



Dead Men Can't Sin

Index

1. Death, its Biblical meaning
2. Death, and man's love of it
3. Adam would rather do, = than die
4. To die, is to live – a new life through death
5. How do we put Adam to death?
 - a. A new life
6. Dead men can't sin – A life free from sin
7. Dead to the law – alive unto Christ
8. A life without condemnation
9. The Christian, one who has been chosen in Christ
 - a. What about our failure?
 - b. Final

Preface

The issue of sin and its effect on man's relationship with God, is the age old question that man's mind and his religion attempt to answer. Holy Scripture is God's answer so we may know how a person can relate to God in truth and what effect it will have on our lives. God's eternal truth, received into the heart of a believer, is the pathway of freedom and the knowledge of God. A believer, desiring and pursuing God's truth, will bring the reality of Christ into his life.

1. Death, its Biblical meaning

“I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death” (Revelation 1:18).

Death and its Scriptural meaning will be examined in the following chapters, to give knowledge and understanding on this subject. God, who created all life, is the author of the meaning of life and death. Israel, whose language was Hebrew (Chaldee), was God’s agent to bring the knowledge of Himself to the pagan world. In Chaldee, the common Hebrew word for death is “mawet.” It is used 150 times in the Old Testament; its meaning is, “the end of natural life on the earth.”

Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary lists 7 Greek words for death. The primary Greek word used for death in the New Testament is “thanatos.” This word is used to denote; the separation of the spirit and soul (the spiritual part of man) from the body (the material part). It is also used to show the separation of man

from God; Adam was made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27); he died (was separated from God) on the day he disobeyed God and his body separated from the soul and spirit over 900 years later (Genesis 5:5).

Scripture shows that all men are born into this life in Adam's state, after he partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That state is living, while dead. This means it is a condition of being separated from God (Romans 5:12, 14, 17, 21).

Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary defines the Greek word for dead, "Nekros" and is used as follows;

- a. The death of the body (James 2:26).
- b. The actual condition of the unsaved (Matt 8:22; John 5:25; Eph 2:1, 5; 5:14; Phil 3:11; Col 2:13; cf. Luke 15:24).
- c. The ideal spiritual condition of believers in regard to sin (Rom 6:11).
- d. A church in declension or inasmuch as in that state it is inactive and barren (Rev 3:1).
- e. Sin, which apart from law cannot produce a sense of guilt (Rom 7:8).
- f. The body of a believer in contrast to his spirit (Rom 8:10).
- g. The works of the Law, inasmuch as however good in themselves (Rom 7:13), cannot produce life (Heb 6:1;9:14).
- h. The faith that does not produce works (James 2:17, 20).

Scripture makes it clear that all men are born into a state of sin (Psalms 14:2-3; 51:5; Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 17:9).

All men are in a state of separation from God, they are the living dead (John 3:5; 5:24-25), unless they have been given spiritual life (John 5:21; 6:27).

Never in the Hebrew or Greek language do the words dead, death-stroke, or die mean nonexistence or soul sleep. Separation is always the root meaning of these words.

Spiritual life, the opposite of death, is conscious existence in communion or fellowship with God (1 Corinthians 1:9).

Death in Scripture is always viewed as the result of penal consequences of sin. God's answer for man, in his separated state from God, was to send His Son into the world as a sacrifice for the sins of all men (Isaiah 53:6, 10, 12; Romans 3:23-24; 1 John 2:2).

2. Death, and man's love of it

“I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge and discretion — For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord; but he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate me love death” (Proverbs 8:12, 35-36).

“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

The person without the personal knowledge of God is a person without faith. All men are born into this world in this condition, a natural man without faith in his Creator (1 Corinthians 2:14). The natural man is carnally minded and motivated by the natural things in this world. Scripture calls this condition living according to or after the flesh (Ephesians 2:1-3).

We are further taught that the carnal mind in man is at enmity with God and cannot please Him (Romans 8:7; 8:8). A story may help us understand what this means. When a person works for an employer he

receives wages for his efforts, the better the employee, the higher his wages. The natural man following and working for his Adamic nature also receives wages. As he carries out the directions of his nature, sin being its function (The meaning of sin is, lacking God's perfect righteousness), estrangement from God is the result. The wages received from the Adamic or carnal mind are death, eternal death (Romans 6:23; 8:6).

