

Living Springs Institute

Where Sound Doctrine Endures.

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*“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”
Colossians 2:8*

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Step Into the Springs!

It is hard to believe that in between the last issue of this newsletter and this one, a war was started and has come to an official end! We want the families who have lost loved ones in this war to know our thoughts and prayers go out to all of them. We also pray every day that God will keep His hand upon the men and women still serving in this postwar time, and they will be able to come home as soon as possible! This newsletter only comes to you because of the freedom we enjoy in this country; and to all those who fight to make that freedom possible, we send out a great big heartfelt Thank You! We pray God will bless and lead you always!

I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone that the Bible tells us, in I Timothy 2:1-4, to pray for those who are in the leadership positions. It doesn't really matter whether you think what they are doing is right or wrong, you should always keep them in your prayers. For centuries man has sought to know the future, and in all the things man has done to get a glimpse into what is up ahead, there is nothing clearer than the fact he is just not able to do it! This is the existence God has made for us. It is truly one foot in front of the other, and that is how it goes. What we need, especially those in the leadership, is wisdom and direction from God!

Every time a conflict breaks out, people have worries and thoughts about whether this one spells the end, and the answer to this is yes and no. This is the path man has chosen. Before the Tower of Babel, men worked together and threatened to totally corrupt themselves in false religion. After the confounding of the languages, man chose to fight with each other; and through it all, God has made sure His Word would not vanish from the earth. This has ensured that each individual has had the opportunity to hear and follow the truth. The concern is not when and how will the “end” come, but how are you living your life each day. Are you seeking to go deeper into God's Word each day, or are you just sitting around worrying about what will happen next? In times like these, it is good to sit down and make sure we are familiar with the words in I Thessalonians chapter 5. The way to be sure we are not caught unaware when Christ returns is to make God's will the center of our lives. A wise man once talked about being down, and he said the best way to get on your feet is to get on your knees, and the best way to stay on your feet is to stay on your knees. Now more than ever, we should truly pray without ceasing!

As you may have noticed, this issue of the newsletter is bigger than normal, and there are two main reasons for this. First, this issue has a longer commentary; and second, we have included a Q&A in this issue. This does not mean the newsletter will always be this size, but as promised in the first issue, we will include Q&As from time to time. While we are on this point, I want to remind all of you that you can submit a question to us at anytime by simply writing us at P.O. Box 271, Loveland, CO 80539. Our Q&A policies were printed in Issue #2 of this newsletter; but if you missed them, and would like a copy, you can always request one by mail, or you can visit us online at www.livingspringsinstitute.org. On our website, you can submit a question by simply filling out the online form! We may not always be able to include every Q&A we do, in this printed newsletter, but we will do our best to let you know what questions have been submitted and answered, so you can send for copies of the Q&As you want to read. Once again, keep in mind, if you have Internet access you can find all the Q&As on our website! We hope you will enjoy this expanded addition of the newsletter, and as always, we pray it will be a blessing to you!

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Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip E. Busby

In our last issue we talked about the fifth day as well as some about the sixth day. This time we continue to talk about the sixth day. The sixth day was a very busy day in the creation cycle. It would seem that more happened on the sixth day than any other day. Genesis tells us that land animals were created; then Adam was created; then the Garden of Eden was planted; then the animals were named by Adam; and then Eve was created. Here we have our first incident, in this study, where instead of going simply verse by verse we have to combine verses from both the first chapter and the second chapter of Genesis to get the whole story of the sixth day. However, before we talk about the creation of man and the events that take place there, I want to talk about the significance of the fact man's creation account is split the way it is. First, you must keep in mind that chapter and verse divisions in the Bible were put into place by man. They were placed in the Bible for the sake of studying and reference purposes; they're not, by any means, an actual portion of the Word of God. What I want you to understand is the fact that God did not tell man to put these separations in the Word. Therefore, they have no God given significance! They were put there by man for the convenience of man. We should try to not let chapter and verse divisions throw us off from the flow of what is being said and how it is being said! That being in mind, remember the normal way for the English language to be written is not only sentences but also in paragraphs. If this story was being told to us in a paragraph form, it would look quite a bit different than it looks in chapter and verse form. There are many places where chapter and verse divisions are put, in what I believe are not the best places, and the first chapter of the Book of Genesis is a good example.

