

## Doctrine of Being “In the Flesh”

1. The phrase “*in the flesh*” has a physical and a spiritual meaning.
2. The phrase “*in the flesh*” can refer to the literal human body and matters associated with it.
  - Circumcision. *Genesis 17:24 And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.*
  - Birth. *Romans 2:28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*
  - Marriage. *1 Corinthians 7:28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.*
  - Physical suffering. *2 Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*
  - Life. *Galatians 2:20 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.*
  - Pride. *Galatians 6:12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.*
  - Daily existence. *Philippians 1:22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. 23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.*
  - Personal recognition. *Colossians 2:1 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;*
  - Death. *1 Peter 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;*
3. The phrase “*in the flesh*” can also speak of a spiritual truth referring to the natural sinful state of the soul prior to conversion.

- *Romans 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*
  - *Romans 8:3 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. When the phrase “*in the flesh*” is used in a spiritual sense it sets forth-specific doctrinal truth as opposed to a historical narrative of a person or an event.
- Spiritual truth. Those who are in the flesh or those who are living a life apart from Christ cannot please God. *Romans 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*
  - Spiritual truth. The person who has been born again is no longer associated with or identified with all that makes up the fleshly nature of the unbeliever. *Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*
  - Spiritual truth. The Christian who walks in the flesh as a human finds a spiritual warfare that transcends fleshly humanity. *2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [fleshly], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*
  - Spiritual truth. The natural man or the fleshly man is outside the covenant of grace. *Ephesians 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands.*
  - Spiritual truth. Ultimate confidence should never be put *in the flesh* or man. *Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. 4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:*
  - Spiritual truth. The Doctrine of the Incarnation is a basic tenet of the Christian faith. *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.*
  - Spiritual truth. A special love can be and should be expressed toward those who are in the Lord and in the flesh. *Philemon 16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?*

- Spiritual truth. Christ was put to death in the flesh as an atoning sacrifice for sin. No other death would have satisfied divine justice. *1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:*
- Spiritual truth. Because Christ has suffered and died in the flesh the believer is to embrace His mindset and cease from sinning. *1 Peter 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;*
- Spiritual truth. The flesh is not to be used for living out various lust patterns. *1 Peter 4:2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.*
- Spiritual truth. In every age the gospel has been preached so that individuals might live in the spirit like God who is spirit. *1 Peter 4:6 For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*
- Spiritual truth. It is heresy or extreme doctrinal error to deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh as the Gnostics did in the first century. A person of this persuasion is a deceiver and an antichrist. *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: 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. ... 7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*