The employee, in following the dictates of his carnal mind, becomes a slave to it with no human chance of being set free (Romans 6:16). Scripture calls it **the law of sin and death** (if you sin, you die) (Romans 6:23; 8:2). It seems right to man to follow his carnal or fleshly mind. However, sin and death are the result. *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death”* (Proverbs 14:2). How hard is it to be employed by this employer? It's easy, all men are employed by their Adamic nature and the carnal mind directs their steps.

The carnally minded man only knows what he sees in this physical world. He does not look to his Creator

for truth or the pathway of life. The fact that this planet is controlled by the law of sin and death and is nothing more than one gigantic graveyard, does not awaken him to the sure end of all living things, including himself.

Scripture instructs us that man's only future, is judgment if he continues to follow what is natural to him (Revelation 20:11-15). The master that mankind serves in his fleshly mind brings only eternal retribution with no hope of a reprieve (Hebrews 9:28). However, God has provided a reprieve for man in this endless cycle of sin and death; this will be seen in the following chapters.

3. Adam would rather do, — than die

“Then they said to Him, what shall we do, that we may work the works of God” (John 6:28).

The natural man (man's Adamic nature) thinks that he can gain favor with God by doing something for God. Cain, the first born of Adam, typifies the natural man's view of life and his attempt to gain God's favor. He was the first man to bring his labors (works) to God to receive His favor; his labors were rejected by God (Genesis

4:1-7). Cain's brother Abel, brought a blood sacrifice to God; his blood sacrifice was received of God (Genesis 4:4). Abel's sacrifice revealed his faith in the true sacrifice which was to come, God's perfect sacrifice, the Lamb of God, Messiah (John 1:29).

Many examples are found of Israelites attempting by their own works and ideas, to be accepted by God. Some of the more notable examples of these works follow. While Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the Word of God, Aaron made a golden calf through which Israel was to worship God (Exodus 32:1-6). Aaron and the people of Israel committed idolatry with their own ideas of worship. God threatened to destroy them for their actions (Exodus 32:10).

Saul, after winning the battle against the Amalekites, rejected and acted against God's instructions to him, by saving rather than killing the oxen and sheep. Saul said, he had a spiritual reason for rebelling against Jehovah, he saved the animals for a sacrifice (worship) = unto the Lord (1 Samuel 15:20-26).

Saul, in his zeal, to win God's favor, broke Israel's oath before the Lord with the Gibeonites, and killed them (Joshua 9:1-21). Later, in King David's rule, God brought a famine upon Israel for Saul's action (2 Samuel 21:1-9).

These works of men to please God were not accepted by Him, but rather brought His judgment.

Because the Israelites were a people who had no faith in what God told them (Deuteronomy 32:20), God gave Moses His law for them to keep. The Law of Moses was holy, just and good; if Israel kept it, it would bring them back to obedience to God's Word (Romans 7:12). God told them if they kept the law, His blessing would be on them (Deuteronomy 28:1-14). If they did not keep the law, the curses of God would be on them (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). Israel, confident in their own fleshly abilities, boasted they would keep the law (Exodus 24:3-8). Their failure to keep the law was complete (John 7:19). The Law of Moses was not of faith (Galatians 3:11-12), nor could man receive God's eternal blessing by attempting to keep it (Galatians

5:3-4). The Law of Moses brought only condemnation and death to those who attempted to keep it (2 Corinthians 3:7, 9). Israel is typical of man in his carnal nature, attempting to please God by his own works and abilities.

A rich young ruler in Israel came to Jesus to ask how to inherit eternal life (Mark 10:17). This young man said he had kept the law from his youth; upon hearing this, Scripture tells us, Jesus loved him. Then, Jesus told him how to inherit eternal life. He was to sell what he had, give it to the poor, give up his religion (the Law of Moses) and come and follow the One (Jesus) who could give him eternal life (Mark 10:21). Upon hearing these words the young man went away sad (Mark 10:22). This man wanted to please God and inherit eternal life on what he could do for God, on his own terms.

Today the Adamic nature in man is willing to do something for God. However, this nature in man, when faced with the cross, of Jesus will turn away. Why must this be so when a person wills to do God's will? This will be discussed in the next chapter.

4. To die, is to live – a new life through death

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in the world will keep it for eternal life (John 12:24-25).

