Can God Die?

Jesus Christ died! Yet He was "God with us," a member of the divine Godhead, transformed into human flesh. He was man—but He was also God!

Millions believe "Christ died to save sinners." But, if He died, was He really DEAD? Did He die the same kind of death as other temporal, mortal human beings? You would be amazed to know the incredible amount of CONFUSION existing concerning the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ! Believe it or not, unless Christ died, YOU HAVE NO SAVIOR!

I WAS AMAZED. Being "grilled" in the harsh spotlights of several powerful television studio lights, under the microscopic inspection of three TV cameras, I was being interviewed by John Ankerberg of *The John Ankerberg Show* on the CBN Network.

We ranged far and wide into many subjects, such as the Trinity, the alleged "immortality of the soul," eternal punish*ing* (instead of eternal punish*ment*), and the divinity and death of Jesus Christ.

Yet it seemed both John Ankerberg and many members of the studio audience (there were about 100 present) would shake their heads or let out a low growl of *disagreement* when I told them Christ DIED!

Even when I quoted Jesus Christ as *saying* that He died, it seemed neither my host nor the audience was willing to accept it.

WHY?

A Spiritual Enigma

Is it any wonder Jesus prayed, thanking His Father that the mysterious truths of God were revealed unto "babes"? Is it any wonder the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 1) showed how God had HIDDEN the deep and wondrous secrets of His great plan of redemption and salvation from the intellectuals, the knowledgeable and wise of *this present world,* and that the truth of God is SIMPLE to those with a childlike thirst for that truth?

For some reason, even the plainest, simplest statements in the Bible—in plain

English—are *incomprehensible* to the carnal mind!

Many scriptures give us clear revelation in plain, simple language (if we are willing to BELIEVE what the Bible plainly says!) concerning the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ! Yet *millions* simply *cannot accept* what the Bible plainly says!

Paul wrote: "Christ *died* for our sins *according to the scriptures. . .*" (1 Corinthians 15:3). Read verses 1 through 5 and you will see the apostle Paul is *summarizing* the very meaning of the GOSPEL, saying it was the *gospel* (meaning "good news") He delivered to them which showed "how that Christ *died. . .* "

The gospel *includes,* as one of its most central points, the life, death, burial and *resurrection* of Jesus Christ! Are YOU willing to believe Christ DIED? Or is this concept a spiritual *enigma* to your mind?

Why an enigma?

Simply because many, eager to ascribe to Jesus Christ the total DIVINITY of the Godhead, seem to believe He was "superman," rather than a normal, HUMAN BEING! Though the Bible clearly says He "emptied Himself," became of "no report," and came down to this earth to be literally *changed into* human flesh, born of the virgin Mary; that He was HUMAN, and took upon Himself not the "nature of angels," but the *seed of Abraham*—millions *cannot accept* this plain truth, and so millions believe that Jesus was not really DEAD!

To them, it is *blasphemy* to even suggest that Jesus was completely DEAD!

For example, *did you know* that *many* of the fundamentalist mainstream churches teach that only Christ's BODY died? Did you know they teach that Jesus was very much ALIVE during the three days and three nights in the tomb (and most of them REJECT the idea that even His body was in the tomb for three full days and three full nights!) but that JESUS, the *real person,* in spirit form, was in HELL?

That is what they teach!

Yet the Bible says Christ DIED!

You will note that never, in the entire 31/2 years of the ministry of Jesus Christ,

did His own disciples refer to Him as "Jesus." *Never* did they use the familiar, preferring, instead, to refer to Him as Master, "Teacher," "Rabbi," "Raboni," "Lord" or other titles of respect.

"Christ" means "the anointed one," or "the Messiah." Notice: "For to this end Christ both DIED, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Romans 14:9).

The Bible clearly says that when Jesus was resurrected He REVIVED! An exact synonym for that word is that He "re-*LIVED*"! To be "vivified" is to become "enlivened," quickened or MADE ALIVE!

It is obvious that you are dealing with two opposite states in this plain scripture—one *total death,* the other being ALIVE.

Yet *millions refuse* to believe that Jesus Christ was truly *dead*.

But the Bible insists, over and over again, that Christ *died*.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ *died* for the ungodly … while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6, 8).

Was Christ a Spirit—or Was He Flesh?

Was it merely the *body* in which Christ "dwelt" that died? If Christ was God (and we know He was a member of the God family), could He actually DIE? Did He, the real Christ, merely *leave* the body and remain alive, conscious, actively working, witnessing to "departed spirits," during the time the Bible says He was in the grave?

Let's understand.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was GOD"! (John 1:1).

The Greek word used for "word" is "logos." This means "spokesman," or the executive member of the Godhead who did the *commanding*. When we read that God (Elohim) said, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3), we are reading a first-person quotation from the Personage of the Godhead who BECAME CHRIST!

Read both the first chapter of Hebrews and the first chapter of John and you will see *absolute proof* that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was the Personage of the Godhead who revealed Himself as THE CREATOR to the patriarchs and the prophets of old!

