

MAY - JUNE 2014

# STRAIGHT TALK

*"... regarding the dead, that they are being raised: have you not read in the book of Moses, how God spoke to him in the bush ...? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living;"* – Mark 12:26

## LIFE AND DEATH

37. *But, that the dead are being raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*

38. *For He is not the God of dead ones, but of living ones: for these all live to Him.*

Lk. 20: 37-38

What did Jesus mean when He called Yahweh *"the God of the living ones"*? Was He saying that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still living? Apparently that is what the churches imply. And yet, scripture tells us that when men die they remain dead until God raises them. This was true with Jesus who was slain on Friday and remained dead until God raised Him on Sunday. David is still dead in his grave (Acts 2:29).

And what did Jesus mean when He told one of his disciples to **"Let the dead ones bury their dead."** (Mtt. 8:22 & Lk. 9:60)? How can dead people do anything? Does the Bible infer that there is more meaning to the terms "life" and "death" than mere biological (physical) life and death?

When Jesus was teaching his disciples about life and death, He wanted them to realize that biological life and death, as we know it, is one kind. But there is another kind of "life" and "death." He was talking about that other "life" and "death" when He referred to "the dead ones," and to "the living ones" both at that time and at the time of Moses.

## THE BOOK OF LIFE

From the first chapters of Genesis to end of Revelation, the Bible is a study into the meanings and causes of LIFE and DEATH. Genesis begins with the gift of life, and Revelation ends with the gift of life. And all the books in between teach about LIFE.

As we read about the creation, the law, the prophets, the gospels, the epistles and the apocalypse ... the story of God raising men to "LIFE" and overcoming "DEATH" is a consistent theme. All Bible students read this. They read it,

but most of them don't grasp it. Truth often remains unseen even though it is in plain sight.

The Bible story is not hard to understand once your eyes are opened and your mind is allowed to climb out of the box created for it by the churches.

The Bible is about LIFE and how man receives that life. Scripture calls it "raising the dead." God breathed this LIFE into Adam (who was already alive biologically). God instructed Moses to teach the Children of Israel about this LIFE and how to avoid DEATH (see Deut. 30:15-30).

Also, LIFE is what Jesus gave to his followers.

10. .... *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

Jn. 10:10

4. *In Him (Jesus) is LIFE; and the LIFE is the light of men (awareness).*

Jn. 1:4

22. *And saying this, He (Jesus) breathed in them (his disciples), and said to them, Receive holy spirit:*

Jn. 20:22

The phrase *"breathed in them"* is one Greek word: *"enephusasen,"* which is the equivalent to the English word "emphasized." So Jesus emphasized them ... and thus He INSPIRED them. The word is from the Greek "emphusan" (to inflate), and is also the basis of "emphysema" ... again, having to do with breath.

Thus we see the theological use of the terms "breath" and "life." The infusion of spirit (inspiration) is also the term that means to inflate or breathe in.

## RAISING THE DEAD

Jesus RAISED the dead by breathing spirit into them. When the Jews charged the apostle Paul with blasphemy Paul defended himself by explaining before the Jewish high

priest Ananias, and later before Roman authorities, that the Jew's charge against him was for preaching that the DEAD were being RAISED.

6. ... concerning the hope and raising of the dead I am being judged.

Acts 23:6

Paul called this RAISING "the hope of Israel."

20. ...because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

Acts 28:20

14. But this I confess to you, that according to the way which they (the Pharisees) call heresy, so serve I the God of my fathers, believing all things according to the law and in the prophets:

15. And have hope toward God, which they themselves (the Pharisees) also expect, that a raising of the just and the unjust is to be.

Acts 24:14-15

Here we see a revealing point. The Pharisees condemned Paul for preaching about a RAISING. And yet the Pharisees believed in a raising. The problem was that the "raising" which the Pharisees expected was different from the "raising" that Paul was preaching.

The Pharisees believed in a restoration to life ... much the same as churches have taught. On that point the churches agree with the Pharisees who killed Christ.

The Pharisees believed in a raising. But they didn't believe in the raising that Paul taught ... which was a present "raising" that was occurring at that very time.

That current raising that Jesus had instituted was the point of contention. His disciples were being "raised" to "EONIAN LIFE" and the Jews refused to acknowledge it. This was why the Jews accused Paul of blasphemy ... because if what Paul was preaching was true it was proof that Jesus really was who He claimed to be.

You see, the Jews had a big problem. They had just caused a man to be crucified ... a man who claimed to be the Son of God. But now if the dead were being raised by Jesus, that meant that He was truly who He claimed to be, and they (the Jews) would be exposed by Paul's preaching. They needed to shut Paul up to save themselves.

Thus, it behooves us to understand this idiom of "life" and "death." To grasp this we need to know the difference between "life immortal," and "life eonian." The terms are not the same. And you need a Greek lexicon to catch this.

