



Church of God Ministries
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Was Jesus Dead?

by Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986)
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It is revealed that Jesus was "Emmanuel" - that is, "God with us" - God in the human flesh. He was both God and man. He was divine, as well as human. Can God die? Was Jesus really dead, or did only his body die? Was Jesus the Divine One alive during the three days and three nights a body was in the tomb? Here is a brief, pointed answer.

This is a question that has perplexed millions. It is an enigma that has never been made clear and plain to many minds.

Yet the Scriptures give us a plain revelation, in, simple words - if we can believe the Scriptures - which is to believe they mean exactly what they say, instead of what men by twisting and wresting try to make them say.

We read: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3). "Christ" means "Anointed," or "Messiah," and while the name "Jesus" may be used to denote the human man, the title "Christ" certainly refers to the Divine One - the one who was GOD with us. This Scripture says He died, and was buried - and it was He - the CHRIST - the Divine One - who ROSE FROM THE DEAD. He did not rise from life or a living state, but from the DEATH!

"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). When He rose, He was revived. When a boxer is knocked unconscious, the attendants work over him to revive him. The expression "He was revived" indicates Christ had been unconscious - not that He rose from a state of conscious mental activity. "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).

God in the Flesh

The test of a spirit - that is, angel or demon - is this: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God" (I John 4:2). But does this mean that Jesus was God inside of a body of flesh? Could this mean that it was merely the body Christ was dwelling in that died, while Christ Himself, being God, did not die, but left the body and remained alive, conscious, active, during the three days and three nights in the tomb?

Notice again: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). The Greek word is "Logos." It means "Word," or "Spokesman." This is referring to the One who co-existed with the Father from eternity - who always existed - who is one with the Father, yet, as He Himself said, His Father is greater than He.

Always He referred to Himself as One sent by the Father. He said that the words He spoke were not spoken of Himself, but the Father who sent Him gave him a commandment what He should say and speak. The One who gives the orders and sends another is in a position superior to the one sent, and who obeys the orders. A husband is set by God in a position superior, in the family relationship, to that of the wife. Yet they are both human - both on the same level - and they are ONE. Not one God, but one flesh.

In the Church, or local congregation, an elder is in authority during a service that all things may be done decently and in order, and he has the rule over the congregation. Yet Christ prayed that the Church would be kept as ONE, even as He and the Father are One. The Church is composed of many members, yet ONE BODY. And its members, more than one, are to be kept ONE in the sense of harmony and unity in love and purpose, as Christ and the Father are One - and they form ONE CHURCH, even as the Father and Christ form ONE GOD - yet more than one member, or one person.

Christ the Everliving

In the Old Testament the "Logos" is called by different names. God calls people and beings what they are. There was an archangel, perfect in beauty, full of knowledge. He was named what he actually was - Lucifer, which in

English means "Shining Star of the Dawn" - or Lightbringer. But when thru pride he decided to compete against God for supremacy of the universe, and to take possession and rule from God, his name was changed to what he now was - Satan, which in English means "Adversary," or rival, or competitor.

Therefore the names of Christ have always been - whether names or titles - words which describe what He is. Most frequently He was called "Yahweh," erroneously translated in the Revised Version "Jehovah." In the King James Version it is rendered "Lord."

Today we do not know either the correct spelling or pronunciation of this holy, sacred name - it was so sacred it was never pronounced in ancient Israel, any more than a son who properly honors his father would call him by his first name. Yet we know its MEANING - it means "The Eternal" - or the One in whom is inherent LIFE. It signifies One who possesses life inherent from eternity to eternity - life-source! He also was called "Yahweh-ropha" - God our healer. He gave His name to Moses as "I AM." That is, the One who IS - who EXISTS - who has life inherent in Himself!

He also is the Word, or Spokesman. God is Creator - but the Father created all things by, and thru, Christ the WORD. He is the One who "SPAKE" and it was done." He is the One who said, "Let there be light" - and the Holy Spirit moving upon the face of the waters performed the command, and "there was light." Yet Jesus spoke, or commanded, only what the Father had commanded Him. Father, Word and Holy Spirit combined in perfect harmony in Creation!

