

Imagining The Garden Of Eden (Part 3)

Dirt and Breath

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Do you realize that despite our accumulation of advanced knowledge (and do we ever accumulate knowledge in these times, now it doubles every year or so, it is just incredible), but even though we have all this knowledge—it just seems to be coming out of our ears, particularly scientific knowledge, and technical knowledge—mankind still cannot agree on the definition of life. Six thousand years of knowledge, and we cannot agree about what life is, we cannot define it.

I went onto Wikipedia to see what they had to say. It seems to be a reasonable compendium of thought, and summary. This is what they say:

It is still a challenge for scientists and philosophers to define life in unequivocal terms. Defining life is difficult in part, because life is a process, not a pure substance. Any definition must be sufficiently broad to encompass all life with which we are familiar, and it should be sufficiently general that with it scientists would not miss life that may be fundamentally different from earthly life.

Pardon me, but your atheism is showing!

Notice who is entrusted with defining life. They tap scientists and philosophers, without a theologian in sight! This is an entirely secular way of looking at things. And in the last sentence, which you probably noted, they would be horrified to "miss life that may be fundamentally different from earthly life." So if they shoot a rocket up to some planet or star system, and they find life that is not carbon based and organic like ours, but is some other kind of life, who knows how it would be based. They would expect to find some kind of life out there, and it may not look like us at all, or any kind of earthly creature.

Obviously, what they say there, signals their belief that life evolved. And that perhaps it evolved differently on some other planet or moon among the star systems out there.

Obviously they do not accept the biblical fact that Earth is unique as the only repository of physical life in the universe. Of course, they do not think of the Bible at all. Scripture means nothing to them. To them it is a bunch of myths written by many human authors

who just happen to get a few things right.

For biologists the current working definition of life is descriptive, not absolute. They say that life is a trait of organisms that display all, or most, of various phenomena. And these phenomena are as follows: They have bodies that show organization, which could be as small as one cell; they metabolize food of some sort in order to acquire energy; they regulate themselves to maintain a constant state called homeostasis (sweating, where a body regulates its temperature, is an example for us); they respond to stimulation; they grow and get larger, or mature; they adapt to their environment; and they reproduce.

But, listen to this! One man has gone so far as to define life as, "a self-sustained chemical system capable of undergoing Darwinian evolution." So much for their objectivity.

As Christians, how would we define life? It is actually not an easy thing to pin down in Scripture. For one thing, you are dealing with two different languages in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament. It is pretty much the same ideas that go through them, but there is no scripture or verse that says, "Life is...." We know that there is a scripture that says, "Eternal life is...to know God and Jesus Christ His Son whom He sent," but that is different from what we are talking about here. We are talking about physical life—life as we know it from our senses.

The Bible does not give a biological definition of life. The Bible is not a science book. That is not its purpose. But, it gives us some clues about what God considers to be life, and so we can in many respects accept the biological description of life. All those things are fairly straightforward. Living things do all those things.

But, we do not accept the biologist's assumptions that life began somehow in the distant past and evolved into what it is today. We do not accept their evolutionary assumptions. While they assume evolution, we know—and I want to emphasize KNOW—that all life originated with God. He is the source of all life. He created *all* things, including the living and the non-living things. We have those scriptures in the Bible where it tells us very clearly that He is the Creator. The clearest passage is found in John 1. I believe this to be unequivocal, and unambiguous. People try to talk around these verses and explain them away but they are very clear.

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. [See how clear this next verse is.] All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

John was very specific here. He was very intent on making sure that we understood it positively, and then he said it negatively so that we would not get any ideas that it could have been any other way. So he first says that all things were made through Him, and then he says nothing was made without Him. So we have it from both sides, as it were, very clearly, that this Word was the active Creator.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

What this says to us is that He was the Life-giver. In Him was life. He is the Creator, and He also has the ability by the life that was in Him to give life to other things—other organisms.

Here we have it very clearly. The Word has existed from the beginning with God. God made all things through the Word. And thus the Word is the "hands-on" Creator. The Father is also the Creator; He is the One who gave the job to Jesus Christ. But, the Word is the One who is the physical Creator—the One who actually did the work. And, finally in Him, the Word, was life—life inherent—self-sustaining life. He had it, and He had always had it. No one ever had to give it to Him. It is the same with the Father. They have always been. They have always been living. And, they are the only ones who are capable of transmitting life to other things. We can do it in a physical way, but reproducing is not really giving life. It is still God who is responsible for that life.

