

Cornerstone Christian Fellowship  
Sunday, May 19, 2013

Life, Death, and Resurrection to Life Again — Part One of Three

**Genesis 1:26** Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

**Genesis 2:7** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

**Genesis 2:16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; **17** but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.”

**Genesis 2:18** Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.”... ..**21** So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. **22** And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

**Genesis 3:6** When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

**Genesis 3:9** Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” **10** And he said, “I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.” **11** And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”

The title of this series of messages is Life, Death and Resurrection to Life Again. I have been impressed recently in my study about how important it is to understand the way God sees these topics — life and death and resurrection. Having recently put together a study on the Full Scope of Salvation (and through that study seeing how God’s Word presents life and death), I was left wondering if I had a complete understanding of *resurrection*. One of my favorite passages is **Job 19:25** “**And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. 26 Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; 27 Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes shall see and not another...**” Of course this speaks of the bodily resurrection. But I began to think of the importance God puts on our being crucified with Christ, buried with Him and raised to walk in the power of His resurrection. So I wanted to study these things more thoroughly.

I realized that in order for there to be a resurrection, there would have to have been a death and burial; and in order for there to have been a death and burial, there would have to have been life at one point in time previous to death. Then, after death and burial, resurrection would bring about life again. Here is what it would look like:

LIFE

RESURRECTION

DEATH

And in seeing this, I wondered if this happened over and over again? Or is it a one time event? After some thought on this, I decided it is both — depending upon how you look at it. If you look at it in the most simple of ways — we are alive, we die, and we are resurrected to stand before the Lord — then it is a one time event. But in perhaps more of a complex way to look at it, this cycle happens over and over again — we die daily (i.e., to our old nature), and, by the power of Christ’s resurrection, we *can* walk in newness of life daily. In this way, you could see the cycle being repeated over and over again.

From a cursory glance of these three topics — life, death and resurrection — we might see that our *initial* thoughts related to any of the three *could* fall short of the way they each is presented in Scripture, short of its Scriptural scope. For example, our initial thought of *life* might be what we see around us here and now. We are all “alive” here today — we breathe; we move around; we speak; we interact. And our *initial* thought of *death* might be that we stop breathing; stop moving around; stop speaking and interacting. But from a Scriptural standpoint, there is more to life and death than what our initial perception of both might be. The same is true for the concept of resurrection. Our understanding may fall short of the *complete* way resurrection is presented in Scripture.

The best way to know that we have a *correct* and/or a *complete* understanding of any of these topics is to go back to see where each is initially presented in Scripture and study from there. *Life*, with respect to mankind, is mentioned at the beginning when God formed the man from the dust of the earth and breathed His breath into the man! As we will see, life, as it is presented at the beginning of God’s Word, has to do with being created in God’s image, and with fulfilling the purpose for man’s creation. And *death*, as it is presented at the beginning of God’s Word, would have to be understood as *being separated from that life*. So to *correctly* and *completely* understand death, we would have to correctly and completely understand life, and to do that we would need to lay the foundation for both concepts from the information revealed at the beginning. Then we can come into a correct and complete understanding of *resurrection to life again*.

### How We Should View Life

We can get a glimpse of *life* at the beginning when God formed the man from the dust of the earth. **Genesis 2:7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and**

**breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.** *God breathed His breath (His Spirit) into the man, bringing him to life.* Along with God's Spirit being the means to life, we would also need to plug into this understanding of life the very purpose for which God created man in the first place, for without this understanding, the foundation of what we are studying concerning life would be incomplete. We know that Scripture specifically and clearly states God's purpose for creating man! The original created ruler over the earth — Lucifer — had, in an age past, rebelled against Sovereign God; and in this rebellion he forfeited his right to rule the earth on an ongoing basis, on into eternity future. Simply stated God created man to replace this incumbent ruler. In grasping and understanding these facts according to Scripture, we would need to remember a couple more things about *how* man was created if we are to understand *life* correctly and completely.

### **Life is Being Created in God's Image and Likeness for a Purpose**

As familiar we are with the verses in Genesis chapter one concerning God creating man, we will read it again here, so as not to miss how this fits into our understanding of life, as these details are paramount in our understanding. **Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."** Here we see *how* God made man — in His own image and likeness; as well as *why* God made man — to rule over the earth. These two components are what life is as we need to understand it. So to understand life correctly and completely, we need to understand what it means to be made in God's image. Surely God gives some details as to His Own image in His Word so that we would know. And He does just that. From Scripture, we know that God is

- A Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that He is
- Covered in light (glory) and clothed with regal garments of splendor and majesty.