Now, the Logos - the WORD - was God. "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." (John 1:1-4, 14)

Christ Was CONVERTED Into Flesh

Notice, the "WORD," who was the ETERNAL - the EVERLIVING - in whom was LIFE - eternal life - by who all things were made and created - the very GOD Himself - HE WAS MADE FLESH. Notice, He did not merely enter into

some mortal fleshly body - the body of another. He was not separate from the flesh, as One inside the flesh. It says in plain language - IF we believe the Scripture - IF we believe it means what it says - it says He was made flesh! That is, He who had existed from eternity - He by whom God created the worlds and all things therein - He who was and is LIFE - He who was GOD - He was made flesh - converted INTO flesh, until He became flesh - and then He WAS flesh!

Yes, Jesus was a fleshly MAN. He was God come in human flesh. And, when converted into human flesh, the LIFE that kept Him alive resided IN THE BLOOD, as in all who are flesh (Leviticus 17:11). The breath oxidizes the blood and is called the "breath of life" - of animal, or human, life.

Jesus was also GOD - He was both human and divine. But He was not GOD inside of, yet separate from the body of flesh - He, God, was MADE FLESH, until He, still GOD - God with us - became God IN (not inside of) the human flesh - God manifest IN THE FLESH (I Timothy 3:16) - "He also likewise (as the children are partakers of flesh and blood) took part of the same" (Hebrews 2:14). That is, as we humans are partakers of flesh and blood, Jesus Chris, also, in exactly the same manner, was partaker of flesh and blood. And why? Why, in order that He might DIE! - "that through death 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 brethren" (Verses 14, 16).

Jesus came, NOT in the nature of angels - that is, spirit nature. He was a human being. He was MADE FLESH - made HUMAN - He took on, at birth, HUMAN NATURE. He was tempted in all points like we are. He suffered as we do. He was forced to resist the pull of human nature, even as you and I. He, God, BECAME MAN - man so shat HE COULD DIE for us, that our sins might be erased and forgiven!

It Was CHRIST Who Died

Jesus DIED! Jesus WAS DEAD!

And for three days and three nights the Second Person of the Godhead - EMMANUEL - GOD with us - GOD made human flesh - was DEAD! And dead matter cannot impart life. Life can come only FROM life. As a human, Jesus was the Son of God the Father. God was His only Father. Mary was His mother. He became the SON of God at his human birth. And now He was DEAD - yes, DEAD! If He was not DEAD, then the penalty of your sins is not yet paid - you are yet in your sins - you are without hope! But Jesus was DEAD!

If there was no other Person in the Godhead, then the Giver of all Life was dead and all hope was at an end! If there was no FATHER in heaven while Jesus Christ lay dead - His blood in which resided His LIFE shed from His veins, given for you and for me - then all life everywhere had come to an end! But the Father still reigned in high Heaven! And the FATHER had LIFE INHERENT IN HIMSELF!

Life can come only from life! And Christ Jesus was now DEAD! His life had gone from him - poured out on Calvary's Cross - poured out from His veins! That's where His life resided - in His BLOOD, not in spirit! He did not shed a spirit to save us from our sins - He shed His BLOOD, and in so doing GAVE HIS LIFE. But, "as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John 5:26). *God the father raised Jesus from the dead!*

Not Resurrected in Same Body

Now notice carefully. God the Father did not cause Jesus Christ to get back into the body which had died. Some seem to believe that it was only the body which died - that Jesus Christ never died - Christ was alive, and preached to "spirits in prison" during the three days and nights His BODY was dead. What they believe is that a BODY Christ lived in died, But CHRIST HIMSELF never died, Christ was God, and, they argue, God could not die! If they are right, they are lost and doomed to eternal punishment! If Christ did not die for their

sins - if it was only a mortal body which died - then we have no Savior, and we are LOST.

