

Death and Life - A Closer Look

by Stella Paterson

No temptation [Greek 'adversity'] has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted [Greek: 'tested'] beyond what you are able, but with the temptation [adversity], He will also make the way out, so as for you to be able to bear it. 1 Corinthians 10:13 EMTV

There is no question that we are in a time of some of the greatest adversity ever experienced by we who live in the 'western' world. Such atrocities as those suffered by Christians in far-away lands seem to be creeping ever closer to our own doorsteps, as we see alarming measures being taken by the leaders of our once 'free' lands.

It is *common to man* (human) to deal with adversity; it is part of life on this earth. Why must the peoples of the earth deal with **so much** adversity? Where did it all begin; what is behind it all; where is it going, as it leaves its trail of destruction? And what is the answer? Again, I am thrilled to report, the Bible has the answer to every question regarding life and death.

In the beginning . . .

To find the answers, we must go back to the Garden of Eden and the fall of man with the entrance of the knowledge of good and evil. The effect of what happened in Adam's day has had massive influence throughout the millennia, with wide-spread corruption upon the earth. Fleshly man has continued to embrace the knowledge of good and evil, and believes he must see, feel, handle and experience, according to his flesh. The majority of things he fails to understand--except through his senses, which he thinks is *real*.

Everything that is wrong in this world, is a result of the knowledge of good and evil; whether accomplished by the devil's cohorts, ruthless and greedy leaders, apostate preachers, or power-hungry politicians, etc., etc., etc.

To learn "what is behind it all" we must take a look at . . .

In the now . . .

The death that came upon mankind through the knowledge of good and evil seems to have an even firmer grip, as we witness the degradation all around us. In direct defiance to the God who created life, evil men and women are intent on tearing down and destroying anything and everything He put in place.

The sanctity of life seems almost to be a joke, or blight on mankind's desire for control. Abortion is at an all-time high; "mating" between people incapable of

reproduction is rampant; food crops are being poisoned by chemical companies in the name of "increased yield" and *pest control*, and genetically modified "food" is being foisted on society. These are only some of the ways the tyrants of the world are rebelling against God-given life.

We hear news reports almost daily of a move to silence the name of Jesus in places where such a thing would be unheard of, even in more recent days. Fear of offending 'others' now takes precedence over freedom of speech and freedom of religion. God-fearing people are now being targeted by ruthless and godless men and women who have arisen to power seemingly overnight. But, what these evil people do not realize is that there is a God in heaven, whose presence by His Spirit is even more *real*. A day of reckoning is coming, sooner than they think.

The Lord quickened to me some truths that will bring great joy and hope in these troublesome times. So before we get off on a tangent about evil workers in the earth, let us take a closer look at death and life. To do so, we must go back to the days before the creation of man, which was . . .

In the beginning, God . . .

On the third day of creation, God set in place a principle that would endure throughout the ages. This is what occurred on that day:

And God said, Let the earth put forth grass, herb yielding **seed**, and fruit tree bearing fruit **after its kind, wherein is the seed thereof**, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, herb yielding **seed after its kind**, and tree bearing fruit, **wherein is the seed thereof, after its kind**: and God saw that it was good. Genesis 1:11-12

The *principle* there is found in the bold words, and specifically, "seed after its kind." Just think! Those seeds He created contained life that would for thousands of years continue to reproduce--each *after its kind*.

In Noah's day, when evil was raging and God chose to destroy all flesh, he kept for Himself a remnant of every living thing. Along with Noah, his wife, their sons and their sons' wives, the *seed* of creatures, both great and small, was preserved, as we read in Genesis chapter seven, and as indicated here: *Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.* (Genesis 7:3)

And so we see the continuation of life that had its beginning at Creation--in something as simple as a seed. For thousands of years, man has been unable to stop it. Life carries on, multiplying by propagating itself, each species *after its kind*.

Think about it! In each and every seed, there is absolutely everything necessary for perfect reproduction; nothing missing, nothing extra--just a "wholeness" that is beyond comprehension. With humans and animals all that is needful is for the male and the female to come together, to start the new life which has been lying dormant, awaiting its fertilization and time to manifest. With plants, all that is needful is for the seed to be planted in fertile soil and die so that the new life can spring forth.

