

July 24th 2016 Death or Life

[Gen 12:1-3 NKJV] 1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

God chose a specific man 2,000 years after Adam to make a nation out of and to bless the families of the earth through. Abram responded to God's voice, separated himself from the land of His birth and started his journey to the land which God would show him. God promised him that he would give him the land and make his descendants as numerous as the dust of the earth. But there was one problem in Abram's eyes. How could this happen if he is childless?

[Gen 15:1-7 NKJV] 1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I [am] your shield, your exceedingly great reward." 2 But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house [is] Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" 4 And behold, the word of the LORD [came] to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. 7 Then He said to him, "I [am] the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

Abram believed what the Lord had told him and it was accounted to him for righteousness. As time progressed he got restless and still no son and without a son the inheritance that the Lord has promised would not be realized.

[Gen 16:2-4 NKJV] 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing [children]. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. 3 Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her

husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. 4 So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.

Abram acted apart from that which God had promised him. He was 86 when Hagar bore Ishmael (Gen 16:16). Then the Lord was silent for 13 years until [Gen 17:1-6 NKJV] 1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I [am] Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. 2 "And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." 3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. 5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 "I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you."

God then makes a covenant with Abraham and his descendants and the sign of that covenant was to be circumcision. He changes Sari's name to Sarah and says she will be a mother of nations, kings of people will come from her.

But there was still one HUGE question. Abraham knew for this to happen he MUST have a child and the child he looked to was Ishmael, but this was not God's plan.

[Gen 17:17-19 NKJV] 17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall [a child] be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear [a child]?" 18 And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!" 19 Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, [and] with his descendants after him.

Shortly after this Sarah bore Abraham a Son and he named him Isaac.

Now Abraham had two sons, a son of the bondwomen (Ishmael) born according to the flesh and a Son of the Freewomen (Isaac) born through promise. All of which has the inheritance that God was giving to Abraham and his descendants in view.

[Gal 4:22-31 NKJV] 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he [who was] of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar-- 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children-- 26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, [You] who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband." 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac [was], are children of promise. 29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him [who was born] according to the Spirit, even so [it is] now. 30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

Again we see the first son being born according to the flesh as Abraham acted apart from faith in that which God had told him, the son of the bondwoman. The second son was born by faith by the freewoman through promise. We see God rejecting the first birth and accepting the second. Through this we see many great spiritual truths but for the purpose of today we are going to focus on just a few.

Firstly, the son of the bondwomen can only be cast out once the Son of Promise is born. We'll get back to this in a minute.

Secondly, there has to be a separation between the two for the inheritance to be realized.

Thirdly, the first is always set aside and the second is established.

Why is all this important? When we look at our spiritual condition, our sin nature verses our spirit man, we must look at it through the Lens of the Scriptures to determine what the proper response is that we are to have toward it. Our response should always be the same, we are to act by faith in what God has said. This is not possible if we don't know what the Word of God is saying regarding this. Remember,

[Rom 10:17 NKJV] 17 So then faith [comes] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

[Heb 11:6 NKJV] 6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [Him], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and [that] He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

So to our first point, what do the son of the bondwoman and the Son of Promise picture for us? Ishmael was born first and apart from faith. In our Galatian passage it says “But he [who was] of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh”. Ishmael is representative of our first birth our birth in the flesh, our natural birth under the dominion of the god of this age.

[Eph 2:1-3 NKJV] 1 And you [He made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

The Son of Promise was born second and was born out of faith in what the Lord had told Abraham. This birth pictures our second birth, our birth from above, our spiritual birth to a living hope. This birth is a result of Christ’s finished work on the cross. Let’s read on further in our Ephesians passage.

[Eph 2:4-10 NKJV] 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in the heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in [His] kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Because of Christ’s death and resurrection, we are no longer slaves to sin, no longer separate from Christ, no longer excluded from the common wealth of Israel, no longer strangers to the covenants of Promise. Let’s continue in

Ephesians [Eph 2:11-13 NKJV] 11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can put to death the flesh and walk in the Spirit. To put it another way, we now through Christ, are able to and must cast out the son of the bondwoman, that born of the flesh. We must do this because the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. This is an irrevocable truth, so that from God's perspective the son of the bondwoman does not exist in relation to the Promises given. Gen 22:2 "The He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac."

But remember the son of the bondwoman could not be cast out until the Son of Promise was born. It's the same for us. We could not have put to death the flesh until after our second birth, until we were born from above, until the Son of Promise was on the scene so to speak.

[Jhn 3:3-7 NKJV] 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

There will always be a battle inside us between our first birth (flesh) and our second birth (spirit).

Remember what our Gal 4 passage said, "Gal 4:28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac [was], are children of promise. 29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him [who was born] according to the Spirit, even so [it is] now. 30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with

the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free."