So, we can say that this life that was in Jesus Christ or the Word, is the source of all physical life.

Let us think about this for a minute. Life came from a spirit being. The spirit being we call the Word, and also the one known as the Father, are fully spirit. They have existed as spirit from eternity past. But, we are physical. But we have life.

Now what this sets up is a little bit of logic. Since God the Father and the Word are not physical beings, yet they have true life, whatever life is, it must be of a non-physical nature. It is something more than just physical life force. There is something spiritual in it because it is from God. At this point, we will just call it non-physical for now. There is something non-physical in the nature of what life is.

Maybe another way that we could put it is that it is an imparted force, or energy. So, it has been called the vital force, or the life force. Many of you were here for my Bible study in January on the question of the immortality of the soul. We found out there that

what most people believe is their soul, is in fact their life force—their life.

This seems esoteric, but it is important to what we are going to study today. Turn to Job 12. I would like for you to see Job's version of this very same thing. At this point, Job was contending with his three friends, particularly Zophar at this point, about his predicament—his children had been killed, all this wealth had been taken away through various destructive things, windstorms and whatnot, and he was ill and sitting on an ash heap scraping sores with a potsherd. He was pretty miserable.

And here his friends have come to accuse him of sin, saying that he must have done something wrong, otherwise these things would not have happened. But, Job's answer, here, revolves around God's sovereignty. He is talking about how God is in control of things. He has the right understanding. He is saying that God is doing something here, but he had not figured it out yet. But God is in control. And if He could take people from their great positions and make them low, and then raise them up again, He could certainly work with Job.

Job 12:7-10 "But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; and the fish of the sea will explain to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?"

This is very similar to what John says in John 1:3-4. He is saying that it is so obvious, if you would just look around, look at the animals, birds, fish, and such, notice how they all live and work together, how everything works so finely and is so finely tuned; it is obvious that God made these things. If we would just look at the creation we can tell that God's hand is in this.

And then Job says that it is equally obvious that God governs His own creation. That is what verse 10 is saying, "In whose hand is the life of every living thing." He is talking about the fact that even though these things have been created, and are alive, it is still God who has them in His hand, and He sustains them, and provides for them, and does all kinds of things for every one of these bits of His creation.

So, not only is He Creator, He is also Life-giver, He is also sovereign, and does all these other wonderful things.

So, as he says here, He not only gives life to every living thing, he implies that He can

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take it away just as easily. If your life is in the hand of someone, that person whose hand holds your life has control over life and death, and that is what Job is saying. He is putting himself into that too. It is not just the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, he is thinking of himself, that his life is in God's hand. And, He is controlling things, and He is working things out, because He is sovereign.

So, Job is saying here what John said, that God is Creator, and Life-giver. And I want you to notice, here, as we transition back to Genesis 2, that here in verse 10 Job adds that the physical life of all creatures, including himself, is uniquely tied to *breathing*.

Now, if we were to say the one factor that the Bible points to as determining life, it would be the ability to breathe.

With that introduction, we want to go back to Genesis 2:7. We have come to the point (in this series) where God is about to give life to Adam, thus, my introduction on how to define life.

Now, we need to remember, as I point out in every one of these sermons, that God wants us to use the faculties of mind that He has given us—great faculties of mind. And in this particular case, I want to emphasize the imagination so that we can put "flesh" on the bones of Scripture, as it were. Within the limits, though, I always want to point this out, within the limits with what harmonizes with His entire revelation, the whole counsel of God. We cannot just willy-nilly imagine something, because if it does not square with the rest of Scripture, then we will go way off and leave true doctrine.

But, it is a good Bible study technique to apply the imagination to these scriptures, because as I said in the first sermon, God is very concise with His wording, especially here in the book of Genesis, and especially in the early part of Genesis, which in 8-9 chapters covers 1650 years of history. That is pretty quick! So, God was very sparing in what He said, and He expects us to be able to extrapolate from that by using our imagination and reasoning powers.

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being [or living soul].

This is as far as we are going to get today, because this verse is packed, absolutely packed with information. It may be among the most precise and concise verses in the entire Bible, there is so much there.

