

**THE LIKENESS  
OF SINFUL FLESH  
IS IDENTICAL TO  
FALLEN HUMAN FLESH**



*Wiesmullan Vonbruggen*

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## **Introduction**

There is always the quest to plunge into the great mysteries of God in the plan of salvation and the incarnation is no exception to the task of the sincere seeker of truth.

This investigation into the humanity of Christ, especial to the idea of the “Likeness of sinful flesh”, is important to the astute theologian or any Christian who desires a true knowledge of the plan of salvation. That the humanity of Jesus Christ must be made clear to us is indicative of learning the reality of how close God has made Himself available to us sinners.

As we enter into this exposition on the ‘likeness of sinful flesh’ we are looking at the way theologians pervert the truth just to propagate their errors. It is the apostasy from the pure line of truth set down by Jesus Christ and continued by the apostles. This truth of Christ having incarnated or made in the flesh, the flesh of fallen man, hence sinful flesh, is attacked by satanic hatred.

Thus we give as much evidences to prove that “likeness of sinful flesh” means “to be of the same, identical, exact and full resemblance of our human flesh”.

It is erroneous to think that sinful flesh is sin, or that the flesh must be purified first before divinity could dwell in it. Thus by this perverted way of reasoning, Satan has led many to reject the possibility of being sinfree in this fallen sinful flesh. Even if one should try to use the original Greek text to invalidate the truth of ‘likeness of sinful flesh’ as stated in Rom. 8:3, they are still proven wrong.

For we will give evidence of this, plus associated proofs from the Bible and reputable scholars that were inspired by the Spirit of truth to testify of the true concept of the humanity of Jesus Christ.

The study of the incarnation will always excite the genuine Christian for it gives evidence of the reality of God being close to mankind. Thus by being in fallen sinful human flesh, Christ has proven that sinfree living is possible in this sinful world.

May God grant His Spirit as you use the Bible in studying this book, Amen!

## THE LIKENESS OF SINFUL FLESH IS IDENTICAL TO FALLEN HUMAN FLESH

The presentation of this exposition on the 'Likeness of sinful flesh' is to make plain the facts to those who are in denial of the reality of the truth of the nature of the humanity of Jesus Christ. All things concerning Jesus Christ must be made plain, for in this time of the end the church is to reach its perfection in the clarity of doctrine, thus they will have the opportunity to develop perfect characters.

The Bible solemnly and emphatically warns that we should believe the truth, that the Eternal Word became flesh and that the flesh type of Jesus must be clearly known as being a 'flesh of sin', that is 'sinful human flesh', and not being a flesh that is sinless.

To speak and believe that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh, is to speak the lies of the anti-Christ or give a substitute Christ. (1Jn.4:3).

- a) Thus in John's time was the philosophy of Gnosticism in its inception as *"Docetism, which denied the reality of the humanity of Jesus Christ. This view was the logical sequence of their assumption of the inherent nature evil in matter. If matter is evil and Christ was pure, then Christ's human body must have been merely phantasmal" meaning only a supposed human appearance in form.* **Systematic Theology p.670. A.H. Strong.**
- b) Thus they proclaim Jesus did not have a real human body or flesh as all men. Therefore He would have a flesh different from us, one that is not affected by sin, hence a sinless human flesh type.
- c) It must be remembered that to deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of the anti-Christ, or a false messiah is being presented, a substitute Christ to the real Christ.
- d) Therefore this shows that the flesh of Christ being sinless, as against sinful flesh is a doctrine of devils, proving that there is a fallen or apostate false type of Christianity. (1Tim.4:1; Rev.14:8; Rev.18:1, 2).

What are the issues at stake in understanding Jesus Christ having come in our type of sinful human flesh, in the likeness of it? The Bible states in Rom 8:3

“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.”

- a) We are faced with the insincerity and dishonesty of intellectual scholasticism in Christian theologians with regards to identifying the humanity of Jesus Christ as being in the ‘likeness of sinful flesh’. They misconstrue and pervert the meaning of the word ‘*likeness*’ as not to mean sameness, doing great injustice to the Greek literal meaning.
- b) By inference of such perversion they conclude that Jesus Christ did not come in “Sinful Human Flesh” as ours but only in likeness or resemblance but not sameness or identical, but rather ‘sinless flesh’.

Let us investigate the Greek term to ‘*likeness*’. The Greek reading of the verse in Rom.8:3 in part is: “God his own Son sending in the likeness flesh of sinful ...”  
“*Theós tón heautoú Huión pémpsas en homoiómati sarkós hamartías*”

- a) Here are some facts of the Greek exposition on the word likeness.

“Homoioima” to make like, likeness, shape, similitude, resemblance. This word is so important to the proper understanding of the incarnation of Christ that it is necessary to consider the context of the important passages where it occurs. Abstractly, in the sense of a noun meaning likeness, resemblance (Rom.1:25; Rom.5:14; Rom.6:5)

In Rom.1:23 - exchanging the glory or essence of the immaterial, incorruptible God for a likeness of an image (en homoiomti eikons). “..Made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things.” Can God be a homoioima, a representation, of an eikon, image?

Rom.5:1 - ‘even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.’

Rom.6:5 - in the likeness of His death. Paul in this passage is speaking about baptism as a symbol of our voluntary death and burial even as in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ who died and was buried.

In Phil.2:7 for the statement that Jesus “was made in the likeness of men [en homoiomati anthropon]”; and in verse eight that He was “found in fashion as a man [hos anthropos ]”. In shape (schema), He was exactly as man. In

this instance the words homoima, likeness, and schema, shape, are parallel. In His essence he was God, but took upon Himself, in addition to His deity, the likeness of men (with a true human nature in real body), yet without sin. For this reason we are told that he was made en homoiomati anthropon, “in the likeness of men,” not merely that He became a man. Dr. S .Zodhiates, **The Complete word study Dictionary** p. 1042, 1043.