Elisha, an Israelite and a farmer, was plowing his field when Elijah the prophet of God came by and threw his mantle on him. Elisha immediately left his oxen and ran after Elijah. Unlike the rich young ruler whom Jesus called to give his money to the poor and follow Him, Elisha took his oxen, slaughtered them and gave them to the people. *“He then arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant” (1 Kings 19:19-21).*

The Adamic nature in man directs his life and his pursuits to the things of this world. This nature is suited for this world and is responsive to the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). A person’s Adamic nature, has no part in the kingdom of Christ if he follows Jesus. Jesus has made clear a person’s

pathway to follow Him, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it”* (Matthew 16:24-25).

Following Jesus means a person must release all religion (religion is man’s ideas and religious systems not found in God’s Word) and hang on to nothing which may hinder God’s Spirit. These may include denominations, church, religious figures, ethnic culture, family members, money, worldly goods, personal goals or self (Luke 14:26-27). Jesus said, whoever does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple (Luke 14:33). We may think this is too harsh. However, if we put this in human terms, doesn’t the man who marries a wife expect her to be only for himself? Can they become one flesh any other way? Neither can a person become one with Christ unless he enters into being “His body, of His flesh and of His bones” (Ephesians 5:30), by being united with Him.

In a marriage between a husband and wife, death to the single life is a fact. A person, who is becoming united with Jesus; is putting to death his flesh or Adamic nature. Just as a wife is to reverence (respect) her husband (Ephesians 5:33), so the person who has fear (reverence) of Christ will find the road that leads to life (Proverbs 19:23; Matthew 7:13-14).

This road that leads to life is through death. Scripture shows us that when sin entered the world, death was the result for all men (Romans 5:12). From that time on man could only regain life through death, the death of another, even Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15; 3:21; Leviticus 17:11; John 10:15; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). A person's Adamic nature must be put to death, if he is to enter into the life God provided through the giving of his Son.

5 . How do we put Adam to death?

“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:11).

How do we reckon ourselves dead to sin? Scripture tells us that this is done by the renewing of our mind, through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:2; Titus 3:5). Faith in what God has told us in Scripture is the transforming agent and foundation of this renewing (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). We have no power in ourselves to put our Adamic nature to death nor to do the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing in a new life (John 15:5). However, we need to understand that a person, who follows Christ to become His, is a person who was crucified with Christ 2000 years ago at Calvary. The believer is in Christ and was crucified with Him (Romans 6:6). This is seen by all when a believer is baptized, and desires to be identified with Christ in His death. *“For we are become identified with [Him] in the likeness of His death...” (Romans 6:5, JND.).*

Scripture shows the believer that he not only died with Christ, but was buried with Him through baptism (Romans 6:4). Baptism signifies the death of our Adamic nature, so the believer can be raised up in a new life by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:4).

Our Adamic man cannot enter into the kingdom of Christ.

a. A New Life

Jesus said, the person who hears My word with the ears of the heart and believes in Him who sent Me, has everlasting life (John 5:24). He further stated that that person will not come into judgment but has passed from death into life (John 5:24). This life is spiritual and eternal. The believer then, is a dead man (in Adam) with a new resurrected life in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). His old life followed the course and purposes of this world; it was after the first man Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45; Ephesians 2:1-5).

The believer now has a new life because of the indwelling Holy Spirit living within him (Colossians 1:27; 1 John 3:24). Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11). God has put this same power into every believer, Who is activated, by the believer's faith.

The Holy Spirit has given the believer the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16) which allows him spiritual

understanding to see as God sees. It gives him discernment to know whether things are of the world, the flesh, the devil or of Christ. Ephesians 2:4-10, shows the believer what God has done for him in giving him a new life. In this new life, the believer has the power of God working in him; sin no longer has dominion over him (Romans 6:14).

6. Dead men can't sin = a life free from sin

“For the one who has died has been freed from sin”
(Romans 6:7).

If we went to any graveyard looking for a dead and buried corpse, still living in sin, we would spend a lifetime trying to find such a dead body without success. Why? The answer is obvious to all, **dead men cannot sin**. So it is with a Christian, as Scripture reveals to us; *“for you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God”* (Colossians 3:3). **The Christian is a dead man with a new life in Christ**; he is able to live unto God for the first time in his existence.

Indwelling sin is fully integrated into our Adamic nature, it cannot live unto God (Romans 7:20). The Christian, putting to death his Adamic nature (the flesh), allows his new life in Christ to have power and dominion over his life. If our Adamic nature is dead, we are free to live unto God in the leading and power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:6-7; 2 Corinthians 4:10; Colossians 3:9-10).

