

# ETERNITY AND TIME

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Theological research is considered by many assembly (church) members to be hairsplitting. Thus, we see another method of Satan to keep Christians from an in-depth study of Scripture. Why do people call the spiritual desire for research into the depths of Biblical evidence unprofitable for the spiritual life? There is no complaint against scientific research for the improvement of physical life. People in general are not only requesting scientific research in this area but they are giving large sums of money for such endeavor. Scientists consider it a great honor to spend their lives in analyzing plants, insects, the human body, space, etc., to improve the quality of physical life. This work is never called hairsplitting but scientific research.

There can be no worthier object of mental application than the eternal God and His relation to eternity and time. We must never forget that theological research has its

boundary. It is limited to “thus saith the Lord.” The word reveals the eternal God and His purpose for the elect. Satan wants to deceive, but deception is difficult where the light of Biblical research is made, proclaimed, and received. Hence, the more knowledge one has on a given subject, the less likely his deception.

The man of God who devotes fifty or more years to the study of Holy Scripture is no fanatic. There is no better way to demonstrate the deception by Satan than to contrast Biblical research with scientific research. For example, a physician might spend five to ten thousand hours in his laboratory before he discovers some wonder drug like the Salk vaccine. Is he called a fanatic for his enthusiasm? No, he is praised. However, a man of God who spends a hundred thousand or more hours in an in-depth study of the word of God is considered an extremist. He is criticized for not giving more time to unprofitable programs. Churches today are filled with such critics who have more concern for time than for eternity. They do not know that the greater knowledge believers have of eternal verities the better equipped they are to redeem the time.

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# 1

## **ETERNITY AND TIME MUST BE DISTINGUISHED**

A recent newspaper article reported a recognition among many doctors of a near-death phenomenon. The report was that more people talk about the phenomenon because of publicity concerning near-death research. According to the article, near-death experiences have become common and are no longer considered fictitious. The poll that was taken revealed a variety of near-death experiences. Those claiming to have had the experience gave various testimonies: (1) They had a sense of peace and painlessness. (2) They experienced a panoramic view of their lives. (3) They felt the presence of dead relatives or spirits. (4) They felt themselves moving through some kind of passage or tunnel.

The various conclusions drawn from the poll are interesting. A doctor, who requested anonymity, said his out-of-body experience while undergoing surgery has altered his skepticism about an afterlife. He said he had always believed in God, but his experience made him realize there really is something out there. Some suppose that their lives have been changed for the better by their near-death experiences, but others say their experiences have proved disruptive. Some have become reckless, and others become dissatisfied with their jobs and marriages. There are some who become so enamored with their near-death experiences that they do not want to go on with the business of living. They would rather have this wondrous death.

A question asked was whether near-death experiences open peepholes to heaven, or if they are merely the unraveling of the brain as it approaches death. The article stated that a decade of research has discredited some theories and produced some others: (1) Endorphins, the morphine-like substance released by the brain during trauma, may account for the peace and painlessness. (2) Temporal lobe seizures, which sometimes cause the brain to replay life experiences, could result in the panoramic vision of one's life. (3) Out-of-body observations may be evidence that the mind and brain can exist separately. (4) Anoxia, the lack of oxygen to the brain, could produce the sensation of out-of-body-floating. The rush of blood to the brain as the person regains consciousness could result in the brilliant light witnessed by some. (5) Subconscious memories of the birth experience may account for the moving through a passageway or tunnel. (6) Near-death images of heaven may be the mind conjuring pictures based on previous religious instruction. (7) Near-death experiences are not death itself, and they cannot be interpreted as visions of people who have come back from the dead.

The near-death experiences of millions should promote interest in the study of time and eternity. Subjective experiences of people in time should never be accepted as valid in relation to eternal realities. Christians must beware of a humanistic philosophy that makes human experiences the norm for judging reality. Human philosophy denies that Scripture provides the norm for belief or action. Furthermore, it stresses human freedom not to merely choose correctly but to create a subjectively meaningful world. Hence, anthropology replaces theology. Conclusively, with those who embrace this philosophy, human opinions overshadow and replace the objective facts of Holy Scripture.

Time is valuable because it has not only a beginning but an ending. Therefore, there is a future, a present, and a past. The only part of time that actually exists is the present. The past is gone, and the future has not yet arrived. Failure to redeem the time, that is, "the now," is to lose it: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15, 16). The Greek word for "redeeming" is the present middle participle of *exagoradzo*, which means to buy out, to redeem, or to set free. In the middle voice it means to secure for oneself or to rescue from loss.

The correct way to speak of time is not past, present, and future but future, present, and past. Time is not moving from the past but from the future. Time that is past is lost forever. It cannot be redeemed. Since the future has not arrived, one cannot make the most of what does not yet exist. Time is a point and has a location. A common expression is "at that point in time." Time's location is the present. Therefore, Christians should continually make the most of the "now."

Time began with creation. Three things basic to the created universe are space, matter, and time. Space consists of three dimensions— length, breadth, and height. These are the basic dimensions with which we are familiar. Matter consists of energy, motion, and phenomena. Time consists of future, present, and past. This universe was created by God for His glory (Gen. 1:1; John 1:3; Col. 1:16). God's essence cannot be comprehended, but His existence cannot be denied. (See Rom. 1:19, 20; Rev. 4:11.) The purpose of God in

creation is presently being completed. “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36). Please observe that the verse does not say “to,” “by,” and “for” the people. All things are moving toward their consummation that “God may be all in all” (I Cor. 15:28). The beginning of creation, therefore, includes the beginning of time.

Time has an important relation to man. It speaks of the period of his life, because there is a time to be born and a time to die (Eccl. 3:1, 2). The brevity of life and the certainty of death are generally understood. “Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble [NASB: short-lived and full of turmoil]. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not....Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass...” (Job 14:1, 2, 5). Man is constantly subjected to objects that should make him reflect on his exit out of time. However, the depravity of man’s nature is so engrossed with present pleasures of time that he seldom reflects on eternity. Human life is flattering in its beginning. It comes forth like a flower but becomes tumultuous in its continuance. Life is ceaseless in its course. It flees like a shadow and moves gently and silently.

Distinction must be made between God’s appointed time and man’s expected time. The term of life cannot extend beyond the time determined by God. Job spoke of his days being determined (Job 14:5) and the days of his appointed time (Job 7:1; 14:4). David said, “LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am” (“what time I have here” —KJV margin notation; “how transient I Am” —NASB) (Ps. 39:4). There is no contradiction between these verses and those that seem to teach that man may lengthen his days: “...Why shouldst thou die before thy time” (“not in thy time” —KJV margin notation) (Eccl. 7:17). “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (Ps. 90:10). “...Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days” (Ps. 55:23). The truest lengthening of life is to live while we live. That means wasting no time but using every day for the highest ends. What is the meaning of Scriptures that speak of prolonging one’s life? God promised the Jews, if they were obedient, their lives would be long in the land of Canaan and they would not be interrupted by captives (Deut. 4:40; 5:16, 33; 22:7). When Paul quoted Deuteronomy 4:40 in Ephesians 6:3, he left out the concluding words, “in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,” and made it a promise not confined to one people or land.

Man’s days cannot be lengthened beyond God’s decree, and all obedient children do not live long lives. Nevertheless, these are not inconsistent with the general rule that obedient children are prosperous and happy, and diligence makes men wealthy: “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat” (Prov. 13:4). Laziness is the creed of the sluggard. Idleness is a sin against the ordinance of God. Whether one’s temporal life is long or short, the diligent person lives a long life in a short time. On the other hand, the sluggard lives a short life in a long time. “The fear of the LORD prolongeth days [KJV margin notation— addeth days]: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened” (Prov. 10:27). Fear of the Lord leads to a virtuous life,

because Christians fear Him whom they love. Conversely, the wicked fear whom they hate. Hence, they “shall not live out half their days...” (Ps. 55:23). Conclusively, the wicked shall live only half of their expected days, not their days determined by God.

Time has been defined as “the consideration of duration, the measure of it, as set out by certain periods, and marked by certain measures.” The river of time rises in value as the Christian rushes on to the ocean of eternity. Time is the essence of everything in the physical universe. Therefore, this universe is a time universe. Since time presently coexists with eternity, man has difficulty differentiating between them. Being a creature of time, man wants to put time in eternity by speaking of “eternity past” and “eternity future”.

Everything is timeless in eternity. Eternity is not an extension of time. There is neither past nor future in eternity. Some say there is time in eternity because one event will follow another. One must understand that what Bible students mean by “before” and “after” in reference to God’s decrees is not that one is before another in the order of time, because all are from eternity. However, he must form an idea of one decree before another inasmuch as God decrees one thing out of respect to another decree. Hence, one decree becomes the foundation of another decree. For example, God’s decree to manifest His glory should be considered before the creation and fall of man. Creation was the means of manifesting His glory. Therefore, God’s decree to manifest His glory preceded—in order—the decree to create.

There is order but not time in eternity. Order does not necessitate time. It means arrangement, classification, or coordination of persons or things by sequence or rank; but time means the sequential relations that any event has to another as future, present, or past. Hence, the sequential which is characterized by regular sequence of parts— future, present, and past —would bring finite duration into eternity which is impossible. There is order in eternal election. Since our election is in Christ (Eph. 1:4), the election of Christ to be our Savior preceded our election in Him (Is. 42:1; Luke 23:35; I Pet. 2:4). Furthermore, the acts of God in time are the acts of God’s will decreed before time. The eternal decrees of God must be understood in the mind of God in the same order in which they are executed in time.

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## 2

### **DISTINCTION BETWEEN ETERNITY AND TIME IS ILLUSTRATED**

Time is transitory presence in contrast to eternity which is abiding presence. Since time presently coexists with eternity, man who is a creature of time has difficulty differentiating between them. The puritans spoke of eternity as an “eternal duration.” Duration, however, can be measured; but eternity is immeasurable. The dictionary defines “duration” as continuance in time or the length of time during which something continues or exists. Eternity cannot be explained by the use of a term which speaks of “the length of time.” It cannot be defined by a measurable term. If eternity were made up of what the puritans called “the extension of duration,” it would be made up of an endless succession of measurable units of time. Thus, eternity would be gradually running out of time. However, eternity can be neither shortened nor lengthened.

Martin Luther’s concept of eternity was “the whole thing at once.” Augustine has shown there cannot be a hundred present years. His illustration was that if the first of those years is now going on, it is present, but ninety-nine future years do not exist. He concluded that if the second year is going on, one is gone, another is present, and the rest are future; therefore, there cannot be a hundred present years. When one considers the factuality of this statement, he may substitute month, day, hour, minute, and second, and the conclusion is that the present has no length at all. Furthermore, one cannot speak of either past or future as having any reality. The present alone has reality, and eternity may be expressed as “the immeasurable present.”

When God spoke of His eternity, He said, “I AM” (Ex. 3:14). If he had said, “I Was,” the meaning would be that He is not now what He was. Furthermore, if He had said, “I Will Be,” the meaning would be that He is not yet what He will be. Einstein wrestled with the problem that there cannot be a span of time, because it will not stay still long enough to measure it. Hence, the conclusion is that eternity is not time, like a rainbow, disappearing into eternity at both ends. Eternity does not flow past, or some would have already been used up. Therefore, eternity is the abiding, immeasurable present.

There is a difference between the succession of events in time and the intensity of experience in eternity. Intensity of experience will replace extensity when time ceases to exist. The word “extensity” means the quality of having extension. Psychologically, it is the attitude or sensation by which spatial (pertaining to space which also involves time) extension is perceived. The word “intensity” refers to the quality or condition of being intense. The essential quality of eternity is intensity rather than extensity. For example, to think of length as the essence of eternal life is to suppose that the reality of it is to be measured by how long it lasts. We are so conscious of our mortality that we tend to emphasize the quantitative aspect of our life in Christ, with its guarantee of victory over death. However, the qualitative aspect of our life in Christ is immensely significant. Such a life is not engineered by the persuasive eloquence that produces a mere mental assent for a period of time. (See John 10.)

The difference between extensity and intensity may be illustrated by showing the difference between life in prison and capital punishment. The intensity of capital punishment exceeds the extensity of life in prison. Life in prison is measurable, but capital punishment is immeasurable. Apply this same distinction to the death of Jesus

Christ. The extensity of His human suffering on the cross lasted for three hours, but the intensity of the suffering of the infinite Person compensated for the eternity of the punishment He endured.

Man is ever seeking a better understanding of eternity and a more concise way of expressing his belief in such an infinite subject. Various ways of illustrating eternity have been suggested, but most of them are utterly inadequate.

There are some who say duration of Divine existence is from eternity, according to our finite way of understanding eternity. They state that the Divine duration must be considered as wholly permanent and the ever present “now,” and it is as incapable of division into parts as Divine existence Himself. They conclude that as the present “I Am” of Divine existence does, at once, fill heaven and earth, the present “now” of the Divine duration does, at once, comprehend all time and eternity. Duration, however, is measurable.

Some have sought to illustrate eternity with a circle because its circumference remains unchanged. One can go around the circle endlessly because there is no end. But what about the repetition of the measurable circle?

There are others who say eternity and time are not two lines, of which the shorter runs parallel for awhile with the other which extends infinitely. But eternity is the unchangeable center which sends out rays to cover the whole contour of time.

Some believe that eternity is infinity in its relation to time. They say that past, present, and future are “one eternal now” to God. There is logical but not chronological succession in God’s thoughts. Time is duration measured by successions. Duration without succession would still be duration, although it would be immeasurable. Hence, eternity is duration without beginning, existence without bounds or dimension, present without past or future, infancy without youth or old age, and today without yesterday or tomorrow.

Eternity and time differ. Time is duration measured, but eternity is not duration that is immeasurable. A study of the Biblical meaning of eternity will reveal that duration should never be used in its description. When one studies the subject of eternal life, he learns that the term is more qualitative than quantitative. It is suggested that the term “eternal” carries the idea of intensity or depth rather than extensity of length. The better way to state it is that time is transitory presence and eternity is abiding presence. The adjective “transitory” means not lasting, not enduring, not permanent, or not eternal. On the other hand, the adjective “abiding” means continuing without change or enduring.

Eternity must not be confused with time, even though both are currently coexistent. Time has both beginning and ending. But eternity has neither. Time moves from the future through the present to the past, but eternity is constant. When the future storehouse of time has passed through the present, nothing will be left to flow through the “now.” Time will have run out of time. Thus, nothing will be left but eternal constancy.



As God's eternity must be viewed from the perspective of quality (height and depth) rather than quantity (duration that is immeasurable), the life given by God to the elect must be viewed from the same perspective. Although the elect of God are creatures of time, they either possess or shall possess life in dying bodies. Christ said, "...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). To say that the new life begins with the new birth might seem a trite remark. But it is worse than platitude. It is half-truth. This life comes from God who is eternal life. Strictly from a human point of view, this life stretches backward into the past (II Tim. 1:9) as much as forward into the future (John 6:51). The elect to whom grace was given in Christ before the world began will live forever.

God's eternal purpose cannot be regarded as a lifeless foreordination. Deistic ideas can arise only out of an ill-balanced and unhealthy over-concentration of the one aspect of man's view of eternity. The eternal decree must be regarded as being as much alive and relevant today and tomorrow as it was yesterday because God inhabits eternity. If God were not eternal, there would be no eternal covenant of grace (Heb. 13:20, 21). This covenant is unilateral. The eternal God alone makes and maintains it. If God's eternity could be measured, He would not be immense, immutable, and perfect (II Pet. 3:8).

Eternal life obtained by grace is the greatest of all— qualitatively and quantitatively. The quality of this life gives it quantity. Although the believer is in this world of time, by grace he is not of this world of time. His fortune is not inexhaustible duration but eternal life, which is timeless. When the Christian passes out of time into eternity, the extensity of his experience will be replaced with intensity.

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# 3

## **GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE IS EXECUTED IN TIME**

God's purpose in eternity and His accomplishments in time are of the same extent. Hence, His purpose which was founded in sovereignty, ordered by infinite wisdom, ratified by omnipotence, and cemented with immutability can never fail. One of the great Biblical examples of God's purpose and its fulfillment being of the same extent is Romans 8:28-30. Paul proves to the enlightened mind that the foreordained equal the predestinated, the predestinated equal the called, the called equal the justified, and the justified equal the glorified in number. Hence, the mathematical axiom "things equal to the same things are equal to each other" applies here. God's purpose of natural law is necessary to hold our physical creation together. Moreover, His purpose of spiritual law is equally necessary to hold the spiritual creation together in a state of fixed purpose and progress until it reaches its consummation in the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Free grace theology stands almost alone in its emphasis on God's eternal purpose. Free will theology does not place God's eternal purpose in the foreground. Therefore, unlike free grace theology, free will theology is less theological and more anthropological. It begins with man's will rather than God's will. Those who embrace free will theology, when cornered by those who teach free grace, are always found raising the same question that Paul anticipated in Romans 9:14— "Is there unrighteousness with God?" Paul was so outraged by the questioning of God's justice that he dismissed the question with a decisive denial. Depraved minds accuse God of being unequal in purposing to save some and not all. John, in his vision of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, heard the blending of the song of Moses with the song of the Lamb: "...Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Rev. 15:3). There is no inequality in God's ways. How can man on such a low level of depravity rise to the level of questioning God's justice? There is no superior to whom God is accountable for His deeds. Therefore, God cannot be guilty of what man understands as arbitrariness.

Advocates of free will theology are incapable of making the proper distinction between God's purpose and His command. Although the two differ, they are not contradictory. God's purpose is from eternity, but His command is for man in time. God's eternal purpose cannot be hindered, because it is what God will do. On the other hand, God's command is what man should do but not what he shall do. Man is nonsensical to say he can purpose to reject God's eternal purpose. That is the same as saying man can purpose to defeat God's purpose, which is directly opposite to what God said through Isaiah: "...I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Is. 46:11). God's command is general, but His purpose is particular. Therefore, God "commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30), but He did not purpose to grant "repentance unto life" to all men (Acts 11:18). Man's inability, apart from grace, to repent is his own fault. Hence, God cannot be blamed for man's depravity. God's purpose rather than His command is the guarantee that everything will be accomplished according to His counsel.

The Greek word for "purpose" is *prothesis*, which means a setting forth or a purpose. This noun is used a total of twelve times in the New Testament. It is used in a physical sense when it is translated "shewbread" (Matt. 12:4; Mark 2:26; Luke 6:4; Heb. 9:2). It is used in an intellectual sense when it is translated "purpose." This usage is divided into two divisions: (1) There are three references to men (Acts 11:23; 27:13; II Tim. 3:10). (2) There are five references to God's eternal purpose in the salvation of the elect (Rom. 8:28; 9:11; Eph. 1:11; 3:11; II Tim. 1:9). The verb *protithemi* is used only three times (Rom. 1:13; 3:25; Eph. 1:9). It is a compound word made up of the preposition *pro*, which means "before," and the verb *tithemi*, which means "to place" or "to purpose." Therefore, God knew exactly what He would do, and the thing purposed will definitely come to pass.

The "shewbread" was publicly displayed to remind Israel of the manna provided for them in their wilderness journey. Twelve loaves were placed on the table of shewbread to remind the priest, who was representative of the Israelites, of God's provision for all twelve tribes in their wilderness journey. This is the physical sense in which the word *prothesis* is used.

God has intellectually displayed His eternal purpose in His word to remind the elect that their salvation is no afterthought with Him. Our salvation was God's forethought. Hence, God has displayed before us not only what He eternally purposed but what He actually does in time. God's purpose is not the same as His execution of the thing purposed. For example, God's purpose to create is not the same as creation itself. Moreover, His purpose to save certain ones is not the same as salvation itself. Our creation and salvation do not coexist with God's purpose, but His purpose coexists with them. The question has been asked, Why did God wait so long to create? God did not wait. Waiting implies time, and there is no time in eternity. Among the references to things that are from eternity is the salvation of the elect: (1) The glory of the Son was with the Father— "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). (2) The love of the Father was for the Son— "Father, I will that they also, whom thou has given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou has given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). (3) God's purpose to save sinful man by grace was before the world began— "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Tim. 1:9). (4) The wisdom that conceived the plan to save sinful man was ordained before the world began— "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (I Cor. 2:7). (5) The promise of eternal life was made by God before the world began— "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). (6) The Lamb was slain in the purpose of God before the foundation of the world— "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Pet. 1:20). "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). (7) The election of some to salvation was made before the foundation of the world— "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4).

God has only one purpose, but it has many parts. The eternity of God's purpose means that all of its parts are but one intuition: God "is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth" (Job 23:13). Man has succession of thoughts, but God never has a new thought. What He thought He thinks. Nothing can be added to God's one mind. However, there is succession in the execution of God's purpose. Although succession is related to time and not to eternity, that does not destroy the idea of order in God's purpose. There was no succession in God's thinking in eternity, because God is in one mind. This truth is not beyond the Christian's understanding with his finite mind to some degree. A person with a creative mind visualizes something as a whole before the development of its parts. The ability to form an idea of a thing as a whole before it is executed in the order in which its intention requires is not beyond the range of even a finite mind. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are eternal. But there is a natural order in the Godhead. As there is natural order in the Godhead, there is natural order in God's plan of salvation.

The first reference where the word *prothesis* is used in relation to God's plan for His chosen ones is Romans 8:28— "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." We are the children of Divine purpose. Assurance belongs to us— "we know." The Greek word for "know" here is not *ginosko*. It is the stronger word *oida*. This may be illustrated with the Lord's statement to Philip and the other disciples: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him" (John 14:7). The Greek word for "known" used in the first part of the verse is a pluperfect of *ginosko*— "if you had definitely come to know me." Our Lord was rebuking them because they had not listened to Him as they should; therefore, they did not know as much about Him as they should. The second Greek word translated "known" is the pluperfect of *oida*— "would have had perception of." Had they been more attentive to Christ, they would have had perception of Him and of His Father also. The last Greek word translated "know" comes from *ginosko*. The disciples had not really come to know Christ as they should. They loved Him, but from that time they were beginning to know the Father.

The fact of our knowledge that we have been called according to God's purpose is stated in Romans 8:28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:28-30). God's purpose is not by reason of the love that is in us, but love is in us by reason of the purpose of God.

There are other references where the word *prothesis* is used in relation to God's plan for His chosen ones: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth" (Rom. 9:11). "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11). "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11). "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Tim. 1:9).

There is a natural order in God's purpose. Since there is order in its execution, there had to be a natural order in the mind of God. This does not place time in eternity. There is a difference between God's purpose which is one in intuition and the execution of God's one plan. That can be illustrated several ways. There is one God, but three Persons. We think successively, but God thinks simultaneously. Our glorification was in the mind of God at the same instant He chose us. God is in one mind (Job 23:13).

Disregarding the debates over the order of God's decrees, the following order in the execution of God's purpose in time must be acknowledged:

FIRST— God purposed to “save” some (Eph. 1:4; II Tim. 1:9). This is one of the seven things mentioned that took place before the foundation of the world.

SECOND— God purposed to “redeem” those He purposed to save: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (I Pet. 1:18-20). It is wonderful that God has displayed his eternal purpose before us in order that we might know His purpose for us.

THIRD— God purposed to “regenerate” all whom He purposed to redeem: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). The washing of regeneration of Titus 3:5 is a once-for-all washing. Once a person has been cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ he will never need cleansing again. The renewing which begins in regeneration continues as long as one is in time, but the once-for-all-washing will never be repeated.

FOURTH— God purposed that all whom He would regenerate should “believe”: “...as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48). God enables the one purposed to be saved, redeemed, and regenerated to believe. By reason of his depravity, man’s will is naturally biased to that which is evil (John 5:40). Therefore, apart from the grace of regeneration, no one can believe until he has been regenerated. If an unregenerate person could choose Jesus Christ as his Savior, his will would not be depraved. The unsaved, unregenerate person who thinks he has the ability to choose Jesus Christ falsifies depravity, and the one who supposes he can receive Jesus Christ as Savior apart from grace falsifies grace.

FIFTH— God purposed that everyone who believes will pursue “holiness” of life: “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication” (I Thess. 4:3). We are chosen in Christ that we might be holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. 1:4). Holiness of life follows true faith in Jesus Christ.

SIXTH— God purposed that all who believe will “persevere”: “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:39). We persevere because God preserves us (I Pet. 1:3-5).

SEVENTH— God purposed that all who shall persevere will be “glorified”: “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom. 8:30).

Within the context of the execution of God’s eternal purpose, time is the system of sequential relations that one event has to another. A consideration of the past, present, and future of time forces one to admit that time’s duration is not only indefinite but finite. On the contrary, within the context of God’s eternal purpose, there is nothing more than

the thought of past, present, and future. Without a future in God's thought, the message of "...he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world..." (Eph. 1:4) and "...according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Tim. 1:9) is without meaning. The words predestination and foreordination would be meaningless if there was no future in God's thought. Furthermore, without a past in God's thought, all the regenerate are yet in our sins; Christ has not died; etc. Without a present in God's thought, the admonition to make the most of our time is meaningless (Eph. 5:16). Other expressions related to this are "the fulness of the time" (Gal. 4:4) and "in due time" (Rom. 5:6).

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# 4

## THE ETERNAL GOD ADAPTED MAN FOR TIME

God's eternity and His existence are equivalent terms. They imply the same idea. Hence, God is His own eternity. We do not presume to either fully understand or explain the Being of God or His infinite attributes. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (Job 11:7). "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever..." (Rom. 11:33-36). If God could be fully comprehended by finite men, He would be no different from men. The natural tendency of the depraved mind is to think of God as corresponding in some way with men. The anthropomorphic (made to resemble a human form) representations of God in the Bible appeal to the natural disposition of the human mind, which is all men can see. Man's depraved reasoning is, "since I was made in the image of God, I must think of God in the image of myself." Such thought leads to heresy. Hence, we understand why God said, "...thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself..." (Ps. 50:21). We must never forget the Biblical truth that God took upon Himself in the incarnation the likeness of men, but He did not become altogether like men (Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:7). While being in the likeness of men, the incarnate Christ was very much unlike men.

Man is not eternal except in God's eternal purpose. His existence began in time. However, it has never ceasing existence. Man's existence in time was a present reality to God who has neither a past nor a future. Therefore, all things have, with respect to God, both a known and a real existence simultaneously because there is no time with God. Man's existence in time did not coexist with God, but God coexisted with man. God is the first, and He is simultaneous with the last: "Who hath wrought and done it, calling the

generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he” (Is. 41:4).

The Bible nowhere attempts to prove God’s existence, but it does declare that the knowledge of God is universal (John 1:9; Rom. 1:19-21, 28, 32). Existence itself does not demand a cause. However, the coming into existence of that which did not previously exist does. What is the principle by which an endless series of causes is avoided? The principle is the difference between the Creator (the uncaused Cause) and creation (which demands a cause). This eliminates the endless series of causes. How can one formulate such a principle? An interesting comment is that God is more truly thought than He is described and exists more truly than He is thought. Subjective knowledge of God is less real than the objective fact of His existence. This means that God has more of existence than the thought of Him has. Therefore, formulate the objective, and you will better understand the subjective. When the objective is formulated, the subjective will take care of itself. As light from the sun manifests other things to us, it also manifests itself. God reveals Himself to all without exception in general revelation, but He specially reveals Himself to the elect in grace.

There are only three kinds of beings: (1) There is the Entity without beginning or ending, proper only to God. All creatures not only derive their existence from the eternally existent Creator, but they are also totally dependent on Him. (2) There are beings that had a beginning but shall have no ending. Both angels and men have a never ceasing existence. (3) There are creatures that have both beginning and ending. Beasts, fowls, and fishes all have a beginning and an ending. We are concerned only with the first two in our present study. It must be observed, however, that creature life is successive; whereas, the life of the Creator is inherent.

The angelic creatures were adapted for the celestial sphere. They had access into God’s presence. Celestial beings were created as ministering spirits (Ezek. 28:13-18; Heb. 1:14). There are 273 references to these heavenly creatures. The designation “angel” in both Hebrew and Greek means messenger. The elect angels are the messengers of God (I Tim. 5:21). The fallen angels are the messengers of Satan (Matt. 25:41). The classification of angels is an interesting study, but we only want to consider in this lesson the function of the elect angels. There are not only angels, cherubim, seraphim, and living creatures but reference is made to individuals— Lucifer (son of the morning), Michael (who is like God), and Gabriel (the mighty one). Angels are sometimes called “sons of God” in the Old Testament, while men are called “servants of God.” But in the New Testament, angels are called “servants,” while Christians are called “sons of God.” Angels have a special service for God in behalf of His people. “For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone” (Ps. 91:11, 12). “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. 1:14).

Paul described the close attention given by angels to the Son of God during His first advent: “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in

the flesh...seen of angels..." (I Tim. 3:16). Angels were witnesses of the most important events concerning the Redeemer. They saw Him with wonderment. Here was One who was above them but had come down to be clothed with a nature beneath their own (Heb. 2:9). What amazing condescension! Never until now had they seen the eternal Son insulted and maltreated by His creatures. Their desire to look into the affairs of the redeemed resulted from Christ's sufferings and glory that shall follow (I Pet. 1:10-12). We understand enough about angels to desire to comprehend more. Hence, we desire to look into their affairs as they do ours. Although their knowledge is superior to ours, it is progressive. How different from their Creator who is of "one mind."

An examination of Genesis 1:26 shows the uniqueness of man compared with other creatures adapted for the terrestrial sphere. Man created "in the image" and "according to the likeness" of God has had many interpretations. The words "image" and "likeness" are not synonymous. Image seems to refer to man's capacities; whereas, likeness refers to his tendencies. In God's image, man somehow represents God. In His likeness, he resembled God. Being created in God's image, man was equipped with certain capacities to accomplish God's purpose as His representative. In God's likeness, man was blessed with a tendency Godward, which made cooperation with God a delight.

The word "image" has been interpreted many ways— dominion, man and woman, original uprightness, the non-material aspect of man (soul), and immortality. But the whole man is the image of God. The Genesis record does not imply that certain "higher" qualities exclusively make up the content of the image. Some believe that the image of God is in the immaterial rather than the material part of man. Hence, man's body is excluded from the image. They claim that unless this view is embraced, the Bible student would be supporting the anthropomorphism of earlier sects. Scripture, however, makes no distinction between man's spiritual and bodily attributes in order to limit the image of God to the spiritual (immaterial) aspect of man.

The seat of the image of God in man is the whole man— body and soul. God is said to create man in His image— not the soul only or the body only. As the whole man was the image of God before the fall, the whole regenerated and sanctified man is the image of God (I Thess. 5:23; Rom. 12:1, 2; II Cor. 7:1). Man is like a coin which bears the image of a monarch. Our Lord illustrated this with tax money when He called for a coin and said, "Whose is this image and superscription?" (Mark 12:16). His hearers replied that it was Caesar's, indicating that the head on the coin bore some resemblance to the emperor. It has been said that in creating man God theomorphized (made man in His image); therefore, man necessarily anthropomorphizes (views God as a Person who sees, hears, etc.). What other idea of God can we have? Without God revealing Himself to us in human terms, it is impossible for us to have any concept of our God. God does not reveal Himself to us in terms of angelic language. The perfections of God are represented by the human body— His omniscience by eyes, omnipresence by ears, omnipotence by arm and hand, and His pleasure or displeasure by His face toward or against men.

Modernists sneer at the childlike faith of Christians and designate us as anthropomorphists. But the word anthropomorphism does not frighten Christians. Its



derivation is simple. It is a compound word made up of *anthropos* (man) and *morphe* (form, the Greek for substance). Hence, we have a thought of God in human form: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:5-8). The ultimate expression of God identifying Himself with man is in the humanity of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Christians see no difficulty in believing that the body of Adam was formed according to the idea of the body of Christ in the Divine mind. “And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil...” (Gen. 3:22). “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come” (Rom. 5:14). “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me” (Heb. 10:5).

Scripture speaks of man formed after the Divine image (Gen. 1:27). This indicates a profound principle of Biblical thought. It presupposes God to account for man. Man, therefore, does not form an idea of God from himself. But he forms an idea of himself from God. There are two sides to the God-resemblance of man— one can be lost, and the other cannot. That which was lost in the fall is regained by redemption and regeneration (Col. 3:10; Rom. 8:29). There is, on the other hand, a God-resemblance even in fallen man (Gen. 9:6; James 3:9).

Angels and men were both created for their respective spheres— spiritual and physical. The nature of men is inferior to that of angels. Men at their highest are compared to angels. Stephen’s highest moment of spirituality is analogous to an angel. His face was seen as the face of an angel (Acts 6:15). David’s wisdom is said to be as “an angel of God” (II Sam. 14:20). Paul’s eloquence could not surpass angels (I Cor. 13:1). Angels are spirits (Heb. 1:14), everlasting spirits (Luke 20:36), and heavenly spirits (Matt. 24:36). Men are dust and ashes (Gen. 18:27), grass (I Pet. 1:24), and have their abode on earth (I Cor. 15:47).