The first chapter ends with the thirty-first verse, which brings us to the end of the sixth day. However, as we read into chapter 2 you must go all the way to verse 3 before you find the best place for chapter 1 to end. Here at the end of verse 3 of chapter 2, we find the wrap up of the seventh day. This is the true end of the introduction to the Bible's story. Here we find the completion of the creation cycle. Genesis chapter 1 verse 1 to Genesis chapter 2 verse 3 are the words in which God lays down the beginning story of how all of creation was generally put into place. It does not give us a lot of the details that chapter 2 gives us about the creation of man, because it is an elementary way of laying out the general steps of creation as they happened over a seven day period. Chapter 2 verse 4 is when God really begins to speak to us about the journey all of it was created for, and that is the human journey! This is why chapter 2 of the Book of Genesis goes into a greater detail of exactly how man was created, and the process that was followed on the sixth day of creating Adam and then creating Eve; in between which are events such as the planting of the Garden of Eden, and the naming of the animals. Here we also are given some details on the general thought processes of God Himself. Putting the wording in this way emphasizes a great point as well, and that is the fact there is no "prehistoric" to the Bible. The Words of chapter 2 verses 4-6 tell us this is a complete account. We are hearing how man began his journey on this earth, not as some kind of knuckle dragging neanderthal, but as a fully developed human with all the brains and physical abilities of the human race! The first words in Genesis tells us how the world was formed "In the beginning"! It tells the story of the creation of not just things like water and earth, but time itself. This means it is telling us the way in which not just animals and plants were formed, but how God literally created seven specific days! It is really a shame that the end of chapter 1 does not go to the third verse of chapter 2. If it did, I believe there are many facts that would be clearer to us. The greatest of these would be the fact the Sabbath day is not just some "oh by the way" part of the cycle that gets honorable mention at the beginning of chapter 2, but it is truly a solidified part of the creation process! God makes this fact very clear in the laws He gives to the Jewish nation; and, of course, we will talk about the creation of a seventh day just as soon as we complete our study of the sixth day.

For the purposes of looking at the actual creation of man, we will look simultaneously at the account in chapter 1:26-31 and chapter 2:7-25. Here in chapter 1 verse 26 we see the general thought pattern of how man would be created. We find that man was created in the image of God; Genesis 1:26 tells us that was the determination God made as to what our general pattern would be. This is very important! As we talked about the creation of the animals, we found that God commanded the ground to "bring forth" the beasts of the field. This command brought forth more than just one type of animal, it created an abundance of creatures of all different kinds. However, when it comes to the creation of man, we find that God specifically wants to make us in His image and after His likeness. This means the part of us He forms from the ground is only one part, and not the whole, like the animals. Verse 27 tells us God carried through on that idea. It also makes clear that male and female were both created in the image of God. This fact becomes very relevant to the verses in chapter 2. There we see God bringing all the animals to Adam to find an helpmate. The fact He did not find one amongst the animals is why God created Eve. We will talk more about this as we get to that part of scripture. First, we want to talk about God. Here in verse 26, we find the first evidence that God is made up of more than one part. God specifically says here, "let US make man in OUR image after OUR likeness." As we get further into this study we will find multiple occasions on which to talk about the fact God is a Triune Being. However, we want to take time to talk about it here, even though God The Father, God The Son, and God The Holy Ghost are not specified here.

In verse 26 we find that God, in essence, talks to Himself. It may seem to some people to be in poor taste to put it this way, but think about why it might be considered in poor taste! We live in a society that believes when someone talks to themselves they must be a little crazy. Why? I believe this is mostly because humans either don't understand how they were created, or they do not want to understand. Paul warns us in the New Testament that we will always be tempted to live in the flesh and ignore the spirit. Of course, he was very right; and many times the more someone is in tune with their entire self, the more strange they seem to those who are not. That does not mean the person is wrong or crazy! Because God is a Triune Being, it is very logical and appropriate for God to talk to Himself; and so, maybe we should take another look at how we feel about this issue before we open our own mouths to talk about someone else!