In a minute or so of meditation, you could come up with two, three, or four *big* doctrines that come out of this one verse. It starts with God's creation, and that God as Creator; and that God is life-giver; and that God, well you could just go on and on speaking about earth, which we will get to, breath, life—I think that is five already—and then the doctrine of man, which we will not get to except in a passing way. There is all kinds of stuff in this one little verse.

Last time, we imagined our Creator gathering His materials, and meticulously fashioning the body of Adam from the various dusts of the ground. And we imagined Him not as we have thought of Him in the past, of gathering this big lump of clay, and then sculpting it into the form of a man, and then hocus-pocus making it a living thing, changing the dust into flesh of various kinds—skin, muscle, sinew, bone, ligaments, tendons, veins, capillaries, arteries, nerves, and the specialized organs—the brain, heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, eyes, pancreas, sex organs, and everything else—God made those things specifically, individually—in detail.

Now, of course, God is God, and He can do those things quickly, and He has the ability to transform matter that we certainly do not have. But, He laid all of this out in the shell of what was Adam until He had made everything. I had forgotten the hair, and nails too to add to the list above. There are many parts on the human body that He had to form and fashion. And I am sure there were things that He could use from His forming and fashioning of animals, because we have flesh much like theirs. As a matter of fact, the closest flesh we have that I have ever heard of us, is the pig, which is why they often use pig-parts when doing certain grafting like skin for burn victims while their own grows back (which is disgusting to me). But, I am sure that God made animal kinds similar to human kind because it is very efficient. And so, we have very similar types of systems and parts.

But even so, to make the man in less than a day, just a part of a day; and to do all that intricate detailed work, and then to have it work on the first go is just an incredible thing to think about. But God was down there in the dust forming Adam in all this detail.

The simple statement, "The Lord formed man of the dust of the ground," covers a huge amount of detailed work and craftsmanship. I mean, we would not have the first clue about how to start any of this, even our most brilliant biologists would not really know what to do. I mean, how do you even take dust, and make it into a cell? And then God not only made it into a cell, He made billions of *different* cells for *different* functions. How many cells are in the human body? Maybe it is a trillion or so. It is an incredible number of them.

Did each particle of dust become a cell? Or, did He take hundreds of particles of dust as His raw material to make one cell? I do not know. It is an amazing thing to think that Adam went from dust blowing in the wind, to this multi-celled organism that with the breath of life was able to do all the things that man can do. It is an absolutely amazing thing to think about. If you want something to meditate about, that is something that you could meditate on for days, weeks, and months. It is an amazing thing.

Adam was obviously the pinnacle of God's creation. He did not just slap Him together. He did not just take a lump of clay and squish it, and mash it, and there he was. He did not just snap His fingers and invisible forces did all these things. The Bible shows us God formed him. And behind that word, "formed," is a great deal of craftsmanship, a great deal of work.

Please turn to Psalm 139. David obviously thought about this deeply from time to time. Of course, having to tend his father's sheep he had some time, maybe sitting on a rock looking over a field where the sheep were grazing, and keeping an eye out for bears and lions and whatever else. But in the quiet of the night, he was able to think about these sorts of things.

In this passage David is not speaking about the creation of Adam, but rather about the formation of a child within the womb. But, the ideas are the same in terms of thinking about God's marvelous works.

Psalm 139:13-15 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

Now, there is a lot of poetic language here, of course. That is what the psalms are—poems. But, we can imagine from what he says here about a baby being formed in the womb just how much care God took in fashioning Adam. It is very similar, because Adam is the prototypical man. He was the one who had to be the perfect physical specimen right from the hand of God.

Also, he was the one who was to be the beginning of billions of other human beings. And God would want to start that off with the most perfect human being that He could, so they would reproduce in kind for many generations.

I tried to figure out while sitting there before coming up today that if we assume about 25 years per generation, we could come up with about 240 generations since the creation of Adam. Of course, generations were much longer than that before the flood, and even for a time after the flood. So, let us just say that it is more like 150 to 180 generations of mankind since Adam; we are still reproducing fairly well. We are probably not at the same level of vitality and health of Adam and Eve, but to think that after that many repetitions, we are still reproducing pretty well.

If you would look at the records from the Olympic Games, some of us keep getting faster, and stronger, jump farther. Of course it is aided by steroids! Mankind still seems to be quite healthy, all told, despite all the cancers, and AIDS, and other such things, which we have brought upon ourselves.