- b) Another exegete says; ‘**omoioima**’ that which has been made after the likeness of something, hence a figure, image, likeness, representation.

Likeness i.e. resemblance (in as much as that appears in an image or figure), frequently such as amounts well-nigh to equality or identity. (Rom.6:5; Rom.8:3; Phil.2:7)... ‘A likeness expressed by an image, i.e. an image like, Rom.1:23. J.H. Thayer, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T.** p.445.

- c) Then we see that the literal Greek gives proof that likeness in fact is the same as given to the pantheistic idol worshipper who seek to make idols to be in the likeness of God’s glory. But this is impossible.

Also we have not sinned after the same way or in the likeness of Adam’s sin, but have received the same depravity he got when he fell from God’s grace.

- d) As for the use in Rom.6:5, the likeness of baptism to the death of Christ is that in His death Jesus Christ conquered sin and death (1Pet.4:1; Heb2:14). So likewise we who have been baptized into His death by means of the gift of faith through grace does overcome sin, and will gain the resurrection. (Rom.6:6,8).
- e) Also as stated in Phil.2:7 that Christ was made in the likeness of men. This is right to the point that Jesus who was the Word made flesh, was exactly in the actual form of a man just as all men. Thus in the likeness of the sinful flesh of fallen human kind did Jesus Christ become man. Therefore, if all these related scripture use the word likeness and it identifies in context to be the same or identical, why should there be a fault in Rom.8:3 as to the flesh of Christ being in likeness of all human flesh?

Let’s look at another exegesis of the word ‘likeness’.

- a) “*Likeness; image, copy, form, appearance. The meaning is not quite clear in*

*the two related passages in which Paul uses our word in speaking of Christ's earthly life. The expressions "en homoiomati anthropon" Phil.2:7 and "en homoiómati sarkós hamartías" Rom.8:3 could mean that the Lord in His earthly ministry possessed a completely human form and that His physical body was capable of sinning as human bodies are, or that He had only the form of a man and was looked upon as a human being, whereas in reality He remained a Divine being even in this world. In the light of what Paul says about Jesus in general it is safe to assert that his use of our word is to bring out both that Jesus in His earthly career was similar to sinful men and yet not absolutely like them". Arndt and F. Gingrich, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the N T** p.567 W F.*

In this explanation we see that dishonesty to truth is used. The Greek gives the word likeness to be image, copy, form, appearance according to this exegete. But this is true, for the image or copy of something is that thing properly represented, it is the same in form and appearance. So for that in this respect the sinful flesh type of all men, is the same flesh that Jesus Christ had. To deny this simple truth is to follow the Gnostic reasoning of Docetism; 'As these Gnostics believed that all matter was evil there was nothing for it but to deny that Christ had contact with flesh'. Donald Guthrie, **New Testament Introduction**, p.870

The denial of Christ coming in the flesh of sin is really heresy, thus it will be logical to say that sinful flesh is sin, so that Christ came in sinless flesh. Then He only appeared to be like men. It is this gnostical influence in false Christianity that cause the rejection of the truth of the humanity of Christ. This scholar follows this line of reasoning by saying that Christ was only looked upon as a human being. As we see that the comments made puts the idea of likeness in a non-committed position.

But the fact is that as Christ was indeed human, having a body that was affected by sin in terms of infirmities, so that He did not have sin in Him nor the passions of sin in His body. Even though it was possible, if He had chosen too. Jesus was indeed divine but this is in the sense of Him possessing the divine nature of God and also the divine character. (Heb.1:3; Co2.9; Jn.1:14, 18). And yet He was human in the truest sense, so that Christ was in all things made like unto His brethren the children of men. (Heb.2:14), But still He was separated from all sinners. (Heb.7:26).

b) Another linguist states:

**“Omoioma”**, *that which is made like, image, likeness.*

*The word is rare in profane Greek ; it is never abstract in the sense of likeness and agreement, but always the harmonizing, established likeness,...in ‘omoioma’ the relationship to another, the agreement or harmony with, stands prominent and determines the conception, ”omoioma” implies the greatest possible resemblance. In the Lxx. it occurs very often. How fully it designates likeness, as something made to resemble another, is clear from these passages (Deut.4:16; Isa.40:19; Exo.20:4). How decidedly the resemblance may be kept in view is evident from Isa.40:18, where it is not like icon-pattern, archetype, but -what likeness will ye liken me to, where is there a likeness to which ye might compare me? Thus ‘omoioma’ signifies. That which made like, the copy, image. Hermann Cremer, **The Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek.** p.802, 803*

- c) Now we will give comments on the texts used in Deut.4:16, 17, 18; Isa.40:19; Exo.20:4.

Deut.4:16 – *“Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female”.*

Here the word likeness in the Septuagint (Lxx) is the Greek word *omoioma* and it speaks of the representing of the image of male or female. And this is exactly as male and female can be. Yahweh is speaking of the use of idols to be worshiped, these are made like or same as male or female. Also the same as to any beast, winged fowls, or fish. So that those who reject the grace of Yahweh do worship forms of creation as gods.

Isa.40:18 - *“To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?”*

Here again the same word likeness is the same in the Septuagint, and the point made is that there is nothing to compare God too. No creation is of His nature so that none could be like Him. To seek to compare anything to God, is to make that thing God. But no idol is God, therefore in likeness to, to be exact as God, would be blaspheme. So likeness in this context is an attempt to be same as God is in nature.

Ex 20:4 – “*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth*”

Thus it is said that there is to be no making of any idol that is of any other form of creation on the earth. The likeness of any thing is to be of the same and bear the appearance of it, therefore an idol made in the likeness of any form of creation means that the idol is representing that form of creation as it is worshiped. Then likeness is exact, same as.

Therefore we see that the word ‘likeness’ as it is used in other scriptures of the Bible does not present a contradiction of it in meaning as to exact representation, sameness or true image copy. Neither in the Greek of the Second witness (NT) nor the first witness (OT) as in the Septuagint (lxx).