Man created in the image of God has no higher purpose than to be a reflection of God. He must never presume to be original. Original and image are opposites. He that becomes image is nothing in himself, but he exhibits all that he is in absolute dependence upon Him whose image he bears. Original man was glorious, but fallen man is despicable. Fallen man, in opposition to God, undertakes to make an image of God (Rom. 1:21-23). However, God alone has the prerogative to make an image of Himself. Therefore, the image in man lost by the fall is restored by the incarnate Christ through His work of reconciliation. Since the whole man was made in the image of God originally, the whole man becomes the new image of God eternally. There is an interdependence between the soul and the body in the elect, just as there is an interdependence between the form of God and the form of man in Jesus Christ, the Son of Man.

God who inhabits eternity prepared a body for His Son that was adapted for time. Thus, we have the incarnation which was a necessity for the redemption of the elect. David

prophesied the incarnation: “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me” (Ps. 40:7). The writer of Hebrews quoted this prophecy and added, “...a body hast thou prepared me [aorist middle indicative of *katartidzo*, which means a body you prepared or provided me]” (Heb. 10:5). Christ’s body was human but sinless. Being clothed with a human body, Christ could stand in the place of men. Furthermore, being sinless, the Lord Jesus Christ could be a substitute for sinful men before God.

When the Son of Man accomplished His mission, His earthly body had to be adapted for its eternal habitation. After His resurrection, Christ told Mary, “...Touch me not [present middle imperative of *hapto*, which means cease clinging to me],” because He had not ascended to the Father (John 20:17). Between that time and when Christ “appeared in another form [*en haterai morphei*— in a different form],” His body had been adapted for heaven (Mark 16:12). One must remember that Christ’s body was not subject to corruption. Therefore, He could appear to Mary in His resurrected but unglorified body. The ascension of John 20:17 is not the same as that described in Acts 1:9-11. Hence, the transformation of Christ’s body which had been adapted for earth took place between the time He said to Mary, “Cease clinging to Me,” and His appearance to the disciples behind closed doors (John 20:26-29).

Man who was created for earth in time must undergo a change to adapt him for eternity. As Jesus Christ ascended to heaven as the glorified God-Man, the Christian will enter heaven to be with Christ as man— soul and body. The new liberties of Christ’s “different form” (Mark 16:12) suggest the kind of freedom the elect will have when they shall be made like Christ: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2).

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# 5

## **MAN IN TIME HAS ETERNITY IN HIS HEART**

God not only inhabits eternity but He put eternity in the heart of man whom he created in time. Of all earthly creatures, man is the only one who will live eternally either with the eternal God or separated from Him. There are only two destinies for mankind— heaven or hell. Having considered, to the best of our finite understanding, the immensity of eternity, let us now consider the twofold relationship of mankind in time to the eternal God.

God dwells in eternity: “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy...” (Is. 57:15). Included in this statement are (1) God’s supreme

rank— “the high and lofty One,” (2) God’s eternal existence— “that inhabiteth eternity [dwells in eternity],” and (3) God’s absolute holiness— “Whose name is Holy.” God’s voice from eternity to men in time reveals the incomprehensible difference between eternity and time. Although God’s eternity is intellectually incomprehensible, the thought of it is invaluable. Although men cannot comprehend eternity, they can comprehend that there is an eternity in which the high and holy One dwells.

God’s indwelling eternity exalts Him above the limitations of time and frees Him from the limitations of space. God is not in time, but time is of God. Time has a beginning and an ending, but eternity is an eternal “now.” We speak of time as having passed, but to use that terminology with reference to eternity would suggest that God is older now than He was. Eternity is that perfection of God whereby He is elevated above time. Furthermore, God’s infinity with reference to space is called immensity. Immensity may be defined as perfection of the Divine Being by which He transcends all spatial limitations, and yet He is present in every point of space with His whole Being: “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?” (I Kings 8:27). “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD” (Jer. 23:24).

The nature of God is spiritual. His spiritual nature is of an immaterial substance unlimited by material nature. The essence of God is indivisible. It has been said that the light of the sun cannot be divided; therefore, it is entire in every place (in its sphere). As the sun is entire in every place in its sphere, God who created the sun is more present in eternity than His created sun in its sphere. This is why the prophets said God fills the heavens and the earth and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him.

Imperfection in man’s vision is not the thing that renders him unable to see the invisible God. Since God is spiritual, our apprehension of and approach unto Him must be spiritual. Man can neither paint a portrait nor make an image of God whom he has never seen. The attractiveness of the flesh has no place in spiritual worship. God who is Spirit can be embraced and known only by the spirit of a regenerated person.

God alone is eternal. Something must exist as a cause before anything can exist as an effect. A nonentity giving existence to itself is impossible. If there is an act, something must exist to produce the act. This means the Cause is eternal and the effect is temporal. The will to create is eternal, but the creation is not. From the standpoint of God, the creation of the world was not in the past and its destruction will not be in the future. Hence, it can be said that the eternal God knows all things by one act of knowledge, purposes all things by one act of His will, and creates all things by one act of His power. Eternity implies perfection and completion, and time implies imperfection and incompleteness. Some say that eternity with succession is like immensity with extension and omniscience with contingency. That eternity is the timeless state can be factually stated.

Man's comprehension that there is an eternity is because God has set eternity in his heart: "...he hath set the world in their heart..." (Eccl. 3:11). The NASB has translated the statement, "...He has also set eternity in their heart...." This is why the things of time can never satisfy man. His heart is too large for them. Hence, there is an instinct in man which makes him dissatisfied with the finite. All living creatures on earth other than man are satisfied with their sustenance. However, man is never satisfied. As a depraved person, he does not know wherein true satisfaction lies. The great lesson of Ecclesiastes is that one without Christ can never be satisfied, even if he possessed the whole world. His heart is too large for the object. Hence, he says, "...vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Eccl. 1:2).

The problem of Ecclesiastes is how one can be satisfied without the eternal God. There is only one long comment in this book: "...Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again" (John 4:13). The impartial verdict was brought in by Solomon who was in the best position to know. He knew by experience. He sought satisfaction in science (Eccl. 1:4-11), but he observed a dreadful sameness. He tried wisdom (Eccl. 1:12-18), but all to no purpose. The book of Proverbs gives the sufficiency of Divine wisdom, but Ecclesiastes shows the insufficiency of human wisdom. Solomon tried pleasure and found that it is dangerous to take pleasure in pleasure (Eccl. 2:1-11). Pleasure is always exaggerated. Nothing is ever said about the high price one pays for a little pleasure that is short-lived. Moses chose suffering with the people of God rather than pleasure: "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25). It always appeals to a person's lustful appetite. Solomon tried materialism but hated his labor, because he did not know if the person who received what he left would be wise or a fool (Eccl. 2:12-23). He tried wealth but found he could never satisfy his appetite for more (Eccl. 5:6-12). He tried morality only to find that a high moral plane gave no lasting satisfaction (Eccl. 7:1-12; 12).

Solomon was a wise man. As King in Jerusalem, Solomon was in an exalted position. He was the wisest man of his day. Solomon was a literate—"he spake three thousand proverbs," a musician—"his songs were a thousand and five," a forester—"he spake of trees," a zoologist—"he spake also of beasts," an ornithologist—"he spake...of fowl," and a biologist—"he spake...of creeping things" (I Kings 4:29-34). As wise as the King was, he spoke as man "under the sun," not as a man "in the Son of God." Hence, the key to the problem is man "under the sun," a statement used 28 times in this book.

Scripture proves that a subjective knowledge of God's eternal existence abides within every human being: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1:19-21). Since man's subjective knowledge of God's eternal power (proof of existence) is an objective fact, it must be revealed and established by evidence. Atheists (so-called) seek to prove that God is nonexistent. They foolishly reason like a man who walks outside his home, looks

through a window, sees no one inside, and denies that anyone lives there. One who claimed to be an atheist said he was an atheist and God knew it. As a person acknowledges his own existence by doubting it, he acknowledges God's existence by questioning it. Eternity being set in the heart of every man renders him inexcusable before God. The eternity within acknowledges God's eternal power and Godhead.

The message of The Song of Solomon is different from that of Ecclesiastes. The person in grace learns that he cannot fathom the infinite preciousness of God's love provided in Christ's redemptive work which has been shed abroad in his heart by the regenerating Holy Spirit. However, he is satisfied with the triune God, because the Object of his love is too large for his heart. His heart in which eternity has been set has been touched by Divine grace. One may drink water from this world's well (*phrear*, well or cistern), but he will thirst again (John 4:11, 12). However, when one by grace drinks once-for-all the water that God gives, he will never thirst (John 4:14). The absence of thirst is because he has life for the soul, light for the mind, love for the heart, grace for strength, comfort for sorrow, faith for the pilgrimage, and hope for the future.

The Song of Solomon is one of the most misunderstood books of the Bible, because men by nature do not have spiritual minds. The book gives the history of a humble and virtuous woman engaged to be married to a man of unexcelled qualities. Hence, it is a revelation of the chaste and virtuous love which no splendor can dazzle and no flattery can seduce. One who correctly interprets the Song will recognize in it a duality in unity, for which it expresses pure and marital love ordained by God in creation and the vindication of that love against asceticism and lust. The deeper and larger prophetic meaning has reference to Christ and His sheep.

Spiritually-minded people rejoice in this Song. It was sung annually on the eighth day of the passover feast. Therefore, only those who know Christ as their Passover can possibly understand it. It speaks to Christians in a profound manner about Christ's love for them and their love for Him.

The text of the book is 2:16— "My beloved is mine, and I am his...." The Song does not bring before us the first movements of God in the soul. They had already been settled. One must be attracted to Jesus Christ because of who He is and not merely for what He has done. It has been pointed out that there are three stages of love in the life of a Christian, and they are emphasized in this Song: (1) The young woman said, "My beloved is mine, and I am his..." (2:16). This is the first ruling thought in the mind of one who has been regenerated. Observe the order in the text. She spoke of the "beloved" being her possession before acknowledging that she was his possession. (2) She said, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine..." (6:3). Here the order is reversed. The ownership of the beloved is now given its rightful place in her thoughts. This denotes spiritual growth. It is no longer "mine" but "thine". (3) She said, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me" (7:10). Here the word "mine" is dropped in perfect assurance that being the beloved's includes all. The beloved's ownership of the young woman swallows up every other thought in the spiritually mature Christian.

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## THE CERTAINTY OF ETERNITY AND THE UNCERTAINTY OF TIME ARE CONTRASTED

an's short time on earth bears a never ending relationship to eternity. His duration of time is uncertain. Therefore, two impressive warnings are given, one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament: "BOAST not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1). "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil" (James 4:13-16). Man's today does not satisfy apart from his expectation of tomorrow. The only thing certain about tomorrow is its uncertainty. Therefore, "BOAST not thyself of to morrow...." People in general admit that tomorrow is uncertain, but they seem to think there is an exception in their particular case.

The warning "BOAST not thyself of to morrow" does not mean that man is to give no thought to preparation for "a rainy day." "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest" (Prov. 6:6-8). Here we see what the fall of man has done to him. Man created in God's image and after His likeness was given dominion over the lower creation (Gen. 1:26-28); but now as a depraved creature, he is sent to school and taught by the ant. That should take the wind out of the lazy man's sail, but it will not because he is void of understanding.

The sluggard is an inactive and lazy person. Conversely, the ant is industrious in order to provide food for the time of its scarcity. The lazy person is without excuse. He possesses the spirit of understanding, and he has guides (Job 32:8; Mal. 2:7). On the other hand, the ant has neither guide nor overseer. God warned the Israelites about not knowing the judgment of the Lord by contrasting them with creatures: "...the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD" (Jer. 8:7).

The sluggard is void of understanding: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction" (Prov. 24:30-32). The understanding person plows his field, looks to its crops, and tries to make

the best of everything. On the other hand, the man void of understanding or empty headed conjures up excuses by his own imagination. “The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing” (Prov. 20:4). “The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets” (Prov. 22:13). Although the sluggard is too lazy to work, neither his imagination nor his tongue is slothful. The imagination can create a whole menagerie of wild beasts, and the tongue never tires of complaining about inclement weather.

God who purposed that man shall reap has also purposed that he shall sow. He did not place Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden to walk through and watch the spontaneous growth of food supplies without their dressing and keeping it. God appointed that every Israelite should have a piece of land, thus making him a landowner. He meant that each man should possess and cultivate his apportionment. Furthermore, God appointed for His people a spiritual inheritance, not that we should lie down beside it, but be diligent: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Eccl. 9:10). We should work while it is day because the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4).

Solomon, who gathered instruction from the sluggard’s farm, said, “Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction” (Prov. 24:32). Men generally gain wisdom if they possess wisdom. The artist’s eye sees the beauty of the landscape because he has beauty in his mind. The spiritual mind sees the neglected vineyard of his own life and determines to do something about it. Without cultivation the believer’s mind will produce an abundant crop of evil thoughts and vain imaginations which will affect his soul. Furthermore, without continually pruning and training his affections, his heart is prone to become occupied with temporary objects that will prevent it from being captured with eternal issues. A neglected garden and a neglected life both lose their distinction.

Men must not waste what God in providence gives because “He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich” (Prov. 10:4). This rule applies not only to the business of life but also to the concerns of man’s soul. It is true that we are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8), but the other side of the coin says, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). It has been said that it would be a libel on the Divine economy to imagine that the tender plant of grace would thrive in the sluggard’s garden. Hence, we are not only to give diligence to make our calling and election sure (II Pet. 1:10) but to add to the faith God has given (II Pet. 1:5-9). The Greek word for “diligence” of II Peter 1:5 is *spoude*. It means haste, earnestness, or diligence. The verb used in verse 10 is an aorist imperative of *spoude*, which means to urge on or to make haste. Diligence includes the employment of time. It implies activity, watchfulness, constancy, and perseverance.

Diligence is opposite to delay. Therefore, “BOAST not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Prov. 27:1). Since there is a sinful confidence regarding the future, none should say what he will or will not do tomorrow. While we can

review our past life, we can make no prediction of its future in time. We are not forbidden to look to the future and provide for prospective needs, but presumptuous confidence about the future is denounced: “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow...” (James 4:13, 14a). The arrogant words “we will” displaced “If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (James 4:15). The person who says “If the Lord will” recognizes with David that “his times” are in God’s hand: “My times are in thy hand...” (Ps. 31:15). Conversely, those who say “we will” deny that their times are in God’s hand.

Our times of prosperity, adversity, and death are all in God’s hand. Hence, our living as well as our dying is in the hand of God. No wonder James raised the question, “What is your life?” and answered, “It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14). Scripture proves that it is a dying life and a living death: “I die daily” (I Cor. 15:31) and “...though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (II Cor. 4:16). The verb “perish” is present passive indicative of the Greek verb *diaphtheiro*, which means the outward self is progressively decaying. Therefore, our physical life is so unstable that James asked, What is it? It is a vapor (*atmis*, an exhalation, vapor, or smoke— used only here and Acts 2:19).

The boastful words “we will” are evil because they replace the will of the sovereign God (James 4:15, 16). Men who speak in this manner are relying on a second cause rather than the first Cause, the Cause of the second cause. Every effect has a cause, and that means the second cause is the effect of the first uncaused Cause. The uncaused Cause is by necessity self-existent, and therefore eternal and unchangeable. Hence, those who put their will above God’s are practical atheists. However, this is no more evil than religionists who believe God’s will is subordinate to theirs. God said to Moses, “...I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy” (Rom. 9:15, 16). Paul said to the Philippian saints, “...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12, 13). Man’s will to do good is the effect of God’s will. Therefore, the second cause is the effect of the first uncaused Cause.

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# 7

**MAN’S ETERNAL EXISTENCE DOES NOT  
CONSIST IN THE POSSESSIONS OF TIME**



The subject of Luke 12:13-21 is “beware of covetousness.” It literally means that one should take heed and guard himself from inordinate desire for more. Unlawful desire is forbidden. Within the context of this passage, Christ warned His disciples about being unduly concerned about their physical welfare. Our Lord’s discourse was interrupted by a man who wanted Him to intervene in a case where an inheritance was involved. At first sight, Christ’s refusal to arbitrate between the two brothers might seem astonishing. Was not a question of justice to be decided? Furthermore, who is more competent to deal with it than the Holy and Just One? However, a second look reveals that the brother who was demanding his dues, as well as his brother against whom he complained, was moved by the spirit of covetousness. Hence, Christ said unto them (not him), “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions” (Luke 12:15 NASB).

The Biblical understanding of Luke 12:13-21 condemns both socialism and communism. Socialism is the theory of a political and economic organization that advocates public, collective ownership and management. Its philosophy is that social reform can be brought about by collective effort. Communism is the theory of a social organization based on holding in common all property whose ownership and control is ascribed to a totalitarian and self-perpetuating political party. On the contrary, the community of goods in the Jerusalem assembly was not compulsory. It was the Christians’ voluntary act of love rather than duty. Nowhere outside of Jerusalem do we find any other Christian community of goods. The Lord left no definite instructions for the future community of goods by His “little flock.” (See Acts 2:44, 45; 4:32.) There are brief references to the assembly’s responsibility to Christians (Acts 6; I Tim. 5).

The passage before us also condemns the idea of the present existence of the kingdom of Christ. The things of God and the things of Caesar are distinguished in this age. This distinction will not exist in the kingdom of Christ. There would be no need for the teaching of Romans 13:1-7 if the kingdom presently existed. Christ’s first advent was not to establish the kingdom but to redeem those who would become heirs of the kingdom. Christ’s mission was not to socialize mankind but to redeem the elect. Furthermore, He disclaimed the position of “judge” (*krites*, one who passes judgment) in the case of a civil matter. He also refused to be a “divider” (*meristes*, an arbitrator or apportioner) in this civil matter. He refused to take from the oppressor and give to the oppressed, and He did not encourage the oppressed to take from the oppressor. He condemned oppression. On the other hand, as King of the kingdom Jesus Christ will not permit oppression. His reign will not be restricted. It will be universal.

Covetousness is an inordinate desire for the things of time. It is often represented as prudence. The prudent, like the ant that prepares its food supply for the future, manifests foresight in his planning. However, the prudent may often be like the rich farmer in the parable that Christ gave to illustrate covetousness. Some have said the one good thing recorded of the rich farmer is that he thought of the future and laid up for years to come. But his thought was bad because it was of time without considering eternity.

Covetousness has its roots in the creature rather than the Creator. The rich farmer loved himself more than the Creator. Such a person may be industrious and moral and yet be a slave to covetousness. Inordinate desire manifests itself by dissatisfaction. The sole interest of a covetous person is the inordinate desire for more, even at the expense of others or his own soul: "...the love of money is the root of all evil..." (I Tim. 6:10). Money itself is not evil, but the love of it leads to all kinds of evil: "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (I Tim. 6:9). The words "drown," "destruction," and "perdition" must be considered. "Drown" is the present active indicative of *buthidzo*, which means to cause to sink or drag to the bottom. The person who has an inordinate desire for riches will drown in his own lusts. There is no sin too heinous for the lover of money. "Destruction" (*olethros*, ruin, destruction, or death) and "perdition" (*apoleia*, utter destruction; eternal ruin or perdition) are used together only in this place, and they show the result of being dragged to the bottom by an inordinate desire for money. The destruction experienced by the lover of money will be eternal perdition.

The providence of God caused the farm in the parable of the rich man to be productive. There is no doubt the rich farmer was considered an industrious person who took advantage of the seasons and made the most of them. His frugality was revealed by making good crops and knowing the value of saving what he harvested. There is nothing wrong with laying up something for "a rainy day." Providence does not always provide good seasons. Therefore, the farmer should store up something for a time of drought or famine. He should not waste what he could not use. Furthermore, there is nothing wrong with enlarging one's plans. Progress demands setting aside old plans and making new ones. The rich farmer, according to the picture Christ drew, would be considered by the world as wise, industrious, and frugal. But he portrays a man our Lord called a "fool." He did not consider the providence of God as the cause of the productivity of his land because he thought he was the cause.

The reasons Christ called the rich farmer in the parable a fool are evident: (1) In the conversation the farmer had with himself, he used the pronouns "I," "me," "thou," and "thine." He lived as though there were no God or eternity. (2) He spoke to his soul as though it should be grateful for the provision he had made for its future. He was presumptuous of the future. (3) He supposed that the worldly goods of time would satisfy his soul in which eternity had been placed. God broke in on his soliloquy with the shocking statement, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou has provided?" (Luke 12:20).

The rich man not only thought within himself but spoke to himself. One who considers only self is empty. The personal pronouns manifest that he was wrapped up in himself. He applauded himself, but God said, "Thou fool." With selfishly depraved men, honesty, plain dealing, and preaching of the gospel are foolishness, but they are not so with God. The farmer promised himself ease, pleasure, and contentment for many years, but God threatened him with death that very night. The farmer appropriated all the provided peace, comfort, and contentment to his own soul, but God questioned who should have the things he had provided. Hence, the rich man from God's perspective is an entirely

different person from the one seen on the surface by men. This is understandable because man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart.

The rich farmer thought of time and himself rather than God and eternity: "...Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19). The different tenses of the verbs in the command of the farmer to his soul are interesting. There is one Greek word for each of the parts of the command: (1) "Take thine ease" is present middle imperative of *anapauro*, which means "keep on resting." (2) "Eat" is aorist active imperative of *esthio*, which means "eat at once." (3) "Drink" is aorist active imperative of *pino*, which means "drink your fill." (4) "Be merry" is present passive imperative of *euphraino*, which means "keep on being merry." The rich man felt that he was the master of his own destiny. The command to his soul was as empty as the often heard statement, "Have a good day." The fool was saying, "Have not only a good day but a good tomorrow." However, the fool had to leave his crops unharvested and his barns unbuilt. His prosperity in time was not because he was industrious and frugal, but God's providence caused the land to bring forth plentifully.

The rich farmer did not know his own name. Furthermore, his real name was not known by others until God revealed it. Many live most of their lives without knowing who they are. After all, there is something to the frequently repeated statement, "I am trying to find out who I am." Without knowing it, their statement has revealed who they are. The rich man in the parable was no doubt known as a prosperous, great, frugal, eminent, etc., man. But God said his name was "fool." The Greek word for "fool" is *aphron*, which means unwise, spiritually unenlightened, boastfully foolish, or vain. The only place God is not in the thoughts of the wicked. This is practical atheism: "THE fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good" (Ps. 14:1). Hence, the wicked live in a state of habitual forgetfulness of God. They, like the rich farmer, act without an abiding sense of accountability to God. They live for self and time and not for God and eternity.

God said, "...Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." "This night" is not what Jeremiah told Hananiah or Hosea told the revolting Israelites: "Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the LORD. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month" (Jer. 28:16, 17). "And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them. They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them. They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions" (Hos. 5:5-7).

The death of the righteous comes as the dawning of the morning: "Seek him that...turneth the shadow of death into the morning..." (Amos 5:8). The call is a gracious summons by the electing God. Conversely, the death of the wicked is like a vessel being dragged from its moorings. It is like the approach of a tempestuous night: "The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered: he openeth his eyes, and he is not. Terrors take hold on him

as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night” (Job 27:19, 20). Unlike the Christian’s gracious summons, the call of the wicked will be by forceful arrest. God said to the covetous farmer who lived for time and ignored eternity, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee” (Luke 12:20).

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## 8

### MAN WAS CREATED IN TIME TO LIVE ETERNALLY

The eternal God created man in time, but man created in time shall live forever. Time is transitory presence, but eternity is abiding presence. The adjective “transitory” means that which is passing is short-lived. It is opposite to that which is permanent. Time consists of future, present, and past; but the present is all of time that actually exists. When God created the universe with time, all time was future. When time shall be no more, all time will be past.

Time and change coexist. Therefore, man must be changed by grace in time to insure an eternity with the eternal God, with whom there is no change. There is no change where there is eternity. Those for whom Christ died are first changed by grace in regeneration. From that time, they are continually changed until they are finally changed in glorification. The first change assures the final change: “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). The word “confident” is a perfect active participle of *peitho*, which means to be confident, convinced, or persuaded. God’s preservation of the good work He began in the Philippian saints is described by the future active indicative of *epiteleo*, which means to carry out to completion. It must be pointed out, however, that God’s preservation is linked with human perseverance in the statement “...your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil. 1:5). This proves that once God has begun a good work in a person, the recipient never remains passive: “...whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well [*pege*, a source or fountain] of water springing up into [to] everlasting life” (John 4:14).

Paul spoke of the “outward” and the “inward” man: “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (II Cor. 4:16). The apostle was not teaching dualism but duality. The two must not be confused by making them identical. There is duality but not dualism in man. Duality signifies that there are two aspects in man, but dualism divides man into two mutually irreducible elements. Duality within created reality does not exclude unity. Duality between body

and soul becomes dualism only when there is a separation which destroys the unity between them. Hence, when we speak of the assembly (church) as the body of Christ, we are talking about one Divine organism with two aspects. The assembly (church), like man, is essentially one with two aspects— visible and invisible. As the visible aspect of the assembly is not swallowed in the invisible and the invisible is not swallowed in the visible, the outward man is not swallowed in the inward man and the inward man is not swallowed in the outward man. Furthermore, as the assembly (church) is neither visible nor invisible only, but both, man is neither outward nor inward only, but both. The assembly (church) and man are both mysteries.

A very important question must be answered. Is man dichotomous or trichotomous? This is a debatable subject among theologians. Those who believe man is dichotomous teach that trichotomy began with Greek philosophy, which has a dualistic background. They claim that such philosophy broke the unity of man's nature. On the other hand, those who teach trichotomy believe the dualistic tension is even more acute in the dichotomistic view. The debate goes on.

The following are the basic arguments used by dichotomists: (1) There are two distinct elements in man— material and immaterial. (2) Spirit and soul are not two substances but one and the same immaterial substance viewed from two aspects. (3) I Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12 do not teach trichotomy, because the Bible elsewhere speaks of man as consisting of two parts (Rom. 8:10; I Cor. 5:5; II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 2:3; Col. 2:5).

The following are the basic arguments used by trichotomists: (1) Man is a trinity in unity (I Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12). (2) Through the spirit, soul, and body, man attains God, self, and world consciousness. (3) The triunity of man's personality may be compared to the Mosaic tabernacle. In his spirit, man enters the holy of holies through God-given faith. He believes what he can neither see nor feel. In his soul, man enters the holy place through his understanding of things seen in the light of the candlestick. In his body, man manifests what he believes and understands by the way he lives. Hence, the unseen spirit and soul are manifested in the body which is seen.

There were two aspects of the one creative act of God of Genesis 2:7— “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul [being— NASB].” Hence, man is not dualistic. He is one person with a dual nature— material and immaterial. The two natures of man's being are closely connected. The soul is adapted to the body, and the body is adapted to the soul.

Man's immaterial nature consists of spirit and soul. The spirit is the seat of God-consciousness, and the soul is the seat of self-consciousness. The Greek word for spirit is *pneuma*, and the word for soul is *psuche*.

The “spirit” is the higher consciousness of man's immaterial nature. The word “spirit,” *pneuma*, is used several ways in Scripture. Spirit refers to the noncorporeal entity in personality, whether human (Mark 14:38; Luke 1:17; Rom. 1:9; 2:29; I Cor. 2:11),

Divine (Matt. 1:18, 20; 3:16; John 14:26; Acts 5:3, 4), angelic (Heb. 1:14), or demonic (Mark 1:23; I Tim. 4:1). We are concerned with the human spirit in this lesson. The spirit of man is the higher consciousness of man's immaterial personality.

The soul is the lower consciousness of man's immaterial nature. The word "soul," *psuche*, means breath, life; the principle of animal life; the soul of man (the inner self— Luke 12:19); the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions; the essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death. This word is translated heart, life, mind, and soul. The adjective *psuchikos* proves the soul is lower than the spirit in the consciousness of man. It means not possessing the Spirit of God, nonspiritual, physical, and sensual (I Cor. 2:14; 15:44— twice, 46; James 3:15; Jude 19).

Man's material nature consists of a body. The body of man is essential to his being. The soul is designed for the body, and the body is designed for the soul. There is an interdependence between soul and body. Man was created a whole being. Every act of man is seen as an act of the whole man. The body is not viewed as less valuable than the soul. "HAVING therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1). "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:23). "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:12). "I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19, 20). "It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven" (I Cor. 15:43-47). Hence, the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, a sacrifice for service, an instrument for righteousness, a means of glorifying God, and a seed-corn for the glorified, spiritual body.

There are two kinds of error regarding the body. Some are concerned with the health of the body to the neglect of the soul. Others abuse their bodies by failing to show the proper respect for them. The body of the believer is not his vessel, but it is the Spirit's temple (I Cor. 6:19, 20). Paul's desire was that he and the people to whom he ministered would put the "body" in its proper place. The Christian is to give the body its need but not what its lust calls for or desires. It must not be injured or defiled but possessed in sanctification and honor: "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (I Thess. 4:4). There is a double love in every Christian—supernatural for Christ and natural for the body: "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his

wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church [assembly]" (Eph. 5:28, 29).

Paul's thought was far from gnostic dualism, in which the soul is imprisoned in the body and longs for escape. God's making woman for man was not a dualism but a unity (Gen. 2:22, 23), and so it was in His making the body for the soul. Therefore, Genesis 2:7 is a revelation of man's complete createdness and dependence in his whole existence.

What is man? We will seek to answer the direct question by first asking some questions: (1) Is man a soul? (2) Does man have a soul? (3) Is man a combination of spirit and body, forming a soul? (4) Is man a soul who has a body? (5) Is man a combination of spirit, soul, and body?

In answer to the first question, to say "man is a soul" is to emphasize the immaterial (incorporeal or spiritual) to the neglect of the material (corporeal or physical). If man is the soul, what need is there for a body?

In answer to the second question, to say "man has a soul" is failure to give all that constitutes man. Man was not designed to be merely a soul. There is an interdependence between soul and body. Man is an incarnated soul.

In answer to the third question, to say "man is a combination of spirit and body, forming a soul" is untenable. That would make the order of the words, "spirit and body, even the soul." If this were true, the personality would be dissolved at death—a doctrine worse than soul sleep. The spirit and soul represent the immaterial side of man.

In answer to the fourth question, to say "man is a soul who has a body" is, like the first two questions, placing emphasis on just one aspect of man's being.

In answer to the fifth question, to say that "man is a combination of spirit, soul, and body" is Biblical; but so is "soul and body" or "spirit and flesh (body)." The "spirit and soul" represent the immaterial feature of man, which may be called either spirit (Luke 1:17, 47, 80; 2:40; 23:46; John 11:33; 13:21; Acts 7:59; 11:12; 17:16; 18:5, 25; 19:21; Rom. 1:9; 7:6; I Cor. 2:11; etc.) or soul (Matt. 10:28; Mark 8:37; John 12:27; Acts 2:27, 31; 14:22; 15:24; Heb. 4:12; 6:19; 10:39; James 1:21; I Pet. 1:22; II Pet. 2:8; III John 2). The "spirit" and the "soul" are distinct but inseparable. Their distinction is used in a metaphorical sense by the word of God, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit" (Heb. 4:12). They are never separated. The "spirit" is the higher part of the immaterial feature of man which understands (I Cor. 2:11) and is in touch with the unseen by worshipping God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The "soul" is the other part of the immaterial feature of man that connects it with the body. It desires, loves, sorrows, hates, etc. The personality is sometimes connected with the soul (Acts 2:41, 43) and sometimes with the body (Acts 8:2).

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## THE WHOLE MAN CREATED IN TIME WILL LIVE ETERNALLY

Since the fall of Adam, men have had difficulty preserving a proper balance between the material and immaterial natures of man. In our study of man, we are dealing with the whole man. The wonder of man cannot be explained in terms of his soul alone, and even less in terms of his body alone. The “whole man” —material and immaterial natures— must be considered. The “whole man” was affected in the fall, and the “whole man” is redeemed. Hence, the Bible deals with the “whole man” in the actuality of his existence. Furthermore, we can never see man from the Biblical perspective as long as we remove what some call the “real man” from his bodily existence. False religions, in their quest for the “real man,” have ignored the whole man. Scripture does speak of a change from the corruptible to the incorruptible and from the mortal to the immortal, but this transformation does not minimize the “whole man.”

Scripture does not view man’s body as secondary. The moment one devaluates the body of man he has deactualized man’s reality as a creature of God. The informed Christian will always be suspicious of any view of the human body which, in one way or another, devaluates it to detract from the genuineness of the Divinely created human being.

In our last lesson, we gave the basic arguments of the dichotomists and the trichotomists concerning their respective views of man. We will summarize their views before giving a more detailed study of the “whole man.” The dichotomist would say that God works upon the spirit, the spirit works upon the body, and the body works upon the world. The trichotomist adds one thing. He says God works upon the spirit, the spirit works upon the soul, the soul works upon the body, and the body works upon the world. Thus, the trichotomist places strong emphasis upon the order of I Thessalonians 5:23— “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Neither dichotomists nor trichotomists believe man is “all soul,” but they differ in their views of man’s immaterial nature. Dichotomists believe the soul and spirit are not two substances, but they are one and the same immaterial substance viewed from two aspects. On the other hand, trichotomists believe the spirit and soul are two substances within man’s immaterial nature.

