

Adam and the Fall – Part 6

It is the fact that Adam continued to function after partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that creates the greatest problem in the minds of most people. After all, the LORD stated that Adam would die “in the day” he ate the fruit, and yet, Adam and Eve seem to function well enough to know how to make aprons to cover their nakedness. Yet, there is the problem of Adam now not wanting to face his Creator:

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. (*Genesis 3:8*)

Moreover, when the LORD calls to Adam, the response and exchange that follows indicates something is terribly amiss:

And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over

thee.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (*Genesis 3:9-19*)

Clearly, things have radically changed. Where before life was quite simple and easy, now life becomes complicated and hard. Moreover, instead of the fellowship that existed before, now the LORD God rebukes Adam and pronounces judgements and consequences for what has been done. In this we do see the single pronouncement that Adam will die when the LORD states "till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," but that lies in the future, and it is not this day, which is what the LORD declared when He placed Adam in the Garden.

Clearly, there is need to search the Scriptures to understand what the LORD meant when He told Adam he would die. Since the common conception of death is that someone ceases to exist in this world, and that is not what happened to Adam and Eve, it is imperative that we resolve this so that we may know how the LORD God views us and all mankind.

Due to our limitations in understanding, we must go from what we can see and understand, to what we cannot see, and have no understanding of. In the Scripture we are able to do that as we have several instances where someone's death is described and the events that occurred are detailed concerning what happened, and in what sequence. One of the first descriptions we have is the death of Rachel, the wife of Jacob.

And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way

to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. (*Genesis 35:16-18*)

Here we see that Rachel, Jacob's wife, died and ceased to exist in this physical world. However, in that description of her death, we are clearly told that her soul departed her body, and that was the signal event of her death. We have this confirmed by another passage of Scripture as well:

And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. (*I Kings 17:18-23*)

Again we have it confirmed that physical death is not the cessation of functioning of the soul, but a cessation of function of the body due to the soul departing the body. This then, renders the soul incapable of operating in the physical world, and thus, is separated from the physical world as it has no body in which it can operate to interact with the physical.

The fact that strictly spiritual creatures do not have flesh

and cannot operate in the physical without some sort of physical vessel to utilize is confirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection:

And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 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 24:36-39)

Here we also see a separation exists in the interaction of the physical and the spiritual. Were the Lord Jesus Christ strictly a spiritual person after His resurrection, it would have been impossible for the disciples to touch Him. Thus a separation exists between the physical and the spiritual. This separation is a sharp and distinct separation that cannot be bridged, as the Lord Jesus Christ explained to Nicodemus:

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:5-6)

Since we now know that it is the soul that animates the body, and the body is simply a vessel the soul dwells in and utilizes until it's time is full and it departs, thus causing the body to cease to function and all interaction with the physical world is cutoff, we can see that physical death is simply a separation of a soul from its ability to interact with the physical world.

Thus, we can also see a parallel with the death the LORD spoke of in the Garden, in which the death spoken of is a spiritual death. If we understand that Adam did indeed die that day, we can understand that since Adam continued to operate in the physical world, his death must have been spiritual.

What then is spiritual death?

Since we know that physical death is simply the soul ceasing to interact with, or being separated from interaction with the physical world by departing the body, we can also see that spiritual death must also involve a separation. Here, Adam's behavior is telling:

And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. (*Genesis 3:9-10*)

Where before Adam was not afraid of his Creator, now he is afraid of the LORD God and hides himself from the presence of the LORD. Now there exists a situation where Adam cannot bear the presence of his Creator, and he has become alien to the LORD who made him. This situation is mirrored in Isaiah, Chapter 59:

Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. (*Isaiah 59:1-2*)

It is not that Adam's soul has ceased to function, but that it no longer has any fellowship with the LORD God. We know that the soul of a person who never submits to the gospel doesn't cease to function, for the rich man in the parable of Luke, Chapter 16, whose soul was in hell, was fully cognizant of what was going on:

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on

me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. (*Luke 16:22-25*)

What we then find in Scripture is that death, as the LORD God defines death, is not a cessation of function of the soul, and neither is the soul incapable of understanding what is going on. Rather, it is that the soul has no fellowship with the LORD God, and thus no meaningful interaction with the Creator, the source of all life. In John, Chapter 14, a statement by the Lord Jesus Christ's is recorded that sheds considerable light on this:

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (*John 14:6*)

And again in John, Chapter 5:

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. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. (*John 5:24-25*)

Here the construction of the statement is quite clear: that there are functioning individuals walking around which are dead, as they are separated from the LORD God by their sins and iniquities. However, if they will hear the gospel and believe, they will pass from death to life, and cannot die ever again.

Thus, to the LORD God, death is being separated from Him, and He not knowing you, as the LORD cannot fellowship with those who countervail His judgements, call Him a liar continually, and are unrepentant in their hearts. They are strange and

alien to Him, even as Adam became strange to the LORD.

So then we see that death ensued that very moment Adam partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, became aware of the law, judged his condition, and judged that the LORD God had inadequately clothed him, and determined a course of action that revealed the condition of his heart and soul. In so doing, Adam separated himself from God and made himself strange to the LORD God, setting himself as a judge over the actions of the LORD, and finding them wanting.

By this, Adam became the enemy of God and dead to God, and the fall is complete. Man can now never escape the law and its consequences save through the Lord Jesus Christ, and His shed blood on the cross.