Therefore, why is it that when scholars are confronted with defining the meaning of likeness as to sinful flesh they pervert, misconstrue and lie on the plain truth of scripture? This shows that false theological ideas as well as the insincerity and dishonesty they have towards truth is the problem.

Let’s look at some scholars’ comments denying the truth of “likeness of sinful flesh”. We shall add some brief comments to the quotations, leaving a detailed explanation for later.

- a) In reference to Christ’s flesh this scholar says, “*His was as Rom.8:3 says, not the flesh of sin, but sinless flesh. He became man so that he could die for the sin of man. It was as the Son of God that Christ became the son of man, He never ceasing to be the Son of God.*” Dr. S .Zodhiates, **The Complete Word Study Dictionary** p.1043

This author while he did represent correctly the Greek meaning of likeness, yet we see that due to his bias to the truth, he gives a complete different answer to the meaning of sinful flesh. He declares that Christ had a flesh of sin, while this is the literal Greek expression, to the author this implies that the flesh of Jesus Christ had sin in it. Thus he will say that Christ had instead sinless flesh. Here a lack of knowledge of what is sinful flesh is the problem, and false theology gives rise to saying that Jesus was always the Son of God. When in fact He became the Son of God at the incarnation. (Jn.1:14; Lk.1:35; Heb.1:5)

- b) Another scholar states; “*in likeness of flesh of sin*”. ‘*In likeness of flesh*’ by

*itself would be docetic it is of the essence of the gospel that the Son of God came 'in flesh' and not merely 'in likeness of flesh'. Paul might have said simply 'in flesh', but he wished to emphasize that human flesh was the realm in which sin gained a foot hold and usurped dominion until the grace of God drew near. Hence he says not simply flesh but flesh of sin or sinful flesh. But to say that the Son of God came in sinful flesh might imply that there was sin in Him, whereas...he 'knew no sin'. Hence he is described as being sent in the likeness of sinful flesh". F.F. Bruce, **Tyndale Commentary on Romans** p 152.*

Intellectual dishonesty is practiced here by this renowned scholar and author. He directly destroys the sweet truth of likeness of sinful flesh by attributing to it the fact that, to have sinful flesh is to have sin in the flesh. To him likeness is not to be similar too, but only may appear to be. Thus Christ is not like us as a human being in the flesh. Then likeness of sinful flesh does not mean the same kind of flesh like all humans. He makes the problem sin being in the flesh, so that sinful flesh is sin itself. Then we cannot get rid of sin until the flesh is changed.

- c) Two other scholars comments, *"The flesh of Christ is 'like' ours in as much as it is flesh, 'Like' and only 'like', because it is not sinful: neither the Greek nor the argument required that the flesh of Christ shall be regarded as sinful flesh". W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, **A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans** p.193*

This is a blatantly dishonest comment, for these authors lie openly on the Greek exegesis. More so they pervert the true meaning of likeness, to avoid saying that Christ did have a body of sinful flesh. To them sinful flesh is to be in sin.

- d) *"to say that Christ came in the likeness of flesh would be docetic and suggest the unreality of Jesus' humanity. To say that he came in sinful flesh would make him a sinner. The Pauline expression asserts that he came in real flesh, like all flesh, with one exception — he did not share sinfulness". George .E. Ladd, **A Theology of The N.T.** p.421.*

The misconception continues in this mind. Docetism purports the idea that Christ was a make believe human being, phantom like figure. So this is a lie this writer gives, and sinful flesh does not make Christ or any man a sinner. This will mean that the flesh itself is the problem of sin. The Bible states the

carnal mind is the problem in sinful man (Rom.8:6, 7). So then Christ did have a real flesh as all flesh but not with the carnal mind of sin in Him.

- e) *“However, His humanity was sinless, a fact Paul guards by writing that he came in likeness of sinful flesh”. (Rom.8:3) Charles.C. Ryrie, **Basic Theology** p.241*

Here again sinful flesh is interpreted to be sin.

- f) *“In likeness of flesh of sin” is one of those exact Scripture phrases which admit of no change....Christ assumed our flesh but not its sinfulness. Paul has just used the term “flesh”...in the sense of our corrupt nature; if he had continued in this strain and had written that God sent His Son “in the flesh,” the sense would be that Christ appeared in our sinful nature. This thought he avoids by writing: “in the likeness of flesh of sin.” The likeness of the flesh of sin is the flesh without sin.....Jesus resembled men, all of whom had sinful flesh, but he only resembled them because his flesh was not tainted with sin. R. C. H. Lenski, **The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans**, p. 500*

This reasoning is quite deceptive because the author plays on the word flesh and sin. If the phrase ‘likeness of flesh of sin’ is true then what type of flesh does all men have? Of course. , a flesh of sin, and to be in the likeness of such a flesh is to possess the flesh that is of the same in resemblance, form, and identical as of human beings. The sinfulness then is something else than the writer inserts, as if to mean that our sinfulness which is the sinful values of the carnal mind or the fleshy mind with the evil works. (Rom.8:6, 7; Gal.5:19, 20, 21).

That Christ came with such in Him, is not what Paul puts forward here. So then Christ did not just resembled men, (as to speak docetic), but that He was a man in all likeness in respect to humanity in context to the flesh type .i.e. sinful flesh. He did not have sinless flesh.

- g) *“Not in the likeness of flesh of sin since He was really and entirely human; but in the likeness of the flesh of sin; really human, conformed in appearance to the flesh whose characteristic is sin yet sinless. Christ appeared in a body which was like that of other men in so far as it consisted of flesh, and was unlike it in so far as the flesh was not flesh of sin”. Marvin .R.Vincent **Vincent’s Word Study of the N.T. Vol. 3** p.85*

- h) The misconception of flesh with sin is the continued error being made, thus to stress on 'the likeness of flesh of sin' in contrast to 'the likeness of the flesh of sin' is petty scholarship, the writer still allude to the point that the flesh of man is characteristically sin. So that Christ was only in appearance human (docetic in context), not really man in true humanity.