I believe we find our most vivid example of the fact God exists as one God, yet in three parts, during the time in which Christ walks this earth. Jesus refers to Himself as The Son of God, continually yielding to The Father and His will. Jesus also refers to The Holy Ghost on different occasions; and before Jesus goes, He informs us that since He is going, He will pray to The Father that He will send The Holy Ghost to us. So the Gospels lay out a very clear picture of the fact God The Father, God The Son, and God The Holy Ghost exist; yet the Bible makes it very clear God is one God. (Deut. 6:4-7) I understand this fact is very hard for many to grasp, and it may make you feel better that even the disciples who walked with Jesus, as He was here on this earth, found it very hard as well. If you read the story in John 14, you find that the disciples wanted to see The Father; and Jesus tries to explain to them, if they have seen Him then they have seen The Father!

However, it is comforting to know that Jesus went on to explain: if you could not grasp the fact God was one and yet three distinct parts, it was enough to just put your faith in Jesus and you would still be saved! That being true, we still want to take the time to try and understand these things; because it is a point of great understanding, if we can grasp the nature of God, then we can be helped in understanding our own nature. We should also consider that it is the same in reverse. If we can gain understanding into how we are made, then we gain understanding into God Himself, as well! We understand this is a fact, because the verses here in Genesis tell us we were made in God's image. This is a reference to the fact we too are a triune being. One of the most obvious ways to understand how we are a triune being is to, once again, think about the tendency we all have to ask ourselves questions. It is, many times, through this process we make decisions. Now, when you ask yourself a question, who are you talking to? We must understand there's more to us than just the flesh. Yes, God formed us out of the dust of the ground, but He also breathed the breath of life into us. We are not simply part of those "ecosystems" of the planet we talked about in the last issue. We were given charge over the planet to care for it, but we were made in a very separated way from the animals and plants. Also, keep in mind plants and animals were always intended to have a life and death cycle, but man was made a "living soul," a being who was given the Tree of Life and intended to live forever!

Paul speaks to us throughout the New Testament about the fact we can not live strictly in the flesh. At the same time, there are many people who believe the flesh is not actually us. They say the flesh is only a shell in which we live. This is an entirely wrong way to look at our being. We are made up of three parts, and we need all three of those parts. The fact that the corruption of the seed of sin lies within the flesh, and the flesh part of us is the part that is going to face death, does not change the fact it is as much a part of us and as an important part of us as the spirit and the mind. We must understand, it is the fact the flesh will die someday that poses the basic problem we need to be saved from. Without a body, the other two parts of us have no place to go but into what Jesus described as "outer darkness." (Matt. 22:1-14, 25:14-45) It is through the physical death and resurrection of Christ we receive what we need to overcome this problem. However, Jesus did not do it just for the sake of solving that problem; He did it so those who wanted to make the decision to follow God would have a way to live on in a complete form! Further, Jesus said He also was leaving this earth so He could prepare a place for all those who want to serve God, and the purpose for that place would be so that where He is we could be also. (John 14:1-3) All of these facts become clearer and clearer the deeper we go into the Word of God. Understand, we will not comprehend some of these things in full until the day we go to be with Christ. (I Cor. 13:12) However, that does not mean we should not continue to study and learn as much as we can in the here and now! God said His people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. (Hosea 4:6) Thankfully, the Bible also tells us if anyone lacks wisdom he may simply ask of God who gives liberally to all men. (James 1:5) It also says if we ask it shall be given to us, if we seek we will find, and if we knock it shall be opened unto us! (Matt. 7:7-12) We can have the knowledge of God in our lives!

Because we want to continue to grow and learn, we will continue to talk about the subject of God being a Triune Being and us being made in His likeness, in our next issue. Until then, I pray we will learn each day how we may serve God better, not just in the flesh but as a whole! See you next time.

Living Springs' Questions & Answers

My questions is: "If man had not fallen - Do you think (what is your thought) that humans could have died due to accidents?"