Note Deuteronomy 32, together with 1 Corinthians 10:4. *Who* was "that ROCK" who "followed the children of Israel" in the wilderness? Very clearly, your Bible says that "ROCK" *was Christ!*

Notice John 1:4 and verse 14! "The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made BY HIM … in Him was LIFE … and the *Word* was MADE FLESH, and dwelt among us"!

Notice! He *"WAS MADE FLESH"!*

If He was *flesh,* then He was completely *changed into* human flesh! Though He came from a divine source; though His mind, closely attuned to the mind of God the Father; filled with the Holy Spirit without measure, could accumulate knowledge, wisdom and understanding; could even stir memories of His preexistent state (for example, to the Jews He said, "Before Abraham was—I AM!"), He WAS FLESH! Notice that your Bible does not say He merely *entered into* a mortal body—it says He was *MADE* FLESH!

He, the very CREATOR, the One who made the world, who created all creatures including *man*—He who was VERY GOD—*became flesh!*

He was converted INTO flesh; He WAS *flesh!*

There is *gross confusion* concerning this MOST ESSENTIAL point!

For, if Jesus Christ was not HUMAN as well as *divine;* if He was not flesh; if He did not DIE, *then we have no Savior.*

Jesus Christ Said He Died!

When I told my host and skeptical members of the audience that Jesus Christ Himself said, "I WAS DEAD," they *couldn't accept it.*

Somehow, in their minds, this was *blasphemous.* Somehow, because they wanted to accept the deity, the *divinity,* of Christ, they could not *bring themselves* to

accept the fact that He DIED!

Of course, the reason for this was their acceptance of the *pagan*doctrine of "the immortality of the soul." This concept was LOCKED, absolutely FIXED, in their minds! Believing there is something eternal, spiritual and EVERLASTING which is dwelling WITHIN them; that they have an *immortal soul* which is destined to go either to heaven or to an ever-burning hell when they die, they believe Jesus ALSO had a "soul."

Yet Jesus Christ Himself, using the Greek word "Psuche" (translated "soul"), warned that we are to "fear Him who hath power to DESTROY both 'psuche' [soul] and 'soma' [body] in *Gehenna fire"!* (Matthew 10:28).

Whatever is meant by the Greek word "psuche" (which can be translated *mind*, as well as *life),* it is obvious that Almighty God can DESTROY it in *Gehenna fire!*

I was taken aback when I realized that these people were not willing to accept a first-person quotation *from Jesus Christ Himself!* I quoted to them, "I am He that liveth, and WAS DEAD; and behold, I am *alive* forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of the grave ['hades'] and death" (Revelation 1:18).

I explained that, in a red-letter Bible, which prints every direct quotation from Jesus Christ Himself in *red ink*, you will read these words, in Revelation 1: 18, in *red letters!* This is a *direct quotation* from the lips of Jesus Christ of Nazareth HIMSELF, AFTER His resurrection!

How *amazing* that people will cling to superstitions; to oft-repeated clichés; to pagan concepts and *false doctrines* in the face of plain, personal quotations directly from the very PERSON whom they claim to *worship!*

But does *worship* include *obedience*?

Does *worship* include standing in absolute awe of the One who is being worshipped; *fearing* to doubt His word, disagree with His commands or disobey His orders?

Though millions do not know it, they have "appropriated" Christ. They believe they "have" Christ in their hearts. They have "appropriated" Christ; made Him "theirs," rather than *giving themselves* in complete and total surrender so they BECOME HIS!

There is a difference!

To these and other individuals with whom I have spoken over the years, their doctrinal concepts are MORE IMPORTANT than direct, first-person quotations from Jesus Christ Himself!

Christ says, “Think not I am come to destroy the law and the prophets”! and millions think He DID.

Jesus Christ says, “Swear not at all,” and millions of so-called “Christians” freely indulge in oathtaking, swearing and even “innocent” use of the name of Jesus Christ or “the Lord” in casual conversation!

Jesus plainly says, “I died,” and millions say, “Oh, no, you *didn’t*—you were ALIVE!”

The Awesome Truth

Do YOU realize what your Bible is plainly telling you?

Your Bible is telling you that the executive member of the Godhead was *changed into* human flesh.

Human flesh is what He BECAME! Notice that He is called “God manifest IN THE FLESH” and it is said of Him that He ” . . . also likewise (as children are partakers *of flesh and blood)* TOOK PART OF THE SAME”! (1 Timothy

3:16; Hebrews 2:14).

Continue in Hebrews 2: “…That through *death* [He plainly said He DIED!] He might annul Him who had the power of death, that is, the devil—for verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the *seed of* Abraham … made LIKE unto His brother”! (verses 14, 16).

Christ died!

For three days and three nights Jesus Christ of Nazareth was DEAD! Do you know—do you *realize—ALL* that this means?

It means that for three days and three nights the Godhead in heaven above consisted of only ONE great exalted PERSON!

The throne of Jesus Christ of Nazareth in heaven above was EMPTY for those three days and three nights—just as it was *empty* for the approximately 33*1/2* years previous to this time!

Yet, during His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ was "God in the flesh" (that is what His *name* "Emmanuel" *means*) and therefore there were TWO members of the Godhead, one in heaven, and one on earth. That is why Jesus called Himself not only the "Son of man" (referring to His physical, *fleshly* being), but the *"Son of God"!* (referring to His divine origin).

