

Contrasting Seasons of Faith – Birth and Death

I. Birth

A. Physical Birth

1. Psalm 139:13-18

“**139:13** Certainly you made my mind and heart; you wove me together in my mother’s womb. **139:14** I will give you thanks because your deeds are awesome and amazing. You knew me thoroughly; **139:15** my bones were not hidden from you, when I was made in secret and sewed together in the depths of the earth. **139:16** Your eyes saw me when I was inside the womb. All the days ordained for me were recorded in your scroll before one of them came into existence. **139:17** How difficult it is for me to fathom your thoughts about me, O God! How vast is their sum total! **139:18** If I tried to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. Even if I finished counting them, I would still have to contend with you.”

B. Spiritual Birth

1. John 3:1-20

“**3:1** Now a certain man, a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who was a member of the Jewish ruling council, **3:2** came to Jesus at night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs that you do unless God is with him.” **3:3** Jesus replied, “I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” **3:4** Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter his mother’s womb and be born a second time, can he?” **3:5** Jesus answered, “I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **3:6** What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. **3:7** Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must all be born from above.’ **3:8** The wind blows wherever it will, and you hear the sound it makes, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” **3:9** Nicodemus replied, “How can these things be?” **3:10** Jesus answered, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you don’t understand these things? **3:11** I tell you the solemn truth, we speak about what we know and testify about what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony. **3:12** If I have told you people about earthly things and you don’t believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? **3:13** No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven – the Son of Man. **3:14** Just as Moses *lifted up the serpent in the wilderness*, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, **3:15** so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.” **3:16** For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. **3:17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him. **3:18** The one who believes in him is not condemned. The one who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God. **3:19** Now this is the basis for judging: that the light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. **3:20** For everyone who does evil deeds hates the light and does not come to the light, so that their deeds will not be exposed.”

C. Significance of Birth

1. Birth is a Blessing (Psalm 127:1-5)

“**127:1** If the LORD does not build a house, then those who build it work in vain. If the LORD does not guard a city, then the watchman stands guard in vain. **127:2** It is vain for you to rise early, come home late, and work so hard for your food. Yes, he can provide for those whom he loves even when they sleep. **127:3** Yes, sons are a gift from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. **127:4** Sons born during one’s youth are like

arrows in a warrior's hand. **127:5** How blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! They will not be put to shame when they confront enemies at the city gate.”

2. Birth is Purposeful

a. Population Expansion (Genesis 1:28a)

“God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it!”

b. Fulfill God-given Purpose

(1) Uniquely Formed – God was intricately involved in shaping our appearance, aptitude, abilities, limitations, personality, likes, dislikes, passions

(2) Uniquely Spiritually Gifted

(a) Romans 12:3-8

(b) 1 Corinthians 12:4-31

(3) Unique Assignments

(a) Genesis 18:16-19 – “**18:16** When the men got up to leave, they looked out over Sodom. (Now Abraham was walking with them to see them on their way.) **18:17** Then the LORD said, “Should I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? **18:18** After all, Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using his name. **18:19** I have chosen him so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. Then the LORD will give to Abraham what he promised him.””

(b) Jeremiah 1:4-5 – “**1:4** The LORD said to me, **1:5** “Before I formed you in your mother’s womb I chose you. Before you were born I set you apart. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations.””

(c) Amos 3:1-2 – “**3:1** Listen, you Israelites, to this message which the LORD is proclaiming against you! This message is for the entire clan I brought up from the land of Egypt: **3:2** “I have chosen you alone from all the clans of the earth. Therefore I will punish you for all your sins.””

(d) Ephesians 2:8-10 – “**2:8** For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; **2:9** it is not from works, so that no one can boast. **2:10** For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do them.”

(4) Uniquely Glorify God (Ephesians 2:1-10)

“**2:1** And although you were dead in your transgressions and sins, **2:2** in which you formerly lived according to this world’s present path, according to the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the ruler of the spirit that is now energizing the sons of disobedience, **2:3** among whom all of us also formerly lived out our lives in the cravings of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as the rest... **2:4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, **2:5** even though we were dead in transgressions, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you are saved! – **2:6** and he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, **2:7** to demonstrate in the coming ages the surpassing wealth of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **2:8** For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; **2:9** it is not from works, so that no one can boast. **2:10** For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do them.”

3. Birth leads to Death

D. Application: How do we live concerning birth?

1. Physical Birth

- a. Rejoice when birth occurs whether yours or another's.
- b. With infertility, pray, trust, determine cause so may consider therapy and/or adoption. Recall great Biblical cases of infertility: Abraham and Sarah; Isaac and Rebekah; Elkanah and Hannah; Zechariah and Elizabeth.
- c. By faith, accept that God did not make a mistake when He formed you or your child. If you or your child were different, you or your child would not be appropriate to fulfill His purposes.
- d. Cease the comparison game. God made you in His image to fulfill His purposes for you for His glory.
- e. Remember that we are deeply loved by God and should love others as God made them rather than as how we want them to be.