The answer to a question like this seems at first to be very complex. People like to start asking all kinds of other questions such as, "if man was supposed to live forever, how could he possibly die?" On the basis of thinking like this, some people would say it wasn't possible for man to die, that his body was simply indestructible at the time; and it was not until after they took of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil that their bodies became capable of being hurt. The truth of the matter is, the question is not that complicated. All we have to do is look into the Word of God and find what the truth of human existence is. The question really being asked here is, "before the fall, was man able to be killed?" The answer to this question is "YES"!

First, let's lay down some facts for everybody. The first fact is, yes man was intended to live forever! The second fact is, man's body was very much the same before the fall as it is now, after the fall. Our body is referred to as a corruptible body, in the New Testament. However, this was true of our body even before the fall, and that is why we were able to fall. Our bodies were able to succumb to temptation and be corrupted by sin, and that is exactly what Adam and Eve did. Many believe our bodies were given the power to live forever all on their own. They believe we lost that power when we disobeyed God. However, the truth of the matter is that our bodies were able to live forever before the fall, not because of the way they were made but because we had access to the Tree of Life. So, the reason why our bodies will not live forever now, after the fall, is because we do not have access to the Tree of Life. This is the judgment God laid down upon us for sin. God said that in the day they took of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil they would surely die; and in saying this, He made it very clear what the wages of sin would be. So, whether before the fall or after the fall, man's bodies were capable of dying!

Genesis makes the facts very clear, it tells us that the Tree of Life was placed in the Garden of Eden; but later, after the fall, God specifically separates man from the Tree of Life, because he did not want man to reach forth, take of the tree and live forever in his corrupted state. So, yes, from creation man was intended to have eternal life, but the Tree of Life is what provided that eternal life for our physical form. Now, the fact is that the physical body is where the seed of sin lies. When man took of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, sin entered his body; therefore, it is not the spirit or the mind that dies, it is the physical body. This physical death was not something that came immediately but something that, because man was separated from the Tree of Life, would come eventually. So, as we say, "death comes to us all."

Another clue all of this is true is the fact that even now, after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, we will still face death in this physical body. The only exception to this rule is if we happen to still be alive and remain at the time in which Christ returns. If that is the case, the Bible tells us we will be changed in a moment! So, even now that sin has been washed away by the blood of Christ, we still need a new form. This body which is part of us now will have to be replaced! So, you see, what Jesus bought for us, on the cross, was not a way for this physical body to remain alive throughout all eternity. What He bought for us was a new body: one that would not be capable of being corrupted. This new body is what Jesus appeared in before his disciples and many others, after His resurrection. We are told Jesus eats in this new body, but this new body can also enter a room where all the doors and windows are shut. Paul later described for us in the epistles, the body Jesus had, which he bought for us to have after the resurrection, is a body that is incorruptible. Unlike our current form, our new form will simply not be capable of being corrupted.

Another clue that our bodies were always able to be killed is the fact that Jesus was the second Adam. His physical form was literally created by God. He was not of the same lineage as the rest of us, but was truly created by God from scratch! Yet even though this is true, Jesus was able to be killed! These physical forms have physical truths to them. One such truth is the fact that we must inhale oxygen. These facts are true as much before the fall as after! As Jesus gave his life on the cross, He died just as every man hung on a cross died - by suffocation! It is the fact Jesus lived His life without sin that gave God The Father the right to raise Jesus from the dead. This is why we must put our faith in the fact Jesus died for our sins, and He can share that resurrection power with us. I believe His new body was not capable of being killed by the things of this physical world. It seems this new body simply does not run on the same physical principles that rule this world. After Jesus' resurrection, there would have been no capability for the Pharisees and Sadducees to try to put Jesus back on the cross! His new body would simply not have been capable of being killed in this way.

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Ossuary This, Ossuary That!

By Philip E. Busby

Several months ago I read about an ossuary that was found in a private collection. The word ossuary probably did not mean a whole lot to many people just a few weeks ago, but now it is the talk of the world! Over the Easter season this issue got plenty of attention, and I guess I should not have been surprised. However, I was and am surprised that this “find” has stirred so many people!