Therefore Christ was a man in a flesh not with sin, then without sin being sinless flesh. This makes Jesus Christ not like us in all things (Heb.2; 14). This is anti-Christ teachings. For Christ did not only come in the flesh (Rom.1:3), but the type is sinful flesh as Paul states. (Rom.8:3)

What we have seen in all these scholars mind is the fact that false theology is prominent in their reasoning. In as much as the Greek places the term 'likeness' to simply mean, same and identical. Yet due to the dislike for sinfulness in character which is what the truth of Christ being in 'the likeness of our sinful flesh' gives, the truths of the plan of salvation is often perverted.

Now we will quote some scholars from among the apostate Seventh day Adventist who follows the false theology.

- a) *"Rom.8:3...This scripture does not say God sent HIS son "in sinful flesh" but only "in the likeness of it". Christ actually became flesh, thereby taking our nature. His flesh, or physical being, was like ours. In the term "likeness of sinful flesh" Paul emphasizes the fact that Christ took flesh as it had been affected by sin for four thousand years. He was truly a man. When men looked at Him he appeared no different from themselves. But this "likeness" went no further than that. Every other man was born in sinful flesh not in its likeness".* Edward Heppenstall, **The Man Who Is God.** p.136, 137

Here again the same reasoning is done to pervert the truth. He says Christ did not come in sinful flesh, but only in the likeness of it. This is dishonest to the Greek rendering of likeness. If Christ took our flesh then it has to be like ours. He says that Christ took our nature, but what does this mean? We have human nature, but this is compounded with the fleshly mind of sin or the carnal mind, as well as the corrupt feelings flowing in it. This Christ did not have, but human nature as to the flesh yes, for that is of human kind. So Christ did have sinful flesh as human nature as all humans. The Jewish people knew that Jesus was a man like them, for they knew His family. (Matt.12:46, 47; Matt.13:55; Jn.6:42). Thus it is that Christ appeared no different from other men, for these

men knew that Jesus was literally like them for they associated Christ with people that had sinful flesh.

b) To quote another Adventist author.

*“Isn’t it also mistaken to suggest that Christ’s likeness to sinful flesh means that He actually had our sinful nature? It was this information from Rom 8:3 that really cleared up in my mind the truth about Christ’s nature. He came in the flesh, but it was only the likeness-the appearance-of sinful flesh. He didn’t look the same as Adam did before the fall; He looked as one of us. But His nature was pure and holy, where as ours needs salvation”.* Martin Weber, **More Adventist Hot Potatoes** p. 68.

It is a pity to see such reasoning from an Adventist. And it is mistaken to say that likeness of sinful flesh is our sinful nature. This reasoning confuses the issue of what is sinful flesh as to sinful nature. For while we do have sinful flesh this is not sin in us and our sinful nature which is the carnal mind and perverted emotions in the body. We do need salvation from this to be sinless, this is sin in us, not the flesh itself. So what of Christ? This author presents that the flesh of Christ was in appearance only like ours, so that Jesus was not really man. This makes Him a kind of phantom figure, Christ looked like us but not really so because He had sinless flesh. This makes Christ separated from us as a human being. The fact is that He came in the likeness of, identical to, our sinful flesh.

c) Another Adventist author writes;

*“Let it be especially noted that the only passage of scripture which use the expression ‘sinful flesh’ affirms that Christ only came in ‘the likeness’ of such. ‘Likeness’ never means ‘sameness’ according to Philippians 2:7, he was made ‘in the likeness of men’ but He was not just a man, but the God-man”* Desmond Ford, **Theology in Crisis**, p. 251,

The persistent reasoning to reject the truth of ‘likeness to be identical copy, same as’ etc. This apostate SDA falls into the mischief of apostate Christianity. He reasons that only one scripture affirms Christ likeness of sinful flesh, this is wrong. Rom.8:3 is a principle text but there are supportive scriptures proving the reality of what likeness means, which is evidently sameness even in Greek, (Phil.2:7; Rom.6:4,5) . The blatant lie that Phil.2:7 does not present likeness as sameness is a cheap scholasticism we have proven this in our word

study previously. To even further state that though Christ was made like men, He was not just a man. What else was Christ made in the likeness of? He was completely man in His humanity in the flesh and in this He was like all men. Yet we know that He was God in character he did have the divine nature in Him. Jesus was God manifest in flesh, (1Tim.3:16; Jn.1:14). So being the God man, 1Tim.2:5 does not change the fact that in Jesus Christ was the uniting of divinity and humanity, the divine character in a temple of sinful human flesh.

Thus it is viewed to what great extent some scholars go to pervert the truths of salvation just to propagate their own preconceived erroneous concepts. The dishonesty practiced when faced with the truth is evidently seen.

- d) To quote a genuine scholar in Adventism in regards to the ‘likeness of sinful flesh’, he says;

*“But we have no right to infer from Rom.8:3, as to the “likeness of sinful flesh”, that the words indicate an imitation or pseudo-appearance of a fallen nature, but rather the taking of an identical condition.*

*For according to Webster the term “likeness” is the “state or quality of being like”. The noun ‘Like’ is defined “equal or similar to another”, or “counterpart”. The verb “like” is “to the same extent or in the same as”. For many centuries the true semantic meaning of the word “Likeness” in this text, has been subtly altered to conform to the ancient tradition as to the immaculacy of Christ’s human heredity. The original meaning is the literal identical fallen nature of man.*

*“So from one generation to another has been handed down the Twisted Implication of the word ‘Likeness’ in Paul’s statement. Whereas it means the same “Identical flesh of sin”, it is still construed to mean” sinless flesh with a human appearance (or like idea)”. Albert Olesen, **Think Straight About The Incarnation, p.15, 21***

The idea of sinless flesh has no basis in scripture and by implication it does away with the effective work that Jesus Christ came to do and make manifest to us by revelation and example.

