

Life To Death

Perfection

In the distant past, God created the heavens and earth. The Syriac Bible records it this way “the being or substance of heaven and the being or substance of earth.” This creation was followed by the creation of 1) light; 2) space, planetary vortex, solar system, firmament or expanse; 3) the separation of waters, dry ground, and vegetation; 4) lights in the solar system, stars, sun, and moon; 5) aquatic life, fowl in the sky, and air-breathing land creatures, and lastly; 6) man a creature in His own image or likeness. The man was a righteous being living in a perfect place, in a perfect relationship with his Creator and God communicated with him. (Genesis)

“So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’ Then God said, ‘I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground — everything that has the breath of life in it — I give every green plant for food.’ And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” (Genesis 1:27-31 NIV) The term very good carries the meaning of “as good as it possibly can be” that is perfection. God also created from man a helper; a companion suitable for him and told them to “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it.” (Gen 1:28)

“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.’” (Genesis 2:15-17 NIV)

Temptation

The Bible is silent about how long this perfect relationship existed. Would man with the ability to decide and choose always remain in this state of perfection? No! Being a creature of choice, he was tempted by his desires. He yielded doing what God told him not to do. He sinned breaking the perfect relationship with God. According to the apostle James man was not tempted by God but by his own desires. “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed (as they lure him away and trap him - GWT). Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” (James 1:13-15 NIV)

Consequences of Broken Relationship

Adam and Eve disobeyed and sinned. The perfect relationship with God was broken. God had told him that the consequences of this action of disobedience would be death becoming mortal. Man was no longer righteous but in need of a way to be restored to a righteous relationship or endure eternal death.

Woman would have to endure much greater pain in childbirth and her desire will be to her husband. Albert Barns states “she is to be subject to the will of her husband. ‘Desire’ does not refer to sexual desire in particular. (Genesis 3:16). . . . ‘The determination of thy will shall be yielded to thy husband, and, accordingly, he shall rule over thee.’ The second clause, according to the parallel structure of the sentence, is a climax or emphatic reiteration of the first, and therefore serves to determine its meaning. Under fallen man, woman has

been more or less a slave. In fact, under the rule of selfishness, the weaker must serve the stronger. Only a spiritual resurrection will restore her to her true place, as the help-meet for man.” (Barnes' Notes, BibleSoft)

Christ through Paul gives a much different meaning to their relationship. It appears to put their relationship back to a companion.

“Husbands, love (to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of – Thayer's Greek Lexicon) your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church.” (Eph 5:25-30 ESV)

Man will painfully labor for his food that will come from the plants of the field among the thorns and thistles. Again, quoting from Albert Barnes “The curse of the soil is the desire of the fruit trees with which the garden was planted, and of that spontaneous growth which would have rendered the toil of man unnecessary. The rank growth of thorns and thistles was also a part of the curse which it occasioned to man when fallen. His sorrow was to arise from the labor and sweat with which he was to draw from the ground the means of subsistence. Instead of the spontaneous fruits of the garden, the herb of the field, which required diligent cultivation, was henceforth to constitute a principal part of his support.” (Barnes' Notes, BibleSoft)

The earth also appears to have been under the curse of death as Paul states “The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.” (Romans 8:19-23 NIV)

Adam and Eve, consequently **all mankind**, were separated from the presence of God being removed from the perfect creation. “‘The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.’ So, the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the Tree of Life.” (Genesis 3:22-24 NIV)

Man was now **a mortal being** in need of forgiveness in order to be restored to his former relationship with God, his Creator. God told him “for when you eat of it you will surely die” and then decay and return to the elements from which he was created.