God made Adam to be strong, and healthy, and to be able to reproduce without degradation over many, many, many generations. So, even without the detailed knowledge we have today with things like DNA studies, and being able to see things with electron microscopes, and all the endless observations that scientists do, David was simply awestruck by the intricate and interconnected complexities of his own body.

He could sit there and look at His hand and wonder, "How in the world could God make such a wonderful thing happen?" There is really no other animal that has a hand like we do. There are a few primates that have similar ones of a sort, but there is nothing like the human hand, because the human hand has intelligence behind it. We can make things with our hands, or throw things; we can make funny signs with our hands; we can caress with our hands; or we could knock somebody's teeth out with our hands.

The hand is such a marvelous creation. And that is only one of the things that God gave us. We can pretty much pick any organ, any function of a human being, and it is just absolutely amazing. People spend their lives studying one part of the human body in order to pass on some helpful knowledge. We have doctors who specialize in eyes. We have doctors who specialize in the ears, nose, and throat. We have doctors who specialize in certain parts of the body, or a certain cancer that people can get, or even just aligning *two bones* in the neck. In all these little bits of knowledge we have been able to understand.

But David, without all that gathering of knowledge, was still able to see God's handiwork behind it all, and not only be amazed at how God was able to form Adam in the first place, but to reproduce this time, after time, after time in the wombs countless women. And each kid comes out with those same parts, and abilities, and potential. It is just amazing.

He could not understand how it all happened, but he could appreciate the supernatural skills and knowledge it took to make a man.

Now let us go back to Genesis 2:7. Moses writes that God made man of the dust of the ground. And there is a bit of word play in the Hebrew that we cannot see because we do not speak it.

"Man," is the word, "adam," while "ground," is the word, "adama." Clearly, God wants us to associate adam—man, with the ground—adama. It is very important for us to get this understanding. We want to make sure that man and the earth are linked.

Now Adam means "red," or "ruddy." It is a cognate word to "Edom," Esau, because he came out red, so they called him "red guy." He got the name Edom only after eating that red stew—but it still fits.

Actually Adam means red or ruddy because of the color of the dust from which man was made. That is anyone's best guess. So, there is a link between the redness of the man, and redness of the ground. He was the red of the soil.

Adama is the cultivatable soil. Not just any old dirt, but it is mostly talking about cultivatable soil that grows plants for food, trees for wood, and all those things that we can get out of the earth.

Now, even "dust," has this implication of "earth." Dust comes from the Hebrew word "hapar," which means dust or fine bits of earth.

In this one phrase that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground," we have three words that mean "dirt"—Adam (the red dirt), dust, and ground. All three of these words revolve around the same idea. God wants us to understand right away that man is from the earth. He is made of earth, he is tied to earth, and therefore he is part of the earth; man is earthy. So we are physical beings made of the elements of the earth that He got out of the soil. We are not heavenly or spiritual beings at all—not naturally.

In fact, that is one word that could be used for mankind—natural—out of nature. We are not divine. We are not spiritual. We are not heavenly.

The apostle Paul says in I Corinthians 15:44 that there is a natural body, and a spiritual body. The way that Paul states this makes it very clear that these are two distinctly different things. There is a natural body on one hand, and there is a spiritual body on the other.

He also says in I Corinthians 15 that the first man was of the earth made of dust (verse 47). And then in verse 48 he says that as was the man of dust, so are those who are made of dust—all the rest of us. So, not only is Adam made of the dust of the ground, but all of Adam's progeny, including us, are physical, natural, earthy beings. We are not divine by nature.

Now also, notice that we are made of dust. Years ago there was a joke going around in the church of God that Adam should have been named Claude (clod). But, Adam was not made from clods. He was not made of mud, or clay (which I have used in the past), and not made from sand. It is very specific that God used the specific word that means dust. He used that specific word, *hapar*, which speaks of the dust of the ground—the fine bits that usually are on top of the ground that can be picked up by the wind, and blown. It is not the stuff you stick your shovel in, and remove a large clump of, but it is that fine, very small, almost weightless bits of earth.

There is a reason for this. We could spin this positively if we wanted to, being arrogant as most men tend to be. We could say that, "Dust is a very fine substance, almost as if it were ground and purified to separate all the elements and compounds into their pure states so that we can say that God fashioned man of the very finest and best materials." That is the arrogant human talking. "Wow! Look how good we are!"

