

## IS THE FLESH OF JESUS GOD?

Sometimes, in order to better elucidate a question that may be difficult for some One God Christians to answer, it is helpful to formulate the question and meditate on it in light of the scriptures. One way to answer this question is by reminding ourselves that we put on the same body of the Lord in baptism. “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). We can reinforce this scripture with another one to drive home the point that we do indeed put on the literal body of the Lord with which we can enter heaven. “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Phil 3:21). Now, once it is clear that we will have the same body as the Lord Jesus had on this earth, and still has in heaven, it becomes easier to answer the question: is the flesh of Jesus God? Obviously, the answer is that the flesh of Jesus cannot be reduced to all that is God for that would mean we ourselves have put on “God-flesh”. This is why it is so important to employ precise biblical language, or we will be in danger of courting false doctrine. Let us explore this theme further.

*1 Timothy 3:16 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.*

The Greek word for “manifest” is *phaneroō* and, according to James Strong, means “expose to view, make manifest, to show oneself, appear”. In other words, God appeared or became visible through a body. The body no doubt is of the word of God, which we explored in depth last week. We studied how the word made flesh was capable of death, but God is immortal. Put differently, the immortal God revealed himself through a mortal body. Whatever is mortal cannot be God in and of itself. It would be helpful at this stage to consider all the things that are common to humans, but not God. Humans cannot survive without oxygen, water and food, to name a few necessities. God created humans and the conditions for their survival – he is not impacted by their existence or lack. Now, one can argue that the body of the Lord Jesus transcends these needs as he is now in heaven and also unaffected by these needs. That is correct, but does that now mean that we too become “God” because we will put on the same body in heaven? The answer is no because the body alone is not God. God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and truth (John 4:24).

So, what is the flesh and blood or body of Jesus if we cannot call it God? The Bible calls it the word made flesh. While we cannot call this body God alone, we still must recognize the body's origin in God and the role it plays in our salvation. We must believe that God's life was manifested in that body. When he say "Jesus", we are speaking of the Father in his own word made flesh. No wonder the apostle Paul states the following about Jesus: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3). A person's word reveals that person's character. The Greek word for "express image" is *charaktēr* and means, among others, "precise reproduction in every respect" (Strong). So when we say "Jesus", we are speaking of God in his own body, but the body alone is not God. Yet the body was the means through which we have been saved. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

*John 6:53* Then Jesus said unto them, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*

We eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood because the life of his body is the eternal Father. All life has its source in the Father. Without the Spirit of the Father, the body of the Lord cannot have life or give life on its own. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). By partaking of his flesh and blood we acknowledge the power of God to save us through his word made flesh. This is not the work of the flesh alone – this is precisely what the Lord was arguing. In other words, God only works through his flesh and blood to give salvation. So while the flesh of Jesus is not God alone, it cannot be understood or offer salvation without understanding its origin as the word of God made flesh. "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him" (Isaiah 59:16). The word is compared to the "arm" of God. A person's arm is not the entire person but integral to the person.