A Mortal Being

After having eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man must decide between right and wrong, good and evil, obedience and rebellion. Some like Abel chose to do right. Others like Cain chose to go their own way and do their own thing. Some 1600 – 1700 years after the beginning of time, all but eight people were evil. “The LORD said, ‘My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years’. ... The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So, the LORD said, ‘I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth — men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air — for I am grieved that I have made them.’ (Genesis 6:3, 5-9)

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. (Genesis 6:3)

“By faith Noah, being warned (of God) concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” (Hebrews 11:7 ASV) “God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. The LORD then said to Noah, ‘Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation.’” (Genesis 7:1 NIV)

“In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God.” (1 Peter 3:20-21 NIV) “God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth ... Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ‘Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you.’” (Genesis 9:1; 8-10 RSV)

But less than 300 years after the flood mankind again rebelled. They decided to “build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.” (Genesis 11:4) But God thwarted their plans adding language barriers.

Shortly after this God called Abraham, another righteous man, and established another covenant. It would be through this man’s seed, posterity, and atonement would be made for man’s sins allowing his relationship with God to be restored.

Restoring Broken Relationship

God reveals more of His plan for restoring man’s broken relationship in His calling of Abraham. “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. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 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.’” (Genesis 12:1-3 NKJV)

All the earth would be blessed through the son of promise, Isaac, not the son through the natural course of life, Ishmael. “When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers’. ... Then God said, ‘Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac.’” (Genesis 17:1-2; 19-21 NIV)

“God renewed this covenant with both Isaac and Jacob. “Brothers and sisters, let me use an example from everyday life. No one can cancel a person's will or add conditions to it once that will is put into effect. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his descendant. Scripture doesn't say, ‘descendants,’ referring to many, but "your descendant," referring to one. That descendant is Christ. This is what I mean: The laws given to Moses 430 years after God had already put his promise to Abraham into effect didn't cancel the promise to Abraham. If we have to gain the inheritance by following those laws, then it no longer comes to us because of the promise. However, God freely gave the inheritance to Abraham through a promise... Before Christ came, Moses' laws served as our guardian (schoolmaster, tutor, custodian). Christ came so that we could receive

God's approval by faith. But now that this faith has come, we are no longer under the control of a guardian.” (Galatians 3:16-18; 24-25 GWV)

The Atoning Sacrifice

“The law is only a shadow (an image representing the form of that object as opposed to the thing itself - Thayer Greek Lexicon); of the good things that are coming-not the realities themselves. ... Those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” (Hebrews 10:1-4 NIV)

“First, he (Christ) said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them’ (although the law required them to be made). Then he said, ‘Here I am, I have come to do your will.’ He sets aside the first [the Law given through Moses] to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:8-10 NIV)

“The Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in [trusts, clings to or relies upon] him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes [put their trust through obedience] in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of (authority, character - Strong’s and International Bible Translators Inc.) God's one and only Son.” (John 3:14-18 NIV)

“When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place (not the tabernacle Most Holy Place established through Moses but the abode of God) once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9:11-12 NIV)

The Gospel

“Now after John [the baptizer] was delivered up Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.’” (Mark 1:14 ASV) John’s message was for them to change their way of living [repent], and believe (commit to) the gospel. **But what was this gospel they needed to believe?**

The word gospel means good news. This good news was that the perfect atoning sacrifice (Messiah – Hebrew; Christ - Greek) had come to the earth in the flesh to live among mortal man and to be tempted like a man. He (Jesus) did not yield to these temptations telling everyone He was doing His Father’s will rather than keeping the traditions of man established by the current Jewish religious leaders and those of years past. The scribes, Pharisees, and teachers of the law were angry, jealous, and envious for the crowd followed Jesus. They also feared losing their position of power, honor, and praise. This jealousy led them to violate the Law of Moses and their traditions by demanding that an innocent man be crucified. The death of God’s atoning sacrifice, “the Lamb of God,” was only part of the gospel for on the third day God would resurrect Him from the dead. Forty days following His resurrection Christ, being victorious over death (Satan’s hold on man) ascended back to the Father.

Having provided the means for man’s reconciliation, Christ – God in the flesh – returned to His Heavenly home and sent God – the Spirit – to dwell with all who put their trust in God, the Christ, by obedience thereby becoming His Body (the church.) Those In Christ receive all the spiritual blessings including the forgiveness of their sins and have their relationship with God restored.

