

In The Flesh

1 John 4:2-3

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FOCAL Read Responsively 1 John 4:2-3 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: {3} **And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.**

When I was growing up one of my favorite television shows was the *Andy Griffith Show*. Every week you'd see something that was happening in the lives of the citizens of a fictitious town called Mayberry. I remember one episode where Aunt Bea was feeling a little run down. An acquaintance had suddenly died and, since this lady was the same age as Aunt Bea, she began to think about her aches, her pains, and her mortality. When Andy told her to see the town doctor she refused. "What good can he do, other than charge me five dollars and tell me 'We're not spring chickens any more?'"

And then a snake oil salesman came into town.

A "snake oil salesman" is someone who offers what he doesn't have to give. This man offered Bea relief to all her aches and pains. Bea, a good Christian lady, took him up on his offer. She bought two bottles of his "medicine" and, when Andy came home that night, he found a giggly, slurring, plate dropping Aunt Bea. She was on top of the world, felt great, and was like a spring chicken. What she didn't know was that the "medicine" she was given was liquor. Aunt Bea was deceived by that snake oil salesman into getting not only herself, but also the ladies of the local Church drunk. In the end,

everything turned out fine. Andy caught and jailed the bad guy, and Aunt Bea and her friends, though red faced, went home and continued to be productive citizens of Mayberry. But life isn't a situation comedy, and things don't always come out rosy when you compromise with evil. And, dear friends, you can never find good apart from Jesus Christ!

Adrian Rogers said “You may know all sorts of facts, but if you don't know the Lord, it's all wasted. You can understand biology, but if you don't know the giver of life, you're still uneducated. You can comprehend geology, but if you don't know the Rock of Ages, you don't really know anything of importance. You can know all about botany, but if you haven't met the Lily of the Valley, your knowledge is useless. You can know all the facts of history, but if you reject the central figure of history, your time has been wasted.”

What the fictional Aunt Bea should have known is the same thing that every person should know. Evil can never *help you*. Evil can never be your friend. Evil may pretend to be your friend, and may pretend to help you through a valley in life, but in the end evil seeks its own profit.

When life gets you down, turn to Jesus. The Scripture tells us that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh**. Jesus Christ is a real solution to your real problems. Christ is a living Solution to a sinful life. Christ is a living Solution

to a lonely life. Christ is a living Solution to a loveless life. **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh** – He came from eternity to bring real and lasting solutions to your life.

Will you give your life to Him?

1. Jesus Christ Is Come In The Flesh Is A Statement Of Biblical Fact

FOCAL 1 John 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: **Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:**

I love the King James text here! Other versions render this passage "every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ HAS COME in the flesh is of God". You can render it that way - but it's not right. The words "is come" in the Greek text is the *Perfect Passive Participle* of the word¹ ἔρχομαι, erchomai, (pronounced *er'-khom-ahēe*). The word is not a simple past tense. "Has come" gives the sense that Jesus was, at some time in the past, **come in the flesh** - but He may not be in the flesh now.

The Apostle John leaves no doubt in his reader's mind. He says in fact that "**Jesus Christ came in the flesh in the past, with the continuing result that He is still in the flesh even now.**"

¹ G2064, ἔρχομαι, erchomai, *er'-khom-ahēe*, Middle voice of a primary verb (used only in the present and imperfect tenses, the others being supplied by a kindred [middle voice] word, ἐλεύθομαι eleuthomai or ἔλθο elthō; which do not otherwise occur); to *come* or *go* (in a great variety of applications, literally and figuratively): - accompany, appear, bring, come enter, fall out, go, grow, X light, X next, pass, resort, be set.