- a) Therefore to be in sinless flesh, Jesus Christ could never accomplished living the plan of salvation to perfectly represent sinful human beings.
- b) Then all the victories that Christ gained, we cannot accomplish such victory over sin in sinful flesh, because we don't have a flesh like His (sinless flesh).
- c) The sacrifice then of Christ would not be on our behalf to provide life for us to be free from sin, because Christ did not identify Himself with sinners.
- d) Then the perfection of Christ as a human being would be a fake. He did not really face temptation as we have to.
- e) Also sinners cannot ever have the faith of Christ in them, for it was not provided. So that to be holy and sinfree becomes impossible while being in sinful flesh.

The emphasis of Rom.8:3 is that through God being in the flesh, becoming the Son of God, we are granted the merits of salvation.

- a) We due to being in sin, cannot obey God nor keep His holy law. (Rom.3:19; Rom.7:14; Rom.8:7).
- b) But Jesus Christ also in this flesh of sin did keep the law of God perfectly all His life on earth. (Jn.15:10; Matt.3:15; Matt.5:17).
- c) He was sinfreely perfect in obedience to the plan of salvation given to Him, resisting all temptations. Thus Jesus was perfect in character in condemning sin in sinful flesh. (Jn.14:30; Jn.8:45, 46; Heb.2:18; Heb.4:15; Heb.5:8, 9).
- d) Then Jesus did and can make provisions of grace through His sacrifice to save us from sin. (Heb.1:3; Heb.9:14, 26; Jn.1:29; 1Pet 4:1).
- e) Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh, 'for sin' as a sacrifice of sin. A sin sacrifice, as stated. (Lev. 16:3, 5, 6, 9; 2Cor.5:21).
- f) Christ the true Lamb of God did suffer in the flesh for us, and He thus ceased from sin. (Jn.1:29, Heb, 10:5, 1Cor. 5:7, 1Pet.4:1).

- g) Therefore He gave His sinfree life or divine character, so that we can overcome our sinful human character (Heb.9:15, Heb.10:10, Heb.7:25, 26, Eph.4:12-24).
- h) Then as we have the same flesh as Christ did in His incarnation, we can have the same victory through His grace (1Jn.3:5,6,7, 1Jn.5:4,5, Rom.8:9,10, Rom.6:6,7). So the validity of 'likeness of sinful flesh' is seen as salvific in dealing with sin.

As the humanity of Christ was "in the likeness of sinful flesh", what is sinful flesh as identified in the scriptures. Sinful flesh being from Adam to every generation of mankind, has "Inherited infirmities of a moral, biological, physiological nature", as the scripture shows in Rom.8:26; 2Cor.12:9; Heb.4:15.

- a) Sinful flesh can suffer injury (cuts, bleed)
- b) This Jesus did suffer as He was pierced and bled (Jn.19:34, Jn.20:27, Lk.24:40).
- c) Sinful flesh feels actual pain when injured.
- d) It suffers death and actual decay. Jn.19; 30, 33 (Jesus did not decay in His flesh when He died. (Acts 2:31, as` did Lazarus Jn.11:14, 38, and 39).
- e) Physical tiredness and weariness to rest and sleep. (Matt.8:24,25;Jn.4:6)
- f) Hunger to eat (Mat.4:1, 2; Matt.21:18, 19).
- g) Thirsty to drink (Jn.4:7).
- h) Emotional hurts hence cry and grief (Matt.26:75; Lk.19:41; Jn.11:33, 35, 38).
- i) Even psychological pain, of burden and extreme mental suffering. (Matt.26:38; Lk.22:44).
- j) The flesh has the liabilities of corrupt passions or emotions. The moral weaknesses. (This only flows when there is the values of sin in the mind or the carnal mind of sin.).
- k) All these are not sin in itself, but rather the effects of sin on the sinful human

flesh. Sinful flesh is not sin. (Rom.8:3; Heb.2:14, 16, 17).

- 1) While we have the sinful flesh with all the above effects of sin in it, the corrupt values of sin and the perverted emotions or passions are made inactive because of the faith of Christ in the mind. So holy values for truth and affections for holy things flow. (Rom.6:6; Col.3:2; Gal.5:24).

What makes us to be in sin in this sinful flesh is as follows:

- a) To sin or be in sin, is to be without the love of God and the Faith of Jesus Christ, or His holy life in us. (Eph.2:12; Eph.4:17, 18).
- b) It is to have the thoughts of the flesh, of sinful values. (Rom.8:6; Gen.6:5; Matt.15:18, 19).
- c) There is no faith in the mind to please God. (2Thes.3:2; Heb.11:6; Rom.14:23).
- d) There is the actual flow of corrupt perverted emotions or the body of sin. (Rom.1:26; Rom.7:5, 8, 18, 23; 1Thes.4:5).

Now let us look at facts from the scriptures that shows, Jesus Christ did take sinful flesh as all of mankind do have since the fall of Adam and Eve.

- a) Jesus was the son of Abraham and the son of David according to the flesh (this means that Jesus was born of the same flesh as the fathers in phenotype and of genotype) (Matt.1:1; Rom.1:3; Rom.9:5; Heb.2:16).
- b) Jesus did not come in a body or flesh that was sinless as of angels. They are made of the light of fire, it is a glorified form. Jesus gave up that form in becoming incarnate as in sinful human flesh. (Heb.2:16; Heb.1:7).
- c) Jesus Christ had a flesh from Mary that was in reality exact in phenotype and genotype being born of her. Thus it was susceptible to suffer all the infirmities that we normally undergo in this flesh. Yet he was sinfree in character. (Lk.1:31; Heb.2:14, 17, 18; Heb.4:15; Heb.5:7, 8).
- d) Thus Jesus was and is our Savior and example in us perfecting human character by His grace. (1Pet.2:21, 22; Heb.2:101, 11; Jn.17:19).