The difficulty between dichotomy and trichotomy is a man-made problem, but there is a simple solution where prejudice does not prevail. Scripture is plain concerning the nature of the spirit and the soul. Both are immaterial. When no distinction is made between spirit and soul, one correctly views man as dichotomous. Both spirit and soul are one as to their nature; hence, man is dichotomous. He has only two natures— immaterial and



material, incorporeal and corporeal. However, when spirit and soul are viewed as two substances within the immaterial nature, we are forced to use the term trichotomous. It is not contradictory to say that when the two elements— spirit and soul— are discussed as one nature (immaterial), man is dichotomous. On the other hand, when one shows that the two elements— spirit and soul— are two different substances, it is not contradictory to say that man is trichotomous.

Some teach that when a person is “born of the flesh” (John 3:6), he is dichotomous (soul and body); but when he is “born of the Spirit” (John 3:6, 8), he is trichotomous (spirit and soul and body). This view makes the unbeliever a dichotomous person without a human spirit, and only the believer is a trichotomous person with a human spirit. When this theory is taken to its logical conclusion, one must believe that before the fall, man was trichotomous; but after the fall in a state of depravity, man is dichotomous. Unless fallen man is regenerated, he will never become a trichotomous person. Hence, the bottom line of such teaching makes depraved man something less than man.

The soul is the link between the spirit and the body. Hence, the order of I Thessalonians 5:23 is important: “...spirit and soul and body....” It has been suggested that a type of the difference and relationship between the two elements of man’s immaterial nature is found in man and woman. In their characteristic difference, they typify the features of spirit and soul. Man is known for his mentality and woman for her emotionality. Each complements the other in the relationship. One is not complete without the other. In the fall, Adam was not deceived, “but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (I Tim. 2:14). The serpent deceived Eve (Gen. 3:13). Adam was led by the affection of his soul. His understanding was seduced by the affection of his soul for Eve. The spirit of Adam fell with his soul, and Eve fell with Adam.

The spirit has yielded its authority to the soul in fallen man: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (I Cor. 2:14). (See Rom. 1:21-28.) Conversely, the spirit is in control in the believer. Man’s spirit is the seat of his mind, or understanding: “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (I Cor. 2:11). Therefore, it should be sanctified (I Thess. 5:23). It should be cleansed from everything that might pollute it: “HAVING therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (II Cor. 7:1). The verb “cleanse” is first aorist active subjunctive of *katharidzo*, which means to cleanse or purify. The aorist subjunctive means immediate point-type action. However, there is a continual struggle in “perfecting” (present active participle of *epiteleo*, which means to complete or to carry into practice), which means to bring to completeness that state of holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). This perfecting is achieved by a reverential fear of God controlling the believer: “And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth” (I Pet. 1:17 NASB). Cleansing includes the whole man, in which the spirit is one of the elements. Intelligence and judgment are ascribed to the Spirit (Hebrew *ruach* or Greek *pneuma*).

The spirit is the noncorporeal element in personality, whether Divine, human, angelic, or demonic. These are some of the numerous references in the Old and New Testaments: “And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled...” (Gen. 41:8). “...The LORD thy God hardened his spirit...” (Deut. 2:30). “And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser...” (I Chron. 5:26). “...They provoked his spirit...” (Ps. 106:33). “They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding...” (Is. 29:24). “...The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41). “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit...” (Luke 1:80). “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59). “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit...” (Rom. 1:9). “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit...” (Philem. 25).

Affections, appetites, and desires are ascribed to the soul (Hebrew *nephesh* or Greek *psuche*). The soul is the lower noncorporeal element in the immaterial nature of man. Like the spirit, there are many references to the soul. The following are a few: “...The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter...” (Gen. 34:8). “...The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David...” (I Sam. 18:1). “...So panteth my soul after thee, O God” (Ps. 42:1). “...My soul thirsteth for thee...” (Ps. 63:1). “My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord...” (Ps. 84:2). “My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments...” (Ps. 119:20). “...O thou whom my soul loveth...” (Song of Sol. 1:7). “And I will say to my soul, Soul...” (Luke 12:19). “...Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (I Pet. 2:11). “...Vexed his righteous soul from day to day...” (II Pet. 2:8). “And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee...” (Rev. 18:14).

The Greek word *psuche* is translated “heart” (Eph. 6:6), “mind” (Acts 14:2; Phil. 1:27; Heb. 12:3), “life,” and “soul” many times. It must be made clear that the word *dzoe*, not *psuche*, is used when speaking of eternal life. The soul is distinct from the body (Acts 2:27; III John 2). It is contrasted with spirit and body in I Thessalonians 5:23 and with spirit in I Corinthians 15:45.

Some say *psuche* and *pneuma* are used interchangeably, and they quote Luke 1:46-47, where the “soul magnifies” and the “spirit rejoices.” The answer to this is not difficult. The soul expresses how its longings are satisfied, and the spirit expresses the joy of the mind. They also say the soul has as much to do with the higher action of the mind as the spirit, and they list such passages as Psalms 42:1 and 63:1. The informed Christian does not deny that the soul has nothing to do with Divine things. Knowledge of God causes the soul to rejoice.

The Greek word *psuche* is translated “life” and “soul” in all but seven references. Soul is the primary meaning, and life is the secondary meaning. The word *pneuma* also has primary and secondary meanings. Its primary meaning is “spirit,” and its secondary meaning is “wind.” The same word is translated “wind” in the first part of John 3:8 and “spirit” in the latter part.

The “spirit” distinguishes man from animal. The animal has a “soul” (*psuche*, Rev. 8:9; 16:3), but it does not have a spirit. Man has something the animal does not possess. He has a higher life than that of the animal. There are different kinds of created life. The vegetable kingdom has life but not self-consciousness. Animal life has self-consciousness but not God-consciousness. In view of man’s salvation, he has been granted by the sovereign God a threefold consciousness: (1) of God, (2) of himself, and (3) of the world. Thus, we have “spirit and soul and body” (I Thess. 5:23). Through his spirit, man attains God-consciousness; through his soul, self-consciousness; and through his body, world-consciousness. From this point of view, man is trichotomous.

The body of man is his material nature. There are two heresies concerning man’s body: (1) The materialist makes the body everything; and (2) the religionist makes the body nothing. The materialist places emphasis on these verses: “...Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:19). “...Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust” (Ps. 104:29). “For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Eccl. 3:19, 20). The first two Scripture references indicate that death is to be viewed as terminating all labor and pleasure “under the sun.” In the third passage, Solomon was writing from the viewpoint of a man “under the sun,” not “in the Son.” The key to understanding this is Ecclesiastes 3:18— “I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men...” From such a view point, the dissolution of man and beast appears to be the same. Man does not appear to have any preeminence over the mere animal. Conversely, the uninformed religionist places all the emphasis on the soul. He sees man “in” the body: “...The life which I now live in the flesh...” (Gal. 2:20). “...If I live in the flesh...” (Phil. 1:22). “...Whilst we are at home in the body....willing rather to be absent from the body...” (II Cor. 5:6, 8).

There are Scriptures where man is identified with his body, and others where man is identified with his spirit or soul. Therefore, one is in error to argue exclusively for either class of Scriptures. The following are some passages from both classes— material and immaterial: “And he [Joseph] bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre...” (Mark 15:46). “Devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him” (Acts 8:2). “...Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (II Cor. 4:16). “...Willing rather to be absent from the body...” (II Cor. 5:8). “..To die is gain...” (Phil. 1:21). “..The time of my departure is at hand...” (II Tim. 4:6). “Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle...” (II Pet. 1:14).

Let us not be as guilty as some who say, “Let the outward man perish; its perishing will only set the inward man free, in an infinite and everlasting liberty.” Christ “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (II Tim. 1:10). The soul possesses life, but immortality refers to the resurrection of the body— the hope of the soul. Therefore, we cannot exalt the immaterial (spirit or soul) over the material (body) or the material over the immaterial. Both are necessary to constitute man. The perfection of salvation includes the whole man.

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## GOD DISTINGUISHES IMMORTALITY FROM INCORRUPTION

Dichotomy and trichotomy have been discussed in our last two lessons. We have shown from Scripture that man is to be viewed in his entirety— material and immaterial natures. One is in error to maximize one nature and minimize the other. Both natures constitute man. Some look upon the “outer man,” which is decaying, in the sense of “let it crumble” in order that we might enjoy infinite and everlasting freedom. This belief is said to have enabled the martyrs to sing their lives away in the flames. Hence, they speak of the “immortality of the soul” (inner man) and place more emphasis on it, because it is renewed day by day in contrast to the decaying body.

Paul did not speak contemptuously of the body in Philippians 3:21— “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body....” The word “vile” comes from the Greek *tapeinosis*, which means low estate or humble condition (humiliation). The body as God’s creation is good (I Cor. 6:13 ff.). Its characteristics are frailty and weakness due to the fall (Gen. 3:19; Ps. 103:14). The body must not be thought of as inherently evil, as in Stoic and Gnostic philosophy. The Christian knows that his “body of humiliation” will give place to a new spiritual body. The noun *tapeinosis* is used four times in the New Testament. It is translated “low estate” (Luke 1:48), “humiliation” (Acts 8:33), “vile” (Phil. 3:21), and “made low” (James 1:10). The verb *tapeinoo* is used 14 times and is translated “shall humble,” “shall be abased,” “shall be brought low,” “abasing,” “will humble,” “to be abased,” and “humble yourselves.” Hence, there is no justification for translating the noun *tapeinosis* in Philippians 3:21 as “vile.” The body has been “humiliated” by the presence of indwelling sin.

Although the outer man is decaying, the Christian does not worry about the future: “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (II Cor. 4:16). The children of God fail in many ways, face death, and know that physical weakness and decay must come. Nevertheless, they do not lose heart. They look for “...an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away...” (I Pet. 1:4 NASB). The truth that the “inner man” has been renewed by grace is assuring to them. They are certain that as salvation has been applied to the soul, it will be applied to the body at God’s appointed time: “...now is our salvation [of the body] nearer than when we believed” (Rom. 13:11). The inner man’s day by day renewal sustains Christians in times of disappointment, failure, illness, and death.

Spiritual renewal is a series of acts. Physical life is one gift, but the daily renewal of the gift of life is by air, food, and exercise. The same principle applies to the spiritual life in time. There is first the “washing of regeneration” and then the “renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). The “washing of regeneration” is the once-for-all washing (John 13:10). “Renewing of the Holy Spirit” began in regeneration, but it will continue as long as the believer is in time. The Greek word for “renewed” of II Corinthians 4:16 is a present passive indicative of the verb *anakainoo*, which means the inner man is being renewed or adapted to the new life which had its beginning in regeneration. Paul used the passive verb in speaking of the new life. However, renewal strikes at the stagnation, complacency, and indolence so often manifested in the lives of assembly members. The safeguard against conformation to the world is spiritual renewal, which is a continuous experience—“renewal day by day.” The verb *anakainoo* is used in II Corinthians 4:16 and Colossians 3:10, and the noun *anakainosis* is used in Romans 12:2 and Titus 3:5.

This brings us to another phase in our study of the subject “What Is Man?” Man’s material and immaterial natures are usually referred to as mortal and immortal. Scripture is clear on the subject of the mortal nature of the human body in time, but there is no Scriptural evidence for the term “immortality of the soul.” Strictly speaking, immortality refers to the body: “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (I Cor. 15:53, 54). The Greek word *athanasia* is the true word for immortality, and it occurs only three times in the New Testament (I Cor. 15:53, 54; I Tim. 6:16). In relation to man, mortality and immortality are physical terms. However, immortality is not man’s natural and present condition. Immortality means deathlessness, but men die. On the other hand, man’s spirit and soul do not die (Eccl. 12:7; Matt. 10:28). Hence, there is a principle of life in man that is not subject to the decaying body. This principle of life is often called “the immortal soul,” but should this term be used?

Immortality (*athanasia*) means more than deathlessness. It suggests the quality of life. The term is ascribed to God because it is inherently His: “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting...” (I Tim. 6:16). The expression “Who only hath immortality” does not deny that God communicates it to others, but it establishes the fact that Divine immortality is the source of all life. The eternal life which God gives includes immortality (I Cor. 15:53, 54). His gift of grace makes the believer immune from spiritual death, but he will not possess the fullness of life until mortality is “swallowed up of life” (II Cor. 5:4).

There are some who think there is no difference between the Greek words *athanasia* and *aphtharsia*. They contend that both words are used in I Corinthians 15:53-54 with apparently no difference of meaning. In these verses, *athanasia* is translated “immortality” and *aphtharsia* is translated “incorruption [imperishable, NASB].” They also argue that *athanasia* is ascribed to God in I Timothy 6:16 and the adjective *aphthartos* is attributed to God in I Timothy 1:17. If there is no difference, why would the

Holy Spirit use such tautological language? A careful study of the two words will reveal that *athanasia* speaks of not only deathlessness but the quality of life; whereas, *aphtharsia* stresses the imperishability and incorruptibility of that life.

The noun *aphtharsia* is used eight times. It is translated “immortality” (Rom. 2:7; II Tim. 1:10), “incorruption” (I Cor. 15:42, 50, 53, 54), and “sincerity” (Eph. 6:24; Titus 2:7). It is applied to God, the body of a Christian, and purity of love and doctrine. The adjective *aphthartos* is used seven times. It is translated “uncorruptible” (Rom. 1:23), “incorruptible” (I Cor. 9:25; 15:52; I Pet. 1:4, 23), “not corruptible” (I Pet. 3:4), and “immortal” (I Tim. 1:17). It is applied to God, the crown of righteousness, the Christian inheritance, the new birth, and Christian purity.

The Greek word *athanasia* (deathlessness) is the negative of *thanatos* (death). Man did not possess immortality when he came from the hands of the Creator. He was warned that he would die if he ate of the forbidden fruit, and Adam and Eve both died when they ate it. “...It is appointed unto men once to die...” (Heb. 9:27). What is death? It is not a cessation of existence. Adam and Eve continued existing after the fall. Their bodies did not die, but their souls died spiritually. “...Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God...” (Gen. 3:8). Therefore, death is not cessation of existence but separation of existence. It is existence out of harmony with God. This spiritual death is the condition of every person who comes into the world, until he is regenerated by the Spirit of God. When he is made alive by God, he passes out of spiritual death into spiritual life (John 5:24). Having passed out of death into life, the believer is assured that he will never perish (John 10:28).

Adam’s fall did not kill the body, but it is condemned. The bodies of believers as well as nonbelievers are decaying, and they will eventually die because they are “mortal flesh”: “For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (II Cor. 4:11). The word “mortal” (*thnetos*, subject to death, the organ through which death carries on its death-producing activities) is related to the verb *thnesko*, which means to die. If the Christian dies before Christ’s return, his corruptible body will put on incorruptibility at the resurrection. On the other hand, if he is alive, his mortal body will put on immortality.

A person’s terminology should be guarded in the study of the soul. A question has been asked, If immortality is the natural attribute of every descendant of Adam, why do we have such statements as seeking for immortality, immortality will be given in the resurrection, and immortality will be brought to light? Another question follows, How can you promise a person something he already has? The use of the term “immortality” is unnecessary in the discussion of the never ending existence of the immaterial nature of man. Neither angels nor men lost existence in the fall. Their characters were changed, but their beings remained the same. When the body of man dies, the immaterial nature does not share its dissolution (Luke 16:19-31; John 5:28, 29). “Immortality” is a term used to designate the consummation of man’s life in grace.

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## **IMMORTALITY OF THE BODY AND EVERLASTINGNESS OF THE SOUL ARE DISTINCT**

Apart from a Biblical perspective of the present and future, one can become despondent. The frailty and transitoriness of the things of time will result in the language of Solomon: “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity” (Eccl. 1:2). This language came from one who had “wisdom and understanding exceeding much” (I Kings 4:29), wealth as plentiful “as stones” (I Kings 10:27), and advantages to experiment and draw conclusions second to none; but all this was viewed as a man “under the sun.” There is nothing in the world vain in respect to its natural being. Everything God made was pronounced good (Gen. 1:31). All the vanity in worldly things is only in respect to the sin and folly of man. Hence, “all is vanity” only when viewed improperly and unemployed to God’s glory.

The Christian does not say, “Wisdom is vain, therefore, I would be better to be ignorant”; “I am financially secure, but I would be better to be a pauper”; or “I have had many advantages in life, but I would be better to have had none.” Solomon was not speaking of Divine wisdom, money used properly, or Christian activity. Looking at human life apart from the “unseen and eternal” will result in the view that “all is vanity.” Conversely, looking at it from God’s perspective, grace, incorruption, and immortality will result in thanksgiving, praise, and hope. The testimony of the Christian is not that of a Roman Emperor who, when he came to die, exclaimed, “I was everything, and have found that everything is nothing.” But the Christian exclaims, “Apart from Christ I was nothing, but now in Christ I am an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ.”

Each day directs Christians to the next, until at last we leave the temporal scene and take up residence in the eternal. Earthly life with all its blessings— salvation, providence (all things working together for our good), assembly fellowship, physical health, good job, etc.— does not fulfill our hopes. There is always something left to desire. Life directs us to a life beyond death. Life is cruel and hope is vain if death is only death. But death is not the conclusion of everything. It is the exodus into something greater than we can imagine. The question may be asked, if we are dissatisfied with life in time, why do we flee from death that will introduce us to eternity? The answer is simply that we forget that we will get in eternity what the present and past have failed to fulfill. However much may have been granted to us in time, there is something in eternity to perfect what is lacking in time. Christians bear within themselves an idea of perfection because within us is an eternity. Therefore, we strive as though we were striving for eternity. We all carry within us a homesickness for our true home. This homesickness wings the Christian’s “desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Phil. 1:23).

Death is the transition from time to eternity. It is a break in the history of life. Death leads us into the immediate presence of God. Many delusions interpose between us and God while we are in time; but in eternity, we shall appear as we really are. We may have deceived men in time, but deception and self-delusion vanish in God's presence. Eternity will be all light and truth.

The expression "man has a mortal body but an immortal soul" is commonly heard. Those who use it say we are mortals because we know ourselves to be immortal. Hence, belief in the immortality of the soul has at all times and in all cultures been advanced. This belief built the pyramids in Egypt, and the mummies bear testimony to it. It bestowed upon the Germanic nations (the Indo-European family of nations including German, Dutch, English, and Scandinavian) the joyful courage with which they met death in the field of battle. It gathered the noblest of the Greeks about those secret doctrines of Eleusinian mysteries (celebrated annually in Eleusis and Athens in ancient Greece), which sought to give them that consolation in death which their religion did not give. They say that art, poetry, the sacredness of the laws relating to the dead, and the honor paid to the departed equally bear testimony to this belief. Furthermore, they state that it is as universal as the belief in God. It has prevailed among all nations of high mental attainments, while others have had at least some knowledge of it. We are immortal, they say, because we are for God, who is not the God of the dead but of the living.

Mortality is the condition of the Christian's body on earth, but immortality is never ascribed to the soul. Mortality and immortality both apply to the material rather than the immaterial part of man. Immortality in Scripture applies to only the righteous (I Cor. 15:53, 54). Therefore, immortality refers to the state of the body, which will be attained by immediate change apart from death when Christ comes for His own.

The adjective "mortal" (*thnetos*, mortal, subject to death) is used six times in the New Testament (Rom. 6:12; 8:11; I Cor. 15:53, 54; II Cor. 4:11; 5:4). It is translated "mortal" in all the places except II Corinthians 5:4, where it is translated "mortality." However, in the NASB it is translated: "...in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." The adjective "mortal" (*thnetos*) is related to the verb *thnesko*, which means to die or to be dead. The verb is used 13 times (Matt. 2:20; Mark 15:44; Luke 7:12; 8:49; John 11:21, 39, 41, 44; 12:1; 19:33; Acts 14:19; 25:19; I Tim. 5:6). It applies to the material (physical) nature of man in all the references except I Timothy 5:6. Paul spoke of the woman who lived in "pleasure" (*spatalosa*, present participle of *spatalao*, to live wantonly— inconsiderate, licentious, immoral, lustful) as being "dead" even while she lives.

The term "mortal" means subject to death. Paul's admonition in Romans 6:12— "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body..." —is not to be understood to mean that sin is reigning in the mortal body and that reign must be terminated. That concept would be contrary to what has gone before in the epistle. The command, "Let not sin reign," flows from the fact that the Roman believers were dead to sin and alive unto God (Rom. 6:1-11). Since sin does not have dominion, do not allow it to reign. Sin made the body mortal, developed its lusts, and through it enslaved the soul. Because of the Father's



election, the Son's redemption, and the Spirit's regeneration, the believer is not to allow indwelling sin to reign. Because of deliverance from sin's dominion, the Christian has the foundation for the fulfillment of the exhortation, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body."

The mortal bodies of Christians are not to be crucified, but the deeds of our bodies are: "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13). Sin is first mental, then affectional, and finally physical. Sin's conquest, therefore, must follow the same order. The three great truths stressed in Romans 6 which harmonize with the parts of sin's conquest are comprehension (vv. 3, 6, 9, 16), calculation—to count or rely on the knowledge (v. 11), and regimentation (vv. 13, 16). The members of the body must be denied their natural desires. They should be treated without regard for natural appetites. Christians must determine the place our bodies should have in the great drama of Christian living (I Cor. 6:19).

The quickening of "mortal bodies" of Romans 8:11 has been interpreted two ways: (1) the resurrection of the dead and (2) the purifying of the whole man in the service of Christ. Those who believe the former base their view on the future active indicative verb *dzoopoieo* (to engender living creatures; to quicken, make alive, vivify, metaphorically to quicken with the life of salvation— John 5:21, twice; 6:63; Rom. 4:17; 8:11; I Cor. 15:22, 36, 45; II Cor. 3:6; Gal. 3:21; I Tim. 6:13; I Pet. 3:18). The latter base their view on the fact that it is a "mortal" body, not a "dead" body. Now that the Holy Spirit indwells believers, they learn the meaning of resident life from the word "dwell" (Rom. 7:17, 18, 20). The mention of the resurrection of Christ in the first part of Romans 8:11 does not indicate that Paul was speaking of physical resurrection. The same power that raised Christ from the dead to cause us to believe (Eph. 1:18-20) is necessary to cause the whole man to be made alive in the service of God. The same Spirit who gives life to the dead soul purifies the whole man by His indwelling. "Mortal bodies" are under discussion. The future active indicative verb does not refute the second view. Is not the entire Christian life future from the point of time when the soul was quickened? A normal Christian experience increases the efficiency and the enjoyment of our mortal bodies (Rom. 12:1, 2). The Spirit quickens (enlivens) our physical existence. Therefore, Christians must reverence their mortal bodies, while they keep them in subjection (I Cor. 9:27) and bear in them the dying of the Lord Jesus (II Cor. 4:10). Believers are "constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh" (II Cor. 4:11 NASB). The life of Jesus Christ being manifested in our mortal bodies is emphatically beautiful.

The three verses left where the word "mortal" (*thnetos*) is used apply to the time when the "mortal shall put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:53, 54; II Cor. 5:4). Mortality refers to the bodies of the living saints when Christ comes to receive His own unto Himself. Corruption refers to the bodies of the saints who have died. Compare I Thessalonians 4:15-17 where the same event is mentioned. The dead and the living in Christ are similarly contrasted.

The term “immortality” is never applied to the soul. That, however, does not mean that the soul does not possess a ceaseless existence. God created man a whole person—material and immaterial. Immortality in Scripture is applied only to the righteous, and then only in two consecutive verses: “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (I Cor. 15:53, 54). Christians step out of time into eternity by going through “the valley of the shadow of death” (Ps. 23:4) or by being “caught up” without passing through the shadow (I Thess. 4:16, 17). They put on either incorruption or immortality. Conclusively, corruption and mortality will both be put off.

The believer’s body is as everlasting in character as his soul. Whatever reality the word “immortality” (*athanasia*) asserts, applies to the body. Immortality is something different from mere continued existence. It refers to the glorious life attained only by passing out of time into eternity. It will be like the Lord Jesus Christ (I John 3:2). Man is not a whole person apart from the body. Furthermore, he can never be what he was chosen to be until the mortal body puts on immortality. Paul was addressing “mortal” (living, subject to death), not corruptible (dead) persons in I Corinthians 15. He also wanted them to know there would be mortal persons when Jesus Christ comes for His own; therefore, he said the mortal must put on immortality.

When the Christian steps out of his mortal body, he will step into his immortal one. Someone may ask, how can that be since the mortal puts on immortality in the resurrection of the future? This question brings up the necessity for distinguishing between time and eternity. From the standpoint of time, the resurrection of the body will take place at the second coming of Christ. However, to the dying Christian who steps into eternity, the resurrection is in the immediate present. There is no waiting for the resurrection in eternity. If there were any waiting in eternity, it would not be eternity. At the death of an individual, the living and not the dying experience the sense of separation. There is no “time” for him who has entered eternity. To the deceased, time is eclipsed between his death and the time the saints join him. Hence, all arrive in God’s presence when he does. An analogy from travel will illustrate this truth. Suppose all the living saints of God came to see me off on my trip from the continent of time into the continent of eternity. When I arrive at my destination, I find that they, too, have made the journey with me.

A Biblical principle describing the eclipse of time for the deceased is set forth in Christ’s statement, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). There are three periods of time to consider in Christ’s statement: (1) the time before Abraham, (2) the time of Abraham, and (3) the time after Abraham. There were 2,000 years between Abraham and Christ, but our Lord placed Himself as the incarnate Person in time before the time that preceded Abraham. Thus, all three periods of time occupy the same time by using the present tense— “I Am.”

The dying Christian goes from a mortal (die-able) body to an immortal one that is not subject to death. Thus, he goes from the mediating to the unmediating presence of Christ.

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# 12

## **MOMENTARY LIGHT AFFLICTION IS OUTWEIGHED BY ETERNAL GLORY**

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (II Cor. 4:17). “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison” (II Cor. 4:17 —NASB).

Daily renewal of the inner man enables Christians to transfigure their afflictions, thus making them appear comparatively light and of short duration in the light of the eternal weight of glory they shall experience. Grace alone enables persons to make comparisons such as those set forth in II Corinthians 4:16-5:8— (1) a decaying body with a daily renewed soul, (2) light affliction with an eternal weight of glory, (3) things which are seen with things which are not seen, (4) temporal things with eternal things, (5) earthly tent (body) with an eternal, heavenly house, (6) groaning in the earthly tent with that which is mortal being swallowed up of life, and (7) absent from the body with at home with the Lord. If the soul is dead in trespasses and sins, the decaying body and the afflictions of life only increase its death. But if the soul has life, all things work together for its development. The comparison of the soul that is dead with the soul that is spiritually alive is like comparing two seeds, one infertile and the other fertile. The forces of nature play upon both seeds alike, but the results differ. The lifeless seed has no resistance against the forces of nature, but the seed that has life is capable of resisting the disintegrating forces of nature and uses them to increase its life and productivity: “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world...” (I John 5:4). Therefore, the soul that has life grows strong through opposition.

The word “affliction,” in its noun form (*thlipsis*, pressure, compression, pressing together; metaphorically— oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, or distressing circumstances— Matt. 13:21; 24:9, 21, 29; John 16:33; Acts 7:10, 11; 11:19; 14:22; 20:23; Rom. 5:3; I Cor. 7:28; II Cor. 1:4; Eph. 3:13; I Thess. 1:6; 3:3; II Thess. 1:4, 6; Rev. 1:9; 7:14) and verb form (*thlibo*, Matt. 7:14— narrow; II Cor. 4:8; I Thess. 3:4; II Thess. 1:6, 7; I Tim. 5:10; Heb. 11:37) must be carefully studied in the light of all Scripture to avoid misunderstanding. The word is often used to designate making compensation for sin. Affliction is not meritorious. Afflictions are common to all humanity (Gen. 3:17-19). Some are of a self-produced character. Man can sin with impunity against physical laws no more than he can sin against God’s laws. There are

afflictions of Divine appointment upon the saved and the unsaved. In themselves, abstractly considered, afflictions are heavy. Nevertheless, they are light to persons in grace because they work for them an eternal weight of glory.

Christian affliction is “light” (*elaphros*, light in weight or not heavy— Matt. 11:30; II Cor. 4:17). Christ said to those to whom He had given rest, “...my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Christ’s “burden” (*phortion*, a burden or load; obligation) is light in grace. Therefore, His yoke is easy. Impossibility with nature is easy and light to grace. The giving of rest enables believers to bear the yoke and burden and find further rest. Thus, the yoke becomes increasingly easy and the burden lighter as the Christian continues to bear it.

Since there is strong aversion to affliction of any kind, Christians are prone to magnify their troubles. Affliction in itself is not agreeable to the outer man, but grace enables the inner man to bring the outer man into subjection to the will of God. The Christian has the correct perspective through Divine instruction. He contrasts affliction with glory, the lightness of affliction with the weight of glory, and the moment with eternity. Viewed in this light, Paul presents affliction as being insignificant. What is affliction compared with glory, the lightness of affliction compared with the weight of glory, or a moment compared with eternity? The correct perspective leads one to say with Paul, “...none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy...” (Acts 20:24). The ability to think Scripturally and act accordingly is a great gift from God. Spiritual elevation enables one to look down on afflictions and declare, “None of them move me.” This kind of elevation makes the things of this little world appear what they really are in the light of infinite eternity.

Affliction is part of the discipline of the life of grace. It is momentarily producing for us a weight of glory. In II Corinthians 4:17, the word for “moment” is *parautika*. It is an adverb meaning instantly, immediately, momentary, or transient. It is used only in this verse. Paul was speaking of the momentary lightness of affliction in view of the weight of eternal glory. Affliction, therefore, results in enriching the Christian’s spiritual life: “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (I Pet. 5:10). The benefits of affliction are many: (1) Affliction is a pathway to devotion: “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word” (Ps. 119:67). (2) It is to prove us: “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10). (3) Affliction is to furnish us with spiritual power. God’s strength is made perfect in human weakness (II Cor. 12:9). (4) It polishes character (Rom. 5:3-5). (5) It is a preparation for fruitfulness (John 15:2; II Cor. 1:3, 4). Affliction is like the pruning knife that removes the superfluous and useless but not always the evil things. (6) Affliction is a pledge of coming glory (Job 23:10; II Cor. 4:17). (7) It enables us to praise at the second coming of Christ (I Pet. 1:7). The grace of God will beat the spears of affliction into pruning hooks for Christians.

Christians who magnify their afflictions do not have the Biblical perspective. The highest comfort human philosophy can give the afflicted is, if affliction is great, it is short; and if

it is long, it is light. In other words, if affliction is severe, it will shorten life; but if it is of long duration, one will learn to bear it. However, Paul used the terms “light” and “momentary.” It is “light,” not in itself but comparatively, in respect to the excellency of the heavenly glory (Rom. 8:18), and copulatively, in respect to the support of the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 8:26, 27). It is “short” if it should last throughout one’s Christian life because it is only momentary compared with eternity. Affliction is long only when one measures it by time rather than by eternity. The longest time compared with eternity is nothing: “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night” (Ps. 90:4).

The future glory of the Christian is indescribable. II Corinthians 4:17 contains a repetition of the Greek word *hyperbolēn*— *kath’ hyperbolēn eis hyperbolēn*. The word *hyperbole* means a throwing beyond, superiority, excellence, preeminence, exceeding greatness, or beyond measure. In I Corinthians 12:31, the Greek could be translated, “I show you a supremely excellent way.” In II Corinthians 4:17, the Greek means “beyond all measure— more and more exceedingly.” A repetition of *hyperbole* is generally used when a person in any excited manner overstates the truth. Our English equivalent is hyperbole— intentional exaggeration. Paul used the repetition to show that no proportion whatever can be instituted between present affliction and future glory. All that a righteous person suffers goes to heighten and multiply his future enjoyments. Hence, we have one hyperbole heaped on another.

“Eternal weight of glory” staggers our imagination. Eternal (*aionion*, eternal, everlasting) stands in contrast with affliction that is momentary. Weight (*baros*, heaviness, weight, burden, trouble— Matt. 20:12; Acts 15:28; II Cor. 4:17; Gal. 6:2; I Thess. 2:6; Rev. 2:24— translated “burden and burdensome” except II Cor. 4:17) is in contrast to light. Glory (*doxa*, reputation, honor, glory) is a future state of bliss— glorification (II Cor. 4:17; II Tim. 2:10). All words are too weak to express heaven’s happiness; therefore, Paul heaped one hyperbole upon another and one expression upon another. The eternal state of the Christian will be absolute holiness: “Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12 NASB). As absolute holiness is the attainment of moral glory, vast intellectual knowledge will be our intellectual glory. The tree of knowledge there will hide no serpent in heaven’s foliage and instill no poison in its fruit. The celestial state will be a “tree of life” as well as “the tree of knowledge.” The eternal state will be one of absolute fellowship with God. The enjoyment of life on earth is intercourse with God. The more refined that intercourse, the more delightful is life while here on earth. Hence, the intercourse we have with God now will be perfected when we experience absolute holiness and intellectual illumination.