The Lord continues in the next chapter of Galatians [Gal 5:1, 6-7, 13, 16-26 NKJV] 1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. ... 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. 7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? ... 13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not [use] liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ... 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told [you] in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those [who are] Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

This battle between the flesh and the spirit continues to wage war in our own members. There must be work that each one of us is to do in our own lives to separate the flesh from the spirit. We must "crucify the flesh" as this passage says. Why must there be a separation between the two? We just saw in Gal 4 that "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." They had to be separated as nothing in the flesh can please God. It is only that done in faith which can please him.

[Rom 8:5-9 NKJV] 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those [who live] according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded [is] death, but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who

are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Does living a life according to the flesh, being carnally minded, really lead to death? Can a Christian, who has appropriated the blood of the Passover lamb, who has been made alive really be carnally minded? What does Death here mean? Sounds like something we heard in the garden doesn't it?

[Gen 3:2-4 NKJV] 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 "but of the fruit of the tree which [is] in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

This is not a physical death that we see in Romans or Genesis, it's a spiritual death. A separation from God thereby not fulfilling our created purpose, to rule and reign with Christ. This is not a death in the sense that the Christian is no longer a child of God. In the foundational type we have studied with Abraham, Ishmael is STILL Abraham's son but in relation to the inheritance Ishmael is not seen. Works done in the flesh will always lead to death, death with regards to our inheritance in the age to come (the millennial Kingdom). Works done in the spirit will always lead to life, life in the age to come.

[Mat 16:24-27 NKJV] 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

The Romans passage continues on and says "[Rom 8:10-13, 16-18 NKJV] 10 And if Christ [is] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin, but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ... 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him], that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of

this present time are not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

What sufferings are the scriptures talking about here? Well, within the context they are putting to death the deeds of the body, dying to our flesh.

We see this separation many times in scripture always for the purpose of producing fruit. We see it back in Genesis 1 when God separates light/darkness, waters from the waters, dryland from the water so that the Land will produce fruit. Separation is always for the purpose of producing fruit so that the inheritance might be realized. We saw it when God separated the Children of Israel from Egypt and right after that they were instructed to remove all leaven from their houses. Leaven picturing Sin. [Exo 12:15 NKJV] 15 'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

Just like Israel we were delivered from slavery to sin by a sovereign act of God through His Son, our Passover Lamb so that now we have the choice to do what Israel was told to do, We MUST remove all the leaven out of our own house, separate ourselves from sin. [1Co 5:7 NKJV] 7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

We are called to separate ourselves from the conduct of our former life. We must cast out our flesh/sin nature and walk in the spirit. Ro 12:1 ¶ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

And in doing so we will receive an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance that is not heaven, but is reserved in heaven. 1Pe 1:3 ¶ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last

time.....9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

2Pe 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 ¶ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, how does this separation actually happen? Only through the understanding of the Word of God and our willingness to humbly submit ourselves to it daily.

[2Ti 3:16-17 NKJV] 16 All Scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

[Jas 1:19-22 NKJV] 19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

It is only through a sovereign act of God, the death of our Passover lamb, that we are made alive spiritually. It is only because of this sovereign act that the Holy Spirit dwells within us, leading and guiding us into all truth. It is only through the Holy Spirit that we can finally look through the Lens of the scriptures and realize that our sin nature profits nothing. We realize through the Lens of the Scriptures that there is NOTHING good that comes from it. We realize through the Lens of the scriptures what we must change in our own lives to separate ourselves from the World, that which is born of the Flesh. We

can only realize through the Lens of the Scriptures what are the Promises given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that we, the one new man, have become heirs by faith, through Christ.

So this question must be asked. Can a Christian who does not spend any time studying God's Word walk by the Spirit and please God? The answer is No.

[Rom 10:17 NKJV] 17 So then faith [comes] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

[Heb 11:6 NKJV] 6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [Him], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and [that] He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

This journey of casting out that born of the flesh is an individual journey that each of us must go on. We must NOT compare our-self to others around us. God deals with us on an individual basis through His Word. The timing, intensity, struggles might be different for each of us but the process is always the same. It must be from Faith to Faith and CANNOT be done apart from the Word of God, because faith only comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. We must Study the Word of God and act upon it by Faith, believing God will do what He says He will do in response to our faithful obedience. God WILL always do what he says He WILL do. Whether it is blessings for obedience or curses for disobedience. We saw that pretty clearly lived out with Israel didn't we?

Let's go back to Galatians one more time.

[Gal 6:7-10 NKJV] 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Let's be encouraged that this labor that we are engaged in each and every day in putting down our flesh is not in vain.

[1Co 15:58 NKJV] 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

As I close this morning let's remember what we saw in our foundational type with Ishmael, being born first according to the flesh, being set aside for Isaac who was born second out of Promise. We see this in other places in scripture with Rebekah making the choice to separate herself from the land of her birth all in view of a marriage relationship with Isaac (a type of Christ). With Ruth making a choice separating from the place of her birth to follow Naomi (a picture of the scriptures) with a wedding and redemption of an inheritance in view through Boaz (a type of Christ). It's a choice that each of us must make and it always ends in a marriage relationship with the inheritance in view.

[Rev 19:6-9 NKJV] 6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunders, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed [are] those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

Let's Pray...