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The Doctrine of Death

Phi 1:21 For¹⁰⁶³ to me¹⁶⁹⁸ to live²¹⁹⁸ is Christ,⁵⁵⁴⁷ and²⁵³² to die⁵⁹⁹ is gain.²⁷⁷¹

It is very important to note that this verse is not a reference to all believers. Paul is specifically referring to himself as a mature believer, or what is true in the life of any mature believer. But apart from spiritual maturity neither living nor death is a profit type of experience.

It is only the mature believer who goes out in dying grace and considers such experience a promotion that is referred to in this verse. And, it is the mature believer or the believer in spiritual adulthood who lives a meaningful, loving, and enjoyable existence. The verb "to live" in Phi 1:21 points to the enjoyment and love of real life it also points to an active life full of vigor which comes from knowing that all in life (and death) is secure in Christ Jesus. So again, this verse if a reference to mature believers only in his living and dying grace

Unfortunately for the most part, death has always presented humanity with fear and anxiety. This fear of the unknown only serves to place them in bondage. Hebrews 2:14 tells us that Satan keeps people enslaved throughout their entire lives by way of fear of physical death. It is therefore important to know what the word of God teaches concerning the subject of death.

There are at least eight categories of death in the Bible:

- Spiritual death
- Physical death
- Positional death
- Carnal or cosmic death
- Production mortality or dead works
- Sexual death
- The Second death
- Sin unto death

Physical death: The real you is your soul not your physical body. Your present physical body is a temporary housing for your soul. At physical death the soul is transferred to an incorruptible body, first the interim body until the Rapture and then the resurrected body after the Rapture. The unbeliever is dichotomous, that is consisting of body and soul, whereas the believer in Christ is trichotomous,

consisting of body, soul, and human spirit. The believer receives a human spirit at the moment of salvation and this is how God's Spirit communes with man.

For the unbeliever their soul is what lives forever and ever and for the believer, the soul and spirit is what exist forever. When physical death occurs it happens to the physical body only. Physical death has nothing whatsoever to do with the soul and spirit. The mature believer knows this and so considers his physical death profit, or a promotion in that it secures a great victory toward the fantastic eternal rewards promised by God. But the unbeliever or the believer who is not educated in God's word lives out his life in fear of that which he does not know, particularly physical death. This lack of knowledge is due in full to the individual's own rejection of God's word and God's plan. This lack of knowledge leaves unbelievers and most believers in an uncertain and apprehensive state concerning what happens to them after physical death.

Many believers claim through out their lives to have a faith or even "the faith", but when their faith is put to the test in the face of death they are suddenly stricken with an immobilizing fear and their soul is flooded with grief. On the other hand, the mature believer is confident that the death of his physical body, which body contains the old sin nature (OSN), is left behind and his soul and spirit are promoted to heaven!

The soul of the unbeliever upon physical death is transferred to its interim body in a place known as hades then at the end of human history they are brought forth to the Great White Throne Judgment (for unbelievers only) and issued their resurrection bodies thereafter cast into the eternal lake of fire forever separated from God.

This judgment is based on the unbeliever's rejection of the Son of God, Jesus Christ as their personal Savior while they were on earth. So, physical death happens to the physical body. And physical death is a matter of the sovereign decision of God based on His perfect knowledge and perfect timing, Psalm 68:19-20. Physical death does not separate the believer from God, Romans 8:38-39.

Physical death means no appointment with judgment, Hebrews 9:27; being face to face with the Lord, 2Corinthians 5:8; the end of pain, Revelation 21:4; an eternal inheritance, 1Peter 1:4-5; a new home, John 14:1-6; realizing what eternal life is all about, John 11:25; 10:28; 20:31; 1John 5:11-12; waiting for the resurrection body while in an interim body, John 11:25; 1Thesolonians 4:13-18; Job 19:25-26; Philippians 3:21; 1Co 5:51-57.

Physical death secures a great victory and that is how it should be viewed. The sting of death has been removed by our Lord Jesus Christ, 1Corinthians 15:55-57. If you understand what heaven is all about, what eternity holds and what the word of God promises you will not live in fear of death.

Spiritual death: The spiritual death of the human race is noted in Genesis 2:17 "dying [spiritually] you shall die [physically]." The Hebrew looks like this boyown [in that day] taamuwt [dying spiritually] mowt [shall die physically].

The origin of spiritual death was not and is not anyone's personal sin but originates with the fall of man. The fall of man entered in the penalty imposed upon the human race which is the imputation of Adam's original sin (AOS). The imputation of AOS is issued simultaneously at physical birth when human life is imputed to the biological life. We are all therefore born physically alive and spiritually dead, Eph 2:1; Rom 5:12.

