

Q: Please explain “flesh.” (8-20-22)1

A: A tape will come that is absolutely complete on that subject. The reason that it is a long subject is that the New Testament has many, many references to flesh. If you took a concordance and looked up all the words “flesh” in the New Testament and read all of the passages, you would come out of it very confused. And the reason is this: The flesh is spoken of as something wonderful that comes from God, and then flesh is spoken of as something that is filthy.

There are as many passages talking about the good nature of flesh as there are about the evil nature of flesh, and it is for this reason that so far as I know, the subject has never been covered or explained in literature. If through the human mind you would try to fathom out what it means that flesh is of God, but flesh is to be overcome, you would get nowhere.

But it was during a class that this subject of flesh was given to me inwardly. And I searched the scriptures, found those passages, separated them, and was given light on them. And then I saw this: Flesh has two different meanings.

We have a temple, a body “not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” We have a spiritual body, and it has form, and therefore, it may be said to be “flesh” in the same way that John says, “And the Word, which was God, became flesh.” Now he didn't mean that it became the type of flesh that decays or gets cremated. He meant that the Word, the invisible and unmanifest, becomes visible and manifest as form, but *still* spiritual, eternal, harmonious, perfect.

Now, the Bible speaks of “flesh” as being ugly; as that which, well, “If you sow to the flesh, you reap corruption.” And yet, we're told that God is the Word that became flesh. There you see the two extremes, do you not? God is the Word that becomes flesh, but if you sow to the flesh, you'll reap corruption. So it can't mean the same flesh as the Word that became flesh, can it? No.

God, the Word that becomes flesh, becomes form; becomes you and me. Now let's see if we can identify that person. Close your eyes, and inside of yourself say “I, I, I, I-Joel, I-Joel, I-Joel.” Does that I have fleshly form, as you know it? Have you ever seen that I? No, no. You have never seen me, and I have never seen you. Do you see that? I have never seen that I that you just declared. I have seen your body. You have seen my body. But you've never seen me, because I—that's what I just declared up there—I-Joel, that's me—invisible, perfect, complete, forever and forever. And if you cut off my legs, I-Joel is

just the same fellow, and he knows everything just the same. And if you cut off his arms, I-Joel, I can't tell it, I am just as complete. I am just as perfect. I'm just as harmonious. I know everything just the same. I-Joel am complete.

Now that I is God made flesh, God individualized, God made tangible, God made evident. But it is incorporeal. Now, it is individual, but it hasn't got what we would call this kind of a "fleshly" body. That I-Joel is a complete, intact unit that will exist a thousand years from now, ten thousand years, a million years from now, I-Joel will be circulating somewhere in consciousness. So will every I that is in this room, because that I is your true identity. That I is God, the Word made flesh, made individual. That is the indestructibility of your individual nature.

Now then, the second chapter of Genesis sets forth an unreal creation. In this first chapter of Genesis, you will realize that God made us in His own image and likeness, which is Spirit, and you will realize He made us without having a wife. And so you will see that the I which is Joel is the unfolding of the I which is God. It's an immaculate conception.

Those of you who are familiar with Christian Science may remember Mrs. Eddy's statement, "Man was never born and will never die." Now that man is I. When you say "I"—close your eyes and say "I"—let me tell you that that's an immaculately conceived child. That's you as you are in the image and likeness of God. That's you as you were before Abraham was. That is your true identity, and it is form, and it is not that sense of flesh form, but at least it's an eternal one.

Now as against that, the second chapter of Genesis comes along and this immaculately conceived man, Adam, instead of communing with the Father if he wanted companionship and waking up in the morning and finding one beside him, he decided he had to make himself one. That's the beginning of man as a creator. And so we are told that Eve was made out of his rib.

Well you know, there is a saying that if a man ever had one baby, that would be the last baby in the world; that there'd never be another. And that comes from the fact that Adam had a baby called Eve, and he decided there never would be another. That just wasn't a good way to have babies! So he evidently searched around until he found a more pleasurable way. But out of this "rib" business and this "Adam and Eve" business has come what is known as this "mortal creation," which is finite, and which withers like dust and is seen no more.

Now then, that sense of flesh is the earthly one which is referred to in the statement that, "If you sow to the flesh, you will reap corruption." And that means not what the church teaches. It actually means that if you conduct your life as if this body were you and live your life catering to this body, you are sowing to the flesh and reaping corruption. If your attention is on your figure, or your food, or your wealth, or the type of automobile you drive, or whether your house is better than your neighbors, that's all sowing to the flesh. That is all concern with the outward form.

Now, there's nothing wrong about harmonious and beautiful and gracious outward living when it comes as an added thing to one's spiritual unfoldment. But, when one neglects their spiritual life for a complete pursuit of the pleasures of sense, the profits of sense, the beauties of sense, then of course, one is just reaping corruption for themselves because they are then living as a branch that withereth, as a branch that is cut off and withereth. Do you see that?