**Psalm 104:1 ...Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with splendor and majesty, 2 Covering Thyself with light as with a cloak...** This very description of God states the self-evident fact that God is the Sovereign Ruler over all of creation.

Then we know that Adam and the woman, in having been created in God's image and likeness, were created

- Three parts — spirit, soul, and body; and that they were
- Covered in glory, while awaiting the reception of regal garments of splendor and majesty, which describe the very purpose for man's creation.

Let's make sure that we understand the three parts of our being:

1. Our spirit is the part of our being that can know God — it is our God-consciousness.
2. Our soul is the part of our being where we are self-conscious — this is the seat of our feelings, emotions, and desires.
3. Our body is the physical entity which houses both the spirit and the soul.

We also need to have a grasp concerning the glory which covered Adam and the woman. Without going into too much detail here (as we have covered this in FULL SCOPE OF SALVATION study), we know that Adam and the woman were covered in glory, yet awaited

the clothing of splendor and majesty from a description used of them in **Genesis 2:25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.** The Hebrew word for *naked* used here at the end of Genesis chapter two is a Hebrew word that can mean *a partial nakedness*. This would seem to be the case with Adam and the Woman. Having been made in God's image, they had a covering of glory (which was a facet of life at the beginning), but they awaited the reception of the regal garments. They would have to possess *both* (the covering of glory *and* the regal garments) in order to step into the position for which they were created. Their reception of the regal garments would follow their being obedient to the command God had given Adam just prior to the woman being taken from his body and fashioned — the command being a test to prove worthiness to rule in Satan's stead.

And so we see that to understand life, as it is initially presented in Scripture, we would have to see life affecting all three parts of man's being — his spirit, and his soul, and his body in the following ways:

- **For the spirit, *life* is having union with God's Spirit, as in Adam's creation. God breathed His own breath, His Spirit, into the form He had shaped from the dust of the earth and, at that moment, the man became a living being.**
- **For the soul, *life* is having only a knowledge of good, not a knowledge of evil, as in Adam's creation. God created Adam and the woman knowing only good.**
- **For the body, *life* is being covered with and sharing God's glory, while awaiting the reception of royal robes (garments of splendor and majesty), as in Adam's creation. God having created them in His own image and likeness for the purpose of ruling over the earth.**

All in all, *life* — with respect to man — would reflect God's image and likeness, as well as being in a position to fulfill the purpose for his creation.

### **How We Should View Death**

If we understand these things about life, then we can come to a more clear understanding of death. One thing that we must understand about death is that in no way, shape or form does death mean ceasing to exist! From Scripture's perspective, with respect to man, death should only be seen as a *separation from life*. And death would affect all three parts of man — his spirit, his soul and his body.

We can see the point of testing in Genesis chapter two, which sheds light death. **Genesis 2:15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."** The point of the test was to obediently adhere to God's command *not* to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as God did not want the man to know evil, only good. And here we see that disobedience — knowing evil (through experience) — would surely bring about his death.

So, if life in the spirit means to be in union with God, then

- **For the spirit, *death* means *separation* from God's Spirit, which resulted from Adam's sin.**

If life of the soul means only knowing good, then

- **For the soul, *death* means *separation* from possessing only the knowledge of good; *death* means also possessing a knowledge of evil through experience, resulting from Adam's sin.**

If life for the body (as initially seen in Scripture) means having the covering of glory in the image of God, while awaiting the reception of garments of splendor and majesty, then

- **For the body, *death* means *separation* from the image and likeness of God — a body devoid of the covering of glory, thereby not being able to receive the royal garments, thereby being separated from fulfilling his created purpose, resulting from Adam's sin.**

All in all, *death* — with respect to man — means that man is separated from God as well as being separated from his created purpose.

Once Adam and the woman sinned, they found themselves in an *utterly* naked state, suffering the loss of that glory the moment they sinned. We see it in **Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked...** A *different* Hebrew word for *naked* is used here in Gen. 3:7 than was used in 2:25. This word describes an *utter nakedness*. With no covering of glory, they could not receive the regal garments and could not rule. This loss of glory would have to be seen then as a facet of death, as initially presented in Scripture.

Let's think for a moment on the death of the body. As mentioned before, it's likely that our first thought of the death of the body would be when the body becomes lifeless and eventually turning to dust. This certainly is a facet of death which resulted from Adam's sin, the facet you and I would be most familiar with in our understanding of death. **Genesis 3:17 Then to Adam He said, "... .. 19 By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.**" And actually, death in this respect, seeing it from God's perspective, is a severe mercy, which we will discuss shortly. But for now we are looking at how *life* and *death* are *initially* presented in Scripture. And when God gave the command to Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He said that "*in the day* that you eat from that tree, you will surely die!"