Dr. Kenneth S. Wuest states: "every teacher who is in agreement with the Bible that 'Jesus Christ is come in the flesh' is of God. ... Likewise, the teacher who does not agree to that doctrine is not of God. He is actuated by the spirit of anti-Christ who denies and is against all that the Bible teaches regarding the person and work of the Lord Jesus. This is Modernism."²

Shortly following the resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ the devil began to infuse agents into the local Churches. These agents – some who were **Pharisees** and others who were called simply **“those who know”** or the **“Gnostics”** - began to spread heretical lies about the Savior. The **Pharisees and Chief Priests**, we are told, paid off the guard who had stood at the tomb of Christ (**Matthew 28:11-15**). The guard, if asked, was to say **“His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept”**.

Another group who called themselves the *Gnostics* began to proclaim that Jesus Christ had *never* come in the flesh. They taught that it was inconceivable that God could be born of a virgin, and that God could grow up in His humanity from child to adult and maintain His sinless state. Jesus Christ must have been a *spirit* - He did not really come in the flesh.

Two groups – the unbelieving Jews and the Gnostics – both taught that Christ *never came in the flesh*. But what is the testimony of the Scripture?

John knew that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh**. He was there, and was an eyewitness of Christ. Jesus Christ was no mere apparition, but John had **leaned on Jesus, clinging to Him (John 13:23)**. Jesus was real, no figment of the imagination. Jesus Christ had a family. **He had a mother, and had brothers who came to speak to Him (Matthew 12:46)**. He was real. He was not a spirit being come to the earth as the Gnostics declared, but He was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth. The Pharisees mocked Christ by pointing out His poor family:

Mark 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. He is real - no figment of the imagination, no fairytale, no invention of man. The **Apostle Paul boldly preached at Antioche:**

Acts 13:30-31 But God raised {Christ} from the dead: {31} And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

Christ was raised from the dead, not as a spirit but as a physical Being. He was truly dead on Calvary. The Bible says that the Roman Guard that executed Him:

John 19:32-35 ... broke the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. {33} But when

2 *Word Studies In The Greek New Testament*, pages 160-170 "The Exegesis of 1 John"

they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they broke not his legs: {34} But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. {35} And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

The soldiers were not lax in their duty. They did not look at Christ hanging on the Cross and say "He's dead – let's just move on". No, Beloved, for they were accountable to Pilate the Governor.

One soldier rammed a spear into Christ's side and forthwith there came out blood and water. Why is this significant? The Roman executions were thorough in their duties. Josh McDowell stated:

"The centurion would always check with four different executioners. That was Roman law. There had to be four executioners. They did that so in case one man was a little lax, the other one would catch him in it, And you would never have all four lax in signing the death warrant. Discipline was severe with the Romans.

For example, when the angel let Peter out of jail in Acts 12 in the New Testament, Herod called in the guard and executed them all - just for letting one man out of jail. In Acts 16 in the Christian New Testament, the doors had been opened up in the jail for Paul and Silas, their chains had been loosened, and the moment the guard saw they were freed, he

pulled out his own sword to execute himself. And Paul said, "Wait a minute!" You see, that guard knew what would happen, He would rather die by his own sword, than be executed by the Romans. ³

Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. He literally died on Calvary. Even His enemies noted that Jesus died, for the Pharisees plotted with Pilate:

Matthew 27:63-64 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. {64} Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

While He was yet alive. The Pharisees knew Christ was literally dead. He Who is come in the flesh is now dead. Let's seal the tomb, lest His disciples steal Him away and fake His resurrection.

The testimony of Scripture is that Christ was not a spirit, but a Person of flesh and bones Who literally rose from the grave. Jesus startled His disciples by appearing in a locked room with them. He told them:

Luke 24:39-43 Behold my hands and my feet, that it

³ From THE DEBATE that took place in August, 1981, in Durban, South Africa. THE TOPIC was the question: Was Christ crucified? THE PARTICIPANTS were Josh McDowell and Ahmed Deedat, the president of the Islamic Propagation Centre in Durban, South Africa.

is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. {40} And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. {41} And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? {42} And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb. {43} And he took it, and did eat before them.