Surely this absolute holiness and intellectual illumination is not something that must await, from the standpoint of time, the future advent of Christ. How do we reconcile John 14:2-3 with Luke 23:43? Is the thief enjoying what the disciples could not enjoy until Christ comes the second time? Paul told the Corinthians that Christ would “raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (II Cor. 4:14). Do we go into God’s presence as a family? Does this include the thief? Since our reception is future, how did the thief enter Christ’s presence that day? The thief’s passage has been delayed, or ours

has been advanced. Who adjusts to whom? Paul said all meet the Lord together: “Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do” (I Thess. 5:10, 11).

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# 13

## TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL THINGS ARE COMPARED

Troubles, distresses, perplexities, persecutions, afflictions, and sorrows will soon be over for God’s people. Christians are instructed to bear these things by comparing them with the things that are reserved for us in the future. “...Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Ps. 30:5). “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Cor. 4:16-18). The language of neither Paul nor the Psalmist can be applied to the ungodly. The perpetuity of eternal joy enables us to bear the brevity of the weeping. Weeping is like an uninvited guest who enters the believer’s dwelling, making him sorrowful by his unwelcome presence, but he comes to sojourn for only a night. Another guest will arrive in the morning, and weeping will disappear in the presence of joy. Hence, the affliction of every Christian will soon be ended. The last pain will soon have passed through his mortal body. The last pang of a departed loved one will have been experienced. Therefore, the believer will take the last step out of the night of weeping into the glorious morning of eternal joy.

Paul drew a distinction between things seen and things not seen: “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen...” (II Cor. 4:18a). There are only two worlds, terrestrial and celestial. Furthermore, there are two ways of seeing. The terrestrial world is seen by physical eyes, but the celestial world is seen by faith. Paul began the verse with a negative statement. His participial expression (*me skopounton*, present active participle of *skopeo*, which means to view attentively; to see or observe) is taken in a temporal sense. Thus, Paul was saying, “While we are not considering the things that are seen.” He went on to make a positive statement. Hence, he made another participial expression: “...but at the things which are not seen...” (*alla ta me blepomena*). Here we have a present middle participle of *blepo*, which means to have the faculty of sight, to see, to exercise sight, to discern mentally or perceive. This participial expression has been translated “while we look,” “because we look,” “since we consider,” etc., but

perhaps the best translation is “looking as we do.” Paul’s present troubles did not overwhelm him because he turned to the things that God prepared for them that love Him (I Cor. 2:9).

The Christian must turn from the seen affliction to the unseen support. Christian support in trial does not come from that which is seen, but too often one finds himself leaning on the arm of the flesh. If the believer is physically ill, he must not do like the good king Asa who sought not the Lord but the physicians (II Chron. 16:12). The king had previously entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God; but in the time of affliction, he sought the physicians. The statement “entered into a covenant” of II Chronicles 15:12 is what we would call “a revival.” There is nothing wrong with seeking physicians, but there is with seeking physicians and not the Lord. Asa fell into his former sin of creature confidence. The king was not completely divorced from the confidence of man. Prosperity by fleshly schemes is disastrous to a Christian. The sad fruit will soon appear. The king induced Benhadad to break the treaty with Baasha, king of Israel, who had come against Judah. Did Asa think all was fair in war? Asa’s action may have been “good worldly politics,” but it was a black mark against Christianity. The prophet Hanani warned Asa: “Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand” (II Chron. 16:7). Unlike Asa who slept with his fathers for his sin, Paul sought the Lord in his affliction, and God gave him support (II Cor. 12:7-10).

The Christian must turn from seen vicissitudes to unseen possessions. The changing conditions of life may be manifold— so-called friends become enemies; a good economy becomes bad; a time of peace becomes a time of war; good health becomes ill; joy is turned into sorrow; etc. Turning to his unseen possessions, the believer knows he has a friend who sticks closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24). He is an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ, who is the appointed heir of all things (Rom. 8:17; Heb. 1:2). He has a joy that cannot be destroyed by circumstances (Hab. 3:17-19; John 15:11). Hence, the Christian can say with full assurance of faith— “nothing shall separate me from the love of God, nothing shall remove me from the grace of Christ, and nothing shall deprive me of the communion and support of the Holy Spirit.” In his personal testimony, Paul attested that the thrice holy God has provided abiding realities, which the changing circumstances of time are powerless to change (I Tim. 1:12-17; II Tim. 4:9-18).

Believers are related to the two worlds of sense and spirit— terrestrial and celestial. Unsaved people act and talk as though there were only the one world of sense. They are able to relate only with what their five senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling experience. On the other hand, Christians are able to relate with the spiritual world because of the spirit of grace. Therefore, all that affects Christians is not visible. They know that faith is not the eye, sanctified reason is not the ear, the regenerated heart is not feeling, the renewed will is not tasting, and a good conscience is not smelling. The invisible, renewed inner man in Christians thirsts for the invisible, spiritual world.

Believers experience two kinds of rest— body and soul. The experience of physical rest is known to all. God gave man the night and set aside one day a week for the purpose of

resting. Christ spoke of rest: "...Sleep on now, and take your rest..." (Matt. 26:45; Mark 14:41). "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while..." (Mark 6:31). The verb for "rest" used in these verses is *anapauro*, which means to cease from any movement or labor in order to recover one's strength; to cause to rest; to take rest, repose, or refreshment. The compound word *ana* (up or again) *pauo* (to make to cease or desist) has been translated to mean to "rest up" or to "refresh oneself." The verb is used twelve times (Matt. 11:28; 26:45; Mark 6:31; 14:41; Luke 12:19; I Cor. 16:18; II Cor. 7:13; Philem. 7, 20; I Pet. 4:14; Rev. 6:11; 14:13). It is translated give rest, take rest, rest, take thine ease, and have refreshed. The noun *anapausis* is used five times (Matt. 11:29; 12:43; Luke 11:24; Rev. 4:8; 14:11). There is rest for the body and the soul (Matt. 11:28). Soul rest is permanent; it is God's gift. This rest is not dependent on the body. The soul that has been once-for-all renewed by the grace of rest also finds rest (*anapausis*) by taking Christ's yoke and bearing His burden. The rest that is found could also be called "spiritual refreshment" in Christian fellowship (I Cor. 16:18; II Cor. 7:13; Philem. 7, 20; I Pet. 4:14). The Psalmist knew the difference between soul rest— "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him..." (Ps. 37:7); "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell..." (Ps. 132:14)— and body rest— "... neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin" (Ps. 38:3).

Believers enjoy two kinds of joy— things and thoughts. Enjoyment of things is derived from things that are seen, and enjoyment of thoughts is obtained from the thoughts of the mind upon eternal verities. The person who makes temporal things his end and whose enjoyment is in the things of time will soon discover that they are temporal. Therefore, they cannot give lasting enjoyment. With the decaying of the body, the time will come when the body will be incapable of enjoying the senses. Conversely, the Christian enjoys the properly used things of time; but as afflictions and trials come and as the body deteriorates, he has another source of enjoyment. His real source of enjoyment is not the seen but the unseen. Hence, spiritual enjoyment comes not through the five senses of the body but through the thoughts of the mind through meditation on the things of God and claiming His promises. (See Heb. 13:5, 8; Deut. 33:25; Rom. 8:18-39.) The life that transcends the senses is not simply in the senses. The true philosophy of life is that which seeks to turn the mind to the unseen. To the Christian, the unseen is the nearer experience.

Looking at eternal things which are present of II Corinthians 4:18 is a Divine paradox. Are not our eyes made to look at things which will be seen? What did the apostle mean when he spoke of looking at the things which are not seen? The Christian's inner man and his body both have eyes. The ability to see eternal things is entirely a matter of revelation. Hence, Paul disclosed the great secret of the Christian's life power. He did not say we look at future things, but he said we look at eternal things which are present. Persons who look at "the things which are not seen" are not to be regarded as visionaries, and persons who look only upon "the things which are seen" are not to be regarded as men of solid and practical sense. People who live in the illusion of a false or partial vision, not those who discern things for what they are, are visionaries. The very things not seen by natural men are the things that inspire Christians to suffer, endure, and die. (See Heb. 11.)



Comparing temporal and eternal things of II Corinthians 4:18 is Paul's second Divine paradox. From a natural point of view, things that can be seen are the things to be viewed. However, Paul told us to look at the things that are not seen. How can we look at what we cannot see? When we are persecuted, despised, forsaken, or seriously ill, we can by faith say, "This is temporal; therefore, it will not last long. There is something permanent." The Greek word for "temporal" is *proskaira* (nominative plural neuter of *proskairos*), which means continuing for a limited time, temporary, or transient (used only in Matt. 13:21; Mark 4:17; II Cor. 4:18; Heb. 11:25). The Christian must consider the transient nature of things seen and the eternal nature of things not seen. Looking at eternal things includes assurance of their reality and importance by a fixed and repeated consideration. Furthermore, the believer must consider the fact that he will soon pass from time into eternity. This consideration weans him from all low and selfish aims.

Looking at eternal things by faith means seeing the eternal Father who chose me in Christ before the world began. It means seeing the eternal Son who loved me and purchased my redemption. It means seeing the eternal Spirit who regenerated me, thus giving me eternal life in a decaying body. It means that if this decaying body is put off in death, I will step into an incorruptible body. It means seeing that if I am alive when Christ comes for His assembly, I will step out of this mortal body into an immortal one. It means when I see Christ, whether by the route called death or by the rapture, I will be like Him— soul and body. It means when I see Christ, my metamorphized body will be capable of coming back into time with Christ and reigning with Him in the kingdom. As Christ moved back and forth from time and eternity in His glorified human nature between His resurrection and ascension, I see that being like Him I shall be able to do the same as I reign with the King of kings in the kingdom. What an exciting and glorious future for me and all "that love [who have loved, perfect active participle of *agapao*] his appearing" (II Tim. 4:8).

## **CHRISTIANS ARE SAVED IN HOPE**

The salvation of the believer's soul is complete in time, but the salvation of his body will be completed in eternity. Present salvation is enjoyed by faith, and it is reflected in the believer's consciousness by the hope of future redemption. Therefore, hope is exercised by the person who possesses saving faith. Hope is the expectation of some future blessing: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for

what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:22-25). The Greek words *tei gar elpidi esothemen* should be translated "For we were saved in hope." The Greek word for "saved" is first aorist passive indicative of *sodzo*, which is point action past time, signifying "we were saved." Salvation does not come in a completed package as far as the Christian in time is concerned; therefore, it is more scriptural to say, "For we were saved in the sphere of hope." Hence, hope never disappoints, because Jesus Christ is its object and His kingdom will be its consummation. A lesson greatly needed today is Paul's theological statement in Titus 2:11-15, which supports the practical exhortation in Titus 2:1-10.

True eschatology is the expectation of Christ's second coming: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). The first advent of Christ brought saving grace (Titus 2:11), but His second advent will perfect it. Furthermore, Christ's first coming brought the earnest of redemption in humiliation, but His second coming will complete that redemption in glory. Hope is not only entertained but expressed during the absence of Jesus Christ. Paul spoke of the "...work of faith, and, labour of love, and patience of hope..." (I Thess. 1:3). He then showed how believers become examples of Divine election (I Thess. 1:9, 10): (1) "Ye turned to God from idols" is the "work of faith." (2) "To serve the living and true God" is the "labour of love." (3) "To wait for his Son from heaven" is the "patience of hope." One must observe that saving faith does not turn from something to something, from being high on drugs to being high on religion, etc. It turns to Jesus Christ from something. This completely eliminates the repeatedly heard question, "Have you tried Jesus?" The labor of love is not a negative attitude. Christians are the slaves of Jesus Christ. During His absence, we bear His reproach outside the camp of organized religion. The Christian's present hope is a living eschatological hope: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:3-7).

The Bible speaks of "one hope" (Eph. 4:4). Hence, eschatology is the Christian's hope for Christ who redeemed the elect in His first coming (Heb. 9:26) but will "appear the second time" to consummate their salvation (Heb. 9:28). Completed salvation is for those who "wait" for Jesus Christ. The Greek word for "wait" is a present middle participle of *apekdechomai*, which means to expect, wait, or look. This verb is used seven times in the New Testament, and they all apply to the second coming of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:19, 23, 25; I Cor. 1:7; Gal. 5:5; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 9:28). Without detracting from the foundational work of our salvation already performed and now in progress, our present desire lays great emphasis on that which is yet to come. Uniting the two advents of Christ gives the true and comprehensive sense under which salvation is to be regarded, thus making Christ's second advent "the blessed hope" and a coming "unto salvation" in its

perfection: “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Rom. 13:11). “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (II Tim. 2:10).

The first three features of Biblical unity in Ephesians 4:4-6 are internal: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (v. 4). (1) “Body” is never used in the plural form in the New Testament. Christ’s body is one, but it consists of many members. Membership in the one body is now conterminous with salvation (Col. 1:19-29). All the parts of the body are joined to the Head. No metaphor could be as complete as the human body (I Cor. 12). The human body is the vehicle by which the unseen person is made known. No one can know what the spirit within is thinking or the soul is feeling without their expression through the body. Both the human body and the assembly (church) constitute a marvelous unity. (2) The Holy Spirit who indwells the body regenerates, indwells, and seals. The unity of the body formed by the Spirit is in reality a diversity operating with one common goal. Christians do not surrender truth to accomplish uniformity. Unity is not found in disloyalty to the truth of God. A limited message may produce an expanded congregation, but proclaiming the whole counsel of God alone will result in a true fellowship of believers. However, admitting that within the unity of the Spirit there are degrees of realization and understanding of this unity is not inconsistent. (3) Hope of the assembly (church) being like Christ is the glorious consummation in view. The Spirit is the earnest (pledge) of the consummation of Christ’s work in the kingdom. The one body is effectually called by the one Spirit in one hope. That which is effectual to the elect is general to the nonelect. This is the reason all who hear the gospel do not come to Christ.

Hope delayed makes the heart discouraged: “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life” (Prov. 13:12). Many Christians believe that deceased saints are with Christ but not like Him. They believe and teach that there is an intermediate state between the saint’s demise and resurrection. However, deceased saints being with Christ without being like Him is impossible: “Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Cor. 5:6-8). “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Phil. 1:23). “Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me....Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II Pet. 1:14; 3:13). Neither Paul nor Peter gave any indication of waiting in time and then another period of waiting, which is impossible, in eternity. Hence, those who believe in the intermediate state have Abraham hoping for the city of God for about one hundred years in time and then waiting for it about four thousand years in eternity. If this is true, Abraham’s heart “is” sick from his deferred hope in eternity! Abraham had experienced delayed hope in Isaac’s birth (Gen. 15:3; 21:1-5), but that would be nothing compared with more than four thousand years of delayed hope in eternity. The disciples’ sight and recognition of Moses and

Elijah on the mount of transfiguration destroy the idea of Abraham waiting for his glorified body.

Paul was constrained by pulls from two directions: “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you” (Phil. 1:23, 24). Both of Paul’s desires were good. He was not only ready to go and be with Christ but willing to stay if his “race” or “course” was unfinished. He could not at that point in his life say “I have finished my course” (II Tim. 4:7). However, the wonderful thing about Paul’s dying or living was that Jesus Christ was connected with both. If he died, he would be with Christ in eternity; but if he lived, he would be working together with the Spirit of Christ in time (Phil. 1:23; II Cor. 6:1). Paul’s constraint was the happiest condition in which a person could live in time. It was a condition in which one can repose and not from which he desires escape. The Greek word for “strait” in Philippians 1:23 is a present passive indicative of the verb *sunecho*, which means to hold together with constraint. This word is also translated “straitened” (Luke 12:50), “pressed” (Acts 18:5), and “constraineth” (II Cor. 5:14).

Eternity is gain over time, and living with Christ in Person is far better than having the presence of the Comforter with the absence of Christ in time: “...to die is gain....to be with Christ...is far better” (Phil. 1:21, 23). Christ gave His disciples a precious promise: “...I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:16, 17). The word “another” (*allos*, another of the same kind) indicates that whatever Christ had been to His own during the days of His flesh, the Holy Spirit would be during His absence. The Holy Spirit is the assured pledge of Christ’s presence until the redemption of the purchased possession, which is the body (Eph. 1:13, 14; I Cor. 6:19, 20). Furthermore, the indwelling Holy Spirit leads the believer to look outside of himself, see Christ by faith, and wait in hope for His second coming.

Jesus Christ assured His disciples that He would not cease being their Comforter, but He could no longer personally be their Comforter on earth. The Greek word for Comforter is *parakletos*, which means one who has been called to the side of another, one who pleads another’s cause before a judge, an advocate, a helper, succorer, or assistant. Therefore, He would send the Holy Spirit to them from the Father: “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father...” (John 15:26). The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. He is the third Person in the Godhead. He is a Divine Person, not a mere influence, action, or attribute. Reference to the Holy Spirit by the pronoun “it” manifests ignorance of the Divine Person. This Divine Person dwells in and abides with Christ’s sheep. He testifies, teaches, guides by objective truth, brings to remembrance, speaks, empowers, enlightens, and maintains our hearts in those blessed affections which were formed by God’s love in regeneration. Jesus Christ set forth all the blessed light and grace of the Father when He came. During His absence, another Divine Person has come to maintain that testimony in the body of Christ.

## **THE ETERNAL HOUSE WILL REPLACE THE TENT OF TIME**

II Corinthians 5 is a section of Scripture used to support what is called “the intermediate state.” Hence, it is said that when death occurs to the Christian, it separates him from the temporal but does not immediately unite him with the eternal. The immediate effect of death is to release the person from his earthly body. Therefore, the soul is without a body in the intermediate state.

Like every other Biblical subject, the intermediate state is debatable among Christians and cults. Several views of what happens to man when he dies will be given and tested in the light of Scripture.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the dead spend a period of time in purgatory. Purgatory is a place where souls suffer for a time before they enter heaven. They are sent there to make satisfaction for the temporal punishment due to sin. They explain temporal punishment as something which lasts for only a time. The sins for which they suffer are venial and still on their souls; therefore, they have not fully atoned for the temporal punishment due to their sins. Roman Catholic teaching distinguishes original from actual sins. They say original sin is removed by the Sacrament of Baptism, but actual sin is removed by the penitent’s almsdeeds, voluntary affliction, and purgatorial sufferings hereafter, supplemented by the atoning blood of Christ.

There are those who teach what they call “soul-sleep.” Believing that the body is indispensable to activity and consciousness, they say the soul sleeps until the resurrection. Seventh-day Adventists, for example, say the intermediate state of man is plain: Death is really and truly a sleep, a sleep that is deep, unconscious, and unbroken until the awakening at the resurrection. The Bible makes it clear that the whole man, not merely a part of him, sleeps. There is no intimation that man sleeps only as to his body and that he is wakeful and conscious as to his soul.

Among the more orthodox are those who say when death occurs to the believer in Christ, it separates him from the temporal. It does not unite him with the eternal. Hence, they say that the deceased is brought immediately into the presence of Christ, but this presence with the Lord is not a bodily presence. The bodily presence will not take place until the resurrection. Between the time the body dies and the resurrection, the Christian is in an intermediate state. During this state, the soul is conscious. It is not asleep or unconscious.

There are others who say the “house not made with hands” of II Corinthians 5:1 is a body prepared for the soul until the soul is clothed with the resurrection body. They suppose it

refers to some “celestial vehicle” with which the soul is clothed during the intermediate state.

The Scriptural view is that “the house not made with hands” is the eternal house into which a Christian enters when he steps out of time into eternity. Therefore, there are no such things as purgatory, soul-sleep, unclothed state, or a temporary body between death and the resurrection. There is no interval between absence from the body and presence with Christ. Hence, there is no break in the continuity of soul and body when one steps out of time into eternity. The dying Christian steps out of an earthly house into one that is made without hands, eternal in the heavens. Soul-life apart from a body is unscriptural.

This brings us to our study of II Corinthians 5:1— “FOR we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” “FOR we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (NASB).

The particle “for” (*gar*) sends our thoughts back to what precedes it. Paul’s decaying body and affliction had not caused him to lose heart, because he looked not at the things which were seen but at the things which were not seen. Furthermore, Paul knew the Promiser would not deceive His people. Christ had said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8). Christ had been seen in His glorified body by a large number of witnesses (I Cor. 15:5-8). Christ’s high priestly prayer attested that His own would be with Him and behold His glory (John 17:24). John was inspired to say we will be like Christ, because we shall see Him as He is (I John 3:2). The apostles knew by the change Christ had wrought in their souls that He could do as much for their bodies. Christ can as easily give a luminous (radiant) body as He can illuminate the mind.

“For we know” is first person plural perfect active indicative of *oida*, which means to have a settled knowledge. It is a stronger word than *ginosko*, which is frequently used to suggest progress in knowledge. The word *oida* was used by Paul in his testimony to express his knowledge of Christ. It was used to speak of the restored blind man’s knowledge of his sight. It is also used of the Lord’s sheep knowing the voice of their Shepherd: “...I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (II Tim. 1:12). “He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see” (John 9:25). “And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice” (John 10:4). The apostle Paul had a settled knowledge concerning not only his salvation but the kind of body he would have as soon as he stepped out of time into eternity. The certainty of the future state of Christians is our present concern. Assurance gave Paul the desire to “be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Cor. 5:8).

The particle “if” in the statement “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved...” is *ean*. It is a third class condition particle used with the first aorist passive subjunctive of *kataluo*, which confines it to the future. The subjunctive

mood denotes possibility. Hence, the possibility of the house (*oikia*) of the tabernacle (*skenos*, genitive singular of *skene*, which means a tent or temporary dwelling) terminating its allotted time suggests that the believer might not die. He may be living in time when Jesus Christ returns for His own. Therefore, those who are living will not “walk through the valley of the shadow of death” (Ps. 23:4), but their bodies will “be swallowed up of life” (II Cor. 5:4). The verb *kataluo* means to dissolve, disunite, demolish, destroy, or overthrow.

The Christian’s earthly house is decaying (II Cor. 4:16). It is inferior to the one he will experientially have when the body of humiliation is made like Christ’s glorious body (I John 3:2). The tent suggests not only its temporary nature but that the Christian life is a pilgrimage which subjects it to trouble and affliction. However, it is a life destined to something greater.

Christians are now indwelling the tent which is their house on earth, but they have a title to their heavenly house: “...we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” “We have” is first person plural present active indicative of the verb *echo*, which means “I have.” Our Title to this house is not post-dated but pre-dated. The indwelling Spirit, according to II Corinthians 5:5, is a foretaste of the future glory. From God’s viewpoint, our glorification, like our foreordination, predestination, calling, and justification, is an accomplished fact. There is no time with God. The aorist tense speaks of finished action in time past. It has different shades of meaning. Thus, the aorist may emphasize the initiation, culmination, and action in its entirety. The five aorist verbs in Romans 8:29-30 reveal the whole of the elect’s salvation. There is nothing but grace, whether we view salvation in God’s foreordination of and predestinated plan for the elect, or its calling, justification, and glorification in the elect. Salvation is of God, whether one views it in its initiation, continuation, or culmination. However, from God’s viewpoint, it is all in the eternal present. God views our salvation in its entirety. We view it in its different aspects: “Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us” (II Cor. 1:10).

The house “we have” is an eternal possession: “...we have a building [*oikia*, a house] from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Christians are able to challenge the present and rejoice in the future, because they possess the title deed to an eternal house in the heavens. Paul did not say, “we shall have” but “we have.” The present active form of *echo* means that our title deed is not only actively present but it is a reality. Our present body (house) is from God, but it comes from Him through secondary instrumentalities. The future bodies (houses) of believers will come directly from God.

There is no indication of an interval of time between the dissolution of the earthly body and the inhabitation of the heavenly body. Since time cannot exist in eternity, there is no intermediate state between the Christian’s death and resurrection.

Many believe the state of the blessed dead between death and the resurrection is undesirable. They say it is an unnatural separation between the soul and the body induced by the first sin, and such a separation was an unpleasant thought to Paul. He did not want

to be unclothed. They further state that the intermediate state is superior to the present state because Jesus Christ is there. Promoters of this view warn that anyone who unduly exalts the intermediate state depreciates the resurrection as completed redemption. Until the resurrection, saints are represented as not having been rewarded or having inherited and therefore imperfect as to completed redemption. How could such teaching have been Paul's hope?

Paul anticipated no intermediate state between death and the resurrection. His earthly body was decaying, but he was not filled with despondency. Like Abraham before him, Paul looked for the eternal city and all that it included. Hence, he looked for a new body that would inhabit that eternal city. The context suggests that Paul had in mind the probability of his soon death. Hence, the possibility of his being alive when Christ returned was remote. Only twelve years later he spoke of his departure being at hand: "For I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (II Tim. 4:6). The Greek word for "departure" is *analsis*, which means dissolution or unloosing. This is the only place in the New Testament where the noun is used. Paul used the verb *analuo* in Philippians 1:23— "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart [*analuo*], and to be with Christ; which is far better." The verb means to loose or to depart from life.

The earthly house will be "dissolved" in death, unless the Christian lives until Christ comes for His own (I Thess. 4:13-18). The verb "dissolved" is first aorist passive subjunctive of *kataluo*, which means to dissolve, disunite, destroy, or overthrow. It is used here in the sense of physical death. Among the 17 times it is used in the New Testament, it is translated "destroy" (Matt. 5:17), "lodge" (Luke 9:12), "to be guest" (Luke 19:7), "thrown down" (Matt. 24:2), "will come to nought" (Acts 5:38), "overthrow" (Acts 5:39), and "dissolved" (II Cor. 5:1). The language used by Paul is similar to that of Eliphaz (Job 5:24-27). Death is inevitable for most Christians. Only few of the members of the body of Christ will be alive when He comes for His own. Eliphaz said, "Thou shalt come to thy grave in full age...." This is a trite saying, but it is one so easily forgotten. The key to dying is "thou shalt know" (Job 5:24, 25, 27). "Thy tabernacle" refers to a temporary shelter, but "thy habitation" means a place of tranquil habitation (Job 5:24). The decaying of the body imposes no inevitable decline in the soul's higher life (II Cor. 4:16-5:8).

The leprosy of sin is in the wall of the earthly house; hence, the house must be torn down. (See Lev. 13-14; Heb. 9:27.) We are hastening to dissolution: "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle..." (Job 7:6). All the patriarchs, with the exception of Enoch and Elijah, have walked through the valley of the shadow of death. Neither medical science nor the philosophy of Neo-Pentecostalism can protect the earthly tabernacle from dissolution. However, the Christian can look upon death as an exit out of time and an entrance into eternity. There, he will experience the unmediating presence of Jesus Christ.

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## PAUL DESIRED HIS HOUSE FROM HEAVEN

Christians have new bodies with which they shall be clothed, and they desire to experience that clothing. This desire is not motivated by disobedience or impatience. Informed Christians know they have been saved for a purpose, and they want that purpose accomplished. Contentment destroys impatience. Paul said of himself, "...I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11). Contentment is the highwater mark in the Christian life. It is self-sufficiency, but not in the natural sense. Christians are independent of circumstances or conditions. Inner strength keeps them looking to the goal. Hence, all the problems along the way do not deter them. Contentment, however, does not indicate that believers are indifferent to circumstances. That attitude would be nothing more than the resignation of pagan stoicism. Paul was not mastered by circumstances. By grace he had been able to master circumstances. He knew how to be abased and how to abound (Phil. 4:12). Therefore, he put them all together and said, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13 NASB).

Groaning is in the present body: "For indeed in this house we groan..." (II Cor. 5:2 NASB). The demonstrative pronoun *toutoi* (this) refers to the "earthly house" of verse one. There are five references to the earthly tabernacle in II Corinthians 5:1-8— (1) "our earthly house of this tabernacle" (v. 1), (2) "For indeed in this house we groan" (v. 2 NASB), (3) "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan" (v. 4), (4) "While we are at home in the body" (v. 6 NASB), and (5) "willing rather to be absent from the body" (v. 8).

Christians groan in their earthly tabernacles. The word for "groan" is plural present active indicative of *stenadzo*, which means to groan or sigh (Rom. 8:23; II Cor. 5:2, 4; Heb. 13:17), to sigh inwardly (Mark 7:34), or to give vent to censorious feelings (James 5:9). The changes from a body preserved by the tree of life in the garden of Eden to a mortal body and from gardening in paradise to plowing by the sweat of the brow were unpleasant. Adam was so reluctant to change that he had to be driven out of the garden. Christians live in a groaning world: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:22). We bear a part in this concert: "And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23 NASB).

Christians know by revelation, observation, and personal experience that the whole creation is groaning. The metaphor of groaning is taken from a man bearing a heavy burden and a woman giving birth to a child. Before sin entered into the world, creation and man sang without wail. But now they have changed their tune and groan together. Although Christians have been delivered from the curse of sin, they will not enjoy full redemption until the redemption of their bodies. Therefore, the Holy Spirit must help us

in our infirmities. He makes intercession in us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26, 27). We learn from revelation that creation is groaning for liberty (Rom. 8:22). Christians are groaning for likeness (Rom. 8:23), and the Holy Spirit within Christians is groaning that they might be enlightened (Rom. 8:26, 27).

The Bible and observation reveal that all creation is groaning. This universal groaning and travailing begins very low in the scale of creation. As we ascend the scale of creation, the struggle becomes more intense. Mountains writhe in agony. Trees and flowers fight sternly with nature. However, beauty is seen in all its groaning. As we proceed to the realm of animate creation, the struggle becomes more destructive. The race is for the swift, and the spirit is for the strong. With each surviving, living thing, many perish. Each organism has its inward, preying parasite, and its natural foe pursues it. Groaning becomes articulate and burdened with anguish when we advance to the level of humans. Human history is one of bloodshed, famine, and disease. Masses of victims lie crushed under the chariot wheels of progress. However, God preserves His elect in it all until they are regenerated. The regenerated are not free from groaning. Christians are groaning for likeness: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Ps. 17:15). Believers experience groaning not only from indwelling sin (Rom. 7:20) and the physical decaying of the body (II Cor. 4:16), but also from bearing the dying of the Lord Jesus in their mortal bodies (II Cor. 4:10, 11). The latter is more than a pious thought of the mind borne while they sit in an assembly service. It is an experience by the Christian who goes outside the camp bearing the reproach of Christ in his body.

Men debate whether Paul desired to die in order to be clothed upon with his house from heaven, or if he wanted Christ to come that he might escape dying without being unclothed. Those who believe in the disembodied state of the dead between death and the resurrection make the following statements: Paul's desire for death would have been unnatural. The Christian is looking beyond death to the time he will be clothed with a new body at the resurrection. Therefore, the hope of the Christian is not death as a natural process, because it disembodies and disrobes. The believer desires either the resurrection or the rapture. Death is a curse. It answers no questions and settles no problems. Man was made in the image and likeness of God. His loss of the image of that pattern produced the necessity for redemption. The spiritual part of the new image comes through regeneration, but the physical part comes through resurrection. On the other hand, those who deny the intermediate state say Paul desired his house from heaven in the passage under discussion. Consider the context of II Corinthians 4:7-5:8.

To say that Paul neither desired nor anticipated death is going too far. The particle "if" (*ean*— v. 1) is third class condition. Being in the subjunctive mood, it involved the possibility of his death. Paul was ready either way. There is no clear reference to the Lord's return in the passage. However, there is no doubt that Paul later anticipated death: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (II Tim. 4:6). Paul was actually saying, "I am already being poured out." The verb "offered" is first person singular present passive indicative of *spendo*, which means to pour out a libation or drink offering. The present passive indicative mood signifies that Paul was in the act of

being sacrificed for the cause of Christ. Furthermore, he said that his departure was at hand. The Greek word for “departure” is *analuōsis*. It is used metaphorically of death (II Tim. 4:6). The verb *analuō*, which means to loose in order to depart, is used only twice in the New Testament (Luke 12:36— return; Phil. 1:23— depart). The Greek word for “at hand” is a perfect active indicative of *ephistemi*, which means “had arrived.” Hence, the time had come for Paul to die: “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.... For I am in a strait betwixt two [NASB: “hard pressed from both directions”], having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you” (Phil. 1:21, 23, 24). Paul spoke of death as his friend, not his enemy.

Death has been made, by Christ’s death, the gracious possession of Christians: “...For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s” (I Cor. 3:21-23). Therefore, death is not disaster but gain to believers. Whatever follows death for the child of God is “far better” (much better— *mallon*, an adverb which means more, to a greater extent, or in a higher degree; and *kreisson*, better, superior, more excellent, of a higher nature, or more valuable) (Phil. 1:23). The writer of Hebrews used *kreisson* thirteen times to show the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old.