Those who have not been reading the paper may not be aware of the hype; and many may be asking, what on earth is an ossuary anyway? An ossuary is a simple box (most are made of stone) that was used to place the bones of dead people in. Many are familiar with the story of Jesus being laid in a tomb; and as believers in Christ know, Jesus did not have a long-term need for a tomb. However, it is a different story for the common man. Having a place for laying a dead body is a long-term problem, but putting it in a tomb was not, for most, a long-term solution. The Bible tells us families, such as Abraham’s, bought and used places to bury their dead. Many times these were caves, or cave like places carved into the rock. (Gen. 49:29-31) However, you must understand that tombs were not only expensive, but they were very space consuming. Even today we face a lack of room for the graves of the deceased. Can you imagine if we tried to build a tomb for everyone? So they needed a system - if you will - to deal with this problem.

There is a system found to be used in the tombs of kings. As archaeologists excavated tombs in and around Jerusalem, they found tombs they believed were the burying places for at least some of the kings of Israel. These tomb chambers were found to consist of not just the burial shelf where the body was to be laid, but they also found box like structures carved into the rock. Many of these were under the burial shelves themselves. These “box” structures, which are called repositories, were, many times, filled with bones. From this it is believed a system existed that went something like this. A body was laid in a tomb on the burial shelf. After a period of time - likely a year or more - it decayed to the point that there was nothing left but the bones. Sometime after this happened - maybe when the next family member died - these bones were put into the repository. So, many times kings would be laid on a shelf in the tomb, and after their body was nothing but bones, the bones would be placed with the bones of his fathers in one of these repositories. This would mean that literally kings were “gathered” unto their fathers! (II Kings 22:18-20)

However, for the common man the system may have been a little different. We know that an ossuary is not big enough for a whole body. So, the bones must have been placed in them sometime after the body of the deceased had decayed. It is reasonable to believe that, many times, bodies were placed in tombs after death; and because these tombs needed to be used by others, who may or may not be family members, they did not build repositories in most. This meant the bones of the last occupant had to be dealt with. So, the bones would be removed and stored in a box. We call these boxes ossuaries!

The discovery of the ossuary everyone is talking about these days brings out an interesting point in the existence of denominations, churches, and religious philosophy of all sorts. On this ossuary was the inscription “James, the son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.” The inscription was written in Aramaic, and many things about the box tells us it is most likely from sometime in the first century after Christ. If this inscription is a reference to Jesus Christ - and many believe it is - it would be the oldest reference to Jesus that has ever been found, and one of the greatest evidences (outside of the Bible, of course) of Jesus’ existence.

However, that is not what many people are interested in! Everyone seems to be more interested and worried about what this new “discovery” will mean to their doctrine. Everyone is scared of the fact it might dispute something they believe. They are putting up their guard against how this “find” might be interpreted. The Catholics are the most interesting, in the idea that they are already calling for the possible interpretation that the word “brother” on the ossuary may mean only something like cousin and not really brother, as in the same mother and father. They want this because they are afraid the idea that Jesus had a brother thwarts their doctrine, which states Mary was a perpetual virgin. If Jesus had a brother, then that could not be true! Of course, the Bible tells us Jesus had siblings. (Matt. 13:54-57) So, this doctrine is silly in light of what the Bible directly states. Mary did not have to remain a virgin to be a virgin when Jesus was born. Mary and Joseph were not the physical parents of Jesus! Mary’s womb was simply used as an incubator for Jesus’ Physical form.