Paul stated:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17 NKJV)

“Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word, I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.”
(1 Corinthians 15:1-2 NIV)

“We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. All over the world, this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.” (Colossians 1:4-6 NIV)

“Certainly, it is right for God to give suffering to those who cause you to suffer. It is also right for God to give all of us relief from our suffering. He will do this when the Lord Jesus is revealed, *coming* from heaven with his mighty angels in a blazing fire. He will take revenge on those who refuse to acknowledge God and on those who refuse to respond to the Good News about our Lord Jesus.” (2 Thessalonians 1:6-8 GWT)

Peter admonished “If you suffer for being a Christian, don't feel ashamed, but praise God for being called that name. The time has come for the judgment to begin, and it will begin with God's family. If it starts with us, what will be the end for those who refuse to obey the Good News of God?” (1 Peter 4:16-17 GWT)

“Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith!” (Romans 16:25-27 RSV)

Man's Choice

We have seen that Adam and Eve made a very poor choice and yielded to temptation choosing to follow their desires rather than God's. As a result, they and consequently all mankind became mortal. They were separated from God's presence and would die and return to dust from which God had made them.

They broke their perfect relationship with God. The only way for this relationship to be restored was for a perfect sacrifice for sin to be offered. Therefore God, the Son, left the presence of God, the Father, came to earth, lived among men being tempted as man but not yielding, and offered His own body and life's blood as that perfect sacrifice. When God raised Him from the grave, He destroyed Satan's only hold over man by conquering death and the grave.

Therefore, since:

- a. “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23)
- b. “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23 RSV)
- c. “He sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” (1 John 4:10 NIV)

Then man must:

- a. understand what God requires of him to accept this sacrifice
- b. make a choice to accept His offer to be In Christ.
- c. accept His message - the gospel
- d. be baptized a burial or immersed in water. (Acts 2:41 NIV)
- e. live pleasing to God while maturing into His nature.

These are the same thing Paul, Saul the persecutor of Christians, was told to do by Ananias - "Rise and be baptized (immersed) and wash away your sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22:16 RSV)

Restored to Righteousness

Later Paul would tell the Ephesian Christians "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. ... You also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed (putting trust in Christ by obeying; i.e., action), you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-to the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1:7-10 ... 13-14 NIV)

"My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the expiation (our substitute by assuming our obligations he expiated our guilt from Easton's Bible Dictionary) for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:1-2 RSV)

"From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them." (2 Cor. 5:16-19 RSV)

Living the New Life

"The disciples were devoted to the teachings of the apostles, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer." (Acts 2:42-43 GWT)

"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God." (1 Peter 1:22-23 NIV)

"Therefore, rid yourselves (Christians) of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." (1 Peter 2:1-3 NIV)

"Since you are foreigners and temporary residents in the world, I'm encouraging you to keep away from the desires of your corrupt nature. These desires constantly attack you. Live decent lives among unbelievers." (1 Peter 2:11-12 GWT)

“But in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.” (1 Peter 3:15-16 RSV)

“Since Christ has suffered physically, take the same attitude that he had. That way you won't be guided by sinful human desires as you live the rest of your lives on earth. Instead, you will be guided by what God wants you to do.” (1 Peter 4:1-2 GWT)

Don't Turn Back

- Two Christians Ananias and Sapphira lied.
“Peter said to her, ‘How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.’” (Acts 5:9 NIV)
- One Christian was greedy desiring to purchase power.
“Peter answered: ‘May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!’” (Acts 8:20-21)
- One missionary loved the world and forsook his work.
“Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica.” (2 Timothy 4:10 NIV)
- Entire churches wandered away from God.
 - a. Ephesus - You have forsaken your first love – Repent and do the things you did at first
 - b. Pergamum -You have people who hold on to the teaching of Balaam¹ and the Nicolations² - Repent
 - c. Laodicea - You are neither hot nor cold. - I am about to spit you out of my mouth
 - d. Sardis - You have a reputation of being alive but you are dead -Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die
 - e. Thyatira - Tolerate teachers whose teachings lead Christians to sexual immoralities -Unless they repent they will have intense suffering

Remain Faithful

To the Christian faithful, those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 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, 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.