The seed of Abraham

Because of his trust in God, Abraham was blessed to be given the privilege of producing "seed" that would eventually result in the coming of Jesus, God's Son. The promise to Abraham was that innumerable "sons" would come from him, as we see in these two verses:

And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be numbered.
Genesis 13:16

And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and enumerate the stars, if you are able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall your seed be. Genesis 15:5

We know that Abraham also had a child with Sarah's maid, even before his promised son, Isaac was born. This is the promise God gave to Hagar, the maid: "*And the angel of the LORD said unto [Hagar], I will multiply your seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.*" (Genesis 16:10)

The same seed of man reproduces *after its kind*; some good and some bad, as we see with the two sons of Abraham, who were Isaac and Ishmael; and the two sons of Isaac, who were Jacob and Esau. As we know, Ishmael and Esau have always been at war with Jacob who is Israel. Then in the New Testament, we find Jesus' parable of the *tares* which are the wicked ones sown by the devil. (Matthew 13:24-30) This time the reference is to the "good and bad seed" in the Body of Christ, and the ultimate separation of true and false.

The promised Seed

Thousands of years later, the Apostle Paul speaks of the prophetic words given to Abraham regarding the promised Messiah. "*Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises spoken. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ.*" (Galatians 3:16 EMTV) Later on, in the same chapter, he says how all believers are "seeds" of Abraham by promise. "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*" (Galatians 3:28-29 EMTV)

Jesus, the Seed of Life, is the purest Seed; it is *incorruptible*, as the Apostle Peter tells us. Notice how he speaks of the fruit which comes from that incorruptible seed. "*Seeing you have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which lives and abides.*" (1 Peter 1:22-23) That *incorruptible* Seed not only is our Life, but *love* is the fruit of the seed!

If we go back to the Old Testament, we see the words proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah, where the Lord likens His word to seed which reproduces and fulfills His will.

For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven, and returns not thither, but waters the earth, and **makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater**; so shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. Isaiah 55:10-11

Dying to live

Before His crucifixion, Jesus spoke of what His death would mean and how He had to die so that others might have Eternal Life. The lesson He gave not only referred to His own death, but to the death-to-self required of all who desire to follow Him. Here is what He said: "*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 bears much fruit.*" (John 12:24 EMTV)

The key to this whole message about "seeds" is that we must die to have Life. We must go the way of the cross and be raised by the resurrection Life of Jesus. Paul said this to Timothy: "*Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel. . .*" (2 Timothy 2:8 EMTV) And that is what the gospel is about--dying to live!

If we, like Jesus, are the *seed* of Abraham, His seed is our very Life Source. As Paul said to the Colossians, (and the same goes for us,) "*If then you were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. **For you died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.***" (Colossians 3:1-3 EMTV) We must also remember the words of John, who declared "*No one who has been born of God practices sin, because **His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin,** because he has been born of God.*" (1 John 3:9 EMTV)

Seeing is believing?

If man must be able to see, feel and hear, in order to believe or understand something, he is enslaved to the knowledge of good and evil. He is flesh-based and living in the sensory realm. His mind cannot seem to grasp the concept of life as found in a seed. Even faith in God, as small as the tiniest seed, *mustard*, will spring forth and accomplish the "impossible." Carnal man cannot believe in order to see; he must see in order to believe. Could this be the reason John put into words the following?

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have gazed upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life--and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and we declare to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us--that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, in order that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1-3 EMTV

All around us, we see evidence of the life of God which began at creation, in man, plants and animals, all having seed to reproduce *after their kind*. God's crowning achievement, if we could so call it, was man who was created in His image. Even with all the glaring evidence, man remains in ignorance, as Paul said.