By the points we have given it is seen clearly that the idea of 'likeness of sinful flesh' is biblical. Those so called scholars are untrained in being guided by the Holy Spirit of truth, hence why they love not the truth. There is no place for the devilish concept that likeness of sinful flesh will be interpreted to mean sinless flesh, this is doctrine of devils.

- a) As presented, we see that the whole scheme of this apostate doctrine destroys the golden plan of salvation that God has initiated in Jesus Christ. While in contrast the truth of Christ being in the flesh of sin does vindicate the plan of salvation as effective to the problem of sin.
- b) Jesus 'took part of the same' this is emphatic and in context to the children of men. It demonstrates properly to and not different from all of mankind who are of sinful flesh type in phenotype, meaning that all human beings are of the form and shape as man was originally created, and what they are in the birth process. Also in genotype, in what human beings are in their genetic codes, Christ had the same, so that He would be born human with sinful flesh.
- c) Jesus was "made like unto His brethren":\ Heb.2:17. 'Homoimthenai' Homoioo ; of making "like," or, in the passive voice, of being made or becoming "like," Matt 6:8; Acts 14:11, "in the likeness of (men)," lit., "being made like" (aorist participle, passive); Rom 9:29; Heb 2:17, of Christ in being "made like" unto His brethren, i. e., in partaking of human nature, apart from sin (cf. v. 14 ) **Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words.**
- d) In this scripture we see the continued point of sinful flesh, thus in all circumstances and conditions Jesus Christ was made in sinful flesh. And as the expositor says, this flesh is apart from sin which will be sin as the carnal mind values. This does support the idea of likeness of sinful flesh due to the fact that the phase 'made like unto' has the same Greek rendering as we dealt with in our word exposition.

Therefore it is affirmed that the likeness of sinful flesh is identical to fallen human flesh. It is definitely in all things in reference to fallen sinful flesh that Jesus is made like unto.

And this in all things proves that the flesh will have in it all that is akin to man; infirmities, physiological, biological and moral weaknesses. These become sin in us when we have the false values of sin or the thoughts of sin

(the carnal mind) in us. Jesus Christ the Son of God was truly the Son of man as one with the human race in fallen sinful flesh.

Now we shall view the position of some scholars who have the truth on the issue of “likeness of sinful flesh” and also we shall give brief comments on their truth statements:

- a) The first scholar was a puritan who lived between 1628-1691 in England; his name is John Flavel. He says:

*“..but the natural ones, [he is speaking of the infirmities] such as hunger, thirst, weariness, sweating, bleeding, mortality, etc. which though they are not in themselves formally and intrinsically sinful; yet they are the effects and consequences of sin. They are so many marks, that sin hath left of itself upon our natures. And on that account Christ is said to be sent “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” Rom.8:3.*

*Wherein the gracious condescension of Christ for us is marvelously signalized, that He would not assume our innocent nature, as it was in Adam before the fall, while it stood in all its primitive glory and perfection; but after sin had quiet defaced, ruined, and spoiled it”.* **The works of John Flavel vol.1 p.77**

This is truly an inspiring statement of truth, for a theologian of the sixteenth century. This shows that the pure line of truth was still maintained and this Christian was not influenced by the wine of Babylon doctrine. The author makes it plain that the sinful flesh is ‘the effects and consequences of sin’ as demonstrated in the infirmities. On the point of ‘likeness of sinful flesh’ he states in context to ‘the effects and consequences of sin’. This then proves the truth that ‘likeness is actually the same as’. Christ had the same fallen flesh that is akin to all humans. Therefore sinful flesh is not sin, Christ did not have a flesh type like Adam before the fall, but rather fallen sinful human flesh.

- b) Another scholar of the true concept says:

*“If the flesh of Jesus Christ was the likeness of sinful flesh, there must be a difference between the appearance of sinful flesh and our nature, or flesh in its original state when Adam was created. Christ, then was not made in the likeness of the flesh of man before sin entered the world, but in the likeness*

*of his fallen flesh....Jesus was made in man's present likeness". Robert Haldane, Commentary on Romans p.331.*

Here again we see that the truth is inspiring, it is made plain that the human flesh of Christ was not the pre-fall flesh type as that of Adam before he sinned but rather that it was the post fall sinful human flesh that Jesus Christ was made into. Thus the likeness of sinful flesh means that it is the same, the same as fallen man. The effects of sin upon the body is what is sinful flesh, and this is what Jesus Christ was made into.

c) Yet another scholarly comment on the term 'likeness'.

*" But the emphasis in 'omoiomia' is on Christ's likeness to us, not His unlikeness; Flesh of sin is one idea to the apostle and what he means by it is that God sent His Son in that nature which in us is identified with sin". The Expositor's Greek Vol 2.*

This comment shows that there is a definite bias to the truth in the mind of dishonest scholars. Here the Greek is said to render the term 'likeness' as to be the same, otherwise Christ would be in the unlikeness of us in His human body. And then Christ would not be able to be identify with us in regards to dealing with sin, He being the true example.

d) Another comment is worth making.

*"It is therefore important that with Christ it is actually a matter of 'Sinful Flesh' or 'Sark Harmatias'. Paul is concerned to affirm that when Christ came into the world He actually stood under the destroying powers as had man in bondage. Christ overcame sin in its own realm, in the flesh, when He Himself came in the form of sinful flesh". Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans p.314, 315.*

This is a wonderfully inspired comment, the confirmation made proves that sinful flesh is the main point of truth of Paul in regards to Christ dealing with sin. That Christ did come in the same sinful flesh as we have, He dealt the blow of victory against sin in that flesh, sin was defeated in its own realm. Therefore we have the sure hope that Jesus Christ can defeat sin in this sinful flesh, as He was made into.

