

Cornerstone Christian Fellowship  
Sunday, May 26, 2013

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

**Isaiah 46:9 “Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’.”**

We are in the midst of a three-part series entitled LIFE, DEATH AND RESURRECTION TO LIFE AGAIN. In the first part of this series we understood the need to see how God presented *life* and *death* at the beginning of His Word, so that we could come to a clearer and more complete understanding of the way *resurrection* is presented in Scripture. We realized that since man *was created in God’s image and likeness for the purpose of ruling over the earth* (as it is clearly stated in Genesis chapter one), then man would have to be created a triune being (like God), and would have to be covered in glory and eventually clothed in splendor and majesty (like God).

Man was created with a spirit and a soul and a body; and in God’s original creation of man, we saw that:

- **For the spirit, *life* was having union with God’s Spirit, as in Adam’s creation. And at the moment that God breathed His own breath, His Spirit, into the form He had shaped from the dust of the earth, the man became a living being.**
- **For the soul, *life* was 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* was 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 wherein he could fulfill the purpose for his creation.

From last week, we realized that before man could step into his created purpose, he was tested for worthiness. For Adam, obedience to the command not to eat from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* was the test of obedience; and disobedience to this command would bring about sure death. We understood that when it comes to mankind, death never means ceasing to exist, it only ever means some form of separation. So when the present ruler over the earth, Satan, deceived the woman into eating of the

forbidden fruit, and she when gave to her husband who was with her and he ate also, they were separated from God — they died. **Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death...** We saw that death affected the Man and the Woman in all three parts of their being:

- **For the spirit, *death is separation from God's Spirit, resulting from Adam's sin.***
- **For the soul, *death is separation from possessing only the knowledge of good, resulting from Adam's sin, bringing about the knowledge of evil through experience.***
- **For the body, *death is separation from the image and likeness of God, resulting from Adam's sin — a separation from sharing in God's glory, thereby not being able to receive the royal garments.***

All in all, *death*, with respect to man (as it is initially presented in Scripture), means *that man is separated from God and from the very purpose for which God had created him.*

There is something about sin that we must *cognitively* understand. Man cannot take care of/do away with his own sin. Only God can do this work! This was true of the sin of Adam; this is also true of sin imputed to all mankind through Adam (we'll remember the "after-its-kind principle we looked at last week); this was true of the sins you and I committed prior to our coming to Christ, and is also true of the sins we have committed/will yet commit subsequent to coming to Christ. God is the only One Who can do away with sin.

And in cognitively understanding this about sin, we also need to *cognitively* understand that God is the only One Who can do away with the *result of sin* — which is *death*. If God had not stepped into the Garden, calling out to the man (quite literally asking him for a confession), and if He had not slain the animal (bringing about its death through its shed blood), covering the man and woman's nakedness, then mankind would have remained eternally dead — eternally separated from God *and* from the purpose for which they had been created. But, as we read in our opening passage today, that scenario would be an impossibility in God's economy, as we can see something about God from that passage. Let's read it again: **Isaiah 46:9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'."**

The reason God can do this — declare the end from the beginning and bring forth His purpose and good pleasure — is because *He is God, and there is no other*. Yes, *He is God, and there is no one like Him*. God *knew* that Adam was going to sin from before the ages began, and God knew what course of action He would take in bringing to pass His purposes for mankind.

Last week we saw the first step God took in bringing the man back to life again. The *first* step had to do with man's dead spirit, which would have to be the case. Since *God is spirit*, in order for the man to be able to work in conjunction with God's Spirit, the man would have to be alive spiritually. And just in case any of us would think that man could not/would not/should not have any work to do *after* to his spiritual birth, we would only have to read the verse that *follows* Ephesians 2:8, 9 to be adjusted in our thinking. First, **Ephesians 2:8 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.** But then, the verse that immediately follows is: **10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.** Yes, once we have been "created in Christ Jesus" (referring to our spiritual birth, which was the work of *God's* hand), then we are to walk in the good works which God prepared for us from beforehand (from before the foundation of the world, from before the ages began)! And for the one who has been created in Christ Jesus, to miss that point, would be to experience dire consequences in the end with respect to God's created purposes being brought to pass.

### **God's Expectation of Works Emanating out of *Faithful* Obedience**

Let's take a look at a commentary that God adds through the pen of Paul concerning our good works: **Philippians 2:12 So then, my beloved, ...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. 14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.**

Let's go through this passage a bit slower and look specifically at a few things being said here. Paul says we are to:

- **Work out our own salvation with fear and trembling...** This would *not* be referring to the work related to your spiritual birth, as we have already seen that this is a work that only God can do. No, this work is referring to the work that we have been *created in Christ Jesus* to do; things beyond our spiritual birth. And this is how this work is to be done
- **It is God who is at work in you ...through union with His Spirit (through our spiritual birth) both to will and to work for His good pleasure.** We see that we can work *in conjunction with God's Spirit* in order to be a part of His accomplishing *His good pleasure*, which *will be* brought to pass at the end because He is God and there is no one like Him! The question is: Will you and I be allowed to participate in *His good pleasure* in the end? And the answer to that question will be determined at the JSOC in that future Day, determined by how each of us worked out our own salvation.

