorious truth leaves sinners helplessly vulnerable to alluring solicitations to transgress God’s law. Christ must be a Savior from the enticing power of sin now, or He can never save us at last from the presence of sin.

What is the good news view of Christ’s humanity? He took our nature primarily as our Substitute and Savior whose righteousness is imputed because as the second Adam He took our sinful humanity into Himself. He incorporated within Himself the entire human race which He redeemed and thus legally justified. He cannot redeem what He has not taken or assumed. In order to be our Substitute, He must take our nature. But His righteousness is also imparted because having taken the “children’s flesh and blood” He “is able to aid those who are tempted” through the prompting of their sinful flesh and hot blood. He gives them the exact “help in time of need” [succor, KJV] that they must have. The world is literally dying for want of knowing this “most precious” truth which the Lord gives us.

Paul identifies for us what “the faith of Jesus” is when he writes, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the *faith of the Son of God*, who loved me, and *gave Himself for me*” (Gal. 2:20). Christ “gave Himself for me.” Paul identifies with Christ crucified. “The faith

of the Son” is obedient unto death. This motivates Paul to identify with the Crucified One. Thus the atonement which Christ accomplished on His cross is completed as the sinner “sees” this love and aligns himself with the Son.

A. T. Jones writes that “the faith of Jesus” is the only true faith there is because it is Jesus commandment keeping wrought out under severest trial. “Here are they which *keep* the commandments of God and’—*have* faith in Jesus? No. The *have* is not in there. They *keep* the commandments of God and [keep] the faith of Jesus. That is the genuine article; that is the faith which, in Him, endured the test. That is the faith which met every fiery trial that Satan knows, and all the power that Satan could rally, that faith endured the test.”² “The faith of Jesus” is given to the individual through the active agency of the Holy Spirit. One simply “keeps” “the faith of Jesus” by cherishing God’s covenant promise.

The latter rain message encompasses the heart-gripping truth of God’s everlasting covenant promise. The express purpose of God’s covenant is to bring sinners back into fully harmony with God and His holy law.

The latter rain message is the heart-moving truth of the humanity of Christ. God’s promise was a Saviour from sin who comes all the way to where we are in our sinful, fallen condition. In identifying Himself so thoroughly with sinners, except personally choosing to sin, we have a complete

² A. T. Jones, “The Third Angel’s Message—10,” *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, (1893), pp. 205, 206.

deliverance from sin by “the faith of Jesus” which He gives to everyone. The humanity of Christ opens the way for a better understanding the meaning of the cleansing of the sanctuary truth and the meaning of the at-one-ment with God promised in His everlasting covenant.

The Bible says that you and I are standing before the Lord dressed in tattered, filthy old rags; but if we allow him to take away every stitch of those filthy rags He will dress us in His own spotless, beautiful robe of perfect character.

But does He force us to wear it? No, He will force no one. If you squirm and resist Him and tell Him, “No, I like my filthy rags” (I am sorry, many do), He will not force you.

But I tell Him, “Thank you, Jesus, my Savior! Let me have those nice new clothes.” Won’t you tell Him the same?

There was a boy who didn’t know how to swim. But he wanted to paddle around in the lake not far from the house. His brother was six years older, and he knew how, and he wanted to try to teach his younger brother how.

They didn’t know it, but the city had done some dredging in that lake. You couldn’t see the deep dredge holes, of course. Suddenly he fell into one of them. It seemed to him like stepping off a cliff. He just went right down like a stone. Everything got dark.

He was so glad that his big brother saw him disappear beneath the water, and rescued him. Because he did that for his brother, he became his

“savior” from drowning. So he really owed his life to his brother!

Now, what has Jesus done for you? The Bible tells us that He is “the Savior of the world.” It sounds nice to say that, but what does it mean?

We are all a part of the world, so what the Bible really says is that He has saved us. But what has He saved us from? What can you thank Jesus for?

No person in the world today has actually seen Jesus, but He is a real man, and He is also God. But for sure He is one of us and He belongs to us. The reason why we can't see Him like we see any other person is that He is much greater than any other person. Billions of people would want to see Him (and they will see Him some day soon), but it wouldn't be fair for Him to show Himself only to you or me. So everybody looks forward to seeing Him in person when He comes the second time. But when we do see Him we will thank Him, because He has already saved us from death. But that's not the ordinary kind of death that He has saved us from. It's not the death that has happened when there's a funeral.

Jesus tells us that a funeral isn't about the real thing. When a person dies now, he simply goes to sleep until God's resurrection day, when He will come up again. Jesus said that God “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The death that people die now is not what that word “perish” means. When people die now it's just like when at night you say, “Good night, see you in the morning.”

There is another kind of death—that's what the Bible says is “the second death” (Rev. 2:11; 20:14). And that is what it means to “perish.” At the end of the great “thousand years” that are yet to come, the wicked people will be judged, and they will “perish” in the lake of fire. No resurrection from that—ever. They will just be gone forever. That's what “hell” will be.

It's not because God will be extra angry with them; He does not hate them. He still pities them. But they themselves have made their choice to “perish.” God won't force them to change their minds. They don't want to live forever in God's kingdom. They actually want to be separate from Him and separate from His kingdom. And so, God must give them what they really want. It sounds crazy, and it is, but Jesus says that “anyone who hates Me loves death” (Prov. 8:36). Can you imagine that?

That is what Jesus has actually saved you and me from. Take a deep breath; that is proof that Jesus has saved you from that second death because if He had not saved us from it, we would all be dead right now in it. So don't ever think that Jesus has done nothing for you!

All this means that God intends that the life you and I have today shall be the beginning of everlasting life. And it will be so, if we “walk with Jesus.” He is not “I-want-to-be-your-Savior.” He is your Savior! Now don't push Him away.

People can catch hold of big ideas! When we think of what Jesus has saved us from, we want to say the biggest “Thank You” we can think of, because He could never have saved us this way unless He

had already died our second death for us. And that's just what He did when He died on His cross. The death He died was hell itself, the real thing.

Many people don't see this, and that's why they don't give themselves to Jesus to live for Him. But now you do see it, don't you?

He can thank his brother for saving him from going to "sleep" when he was a child, in the first death. But now he can thank Jesus because He saved him from the second death, and he can tell Him that he is glad to obey Him and give Him his whole life. Won't you choose to do the same?