Adam experienced death (separation) in all three parts of his being at that very moment he ate, although his physical body didn't separate from his spirit and soul until 930 years later. So working this all through, we would have to understand that the *initial death* that Adam experienced related to his body on the very day that he partook of the fruit was *the separation from (the loss of) the covering of glory* that had been his in having been created in the image and likeness of God. And losing the covering of glory, also made him lose the right to the reception of garments of

splendor and majesty, putting him in a place wherein he was not be able to fulfill his created purpose. This is death as it is initially presented in Scripture.

### **How Does All of This Affect Us?**

With these things in mind, let's look at life and death with respect you and me! As we do this, we'll need to remember a natural law that God enforced at the beginning. We can read about it here: **Genesis 1:11 Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth"; and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good.... ...21 And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good.** I like to refer to this natural law as the "After-its-kind Law". Once God brought the various life forms forth, the procreation of these various life forms always followed the same pattern — it was *after their kind*.

The exact same thing is true for all of mankind. Adam and the woman were originally created in God's image and likeness, but because of their partaking of the forbidden tree, they became *unlike* God's image. They were still three-part beings, but all three parts were now *separated* from God **and** from the purpose for His creating them — their spirit was separated from God's Spirit, their soul had a propensity toward evil, and their body was devoid of glory. And as a result of his sin, all of their offspring would be born in Adam's image and likeness — separated from God's Spirit, having a propensity towards evil, and devoid of glory. We see this very succinctly stated in **Genesis 5:1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created. 3 When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image...** And to see that this bears true in the NT as well, we can read this in **Ephesians 2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...** Then related to this, we can also see the same thing is true in **I Corinthians 15:21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, in Christ all shall be made alive.**

So you and I have been born after Adam's kind... *In Adam all die*. We are born dead in all three aspects of our being — spirit, soul and body. At birth we all possess a spirit, and soul, and body, just as Adam still possessed all three after he sinned. But all three parts are born dead, i.e., separated from the life we were to experience. So here we are in this cycle of life, death and resurrection to life again...we lost our life in Adam, and as such, we were born dead! *In Adam all die*

So what hope is there for us? What hope do we have for the resurrection to life again? The hope is found in the last passage that we just read: *For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead, for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.* In this passage we see life and death and resurrection to life again, don't we?

Jesus spoke of this resurrection to Martha after her brother, Lazarus, had died, and just prior to Jesus raising him from the dead: **John 11:25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”** This passage has all the components of the topic of these three messages — life, death, and resurrection to life again, but this passage adds the necessary component of faith, with Jesus personalizing this for the Martha, “Do you believe this?”

### **Our Hope — Salvation in its Full Scope**

Salvation — when understood in its full scope (and *only* when seen in its full scope) — brings man back to being in God’s image and likeness, back to the position wherein he can fulfill his created purpose, back to the life Adam and the woman had prior to their sin and death. Personal faith in God’s provisions for life is what salvation is all about.

The *initial* step in salvation has to do with our spirit, *since God is Spirit and since life begins with His breath* (as we have already seen)! Faith in the death and shed blood of Jesus is what brings us back into *spiritual* life. So let’s look to see how this works.

#### **Man’s Spirit**

Man’s *spirit* is where relationship with God begins. As we have seen, the spirit is where union with God takes place. Again, each of us is born with a spirit which is separated from God. Each of us still possess a spirit, but we are born *separated* from God, and in that respect our human spirit is seen as dead in Eph. 2:1. Initially, when God breathed His breath into Adam (which was when Adam became a living being), God imparted His Spirit into him. Therefore, at that moment the man was brought to life having been brought into *union with God*. This idea of spiritual union with God can be seen more clearly in John chapter four where Jesus is speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well. **John 4:24 “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”** It is easy to see then that union with God emanates from our spirit.

Therefore, due to Adam’s sin, all of mankind (all of Adam’s offspring) is born in Adam’s image, after his kind i.e., dead spiritually, i.e., separated from God (cf. Gen. 5:1-3). If an individual’s spirit is not redeemed *through faith* in the Provision that God has given — the death and shed blood of Jesus — then that individual remains *eternally* separated from God. But, through faith in Jesus’ death and shed blood, an individual can come into eternal, spiritual union with God because of the Provision He has given. This is the facet of salvation that has to do with our spiritual birth, and is eternally secure, being based upon the death of Jesus on the cross, when He died for your sin and mine. It only takes faith to receive this facet of salvation and is not based on any work that you and I can do, only on God’s work. **Ephesians 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)... ...8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.** God breathes His Spirit into a person who has faith.