When Jesus came out of the tomb He had been "raised" to a state of immortality. He wasn't merely restored to life, as Lazarus had been. Lazarus was still mortal and he went on to die again. Jesus, on the other hand, was RAISED to an entirely new and higher form of life. And thus far, among men, Jesus alone has been given this highest form of LIFE: immortality.

Paul described Jesus as:

16. The only one possessing the raising, dwelling in light unapproachable which no (mortal) man has seen or is able to see; to Him (Jesus) is honor and eonian greatness. Amen.

1 Tim. 6:16

9. Knowing that Christ is raised from the dead He dies no more; death has no more strength over Him.

Rom. 6:9

Jesus, being immortal, cannot die. He has attained life that is higher than biological life. But no other man has been given this status. Immortality is the third and highest level of life that men can attain. The first level is mortal (biological) life which all have at birth. The second level is spiritual life (also called eonian life) that is the gift of God to men who will accept it. Eonian life is an upgrade for men who are still mortal. The third level is immortality to which all but Jesus have yet to attain.

Christ's disciples were being "raised" to "eonian life," and were still mortal and susceptible to biological death. Thus, eonian life is not the same as immortal life.

"Eonian life" is "life of the age." The "age" was the New Covenant Age. It is the "life" and "light" that Jesus gives to us who are "born anew" or "born from above." It means that Christ's followers are raised from spiritual death. The "dead" were being "raised."

The Jews couldn't allow that to become known, so they needed to silence Paul from preaching that the dead were being raised and that Jesus was God's Son.

25. I am the RAISING and the LIFE: he that believes in me, though he were DEAD (blind & deaf), he shall LIVE (see & hear).

Jn. 11:25

Paul said, "I am judged by you this day concerning the raising of the dead." (Acts 24:21) The "death" and "blindness" Jesus spoke of was the state of spiritual non-function and disconnect from God ... caused by either ignorance and unawareness, or by intentional rejection of truth (as was the case for Adam as well as for the Pharisees). It is a state of hating truth and becoming insensible to God's leading and love. It also causes man to lose his ability to love and to desire truth.

12. And because lawlessness shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Mtt. 24:12

The prophets, Jesus, and Paul all referred to this "death" also as being unable to see and hear, or lacking "eyes to see, and ears to hear."

2. Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.

Eze. 12:2

15. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears

are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed;

16. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

Mtt. 13:15-16

7. What then? Israel does not attain to that which it seeks; but the election does attain it, and the rest are blind.

8. (As it is written, God gives them the spirit of slumber; eyes to see not, and ears to hear not); to this day.

Rom. 11:7-8

When Jesus was "raising" his disciples He said He was giving sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, and raising the dead.

22. Then Jesus answering said to them, Go your way, and tell John what things you have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the gospel is preached to the poor.

Lk. 7:22

The infusion of NEW LIFE (spiritual life) was the dynamic that caused the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the dead to be raised. Jesus taught this.

LIFE is the "fruit" produced from the "tree of life." Refusal to accept this "life" leaves men biologically alive, but spiritually DEAD. This was Adam's big mistake. He thought he could become "as god, knowing good and evil" (i.e., decide his own laws). Rejection of God as Lawgiver brings spiritual death upon men.

## WORDS OF LIFE

Those who accept God's gift of life, and hold to it, become the children of light. They are, "the living ones" (Mk. 12:26 - see pg. 1) and are citizens of New Jerusalem: the city of the living (see Jan-Feb 2013 Straight Talk).

This spiritual process has been the theme of God's word since the very beginning. Some men accept "life" from its tree (source). And some go for other trees (sources). Other trees (sources) are the religions and systems of men: sources that promise "life" but deliver "death."

25. There is a way that seems right to a man (to his own mind), but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Prov. 16:25

God explained this to Adam, but Adam was tricked by the serpent to trust his own heart (the wrong tree or source).

9. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Jer. 17:9

Moses explained this to the Children of Israel after leading them out of Egypt, but most of them did not accept it. As a result, that generation of Israelites perished in the wilderness and were prevented from entering into the promise land (which prefigured New Jerusalem).

Jesus explained this same truth in Jerusalem. But, again, only a few received his words and accepted "LIFE."

63. It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak to you, they are spirit, and they are life.

John 6:63

Peter, also, was told to speak these words of life:

20. Go, stand and speak ... all the words of this life.

Acts 5:20

## WORDS OF DEATH

17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.

Gen. 2:17

4. And the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die:

5. For God knows that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, able to know good and evil.

Gen. 3:4-5

Trees are sources. They provide fruit, wood, shade and protection. Scripture uses trees as symbols of sources. In Genesis 2 & 3, the Tree of Life represented the source of LIFE (i.e., God and his laws).

Also, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represented the source of DEATH. This tree (source) is man's own heart – the self source – that wrongly tells him he can be "as god" by rejecting God and opting to make his own laws. Adam's great sin was thinking he could decide "good and evil" on his own, as if he were God.