The fact Mary and Joseph went on with normal lives after the birth of Christ is evident in the Scripture. When Jesus was left behind at Jerusalem, they found Him in the temple, about His “Fathers business.” (Luke 2:41-52) It is evident by Mary and Joseph’s reaction they did not understand what Jesus meant when He said this. They simply were your typical

worried parents looking for what they saw as a lost son who was too young to be out by himself! For their sake and the sake of the family, the Scripture tells us Jesus went home and submitted Himself to them. The Bible makes it clear that Mary and Joseph intended to get married even before the news of Jesus' birth. It states that Mary was espoused to Joseph. This is to say they were a normal couple who most likely had every intent of starting a family. The fact God chose them to be the caretakers of His Son did not change that. I believe this fact was one of the factors as to why Mary and Joseph were chosen. Mary and Joseph were given a big blessing, along with a gigantic responsibility! Of course, they fit all the lineage criteria for being the parents of The Messiah, but beyond all the specialness of the fact they were chosen to raise the Son of God, they were a God fearing couple who lived and raised a family!

It is no wonder why people are so easily led astray by every false doctrine that comes along. Many people just do not know their Bible! It is amazing to me how many people are comfortable sending their children off to anything that calls itself Sunday school. They do not care or think about what is being taught there, and this is a big mistake on the part of parents everywhere. Many churches use materials that are not even written by true believers. Many would be shocked to find out just how much "Christian" material there is out there that is published by companies who are nothing more than "for profit" organizations. In these materials there are not just a few things that can be brushed off as extrapolations, but many things that are downright fallacies. Here the seeds of many false doctrines are planted. However, this does not disturb nearly as many people as the fact that one, or many of those false doctrines are shown to be untrue by the newest "discovery."

Now, many will argue for a long time about what the ossuary's inscription means. Many will argue, not because they seek the truth, but because they seek to protect and defend their doctrine(s). This fact will inevitably affect the interpretation of the find, and what is said about the inscription will not necessarily be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. However, that will not affect the truth of the Word of God! If we really believe the Bible is the infallible Word of God, then we should be looking at this find with excitement, for what it might tell us! The Bible is truth, so the truth of this ossuary will line up with what the Bible says, but it will not necessarily line up with what you believe! If what is said about the ossuary, or any new "discovery," doesn't line up with what we think the Bible says, then we should not get all crazy about it. Our first reaction should not be to try and reinterpret the find to fit our own doctrine. We should take the time to reexamine what the Bible actually says. You may find that what you have held to, in your personal set of beliefs, is not actually in the Word of God! You may be holding onto something because a man said it, and not because the Bible did!

Centuries ago a man by the name of Copernicus said the earth was not the center of the universe. He said it was not even the center of our solar system! That fact upset the church so badly, they killed him for saying it. Today we have photos to prove Copernicus was right, and amazing as it may have seemed to those in the church many years ago, it's OK! Our earth is not the center of the universe. Our solar system isn't even the center! As a matter of fact, we don't really know where the center is and we are finding that our planet is a very small place in this universe. However, God still loves us. He still cares, and He is still sending His Son back to this little planet to gather all those who believe in Him, unto Himself! So, it's alright to sleep well at night without worrying about the newest "discovery." Though it may disrupt our beliefs at times, it will never destroy or even shake the Word of God! The first chapter in the book of John tells us that Jesus is the Word; and if Jesus survived death itself, I don't think He's worried by a little box of bones, and neither should you be! ✂

Q & A continued from pg. 4

Now we have to deal directly with the question that was asked. Before the fall, would man be able to be killed in an accident? Obviously this would mean something like slipping and falling off a high place, ending up in a situation where one might drown in water, or any one of a number of accidents that might take a life today. The answer to the question is simply, yes. As we have talked about, man's body was capable of dying even before the fall. When God comes down after the fall and lays down the curses on Adam and Eve, there is no mention of the idea that He specifically makes our body capable of death. As we talked about before, it specifically points out that if man continued to have access to the Tree of Life he would have lived forever, even after the fall. So, I believe that before the fall, it was very possible someone could have fallen to their death, or something like that!

There is one more large point that should be made here as well. The Bible tells us this world is waxing old like a garment. (Ps. 102:25-27) This phenomena is directly related to the curse of the ground as well as the flood of Noah's day.