What happened is that the Logos - the WORD - the Eternal - was MADE FLESH. He was converted into- CHANGED INTO flesh. Now He was FLESH AND BLOOD, exactly as you and I His life was in His blood, and He gave His LIFE by the fact His blood poured out while He was on the cross! He had taken on a HUMAN nature. He was God - but now God changed INTO flesh and blood - God WITH US - Emmanuel! Yes, the Word was MADE FLESH, and He WAS flesh and blood, not just an immortal Spirit IN a body of flesh and blood.

We may argue that God is immortal and could not die. But the Scriptures reveal that GOD SO LOVED US that while we were yet sinners, the Eternal, the Logos, who was with God and who was God in the Second Person, permitted Himself voluntarily to be CHANGED INTO a flesh and blood MAN, until He BECAME a human who could and did DIE. But God the Father - God in the First Person - still reigned in High Heaven - and HE RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD - not from life.

It was CHRIST HIMSELF who was DEAD. He was REVIVED. Nowhere does the Scripture say He was alive and active, or that God had Him get back into the human BODY that had died and was now resurrected.

Jesus Christ was DEAD. He was as much "out" as a boxer knocked senseless much more, for the boxer usually is not dead but only unconscious. Jesus was DEAD - but was REVIVED! And the resurrected body was no longer human - it was the Christ resurrected IMMORTAL, once again CHANGED! As He had been changed, converted INTO mortal human flesh and blood subject to death, and for the PURPOSE of DYING FOR OUR SINS; now, by a RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD, HE WAS AGAIN CHANGED, CONVERTED, INTO IMMORTALITY - and He is alive forevermore! Now a LIVING Saviour, not a DEAD Saviour. He was dead - but only for three days and three nights.

Now, How About YOU?

Do you realize WHAT a tremendous price was paid that you might be released from the death-penalty of YOUR SINS? The very Eternal - the Spokesman of the Godhead, and very GOD Himself - permitted Himself to be changed into a mortal human - stepped down, descended to the human plane, suffered, was tempered, persecuted, despised, rejected of man, crucified!

If Jesus had been only human, His death could have paid the penalty for but one other human being who had incurred that penalty by transgression of God's spiritual law (Romans 6:23). Since God the Father created all things by Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:16), and since all things, including man, were made by Jesus Christ, He is our Maker and therefore God; and His life which He gave was of greater value than the total of all human beings (John 1:1-3).

He died and for three days and nights WAS DEAD! He who was IN THE BEGINNING, and WAS GOD! He stooped to human level, submitted to DEATH - trusted the Father to restore Him to life! That is the PRICE paid for you and for me. He GAVE Himself for YOU - and in so doing bought and paid for you! And therefore, you BELONG TO HIM! Will you GIVE YOURSELF to Him?

That is the only way of salvation - the only way this GREATEST PRICE EVER PAID IN THE UNIVERSE FROM ETERNITY can save you, great as it was. you must GIVE YOURSELF up! GIVE yourself, TO HIM! Give Him your life - your SELF. Let HIM come into your mind and heart, thru His Spirit, and live HIS LIFE IN YOU!

It means full, complete, utter, unconditional SURRENDER. You are no longer your own, you are HIS. Give your life to HIM, and see what great usefulness and accomplishment He will put it to! See what great joys will be yours as a result of the great GOOD He can and will do and thru you - IF you are His, wholly IN HIS POWER, wholly subjected to HIS WILL!

Yes, Jesus Christ died and was dead! But God the Father RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, and HE LIVES FOREVERMORE!

You are already dead in trespasses and sins unless, or until, your REPENT of sins, surrender to God, GIVE YOURSELF to the LIVING SAVIOUR who died for you, but was RAISED to become your High Priest and coming King! We have to DIE in order to LIVE. Give YOURSELF to Christ, and He will give you the gift of ETERNAL LIFE!

"For this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this LIFE is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and He that hath not the Son hath not life!" (I John 5:11-12).