We are instructed in 1 John 3:6 that the believer who abides in God does not sin. How can this be, that a believer who is sinful by nature and indwelt by sin, does not sin? It has already been stated that one cannot abide in Christ and live after his Adamic nature. Only in his new life can he abide in Christ. The answer to this question is; the believer's new life in Christ cannot sin. We are told in Romans 14:23 that "*whatever is not of faith is sin*". We can rightly conclude that the believer who walks in faith to the truth (Christ) does not sin (Psalms 32:1-2). This does not mean his actions are always right from a human viewpoint. It is understood from God's viewpoint, which sees the man (through the shed blood of Christ) without sin, because he belongs to God.

We are also informed of this truth, "We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has

been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him” (1 John 5:18). We may say then, a person’s life went into the grave and was buried with Christ when he believed. Then, by God’s power, he arose with Christ, a complete new man in Him (Colossians 2:10, 12; 3:10). He will never die (John 11:26). Now the believer sits with Christ in the heavens (Ephesians 2:6).

God is the author of these truths. The believer enters into the reality of these truths by his faith.

7. Dead to the law – alive unto Christ

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Romans 10:4).

Many people think that God wants them to try to keep the Law of Moses or some parts of it. They believe the Law of Moses has 10 commandments, and they think they should do the best they can in trying to obey or follow them. Believing that if they do this, they will find some acceptance with God.

Scripture gives us a completely different understanding and spiritual direction. It shows us there are not only 10 commandments, but the Law of Moses consists of 613 God given commandments. The person who wants to keep even 1 commandment for the purpose of securing salvation, sanctification, eternal life or as a good rule of life to live by is obligated to keep all of them (James 2:10). God told Israel, through Moses, that there would be a curse on them if they did not keep every one of the commandments (Deuteronomy 27:26; Galatians 3:10). Failure to keep all points of the law brought condemnation and death (Romans 3:19-20; 2 Corinthians 3:7, 9). Many people, in error, have thought that doing the best they can in keeping the commandments will be acceptable to God. Every law is made with a penalty for those who violate it. The effort and sincerity a person puts forth to keep the law has no bearing on its penalty for failure to keep it.

In Romans 7:1-4 a truth is taught of 2 husbands and a wife. The first husband is the Law of Moses, the second is Christ. The wife is a believer, who has been married to both of these husbands. The first husband (the law) brought the wife (the believer) under **the law of sin and death**

(Romans 8:2). This law is simple, if you sin, you die. All 613 commandments of this law are to be kept or you pay the penalty, which is death. When the believer married the second husband (Christ), He freed the believer from the law of sin and death. He brought the believer into a new law, **the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus** (Romans 8:2). This law of the Spirit of life, is not temporary life, but **eternal life**; “*Christ in you*” (Colossians 1:27). The law of the Spirit of life delivered the believer from the law of sin and death. The believer’s (the wife) life ended with the first husband (the law), — he died, when she married the second husband, (Christ). “*For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God*” (Colossians 3:3).

Scripture teaches that the believer was dead, but has been raised from the dead (John 5:21, 24; Romans 6:13; Ephesians 2:1). The resurrection life, with which the believer has been raised, is the power of God working through the believer’s faith. The believer’s new resurrected life is a life lived by God’s power, unto God (Romans 6:11).

8. A life without condemnation

“[There is] then now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1 JND).

A believer who lives without condemnation is a believer who lives without fear of God’s eternal judgment. This promise to all believers, of a life without condemnation or judgment, is not based on the believer’s actions or his lack of transgressions; it is based on God’s Word (John 3:36; 5:24). The believer, with a new life in Christ, may stumble and fall many times, but God will raise him up to; “...*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:12-13). It is the power of God which will make the believer stand.

The kingdom of Christ is not fashioned after this world, nor is it of this world (John 18:36). The believer is a dead man with a new life; no longer subject to the spirit of the world directing his path. His new life is not of the world, he has the Spirit of God to show him the things God has given him (1 Corinthians 2:13). His old nature was a friend of the world and an enemy of God. Scripture

shows us that the whole world is at enmity with God and is His enemy; a person in friendship with the world is at enmity with God (James 4:4). The believer, living in this world, has been saved out of it and made to be a partaker of the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13). Friendship with God is the place into which the believer has been called (1 Corinthians 1:9), and now occupies in this world (John 15:14). The kingdom of Christ is not fashioned after this world, nor of this world (John 18:36).