“To be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” (II Cor. 5:2) has had three major interpretations: (1) The house with which the deceased Christian is clothed is not the glorified body that comes from the earth on the morning of the resurrection. It is the heavenly house into which the believer enters when he leaves the earthly house. (2) The house is “from heaven.” The reference is to the house which was said to be “in heaven” (v. 1) but is now brought, at the time of the resurrection, with the Lord from (out of) heaven at His coming. This view leaves the person in a disembodied state between death and the resurrection. Paul did not want to die, but he desired to be alive when Christ comes. The heavenly body would then be put on like a garment over his mortal body in a manner that the mortal would be swallowed up of life. (3) Paul desired to be absent from the body and present with the Lord (v. 8), but not without being clothed upon with his heavenly house. We cannot be absent from the body and be present with the Lord without seeing Him. Furthermore, seeing Christ as He is views Him in His glorified body. One must be like Him to see Christ as He is (I John 3:2). How can we be like Him if we are not in our glorified bodies? There is no period of imperfection for the Christian between death and the resurrection.

II Corinthians 5:3 is considered a problem text: “If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.” The following is a list of some interpretations of this text: (1) Naked means disembodied spirits are without form and power of activity. (2) Those who depart this life will be clothed and therefore not be found naked. (3) Those who are alive when Christ returns will not be disembodied. (4) The believer will not be bodiless between death and the resurrection because he will have his body from heaven. However, the body from heaven is not the body which will come from the grave. (5) The departed spirits are conscious of their incompleteness (Rev. 6:9-11). (6) The souls of the departed are made perfect in holiness, but they are waiting for the redemption of their bodies. (7) Paul hoped to escape the separation of his soul from his body. However, if he died before the second

coming of Christ, he would be at home with the Lord. (8) Souls between death and the resurrection are in an intermediate state. (9) Believers pass immediately into glory without a waiting period in some kind of intermediate state. (10) The word “naked” means to be without the robe of righteousness (Christ).

The verse in question begins with “if.” In the Greek text, it is the particle *ei* followed by the enclitic (a word closely connected with the preceding word) particle *ge* which imparts emphasis and means at least, indeed, or even. The Greek word for “being clothed” is a plural first aorist middle participle of the verb *enduo* (to put on, clothe, or array) and could be translated “having been clothed.” Should the particle *ei* allow for uncertainty, or should it suggest no doubt? The first class condition affirms reality, and the fourth class is a possible future condition. Which of the two is *ei* in this verse? Paul said, “we have a building of God” (v. 1), and “desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” (v. 2). These statements give reality as well as the possibility of experiencing the building of God as the result of the earthly house being dissolved (torn down) by death. This being the case, it seems justifiable to translate *ei ge kai endusamenoι*, “Since indeed having been clothed.”

The last part of the Greek text is negative *ou gumnoi heurethesometha*. Here we have a plural future passive indicative of the verb *heurisko*, which means to find out, to detect, or to discover. The translation of the third verse can be, “Since we have been clothed we shall not be found naked.” Paul was suggesting the possibility of death rather than being alive when Christ comes. He was reaffirming what he had said in the first verse. Therefore, if his body should be torn down by death, he had a blessed house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

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# 17

## **TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY IS TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD**

Man was made in the image and after the likeness of God (Gen. 1:26). Therefore, his creation was after a Divine pattern. Having lost the image of that pattern in the fall, man must be regenerated by the Spirit to have God’s image restored. Man’s image is not the thing of which it is the figure. Hence, the image and likeness in man are of a created substance. The redeemed soul of man comes through regeneration, and the redeemed body comes through resurrection, or translation. Having been regenerated, Paul spoke of groaning in his unredeemed body. The longer the apostle lived and fought “the good fight of faith” the greater his groan became.

Following his reiteration of II Corinthians 5:2, Paul said, "...being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (v. 4). The participle "being burdened" is from *bareo*, which means to burden, weigh down, or depress. Paul used this verb three times (II Cor. 1:8; 5:4; I Tim. 5:16). In II Corinthians 1:8, he spoke of being "pressed out of measure." While some thought his life was one of ease, Paul did not want them to be ignorant concerning his true condition. He was not a boaster who left the impression that everything was great. He did not practice "the power of positive thinking." The apostle was a realist; therefore, he wanted people to know that he was so depressed he gave up hope of surviving. His reaction was as normal as ours, except his burden was far greater. His experience, however, caused him to trust God rather than himself (II Cor. 1:9). The apostle was burdened, but as great as the burden of his earthly tent was, he did not desire to be "unclothed" but "clothed upon." Unlike Greek philosophers who spoke of being free from the restraints of the body, Paul did not desire disembodiment. He was sure that if his earthly house should be torn down by death, a heavenly house to which he already had the title awaited him. If he did not live to experience mortality being swallowed up of life, he had the assurance that should he die he would not stand before the Lord naked (II Cor. 5:1). The Greek word for "swallowed up" is first aorist active subjunctive of *katapino*, which means to swallow up or absorb. (See I Cor. 15:54; II Cor. 5:4; Rev. 12:16.)

Contrary to the view of Greek philosophy, Christians do not look upon the soul as imprisoned in the body. Paul abhorred the idea of being unclothed, regardless of the trials and sufferings in his earthly body. Therefore, he could speak of death as "gain" (*kerdos*, gain as a matter of profit, or advantage— used in Phil. 1:21; 3:7; Titus 1:11. It is related to the verb *kerdaino*, Matt. 16:26; I Cor. 9:19-22; Phil. 3:8; I Pet. 3:1). How can "death" be either "gain" or "far better" (*mallon*, adverb which means to a greater extent or higher degree, and *kreisson*, which means better, superior, or of a higher nature— Phil. 1:23) if the departed Christian becomes less of a person when he dies than when he was living? Few words have more influence over human affairs than the word "gain." The same influence holds true in the Christian life. Presence with Christ means there will be no sin to mortify, no ignorance to cloud the judgment, no disorder to misguide the passions, and no taint of depravity with which to contend. These will all be a reality because the spirit will be perfected, and the perfected spirit will then dwell in a house not made with hands. As the soul needs a body for consciousness in time, it will have a heavenly body for consciousness in eternity.

Preparation for eternity is the work of God: "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (II Cor. 5:5). The word for "hath wrought" is first aorist passive participle of *katergazomai*, which means to work out, to effect, to bring out as a result, to produce or to fashion or prepare one for a thing. God has prepared us for eternity. His preparation includes election, redemption, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification. All of God's dealings with the elect have "bringing many sons unto glory" as their object (Heb. 2:10). The Holy Spirit within those He has regenerated is "the earnest" (*arrabon*, a pledge or earnest— II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14). An earnest is given when the accomplishment of a promise is delayed. God has given to the Christian the Holy Spirit as the pledge, or guarantee of

what is yet to come. The earnest is given for the security of the person who receives it, not for the Person who has given it. There is no danger of God failing to do what He has promised. “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Num. 23:19). The Holy Spirit is the present guarantee of our coming consummation. He is not a promise to be expected but a pledge already given. Hence, we do not seek Him, but we must yield to Him.

The presence of the Holy Spirit was the source of Paul’s confidence. The Greek word for “confident” is present active participle of *tharreo*, which means to be of good courage or to be hopeful or confident— II Corinthians 5:6, 8; 7:16; 10:1-2; Hebrews 13:6 (translated “bold” in the last three references). Paul had not only courage as he faced the present but unshakable confidence as he looked to the future (II Cor. 5:6, 8). Believers are not in their permanent home as long as they are in their bodies. We experience the mediating presence of Christ while at home in our bodies. We are away from home as to the unmediating presence of Christ. Our “earnest” is the third Person in the Godhead. Therefore, He keeps us from despair in life, and He will do the same for us when we face death. Hence, the Christian life is balanced by having the correct perspective of the present and the future. It can be said that Christianity is a philosophy of faith which brings future things into the present. The believer knows by faith what he can expect and is therefore influenced by it.

Some believe II Corinthians 5:7 is a parenthesis— “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” People of the world are controlled by the things they see, but Christians are controlled by faith in Christ whom they do not see. The word “walk” denotes life, activity, progress, and perseverance. Both the positive, “we walk by faith,” and the negative, “not by sight,” are mentioned. The two principles can never be mixed. To walk by faith is safe. The sense of sight is deceptive. It makes great mistakes because things are not what they seem. Faith, on the other hand, relies on the light of God’s word to guide through time. Faith is the believer’s spiritual sense by which he walks in time by the power of eternity. Faith connects the believer with time and eternity.

Paul’s courage had not waned when he said, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Cor. 5:8). The apostle believed his body was a vital part of himself. It was the organ of his earthly being. Death would be only the change in the mode of his being in time in an earthly body to his being in eternity in a house not made with hands.

Some say the apostle was referring to the act of dying and not to the state of the dead. They say the language is more accurately, “willing to go from home in the body, and to go home to the Lord.” One must recognize, however, that such a transition leads to a permanent state. Thus, the question to be considered is, in what state does the believer go home to the Lord? Is it an unclothed, intermediate state? Many believe that the believer’s presence with Christ at death is immediate (after death), personal, conscious, unclothed, intermediate (between death and the resurrection), and a preferred state. Others take

exception to the unclothed and intermediate aspects of the state of the dead. I identify with those who take exception.

The soul has its identification through bodily senses and perceptions. Hence, the soul gazes upon the present universe and fellow souls through the window of the eyes. The soul is able to make additional contact with the universe and with fellow souls through the ears. Soul communicates with soul by the organ of speech. Hence, an unclothed soul would be cut off from fellowship with the universe and, worst of all, from fellow souls. Since this is an undeniable fact in time, what about the soul in eternity? Could the departed Christian have fellowship with Christ in eternity in an unclothed soul? Jesus Christ made no appearances to His own between His death and ascension until after His resurrection. He was in His glorified body when He made His unmediating personal appearances. Therefore, in order for Christians to appear in the unmediating presence of Christ and fellowship with Him in eternity, they must appear in their glorified bodies.

Man was created body and soul. He was intended to possess body and soul in time and eternity. If this were not true, what is the purpose of the resurrection?

In view of what Paul gave on the subject of death and the future for the departed, how could he, as some claim, anticipate with such joy an interval of unknown duration in an imperfect state? Since man is incomplete without a body, those who describe the “intermediate state” as a place infinitely more to be desired than being in the earthly body are forced to entitle it “no man’s land,” a place where man is only half-man. Scriptural evidence does not justify the conclusion that Paul preferred nakedness of soul with Christ to personal completeness with Christ. When Paul spoke of “gain,” “far better,” “crown of righteousness,” etc., he knew that when he passed from time into eternity, he would be stripped of his earthly tent that he might be clothed upon with his heavenly house. This experience alone can be called “going home.”

## **DEATH IS GAIN FOR THE CHRISTIAN**

Every person struggles with the fact of living and dying. There are only two theories of life and death. Paul described the Christian’s rationale: “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). Conversely, the nonchristian’s opinion is “to live is self, and to die is loss.” The difference between the believer and nonbeliever is unique. It stands alone in quality. The Christian has two lives— natural life from his parents and spiritual life from God. On the other hand, the unbeliever has only the one life which came from his parents. Death to sin preceded life in the Christian. Hence, the Christian’s death to sin

is the fruit of Christ's death for his sin. Conversely, the unbeliever is dead in sin. Therefore, only the person who can speak of death as gain can say, "For me to live is Christ."

Paul condensed three great doctrinal chapters into one verse: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). "I am crucified with Christ" is a summary of Romans 6. The tense of the verb used is important. The Greek text reads *Christoi sunestauromai*. This is the first person singular perfect passive indicative of the verb *sustauroo*, which means to be crucified with another. The perfect tense refers to a completed action. Hence, the results but not the actions are continuing. Therefore, Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ."

According to Romans 6, believers are called upon to acknowledge their having been crucified with Christ and surrender to that truth. When was Christ crucified? Jesus Christ was crucified two thousand years ago. How is it possible for believers since Calvary to be crucified with Christ? All the elect were legally crucified with Christ when He died. Our old man "was crucified" (aorist tense, which denotes a single and completed act) with Christ. The "old man" of Romans 6:6 is the unregenerate man in contrast to the "new man" in regeneration. Thus, the recipient of grace is so united to Christ that Christ's death is his.

Paul no longer lived as an "old man." "Nevertheless I live; yet not I..." (Gal. 2:20). The sinner could not die for sin, but legally in Christ he has died unto sin. Death for the elect is judicial (legal), because we died in our representative, Jesus Christ. There is no death for sin except in the death of Jesus Christ. Those who are not legally dead unto sin will experience sin unto death. What we were in Adam is gone when we are regenerated. Gradual dying is not the dying of the old man: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you" (II Cor. 4:10-12). The believer is not two men but one man with two natures (Eph. 4:22-24). Romans 7 shows self struggling to live a good life but acknowledging defeat because of indwelling sin. Paul acknowledged the justice of God's objective claim, but he lacked subjective ability in himself to do the good he desired. However, grace was residing in his decaying body.

Christ lived in Paul: "...nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me..." (Gal. 2:20). The believer is the subject of life but not its agent. Romans 8 reveals the Holy Spirit bringing assurance to the new man because Christ indwells him by the Spirit: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). The Spirit of Jesus Christ is the Host, not a mere Guest. Where the old life was one of self-love, self-interest, and self-satisfaction, the new life is one of love for Christ, interest in Christ, and concern about the pleasure of Christ. The Christian life is filled with paradoxes. Hence, the



believer is dead but lives. He lives; but at the same time, he is dying. Furthermore, he lives in the flesh but not according to the flesh.

The statement “For me to live is Christ” is so filled with doctrinal teaching that it staggers the spiritual mind. Life itself is a mystery, but the Christian life is a greater mystery. Beginning with the lowest form of life and going all the way to its highest form, there is mystery. The higher the form of life the greater the complexity and mystery. All lower forms of life are derived from God, who is their source. The believer is dependent on Christ, is conformed to Christ, has fellowship with Christ, and looks for Christ.

“To live is Christ” means total dependence on Christ. Christ said, “...because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19). God not only gives life to the elect but assures its future. “Ye shall live” is future active indicative of *dzao*, which means to live. Christ’s promise, “ye shall live,” is secured by His statement, “because I live.” “Because” is a causal particle (*hoti*), which proves that Jesus Christ has provided all that is necessary to secure His own: “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:28, 29). Christ died to save us (John 10), and He lives to intercede for us (John 17).

“To live is Christ” means conformity to Christ. To be conformed to Christ, the believer must “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Titus 2:10). The word “adorn” is a present active subjunctive of *kosmeo*, which means to arrange, set in order, adorn, decorate, or embellish. Paul told the women to “adorn” themselves in modest apparel, apparel that is fitting to not only their sex but their position as Christians. Christians cannot evidence the doctrine (teaching) of Christ in all things without being taught the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

“To live is Christ” means to have fellowship with Christ. This fellowship is habitual, private, and public. We are saved for fellowship, not isolation. The Greek word for “fellowship” is *koinonia*, which means communion, fellowship, association, or joint participation. The verb *koinoneo* means to come into fellowship or to be made a partner. Fellowship with Christ is more endearing and binding than blood relationships. Creature identity is outside of Christ, but Christian identity is in Christ.

“To live in Christ” means to look for Christ. Looking for Christ has a sanctifying effect in the life of the Christian. “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:3). He does not want to “be ashamed before him at his coming” (I John 2:28). The thought of seeing Jesus Christ is the greatest incentive for purity of life.

Death is gain to everyone who can sincerely say, “For me to live is Christ.” This is the only gain that satisfies the Christian. The Greek word for “gain” is *kerdos*, which means gain, profit, or advantage. Few words, if any, have more influence over mankind in general than the word “gain” and its synonyms— “profit” and “advantage.” The profit or advantage of this world’s system— secular or religious— is discounted only by grace.

From the secular point of view, "...what is a man profited, if he shall gain [first aorist active subjunctive of *kerdaino*] the whole world, and lose his own soul..." (Matt. 16:26). From the religious standpoint, Paul said, "...I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win [first aorist active subjunctive of *kerdaino*] Christ" (Phil. 3:8). Christ was such a gain to Paul that religious advantage seemed as nothing. The word "win" (*kerdeso*) is put in opposition to the loss Paul had incurred. However, there was enough in Jesus Christ to more than compensate his loss. There is no comparison but infinite distance between eternal life in Christ and eternal destruction from His presence.

It is doubtful that Paul would have said "to die is gain" if he had anticipated an intermediate state. What advantage would Paul have gained by leaving a busy life of glorifying Christ for a silent and useless existence in an unclothed state? No one has ever experienced perception or consciousness apart from the body. If that is true in time, it is also true when man steps out of time into eternity. II Corinthians 5:1 refutes the theory of an intermediate state between death and the resurrection.

Death brings the Christian immediate gain. Negatively, he is free from indwelling sin, temptation, weakness of the flesh, suffering, sorrow, persecution, and a temporary decaying body. Positively, he gains Christ's personal presence, his inheritance, the kingdom, a body like Christ's, and perfection in holiness. As a minister lay on his death bed, his friend asked if he would like him to engage in prayer. The dying minister replied, "I would rather you would engage in praise."

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# 19

## **BIBLICAL INFORMATION MUST NOT REMAIN IN A CLOSED BIBLE**

Biblical information must be in the mind and heart of the Christian in order for him to be able to overcome the catastrophes of life. Information that remains in a closed Bible cannot help the believer. Every crisis in life, including physical death, is designed to glorify God and to focus attention on His grace.

Paul's exposition of I Thessalonians 4:13-18 began on a negative note. This passage of Scripture is considered the greatest proof of the intermediate state of the righteous dead between death and the resurrection. The apostle began by saying he did not wish the brethren to be ignorant concerning those who were falling asleep. The Greek *ou thelomen de humas agnoein* means "But we do not wish you to be ignorant." Paul turned from the

subject of sanctification to the saints' "falling asleep" (present passive participle of *koimao*, which means those who were being put to sleep).

"Sleep" is appropriately used for the physical death of Christians because it is expressive of resting and awaking. Some say that death to the Christian is a time of rest for the body, a temporary repose from which the body shall be aroused, a refreshment for a more blessed pleasure, and the hope of a resurrection out of a long sleep that it might enter into eternal happiness. This belief originated in a mind lacking understanding of the subject of eternity and time. The Greek word for "ignorant" is a present active infinitive of *agnoeo*, which means to be ignorant or to not understand. Paul used this statement on a number of occasions with reference to various subjects (Rom. 1:13; 11:25; I Cor. 10:1; 12:1; II Cor. 1:8; I Thess. 4:13).

Death to the Christian may be compared with regeneration. Death is to the body what regeneration is to the soul. In regeneration, the depraved soul actually (not legally) dies to sin and is made alive to God. In the death of the Christian, the corruptible body, which is the fruit of the fall, is "torn down" (*kataluo*) that the soul may occupy its eternal house (II Cor. 5:1). This eternal house will be like Christ's (I John 3:2). As the sinner is passive in regeneration, the believer is passive in the act of dying. Although diseases and accidents are considered as causes of death, one must acknowledge that the act of dying is in God's hand. God not only gives but takes life: "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand" (Deut. 32:39). "The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up" (I Sam. 2:6). "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18). Even the instruments of death are under God's control. The sinner does not perceive the change that is wrought upon his soul in the act of regeneration. Likewise, the believer does not observe the change that takes place in his body in the act of dying. Someone may say, "So far so good, but can one say that as a new heart is given in regeneration, a new body is given in death?" Is the new body reserved for the future resurrection, or does God give the new body when the believer dies? Does I Thessalonians 4:13-18 contradict II Corinthians 5:1?

Death of the body is compared with sleep. One is not afraid to go to sleep because he knows its purpose. Why then should the Christian fear death? Ignorance of death's purpose is the cause of fear. Hence, knowledge of spiritual and eternal realities are absolutely necessary for assurance and comfort in the Christian life. A believer fears death only because of Biblical ignorance and looking away from Christ. In the face of imminent death by stoning, Stephen looked away from his persecutors and focused his eyes on the glory of God and Jesus Christ standing at God's right hand (Acts 7:54-60). We are not permitted a vision like that experienced by Stephen, but we have the completed revelation of God's word that he did not possess. Christ said to doubting Thomas, "...blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29). Our faith today is not based on sight but the recorded testimony of God. Peter described this more eminent faith in I Peter 1:8— "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

One does not know when sleep falls upon him. Great lessons may be learned about the act of dying from the analogy of sleep. As sleep does not harm the body, death does not destroy the basic ingredients of the body. Each body with its peculiar features will be maintained and perfected in the new body. Identity of each person will be maintained. Moses and Elijah were recognized on the mountain of transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-13). There are some mysterious things in the vision, but this is understandable since we are in our earthly bodies. However, there is great fascination in the study of this vision. We note the changes that can come to substances without destroying their essential natures. Peter gave testimony to this phenomenon: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount" (II Pet. 1:16-18).

The Christian's death is not punishment as the penalty for sin, but it may be paternal discipline for disobedience. Death and sins have been borne by Jesus Christ on the cross for the elect. Hence, the believer sees in Christ's death not only payment for his sins but the death of his own death (Gal. 1:4; II Tim. 1:10). Christ made three remarkable statements about death as it is related to believers: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death" (John 8:51). "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25, 26). There are some wonderful things for the Christian to consider: (1) His death is not connected with eternal death. (2) The sting of physical death has been removed, and the grave has lost its victory (I Cor. 15:55). Death is only a shadow to the believer (Ps. 23:4). Although death is not a punishment, it is sometimes used as paternal discipline: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it (I John 5:16).

The term of life fixed by God cannot extend beyond the time He determined. Admittedly, there are passages taken out of context that seem to contradict God's determined longevity of each person; therefore, we will consider each passage used against the proposition: (1) God added fifteen years to Hezekiah's days (II Kings 20:1-7). Hezekiah's additional years do not contradict the fact that man's days are numbered. The years were not added to the number God had appointed but to the days the king had already lived. Hezekiah and God saw two different things. The fifteen years were over and above what Hezekiah expected to live. However, the word from the Lord to Hezekiah concerning the years of extension did not cause him to neglect medicinal help. He applied a well-known and beneficial remedy. (2) There are some who die "before their time" (Eccl. 7:17). Man's expected time, according to Psalm 90:10, is "threescore years and ten." However, this is not God's appointed time. There is a difference between man's expected time and God's appointed time. (3) There are some who do not live out half

their days (Ps. 55:23). Such bloody and deceitful men do not really live while they exist in time. Since they do not know what life is in time, they will never know it in eternity. (4) Prolonged days are promised those who fear the Lord (Prov. 10:27). The person who fears the Lord lives a long life in a short period of time. His days shall be swallowed up in that great day when “The sun shall be no more thy light by day...” (Is. 60:19).

Birth introduces depravity, sin, labor, sorrow, disappointment, imperfection, and death. Death is the removal of all these. Furthermore, perfection, rest, unhindered joy, and the endless unmediating presence of Jesus Christ will take their places in eternity. Death to the Christian should be looked upon as (1) that which is best for him, (2) a cure of all spiritual and corporeal diseases, (3) great gain, (4) reaching full freedom from all enemies both within and without, (5) a day of crowning, (6) having an honorable escort into eternity, and (7) passing into the everlasting kingdom.

Living Christians in time must not have abnormal grief: “...that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope” (I Thess. 4:13). The Greek word for “sorrow” is a present passive subjunctive of *lupeo*, which means to make sorrowful, or to cause grief. Some take this to mean that Christians may grieve but not to the same extent as the hopeless. There is an unforbidden natural grief because of our loss, but the thrust of Paul’s statement is that Christians must not be sorrowful for dying saints. Death is gain to them (Phil. 1:21). On the other hand, there is a hopelessness in the face of death for all unbelievers. Saints are to be neither ignorant nor sorrowful like the rest of mankind.

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# 20

## THE BODY BELONGS TO GOD

Paul’s message to the Thessalonian assembly (church) concerning Christ’s coming, the resurrection of the bodies of deceased saints, and the transformation of living believers is considered the great proof passage for an intermediate state of the deceased. Many teach that there is a period of time between death and the resurrection. Thus, the prospect for dying Christians, according to this teaching, is the separation of their souls from their bodies until Christ’s coming for His own. This teaching does not seem to be the hope of either Old or New Testament saints.

David’s hope could never be satisfied until his complete restoration to God’s likeness. “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Ps. 17:15). This satisfaction includes the whole man. There can be no soul satisfaction apart from the body. Some say that as the soul is released from the body it will rise to new knowledge and bliss. Conversely, Scripture teaches that the members

of the body are necessary to consciousness of God in all His glory. If the soul has eyes and ears apart from the body, there is no further need for the body. Scripture does not speak of the soul having such members. Those who say, when the soul is released from the body the eye of the intellect will be opened and the mental ear will become more sensitive to God's word, do not understand God's purpose for the body.

David stressed three things in Psalm 17:15— (1) He would be awakened. What part of a person is awakened after a night's sleep? Sleeping and waking must be applied to that part of man to which it belongs. Since sleeping and waking do not apply to the soul, they must refer to the body. The soul is not inactive in ordinary bodily sleep. How does a person manifest himself after he has been awakened from sleep? Manifestation of oneself comes through an invigorated body after a night's sleep. Moreover, the deceased believer manifests himself through a glorified body after its awakening from death. (2) He would be in the likeness of the Lord when he was awakened. In the language of the New Testament, "...with thy likeness..." refers to the likeness of Christ's resurrected body (I John 3:2). David contrasted his enemies' condition with his own. His enemies had their portion in this life, but David looked for his when he would be made like his Lord. To be like his Lord included the perfection of not only his spirit but his body. (3) He would then be satisfied. There can be no satisfaction apart from the whole man being perfected. Perfection can be accomplished only in the Lord's presence.

Job's hope was to see God for himself, and its fulfillment would be in his flesh: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27). Thus, Job's faith and hope supported him under unparalleled privations and accusations. Job had a true friend in the midst of cruel ones. He had a real possession while enduring poverty. Furthermore, he had assurance while experiencing uncertainties.

By faith Job learned with intense hope. He looked beyond the work of Christ's first advent. Job was carried by faith beyond the corruption of the natural body to the time he, in his glorified body, would see God. He could look death in the face and say, "...yet in my flesh shall I see God." The body that was destined for worms and dust would by the resurrection power of his Redeemer, stand above both. Hence, Job's spiritual insight of his Redeemer was not restricted to Christ's first advent. The patriarch, as well as the prophets, saw Christ's advent without discriminating between the first and second. Both are necessary for perfected redemption. The first advent was for the provision of grace in Christ's work of redemption, and the second will be the final consummation and universal glory of the first. Skeptics have failed to explain away this passage of Scripture.

Some have objected to the Old Testament patriarchs' passing at once into the Lord's presence. Their proof text is John 3:13— "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." This verse is frequently misunderstood. Let us examine it in the light of its context. Firsthand information concerning redemption and the new birth could be acquired by man only by

going to heaven and sitting in the decree-making council of the Godhead. No man has ever done that. However, Jesus Christ, the Mediator between heaven and earth, not only “descended” in His incarnation but “ascended” in His ascension. The Greek text does not have the phrase “even the Son of man which is in heaven.” It reads, “And no man has ascended into heaven except He Who came down out of heaven, the Son of Man.” The Lord Jesus Christ is the only one in the position to speak authoritatively about God’s decree of salvation. Hence, Christ carried the conversation with Nicodemus to its conclusion (John 3:14-16).

Many are guilty of guarding the truth against doctrinal error while permitting its pollution through carnal living. Christians can never be impressive with their straight thinking without the reality and purity of straight living. The greatest problem with the Corinthian Christians was that they were inflated (puffed up— present passive participle of *phusioo*, which means to make natural, to inflate or blow up, to be proud, or to bear oneself loftily) with their knowledge while their testimony was eroding. Any act of sin in the Christian life is not a sudden occurrence. Behind the act is a period of weakening. It is often so slow that it goes undetected until one is startled by the awful act of disobedience. (Study I Cor. 5-8.) A person might ask what this has to do with the subject under discussion. The answer is found in I Corinthians 6:13-14— “...Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.” Compare this with Paul’s discussion of sanctification with the Thessalonian Christians (I Thess. 4) preceding his discourse of verses 13-18.

The body of the Christian is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. Body and soul are equally the subjects of creation, redemption, and resurrection. Hence, man is not complete in creation, life on earth, or life in eternity in a state of separation. In creation, man was not complete until body and soul were united by God. In redemption, God provided salvation for both soul and body. Redemption is applied to the soul in regeneration, and it will be applied to the body in the resurrection. The body as well as the soul is united to Christ by the indwelling Spirit (I Cor. 6:15-20). The body must be raised, or Christ will lose part of His purchase, and the Holy Spirit will lose His dwelling place (I Cor. 6:19, 20). As our union with Christ is not dissolved by death, we do not have the right to say the spirit forsakes its body or temple when the believer dies.

The body is “for the Lord.” Man’s body was formed for the purpose of accomplishing God’s will in time. After the fall, the Father provided a body for Christ to accomplish His will for the elect. Therefore, Christ provided redemption through His mediatorial work (Heb. 10:1-14; I Tim. 2:5). His resurrection out from among the dead was the completion of His work and the guarantee of the saints’ resurrection. Moreover, the bodies of the redeemed are for the accomplishment of God’s will in the world. Our duty as redeemed people, therefore, is to glorify God in our bodies. Christianity is real and visible. Hence, believers must not use their bodies to satisfy the flesh but to glorify God. When God’s will is finished in each believer, God calls him to his “house that is eternal in the heavens.”

The body is for the Lord, and “the Lord is for the body.” Three things in I Corinthians 6:13-20 are outstanding as proof that God is for the body: (1) “...ye are bought with a price” (v. 20). Thus, Christians are not their own. The natural man has been blinded by Satan to believe that a Christian loses all freedom. His greatest ambition is to be his own. Even the religious man feels that he is the author of his own destiny. Conversely, the regenerated man has been made to see that dependence on God is true liberty. True freedom becomes actualized in slavery, not to sin but to Jesus Christ who paid such a great price for the elect’s redemption. Such freedom is unique. It is unsolicited but gratuitously given. (2) “...Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.” Hence, our “bodies are the members of Christ.” They are Christ’s not only by creation but by redemption. The body, as the temple of the Holy Spirit, is to be guarded and treated with great care. Therefore, the believer must guard his health, watch his senses, regulate his appetites, and ask that his body be decently interred. The whole man as a Christian should be as dedicated to God as the tabernacle or temple of the Old Testament. Defilement of the body is to sin against the temple of the Holy Spirit. (3) God “will also raise up us by his own power.” What a climactic proof of God being for the body of the Christian!

Christians must not mourn, as people without hope, over departing believers. Death is not an enemy for the departing Christian. What about I Corinthians 15:26? “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Death is an enemy for those remaining rather than for those departing. It is gain for the departing Christian.

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# 21

## **RESURRECTION IS ASSOCIATED WITH CHRIST’S SECOND COMING (PART I)**

There has been much discussion as to the true interpretation of I Thessalonians 4:14— “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” The particle “if” is a first class condition, affirming the reality of the condition. Because Paul actually said, “For since we believe that Jesus died and arose...,” there was no uncertainty about what they believed. They had no doubt in their minds about Christ’s death and resurrection and should have none about their own.

The title “Jesus” was employed by Paul. This was His “personal” name— “...thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). The Father named His Son “JESUS.” The name points to His death, resurrection, and exaltation (I Thess. 4:14; Phil. 2:10). In the Gospels, the name “Jesus” stands alone many times; but outside the Gospels, the writers intended to put strong emphasis on the



manhood of the God-Man: “Jesus died” (I Thess. 4:14); “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow” (Phil. 2:10); “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2); “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour” (Heb. 2:9); and “Seeing then that we have a great high priest...Jesus the Son of God” (Heb. 4:14).

Fixing our minds on Christ’s humanity does not eliminate our seeing in His humanity that “Jesus” also involves deity. His deity is inferred in the name Joshua, another form of “Jesus.” It means Jehovah the Savior. Only of a divine Person could it be said that He is Savior, and yet He is “a man approved of God” (Acts 2:22). The angel who appeared to Mary to tell of her conception of Christ spoke of Christ in His manhood: “He shall be great” (Luke 1:32). God absolutely considered is great (Neh. 1:5; Ps. 48:1), but God manifested in flesh “shall be great.” Furthermore, “Jesus” shall be called “Son of the Highest” (Luke 1:32), and “the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). In this “Jesus” who is “Son of the Highest” and “Son of God” dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9).

The last part of I Thessalonians 4:14 is designed to show that what happened to Jesus Christ will also happen to those who have been put to sleep (*koimethentas*, first aorist passive participle of *koimao*, which means to fall asleep). The Greek adverb *houtos* means, “thus, in this way.” One must not overlook the passive voice of *koimao*, which must be emphasized. It speaks of those who have been put to sleep.