I am sure God did use good materials. But that is not what He means by stating that we were created out of the dust of the ground. God wants us not to look at it positively. He wants us to look at it the other way. In Scripture, overwhelmingly, dust is a symbol of low worth, or humble origin. Here is one. Turn to I Samuel 2. This is part of Hanna's prayer.

I Samuel 2:7-8 The LOORD makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the beggar from the ash heap, to set them among princes and make them inherit the throne of glory.

This basically describes what He does with His sons. But, He wants us first to understand that we are dust. That is where we started. That is really what we are. It is what we will turn back to too. We are dust, and it is to His glory that He can take us from dust and set us up, as it says, to make them inherit the throne of glory.

That is not the only thing that dust is a symbol of in Scripture. It gets worse. Turn to Genesis 18, because dust is also a symbol of humility. In this passage Abraham is

pleading with God and Christ about Sodom where Lot was.

Genesis 18:27-28a Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?"

What Abraham is doing here is abasing himself as much as he can in order to plead for the city of Sodom, and certainly for the life of Lot. But, he uses this phrase, "I who am but dust and ashes," meaning that he is of the most humble of people.

It gets *worse*. Turn to Psalm 72 because dust also signifies humiliation, not just humility.

Psalm 72:8-9 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust.

Here, this is an act of God, specifically talking about Christ when He comes to rule. His enemies will be utterly humbled and humiliated.

Turn back to Genesis 3, there is also the description of dust as frustration in terms of Satan.

Genesis 3:14 So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.

This is speaking about the frustration of life as Satan, the sinful, rebellious being who has set himself against God. And, God is telling him that in everything that he does he is going to be frustrated because God is always a hundred steps ahead of him. And even when he thought he had done something effective from his point of view in having the Son of God crucified, it actually worked out that he was doing God service by furthering God's plan of salvation. Nothing that Satan does works out right (as it were). He is an eternally frustrated being, because he cannot do anything that God does not use for His own purposes.

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In a way it gets worse. Turn to Lamentations 2, because dust also symbolizes mourning. You probably thought I would get to this one. We all know that the Jews tend to throw dust in the air or on their heads when they are in mourning. Here is an example of that.

Lamentations 2:10 The elders of the daughter of Zion sit on the ground and keep silence; they throw dust on their heads and gird themselves with sackcloth. The virgins of Jerusalem bow their heads to the ground.

Here they are mourning for Jerusalem. They are also humiliated, and humbled, and their expectations are low.

And finally, it also symbolizes death. It does not get much worse than that. Back to Psalm 22. This one is interesting because this is talking about Christ Himself. It is part of that prophecy about His crucifixion.

Psalm 22:15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.

So, clearly, the image we are to take away from God making mankind of the dust is one of humble beginnings, limitations, brevity, adversity, and mortality. In a way, He is telling us right from the beginning: we are low, not high; we are humble, not glorious; we are made of the dust, we are, made of something not worth much.

Actually, this should give us a spiritual high! Is not humility what God is looking for? It is the humble and the meek that are going to inherit the earth. And, the sooner we understand this, and take it to heart, the better it will be for us spiritually. So, here, early in the second chapter of the first book, He is giving us an indication of where our minds are supposed to be. We are not supposed to think of ourselves as wonderful, great, and exalted, but we are to think of ourselves as earthy, as of not much worth—as full of adversity and suffering, limitations and brevity of life; and we will die.

Now, there is one here in Genesis 3 that want to go to specifically. This might have been one of the first things you thought of immediately when I began the talking about being from the dust of the ground. This section was the curse upon Adam.

Genesis 3:19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.

The idea here has been touched on already, and it is the fact that one of the major reasons God made us out of the earth and dust, is so that we can die and return to the earth. In looking at it this way, from the angle of the fact that we can die, it is a good thing.

Let me explain. I believe that death was always part of God's plan for mankind. He knew from the very beginning that as weak physical beings, Adam, man, would not resist sin. As a matter of fact—let me put it this way—He knew that Adam would not resist sin, because he was so weak, and the wages of sin is death. He already knew, being God, that if one would sin, he would have to die. That is just the way that things worked. Death is the result of sin, and obviously that is where Paul got it when he wrote Romans 6:23. Because he said that very clearly—the wages of sin is death.

