

*The Story
of
Adam's Death*



Bible Study Series
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The Story Of Adam's Death

Most of us, when reading the story of Adam as narrated in the book of Genesis, think that it is all symbolic and that his death is also symbolic or at best spiritual, but it is more than that. So let us see what the Holy Scripture says about it.

Before Adam's fall:

Adam was one of God's creations, but different from the rest in so many ways among which are his mind, wisdom, discerning, thinking, power of choice, and power of talking.

And the Lord God chose to keep him in the garden with Him at all times.

The warning:

The Lord God gave Adam the freedom to do whatever he likes, and to eat from all the fruits of all the trees of the Garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for the moment he eats from it he shall die (Genesis 2:17).

Certainly Adam did not know what is meant by death, because he never heard of it before, nor did he see or witness something dead before, for everything was well, good and lively around him.

From this warning we understand that Adam was alive, and he would have stayed alive forever so long as he does not eat from the forbidden tree. In another word he would have stayed Eternal like God, which is actually what the Lord God has created him to be. And this is one of the attributes of the image of God which He bestowed on Adam as the Holy Scripture states: **"So God created man, in His own image; in the image of God He created him."** (Genesis 1: 27). But we know that the Lord God has no material image to look at since He is Spirit as the Holy Scripture tells us: **"God is Spirit"** (John 4:24). So what does the phrase **"In His image "** mean? It means in His image in righteousness, eternity, and godliness.

On the other hand if Adam does not care for and neglects this warning he will lose all these (eternity, righteousness, and godliness) as we shall see later.

After Adam's fall:

As we expected, Adam did not care for the warning and ate from the forbidden tree; whether he was swayed to do so by Eve or the serpent, it does not matter. Before we go any further we should realize that God's word is a royal decree which neither falls away nor can it be changed. So when Adam ate from the forbidden tree, he must die because the Lord God said so; and this brings us to the subject of this study.

As we mentioned above, Adam did not know the meaning of the word death till The Lord God expelled him from the garden, and this is what we call "**The Spiritual death**" or separation from the presence of God as the Holy Scripture states: "**Therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden.**" (Genesis 3:23).

But there is another death which is "**The bodily or corporal death**", and this is obvious from (Genesis 3:19) which states: "**In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.**" And from this verse we can see that God is saying clearly to Adam that he will toil all his life to eat till the time when he returns to dust meaning till the time he dies. So, now Adam's life is limited by time and not eternal anymore.

So from the above, so far, we see that we are dealing with two kinds of death; and in the rest of this article we shall deal with the consequences of each and their outcome, and what the Lord God has done to put things right after all this mess.

The Consequences:

I suppose that Adam didn't even know that he was created from dust, but the Lord God plainly told him this fact.

Adam didn't corporally die immediately, but the Lord God gave him a span of life during which the effect of corporal corruption works in him till he ultimately dies; and that is why the early men mentioned in the book of Genesis long-lived for several hundred years, but as the corrupted nature worked in man over the ages, his span of life went down to less than hundred years with some few sporadic exceptions. And the Lord God did not limit that span of life by days, months or years that Adam would be aware of, but the fact given was that at one day he does not know of, he will die.

Some of us may ask which happened first, the spiritual death or the corporal death? The answer is none of them was before the other for two main reasons:

- a- God is timeless, meaning that His time is always present, because He is not subject or affected by the rotation around the sun as we earthly beings are.
- b- Once He uttered the sentence of His judgment it went into effect as the Lord God said: "**For the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**"

(Genesis 2:17). So the spiritual death went into effect immediately and so also the corrupted nature began working in his body leading to the corporal death after toiling all his life.

So, at this stage we know of two definite things that happened:

- 1) Adam lost his eternity **by being cast out of the garden**, and with it he lost God's image and became spiritually corrupted.
- 2) He also faced corporal death (**to dust you shall return**), and became bodily corrupted. And Paul in the past cried out: **"O wretched that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?"** (Romans 7:24).

But things wouldn't end this way, because the Lord God did not create Adam to vanish or perish; He created him to live eternally in the garden.

So, a process of restoration has to be done to bring man back to the image of God and back to the garden; and please do not misunderstand me as one may think that the Lord God mends things as they come, for this is not true. The Lord God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscience and He foreknows everything before it happens and that is why He prepared salvation before the foundation of the world.

This brings me to a very important point we all should be aware of: The Lord God foreknew what Adam will do, but it was not His will that Adam should fall in sin, it was Adam's will; so please let us not be confused between the will of God and His foreknowledge of things which will happen. His foreknowledge is not His will.

The process of restoration:

We have seen that Adam sinned once, and we would think that God could have forgiven him and end the whole matter right then. Yes we agree that the Lord God is forgiving and surely He could have done just that; after all He has forgiven the sins of the paralytic (Mathew 9:2; Mark 2:5; Luke 5:20), and the sins of the woman who poured the fragrant oil on His feet in Simon's house (Luke 7:48) even without asking for forgiveness. But the problem is not in the sin which the Lord God can mop away; but it is in the consequences or percussions of sin which leaves an ugly scar that cannot be mopped away.