Then continuing, Paul goes on to give more information about God's expectations of us once we are in spiritual union with Him. He shows us:

- *The way* we are to work out our own salvation: **Do all things without grumbling or disputing...** ...*all things* would be referring to that which God tells us in His Word we are to do, encompassing the commands of Christ. And with respect to doing *these* things, we are to *separate* ourselves from grumbling, i.e., *murmuring* and from *disputing* about these things. Then the Holy Spirit gives us
- *the reason* we are to do this: **that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world...** And then God gives
- *The means* of doing these things — the means of working out our own salvation in fear and trembling is through **holding fast the word of life...** *Life*, the very thing we are considering in these messages! We know we already possess spiritual life, which is complete and eternally secure because it is based on God's Work. So quite literally, we do not have to 'hold fast' our spiritual life; it is held for us! The passage is talking about *holding fast the word of life* concerning things beyond spiritual life. It is dealing with working out our own salvation with respect to our soul and body, bringing forth life in these two parts of our being, which is seen as culminating in the next section of the passage. Through the pen of Paul, the Holy Spirit gives
- *the timing* of when this will be culminated: **so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.** There is glory connected to this working out our own salvation, a glory which is to be revealed in the Day of the Lord. And we remember that suffering always precedes glory.

And then, just to glimpse a few other (of the many) verses in the NT concerning our own good works, we can read in: **Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.**

And in I Corinthians 3:11 **For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.**

And in I Corinthians 15:58 **Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.**

And finally in **II Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. **11** Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men...

Just a side note here — let’s talk for a moment about *the fear of the Lord*. Should these passages evoke *fear* in you? Yes! They should indeed! That’s the point, isn’t it? But we are speaking here of the fear of *the Lord* — the Lord’s fear, not the type of fear that Satan would like you and me to have! Satan’s fear would make us want to hide from God, just like Adam and the Woman did in the Garden, when Adam said, *I was afraid ...so I hid myself*. As a result of these passages covered thus far, wouldn’t Satan just love to instill *that* type of fear in each of us? A paralyzing fear — a fear that would make you cover your ears and say: “Enough! I don’t want to hear anymore! It’s just too scary!” No! That is not the fear of the Lord! Let’s read God’s own commentary of what the fear of the Lord is *and* what it does. It is so interesting to see how God’s Word fits together.

#### **Psalm 34**

**7** The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him,  
And rescues them.

**8** O taste and see that the LORD is good;

How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

**9** O fear the LORD, you His saints; For to those who fear Him, there is no want.

**10** The young lions do lack and suffer hunger;

But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.

**11** Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

**12** Who is the man who desires life, And loves length of days that he may see good?

**13** Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit.

**14** Depart from evil, and do good; Seek peace, and pursue it.

**15** The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry.

**16** The face of the LORD is against evildoers,

To cut off the memory of them from the earth.

**17** The righteous cry and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles.

**18** The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, And saves those who are crushed in spirit.

**19** Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But the LORD delivers him out of them all.

**20** He keeps all his bones; Not one of them is broken.

**21** Evil shall slay the wicked; And those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

**22** The LORD redeems the soul of His servants;

And none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.

To have a proper understanding of what it means to fear the Lord, would cause us to run to Him, not hide from Him. Simply stated, to fear the Lord means to hate evil!

### **Re-focus on Topic — Life, Death and Resurrection to Life Again**

How does all of this fit into our understanding of Life, Death and Resurrection to Life Again? Through the few NT passages we just read, we understand that there is an expectation of work on the part of individuals who have been spiritually born; so now let's take a minute to look at how this expectation of works is laid out in the OT. For if this is correctly understood, we would have to be able to see it in the OT as well. As you will see, this expectation of works on the part of the saved can not only be seen in the OT, but it is foundationally laid out as early as the events in the Garden.

Even *before* Adam sinned, there was work to be done by him in the Garden. We can see that in **Genesis 2:15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.** The man was to *cultivate and keep the Garden*, which produced all the food they needed *apart from* any thorns and thistles. But sin brought a whole different set of circumstances. In reading this passage this time, pay attention to the succession of the details *after* Adam sinned: **Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." 16 To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you." 17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you shall eat the plants of the field; 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."**

Due to Adam's sin we see that:

- The woman would have pain in childbirth (but it would be through her seed that a Redeemer would come), and now
- The ground would be cursed, producing thorns and thistles alongside the plants.

These would be just two of the ways in which Adam and Eve had come to know (and experience) both good and evil — pain in bringing forth children, and plants for food growing alongside of thorns and thistles.

After these verses, there is a succession of God-given details that we would do well to note. God's Word goes on to say: **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.** We already know that v. 20 depicts the man and woman's statement of faith concerning a Coming Redeemer, and

v. 21 depicts God's action on man's behalf based upon their faith, bringing them back into spiritual union with them. What follows reveals God's plans *subsequent to* bringing them back into spiritual life: **Genesis 3:22 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.**

There is much to be learned here concerning what God is teaching us! But in order to 'see' it, we need to grasp something that is true about God's Word, for without plugging this *key* into our understanding here, we would miss something very important.