The fact is, God alone is able to know good and evil. His law defines it for us. Man cannot do this on his own, and when he tries he dies. Everything goes off track.

Adam chose to make his own rules rather than accept God's instructions. That choice caused him to lose the **LIFE** that he had been given. He became "dead" in that very day.

Adam's rejection of the true SOURCE OF LIFE was a curse activated by his unconstrained natural spirit. Man's un-raised nature is the curse that affects all men after the example set by Adam.

14. But death reigned from Adam to Moses, also over them sinning not after the similitude of Adam's trespass, who is the figure of the One beginning (Jesus).

Rom. 5:14

Jesus was “the second Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45). He faced the temptations and mortal nature that Adam faced. But where Adam failed, Jesus did not fail. Jesus chose the Tree of Life instead of the self-source tree as did Adam.

During the time from Adam to Moses “death” reigned over most people with few exceptions ... Abraham being the most obvious exception as a model for faith in God.

Abraham received the spirit of LIFE given to him by God. That spirit of LIFE passed from Abraham to Isaac, and then through Isaac to Jacob.

Out of Jacob’s 12 sons, not all accepted the spirit of LIFE. But some did. And thus LIFE continued, albeit in only a few people. Then Moses came upon the scene.

God chose Moses as a vessel through whom the WORDS OF LIFE would again be given to man. With a mighty hand, God showed Himself and the LIFE He offered when He delivered the Children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt. God gave Moses LAWS for THE LIVING. These were the words of LIFE recorded in the Books of Moses.

Once you realize that biological life is not the only kind of life in the Bible, your eyes open to a whole genre of Bible teaching that otherwise cannot be seen.

The “LIFE” to which Scripture points all who believe in Yahweh and his Son is the very thing that is explained in John 1:9-14, and 3:3-21. The “curse” (judgment) of spiritual death comes upon all men who follow the example of Adam who preferred to follow the “tree” of death rather than the one “Tree” of life.

In the New Testament, this “LIFE” is called “eonian life.” This very important term means “**life of the age**” ... and in the English Bible versions this word is generally mistranslated as “everlasting life” (suggesting immortality).

## LIFE, DEATH AND THE RAISING

The concept of life and death is showcased in Genesis 2 & 3, in Exodus and Deuteronomy, then again by Jesus in the Gospels, and then again in Revelation where we read about New Jerusalem, that spiritual City of The Living that has “living waters” and “trees of life.”

Likewise, Jesus referred to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as examples of “living ones” and that God gave them “life.”

In John 3, Jesus explains the concept of spiritual life (eonian life) resulting from being “born from above”:

6. *That which is generated out of flesh is flesh; and that which is generated out of spirit is spirit.*

7. *Marvel not that I say to you, You must be born from above.*

Jn. 3:6-7

Being “born of spirit” is also called being “raised,” and as having “eyes to see, and ears to hear.” Moses spoke of this particular kind of “life” and “death” in Deut. 30.

15. *See, I have set before you this day LIFE and good, and DEATH and evil;*

16. *In that I command you this day to love Yahweh your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that you may LIVE ...*

17. *But if your heart turns away, so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods (other sources), and serve them;*

18. *I denounce to you this day, that you shall surely perish (i.e., “die”), and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land, where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it.*

19. *I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you LIFE and DEATH, blessing and cursing: therefore CHOOSE LIFE, that both you and your seed may LIVE:*

Deut. 30:15-19

You should read all of Deut. 30. It is perhaps the most concise explanation of how God’s rules for “life,” and how faith in God can raise the dead.

## MOSES & JESUS

Jesus made specific reference to Moses to show that God was raising the dead in Moses’ day too. He “breathed life” (spiritual life) into men who had been spiritually dead.

17. *And Yahweh said to me (Moses),*

18. *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto you (Moses), ....*

Deut. 18:17-18

This promise to Moses and the people of Israel obviously points to Jesus. In fact, this passage is quoted in Acts in reference to Jesus:

22. *For Moses truly said to the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up to you of your brethren, like unto me (Moses); Him shall you hear in all things whatsoever He shall say to you.*

Acts 3:22

Moses and Jesus taught men about LIFE. In Revelation 15:2 & 3, we read of certain ones who were “overcoming the beast.” It says these are singing “*the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.*”

Then in Rev. 20:4, we see that these represent “*the first raising*” (i.e., *the firstfruits who were “raised.”*)

The theme of the Bible is LIFE. The good news (“gospel”) is about LIFE. Not biological life, but SPIRITUAL LIFE: EONIAN LIFE. The living ones who have been raised to eonian life are in “the book of life” (Phil. 4:3).

Jesus sent his disciples to teach this simple and vital truth. Rejoice that you are ALIVE FROM THE DEAD!

*Ben Williams*