There is much discussion over the statement, “God will bring with him” (v. 14 NASB). Some of the various views are stated: (1) This does not mean that God will bring with Him from heaven but from their graves. (2) This verse refers to the departed saints. (3) The resurrection of the dead is their being brought. (4) The word “bring” (future active indicative of *ago*, which means to bring) is used instead of “shall raise up,” because the thought of separation was in the minds of the Thessalonian saints. (5) Their resurrection is implied in their being brought.

Since verse fourteen is restricted to deceased Christians, one must observe that death is not cessation but separation of existence. Adam’s spiritual death was his separation from an upright position before God. He died spiritually. His physical death was the separation of his soul from his mortal body. Furthermore, the person born again has died to sin. That death was his actual separation from being dead in sin, a life of habitual sinning. Hence, the believer’s death to sin does not eliminate his physical dying and final separation of soul and spirit from his mortal body. The seed of corruption remains in the body subsequent to regeneration. Physical death, therefore, is the Christian’s separation from that corrupting principle.

Another observation that must be made is that the believer’s separation from his mortal body is his exodus out of time and his entrance into eternity. Since there is no imperfection in eternity, the deceased Christian can be no less a person in eternity than he was in time. If the soul is a person apart from the body, of what value is the body? This refutes the idea of the soul being bodiless between death in time and the resurrection at some future time (II Cor. 5:1).

Verse fourteen applies to deceased Christians; therefore, an intermediate state would be a state of imperfection. But there is no imperfection in eternity. To say deceased Christians are in an intermediate state is to deny that they are with Christ. How can they be with Christ in eternity if they are “waiting” between two temporal events— death and the resurrection? There can be no waiting in eternity. Hence, those who teach the intermediate theory are forced to conclude there is either time in eternity or there is a place between time and eternity that cannot be classified as either. If it is neither time nor eternity, it would have to be some kind of neutral place. But there is no such place. It is either time or eternity. Christ is presently in eternity, but He is coming back into time (in the air) to receive His own. Strictly speaking, waiting occurs only to those who are restricted by time. Therefore, if there were an intermediate place, it would have to be in time. How can deceased saints be waiting in time for their resurrected bodies and be with Christ in eternity simultaneously?

One must understand that historical events have no relevance in eternity, but they do in time. Failure at this point eliminates any further understanding. Taking for granted that some comprehend to a degree the difference between time and eternity, the difference may be illustrated by using two familiar statements made by Jesus Christ during the days of His first advent.

FIRST— Christ said to His disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2, 3). An important distinction is made between what Christ said to His disciples in time and what is eternally prepared for them in heaven. (1) Christ said, “I go to prepare a place for you” (v. 2). The verb “I go” is a present indicative of *poreuomai*, which means to go or pass from one place to another (Matt. 18:12), to go away or depart (Matt. 24:1; John 14:2, 3), or to pursue or be devoted to (II Pet. 2:10). “I go” is in the present tense. It is in the indicative mood, the mood of reality. Conclusively, there is no doubt about Jesus Christ going in Person to “prepare a place” for those to whom He spoke. The word “prepare” is a first aorist active infinitive of the Greek verb *hetoimadzo*, which means to make ready or prepare. All that is necessary at this point is to show that this aorist infinitive denotes that the action is undefined, although it is punctiliar (point action). (2) Christ’s statement, “And if I go and prepare a place for you...” (v. 3), has a third class condition particle (*ean*). It is used with the first aorist active subjunctive of the verb *hetoimadzo*, which describes expectation. The subjunctive mood is the mood of expectation of the promised place. Thus, Christ’s promise stimulated the disciples’ hope. The verb “receive” is a future middle indicative of *paralambano*, which means to take to one’s side or to take to oneself. This verb is found forty-nine times in the New Testament. It was used by the angel of the Lord when telling Joseph to “...fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 1:20). It was also used by Christ in Matthew 17:1— “AND after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.” The examples of “...his own received him not...” (John 1:11) and “...when ye received the word of God...” (I Thess. 2:13) indicate the importance of the significance of this compound verb. Keep in mind that this verb is future tense, because the consummation of the disciples’ salvation was to be with Christ in eternity.

Speaking in time, Christ told the disciples what He would do for them. The aorist infinitive in verse 2 goes no further than to speak of an undefined completed action; but in verse 3, the aorist active subjunctive shows that the promise was not actual from the viewpoint of the disciples in time. From the disciples' standpoint, the actuality of the expectation was future. The subjunctive mood speaks of that which is not actual but objectively possible. Is there any doubt about the actuality of what God has prepared for them that love Him?

SECOND— The second statement by Christ demands a comparison with what He told the disciples. He said to the repentant thief, "...To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). The adverb *semeron* means this day, now, or at present. Therefore, the repentant malefactor experienced paradise immediately. The word paradise (*paradeisos*) is used three times in the New Testament (Luke 23:43; II Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7). Were the disciples of John 14:1-3 to wait for Christ's second coming to experience what the repentant thief experienced instantly after his death?

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# 22

## RESURRECTION IS ASSOCIATED WITH CHRIST'S SECOND COMING (PART II)

In our last lesson, we concluded with a comparison between John 14:1-3 and Luke 23:43. Two questions are in order: (1) Are the deceased disciples "waiting" for Christ's second advent for the consummation of their redemption? (2) Did the repentant thief's death and Christ's coming for him constitute a single event? As to the first question, waiting in an intermediate state would have to be between two events in time— death and the resurrection. Concerning the second question, historical events have no relevance in eternity, but they have in time.

Commentators are greatly divided over the meaning of Christ's promise to His disciples: "...I will come again, and receive you unto myself..." (John 14:3). Here are some of their interpretations: (1) Christ was speaking of His resurrection. (2) It refers to the Christian's death. Although some believe it refers to Christ's second advent, they say this blessed promise is fulfilled in death for all believers who die before Christ's return. (3) It refers only to Christ's second advent. Those who hold this view say, at death the believer goes to Christ which is the opposite of Christ's coming. (4) It refers to the return of Christ through the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This view is based on the coming of the Comforter. There is truth in Christ's mediating presence through the Spirit, but those who advocate this theory fail to consider that the location of the place is determined. Others explain this view by saying there are two promises— "I come" (*erchomai*, present middle indicative)

and “I will receive” (future middle indicative of *paralambano*). They believe the first refers to something soon to take place, and the second refers to the introduction of the believer into the Father’s house at either death or the second advent. However, one must observe that the translation of “I come” is incorrect. The Greek *palin erchomai* means “I come again.” The adverb *palin* means back, again, or back again. With the use of this adverb, the verb *erchomai* is made a future middle indicative rather than a present middle indicative. Therefore, both “I come again” and “I will receive” are future tense verbs. Furthermore, one must understand that what is future in time is a present reality in eternity. (5) The coming is begun in Christ’s resurrection, carried on in the spiritual life, advanced in death, and consummated at His coming in glory. This view is based on additional statements in John 14— “I will come to you” (v. 18); “we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (v. 23); and “I...come again unto you” (v. 28). Those who hold this view fail to see that verses 18, 23, and 28 show Christ’s presence through the mediation of the Holy Spirit, not His personal presence. The coming of the Holy Spirit is not a substitute for Christ’s personal and glorified presence. Therefore, the promise, “I...come again,” is a futuristic middle verb which can be translated “I will come again.”

Historical events have no relevance to eternity, but they do to time. The adjective relevant refers to something connected with the matter at hand. Hence, in our study, it refers to historical events in time. The cry of our age is, “We need a message that is relevant to our times.” What religionists mean by such language is that they want a system of theology that meets the approval of this corrupt society, a system of teaching that is applicable to this scientific age, and a religion that will satisfy the depraved mind. However, the Christian knows that true theology is relative to the eternal word of God. Hence, the believer is continuously attentive and obedient to the eternal word of God which has a message in time for the elect that will have eternal consequences. Such attentiveness and obedience leads him to make the proper distinction between time and eternity. He acknowledges that what is future to man is present reality with God. All things with respect to God have a known and a real existence. Both are simultaneous, because there is no time with the great “I AM.” Therefore, a succession of historical events in time has no relevance in eternity— the eternal “now.” Time is a state of continuous change, but eternity is a condition of constancy. The believer must be led to understand that when he steps out of time into eternity, he undergoes the final change that will be eternally unchanging.

God is eternal, not eternity. Eternal is an adjective describing God, and eternity is a noun designating a state of constancy. The eternal God, therefore, must be distinguished from eternity. God, in the Person of the Son, can be said to come into the world and leave the world. However, eternity cannot be said to come into and leave the world of time. Hence, the difference between a person and a state of constancy must be distinguished.

Christians in time have a heavenly citizenship (Phil. 3:20). The believers of Philippi did not think of their earthly citizenship in time as being more important than their eternal heavenly citizenship. The truth of their heavenly citizenship inspired their hope: “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” The Greek word for “conversation” is *politeuma*, which means administration of

a commonwealth. It is equivalent to *politeia*, which is the state of being a citizen, a community, or a commonwealth. The Greek verb for “we look” is a double compound word. It is a present middle indicative of the verb *apekdechomai*, which expresses earnest expectation and intense desire for the coming of Christ who will change the body of humiliation (not vile body), thus making it possible for us to actually enter our commonwealth. Like our being seated in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6), our present experience in time is by our God-given faith. Since our real commonwealth is in eternity, our present position in time is that of aliens. “For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Heb. 13:14). Therefore, the change in our earthly bodies is absolutely necessary before we can enter our commonwealth in heaven.

We must make a closer examination of two things in I Thessalonians 4:14— (1) What about those who were put to sleep? (2) What does “will God bring with him” mean?

The Greek word for “sleep” is a first aorist passive participle of *koimao*, which means to fall asleep. The inflected form of this verb means those who have been put to sleep. Hence, the passive voice must not be overlooked. The subjects were acted upon, because the act of dying is not in the hands of those who die. God not only gives but takes life. Sleep is suitable to time, because it expresses resting and waking. This term, however, applies only to the body in time. Earthly language is not relevant in heaven; therefore, sleep cannot apply to the soul subsequent to death.

Grammatically, verse fourteen is not easy to translate. Where does the phrase *dia tou 'Iesou*— “through the Jesus” —belong? The preposition *dia* cannot be translated “in” Jesus. Would we say, “...even so those who have been put to sleep through Jesus will God bring with him”? It seems unlikely that Paul was making Jesus the intermediate agent of those who had been put to sleep. In verse thirteen, the emphasis was on those “who are being put to sleep” (present passive participle); but in verse fourteen, Paul used the aorist passive participle— those “who have been put to sleep.” The dead rather than the dying are viewed in verse fourteen. Therefore, logically, the phrase *dia tou 'Iesou* should be interpreted with the verb *axei*, future active indicative of *ago*, which means to bring. However, some object to this interpretation, saying that “bring” already has a modifying clause in “with him.” In the light of the context, the smoothest reading would be, “Thus, in this way, those who have been put to sleep will God through Jesus bring with Him.” This view harmonizes with “And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (John 6:39). (See John 6:44, 54.)

Resurrection of the dead and translation of the living are associated with Christ’s second advent. The fact rather than the nature of the resurrection was Paul’s theme of I Thessalonians 4:13-18. The nature of the resurrected and translated body was discussed by the apostle in I Corinthians 15. Resurrection does not refer to the separation of soul and body but to the complete person in a state of glory. The grand characteristic of the resurrection is to be like Christ.

Resurrection means raising up that which has fallen. Another body would be a creation rather than a resurrection. If the fallen body will not be raised, how will completed redemption be fulfilled? The body must be redeemed because the eyes will be needed to see, the ears to hear, and a tongue to praise Jesus Christ. Therefore, resurrection enlarges our view of Divine perfection. This great truth teaches us to think highly of Jesus Christ, because He is the resurrection and the life. Christ is the firstfruits of the resurrection. Therefore, He is the efficient cause by whom and the meritorious cause through whom our resurrection shall take place.

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## 23

### **FLESH AND BLOOD WILL GIVE PLACE TO FLESH AND BONES**

Two questions are in order in the study of I Thessalonians 4:15-17— (1) Will disembodied souls be brought back by Christ to receive their glorified bodies? (2) How can perfected saints be brought back into time to be perfected?

The proposition of the verses under discussion may be stated in the following manner: At Christ's second advent into time, the oneness of the living and deceased saints will be accomplished not by the living being disembodied but by the disembodied being embodied. Does this mean the deceased souls have not been perfected?

Jesus Christ is the "firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18) and the "firstfruits" of those who have fallen asleep (I Cor. 15:20-24). Hence, the resurrection of many saints recorded in Matthew 27:51-53 has caused many to wonder why their resurrection is mentioned in association with Christ's death rather than with His resurrection of Matthew 28. There is also controversy over whether the resurrection took place at the time of Christ's death or after His resurrection.

Consideration will be given to the argument that the resurrection of the saints recorded in Matthew 27:51-53 took place at the time of the other miracles associated with Christ's death— the veil being rent from the top to the bottom, the earth quaking, and the rocks renting. They say that if the resurrection of many saints occurred after Christ's resurrection, it would be the only one of the signs postponed until after Christ's resurrection. Their affirmation is that Matthew is not concerned about order in his description of the signs that proved the validity of Christ's vicarious death. They regard I Corinthians 15:20 as offering no basis for rejecting the aforementioned idea since Paul was describing the resurrection at Christ's second advent. They believe that thinking

these saints with resurrection bodies remained in their tombs for three days and three nights is unreasonable.

Another view of the resurrected saints of Matthew 27:51-53 is that the graves were opened by the earthquake but the saints were not raised until after Christ arose. Matthew makes it clear that they came out (*ek*) of the tombs after (*meta*) Christ's resurrection. The supernatural wonders proved that Christ's death was supernatural. Scripture clearly reveals that the resurrection of these saints was subsequent to the resurrection of Christ. Not only did "many [*polla*] bodies of the saints which slept arose [*kekoimemenon*, perfect passive participle of *koimao*, who have been put to sleep or having been put to sleep, and *egerthesan*, first aorist passive indicative of *egeiro*, were raised]," but "they went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

Although Jerusalem was not holy at that time (Jer. 7:11), God saw Jerusalem in her final state. The city was chosen by God to be holy; therefore, her holiness was founded on the basis of God's choice. On the part of man, Jerusalem was profane; but on the part of God, she was holy. When Christians are viewed from man's viewpoint, they are weak, vacillating, and sinners. However, God sees the regenerated saved by grace, seated in the heavenlies, and complete in Christ in the same manner He saw Jerusalem in her completed state.

Many questions have been raised about who these saints were and what became of them. But Scripture does not tell us who they were or what became of them after they appeared to many in the holy city. We can say that those resurrected saints have given Christians a foretaste of "...afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (I Cor. 15:23). Furthermore, they could not have returned to their graves like Lazarus, because that would not have proved a perfect resurrection. Christ's death destroyed death (II Tim. 1:9, 10). The tombs at once threw open their doors. They could no longer hold their prey. Death alone is insufficient. Resurrection must follow death. One must be not only emancipated from corruption but admitted into God's presence.

The deceased saints of I Thessalonians 4:13-18 cannot be compared with the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-15), the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:41, 42), or Lazarus of Bethany (John 11). All of these received their old bodies of "flesh and blood" (John 11:44), not bodies of "flesh and bones" like the resurrected and glorified body of Christ (Luke 24:39). The life of bodies in time is in the blood (Lev. 17:11). However, the life of the glorified body will be vitalized by a different principle. Hence, the body adapted for eternity will be independent of blood. Like the glorified body of Christ, it will be one of "flesh and bones."

Those who inherit the kingdom must be in a different form than that on earth. The body must undergo a transformation. Christ's human nature, which was assumed in order to bring Him into covenant relationship with the elect, had to undergo a change to enter eternity and to be qualified for His reign in the kingdom. Therefore, Christians who are united with Him in salvation must also undergo a change from "flesh and blood" to "flesh and bones" in order to reign with Christ: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood

cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (I Cor. 15:50). Christ’s assembly can never be equated with His kingdom. The assembly is subject to Christ, but this subjection is preparatory to her future glorification and exaltation: “Therefore as the church [assembly] is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing” (Eph. 5:24). The Greek word for “subject” is *hupotassetai*, present middle indicative of *hupotasso*, which means to be subordinated. The middle voice signifies the assembly is submitting herself to her Head, Jesus Christ. Therefore, the wife must act toward her husband in the same manner. As subjects of the assembly, believers are in “flesh and blood.” Since they are heirs, they await the kingdom (James 2:5). Thus, the assembly possesses the kingdom only in anticipation. She is represented as Christ’s body. The assembly is never represented as being subject to the kingdom. To be a subject in the kingdom would dishonor the position of the body. Joint rulership with Christ will begin at the time of the assembly’s perfection (Luke 22:29; II Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10). Members of the assembly will have bodies of “flesh and bones” when they are perfected because “flesh and blood” cannot inherit the kingdom.

Paul spoke of the dead saints receiving glorified bodies within the context of time. Living saints shall not precede the deceased saints to meet the Lord in the air. Both meet Christ at the same time: “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him” (I Thess. 5:9, 10). “Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (II Cor. 4:14). “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him” (Eph. 1:10). “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thess. 4:16, 17).

Paul was allowed to talk about what takes place in time. But he was not permitted to speak about what he had heard when he was caught up into paradise (II Cor. 12:1-4). Christians in time can relate with the hemisphere of time, but they cannot relate with the sphere of eternity. Presence in eternity is necessary to relate with its sphere.

The event of I Thessalonians 4:13-18 is historical. God’s word on Christ’s coming and the resurrection in time is recorded for our edification. Hence, we must not be ignorant about that with which we can relate in time. There is a succession of events related to Christ’s second advent. There is an order but not succession of events in eternity.

We must now apply a principle we have already studied. What Bible students mean by “before” and “after” in reference to God’s decrees is not that one is before another in the order of time, because all are from eternity. Order does not necessitate time. It means arrangement of persons or things by sequence or rank. However, time signifies the sequential relations that any event has to another as future, present, or past. Hence, the sequential, which is characterized by regular sequence of parts— future, present, and past— would bring finite duration into eternity; and that is impossible. Hence, what Paul



described as a sequence of events in the hemisphere of time must not be confused with the order of events viewed from the sphere of eternity. For example, what one sees while standing on a sidewalk and watching a five mile parade pass is different from viewing it from a helicopter ten thousand feet above. The one on the ground sees the parade pass as a sequence of parts; whereas, the person in the helicopter sees the whole parade at once. The illustration is inadequate, but it gives some idea of what we are teaching concerning seeing things in time versus seeing things in eternity.

Some say that death becomes synonymous with resurrection. Death does not express the same idea as resurrection. However, it is suggested that they may occur together in the sense of forming a single experience. Paul does show that death is the exit out of time, and in the same experience, the person enters a higher life in eternity (Phil. 1:21; II Cor. 5:1).

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# 24

## **THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS ARE CONTRASTED**

What takes place after death is of such grave importance that no one can afford to take the subject lightly. The future gathers whatever took place in time and includes all its consequences, good or bad. The future life of the righteous and the unrighteous will be more sensitive than the present. The power of pleasure and misery will be augmented: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still” (Rev. 22:11). John was saying that saints and sinners alike will be followed with their own ways into eternity.

Saints will rejoice eternally in the pure elements of righteousness, which they loved and pursued in time; whereas, sinners will be eternally helpless victims of those evil passions they loved and pursued in time. The righteous will be in perfect fellowship with God and fellow saints. On the other hand, the unrighteous will be congregated together, as in the parable of the tares, to be punished. In Matthew 13:30, the statement “bind them in bundles” means the moralist, prostitute, dope addict, murderer, etc., will all be bound together. There are many unrighteous people in time who would not associate with other unsaved people; but in eternity, they will all be together. This will also add to the torment of hell.

The character of a person must be changed by grace before death, or it will never be changed. Character becomes fixed by death. Hence, a time comes in the life of each person when the seal of permanence will be set upon his character. This means the

righteous person will be righteous forever, and the unjust person will be unjust forever. Each takes his past life with him when he dies. He takes himself which is either the product of grace or the product of his own depraved nature. Hence, what one is when death takes him is what he must be forever.

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is unique. It is a Biblical description of what will happen to the saved and the lost when they die. Some affirm that it is a parable, but others deny that it is. There is no direct reference to indicate that it is a parable; however, it is given in parabolic language. Those who contend that it is a parable must admit that it is the only one where the name of a person is given.

An overview of Luke 16:19-31 will first be given before a critical study of some of the doctrinal issues is made. There are three contrasts to be observed in this passage: (1) before death (vv. 19-21), (2) at death (v. 22), and (3) after death (vv. 23-31).

The contrast between the two men in life on earth was that one was rich and the other was in poverty. The rich man is not named because his name is not recorded in the “book of life.” The only thing we know about the poor man is his name. Lazarus is the Old Testament Hebrew “Eleazer,” put into the New Testament Greek, which means “God is my help.” Christ designed this to be a sufficient description of the poor man, because He purposed to fill in his character. The poor man was not self-sufficient, but he recognized by grace that God was his help. On the other hand, the rich man’s character was under full review. He lavished his wealth upon himself and ignored the Jewish law which demanded consideration of the poor. There is a connection between this story and the preceding things recorded in the chapter. The entire chapter has money as its theme. The parable of the unjust steward was given for the benefit of the disciples, but verses 14 and 15 were addressed to the Pharisees. To wear a cloak of religion and amass a fortune is highly esteemed among men, but it is an abomination in the sight of God. The love of money plays a principle role in the affairs of unsaved men. Hence, it is the root of all kinds of evil (I Tim. 6:10).

Lazarus was the beggar in time, but the rich man is the beggar in eternity. The word “beggar” may cause some interpreters a problem unless they go to the original Greek word for its meaning. Without doing this, one might question the reconciliation of Lazarus representing a Christian with Psalm 37:25— “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” The word for “beggar” of Luke 16:20 and 22 is *ptochos*, which means poor or destitute of influence or position. It is also used metaphorically of the poor or destitute of spiritual wealth. The adjective *ptochos* is used thirty-four times and is translated “poor,” except in Luke 16:20 and 22 where it is translated “beggar” and in Galatians 4:9 where it is translated “beggarly.” The NASB translates the word “poor” in Luke 16:20 and 22 and “worthless” in Galatians 4:9. In the light of the context, the word should be translated “poor” to continue the contrast with the rich man.

Contrasts are seen in the external circumstances of the rich man and Lazarus. One was rich; the other was poor. One was elegantly clothed; the other was shabbily dressed. One

was sumptuously fed; the other was fed from things falling (present active participle of *pipto*, to fall) from the rich man's table. One was in good health; the other was covered with sores (perfect passive participle of *helkoo*, to be afflicted with ulcers). One was in his beautiful home; the other had been laid at the rich man's gate. One was a Jew who gave no thought for the poor, afflicted brother outside his home; the other was a poor and afflicted fellow Jew who needed help. How do we know they were both Jews? Christ spoke of the rich man praying to "Father Abraham." Furthermore, Abraham replied, "Son, remember." The Jews considered their descentance from Abraham a great honor (John 8:33-58). The poor man's name indicates that he was also a Jew. However, he was more than a national descendant of Abraham. By grace he was also his spiritual seed (Rom. 9:6-8). Abraham has spiritual seed who are not his natural descendants (Gal. 3:29). Therefore, if the poor man does not fit in the second category, he does in the third. The dogs licked the poor man's ulcers, manifesting more kindness than the rich man.

The inward conditions of the rich man and Lazarus are contrasted. One exulted in his wealth; the other was content with grace in his poor afflicted condition. One was a seeker of earthly treasures; the other was a seeker of heavenly treasures. One was selfish and ungodly; the other was a self-sacrificing believer. We learn from the providence of God that worldly prosperity does not prove one's acceptance with God, and poverty does not prove his abandonment. Furthermore, social elevation does not lead to spiritual-mindedness, and deprivation thereof does not distract from it. The one thing needed was lacking in the life of the rich man. He possessed great riches but had nothing, because he did not have grace. On the other hand, the poor man was the rich man because he was "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (II Cor. 6:10). He was poor in worldly possessions but rich because he possessed grace. The rich man was poor in his riches, and the poor man was rich in his poverty.

There was a contrast in the deaths of the rich man and Lazarus. The only thing the two had in common in life was their possession of mortal bodies. But what a change ensued at the moment of death! The record states that the rich man was buried, but nothing is stated about the burial of the poor man. There was no doubt an elaborate funeral service with a long procession of distinguished citizens and professional mourners for the man of wealth (Jer. 9:17; Eccl. 12:5). Such things are highly esteemed among men. Conversely, there is no reference to a funeral for Lazarus, but a convoy of angels carried him to Abraham's bosom (*kolpos*, which means close to, near, or bosom). Hence, he became a partaker of the same blessedness with Abraham in paradise. The term "bosom" denotes intimacy in fellowship (Luke 16:22, 23; John 1:18; 13:23). Angels are called "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14), and "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels..." (Ps. 68:17).

The contrast between the rich man and Lazarus after death is one that most people would like to ignore or hope after death to find that hell is only a myth. But the contrast after death is as much a reality as the contrast in either life or death. Although the living have not yet experienced death and the afterlife, Christ, the Author of life and death and who cannot lie, has spoken on the subject: "Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was

buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom” (Luke 16:22, 23 NASB). The poor man who had suffered in time was enjoying the comfort and rest of eternal bliss. Conversely, the rich man who enjoyed the comfort of earthly riches in time was suffering the woes of eternal damnation. The chasm (*chasma*, a gaping opening, a chasm, or gulf) between the two is eternally fixed. Separation is a distinct feature of judgment (II Thess. 1:9).

Eternity will make both saved and lost more keenly conscious of things than life on earth did. The rich man in hades knew what was going on in three realms: (1) his own, (2) the one in which Lazarus and Abraham were, and (3) the one in which his five brothers lived. The last realm will exist only until time shall be no more. Abraham heard the rich man’s request, but he could render no assistance. He did say to him, “Son, remember.” Memory is the mind’s power of preserving and knowing its own past history. Nothing is ever irrevocably forgotten. One needs only to be subjected to the scene where some particular event took place, and the details of the event, though forgotten for years, will be brought up from his storehouse of memory. Everything put into the memory bank of your computer will be recalled when eternity subjects you to your life’s history. Memory in eternity will embrace all the past life at once. In an instant, one will be able to see the beginning and ending of his whole life’s history side by side. Memory in time is not constant, but it will be in eternity. While this increases the misery of the unrighteous, the righteous will rejoice and praise God throughout all eternity for deliverance from the nature of sin and the sins of nature.

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## 25

### **ATTITUDES OF THE ELECT AND NONELECT ABOUT TIME AND ETERNITY DIFFER**

Some understanding of the meaning of time and eternity and what it means to step out of time into eternity is very important. Lazarus and the rich man both passed from time into eternity, but the distance between them, which was experienced in time, was forever fixed with an eternal immensity. Do we ever stop to observe the slow motion of the shadow about us? It passes on with such imperceptible progress; yet, it will touch the last line of daylight shortly. Hence, our minutes and hours move forward with a silent pace, but they will arrive with certainty at the last second in time, however thoughtless we may be of their passing. (See Ps. 39:4; 90:12.)

God has a hand in the history of man. There is an appointed time to every person: “Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass” (Job 14:5). Man has no control over either his

birth or death. Birth and death embrace the philosophy of life in time. That life is the gift of God. There is no free will involved in the gift of either physical or spiritual life. No person is the offspring of chance in either life or death. God's determination governs the time of human life. Hence, God controls the time when the heart will stop, the blood will cease to flow in the veins, and the eyes will close to the things that are seen. While the truth that no one dies an untimely death is consoling to Christians, it is not to nonchristians.

We are constantly reminded that life on earth is short. Every vanishing shadow, dying plant, and dying person remind one of the brevity of life: "MAN that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (Job 14:1, 2). Man springs up like a flower and is soon withered and gone. The impotences and imperfections of infancy, the vanities of youth, the anxieties of manhood, and the infirmities of age are closely linked together by one continual chain of sorrow and disquietude. Job described life on earth: (1) Human life comes forth like a flower. The poetic language here is appropriate. Children are like flowers that bud, unfolding their beauty as they grow and develop under the watchful eyes of their parents. (2) Life is full of trouble in its continuance. Trouble and distress are every person's inheritance on earth. With these facts before us, we should not become so entangled with the world in time that we have no time to think about eternity. (3) Life in time is but a few days. The journey from the cradle to the grave is short: "And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage" (Gen. 47:9). The figures employed to describe the shortness of life on earth are various: a "step" (I Sam. 20:3), "a tale that is told" (Ps. 90:9), "a weaver's shuttle" (Job 7:6), and a "vapor" (James 4:14). (4) Life is incessant in its course. It "fleeth as a shadow." Human life is measured by seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years. These periodical revolutions roll on in rapid succession. Thus, we are all hastening on to our fixed state in eternity.

Human life stands on a different plane than any other form of life. In this respect, we are not as the grass of the field that mourns not for its fellows when they wither and die. God has endowed us with understanding; so we are able to be instructed by the death of those around us. The sheep in their folds are unaware of what is happening to their fellows when they are taken away to slaughter. The cattle graze in the meadows, ignorant that death awaits them. To us, however, it is given to know our own mortality, and we cannot suffer our comrades to be taken away by death without feeling emotion.

The significance of time is not the same to all men. To the elect, time is a precious possession. It is a time of redemption and deliverance (Gal. 1:4; I Pet. 1:18-20), regeneration (John 3:8; Ezek. 16:8), salvation (II Cor. 6:2; I Pet. 1:21-25), sanctification (I Thess. 4:4-12), and growing in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (II Pet. 3:18). On the other hand, the nonelect know not the value of time. They do not know how to spend time anticipating eternity. They inquire what they shall do to kill time because they cannot spend it fast enough. They are perpetually calling in the assistance of others to

help them kill time: "...The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead" (Eccl. 9:3). "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11). Although they slumber and sleep in a lethargy of sin, their days and judgment linger not (II Pet. 2:3; Rom. 2:5).

The concept of the use of time is not the same in all men. Christians are exhorted to redeem (*exagoradzo*, to rescue from misapplication) the time (Eph. 5:16). Christ gives His sheep a perfect example of the use of time (John 9:4). Conversely, the nonchristian's view of time is wholly selfish: "...eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19). Paul described the manner of men: "...let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die" (I Cor. 15:32).

Buying up the time is of supreme importance to Christians. Redeeming the time means buying up the opportunity, using time to the full, and making the most of time. The compound verb *exagoradzo* is used by Paul in only four verses (Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5). It is used twice in the sense of "buying from" the curse of the law, and twice in the sense of making the most of time. To redeem means to reclaim by price that which has been lost, or to preserve by prudence that which is in danger. Redemption of time is different from the redemption of one who is lost. The lost person redeemed from sin can, by grace, redeem the time in the sense of making the most of it. He cannot redeem the time that is past, but he can make the most of the opportunity of the present and future. The merchant redeems the time by employing his capital wisely, the farmer by preparing the soil for the seed and cultivating the plants, the student by adding daily to his storehouse of knowledge, and the Christian by living for Christ and others rather than himself.

Pagans recommend sensuality in time, because they know of no enjoyments in eternity. Their statement, "...let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die," of I Corinthians 15:32 is thought witty by undiscerning souls, those who have been blinded by Satan (II Cor. 4:3, 4). Is it not foolish for a man to live in time without any thought about eternity? It is like a man spending time in a resort hotel, wining and dining in sensuality without any thought of the forthcoming bill. At last the day of reckoning comes, and he is presented with a bill that staggers his imagination. He says, "I never thought of that!" The hotel manager would say, "This man is either a fool or a scoundrel." Paul described such a person: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:5, 6).

Time is life's book. Out of this book the elect extract, by redeeming the time, wondrous wisdom. The nonelect let the book lie unopened and die as fools. While the elect are receiving precious fruit that will abide eternally, the nonelect are perishing with hunger. Furthermore, while the elect are gaining new spiritual heights every day, the nonelect are sinking deeper into shame and degradation. The elect treat serious things seriously, but the nonelect treat trivial things seriously.

The sheep of God's pasture treat the Bible seriously, because it alone gives us the true perspective of time and eternity. Searching for more truth is the business of Christians in time. Men of God are grieved to hear people speak presumptuously about things they gained in minutes which took God's men years to gain through study. There is much presumption in religion today among those who embrace "free will" and those who embrace "free grace." There is a lot of false assurance among both.

