

DEATH PRIOR TO ADAM

God had declared, “But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” (Genesis 3:3). When Adam sinned, death was introduced to humanity just as God had said. If we take Genesis literally, this means human death did not exist prior to Adam’s disobedience.

IMPLICATIONS FOR WORLDVIEWS

A consistent biblical worldview does not place human death before Adam’s fall. Any position claiming humans died before Adam stands at odds with the biblical text. This naturally excludes a standard evolutionary framework, which depends on countless generations of mortality prior to humanity’s appearance.

From the late 19th century until around 1930, many scientists pictured a static or eternal universe with no definitive beginning. In the 1930s, evidence for an expanding universe led to the “Big Bang” concept. Subsequent decades brought forward ideas like steady state or oscillating models, and now some favor inflationary or multiverse theories. Scientific consensus continually morphs as new data emerges, showcasing both admirable investigation and inherent uncertainty.

One can rely on scientific theories, which often evolve every generation or so. Alternatively, the Bible has remained fixed in its assertions and has proven reliable in its spiritual claims. Though scientific exploration offers valuable insights, it cannot guarantee permanence of interpretation. Scripture, however, presents a coherent narrative about origins, humanity, and the entrance of death.

DEATH FROM ADAM TO MOSES

Romans 5:14 notes that “death reigned from Adam to Moses.” During this era, no formal code was in place to define sin with specific penalties, except for Genesis 3:3, which only Adam and Eve directly violated. Nevertheless, all people died even though they did not commit the identical transgression. This demonstrates that physical mortality was inherited rather than individually “earned” by the same breach of divine command.

A CURSED CONDITION RATHER THAN A BROKEN COMMAND

From Genesis 5 onward, genealogical records underscore the repeated phrase “and he died,” revealing that humanity was ensnared by the effects of a fallen creation. Death extended to everyone, not only those who mimicked Adam’s exact sin. Its universal presence signified the curse’s hold on humankind.

HINTS OF A WAY OUT

Genesis 3:15 provided a seed of hope, predicting one who would crush the serpent’s head. Abraham exemplified trust in God’s promises, for he “believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). According to Acts 17:30, God overlooked certain eras of limited revelation, implying that, even without the Mosaic Law there was some form of pleasing God (as perhaps implied by Hebrews 11:4 and the “WITNESS OF THE STARS” view of the constellations.

DEATH UNDER THE LAW

Once the Law was given at Sinai, death was no longer a general outcome of the curse alone. It also served as a penalty for explicit transgressions. The realm was the same—still under the curse—but God’s regulations provided an identifiable standard of right and wrong.

THE OFFER OF LIFE THROUGH OBEDIENCE

Leviticus 18:5 states, “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them.” Adherence to the Law did not remove the reality of physical death, yet it pointed toward a future resurrection and a restored relationship with God. Although death maintained its grip on humanity, there was now a path of covenant faithfulness and sacrifice that foreshadowed a more lasting solution. This arrangement proved costly and difficult but revealed God’s ongoing plan of redemption.

DEATH IN THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE

Romans 5:14–15 explains how Adam was “the figure of him that was to come.” As death came upon all through one man’s offense, grace abounded to many through the righteousness and atoning sacrifice of Christ. Humanity’s plight of death met its counterpoint in the gift of salvation.

A NEW DESTINATION AFTER DEATH

In this age, believers possess a clear promise: to be “absent from the body” is to be “present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). Past generations, such as those under the Law, held hope for resurrection and rest, but did not have a promise of immediate presence with the Lord upon death. This unique assurance reflects the fullness of grace now experienced by those who trust Christ.

DEATH IN THE MILLENNIUM

The conclusion of the present dispensation of grace initiates a new era marked by Messiah’s righteous reign on earth. Although Christ rules personally, death still exists for those who rebel.

IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCE FOR REBELLION

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). In the millennial kingdom, the link between sin and punishment becomes direct and swift. Rejection of Messiah’s authority may quickly result in physical death, reinforcing God’s holiness and the seriousness of transgression.

DEATH SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY**FINAL ABOLITION OF DEATH**

Isaiah 25:8 promised that God “will swallow up death in victory,” a prophecy echoed in 1 Corinthians 15:54–57, where Paul proclaims, “Death is swallowed up in victory.” When the corruptible puts on incorruption, the ultimate reversal of Adam’s curse takes place. Death’s sting is permanently removed, and life triumphs forever through Christ’s redemptive work.