If Jesus Christ was not DEAD—*dead in the same way we die*—then we have no Savior!

The Resurrection

Many have puzzled over Jesus' many *appearances* following the resurrection. Some find it repugnant to believe that the "same old physical body" in which Christ DIED was *resurrected,* BODILY!

Yet, when Jesus displayed Himself, first, to the women in the garden (,who supposed Him to be a stooped, badly disfigured *caretaker),* and said, "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended unto my Father"; or when He displayed Himself to "doubting Thomas" and made Thomas *reach inside* the gaping spear wound in His side and put his fingers inside the huge hole torn in His hands, it was obvious He was appearing in the same human, physically disfigured BODY which had DIED!

However, Almighty God the Father in heaven above had RESURRECTED Jesus Christ; changing Him into SPIRIT, restoring unto Him His DIVINITY in a great *ceremony* we are not privy to understand, *after* His ascension to heaven above, BETWEEN the time He told the women "touch me not," and the time when He ordered His disciples to actually *feel* of His body.

Millions do not understand that the great stone door of the tomb was rolled away by angels and an earthquake to let Peter and John *look in*—NOT to let Jesus Christ WALK OUT!

Jesus Christ had been resurrected *many hours earlier.*

He arose, carefully folded the napkin which had been about His head and his grave clothes, and then took a step through *solid rock* and walked outside the tomb, *while the door was yet closed!*

Now He was SPIRIT!

Once again, after He ascended to the right hand of God the Father in heaven, He was VERY GOD!

As an omnipresent and omniscient member of the God family, He once again had ALL POWER! He said so! (Matthew 28:18). Now He had the POWER, by a divine MIRACLE, to manifest Himself as *human flesh,* displaying the great, gaping wounds which had taken His human, physical life by causing His *blood* to be shed!

How *simple* is the very truth of God! How *plain*!

The very member of the Godhead who *did the creat*ing totally "emptied Himself," came to this earth and was *changed into* the tiniest, microscopic form of human life, to begin development as a tiny fetus in the womb of a virgin, Mary.

After approximately nine months, He was born as any other normal, human physical baby is born.

At approximately age 33*1/2*, He was brutally murdered by a false "kangeroo court" using suborned and hired witnesses, and DIED after cruel torture by the Romans and being pinioned to an upright pale, or stake (called "tree" in the Greek).

When He *died,* He was DEAD!

During the next 72 hours, as His *dead body* lay in the grave, He, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, was DEAD!

Exactly three days and three nights later, God the Father *resurrected* Jesus Christ of Nazareth by His superb and supreme power. By a divine MIRACLE, the body stirred, the eyes blinked awake, and Jesus Christ arose from the stone bier on which He lay, and perhaps assisted by *angels,* unwrapped the grave clothes which pinioned His arms to His sides, carefully placed them on the stone bier where He had been lying, and *stepped through solid* rock—out into the late afternoon or

early evening of that *weekday Sabbath*, and has been ALIVE *ever since!*

That ONE LIFE, since He was *very Creator,* was worth more than all of the rest of *humanity* put together! He who was "from the beginning," and who had existed FROM ETERNITY with the Father, had come to this earth and *RISKED EVERYTHING!* Yes, unless there was a great RISK—unless He *suffered;* unless He pled, cried, stayed up nights praying until He perspired as if great drops of blood were failing to the ground; unless *He fasted,* suffered acute hunger, terrible thirst, deep personal anguish of heart and mind—unless He underwent *every temptation,* He could not have become YOUR SAVIOR!

That is the PRICE *He paid for you!*

Are any of us—all Of US COLLECTIVELY—*worth such a price?* THE GREATEST PRICE EVER PAID IN ALL ETERNITY was when the LIFE OF GOD—Almighty God—was changed into human flesh, and He, the "Logos," the CREATOR, *died*!

That is why He demands that YOU GIVE to Him what He has already BOUGHT!

Do you see?

He has *"purchased"* us with *His life!*

He demands our full, utter, unconditional and total SURRENDER to *His will!* He commands that we *give our life to Him,* for He has already BOUGHT US! Presently,

unless you have already deeply repented, been baptized and received the Holy Spirit, the Bible shows you are "dead in trespasses and sin." But, if you will GIVE YOURSELF totally to *God*—He *will give you* eternal life!

And, once He gives you this priceless possession, YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED! This does not mean you could not still "abort," make serious mistakes, or "fall away" into the clutches of sin! The apostle Paul said he had to continually struggle and strive against his own human nature, fighting his own body unless, "after preaching to others he [himself] should be found a castaway"!

Yet he was in a *saved condition!*

Notice!

“For this is the record, that God *hath given* to us eternal life and this life is *in His son.* He that has the Son HAS LIFE: and he that has not the Son has not life”! (1 John 5:11, 12).

That is the meaning of the sometimes “hackneyed” phrase “Christ died to save sinners”!

How *tragic* that *millions* who THINK they understand what that phrase means do not really comprehend it, and *will not accept it* even when it is plainly shown them!

Will *you*?

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