Another fact we must realize here; the Lord God does not restore by mending or patching. Listen to what He says: **"No one patches an old garment with a new cloth, lest the new cloth pulls on the old and ruins it."** (Mathew 9:16).

He makes everything anew again; in another word He creates things again.

Listen to what the Holy Scripture says:

- **"Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."** (John 3: 3). Meaning that man cannot go back to the garden and live eternally unless he is born or created again.
- **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed away, behold all things have become new."** (2nd Cor. 5:17).
- **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."** (1st Peter 1:3).

The situation now is that a sin has been committed, and according to God's warning and righteous judgment, man has to face eternal death or damnation. The Holy word of God is: **"the wages of sin is death"** (Romans 6:23), and so the price has to be paid. Man cannot pay it because he is spiritually dead, and corporally corrupted. So there must be a substitute or a redeemer; but this redeemer has to be qualified for the job.

What are the redeemer's qualifications?

- 1) **He must be a human being:**
Since the offender is human then the substitute must be also human. So from the very beginning, this excludes angels.
- 2) **He must be without sin:**
This is simply because a sinner cannot substitute another sinner. Put it this way: a bankrupt cannot bail out another bankrupt; and the Holy Scripture says: **"every one of them has turned aside; they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, No, not one."** (Psalm 53:3; Romans 3:12). So this disqualifies any human being. But there is one the incarnated Jesus Christ. He is sinless because He is the Son of God from His paternal side, and he cannot inherit the corrupted nature from His maternal side because he was not born by the will of man; or in other words He is not the outcome of a man and woman,
- 3) **He must have the power to create:**
As mentioned before God does not patch the old, He creates anew. No human can create except the incarnated Jesus Christ Who is the brightness of His (God's) glory and the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:3). So, He can create a new creature.
- 4) **He must be willing to die:**
Though he committed no sin, yet He must be willing to die on behalf of the sinner for the Holy Scripture says: **"without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin"** (Hebrews 9:22).; and not only one sinner but he died redeeming all the sinners of the world, **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"** (John 3:16).
- 5) **He must be able to raise Himself from the dead:**
If He dies and stays dead, then he did nothing, for every man will die one day. But He must rise again to conquer death, then and only then there will be victory. Listen to what the Holy Scripture says: **"Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death where is your sting? O Hades where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and strength of sin is the law."** (1st Cor. 15:54-56).

Would an angel do the job? No, he has no power to create a new man, nor does he has the power to rise again; moreover he is not human.

The offense happened against the Creator Himself, and a redeemer has to be of equal caliber to be able to mop out this offense, so neither man nor an angel can do the job. And who could be fit for the job other than that of whom the writer of

the book of Hebrews says that ***“He is the brightness of His (God’s) glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, His son whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds”*** (Hebrews 1:2, 3)? Who also said: ***“He who has seen Me has seen the Father”*** (John 14:9).

Now, what can we learn from all that? Much in every way:

- 1) **The Lord God created Adam to live forever (eternally).** And had he not sinned he would have lived eternally with God, and he would have experienced neither the spiritual nor the corporal death. Likewise had the incarnated Jesus Christ not been killed by the Jews, He would have lived forever for He is eternal and had no corrupted nature working in His body.
- 2) **Had God forgiven Adam, it would still have done him no good,** for the sin has left him with an ugly scar that could not be removed. This means that for example if a person commits adultery and he contracts one of the venereal diseases, then he asks God for forgiveness, and God forgives him, yet he still has the disease. Forgiveness does not remove the effects and consequences of sin. Another example: a man kills another man, then he feels remorse and repents and asks for forgiveness, God certainly will forgive him but the man who was killed cannot come back to life.
- 3) **God’s decree is “the wages of sin is death”.** This was not for Adam only, but also for us. No one should ever think that he can sin and get away with it, unless of course he humbly asks for forgiveness with a contrite heart. Remember how King David cried day and night with tears asking for forgiveness.
- 4) **God’s restoration is to bring Adam back to the garden.** It cost Him His only begotten son but He didn’t mind because He loves each and every one of us. In Him we are new creation because He does not patch things.
- 5) **There was no fit redeemer except His only begotten son.** We have seen how man and angels failed to qualify.

And God talked to us about that redemption in so many different ways across the ages; as a matter of fact we can say since creation because the Holy Scripture tells us that the Lord God made tunics of skin and clothed them (Adam and Eve) (Genesis 3:21). Then He showed us redemption in Noah’s ark, and when the lamb saved Isaac from death, and when the lamb saved the Israelites’ first born from death in Egypt, and then it became a law to offer lamb sacrifices especially on the Day of Atonement.

No matter how much can be said about this subject, one cannot do justice to its deep and beyond comprehension meaning.