The world is Satan's sphere in this age, he is its ruler (1 John 5:19). The believer is in the world but not of the world, his portion is in the heavens and one day he will sit in judgment over the world (1 Corinthians 6:2).

The believer, will not be judged with the world (1 Corinthians 11:32); because his name has been written in the Lamb's Book of Life, from the foundation of the world (Revelation 17:8; 21:27). He will not be judged at the end of the ages, when the whole world will stand at the White Throne judgment to be condemned, forever and ever (Revelation 20:11-15).

The believer being born of God is made a son of God (John 1:12-13; Galatians 4:6-7). The judgment and wrath of God is not the portion of a son of God. *“For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him”* (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10)

9. The Christian, one who has been chosen in Christ

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ, just as he chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...”
(Ephesians 1:3-4).

The Christian, unlike other men on the earth, has been elected of God (1 Peter 1:2). This election, has become a reality for the Christian through his new birth, by being born of God's Seed, Christ (Genesis 22:18; Galatians 4:6-7). This work of God in the believer is received by faith.

Scripture shows us, it is a gift of God, and is unmerited by anything we do or could do. *“For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God not of works lest any should boast”* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The believer, by a work of God, has been taken out of the world, spiritually (John 17:14-16), and baptized into the body of Christ. In the believer's separation from the kingdom of this world, he has been brought into another kingdom. God has separated the believer from this world, and united him with Christ. This separation has been done through baptism of the believer into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13). Through this baptism by God's Spirit, the believer is now in the Spirit and can now live by the Spirit (Romans 8:14).

The Christian, through union with Christ, now sits in the heavens with Christ. Because he is positionally seated with Him, he is seen by God as already delivered from this present evil world (Ephesians 2:6). To think of the evil done in our own life (known and unknown), and to see the

grace of God that lifts up such a person to sit with Christ in the heavens, is grace unknown in this world. Receiving a position of son-ship from God has brought the believer from being a son of Adam, into a heavenly inheritance as a son of God. The believer has been predestined to son-ship through God's infinite wisdom and made secure by the work of Christ (Ephesians 1:5). Being born into this world as a son of Adam with all his works, and then being born again as a son of God, is a work of His grace and power alone. God has redeemed us out of the kingdom of darkness. This He did by the power of Christ, bringing us into the light of His kingdom (Colossians 1:12-15).

Before a person put faith in Jesus Christ, his mind was only on the things of this world. His mind was natural or carnal; he had only the mind of his Adamic nature (Romans 8:3, 7; 1 Corinthians 2:14). This mind is not set on things of God, but on the natural things of this world; the carnal mind brings only death (Romans 8:6). The believer now has been given the mind of Christ, and this new mind directs the believer into the things of the Spirit of God (Romans 8:5).

a. **What about our failure?**

When we see these great promises of God, and then look at our failure and times of falling down, we wonder how this can include me. If it were up to the believer's own abilities to stand, he falls short (Romans 3:23). However, "*Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*" (Philippians 1:6). In other words it is God's power, that will keep the believer and establish him in Christ through his faith (Romans 16:25).

The believer's eternal future is secured not by himself or his efforts, but by the Holy Spirit who has sealed him (Ephesians 1:13). He is being kept by God's power and His sealing for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30). This redemption is an eternal redemption, which has been reserved for you, a place in the heavens (1 Peter 1:4).

The hope of the believer is for Jesus to come, and take His bride (the Church) to Himself (Titus 2:13). The world will go on to its final end. However, the believer

has the precious promises of an eternal inheritance to be with God forever and forever. *“What shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”* (Romans 8:31).

b. Final

Many do not understand these promises or see themselves in the place of being a part of these promises. If you have put your eternal hope in the blood of Jesus as your sin bearer, and your redeemer, these promises are yours. If there is doubt, what is needed for the believer is sensitivity and receptiveness

to the Holy Spirit and for that person to heed in faith every Word of God.

Primarily, a believer, who lacks sensitivity to God's Spirit needs to pray to the Lord of the harvest for that compassion, and for that sensitivity to increase in his heart so that he will follow Jesus according to every Word of God (Matthew 4:4).

Second, the believer should beseech the Lord to give him a burning desire for His word, the Scriptures. These two things pursued in faith (putting our heart in motion to follow the truth in Christ) will bring the believer into the reality of the revelation and knowledge of the Lord Jesus and His kingdom.

D. Neely

12-7-07

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power”
(Ephesians 1:17-19).

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