But when you commence to tabernacle with this I in here; when you begin to close your eyes every day and say, "Come on I, let's you and I get acquainted. Who art thou? What art thou? Who is I? What is I? I, reveal thyself," and you commence to tabernacle with your own inner being, in the end you will learn that that's God! That I which you thought was man or woman is God—God appearing as individual man or woman; in other words, God the Father, appearing as God the son or God the daughter. Do you see that? You'll have an entirely different estimate of yourself than you did when you thought of yourself as corrupt mortal man or as a worm in the dust, or something of that kind. You will know you are not that at all! You can turn yourself into that by catering to a life of fleshliness, but you can enjoy all the good flesh of the world as long as it is an outer unfoldment of an inner grace.

Now, there you have the two words "flesh." God, the Word made flesh, made evident, made individual—it's in *Consciousness Unfolding*—and the highest unfoldment comes when you know that and come into the realization that God is unfolding day by day as your individual consciousness. God is your individual consciousness; you have none of your own. You are not a separate entity of your own. There is no "you," in other words. There is only God unfolding, disclosing, revealing *Itself* as your individual consciousness. And when you know that, you can say, "God the Father and God the Son are one in the same." Do you see that? Then you have to begin to live it and don't contradict it. And the way you will contradict it is by forgetting that and then worrying about the flesh as if it were something separate and apart from God unfolding.

That is why in this work we have a very clear understanding of body. We do not hate the

body, and we do not fear the body, and we don't think the body is ugly, and we don't think the body is to be put off. Why? "Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the living God?" Then what is so terrible about it? I'll tell you what's terrible about it—the *concept* of it that we entertain!

We have an entirely erroneous *concept* of our bodies, and that's why this body is continuously giving us either pain or pleasure, and it should be doing neither. This body has no more right to be giving us pleasure than it has right to be giving us pain. It should be an instrument of which we are so much unaware, that we just live as if we were looking out from our eyes.

This body should be to us like the body of our automobile—you jump into it, you get where you want to go, and you jump out. But you don't look around and start to admire its shine or to be too concerned if it has mud on it, because to you, it is an instrument of transportation. Then in your time, you keep it as clean as you can and give it all the lubrication, and so forth and so on.

So with us! Our bodies must really be instruments, and we should use them to get from here to there. We should use them to eat, to think, to read—for whatever purpose we need them. And then, in the proper time, we should keep them as clean as we possibly can and forget them. Then we are not living unto the flesh. We are not catering to the flesh. We are *using* this flesh as an *instrument* for our experience on Earth.

Now when we look on our bodies in that way, our bodies can be mighty handy instruments, mighty handy vehicles for getting around, and they will give us far less pain and far less pleasure, for the simple reason that we won't be living in the body; we will be living up here in I, in our soul. We'll be looking out here and not feeling around with this.

Now in the fleshly sense of life, man believes that this body is himself, and he looks in the mirror and he says, "I am thin," or "I am stout," or "I am young," or "I am old." But you see, the mirror can't testify to that. What he should be talking about is not I, but his body: "My *body* looks like this, or my *body* looks like that." He should not be referring to it as "I." But in the human sense, he does. He thinks that this body is I, and he's continuously catering to it.

Whereas, after you have practiced for a while this little exercise:

I. I-Joel. Why yes, I am up here looking out of my eyes. I am back here, invisible to the world. Nobody knows me. Nobody has ever seen me. All that's ever been known or seen of me is my form, but I am way back here out of sight, and even if this form should be taken from me, I will continue to function. I will continue to be, and I will continue to have outlined form.

And as you practice that, your body will fade and fade and fade, until one day you will have to touch it to find out if it's there.

I can tell you this, that in the years when I was an active practitioner doing nothing else but healing work, I was seeing patients on average of every ten to fifteen minutes during the day. And I would begin somewhere between seven and eight in the morning and I—I tell you this very honestly—that by four o'clock in the afternoon, I didn't have a body. There was just me looking out of these eyes. The body had completely gone. I was so completely living inside there with I, God, the Spirit of God made manifest, that along by three or four in the afternoon, there just wasn't even a feel of a body around.

And so it was that eventually I came to a place in my own life, which still exists, where, as a general rule, the only part of me that I'm aware of is my eyes. There's something strange about it that I still don't understand, but I know that I have eyes, and I keep looking out of them all the time. The rest of this body, most of the time, is out of thought, out of consciousness. And that's why very, very seldom has it ever been discordant since I'm in this life. But once in a while, it does happen that discords appear, but not very often, and for the reason that the body is very much out of thought. Up here, yes, but for the rest, it just seems to follow me around wherever I go, or maybe as I push it around.

Now those are the two ideas of flesh with all of the Biblical references that you will find in that tape. And so it is that, when you're dealing with your body, or thoughts of your body, please remember this: You're not really thinking of your body at all, because your body is spiritual. What you're dealing with is your *concept* of body, and so you don't want to change your body, you want to change your *concept* of body. Don't change your body; change your *concept* of body, and you'll find that the body itself will conform to your concept. The higher *concept* of body you have, the higher form of body.

¹ *This excerpt is from Recording 651B: 1956 Johannesburg Class, "Galatians – Chapter III." It is posted with kind permission from the Estate of Joel Goldsmith, which holds the copy protection on the recorded classes and the copyright on the transcripts. The full transcript*

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