There is something important to note here. It is *only through death and shed blood* that we can receive spiritual life. This was true at the beginning when God slew the animal(s) in the Garden, bringing about its death through its shed blood; it was also true the night of the Passover in Egypt when a paschal lamb was killed in every Israelite household bringing about its death through the shedding of its blood; as well as it was true in the death and shed blood of Jesus 2,000 years ago when Jesus gave His own life on the cross. Nothing beyond the death and shed blood of God's Provision is necessary to procure one's spiritual life — only the death and shed blood of an innocent, perfect, spotless lamb.

Therein is something else to be noted — *spiritual birth is only the beginning of the process* in bringing Adam's offspring back to the life that Adam and the woman possessed in the Garden prior to their sin; spiritual birth is the *first* step. Within the full scope of salvation, the dead soul (which is separated from only knowing good) and the dead body (which is separated from the glory) must also be dealt with if man is to step into his created purpose. This process *follows* spiritual birth, as we see it laid out at the very beginning of God's Word.

Adam and the woman had *heard* and *believed* what God had said to Satan in promising a Redeemer through the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15; and *based upon their faith in what God said about providing a Redeemer*, Adam changed the woman's name from *woman* — “she was taken out of man” to Eve — “the mother of all the living.” As a result of their faith, God slew the innocent animal in the Garden, in order to clothe the man and the women with the skins of the animal. This was God acting on their behalf to bring them back into spiritual union with Him, based upon their faith concerning His Word about the Redeemer. God had to be the One to do this initial work, as they were dead spiritually and unable to do anything in the spiritual realm.

### **Now the Process Begins**

Even with this spiritual union reestablished through the work of God's Hand, Adam and Eve were still not in possession of the life which they possessed prior to their sin and death. Although their spirits had been redeemed through faith in God's provision, they still possessed corrupted souls — they had the knowledge of evil, and their bodies were still devoid of glory, which made it impossible for them to don the regal garments and step into their created position. The process had only begun with their spiritual re-birth. **Genesis 3:20 Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. 21 And the LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.** (This is the first step in the process, which now begins.) **22 Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”-- 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life.**

Even though God had done the work necessary to bring them back into *spiritual* union with Him based upon their faith, Adam and Eve still possessed a corrupted soul (the man-conscious part of their being had become perverted) and a body devoid of the covering of

glory. So God took an action that would prevent them from living “forever (Lit., *for a long period of time*)” in *that* state — in the state of possessing a redeemed spirit, housed along side an unredeemed soul, both within a body devoid of glory.

Certainly God’s ongoing actions revealed that His plan for redemption was multi-faceted — a plan that would go beyond simply bringing man back into spiritual union with Him. More had to be done if the man and woman were to be brought back to their pre-fallen state — back to the place of knowing only good and being glorified and able to rule in Satan’s stead.

Herein is why physical death (in the way you and I would understand physical death with the body returning to dust) is a *severe mercy* from God’s perspective. It is *severe* because this death painfully separates us from our loved ones, but it is a *mercy* because through this death, we do not have to keep living on and on and on in the state where we possess a redeemed spirit, along side an unredeemed soul, both being housed within a body devoid of glory. It is a mercy that we do not have to keep struggling as we do against our three enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil. Can you imagine living on and on and on and on in these bodies of flesh?

If God had allowed Adam to stretch out his hand and eat from the tree of life, Adam would still be living today, some 6,000 years later, with a redeemed spirit, housed along side an unredeemed soul within a body devoid of glory. But mercifully, we hear God telling Adam that his body will return to dust, but only for the purpose of resurrection! (Remember there can be no resurrection if there has not been a death and burial.) *Now* we can see the need for resurrection! Without resurrection, we could never get back to *life again*, i.e., the life that man once possessed, the life *that is really life*. It is only through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead that allows *life again*! We lost our life in Adam (in Adam all die), and we are born dead. But through the resurrection of Jesus (in Christ, all shall be made alive), we can come to life again! That is our hope! That can be our glory! But we’ll have to wait until next week to see how it all fits together, Lord willing. If He *is* willing, then we will continue in Life, Death and Resurrection to Life Again. But for today, I leave you with the charge that Paul gave to Timothy:

**I Timothy 6:13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which He will bring about at the proper time--He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords; 16 who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.**

**17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.**