For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things made, both His eternal power and Divinity, so that they are without excuse. Because, having known God, they did not glorify Him as God, or give thanks, but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Romans 1:20-21 EMTV

Of course, since the fall, and since the Cross, man must be born anew if he is to have Life and fellowship with God. The physical reproduction of man continues, but it takes the new birth to place in him the new Seed which will live forever. This is something the "world" does not understand. And the principle of *living Seed* in believers is the same principle at work in the *seed* for our food, but it is beyond the scope of the comprehension of evil men. Such ignorance is evident in what they are now doing to God's creation. For one very critical example, let's look at . . .

Genetically modified seed

Most folks have probably heard the term "genetically modified food." It is grown from seed whose genetics have been modified, so as to render them incapable of reproducing *after their kind*. Farmers and food crop producers who sow these

corrupt seeds must buy new seed for sowing each year; they cannot retain seed for the next year's crop because there is no life in the genetically modified seeds. They produce one crop and die, never to live again. Any seed produced by the plant is devoid of reproductive capabilities.

What happens to the food grown from genetically modified seed? The life our wonderful Creator put in the seed of the first planting has come to an abrupt end. The health-giving nutrients required by our bodies are no longer available in dead seed. Evil, greedy man has no regard for life and health. It is no wonder that, as prophesied in Revelation, the twenty-four elders, giving thanks to God, say "*The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and to those that fear Your name, to the small and to the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.*" (Revelation 11:18 EMTV)

Around where we live, on the Canadian prairies, there are miles and miles of fields sown to produce a Canadian genetically modified crop, known as *Canola*. When the sun shines on these vast fields of yellow, flowering crops, it is beautiful. From the seeds, they process cooking oil which is widely used. It is one of the most harmful oils we could use to cook our food in.

The Psalmist David wrote comforting words and also speaks of the role of the "righteous" in the later verses.

Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shalt be fed. . . . I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread. **All the day long he deals graciously, and lends; and his seed is blessed.** Psalm 37:1-3, 25-26

Believing is seeing

"Worldly" tyrants are not the only ones going against God's plan for man. Evil, "religious" man uses New Testament "laws" to judge others and to herd them into compliance to rules which they lay out. This is nothing more than modern-day circumcision. Where is their faith in the *Seed of Life*, who is present in the person of His Holy Spirit, to do the work of grace in believers? Such present-day Pharisees are just as evil as their worldly counterparts who are pushing their agenda on the peoples of the earth. The only difference is that they do it in the Name of God; as though He has made them His "genetic seed modifiers." Just as surely as Genetically Modified Seed ends the life-cycle of God-created seed, so does the meddling of self-appointed judges and shepherds (wolves) whose efforts can never produce life in those they "disciple."

Even though the pseudo-believers read the same Bible as true believers, the reality of this passage escapes them: "*Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen.*" (Hebrews 11:1 EMTV) Only by *relying upon Christ for salvation* (believing/faith) can we truly see the "evidence of things not seen." Only Jesus, the Seed of Life can make us fit for eternity with Him. We cannot see the Seed but we know from the accounts in the Scriptures that the principle of "the seed" is true, and He is real!

The Seed lives on

Regardless of what man may do, he cannot stop the ultimate power of the unseen Seed. Man may attempt to change times and seasons and, in his anti-Christ endeavors, interfere in the life-cycle of God's creation. Whether it be through abortion; un-reproductive "mating"; destroying life through various poisonous means or any other diabolical thing, he will come to his end. What he failed to learn was that true Life continues; Jesus, the Seed of God, lives on!

Man may try to silence the mention of Jesus' Name, but nothing and no one can destroy that Living Seed. He is God, and He is coming as King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Every person in whom the Seed dwells, by His Spirit, will live on. Although man may take our physical life, he cannot touch the Seed! The outer shell of our mortal bodies may die, but our spirits will never perish. We must be like David and declare, "*The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?*" (Psalm 118:6)

The adversity in this life is only for a season. Whatever we may face, we know we can rely on the same God of whom we read in Genesis 1:27-28, about the "planting" of the first seed. *And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [Hebrew: 'fill'] the earth . . .* And in Revelation 21:4, *And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall be **no more death**, nor sorrow, nor crying out; neither shall there be any more pain, for **the former things have passed away.*** (EMTV) **The "fruit" of the Seed lives on!**

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