

"In The Days Of His Flesh ..."

"Who, in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death ..." (Heb. 5:7).

The Hebrew writer in this section is outlining the qualifications that Jesus possessed to be our high priest and mentions, in an almost offhanded way, the humanity of Jesus in saying *"in the days of his flesh."* Such opens to us several thoughts to pursue touching that statement.

First, *"in the days of his flesh"* tells that Christ came to the world possessing a fleshly body. In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he spoke of the mystery of godliness: *"He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory"* (1 Tim. 3:16). John wrote in his gospel, *"In the beginning was the word ... and the word become flesh and dwelt among us"* (Jn. 1:1, 14). How definite are these words! How strange that there should have been any who denied this fundamental, necessary truth concerning Jesus being incarnate. Yet, deny such, some did. There were those in the closing decades of the first century who believed flesh was inherently sinful and because they believed Christ to be sinless, were forced to conclude he did not actually possess a fleshly body; he only appeared to possess one. It was against such teaching that much of John's epistles were directed. His first letter begins, *"That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the word of life"* (1 Jn. 1:1). Nor was John content to affirm the truth; he hastened on to deny the error of those who denied that truth, speaking of such as antichrist. In 1 John 4:2 he said, *"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God, and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh ..."* He wrote in his second epistle, *"For many deceivers are gone forth in to the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist"* (2 John 7). Of the Nicolaitians (a sect believed to have held the "Gnostic" views) John wrote that Jesus *"hated"* their doctrine (Rev. 2:6).

Some would dispute these conclusions. They refer to Philippians 2:5-8 where it is written of Jesus, *"... who existing in the form of God, counted not being on equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man ..."* From this is pressed the idea that Jesus was not really flesh, He only appeared to be flesh ... that He was made in the likeness of man, in the form of a servant.

But, to such argument must be countered that if Jesus was not really flesh, because He was in the likeness and form of man, He was not really God because He had existed in the form of God. What proves one proves the other. Jesus was God and Jesus became man. He had a fleshly body!

The words "*in the days of his flesh*" clearly spells out the truth the humanity of Jesus. But, what about now? This will be the subject for study in the next article.

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