Jesus was touched and handled – He ate food – **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh**. And He was not just seen of a few people. The Scripture goes on to tell us through the Apostle Paul:

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 ... how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; {4} And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: {5} And that he was seen of Cephas {also known as Simon Peter}, then of the twelve: {6} After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. {7} After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. {8} And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Many saw the risen Savior - not as an apparition, but as One Who was in the flesh. Jesus did not just appear and then disappear. This was no magician's trick.

It is significant that the Physician Luke – an educated man by any standards – records of Christ that He

showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs over a forty day period, being seen and heard by many.

Acts 1:3 ... showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. If you do not believe this, John says, **then you are not of God, but of the Spirit of Anti-Christ.** The physical birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to the validity of our faith!

2. Jesus Christ Is Come In The Flesh Because God Will Not Compromise On Sin

There was a time when Jesus Christ was not in the flesh - yet He still existed – co-eternal – within the Godhead.

The Scripture tells us through the Apostle John that

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} The same was in the beginning with God. {3} All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning Jesus Christ was with God - and *was*

God. Jesus proved His Godhood by making all things. **All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.** He is Eternal God, co-existent with Father and Spirit, the Blessed Son. Yet the Word must be

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

God became flesh. Why? Why would God so radically alter His composition as to take on mortality? It all goes back to the Garden.

The Bible tells us that Adam, disobeying God, brought the entirety of his progeny into sinful separation from God. People think of sin as BIG SINS and little sins, but to God *sin is sin*. When Adam failed in the Garden he brought the curse of his sin on all creation. **One man** – Adam – failed in the Garden.

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as BY ONE MAN sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

God could have allowed civilization to end at this point. He could have said “That's it! I told Adam, Adam failed, he's made his bed, let him lie in it!” But God did not do this.

The God Who is holy could not compromise where sin is concerned. The same God, Who is love, moved to act on our behalf.

Romans 5:15 ... if through the OFFENSE OF ONE {Adam} many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is BY ONE MAN, JESUS CHRIST, hath abounded unto many.

The Man Adam was made out of the dust of the ground. He was perfect, but followed Satan into sin and death. The Eternal God the Son **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh** to make restitution for what Adam did.

Romans 5:17 For if BY ONE MAN'S OFFENSE DEATH REIGNED by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness SHALL REIGN IN LIFE BY ONE, JESUS CHRIST.)

Adam, formed of the dust of the ground was made perfect, but caused all to fall. We could not live up to God's Law – we could not save ourselves. **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.**

Romans 8:2-4 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. {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: {4} That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who

walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, standing in our place in the eyes of Almighty God. **We who are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:8)**, so God the Son pleased God *on our behalf*. Because of Him – because I **HAVE BELIEVED ON HIM** – His punishment for me is applied to my account before sinless God.

Jesus Christ is come in the flesh to do for me and for you what the Law could not do: He makes us apparently righteous before Almighty God.

Galatians 2:20-21 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. {21} I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and has given Himself for you and for me. It is a mystery that God would do this for us. It is a mystery that **God would be manifest in the flesh** for creatures such as us.

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.

God would not compromise on sin, neither would He *half save anyone*. If you have called on Jesus Christ to be saved

Since **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh** we who have called upon His Name for salvation have great privileges.

3. Jesus Christ Is Come In The Flesh: What A Blessing The Believer Has In Jesus

John the Baptist, a mighty man of God and one of the greatest prophets ever known to man, was at the lowest point in his life. John had condemned the sexual sin of Herod the governor of Jerusalem, and in response Herod threw John in prison. As John lay in the filth and the stench of that ancient cell he remembered the time that Jesus came to him to be baptized. He remembered putting the Savior under the water, and remembered the Holy Spirit like a dove descending from Heaven to light on Jesus (**Matthew 3:16**). John continued baptizing disciples following that wondrous day. But now, in the dank and miserable prison cell John began to worry.