Now we shall give comments from some genuine Seventh day Adventist scholars who adhere to the truth of 'likeness of sinful flesh':

a) *Likeness of Sinful Flesh. There is a common idea that this means that Christ simulated sinful flesh; that he did not take upon himself actual sinful flesh, but only what appeared to be such. But the Scriptures do not teach such a thing. "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." Heb. 2:17. He was "born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law. Gal. 4:4,5. He took the same flesh that all have who are born of a woman.....Romans 8:3, 4..... says that Christ was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us". Ellet J. Waggoner, The Gospel in Paul's Great Letter (Romans) p.121*

In this comment a clear Biblical comparison is made, that proves the validity of the flesh type that Christ came into. The fact is that the Apostle Paul has placed other associated scriptures that makes clear the fact that the likeness of sinful flesh is identical to our flesh of sin.

Thus the flesh of Jesus Christ was the same as all men born of women. And being in the same flesh of sin, Christ is made to us a merciful High Priest in giving grace to help in overcoming sin, having the righteousness of the law being fulfilled in us, in this sinful flesh.

b) We will yet give another comment from this Adventist theologian:

*"Other scriptures that we will quote bring closer to us the fact of the humanity of Christ and what it means for us. We have already read that "the Word was made flesh," and now we will read what Paul says concerning the nature of that flesh: "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. Rom. 8:3, 4.*

*A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon*

*Himself the likeness of man in order that He might redeem man, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it is sinful man that He came to redeem. Death could have no power over a sinless man.*

*Moreover, the fact that Christ took upon Himself the flesh, not of a sinless being, but of a sinful man, that is, that the flesh which He assumed had all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which fallen human nature is subject, is shown by the statement that He "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." Ellet J. Waggoner, *Christ **Our Righteousness***. P, 16*

This wonderfully truth filled comment stands on the simple principle of scripture proof comparison. The fact that it is said that Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh, it is obvious that it is man of that likeness of flesh He came to save. Therefore, the idea that it is sinless flesh that Jesus Christ came in, is to reason away the Holy Scriptures. There is no Biblical grounds to support this fallacious concept. And if it is that man's flesh is affected by the weakness of infirmities, then Christ had the same, likeness of sinful flesh.

Yet another Adventist theologian supports the truthfulness of the 'likeness of sinful flesh'.

c) Yet another Adventist theologian.

*"Likeness of sinful flesh can thus .refer only to Jesus' nature according to the flesh. It cannot refer to His spiritual nature, or mind-which alone can defile. In taking 'sinful flesh,' He restored the spiritual nature of Adam before sin."*  
A .Leroy Moore, ***Adventism In Conflict***. p.146.

The plain truth is given as to the meaning of sinful flesh. It refers only to the human flesh of Jesus Christ, not even his spiritual identity. Thus only the truth is seen now, that likeness is sameness as to the flesh of Christ in relation to all mankind. Thus it is in this same flesh, it is as man, one with us, that Jesus Christ did make restoration of Adam's failure. Thus the plan of salvation is seen in its reality

d) To quote this theologian again:

*"Likeness of sinful flesh does have the same meaning as 'likenesses of men.' Both identify the fleshy nature (heredity) Christ took upon His divine nature. Each declares it the same humanity as other human beings." **ibid.** p.147*

There is no mistake made here as to what is likeness as to men. It is sameness. For sinful flesh truly equals mankind, and as Christ being in that same sinful flesh. Then Christ was in all things hereditary a human being. And this is the surety of our hope in being sinfree in this flesh.

e) Another credible Adventist source:

*“Where did God, in Christ, condemn sin, and gain the victory for us over temptation and sin?”*

*“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” Rom.8:3*

*Note: “God, in Christ, condemned sin, not by pronouncing against it merely as a judge sitting on the judgment-seat, but by coming and living in the flesh, the likeness of sinful flesh, yet without sinning. In Christ, He demonstrated that it is possible, by His grace and power, to resist temptation, overcome sin, and live a sinless life in the flesh”. **Bible Readings for The Home**, p 115,116*

Is not this sound proof that Christ being one like us is the truthfulness of the gospel? The condemnation of sin is directed by God to be in the very flesh of man He came to save. In doing this it is evident that Christ lived sinfree. Therefore such a victory is granted to all fallen human beings. The power of the gospel is thus seen, the grace of God in Christ is fully demonstrated, and that sinfreeness is possible in sinful flesh

f) To give a final quote from another Adventist theologian who really puts a dent to the erroneous view of likeness’:

*“But we have no right to infer from Rom.8:3, as to the “likeness of sinful flesh”, that the words indicate an imitation or pseudo-appearance of a fallen nature, but rather the taking of an identical condition .For according to Webster the term “likeness is the” state or quality of being like”. The noun ‘Like’ is defined “equal or similar to another”, or” counterpart”. The verb “like” is “to the same extent or in the same as”. These definitions do not imply an imitation but facsimile or duplicate of the original, which in this case was man’s sinful hereditary nature”. Albert H. Olesen, **Think Straight About The Incarnation**, p.15, 16.*

Here it is declared that the indication of likeness to mean not similar too, is to make Christ as human in pseudo-appearance. A kind of fake savior to us. This shows that there is no grounds for scholars to go to lengths to pervert truth just to push doctrines of devils.

It is straightforward that the term 'likeness' as defined here upholds the truth of the incarnation as given by God in Paul's statement in Romans 8:3.

Christ truly had humanity as all men, with heredity from His mother as well from His ancestors. This then makes Him in all things made like unto His brethren in flesh and blood. He is now our High priest against sin.

g) And just to indulge the intellect, we quote a renown theologian, John Wesley:

*“If it could, God needed not to have sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. We with our sinful flesh was devoted to death. But God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, though pure from sin, condemned that sin which was in our flesh; gave sentence, that sin should be destroyed, and the believer delivered from it. **Wesley's Notes On The New Testament, Vol.2***

This is surely putting it straight, that God would not have needed to have send Christ if we by our own efforts could have done the law in righteousness. But on the contrary, it takes divinity in sinful flesh, as was perfectly represented in Jesus Christ to have condemned sin in the our same flesh. Christ n this same sinful flesh lived sinfree, thus we can by the same grace in Christ, live the over comers life.