Since our bodies are dependant on the food that comes from the ground, this problem affects us. Not only are our bodies slowly growing old, but the earth as well. This is not the cause of the fact we will die, but it does have an impact on how long we live and how well we live. At the time of the curse, God told Adam the ground would not yield its strength, but Adam would have to toil in labor to eat from it. In other words, the ground would not automatically produce for man. It would be up to man to draw that production out of the earth. Now, since the earth is growing old, not only does man have to work to draw out the earth's "strength," but that "strength" is diminishing. We see very clearly in nature the fact that ground can be over worked. This is why man fertilizes the land. If he did not, there would not be enough nutrients to grow plants year after year. However, even fertilizer does not overcome the long-term effects. Ground will still become unusable if worked year after year with no rest. This is why God commanded the Israelites to let the ground rest every seven years. (Ex. 23:10-11, Lev.25:1-7) That idea practiced anywhere in the world would be a good idea, but even that practice is only a way in which to prolong the inevitable. This brings us to the fact that not only is the earth growing old on its own, but we are helping it along. The harder we push this planet to give up its resources, the faster it will go down! Whether you are someone who does not care about the environment, or are somewhere in between that and a radical earth worshiper, you would have to be blind not to see the damage man's decisions are doing! This whole subject is one we will have to pick up on at another time, because there is a Biblical environmental viewpoint. However, enough has been said to make the point I wanted to make here! Simply put, each human will succumb to old age, but each generation of humans will be affected more and more by the aging of the planet. Because this is a direct result of the fall of man, you must understand another simple point: man is not what he used to be!

Before the fall, it is hard to say what it would have taken for a human to die! We have talked about the fact he could die, but keep in mind, our perspective of human frailty is based on post-fall humans. Today, we base our thoughts on the idea that man only lives to be tens of years, and before the flood, man lived to be hundreds! Before the fall, it is possible the human form was so durable that a fall from a great height would not have done more than break a few bones; then, it is possible even those injuries would have healed themselves. A broken rib may not have been any more alarming to pre-fall man than a paper cut is to us today. It is possible something like a broken bone may have healed faster than it takes blood to clot today. Now, the fact is, we simply do not know for sure, but there is a pretty good chance that what it would have taken for us to die before the fall would just astonish us today!

Now, it would be irresponsible for me to answer this question and then leave everyone hanging on with what I am sure is the next question that arises after hearing the answer to this one! Mostly, I believe the next question goes something along the lines of, "what would have happened to somebody who died before the Fall?" The answer to this question is fairly simple as well. All you have to do is look at the facts and stories which are told to us in the Bible. The first thing you need to be aware of is that before the fall, man had direct contact with God. God and man literally walked together in the garden, in the cool of the evening. If sin had not entered our lives, we would have God walking beside us everyday! Not just in spirit but literally walking with us! It is sin that separates us from God. It is sin that causes God to place the judgment of death on our lives. God told us that making the choice to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge came with the predetermined sentence of death. In spite of this, man chose to take of it anyway. However, if man had not made that choice, there would be no judgment of death on our lives, and there would be no separation from God! Which brings us to our second point.

The second thing we need to look at is the fact God has the power to raise man from the dead. We see this happen on occasions in the Old Testament; and of course, it happens in the New Testament. Throughout the Bible, and especially when Christ came, we see these physical bodies being repaired of just about everything! The blind could see; the lame could walk; the deaf could hear; the dumb could talk; internal injuries were healed; (Matt. 9:18-35) sickness was driven out; and even death itself was not big enough to stop the healing power of God! These things were shown us for the sake of building our faith in God; to know that God has the power to heal. If we did not have the sentence of death over our physical form, God would have no reason not to simply raise us back up when we got hurt. After being healed, everything would go on like normal. This is what Jesus was talking about in Matthew 9:1-8. He told the man that his sins were forgiven. This disturbed the religious leaders of the day, and Jesus asked them what they thought was easier to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?" Jesus went on to point out that He said this, specifically, so they would know He had the power to forgive sin. What Jesus was talking about was the fact He had come to restore life to us. He came to free us from sin and the wages thereof! When Jesus healed people of sickness, He was touching that process humans go through because sin entered the world. Understand that all sickness is a result of the fact we are all dying.