Dear friends, Satan whispers "**hath God really said**" in our ears in our lowest moments. **What you think of Christ is what will give you strength in times of trial and tribulation.** Is Christ a ghost to you, or is **He come in the flesh?**

So John called for his disciples, and told them **"Go and ask Jesus 'Are you the Christ, or should my men look**

for another?' " These faithful men found Jesus Christ and asked Him that very question. How did our Lord respond? He said:

Luke 7:22 ... Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.

Go and tell John what you have seen. What did John's disciples see? They saw Jesus *miraculously healing the blind, the lame, the lepers, and the deaf*. They saw and heard Jesus Christ raise the dead. Christ came in the flesh to raise the dead, and to give life where none was before.

Christ was miraculously born of a Virgin. He grew to manhood in the town of Nazareth. Following His virgin birth Mary bore other children by Joseph her husband. Christ walked and talked, touched and healed. Christ as God manifest in the flesh proved His power over life and death. We who are in the flesh need a Messiah Who is in the flesh! Christ has come in the flesh because we are in the flesh.

After declaring that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh John went on to say:

CONTEXT 1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

A very real Jesus promised everyone who believed in

Him that we would receive the Holy Spirit of God (John 14:16). The Holy Spirit, also called "The Comforter", would indwell every believer in a very real way. The Holy Spirit abides with us forever, teaching us of Christ Jesus the Lord.

Empowered by the Spirit of God every believer is able to overcome the Evil One, for "greater is He that is in you (the Holy Spirit) than he that is in the world (Satan)".

What other benefit do we have? John goes on to state:

CONTEXT 1 John 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

There is communication between the believer and God. The Apostle said we know that God hears us. How do we know that? Because Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. We are told that:

Hebrews 7:24-25 But this {Jesus}, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. {25} Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Jesus Christ is come in the flesh – He continues forever with an unchangeable priesthood. We who

are His are **saved to the uttermost** because **He keeps on living and representing us before God the Father.**

Christianity is not just some fairytale faith reported in a Disney book. Ours is a real faith for real people!

CONTEXT 1 John 4:10 **Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**

God loved us *before we ever loved Him*. He took upon Himself our judgment, and became - through Christ - **the propitiation or covering for our sin**. Christ came in the flesh - suffered death - and *physically rose from the grave* in a glorified body, and now sits on the right hand of God the Father representing us. And since God is now in us and representing us the Scripture states with all certainty:

1 John 4:12-16 **No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. {13} Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. {14} And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. {15} Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. {16} And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.**

ILLUSTRATE A kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they drew. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's artwork. As she came to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, **"I'm drawing God."** The teacher paused and said, **"But no one knows what God looks like."** Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing the girl replied, . . . **"They will in a minute."**

The world cannot see God, but it can see us. Dear friends, if you are born again by faith in **Jesus Christ who is come in the flesh** then God lives in you. Let the world see Christ in you.

God showed us His love by manifesting Himself through a virgin. God now expects you who are His to let others see God manifested through you. Only by this may we win the world to Christ.

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**1. Jesus Christ Is Come In The Flesh
Is A Statement Of Biblical Fact**

1 John 4:2; Matthew 28:11-15 _____

Two groups – the unbelieving Jews and the Gnostics – both taught that Christ *never came in the flesh*. But what is the testimony of the Scripture?

John 13:23; Matthew 12:46; Mark 6:3; Acts 13:30-31; John 19:32-35; Matthew 27:63-64; Luke 24:39-43; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Acts 1:3 _____

**2. Jesus Christ Is Come In The Flesh
Because God Will Not Compromise On Sin**

There was a time when Jesus Christ was not in the flesh - yet He still existed – co-eternal – within the

Godhead.

John 1:1-3; John 1:14; Romans 5:12; Romans 5:15; Romans 5:17; Romans 8:2-4; Romans 8:8; Galatians 2:20-21; 1 Timothy 3:16 _____

**3. Jesus Christ Is Come In The Flesh:
What A Blessing The Believer Has In Jesus**

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Luke 7:22; 1 John 4:4; John 14:16); 1 John 4:6; Hebrews 7:24-25; 1 John 4:10; 1 John 4:12-16

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