It is wonderful to see that John Wesley in his time could have preserve such a truth as Christ being in sinful flesh. That divinity dwelt in sinful humanity which was indicative of proving that sinfreeness is possible in this world.

What we have laid out thus far is the fact that there is a position on the issue of “the likeness of sinful flesh”. A non bias position is taken because we have quoted different scholars of different times and convictions. Yet we see a unity in their testimony as to the true meaning of ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’.

This shows that those who are against Christ being in the same flesh type as all men, are greatly deceived, dishonest, and insincere. For to reject the plain

testimony of the Spirit of truth as laid down in the Bible, is sure remedy for being a reprobate.

This attack on the humanity of the Messiah of Yahweh, is to make void the promise of salvation given when man first sinned. “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”. (Gen 3:15).

In this, the proto-evangelium of the plan of salvation is seen. The evident truth of “the messiah coming in the flesh as fallen man and woman to save their posterity”.

So we can see that it is the voice of the dragon proclaiming the fallacy of unlikeness of sinful flesh. For surely the devil will not want to lose against God in keeping all the human race in rebellion.

Thus to say the Messiah will come in a flesh unlike what man is in fallen sinful flesh, is to make sinfreeness and obedience to God a hopeless aim in the plan of salvation. We are thus given a Savior that is above us, out of our reach and a non example to sinners.

We are left to wander in this world of sin aimlessly under the darkness of Lucifer’s deceptions. “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them”. (2 Cor 4:3).

But thank God this is not the case for the bible states: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

And more so that the incarnation is real in that God:” Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Tim 1:9-10).

And just how was the Messiah made manifest to us? The Bible says; “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Gal 4:4-5).

This is so true that the Holy Scriptures gives more evidence of how this redemption was worked out for us:

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: 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.” (1 Tim 3:16.)

This flesh type then was surely “in the likeness of sinful flesh” as all man are.

The promotion of the heresy that Christ could never come in the flesh of man, as being sinless flesh definitely dents the uniqueness of the plan of salvation. One has to wonder what led to the perverting of the truth of ‘likeness of sinful flesh’. As we have seen that scholars have allowed themselves to be deceived into thinking that the divinity of Christ cannot dwell in sinful flesh.

They think that somehow the flesh of sin will taint divinity that the moral power of divinity is incapable of dealing with the problem of sin in the fallen state of man with sinful flesh, so that the flesh of man has to be sinless to deal with sin values in him. This is the heresy of Gnosticism in the form of Docetism,

*“The Docetic Gnostics ( from dokeo, I seem) said that Christ did not have a real flesh and body, but only seemed to have one.”* Herschel H .Hobbs, **The Epistles of John** p13.

Another statement on this point;

*“Docetism, which denied the reality of the humanity of Jesus Christ. This view was the logical sequence of their assumption of the inherent nature evil in matter. If matter is evil and Christ was pure, then Christ’s human body must have been merely phantasmal”. Meaning only a supposed human appearance in form.* A.H. Strong, **Systematic Theology** p.670.

Thus this really deny that the incarnation ever happened in history. The fact is then, that there was no manifestation of the love of God to mankind in history. Why? Because divinity cannot dwell in sinful flesh humanity.

Therefore this will lead to the obvious theological error of the Roman Catholic Church, the Immaculate Conception. Thus it becomes logical to think that the flesh must be first purified so that divinity could dwell therein.

Then we see that Babylon in the doctrines of the Roman Church is truly fallen and those who support such concepts are in Babylon, and needs to come out of her.

We can re-quote an Adventist theologian. Here, he says on the point of what influenced the wrong idea of 'likeness of sinful flesh':

*For many centuries the true semantic meaning of the word "Likeness" in this text, has been subtly altered to conform to the ancient tradition as to the immaculacy of Christ's human heredity. The original meaning is the literal identical fallen nature of man.*

*"So from one generation to another has been handed down the Twisted Implication of the word 'Likeness' in Paul's statement. Whereas it means the same "Identical flesh of sin", it is still construed to mean" sinless flesh with a human appearance (or like idea)". Albert Olesen, **Think Straight About The Incarnation, p15, 21***

Definitely the heresy of unlikeness of sinful flesh is a tradition of man. This error has been handed down through men who were apostates from the faith of Jesus Christ. The real intent of the enemy of truth is to give a savior unlike us.

## **Conclusion**

The facts that have been presented here of the incarnation, that it is of sinful flesh, is a level of truth that is of great importance to plan of salvation. This sets the foundation as to the vindication of God in the great controversy against Lucifer's argument of wanting to be equal with God.

For here it is that the eternal God Yahweh has made Himself manifested in the person Jesus Christ, the man who only is God in the flesh. This certainly defeats Satan's evil intent to accuse God of any unjust judgment in condemning him for his rebellion.

God has shown His eternal love to the human race in this act of grace. For the fact that righteous holy God came in the 'likeness of sinful flesh' is truthful of enough proof.

With all the implications of truth of what this means to God and sinners, we can only wonder of the deeper truths yet to understand of this great act of love.

Let me now give a few statements from my favorite author on the subject of the incarnation; Ellen G .White a pioneer of the Seventh day Adventist church. On the 'likeness of sinful flesh' she says:

*"It was not a make believe humanity that Christ took upon Himself. He took human nature, and lived human nature ...Christ's life represents a perfect manhood, just that which you may be, He was in human nature. He took our infirmities. He was not only made flesh, but He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh."* Ellen G. White, **Letter 106 1896**

Plainly stated, it is an inspired statement made, which shows the fact that the incarnation is real. I quote again;

*"He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made in the likeness of sinful flesh, He lived a sinless life."* Ellen G. White, **Desire of Ages** p. 312.

*"That He might by His own example condemn sin in the flesh, He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh."* Ellen G. White, **Special Testimonies September 3rd, 1902.**

May the mercy and grace of Yahweh God in the person of Jesus Christ be in the hearts and mind of all who took the time to study this book, to show themselves approved to God. The blessings of sinfreeness be granted to you all .Amen!