Now, it also says in I Peter 1:20 that Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world, meaning that He was chosen, He volunteered, He was ordained to die for our sins *before* Adam sinned. That is when the world was founded—when Adam sinned. That is what set everything up as it is now. But, it was before this foundation of the world that Christ was foreordained to be the sinless sacrifice to pay for our sins.

And also, they knew—God and Jesus Christ—that He would have to be raised from the dead, and by doing so, a path would be forged by which others—meaning us—could have eternal life upon repentance of our sins, and accepting Christ as our Savior.

So, death was a part of that plan. We will all have to go through the same sort of thing that Christ did. He died, was put in the ground, and then He was raised to eternal life. We will all follow that pattern. He is our Archegos—the trailblazer; the One who set the pattern. So, we will all have to go through that. And so in that way, the fact that we can die is a *good* thing, because it puts us on the path toward eternal life. God set it up that way.

Now, there is another way of looking at this, which is that if a person fails to repent, death plays another role. Our lives can be *forever* extinguished so that we will not live miserably in sin for all eternity.

That is the Catholic and Protestant way of looking at things—they believe we have an immortal soul, and that upon sinning and rejecting Christ, they are going to live forever in terrible torment. But God is more merciful than that. He shows in His Word that He would rather cut them off forever, which He calls the second death. Then, that sinner no longer has to live miserably forever, and those who live on forever, those who live

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righteously, do not have to live in a world where there is sin. For sin makes everyone miserable. And if God allowed sin to continue, then we would be nowhere. God mentions the second death in Revelation 20:6, and 14. It is really an act of mercy on God's part.

I do want to turn to Revelation 21. God will one day purge all sin and sinners forever from the earth. Because death is a reality, because God made us physical and able to die, He can do this, and give His sons and daughters a perfect paradise to live in His Kingdom.

Revelation 21:1, 4, 8 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. [Peter says in II Peter 3 that it will be melted with a fervent heat.] Also there was no more sea. . . . "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death [at this point], nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things [that sin produced] have passed away." . . . "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

In that respect, God made man to die if need be forever. This is another aspect of the fact that we are made of the dust of the ground.

Genesis 2:7b "...and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."

Just like with the other phrase, where we had three words talking about dirt, dust, and soil, here we have three words that imply breathing—breathed; nostrils; and breath of life, which is usually taken as a phrase.

At this point, I am going to throw a lot of Hebrew words at you. I am not so interested that you catch them all, but that you understand their definitions.

"Breathed" is "nah'phakh," which means to blow, or to breathe. There is something interesting in these three words, but I will mention them as we go along because I want to take them as one. In this case, nah'phakh, meaning to blow or breathe, often in other parts of the Bible has the implication of forcefulness, that God *blows* with His mighty wind, for example. Or His mighty breath blows people away, or He breathes fire on people. It is that kind of an understanding—not a puff of air, but a very forceful,

hurricane-like wind, almost, which is very interesting.

The word "nostrils" is "hoff," and is the common word for nose, or nostrils. But, what is interesting about this word is that it is frequently used in the Bible to denote anger, because anger is often noticeable in the nose as in flaring of nostrils. If you get mad <snort> it is almost like a bull, and your nostrils flare. It is that kind of anger being spoken about—almost a rage. It is interesting that this implication is in the word nostril. I am sure that God was not angry, here. I do not want you to take that away from this. But, here is another word that elsewhere in the Bible is used of a rather abrupt, shocking emotion. A kind of forcefulness.

And finally, the "breath of life." This is the phrase, "mishmot khayim." Mishmot comes from mishama, which means breath, wind, or spirit. And it is parallel in meaning to ruach, which we have all heard, as well as nephesh—all three having been translated in the Bible as breath, wind, or spirit. So we have three words that mean very similar things. What is interesting about this phrase, especially the word mishmot, is that it can imply great force. Its uses are harsh, hot wind, and in another place it is a cold blast that produces ice. It is interesting that here again we have an instance where one of these words regarding breath has some vigor to it.

Finally, khayim (life) comes from khaya (living). What is interesting is that this word, too, has the same implication to it, it is frequently used to denote *untamed* animals. It is used one or twice to talk about domesticated animals, but in most cases it is talking about wild animals. All those animals that Noah brought into the ark? Some of them were domesticated livestock, while most were these untamed animals. And that is the word used in Genesis 2:7 for these things.