Arminians talk about "free will" and "their faith" or "decision." They are taught that after they have put "their faith" in "Jesus," they are to claim the promise (I John 5:9-13). The truth is that no person can be assured of his own salvation by simply putting "his faith" in the objective message of Scripture. The subjective spirit of faith, which is God's gift, must precede a genuine experience of salvation by embracing the objective message of the gospel. A mere subjective knowledge of "I believe," apart from the Holy Spirit to mediate the objective and subjective elements to the conscience, will not give true assurance. Presumption is founded on human faith and is proud. The character and not the strength of one's conviction proves the validity of his assurance. True assurance keeps the heart in a lowly posture. It is a faith manifesting itself and not arrogant stoutness. Human faith may believe that Christ is the Son of God (James 2:19), but Divinely-given faith cannot believe in "another Jesus" as Savior (II Cor. 11:1-4; John 10:4, 5). A person may possess God-given faith, but this does not indicate that the person himself will immediately have absolute assurance. Assurance is requisite to the stability of the Christian but not to his being a Christian. The Christian's knowledge may be limited, but it is real: "...we see through a glass, darkly..." and "I know in part..." (I Cor. 13:12). But the fact is that Christians know and see. The Psalmist said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). It is neither more nor less than that. God has not promised to furnish answers to every question which the restless wit of man can frame. But He has revealed enough to light our path to follow Christ in time and to know the important things we can expect in eternity.

Many who claim to believe in free grace talk about the faith of God's elect (Titus 1:1), but they do not manifest obedience of that faith (Rom. 16:26). What value is there in a mere academic understanding of Biblical principles if those principles are not evidenced in life? Saving faith, which is the fruit of Divine election, is a refining grace. It purifies the heart (Acts 15:9). Refining faith does not take away all sin from the life of the believer, but it removes the love of it. It is an obedient faith; therefore, it melts our wills into God's. How did Paul know the Thessalonian believers were elected by God (I Thess. 1:4)? His knowledge came as the result of their work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope (I Thess. 1:3, 9, 10). The word of God effectually works in those who truly believe (I Thess. 2:13). When these evidences of election are missing, those who academically state truth are presumptuous. They are no better off than the rich man. There is a real danger today of words outrunning experience. When expression exceeds the experience, the unreality of the supposed experience is soon revealed.

Eternity will not be the same to all men. The perfection of each believer plus the unmediating presence of Christ will be the acme of fellowship. On the other hand, the sinful condition of each unbeliever plus eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord

and the glory of His power will be the lowest point of debasement. The Christian will have a glorified body like Christ to enhance his enjoyment of the presence of Jesus Christ and heaven. The nonchristian will also have a resurrection body, but it will be to increase his punishment. The rich man in hades “saw” Abraham and Lazarus. He asked that Lazarus might dip his “finger” in water and cool his “tongue” (Luke 16:23, 24). The words “saw,” “finger,” and “tongue” prove that neither the rich man nor Lazarus are disembodied spirits.

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## 26

### **LAZARUS ASCENDED AND THE RICH MAN DESCENDED**

The story of Lazarus and the rich man is used by many to show what they think happens to a soul immediately after death, in what they call “the intermediate state.” They say that physical suffering does not enter into the picture because neither the rich man nor Lazarus was in his body. Their bodies had been left on the earth. The rich man was in hell in spirit only, because the final day of judgment will be at the great white throne. Resurrection of the body will take place at that time, and the sinner will then stand before the white throne as a complete man. The poor man is also in a disembodied state, but he is in a place of comfort and rest. He did not go to heaven, because nothing incomplete can go there. Lazarus will not be complete until the resurrection of his body. The Lord used symbolical language when He spoke of the rich man’s tongue and the poor man’s finger. Hence, the emphasis is not on details but on the fact of man’s intermediate state after death, whether saint or sinner.

Where the rich man and Lazarus actually went when they died is very controversial. The record states that Lazarus was carried away by angels into Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:22). The rich man “...in hell [*hades*] he lift up his eyes, being in torments...” (Luke 16:23). The Bible does not say the poor man was in *hades*. Furthermore, nothing is stated about the location of *hades*. The only fact revealed is that when the rich man died, he was there.

“Abraham’s bosom” is a metaphorical expression. The Greek word for “bosom” (*kolpos*) means bosom, chest, close to, near, or a bay of the sea (Luke 6:38; 16:22, 23; John 1:18; 13:23; Acts 27:39). “Abraham’s bosom” was an expression well-known to the Jews. They used it to speak of the happy state of the dead. “Bosom” denotes intimacy in fellowship (John 1:18). One does not indulge in speculation to say that as Abraham is called the father of believers, those who died in faith were carried into his bosom (Rom. 4:11-17). However, the language of Luke 16:22-23 was used before the death of the



Testator. The more appropriate present language would be, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Cor. 5:8). Christians in this dispensation are under further revelation of truth than believers under the old economy. Therefore, our terminology differs from theirs.

Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom, but where was Abraham? Some acknowledge that Scripture does not say that the place where Lazarus was in intimate fellowship with Abraham was in *hades*. However, they believe the conversation between Lazarus and the rich man indicates that the place was *hades*, but they were separated by a chasm. On the other hand, others abhor the idea of Abraham and Lazarus being in different parts of *hades* separated by a chasm. They believe that when this earthly existence is consummated by death, the only place for the deceased is heaven or hell. Paradise is a part of heaven, and *hades* is a part of hell. They say a place after death containing both paradise and *hades* is a pagan concept. These conflicting views demand a diligent study of the subject of *hades*.

The Greek word *hades* is used eleven times in the New Testament (Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; I Cor. 15:55; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14). It is translated “hell” except in I Corinthians 15:55, where it is translated “grave.” The NASB translates the word *hades* in all the above references except I Corinthians 15:55, where it is translated “death.” There are two other words translated “hell” —*geenna* (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6) and *tartaroo* (II Pet. 2:4, “cast them down to hell”). The KJB and the NASB translate *geenna* and *tartaroo* “hell.” The word *geenna* has been described to mean hell, one destined for hell, the fires of *tartarus*, and the place of punishment in *hades*. Hell is described by such words as “fire,” “unquenchable fire,” “where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched,” and “the tongue is set on fire of hell.” The instances where a figure of speech is used to describe the retribution of the wicked must not be understood as a license to modify the thought which the figure expresses. Trying to put into words that which is indescribable in human language is a feeble attempt.

Many Bible students contend that the Old Testament *sheol* and the New Testament *hades* are synonymous terms. In other words, the New Testament *hades* and the Old Testament *sheol* are stated to be the abode of the righteous and the unrighteous. They cite such persons as Jacob and Hezekiah who expected to go to *sheol* when they died (Gen. 37:35; Is. 38:10). They also quote David who said, “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (*sheol*); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Ps. 16:10). Hence, according to them, the first part of the verse refers to the soul in *sheol*, and the last part to the body in the grave. Therefore, when Peter quoted this text in his message on the day of Pentecost, he applied it to Christ in His resurrection (Acts 2:27). This means that Christ’s soul came back from the place of the blessed dead, and His body came forth from the grave without seeing corruption. But there are others who take a different view of Peter’s quotation of Psalm 16:10. They believe the soul is put metonymically for body, and *hades* means the grave. Thus, the soul is put for the body, as in the case of Acts 27:37— “And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.” Soul, as in Psalm 16:10, must therefore stand for the body. Christ could not be delivered of both soul

and body from *hades* in His resurrection, because both of them could not be together in *hades*. They say that whichever signification of *hades* is adopted, only one of the two could be in *hades*. Hence, if *hades* is the underworld, only Christ's soul was there. The body could not be there. On the other hand, if *hades* is the grave, only Christ's body was there. His soul could not be there.

Peter was talking about the resurrection in Acts 2:23-33, and there is no resurrection of the soul mentioned in these verses. Therefore, to take both the soul and body of Christ out of *hades* is an impossibility. Paul's quotation of Psalm 16:10 in Acts 13:35 is to be understood the same way.

The Hebrew word *sheol* is used sixty-four times. It is translated "hell" thirty-one times, "grave" thirty times, and "pit" three times. Some say the Old Testament word *sheol* was used to represent the state of the dead. It was used to denote not only the state of existence but a place of conscious existence. It was regarded as temporary, and the righteous anticipated a resurrection out of it (Job 14:13, 14; 19:25-27; Ps. 16:9-11; 17:15; 73:24). It is believed that "grave" is the best and most common rendering of *sheol*. They say that in the three places where *sheol* is translated "pit," the better word would be "grave." As to the word "hell," they say that by both dictionary definition and colloquial usage, *sheol* has no such meaning. *Sheol* denoted the present state of death. They further contend that a study of all the references where the word *sheol* is used will prove the following things: (1) As to direction, it is down. (2) As to place, it is in the earth. (3) As to nature, it denotes the state of death. (4) As to relation, it stands in contrast with the living. (5) As to association, it is used in connection with mourning, sorrow, weeping, silence, no knowledge, and punishment. (6) As to duration, the grave will continue until the resurrection—the only exit from it.

Others take exception to some things in the aforementioned view and raise some questions: (1) If the basic meaning of *sheol* is "grave," how can the Old Testament uphold the descent of the wicked into *sheol* as a warning (Job 21:13; Ps. 9:7; Prov. 5:5; etc.)? (2) How can God's anger burn there (Deut. 32:22)? (3) If a descent into *sheol* was the gloomy outlook of both the wicked and righteous, how could the joyful expectation in the face of death be explained (Num. 23:10; Ps. 16:9, 11; 17:15; 73:24, 26; Is. 25:8)? (4) If *sheol* is the place where all the dead go, what is laid in the grave? Do these interrogators contend that only souls descend into *sheol*? What about bodies?

Surely there is a better explanation to some of these problems than we may have heard and read. Can the real problem be solved by dividing *sheol* into two compartments, one for the righteous and the other for the unrighteous? Is *sheol* divided into places of punishment and blessing? Would not the statement "going down to *sheol*" be more dreadful than "going down to the grave"? Solomon spoke of the "strange woman" (prostitute) whose "feet go down to death," and "her steps take hold on hell [*sheol*]." (See Prov. 5:3-5.) This Old Testament passage corresponds with Revelation 21:8— "...whoremongers...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." David described the end of the righteous: "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For

thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps. 16:9-11). “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Ps. 17:15). “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Ps. 73:24). There are two divisions of Scripture in the Old Testament where *sheol* is used: (1) One signifies a place of punishment (Prov. 5:3-5). (2) The other denotes the grave: “the house appointed for all living” (Job 30:23— righteous and unrighteous). Can one prove that the righteous are in *sheol* but in a separate compartment from the wicked?

The New Testament word *hades* is believed by many to be the equivalent of the Old Testament *sheol*. They say that before the ascension of Christ, *hades* was in two divisions, one for the saved and one for the lost. One was called “paradise” (Luke 23:43) or “Abraham’s bosom” (Luke 16:22), and the other was a place of torment (Luke 16:23). At the ascension of Christ, a change took place that affected paradise, but it did not affect the place of torment. “...When he [Christ] ascended up on high, he led captivity captive...” (Eph. 4:8). Since Christ’s ascension, paradise which was in *hades* is now in the third heaven (II Cor. 12:1-4). During the present dispensation, the saved who die are “absent from the body, and present with the Lord.” But the wicked who die go to *hades* and will remain there until *hades* gives up the dead to appear before the white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). Will this view stand the test of Scripture?

There is an immense distance between the spiritual height of Abraham’s bosom into which Lazarus ascended and the awful depth of *hades* into which the rich man descended. Solomon said, “The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell [*sheol*] beneath” (Prov. 15:24). There is an “above” and a “below” in the spiritual world. These terms are to be understood spiritually rather than geographically, because the earth revolves geographically. Christ said, “And in hell [*hades*] he [the rich man] lift up his eyes, being in torments...” (Luke 16:23). The only way the rich man could look was “up.” Everything was “above” to him, because nothing can be “below” *hades* (the doom of the wicked). The chasm that separated the rich man from Lazarus must be expressed by vertical rather than horizontal distance. Things on the same plane are considered alike, but things on different planes are not. Who would say that “Abraham’s bosom,” or “paradise,” is on the same plane with *hades*? Furthermore, the rich man saw “Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” The words “afar off” are the translation of *apo makrothen*, which means “from afar.” Distance, spiritually speaking, could never be greater than between paradise and *hades*, or heaven and hell. The distance that eternally separates the righteous from the wicked can never be spanned. It is experienced to some degree in time.

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## THE NEW BODY IS SPIRITUAL IN NATURE

The resurrected body of the Christian “shall be” (from man’s standpoint in time)— “is” (from God’s viewpoint in eternity)— “spiritual” in nature. Some have difficulty properly distinguishing the natural from the spiritual body. There is much discussion over the Greek words for “natural” (*psuchikos*) and “spiritual” (*pneumatikos*) of I Corinthians 15:44— “...There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”

God gave man a body adapted for time. The Greek adjective used to describe the body is *psuchikos*. Some have translated this word “natural,” but others think it should be “animal” because of its animal functions. Others do not like the word “animal” and have chosen to use the word “soulical.” The adjective *psuchikos* comes from the noun *psuche*, which basically means breath or the breath of life. The noun is used several ways in Scripture: (1) the physical life of a person (Matt. 2:20; 6:25; 16:25; 20:28; John 10:11, 15, 17), (2) the indestructible part of a person contrasted with destructible physical life (Matt. 10:28; Acts 2:27, 31), (3) the heart (Eph. 6:6), (4) the mind (Acts 14:2; Phil. 1:27; Heb. 12:3), (5) the part of a person by which he perceives, feels, or desires (Matt. 11:29; Luke 1:46; 2:35), (6) the base of the new life (I Pet. 2:11; III John 2), and (7) animal life (Rev. 8:9; 16:3). There are only six references using the Greek adjective (I Cor. 2:14; 15:44 —twice, 46; James 3:15; Jude 19). You will observe that three of the references are used by Paul in I Corinthians 15 to describe the human body that is adapted for man’s life in time. The other three are used to describe the unregenerate person who is opposed to the spiritual life (I Cor. 2:14; James 3:15; Jude 19). Paul used the adjective *psuchikos* to describe the body that is adapted for time. He did not say it is composed of soul.

The human body adapted for time will have to undergo a change to be suitable for eternity. That changed human body will be called a “spiritual” body. The Greek adjective used to describe that body is *pneumatikos*. It comes from the noun *pneuma*, which primarily denotes the wind or breath. This noun, like *psuche* is used several ways in Scripture: (1) a spirit Being (John 4:24), (2) an angelic being (Heb. 1:14), (3) the human spirit (Matt. 26:41; 27:50; I Cor. 2:11), (4) unclean spirit (Matt. 8:16; Luke 4:33; I Pet. 3:19), (5) the spiritual life (Rom. 8:4-6, 10, 16), (6) purpose or aim in life (Eph. 4:23; Phil. 1:27), and (7) bondage (Rom. 8:15).

The adjective *pneumatikos* is used to describe the angelic host (Eph. 6:12), men who walk pleasing to God (I Cor. 2:13, 15; 3:1; Gal. 6:1), gifts for service (I Cor. 14:12), and the resurrection body (I Cor. 15:46). This description does not indicate that the body will be “composed of spirit,” but it will be one that expresses spirit or is adapted for eternity, as the body at first was made for time. To speak of a “spiritual body” would be a contradiction in terms, if one understands the body to be composed simply of spirit. Paul did not use the adjective *pneumatikos* to describe the “material” of the resurrected body but its adaptation to eternity.

Paul anticipated objections to the subject of the resurrection in addition to what he had already encountered (I Cor. 15:12). After dealing with the fact of the resurrection, he began answering objections to the manner and nature of the resurrection. Two questions were raised: (1) “How are the dead raised up?” and (2) “With what body do they come?” (I Cor. 15:35). How can the body adapted for time that is sown in corruption, dishonor, and weakness be raised in incorruption, honor, and power adapted for eternity?

The resurrection is demonstrated by nature. Everything in nature “planted in the earth” comes forth in a different form, but its identity is not lost: “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body” (I Cor. 15:36-38).

Paul began his answer to the objector by using the word “fool,” which comes from the Greek word *aphron*, meaning ignorant, foolish, or unenlightened. The apostle made it clear that such an objector was a spiritually uninformed person. He used an illustration with which everyone was familiar: “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die” (v. 36). The verb “quickened” is *dzpooipoieitai* present passive indicative of *dzpooipio*, which means to quicken or to make alive. The passive voice is used to show that God gives life to the seed that “dies” (*apothanei*, second aorist active subjunctive of *apothnesko*, which means unless it dies). Tares do not come forth from wheat that is sown. The form of the seed is changed, but its identity is preserved. The old seed must be destroyed for the new life to appear. That which dies is not “that body that appears” when God makes it alive. The body that is raised is far more glorious than the body that died. The glorified bodies of saints, like plants, do not rise from their own ability. The present tense of the verb “giveth” (*didosin*, present active indicative of *didomi*, to give) indicates God’s habitual practice of giving dead seeds new bodies. He does so as it “hath pleased him” (*ethelesen*, first aorist active indicative of *thelo*, to exercise the will), which signifies that God would do what He once-for-all planned (v. 38).

The second illustration Paul used was that all flesh is not the same kind: “All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds” (I Cor. 15:39). He proceeded from plant life to creatures made up of “flesh and blood.” This verse destroys the theory of evolution. As one kind of seed never becomes another, one kind of flesh (body) does not become another. Hence, the theory of evolution, whether atheistic or theistic, must be rejected not because it is unscientific but because it contradicts the Bible. If the theistic evolutionist is correct when he claims evolution was God’s means of creation, he believes that God owes man redemption. This would of necessity be true if God created man imperfectly. Therefore, the problem becomes theological rather than scientific. That places the theistic evolutionist in the same camp with the so-called atheist. The word “flesh” (*sarx*) is used to denote the body (II Cor. 4:11; Phil. 1:22, 24; Col. 2:5). Paul was preparing the Corinthians for the difference between the body before and after the resurrection.

The last principle from nature that Paul used was the difference between the celestial (*epouranios*, a compound word made up of the preposition *epi*, upon, and *ouranos*, heaven) and terrestrial (*epigeios*, a compound word made up of *epi*, upon, and *ge*, earth) bodies— heavenly and earthly bodies. The former word is translated “heavenly” in every place it is used except I Corinthians 15:40, and the latter is translated “in earth” or “earthly” in every place except I Corinthians 15:40. Hence, the climactic principle from nature proves that as wonderful as the earthly body is (Ps. 139:14-16), it is not as glorious as the heavenly body. Furthermore, as there is a distinguishable glory for each of the heavenly bodies, each person will retain his own identity in eternity.

Resurrection of the dead does not refer to either soul or body separated but to the complete person in a state of glory. The earthly body promises the heavenly. Thus, the lower points to the higher, and the lower must be planted in order that the higher shall come from it. As the lower was adapted for time, the higher will be fitted for eternity. Having completed analogies from nature, Paul said, “So also is the resurrection of the dead...” (v. 42). He proceeded from the seed sown to the difference between the body adapted for time and the one fitted for eternity. It is unnecessary to suppose that the resurrection body will be like the one that was sown. It can be the same body without being like it.

The body adapted for earth-dwelling that was sown in corruption, dishonor, and weakness shall be raised in incorruption, honor, and power. This means the same body that was sown will be raised. As it was with Christ, so will it be with the Christian. Christ’s body of “flesh and blood” was sown, but His transformed body was “in another form” (*en heterai morphei*) (Mark 16:12). The Greek word *heteros* means one not of the same form, class, or kind. Hence, Christ’s glorified body was not one of “flesh and blood” but “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39). The three times the Greek word *morphe* is used in the New Testament are connected with Jesus Christ (Mark 16:12; Phil. 2:6, 7). The intrinsic nature of Jesus Christ is eternally the same: (1) in the form of God, (2) in the form of a servant, and (3) in another (glorified) form. The intrinsic godlike nature of the Christian is the same in time and in eternity, but there will be a change in his form. The soul of the chosen person is redeemed and regenerated in time, but his body must be transformed before he is prepared for eternity. Although the Christian’s body has been bought, the application of Christ’s redemptive work is not applied to it while he lives in time.

An individual is not a human person without a human body. Therefore, the glorified person is not a glorified person without a glorified body. Evolutionists insist there is no essential difference between human and animal bodies. If that were true, there would be no essential difference in either life or death. The Bible states nothing about the transcendental significance of the animal body, but it does about the body of the Christian. What about the body of the nonchristian? His body will be raised, but it will be without the radiance and glory of the believer. Instead of having a body adapted for eternity with God, the unbeliever will have a body fitted for eternal punishment.

## CHRIST IS THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THE ELECT'S RESURRECTION

Some believe Christ's body was not fully glorified during the time between His resurrection and ascension. There are two views concerning this period of time: (1) Although there was a remarkable change in Christ's body between His resurrection and ascension, it was not fully glorified. (2) Christ's resurrection preceded the great change in His body. When Christ appeared to Mary alone, she was not allowed to touch Him (John 20:17). However, He appeared in "another form" to the two on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12). At this point, Jesus Christ was fully glorified, and this was before His ascension.

Those who believe Christ's body was not fully glorified before His ascension have no Scriptural basis. But those who teach that between the time Christ appeared to Mary alone and to the two on the road to Emmaus His body had been fully glorified have Scriptural support (John 20:17; Mark 16:12).

Matthew presents the women going to the tomb just after sunset. The Greek word for "eventide or even (evening)" is *opse*. This adverb of time means late in the day (Matt. 28:1; Mark 11:11, 19; 13:35). Hence, the women visited the sepulchre before the sabbath ended at six p.m. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre" (Matt. 28:1).

Mark presents the women going to the sepulchre while the sun was rising: "AND when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun" (Mark 16:1, 2). The Greek words for "very early" are *lian proi*. The word *proi* is also an adverb for time, but it means the early morning watch, which ushers in the day, or the last watch in the night. The difference between *opse* and *proi* is given in Mark 13:35— "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even [*opse*] or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning [*proi*]." There were about eleven hours between the events presented by Matthew and Mark. Matthew recorded what happened in the first watch, and Mark related what took place in the fourth or last watch.

Luke presents the women visiting the sepulchre on the first day after the sabbaths (Luke 24:1). "Very early in the morning" refers to the first streak of dawn. There is deep twilight in both the evening (*opse*) and the early morning (*proi*), but Luke relates what happened in the fourth watch.

John's account of the visit to the sepulchre has a special connection with Mark 16:9-11. John, Mark, and Luke relate what occurred in the fourth watch. Matthew records events not mentioned by the other three writers: two Marys, an earthquake, a guard, and an angel outside the tomb. John presents Mary returning from the sepulchre the first time in the *proi*, not having seen any person in the tomb. She ran to Peter and the other disciple to report the absence of Christ's body from the tomb. Peter and the other disciple ran to see for themselves. While Mary was alone outside the sepulchre, Christ appeared to her but would not permit her to touch Him (John 20:17) because He had not yet been transformed (Mark 16:12, 13).

The body of Jesus Christ was not subject to corruption. Unlike the body of Lazarus which began to stink after four days, the prepared body of Christ suffered no corruption after three days and three nights. Christ's body was in the heart of the earth three full days and three full nights, not one day and two nights (Matt. 12:40). David prophesied that Christ's body would not see corruption (Ps. 16:10), and Peter quoted David's prophecy (Acts 2:31). Jesus Christ who was without spot was pierced, but He never suffered putrefaction. Christ's body was placed in the sepulchre, but it did not see corruption. Job predicted that worms would eat his flesh, but they never touched the untainted body of Jesus Christ. Scripture proves that the body of our Lord never saw corruption: (1) "...Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up....he spake of the temple of his body" (John 2:19, 21). His body, unlike ours, would never return to dust (Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 3:20; 12:7). (2) He was the second Adam; therefore, He was not under the guilt of the first Adam (I Cor. 15:45-47). (3) As our high Priest, the Lord Jesus must enter the holy of holies as the firstfruits from among the dead adorned in the investiture of the high Priest (I Cor. 15:20).

Jesus Christ was buried in the end of Wednesday before the high sabbath that began at six p.m. the same day. The Jewish day ran from six p.m. until six p.m. This is why Scripture states that "the evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen. 1:5). Since Christ's body was buried before the beginning of the high sabbath on Thursday, it was in the grave Thursday morning and evening, Friday morning and evening, and Saturday morning and evening—the weekly sabbath. Therefore, He arose "IN the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week" (Matt. 28:1). The Biblical view of Christ's body being interred for seventy-two hours is contrary to religious traditional teaching. Religious tradition declares that Christ's body was buried on Friday and was resurrected early Sunday morning. This would be a period of only thirty-six hours. It would indicate that His body was in the grave Saturday morning and evening (the weekly sabbath) and Sunday morning, but not Sunday evening. Should we believe religious traditional teaching or the teaching of Jesus Christ? The answer is obvious. Jesus Christ said, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). The Jews asked Christ, "...What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up....he spake of the temple of his body" (John 2:18, 19, 21). If Jesus Christ cannot be trusted on this subject, how can He be trusted on any other? The redeemed and



regenerated elect affirm that Christ who is truth personified can be trusted on any subject. His teaching is absolute.

Some advocate that since Christ arose with identically the same body that was interred, His resurrection cannot be a type of ours. One cannot deny that Christ's resurrection is different: (1) Christ was separated from the assumed body for three days and three nights. Unlike man, the eternal Son of God was a whole Person apart from the body. (2) He raised Himself (John 10:18). (3) An angel rolled away the stone that sealed the tomb (Matt. 28:2). (4) Two angels were seen where the body of Jesus Christ had lain, one at the head and the other at the foot (John 20:12). Indications are that "the angel of the Lord" removed the stone from the door of the tomb and the two angels removed the wrappings from the body. (5) Christ's body experienced no corruption during the three days and three nights it lay in the tomb (Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:31). (6) The body in which Christ first appeared to Mary was the exact body that was buried. This is the reason Christ said to Mary, "...Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father..." (John 20:17). (7) Christ told Thomas, "...Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27). What was the difference? The difference was between Christ being in the same body before glorification and being in His glorified body. (8) Christ appeared to the disciples "in another form" (*en heterai morphei*). This transformation took place between the time Christ spoke to Mary and to Thomas. The Greek word for "another" is *heteros*, which means other, another, or different. In this different form, Christ could walk through closed doors (John 20:19, 26). If this transformation had occurred before He resurrected Himself, could He not have come forth without the removal of either the stone or the wrappings? Yes, there are differences between Christ's resurrection and ours. But they do not alter the truth that He is the firstfruits of our resurrection, and we will be like Him when we are resurrected (Phil. 3:21; I John 3:2).

The resurrection body of the Christian will be like Christ's (Phil. 3:21), incorruptible (I Cor. 15:42), powerful (I Cor. 15:43), spiritual (I Cor. 15:44), heavenly (I Cor. 15:49), deathless (Rev. 21:4), and never given in marriage (Matt. 22:30).

As Paul could not say his natural body was composed of soul, he could not say his resurrection body was composed of spirit. The adjective "spiritual" describes the relation of the body to the Holy Spirit. If the body were spirit, the resurrected person would have two spirits. The Bible gives no hint of a naked spiritualism. It teaches a certain material connection between the old and new bodies. If the present body were completely annihilated and God created a completely new one, it would not be the same body in resurrection. Thus, the Biblical statements of the corruption putting on incorruption and the mortal putting on immortality would not be true (I Cor. 15:53). There is a connection between what is sown and what is harvested (I Cor. 15:37).

Man's earthly body is made up of a mass of finite particles that are restricted to time. When the body dies, those particles are scattered by every conceivable agency. Since many of these particles have been assimilated by others, to whom shall they be assigned in the resurrection is a question raised by physical science. It must be pointed out that the

principles of physical science are to be taken as true upon their own ground. However, the ground of physical science is not infallible. Hence, it is limited in its speculation.

Man's body is supposed to make a complete change every seven years. The question is asked, Will the resurrected body consist of the particles one first had, those he had at the time of death, or all he had from birth until death? It has been said that one surmise is sufficient to meet a surmise. We do know that regardless of the changes, man remains the same person from birth until death.

The Bible gives no theory as to what constitutes physical identity and sameness; therefore, Christians are not obligated to define how the resurrection body retains its identity and sameness any more than we are to describe how each particular seed retains its identity and sameness. Change is not inconsistent with the retention of identity. This lies within God's secret counsel. God who formed the earthly body from the dust of the ground can preserve and reassemble whatever constitutes sameness and identity for the glorified body.

There is a physical connection between the earthly and heavenly bodies of Christians. This is proved not only by Christ's appearances between His transformation and ascension, but what He said to His disciples: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" (Luke 24:39-43). "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (Rev. 19:9). Hence, the resurrection of the bodies of saints is patterned after Christ's.

The greatest difficulty Christians have with the resurrection of the body as soon as it dies is the fact that the living can view the body as it not only lies in state but is buried. How can persons view the body that has been resurrected? Whatever constitutes the particles of sameness and identity are not things we see but things seen and preserved by God. This can be explained no more than how the sameness and identity of a particular seed that rots in the ground or a body that goes back to the dust are retained. The transformation of the old body is not the substitution of a new one. Resurrection of the body is an unrealized experience and an unobserved miracle to every living Christian. Therefore, we apprehend everything Scripture says about the resurrection although we cannot comprehend this miracle any more than we comprehend creation, the Trinity, the hypostatic union, or regeneration. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3).

## THE NEW BODY HAS A NEW SOURCE OF ENERGY

The Bible states a truth that is echoed by those who study the science of physiology. Moses said, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood...” (Lev. 17:11). After Cain had slain his brother Abel, “...the LORD said unto Cain, ...What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground” (Gen. 4:9, 10). Human life is so important that God gave a principle that a murderer should pay with his own life: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (Gen. 9:6). Hence, capital punishment for murder is recognized from almost the beginning of mankind. Physiologists perceive the importance of man’s blood; therefore, they speak of bloodletting, blood poisoning, and blood transfusions. The blood supply to all parts of the body is its life line. When that supply ceases the body dies.

Scripture has revealed all the nails that have fastened the lid to the casket of evolution. This is another of those nails: “And if an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten...” (Ex. 21:28 NASB). There is no penalty for animals killing animals, but if animals kill human beings they must be put to death because man is made in God’s image. Man, therefore, is above the animal kingdom over which he has been given dominion (Gen. 1:28). There is no penalty to man for killing animals for meat, but he must not eat the lifeblood of animals. “Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. And surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man’s brother I will require the life of man” (Gen. 9:3-5 NASB). (See Ex. 21:12, 28, 29.)

Blood is one of the characteristic words of the Bible. It occurs more than four hundred times, and a word so recurrent must have special significance in Scripture. As blood is the life of the flesh or body, the blood of Jesus Christ is the life of Christianity. Without the shedding of Christ’s blood, there is no cleansing from or forgiveness of sin (Rom. 3:24, 25; 5:9; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:22; I John 1:7; Rev. 1:5). Man is forbidden to eat blood for two reasons: (1) It teaches mankind a reverence for human life. (2) It is a reminder of the appointed means of man’s redemption.

The phrase “flesh and blood” signifies a body adapted for time. This phrase is used five times in the New Testament, one of which speaks of Christ’s body: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). There are four other references (Matt. 16:17; I Cor. 15:50; Gal. 1:16; Eph. 6:12). The purpose of Christ’s “prepared body” (Heb. 10:5) was for His office as the God-man, the Mediator between God and man. In His body of “flesh and blood,” the

God-Man laid down His life for the sheep. He was Offering and Offerer, Victim and Priest.

After Christ's resurrection, He used language not found anywhere else in the New Testament: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). What did the disciples see? They saw the One who was born of the virgin Mary, lived an impeccable life, died a vicarious death, was buried in a borrowed tomb, and had been raised from the dead. Christ was doing more than revealing the marks of His crucifixion. He was also manifesting the kind of resurrection body He had: "...a spirit (*pneuma*) has not flesh and bones..." This proves that Christ's glorified body was not a ghost. It could communicate and eat with the disciples.

Christ's glorified body was more real than His body that was adapted for suffering and death. His resurrection body was indestructible. It was not subject to death. The resurrection body of Christ could walk through closed doors (John 20:19, 26). The Greek word for "shut" is a perfect passive participle of *kleio*, which means the doors having been shut for the purpose of preventing entrance. Such closed doors could keep out bodies of "flesh and blood" but not a body of "flesh and bones." Christ's glorified body was absolutely necessary for Him to remain the Son of Man—the God-Man. He lived and died as the Son of Man, and He will come the second time as the Son of Man.

Some speak of the resurrection body in a manner that denies its resurrection. They go so far as to say Christ's resurrection was not a pattern for the nature of the resurrected bodies of saints. Hence, they believe Christ's resurrection was to prove the validity of His work and to give evidence of life beyond the grave. Their major argument is that the concept of man being incomplete apart from a physical body is not valid.

The Bible teaches that the same body that falls in death will be resurrected. The body sown in corruption, dishonor, and weakness will be raised in incorruption, honor, and power (I Cor. 15:36, 37, 42-44). Since Christ has redeemed our bodies, the same bodies shall be glorified: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid" (I Cor. 6:15). "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23).