Let's take a look at another story. In John 11:1-46 Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Yet Lazarus is not with us today! Why? Because he is dead. Why? Because even after being raised from the dead, Lazarus still did not have the sustaining power of the Tree of Life, and, once again, without it, these physical bodies will succumb to old age. Old age,

before the fall and while man had access to the Tree of Life, was something that would never have happened to these bodies. So, if Lazarus had been raised from the dead under the circumstances of having access to the Tree of Life, he would still be with us today, and so would everyone who has ever lived. Jesus paid the wages of sin and overcame death. In doing this, He provided the opportunity to have eternal life once again!

A large part of what Jesus came to do was to provide for us the ability to walk with God once again - to have the opportunity to live the kind of life Adam and Eve had before the fall. Of course, the big change would be that we would not be able to be corrupted again once we received our new form. This is why Jesus said He came to give us life and that we might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10) Our lives with Jesus, in that place He said He went to prepare for us, will actually be better than what we were given at creation!

So, to wrap up the question being dealt with here, we see that for God, these physical forms are easily repaired! If sin was not a factor, death would not reign over us! So, if somebody had lost their life through an accident, before the fall, God would have simply restored their physical body to working order; and, of course, having access to the Tree of Life would have kept man alive forever!

I suppose there is no end to the questions that can continue to rise, and if you would like to ask more than what is covered here, please feel free to ask them. But before we go, I would like to deal with one more of these questions. If God had raised us from the dead before the fall, would we have had a resurrected body such as Jesus'? The answer is no! We would have been raised from the dead just like Lazarus was raised from the dead. We would have continued to be in the body we are in. The simplicity of all this is that raising someone from the dead is really not that much different than healing a body of any ailment - such as the woman with the issue of blood. God created us in these bodies, and if not for sin there would be no reason for us not to continue in them. The reason why Jesus was resurrected in an incorruptible body was because Jesus came for that specific purpose and mission. Jesus gave His life for that purpose and for that reason. This is why He is the ultimate sacrifice. He was not just a man who one day succumb to death, He was The Son of God who took on the form of man for the specific purpose of accomplishing the ability to provide for us, incorruptible bodies. So, He gave His life for that purpose and received that reward!

As I talked about in the above questions, we will all still face death or transformation here on this planet, even though Christ has come and died for our sins. So, Christ did not come and shed His blood to earn us healing for a life eternal. If God wanted us to live in this state, He would never have taken us from the Tree of Life! If Jesus' work would not have been for the sake of freeing us from the ability to fall to temptation, it really would not have been much of a work at all. As I talked about above, God has the power to heal. He did not need to purchase that! He wanted to give us true life. (John 10:10)

When God came down to look upon men at the time of Noah, the Bible says it grieved God that He had even made man. Man had corrupted himself so badly, his life and existence was truly meaningless. In fact, if meaningless were the only factor, God might have let us live on; but we were more than empty, we were (and are) mean. If our choices only hurt us, I think the story would be different; but we do evil and vile things to each other - both intentional and unintentional. People always ask, why do bad things happen to good people? The answer is, it rains on the just and the unjust! Why does God allow it? Because He created us with a free will, but He will not tolerate it for long! That is why the wages of sin is death. That is why God separated us from the Tree of Life. That is why God shortened our life span at the time of the flood, and that is why He will put an end to all of this someday! There is pain and suffering in a world filled with sin! The only true question is, do you want what God planned for us in the beginning? A relationship with Him, a life filled with true meaning, or do you want to go your own way and see if you can save yourself from death? As we are talking about here in this segment, Jesus did not come to heal us, but to purchase our eternal salvation from sin and death. That's right! I said, "eternal salvation." As long as you are on this earth you have a choice, but after death you are on your way to one side or the other. One side is the life God intended for us in the first place, and the other side is outer darkness! Why is it that "good people" don't automatically go to heaven? Because God did not trap Adam and Eve in a world of no choices, and He is not going to do it to anyone else. If you are going to go to that place Jesus said He was going to prepare for all who follow Him, if you are going to live for eternity in a place where God's presence will always be right beside you, you are not going to get there by accident! It is going to have to be a choice you make!

***Questions submitted to the Institute, answered by
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