There are two categories of spiritual death (1) real spiritual death, and (2) substitutionary spiritual death. Real spiritual death refers to the actual spiritual death of Adam at the fall when he was separated from God. Substitutionary spiritual death refers to the spiritual death experienced by Jesus Christ on the cross when He was judged for all sins and separated from God in place of us, 1Peter 2:24; 3:18; 2Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:6; Rom 5:8.

Though we were born in sin God does not make us pay the penalty for our sins, He allowed a substitute sacrifice on our behalf. What then is the solution to man's spiritual death? Romans 6:23 gives us that answer, "...the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Without the acceptance of this gift on the part of man's free will, man remains in spiritual death and is eternally separated from God.

Positional death: Positional death of the believer also known as retroactive positional truth. At the point of regeneration the believer receives a new nature and the old nature (OSN) is considered dead to God. Our positional death therefore is our identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, this is known as the baptism of the Spirit.

On the cross Jesus Christ paid the price for all sin and also rejected the OSN and all it produces; human good and evil. Our identification with this is our positional death to the old sin nature and it's productions, Rom 6:1-4. Our new nature is that nature in which we execute the spiritual life. The old nature can offer nothing, no matter how good it appears, to God!

Romans 6:10 tells us that Christ crucified and killed the OSN on the cross. Therefore in the eyes of God the OSN is dead and can offer nothing good. Apart from God we can produce nothing, John 15:3-5. Col 2:11-12 teaches that we should only accept the divine good accomplished under the filling of the Spirit and reject that which the flesh produces.

The flesh (OSN) produces human good and evil which makes up the policy of Satan. Yet, human good and evil are still a part of the angelic conflict since

though it has been rejected (at the cross) it has not yet been evaluated or judged. This evaluation of human good and evil is the reason for the Judgment Seat of Christ for believers, 1Co 3:11-15, and the Great White Throne Judgment for unbelievers, Rev 20:11-15... Sin is never brought up.

Our life should be one of reliance on God and the power and nature He has supplied for us in His plan. When we rely on self we adopt the policy of Satan, John 5:19-20. Jesus Christ incarnate pioneered the spiritual life by His complete reliance on the Father's will and the Spirit's power, John 6:63. We are to live our lives in the same manner. You are therefore a loser believer unless you have the Spirit of God as your power and are motivated by the word of God accurately divided, John 4:24. So, understanding the subject of positional death causes the believer to reject human good and evil.

Carnal death: carnal death is also known as cosmic death which is basically post-salvation OSN control of the soul, Ephesians 5:14. Carnal or cosmic death happens in three categories:

- Post salvation sinning
- Post salvation human good
- Post salvation evil

The carnal death of the believer can be classified in three segments:

- Temporal death = the believer out of fellowship with God
- Cosmic death of the believer = cosmic involvement.
- The fragmented death of the believer = the believer living in moral or immoral degeneracy.

All refer to the function of the believer's volition in converting temptation from the OSN into sinfulness. Note that the issue is not whether the believer is cognizant of his cosmic involvement or not but that the desire is freely acted upon by the believer's volition. Temptation is not a sin until human volition follows through with action. Sin and cosmic involvement bring in carnal death which separates the believer from God. Revelation 3:1 explains that the carnal believer does have production and a reputation that he is living... but God considers their works dead, Romans 8:6,13; 1John 3:14. If the believer remains in carnal death he will eventually die the sin unto death, (1John 5:16; Psalm 118:17-18; Act 5:1-10; Revelation 3:16).

Operational death: Operational death is production mortality known as death works. Dead works is the function of human good apart from the filling of the Spirit. Good is not a virtue when found in the devil's world. Works in the cosmic system are: legalism, self righteousness, and arrogance, which parlay into evil. Dead works can include the function of crusader arrogance and all Christian activism. Dead works is moral degeneracy and is burned up at the Judgment Seat of Christ, (1Corinthians 3:12-15; Romans 14:10; 2Corinthians 5:10).

Sexual death: This category of death was mentioned only once, in reference to Abraham and Sarah, Romans 4:17-21; Hebrews 11:11-12. Our next category of Biblical death is the Second death, Revelation 2:11; 20:4-6,11-14; 21:8.

This is for unbelievers only and is the final judgment for those who have rejected TLJC, Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:12-15. The second death will never hurt the mature believer in that all his loved ones will be in heaven. Then finally we have the category known as the Sin unto Death, Revelation 3:16. This is the manner of death for the believer who rejects the plan of God. David notes for us his experience with the sin unto death in Psalm chapters 32 and 38, he also rebounds and is delivered from the sin unto death, Psalm 118:17-18. Sadly enough, this will be the manner of death for the majority of believers in Christ.

Most believers live their lives according the ideas and goals projected by the cosmic system rather than according to what God's plan directs. In their rejection of God's plan in time they become loser believers and live and die in fear and disgrace. Quite unlike that which Paul states in Philippians 1:21 For me living is Christ, likewise dying is profit (divine promotion).