I am not sure what all these implications of forcefulness, anger, and wildness mean in this context. Perhaps it does not mean anything at all. Perhaps it does not have that connotation here. Or, using our imaginations a little bit, perhaps they suggest something along the lines of the force needed to jump-start a heart, or the quick or abrupt inflation of his lungs to get the pulmonary system started. What do we do when a person is lying on the floor, and cannot get his breath, or is not breathing? Someone springs to their aid using CPR, pressing on the chest, and blowing forcefully into the lungs to inflate them artificially. Of course, these things are not done as if by a 700 pound gorilla jumping on someone's chest, but on the other hand it is not done so gently that nothing happens either.

Awakening Adam to life may not have been the quiet soft puff of air from God's mouth to Adam's nostrils that we usually imagine, if these little implications and connotations are

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true. On the contrary it may have been very abrupt, vigorous, and sharp—almost shocking. Even the evolutionists believe that life came from some primordial goo, or soup that has been *struck by lightning*, and suddenly life starts.

Giving life in God's creation of Adam may not have been an easy, gentle process—even for God. If this is true, there is some biblical evidence by spiritual parallel that it was not gentle, that it was perhaps a bit vigorous, abrupt, startling, and forceful, and even almost violent.

For instance, turn to Matthew 11. Remember we are just imagining here. I am not saying that this is so, because I was not there. But, we are using our imaginations to think this thing through understanding the way that some of these words have been defined.

Matthew 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

Let us step back and think here. Is our entering into eternal life gentle and easy? I hope not, because if your life has been gentle and easy, there is something wrong. Jesus Christ says that if we are going to enter the Kingdom of God, we have to do it *violently*, and *forcefully*. If giving physical life is a forceful operation, then so is giving spiritual life too. Are we not to think of what God did with Adam to be the pattern for what happens to us in coming into His Kingdom and having eternal life? Is it not a physical parallel to the spiritual? It think it is.

Paul intimates in I Corinthians 15 in the verses quoted earlier that the spiritual follows the pattern of the physical, and vice versa. They are very intimately linked. And so the clues that are given in Genesis about how Adam was awakened to physical life has some sort of parallel to our being awakened and given, ultimately, eternal life. The physical mimics the spiritual.

Think of it this way. God took great care, and He went into great detail in fashioning man, and then provided physical life, let us say, through a forceful process something akin to CPR. Then, the spiritual parallel, the spiritual process would be similar. And we already know that it is. Jesus Christ said that the violent take the Kingdom by force. What He means is that the *bold, the determined, the resolute, and the forceful person* will enter the Kingdom.

A spiritual namby-pamby will not be there, because the things that we have to do in

order to achieve the Kingdom of God are not easy. God does not put us through easy practice. It is tough, spiritual practice to get us ready for life in His Kingdom. It will take a titanic struggle to be in His Kingdom because there are so many factors acting against us in this world. So, He is warning us that it will not be easy; we will have to work vigorously, even violently at times to force ourselves to do what is right.

See, in this case we are not fighting against other people, we are not being bold and determined against others, we are being bold and determined and resolute, and forceful, and violent against our own natures, against ourselves. That is the process by which we have eternal life. Because we are in this relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father, He gives us the strength to overcome. And it is the overcoming that is so hard to do. That is why Paul tells us that we have to fight like warriors in battle, and aggressively engage the enemy.

Let us just go to a couple of these.

I Corinthians 9:24-27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it [Try to win! Try to be the first cross the finish line.]. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things [discipline yourself]. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: Not with uncertainty [Not haphazardly, he has a goal]. Thus I fight: Not as one who beats the air [like a shadow boxer]. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

He is talking about a very rigorous regimen that he put himself through in order to take the Kingdom by force. One more:

Hebrews 4:11 Let us therefore be diligent [labor and strive] to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience [as the children of Israel in the wilderness].

I am going to this one because it is not just against ourselves that we battle.

Ephesians 6:10-13 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and

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blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Of course Paul uses this metaphor of a soldier in battle to describe the fight that we have against Satan and the demons. They are the ones who are behind all these horrible attitudes that are out in the world, so we have to fight against the world, too, in that way, so that we are not tempted to reenter it following the things they do. So, you can see the fight here that we have to put up in order to enter the Kingdom of God, and to enter into eternal life.

That is the parallel that I want you to see, here. Perhaps the awakening of Adam to physical life was a little more violent than we tend to think—as a word picture and image in our minds of the same sort of violence that we have to go through in order to enter into spiritual life.