2. Spiritual Birth

- a. Rejoice when birth occurs.
- b. Spread the Gospel.
- c. Pray for others to become believers.
- d. Continually grow in Christ. Don't be spiritually immature or malnourished.

II. Death

A. Three Types of Death

1. Physical Death – separation of spirit/soul from body

- a. Genesis 2:16-18

“**2:16** Then the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat fruit from every tree of the orchard, **2:17** but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will surely die.” **2:18** The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion for him who corresponds to him.””

b. Romans 5:12 – “So then, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all people because all sinned”

2. Spiritual Death – separation of humankind from God

- a. Ephesians 2:1-10 (see previous section)

3. Eternal Death

- a. Death for the non-Christian
- b. Persons physically dies in state of spiritual death resulting in eternal separation from God
- c. If a person is not saved, that person will spend eternity in hell separated from God.
- d. Revelation 20:11-15

“**20:11** Then I saw a large white throne and the one who was seated on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. **20:12** And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne. Then books were opened, and another book was opened – the book of life. So the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to their deeds. **20:13** The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each one was judged according to

his deeds. **20:14** Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death – the lake of fire. **20:15** If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, that person was thrown into the lake of fire.”

B. Death for the Christian

1. Transition from Certain Death to Certain Life

a. John 3:16 – “For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

b. Romans 3:22-24 – “**3:22** namely, the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, **3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. **3:24** But they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

c. The opportunity of moving from certain eternal death to certain eternal life cost the life of God’s only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Comfort for the Physically Dying Christian

a. Eternal Life is Certain – John 10:27-30

“**10:27** My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **10:28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; no one will snatch them from my hand. **10:29** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can snatch them from my Father’s hand. **10:30** The Father and I are one.””

b. Future Home

(1) John 14:1-4

“**14:1** “Do not let your hearts be distressed. You believe in God; believe also in me. **14:2** There are many dwelling places in my Father’s house. Otherwise, I would have told you, because I am going away to make ready a place for you. **14:3** And if I go and make ready a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that where I am you may be too. **14:4** And you know the way where I am going.””

(2) 2 Corinthians 5:1-9

“**5:1** For we know that if our earthly house, the tent we live in, is dismantled, we have a building from God, a house not built by human hands, that is eternal in the heavens. **5:2** For in this earthly house we groan, because we desire to put on our heavenly dwelling, **5:3** if indeed, after we have put on our heavenly house, we will not be found naked. **5:4** For we groan while we are in this tent, since we are weighed down, because we do not want to be unclothed, but clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. **5:5** Now the one who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a down payment. **5:6** Therefore we are always full of courage, and we know that as long as we are alive here on earth we are absent from the Lord – **5:7** for we live by faith, not by sight. **5:8** Thus we are full of courage and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. **5:9** So then whether we are alive or away, we make it our ambition to please him.”

c. New Glorified Body

(1) 1 Corinthians 15:53-54

“**15:53** For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. **15:54** Now when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality”

(2) Philippians 3:20-21

“**3:20** But our citizenship is in heaven – and we also await a savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, **3:21** who will transform these humble bodies of ours into the likeness of his glorious body by means of that power by which he is able to subject all things to himself.”

d. Absence of all forms of pain – Revelation 21:4

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will not exist any more – or mourning, or crying, or pain, for the former things have ceased to exist.”

e. Permanent Inheritance – 1 Peter 1:3-4

“**1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **1:4** that is, into an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. It is reserved in heaven for you”

f. Future Reward – 2 Timothy 4:7-8

“**4:7** I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith! **4:8** Finally the crown of righteousness is reserved for me. The Lord, the righteous Judge, will award it to me in that day – and not to me only, but also to all who have set their affection on his appearing.”

3. Comfort for The Remaining Christian

a. Eternal Reunion

(1) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

“**4:13** Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest who have no hope. **4:14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep as Christians. **4:15** For we tell you this by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep. **4:16** For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **4:17** Then we who are alive, who are left, will be suddenly caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. **4:18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

(2) 2 Corinthians 4:14

“We do so because we know that the one who raised up Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus and will bring us with you into his presence.”

b. Comfort for The Physically Dying Christian

(1) The comfort provided for the dying Christian provides comfort for the remaining Christian

C. Application: How do we live concerning death?

- a. Be prepared. Death is coming provided the Lord tarries.
- b. Be comforted when a Christian transitions from certain death to certain life.
- c. Be comforted when you transition from certain death to certain life.
- d. Comfort others in times of transition.
- e. Philippians 1:21 – “For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.” We have a fantastic present and an even more fabulous future.

III. Conclusion

- A. Individual Prayer
- B. Corporate Prayer