

Can God Die?

Tim Conway | *illbehonest.com*

Question: So this one's from Alex. "Hello, Pastor Tim. Thank you for the Pastor Tim series. I have found it to be a great resource for me. I was witnessing to a Muslim man in Africa last summer who asked a very difficult question." So this guy's thinking this question from this Muslim in Africa is a very difficult question. Now, I'll let you guys size up the difficulty of it. "Jesus is both God and man. So when He died, did His divine nature die?" You see the question. When He died, did His divine nature die? "If so, then did God really die? But, if only His human nature died, what's the big deal about Him dying as a man? How would you answer this question?"

Discussion: And here's what it seems like happened. You have a Christian. Here's a Muslim. And he's saying, look, if Jesus Christ has two natures - both God and man - but He only died as a man, but as God, He didn't die, the Muslim is posing the question: what's the big deal? In other words, what he seems like he's saying is, He didn't really die. It's not legit. And I would say that the problem that this man is falling into as to why it's so difficult is I'm just surmising here - it was so difficult because he was trying to figure out how to answer the man perhaps without Scripture. Like, how can I establish that Him dying as a man really is significant when He's God and as God He didn't die? And so, it's really difficult because he's thinking, I don't know how to answer that.

But the first thing I would say is, look, is He God? Yes. The Word was with God and the Word was God. My Lord and my God. Is He man? The Word became flesh. We know He's God and man. Just thinking about the attributes of God. Can God die? In fact, I think one of the things that we need to think about is what is death? See, I think sometimes there's even a wrong concept about what death is, and so we start thinking all wrong even at that level. But what is death?

(from the room): The wages for sin.

Tim: That's the cause of it, but what is it actually.

(from the room): Separation of soul and body. (unintelligible)

Tim: But what is life? What was somebody just saying?

(from the room): Separation from God's favor and grace.

Tim: What is life? What is eternal life? To know God. The idea of death - you think of the second death - it's outer darkness. The idea of death is separation. (incomplete thought) And see, the thing is, when you think about eternal life, eternal life is about knowing God. And so the idea of God failing to know God; the idea of God being separated from God; the idea of God

being cast away from God - you see, how could God die? That's the point I'm making. We could very easily say, think about the attributes of God. It's not possible for God to die. But more than that, if you think about what death is, you just recognize, God can't be separated from Himself. He is life. He is life. How can He fail to be what He is?

(from the room): The grave could not contain Him.

Tim: But the thing is, what you don't ever want to let anybody do is disarm you of Scripture. And it doesn't matter if they're Muslim; it doesn't matter if they're JW's; it doesn't matter who they are. Look, just because a Jehovah's Witness says that John 1:1 is not in their Bible the way it is in yours, doesn't mean you don't continue to quote it to them. Just because a Muslim says, if Jesus Christ was both God and man and He didn't die as God, His death as man is basically meaningless. You know what that is? Do you know what that is? He's just making that up. That's just his own thoughts. Have you ever read what it says in Isaiah 55? "Let the wicked forsake his way..." and what? "...the unrighteous man his thoughts." You know what? We shouldn't doubt that unrighteous men like Muslims have wicked thoughts. They need to forsake those. They need to repent of those. And don't lay down your Bibles when you come face to face with a Muslim. Because here's the thing, does Scripture say that Jesus is both God and man? Yes, it does. Can God die? No, God cannot die. God is life. But can Jesus the man die? Scripture repeatedly says Christ died. But does it say that because God can't die and He's God - man can die and He did die. Does it therefore relegate His death to meaninglessness? It never does! That's just that guy's thought. Just because somebody says it, doesn't make it true. And it doesn't make it an impossible question for me to answer.

The reality is what? The reality is His death wasn't meaningless. Now look, that connection between God and man - there's mystery. And you know what? You don't need to be afraid to tell somebody of a false religion. You know, sometimes we feel like we have to have an answer for everything. But there can be times when we say it's a mystery. There's mystery in this. Christ died, but nowhere does the Bible say that because He didn't die as God, that somehow that is not a big deal.

I mean, what does Scripture say? Does Scripture make His death out to be a big deal? I mean, you think about Jesus Himself. He's imagining that cup. You see Him in the garden. This is the cup. This is the death. Brethren, what's the death? My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? That's where the death is. That's the separation. Where have You gone? I've lost my God. I've lost His smile. I've lost His light. I've lost His goodness. I've lost His mercy. I'm separated from it. He was made sin. And does He just look at it and say, oh, I'm God and man, so this really - it's nothing. I can just laugh at it. He's sweating as it were great drops of blood and He's pleading with His Father: Please, take this cup away from Me. Have you ever read what it says in Luke 12? It says even as He was seeing it coming, He says I have a baptism to be baptized with. And that approach - you know, He walked His life that way, in light of that approaching death, and He said I'm in distress until it's accomplished. It was not a light matter. Do you know what Scripture says? "God so loved..." Do you want to see an expression of love? That's not a

small thing. He so loved that He gave His Son. And when it says He spared not His own Son, that means He gave Him up to death.

Have you ever read Isaiah 53? Of course, you have. You think that's a light matter? Do you think you just let a Muslim just run roughshod over you? Like, it doesn't matter, He's God so His death as a man doesn't matter. What do you mean it doesn't matter? He was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. And it said He was crushed for our iniquities. You better believe it was a huge deal. It's there that sin was paid for. And it was at a price - a ransom price, that nothing else could pay to purchase us from our sins. No price so great. And you start to think about the glory of God, and the infinity of hell. Listen, that cross, we can rightly measure what our sins are - the heinousness of it. The beauty is that He wasn't just a man, so that that death would not be just sufficient for a one-to-one trade. How is it that His death, the death of one man, can pay for a number that is like the stars out in that night sky? It's because there was value beyond just a man.

Listen, there is mystery here, but we needed a man to die. Why? Because He came under the law - a law given to man. He came to satisfy a law for man. And He came to satisfy the wages of sin; the wage of breaking that law. He became a curse for us. He had to be a man. He had to bear the curse of the law that was given to man. He had to die the death that man had to die. And there had to be somehow in it the value to pay for an untold number of people. How does that happen? It happens when God and man are to be found in the same individual.