“But also, for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither

¹ Teaching people to lead or entice others to sin.

² They taught the community of wives, adultery and fornication were things indifferent, eating meats offered to idols was lawful; and included pagan rites

barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things, you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:1-11 NKJV)

“False prophets were among God's people in the past, as false teachers will be among you. They will secretly bring in their own destructive teachings (heresies)]. They will deny the Lord, who has bought them, and they will bring themselves swift destruction. Many people (Christians) will follow them in their sexual freedom (destructive ways, licentiousness, shameful ways) and will cause others to dishonor the way of truth. In their greed, they will use good-sounding arguments to exploit you.” (2 Peter 2:1-3 GWT)

“These false teachers are bold and arrogant (presumptuous, self-willed, bold). They aren't afraid to insult the Lord's glory.” (2 Peter 2:10 GWT)

“People can know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and escape the world's filth (defilements). But **if** they get involved in this filth again and give in to it, they are worse off than they were before. It would have been better for them never to have known the way of life that God approves of than to know it and turn their backs on the holy life God told them to live.” (2 Peter 2:20-21 GWT)

Then the Judgment

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ... And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth (spiritual), for the first heaven and the first earth (physical) had passed away. ... "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.” (Revelation 20:11-21:3 NKJV)

Will your name be found in the “Book of Life”?

Questions

1. Man was created in God's image, His Nature; therefore, man was without sin.

True ___ False ___

2. Since God command Adam and Eve not to eat of the Tree of Life, they were created with decision-making ability.

True ___ False ___

3. God enticed Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree

True ___ False ___

They sinned and suffered the consequences God promised

True ___ False ___

4. In Noah's day God waited over 100 years for the repent of the evil

True ___ False ___

5. Noah and his family were saved through water symbolizing baptism by obedience to God's commands
True ___ False ___
6. God promised another righteous man, Abraham, that through his descendent, singular, mankind could be reconciled to Him.
True ___ False ___
7. The promise made to Abraham was renewed with Isaac, also later to Jacob, and that descendent was Jesus of Nazareth, Christ.
True ___ False ___
8. Those obedient to Christ's gospel have been made holy through the atoning sacrifice of His body.
True ___ False ___
9. Jesus said after the death of John the Baptist the Kingdom of God is at hand, change your way of life (repent) and believe (take action confirming your belief) not just words spoken.
True ___ False ___
10. The gospel of Christ is Christ, the perfect sin offering that can remove sin from the obedient
True ___ False ___
11. The gospel one received saves those who accept Christ, even if they later deny Him
True ___ False ___
12. God will take revenge on those who refuse to acknowledge and obey Him
True ___ False ___
13. Why does mankind need the Gospel of Christ?
a. ___ All have sinned
b. ___ Wages of sin is spiritual death
c. ___ The atoning sacrifice of Christ is the Gospel
d. ___ Obedience to the Gospel by calling on God through baptism to forgive reconciles man to God
e. ___ all the above
14. Christians were told to rid themselves of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander and to grow in their salvation
True ___ False ___
15. People and entire churches of people who abandon Christ by returning to their former sin-filled life are still saved.
True ___ False ___
16. Some "Christians" teach and deny Christ is Lord resulting in many being led astray
True ___ False ___

17. People who accepted Christ's gospel and get involved again in worldly living are worse off than if they had never known Christ.

True ___ False ___

18. The tabernacle of God is with the righteous and God dwells with them as their God.

True ___ False ___

19. Man's actions on earth are recorded in the Book of Life from which they will be judged

True ___ False ___