God very often (emphasis on the word *very*) uses things in the physical world to represent something He wants to teach us in the spiritual world. For example, *physical food* in Scripture is often used as a metaphor in teaching *spiritual truths*. And *physical growth and maturity* is often used metaphorically to represent *spiritual growth and maturity*. **I Peter 2:1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.** Also the writer of Hebrews rebuked the recipients of his letter because he could not teach them deeper truths represented by solid food, but instead had to give them milk all over again. **Hebrews 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.** Other examples of God using things in the physical realm to teach things in the spiritual realm would be to know that in certain passages *trees* represent *nations of the earth*; and *mountains* often represent *kingdoms*; and the *seas* often represent *Gentile nations*, and the *land* often represents the *Nation of Israel*.

As a Good Teacher, God uses a vast array of methods to teach His People what He wants them to know and understand. Numbers represent concepts; historical Biblical events recorded in detail lay out prophecies in the type/Antitype structure; signs given in Scripture point to things beyond themselves; parables, illustrations, etc., etc.. On and on we could go... Perhaps these Scriptural methods of teaching can be summarized in this passage: **I Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.** The things written in Genesis are *spiritual thoughts put into spiritual words*. As such, we need to

understand these things in the *spiritual* in addition to seeing the obvious in the physical realm.

Look again at what God told Adam: **Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil [Lit. sorrow] you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 **Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field.** 19 **In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.**” Again, let’s consider this in the spiritual realm rather than the obvious physical realm. After God brought Adam back into spiritual union with Himself, God said there would be toil all the days of his life in order to gain sustenance. Notice in particular the statements in v. 17: “In toil [or sorrow] you shall eat of it [the ground]” and in v. 19: “By the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread.” The word for toil in v. 17 is the same word used for sorrow when speaking to Eve — “I will multiply your **sorrow**...” And the Hebrew word for *sweat* here is a word that is only used once in all of Scripture. It has the sense of shaking, of trembling; and the word for *face* has the meaning of *breathing hard*. So the combination of these two words gives the idea of this toil being such hard work that it brings about a shaking and a trembling which produces sweat. Sounds a bit like: “Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling”!**

From a spiritual perspective, we know that Jesus is the “bread of life”. Jesus said in **John 6:51** “**I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.**” Once a person has spiritual life, it will only be through hard work that he can gain spiritual sustenance, regularly eating of the Bread of Life, which allows a person to live forever (the singular use of the word *aion*, meaning an age)! This is speaking of the salvation of the soul, and of course the only way that a saved person can eat this bread is to read, study and understand the Word of God, as *Jesus is the Word made Flesh!* And according to Jesus’ own words, anyone who eats this bread *shall live forever*. Again, this spiritual sustenance will only be gained through ongoing hard work! It will only be gained through our own spiritual sweat even to the point of shaking and trembling! It will take dying to the flesh and walking by the spirit in order to live in the Coming Age.

So can we see that the reason God told Adam to cultivate the very ground from which he was taken is for something beyond the natural realm? Can we see the spiritual truths that this OT picture teaches God’s people — saved individuals who still possess a corrupt nature? And bringing the NT to bear upon the OT, we can see that because of the corrupt nature Adam still possessed even subsequent to God bringing him back into spiritual union with Him, he had to cultivate “the ground” by “putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, and humbly receive the implanted word, which was able to save his soul (James 1:21).

In Adam's originally-created state, he only had one nature — it was a good nature, enveloping all three parts of his being. But after he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he had come to know evil! Now he possessed an evil nature, which enveloped all three parts of his being. But once God brought him back into spiritual union with Him, Adam then had two natures — a redeemed spirit alongside a corrupted soul, both of which were housed in a naked body. And this is why God did not want him to have the ability to stretch out his hand, take from the tree of life and live forever in that state! And so He put the man and woman outside of the Garden and commanded them to cultivate the ground from which he was taken!

The same is true for us! We were born into sin, separated from God, born with a singular bad nature, which enveloped all of the three parts of our being. But once we were saved through faith in the finished work of God the Son on our behalf, we gained a new nature. And now we have two natures: a redeemed spiritual nature (which can work in conjunction with the Holy Spirit) alongside our old nature (which can quite *naturally* work in conjunction with the world, the flesh and the devil), both of which are housed alongside each other within an utterly naked body which is made up of the dust of the ground. It is this spiritual truth that God wants us to understand by means of the physical pictures He laid out for us at the very beginning of His Word when He declared the end from the beginning.

Yes! There will be pain in bringing forth the Son in us; and yes, it will be by the sweat of our face that we will eat the Bread of Life. Our corrupted nature must be cultivated by our redeemed nature working in conjunction with the Holy Spirit! It is by the Holy Spirit, that Christ must be formed in us! This will be difficult, sometimes seemingly nigh to impossible work! But let's just remember what Peter wrote! **II Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust...**

Next week we will tie all of this together and complete the cycle:

LIFE

RESURRECTION

DEATH

Lord willing, we will meet together then!