Therefore, it can be said that the resurrection of Christ is the example and guarantee of the resurrection of the saints. As the God-Man retained His body for communication "with" and representation "for" His sheep, the saints of God can say with Job, "...in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:26). Those who try to explain away the resurrection of the same bodies that fell in death say the preposition in Job 19:26 is "from" rather than "in." The NASB translates Job 19:26b— "Yet from my flesh I shall see God." For argument's sake, granting this to be the correct translation, attention must be called to the fact that the preposition "from" can be used in various ways: (1) the starting point, (2) to indicate

agent or instrumentality, and (3) separation. In the light of the context of Scripture, the flesh or body would be the instrument by which the believer “sees” God.

Christ’s body of “flesh and blood” was transformed into a body of “flesh and bones” in His resurrection, and Christians will be “like Christ” when they are transformed (I John 3:2). Therefore, our bodies in eternity will be more real than they are in time. Like Jesus Christ, we will be able to traverse from eternity into time and back into eternity: “...Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14-15). Time will not have run out when Christ comes to judge the world and set up His kingdom. Hence, as Christ traversed back and forth from eternity to time between His resurrection and ascension, we will have that same privilege when He comes to judge the world (I Cor. 6:2; Rev. 19:11-16).

The glorified bodies of “flesh and bones” will be more real because they will never grow old. Passage of time means growing old; but when there is no passage of time, as we know it, there will be no aging process. We age and die because our allotted time is running out in time that is running out of time: “And Thou Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (Heb. 1:10-12). The writer gave a distinction between the creation and its Creator. Important changes will take place in creation. The Greek word for “change” (Heb. 1:12) is a future passive indicative of *allasso*, which means to exchange one thing for another (Rom. 1:23), to change by causing one thing to cease and something else taking its place (Acts 6:14), and to transform (I Cor. 15:51; Heb. 1:12). God who created the present form of nature can cause it to be succeeded by destroying it or causing it to vanish away (*apollumi*) and replacing it with another form more wonderful. Hence, the things of time are like a garment (*himation*) that becomes old, because its time is running out. Although the things of time shall be changed, Jehovah remains unchangeable.

The new bodies of saints will have a new source of energy. It will not be blood which is destructible but the Holy Spirit who is indestructible. Instead of dwelling in a body of “flesh and blood,” the Holy Spirit will be the absolute source of energy of the new body of “flesh and bones.” In our bodies of “flesh and blood,” the indwelling Spirit can be grieved. “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God...” was Paul’s admonition to the Ephesian saints (Eph. 4:30). The Greek word for “grieve” is *lupeo*, which means to make sorrowful, to cause grief, or to offend. Although the believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit (*eis*) with a view to the day he will receive a new body, he can offend the indwelling Holy Spirit who has such tender and affectionate interest in him. He is to the Christian what a rudder is to a ship. Some of the things that grieve the Holy Spirit are mentioned in the next verse—resentfulness, the outbreak of wrath and anger, slanderous speech, and malice. However, in his new body, the believer will not need such a command. He will be free in eternity from the things that were hindrances in time.

Having been redeemed by Christ's blood, we are members of His body: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30); "because we are members of His body" (NASB). The NASB is the better translation because there is no reference to either "flesh" or "bones" in the Greek text. Jesus Christ was not talking about His own transformed body of "flesh and bones" but of His mystical body, the assembly (church): "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church [assembly]" (Eph. 5:31-32). As there is no bond in the flesh greater than that between a man and his wife, there is no bond in the spiritual realm greater than that between Christ and the assembly (church). The body now bears the spirit, but the spirit will then bear the body.

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## 30

### **GOD'S CREATIVE ACTS ARE EITHER THE BEGINNING OF OR IN TIME**

God's three major creative acts may be illustrated by a three-act play: (1) The setting for the first act is the heavens, and the subject matter is the host of them climaxed with the angelic beings. (2) The setting for the second act is the earth, and the subject matter includes the creation of animal life climaxed with the creation of man. (3) The third act has the new heavens and the new earth for its setting and the glorified people of God for its subject matter, which is the completion of God's redemptive purpose.

Creation began in the heavenly realm. Angels are created spirit beings. Their creation adapted them for the heavenly region. The time of their creation is not specifically stated in Genesis 1:1, but reference is made to God completing His creation: "THUS the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them" (Gen. 2:1). Since the heavens preceded the earth, it is reasonable to suggest that the host of angels was created when the heavens were created. As man was the principle part of God's creative acts on earth, the angelic beings were the climax of His creative work in the heavens: "PRAISE ye the LORD, Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created" (Ps. 148:1-5).

The heavens and the earth are two distinct realms with two different kinds of created beings. Spirit beings were adapted for the heavens, and man created with a body and soul (material and immaterial natures) was fitted for the earth. Some suggest that the creation

of the heavens (including the spirit beings) and the earth was all on the first day, because there was nothing “before ...the world.” They state “before...the world” is a phrase expressive of eternity (Ps. 90:2). However, the heavens and the earth were created before the first day, and this does not contradict Psalm 90:2— “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”

The creation of the heavens and the earth took place in the dateless past. The announcement was made with one short but majestic sentence: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). This might be called creation proper. God’s absolute wisdom and power were displayed. That which was formed in the Divine mind became the actual external heavens and earth by the word of God’s power. God’s creation was not out of necessity. It was for the purpose of manifesting His glory through the creation of man, man’s fall and redemption, and redemption’s completion in the new heavens and the new earth. Unlike books written by men that may be read from either left to right or right to left, God’s book must be read backward— from the end to the beginning.

Distinction must be made between the original creation of the earth and its subsequent reconstruction with a view to its becoming the habitation of man. The six days give the account of a new beginning, but they are not the first beginning. The Hebrew “*yom*” is translated “day,” “time,” “today,” “forever,” “age,” etc., but it is also used in the sense of a “solar day.” Its denotement can be determined by the context. The fact that the phrase “evening and morning” is connected with each of the six days of Genesis 1 proves that “*yom*” means a solar day, not a long period of time— according to theistic evolution. The seventh day, unlike the six days, is not described the same way. There is no evening to the day of God’s rest (Gen. 2:2, 3). Apart from the original creation of Genesis 1:1, there are only two creative acts during the six days of reconstruction. They are the creation of the creatures of water and air on the fifth day, and the creation of living creatures for the earth climaxed by the creation of man on the sixth day.

Having established the distinctions between the heavens and the earth, the original creation of the earth, and its subsequent reconstruction, the subject of “time” must now be considered. There are many beginnings in Scripture. But our present focus is on the three major creations which involve the heavens, the earth, and the new heavens and the new earth. Before the first beginning, all was eternity. There is no time with the eternal God; therefore, there is no sequence of “before” and “after.” However, His creative word produced temporal, historical beginnings; but with God, they were a present reality and therefore timeless.

The order of Genesis 1:1 is important: (1) “In the beginning God...” “God” is the Subject. The Subject is eternal. He sees everything at once. The word “once” is not to be understood in the sense of at one time in the past or finally. With the present tense “sees,” it is to be understood as seeing everything simultaneously. (2) “Created” is the verb. Creation is the instantaneous activity of God. All things were at first created without means in their essential perfection. Hence, created things were in obedience to God’s

command (Ps. 33:6, 9; Heb. 11:3). (3) “The heavens and the earth” are the objects of God’s creation. The order of this verse places the eternal and timeless God highest, the heavens that had a beginning under God who is without beginning, and then the earth that had a beginning under the heavens that had a beginning. As to the “heavens,” “...behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?” (I Kings 8:27). As to the earth, “He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7). “Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers...” (Is. 40:21, 22).

The mysteries of the Christian life are better understood by believing than they are believed by understanding: “Through faith we understand...” (Heb. 11:3). This does not indicate that faith is blind, because true faith is the gift of God, and it apprehends what it does not comprehend. To have some concept of a mystery is like knowing the unknowable (Eph. 3:18, 19). The Bible is full of such glorious mysteries— the Trinity, eternity, time, hypostatic union, new birth, etc. One has said, “The sense which one can fathom is not the sense.”

The subjects of timelessness and time are mysteries, but timelessness is the greater. Since we are creatures of time, there is with us a relevance with time which does not exist with timelessness. “In the beginning” was the beginning of time. Prior to “the beginning” there was no time because there was no measurement of duration. There was no duration to measure. Is one philosophically unsound to ask what God did before the beginning of creation? Some consider that forming such a question is foolish. However, the Bible presents a different view: (1) The eternal Wisdom which became the incarnate Word was eternally with the Father (Prov. 8:22-31; John 1:1, 14). (2) Christ was loved by the Father “before [*pro*] the foundation of the world” (John 17:24). (3) God gave the elect in Christ “before [*pro*] the world began” (II Tim. 1:9). (4) The wisdom that conceived the plan of salvation for the elect was ordained by God “before [*pro*] the world unto our glory” (I Cor. 2:7). (5) God elected some to salvation “before [*pro*] the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). (6) The blood of Christ for the elect was “foreordained before [*pro*] the foundation of the world...” (I Pet. 1:18-20). (7) The slain Lamb, names written in the book of life, and the kingdom prepared from (*apo*) the foundation of the world prove that the elect and their future were God’s forethoughts (Rev. 13:8; Matt. 25:34). This proves Divine activity before and from the foundation of the world.

The beginning of the heavens with its host of spirit beings is a different realm from that of man on earth. Angelic beings have access to God and man: “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.... AGAIN there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD” (Job 1:6; 2:1). “And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings” (Luke 1:19). “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. 1:14).



On the other hand, man who is lower than the angels is restricted to his realm on earth: “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour” (Ps. 8:4, 5). God’s original purpose for man has not yet been fulfilled because of man’s sin. However, God’s purpose shall not be frustrated because God the Father has sent His Son who became the Son of Man to fulfill what the first man failed to accomplish. Psalm 8 presents man’s creation in Adam and his re-creation in the second Adam, Jesus Christ. Hence, the Psalmist was filled with awe when reminded of the works of God and how He could be so merciful to fallen man. Man’s position in Adam is below the angels, but in Christ he will be exalted above the angels. The glorified saints will judge not only the world but the angels: “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (I Cor. 6:2, 3).

Unlike men, angels are not appointed to die. When Christ was asked which husband the woman who had been married seven times would have in the resurrection, He replied, “And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Luke 20:34-36). Furthermore, angels are without sex; hence, they do not procreate (Luke 20:34-36; Matt. 22:28-30). These verses prove that angels are without sex in the normal sense of the word; however, the masculine pronoun is used to describe them as men (Gen. 18:2, 22; 19:1, 5; Dan. 10:18; Mark 16:5, 6; Luke 24:4).

Angels are not subject to death because they are spirit beings. Men have an immaterial nature that is not subject to death, but they have material bodies that are subject to death. The fact that aging and death of men are attributed to time does not prove that angels are living in a timeless realm. Created spirit beings are not subject to death. Furthermore, angelic access to God does not prove that their realm is on the same level as God’s. God’s timeless realm is not the habitation of created spirit beings. Their region had a beginning. Beginning and time are inseparable.

The Spirit of the Lord led Isaiah, Peter, and John to speak of new heavens and a new earth: “...I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.... Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.... AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away...” (Is. 65:17; II Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). The present heavens and earth, beautiful as they appear, are under the curse. The new reconstructed creation will be in preparation for the second Adam, as the first reconstructed creation was in preparation for the first Adam. This new creative act by God will be performed in time.

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## SATAN'S CONTAMINATION OF THE HEAVENS AND EARTH NECESSITATES THEIR RENEWAL

The heaven that needs no renewal is the place of God's eternal abode. Thomas was not told where that heaven is, but he was told the way (John 14:5, 6). Paul was transported to the third heaven, but he was not permitted to give information about its location (II Cor. 12:1-4). Although that heaven's location is not revealed to us, God describes its meaning. The Father is in heaven (Matt. 6:9). Jesus Christ came from heaven (John 3:13). The Holy Spirit came from heaven (John 16:7; Acts 2:2). Furthermore, the saints' citizenship (commonwealth), inheritance, treasure, and reward are all in heaven (Phil. 3:20, 21; Heb. 10:34; I Pet. 1:4; Luke 11:22; Matt. 5:12). Saints in time are waiting for Jesus Christ to come from heaven (I Thess. 1:10).

God's eternal abode is up. But where is up? That which is up at one time of the day will be down twelve hours later. Christians at each point on planet earth are said to look up to heaven. Are all believers at the same time looking in the same direction? If heaven were a fixed location, we could look up to heaven only when the earth is in a certain position. However, Christians in every location on planet earth always look up. Hence, they do not regard heaven as a place fixed in some particular direction. The location of the third heaven has never been revealed, but the meaning of *ouranos* is height, the reign above the several heavens, or the highest heaven is the dwelling place of God. Heaven is glory; therefore, it can be uttered but not interpreted.

The Christian life continually ascends by faith and will be consummated by a final ascent into the unmediating presence of Christ. David asked, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?" (Ps. 24:3). The Hebrew word for "ascend" is a future tense verb meaning to go up or to mount. David's questions were answered: "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation" (vv. 4, 5). Since communion with God is above the course of this world, the believer ascends by faith above the impurities of worldly life. Thus, he sets his "affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2). Having been spiritually raised, the believer's life is elevated above the vanities of the world as his faith lifts him into the sphere where his Savior sits at God's right hand. Furthermore, the elevated life in time will be climaxed by the Christian appearing with Christ in glory: "IF ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:1-4).

Before regeneration the soul of the believer was as the body when it dies. It was in a state of corruption, dishonor, and weakness because it was natural. However, the soul is raised from the dead in regeneration to manifest the newness of life in the body. A tomb is suitable to a dead man but not to one who has been made alive. Things on the earth satisfy the natural man; however, only things above can satisfy the spiritual man. Traditions and ceremonies are beautiful furniture for a dead man's dwelling, but the living man demands things that are suitable for life. Since the regeneration of the soul is from above, the resurrected soul is attracted to things above, which in turn elevate the actions of the body. Moreover, the resurrected soul is a vitalizing principle which does not allow the body to remain in the tomb. Thus, eyes are opened, ears are awakened, and feet move in the right direction. The ascending life is from faith to faith, strength to strength, and glory to glory.

Among the hosts of God's creation in the "heavens" are the spirit beings. Satan and his angels are among them. Satan is a mysterious but not a mythical personage. He is a created being, but he was not created as Satan: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezek. 28:15). Originally, Satan occupied one of the highest positions among the heavenly creatures. Surpassing the other spirit beings, except Michael and Gabriel, Lucifer—who became Satan—possessed divinely given wisdom: "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee" (Ezek. 28:17). The order of the angels was subject to him.

When Lucifer became unwilling to rule as a subordinate, he became a traitor. Lucifer became Satan, God's adversary, by exalting himself above God. To justify himself, Lucifer accused God and thus became the Devil. The source of all evil is "the shining one" who became Lucifer, Satan, and the Devil. Since the abode of the angels is on a lower plane than God's, Lucifer was determined to carry his government into the third heaven and usurp the government of God: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High" (Is. 14:13, 14). The sin that caused Lucifer's fall was a "second will." Before the fall, there was only one will—"the will of God." The entrance of the "second will" in Lucifer's heart caused the fall. The creature can never possess the inherent attributes of God; therefore, he can be like God in "independence" alone. Self-governing is a manifestation of "I will." It is manifested in every unregenerate person. Conversely, the regenerate desire to impersonate Christ: "Not my will, but thine [God's], be done" (Luke 22:42).

There are three distinct realms: (1) The eternal abode of God is called the "third heaven" (II Cor. 12:1-4). (2) The heavens with all their hosts include the angels, sun, moon, stars, and air (Gen. 2:1; Ps. 148:1-5; Eph. 2:2). These realms are the second and first heavens. (3) The earth is the realm of man (Gen. 1:1; 2:1; Ps. 115:16). These three levels portray God above angels and men, angels under God but above men, and men under God and angels.

Lucifer took advantage of his position to traffic with the angels under his charge: “Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick...” (Ezek. 28:18). The word for “traffick” means going about to make merchandise; and in this case, it was with angels. Satan, therefore, was the first actor in sin and the first tempter to sin. He successfully persuaded all the nonelect angels to follow him to rebel against God. Having completed his trafficking among the angels, he continued his work through the serpent with Eve on earth. His work will not be consummated until he leads in a final rebellion prior to his final doom at the close of the millennium. Obviously, all things must be renewed prior to the eternal state.

Two realms need renewing because of Satan’s contamination. It is interesting to note that the new heavens and the new earth are always spoken of together. After their renewal, they will no longer be separated. They will form one realm of life and service for the people of God. Two things are certain concerning the future of God’s people: (1) We shall never be infinite. Man is a created being; therefore, the finite can no more become infinite than time can become eternity. (2) We shall always be in the presence of the Infinite. Hence, the Godhead to whom we give thanks for having been chosen, redeemed, regenerated, and glorified will ever be.

The heavens, apart from God’s abode, and the earth are in God’s plan. Christians are able to see that God’s royal rule embraces the whole of creation. There is a circular movement from God back to God. Ezekiel saw a wheel within a wheel (Ezek. 1). In the highest view, the whole symbol declares that God is the Lord of the universe. Ezekiel’s vision of the cherubim and the wheels was designed to correct his despondent mood and assure him that God was keeping watch over His own in that dark hour of Israel’s history. That nation’s life had not passed from God’s control. Divine providence rules in the universe God created. Unlike man, God never brings something into existence that He cannot control. Two outstanding features are presented in the prophet’s vision: (1) The “living creatures” presented the ministries of God’s grace in the world of spiritual agencies. (2) The accompanying “wheels” symbolized the operations of Divine providence.

The earth plays an important role in God’s plan: “The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men” (Ps. 115:16). Planet earth was made for man. Its creation, catastrophe, restoration, and renewal must all be considered in God’s plan. The created earth was poised in space: “He...hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7). Its rotundity is proved by Scripture: “He set a compass [circle] upon the face of the depth” (Prov. 8:27). Isaiah spoke of Him “...that sitteth upon the circle of the earth” (Is. 40:22). At Christ’s second coming, some will be in bed, some in the field, and some at the mill (Luke 17:34-36). The rotation of the earth is seen in the “evening and morning” (Gen. 1) and “day unto day” and “night unto night” (Ps. 19). God did not create the earth a waste place (Is. 45:18), but it suffered a great catastrophe (Gen. 1:2). It was restored for man’s habitation; but when man fell, it was cursed for man’s sake (Gen. 3:17). Creation itself will be set free from its corruption when it is renewed (Is. 65:17; II Pet. 3:13).

Earth is a small planet compared with others in the universe. Many battles between God and Satan have been fought on the earth, and a decisive battle will yet be fought here. God presents Himself in solemn covenants and appearances on this earth. On it the Son of God became the Son of man and died for the elect. After its renewal, the earth will be the residence of the redeemed people of God: “Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever” (Ps. 104:5). “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5). “And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:10).

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## 32

### **THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE THE ELECT’S PERMANENT RESIDENCE**

The Christian’s residence in time is so short, his heart is so carnal, and his mental capacity is so limited that regardless of his desire to study he learns so little of the character and works of the eternal God. Added to the aforementioned things, the few opportunities to hear and the shallowness of what is taught manifest the reasons there is so little in depth understanding of the eternal God and His purpose in time. On the other hand, there is a power of opposition against not only the sovereign Ruler of the heavens and the earth but those who love God. That power of opposition was first revealed in the heavens when Lucifer rebelled against God. That same power was introduced on earth when Adam fell. Revelation has revealed how this Satanic power has invaded every realm of mankind. This power dominates politics which will be consummated in the antichrist, commercialism that will centralize under the authority of the beast, and ideological deception which will be consummated in the false prophet. The realm of professing Christendom will be finalized in the great whore of Babylon.

The fashion of this world is constantly changing. Everything in the world, with the exception of the grace of God in the elect, is changing for the worse. The inward man of the Christian is changing for the better; while at the same time, his outward man is deteriorating. Hence the believer is living in a decaying body and dwelling in an increasingly evil world. Therefore, his hope in time is in neither a body free from a decaying process nor a society that is getting better. His hope is in Christ who has promised him a new body in which to dwell in the new heaven and the new earth.

The point from eternity to eternity must be emphasized. Although man is a created being in time, he was eternally in the purpose of God. Hence, the elect having been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world are redeemed and regenerated in time. Having been regenerated and converted in time, they have the assurance that what began in

God's eternal purpose will be consummated in eternity. Furthermore, when we behold Christ in the new heaven and the new earth, we will be able to relate, with greater intensity of feeling, with what the queen of Sheba felt when she saw Solomon and his prosperity: "...behold, the half was not told me..." (I Kings 10:7). God has revealed just enough about eternity to stimulate the hope of His people. He always keeps the best for last; therefore, the best, like the good wine for the marriage feast (John 2:1-11), is yet to come.

The "new heaven and the new earth" are not to be the main theme of interest for the elect of God. They are presented first, like the old heavens and the old earth in Genesis. As the first heavens and the first earth were prepared for man's benefit, the new heaven and the new earth shall be prepared for the benefit of the new man in Christ. As the garden of Eden was the central idea for Adam in the old earth, the new Jerusalem will be the central idea for the redeemed and glorified man on the new earth. As Adam's fellowship with God in Eden was the principle event, our eternally unmediating fellowship with Jesus Christ will be the characteristic event of the new Jerusalem.

The creation of the new heavens has no reference to the residence of the thrice holy God. God's residence is in the heaven of heavens (Ps. 8:1, 3). One must understand that the word in Genesis 1:1 is plural, "heavens." It is also plural in other Scriptures: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth..." (Is. 65:17), and "...we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Pet. 3:13). John "...saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away..." (Rev. 21:1). The Bible speaks of three heavens (II Cor. 12:2), but only those associated with time shall be created anew. The heaven of God's abode is eternal; therefore, it cannot be contaminated. Hence, it needs neither creation nor renovation. Satan, the fallen Lucifer, is the prince of the power of the air, and the sphere which has been contaminated by him must be created anew. That which shall be created anew had its beginning with time and in time.

The eternal residence of the elect will not be altogether spiritual without materiality. Hence, the verb "passed away" of Revelation 21:1 — "...for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away..." — does not indicate annihilation any more than the resurrection body means the obliteration of the old body. The verb "passed away" is an aorist active indicative of *aperchomai*, a compound verb made up of the preposition *apo* (from) and *erchomai* (to come, to go, or to pass). This compound verb is found 119 times and is used several ways: to go away, to depart, or to pass away or disappear. Hence, John saw what once had been under the curse delivered therefrom by being renewed.

The Greek word for "new" is *kainos*. It does not denote something entirely new, but it often describes a renewal or restoration of something already in existence. Thus, it can mean something new in form or quality. The other Greek word for "new" is *neos* which means new, recently born, young, or youthful.

Some say the old physical world is gone; therefore, this is not a renovated earth. Others believe the "new heaven and the new earth" of Revelation 21 is not something brought

into existence which did not previously exist. Two Biblically historical facts should be the means of forming the correct conclusion: (1) The reconstruction of the formless waste of the original creation of Genesis 1 should give some idea of what God will do. (2) When Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He did not lay aside His material body. His prepared body of “flesh and blood” was transformed into a body of “flesh and bones.” The Lord Jesus not only walked the earth in a glorified material body (Luke 24:13-53) but He has taken that material body into the very presence of God the Father. This is not intimating that Christ’s prepared body, like the original earth, was corrupted. Christ’s holy body must be understood as something that could not be contaminated, but it is mentioned to show that materialism is not obliterated.

The “new heaven and the new earth” seen by John do not signify that the “old heavens and the old earth” will be swept into nothingness. They indicate that they will be changed, cleansed, and made ready for Jesus Christ and His people. The new “heaven” (singular) will no longer be “heavens” (plural), because the planetary and atmospheric realms will then become one. Hence, the new heaven will no more become violent with tempests, tornados, and hurricanes. Furthermore, the earth will no longer burst forth with volcanoes and shake with killer earthquakes. Heaven and earth will not then be separated as they now are. They will form one glorious realm of life and service for the elect.

Scripture clearly distinguishes quality from substance. Within the context of Peter’s reference to the “...new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II Pet. 3:13), he mentioned the world from its original creation “...being overflowed with water, perished” (II Pet. 3:6). The Greek verb for “perished” is *apollumi*, which means to destroy, perish, die, be put to death, be lost, or be deprived of. This verb is used ninety-two times in the New Testament. It is used variantly, but the context always reveals its denotement. What does it mean in II Peter 3:6? The world of the original creation was not annihilated. Its substance remained, and its quality was changed. But due to man’s sin, it must undergo another change (II Peter 3:10). The earth has been cursed because of man’s sin: “...cursed is the ground for thy sake...” (Gen. 3:17). Hence, the creation is groaning and travailing as it awaits deliverance (Rom. 8:19-22). Furthermore, the Psalmist’s statement that the earth and the heavens “shall perish” is explained within the context: “...all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed” (Ps. 102:25, 26). This passage is quoted in Hebrews 1:10-12. There is no way a person can get the idea of annihilation out of these passages. The Greek word for “changed” is a future passive indicative of *allasso*, which means to change, alter, or transform (Acts 6:14; Rom. 1:23; I Cor. 15:51, 52; Gal. 4:20; Heb. 1:12).

There are two dangers that must be avoided by Christians: (1) One must not depersonalize eschatology by speaking of the end time events apart from viewing Jesus Christ in them. (2) One must not personalize eschatology to the extent that he speaks of Christ but disregards what the Bible says about the new heaven, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem.

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## DIVERGENT VIEWS OF THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE DISCUSSED

The last two chapters of Revelation record the consummation of God's eternal purpose. One might think there would be unanimity of understanding concerning the completion of time and the description of the eternal state due to the brevity of God's disclosure in Revelation 21-22. However, the opposite is true because of the varied interpretations of eschatology. Some of the views espoused are listed: (1) The new heaven and earth do not follow the church age. They are the church age itself, because the new age follows the Jewish age. (2) John's vision is a representation in which symbolism is carried to its utmost limits, but it is not without meaning. The new Jerusalem is always represented in the Scriptures as situated in heaven, not on earth. That which is above cannot belong to earth. (3) The millennium of Revelation refers to the "church age" and is therefore realized. It is coextensive with the kingdom which has replaced Satan's. The new heaven and earth refer to the eternal state, because they would not be perfected for the millennium and later destroyed. (4) The scenes of Revelation 21-22 are postmillennial. Conflict between God and Satan is over, and John is given a vision of the eternal state. (5) Isaiah's prophecy concerning the new heavens and the new earth is that they are associated with Israel's restoration therefore must be premillennial. (6) The future state of God's people is not completely concealed in mystery. God has revealed enough about the new heaven and earth, the holy city, and our transformed bodies to whet the spiritual appetite of every saint to investigate every reference on the subject. There is a connection between the new body and the new earth.

The first three views mentioned espouse the spiritualization of literal promises. Although there are varying degrees of interpretations, all who spiritualize literal promises have one thing in common— Old Testament prophecies are largely fulfilled in the church in a nonliteral manner. Amillennialists deny that the thousand years of Revelation 20 refer to the reign of Christ on the earth. They believe that it is a symbolic reference to the complete period between the two advents of Jesus Christ. Hence, the kingdom is the reign of God in the heart. On the other hand, those who embrace the realized millennial view accuse the amillennialists of being too negative. They teach the present reality of the reign of Christ on the earth. There is a major difference between those who spiritualize prophecy. Some believe the new heaven and earth are the church age itself, and others believe they are the beginning of the eternal state. Realized millennialists accuse amillennialists of "explaining away" rather than "explaining" the millennium.

The battle between literalizing and spiritualizing Scripture will never cease as long as men are in time. All Christians believe that some prophecies are to be understood literally and others spiritually. The reality of both cannot be ignored. There are both literal and



spiritual descendants of Abraham (Rom. 9:6-8; 4:16-25; John 8:33-40). Surely there is no difficulty understanding the difference between the “seed” and the “children” of Abraham. Resurrection is both spiritual and physical (Eph. 2:1-10; Col. 3:1-4). Prophecies must be interpreted in harmony with God’s prophetic program. Therefore, to take the prophecy of the new heaven and earth and spiritualize them to mean the assembly (church) age makes as much sense as spiritualizing the incarnation. Would those who spiritualize the kingdom, throne, new Jerusalem, and the new heaven and earth go so far as to say Christ had a “spiritual” body during the days of His flesh on earth? Was Christ’s death only spiritual without a physical demise?

Many are categorized under the spiritualistic interpretation of the Scriptures. They believe the kingdom is the reign of God in the heart. Thus, to them, the kingdom is soteriological. They use Luke 17:20-21 as their proof text: “And when he [Christ] was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” “When the kingdom of God should come” determines the answer to the question raised by the Pharisees. Would Christ give information to His enemies that was denied His disciples? (Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7). The Greek word for “observation” is *parateresis*, which means the act of careful watching or intent observation. This word is understood in the light of the context. No one will be able to observe the coming of the kingdom, because it will come suddenly and unexpectedly at the second advent of Christ. This fact is illustrated by lightning and the days of Noah (Luke 17:24-27; Matt. 24:39). If the kingdom is the reign of God in the heart, what do Matthew 3:2 and II Timothy 4:1 teach?— “...Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” “...who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.”

Realized millennialism has a false premise. The concept of one thousand years of non-utopian reign of Christ as a present reality will not withstand the test of Holy Scripture. The concept of eschatology that maintains the first nineteen and part of the twentieth chapters of Revelation are history is unthinkable. There is no possible way for realized millennialists to make one thousand years to mean two thousand. Furthermore, the kingdom is connected with the second, not the first advent of Jesus Christ (Luke 17:22-37; II Tim. 4:1).

The major difference among premillennialists concerning the “new heaven and earth” is whether they precede or follow the millennium. Those who advocate the former say the “heavens and earth” must be renewed in preparation for Christ’s righteous reign on earth. Whereas, those who embrace the latter ask how there can be death and people subject to deception in the new heaven and earth. Others caught in a dilemma between what they call two undesirable alternatives say there will be a partial renewal at the beginning and a final renewal at the conclusion of the millennium. Hence, they believe the fire of II Peter 3:10-13 is in part premillennial and in part postmillennial, the latter being the most destructive.

Christ's coming will be in flaming fire (II Thess. 1:3-10). Some interpret the "fire" as postmillennial, and others make it premillennial. The fire is explained as the purifying influence of truth which is yet to bring the renovated order of things— moral, mental, and political. However, they fail to tell us how the earth will be renovated. Fire is certainly connected with Christ's second advent (Is. 66:15; Mal. 4:1; II Thess. 1:8). Surely, with all this evidence before us, the conflagration of II Peter 3 can be consistently explained only with the uniform teaching of Scripture. It is therefore premillennial. One thing is self-evident to the Christian. This fire cannot destroy those whom God has ordained to save. Did the fire consume the Hebrew children? God is able to preserve His own from universal judgment, as He did Noah and his family from the universal flood.

The final renewing will take place in the kingdom: "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new..." (Rev. 21:5). The verb "I make" is the present active indicative of *poieo*, which means to create, to make or prepare, to cause to be, or to perfect or accomplish. In his vision, John saw that some things had been made new, but all things would be made new by the end of the millennium. The heavens and earth had both been made new. The first heaven and earth had "passed away" (*apelthan*, first aorist active indicative of *aperchomai*, which means to pass away or disappear). John saw the heavens and earth that were under the curse passed into a new state of being. The aorist tense speaks of what God had done.

That which follows the past tense verb in verse one is very important. The present tense of "making all things new" in verse five describes what God will do during the millennium. The passage beginning with Revelation 21:1 through Revelation 22:5 speaks of both the millennial conditions and the eternal state. Hence, the millennium is the transitional period of the eternal kingdom. The fire that shall come down from God out of heaven is not the conflagration that purifies the heavens and the earth (Rev. 20:9, 10), but the fire at the conclusion of the millennium that will destroy Satan and his army.

"It is done" of Revelation 21:6 is a plural perfect active indicative of *ginomai*, which means "they have been made new and thus stand accomplished." The same inflected verb, except that it is singular number, is used in Revelation 16:17— "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done." This refers to the completion of God's wrath upon the earth, and in Revelation 21:6, it refers to all things made new in preparation for the eternal state. John's vision of Revelation 21-22 takes us from the aorist active indicative verb in verse one ("the first heaven and the first earth were passed away") to the present active indicative in verse five ("I make all things new") to the perfect active indicative verb in verse six ("It is done"). Hence, John saw a new heaven and earth (finished action in past time) which God had brought into being in fulfillment of prophecy (Is. 65:17; 66:22; II Pet. 3:13). He also saw what God was doing during the millennium (present tense action), and he saw God's completed work (perfect tense) in its eternal state of being.

Eternity is an ever present "now." Even in time, the only reality is "now," but the quality of "now" will be incomparably greater in eternity than it was in time. Christians in time

are fearful of wasting the reality of “now,” but there will be no such fear in eternity. Furthermore, we worry about redeeming time and what the unknown future holds, but such worry cannot exist in a perfect eternity by persons who have been perfected.

