

**Following conversations between Brethren David Nodding and Ray Gregory, David wrote the following exposition of his beliefs :-**

## **As In Adam All Die**

The Bible teaches that because of the failure of Adam and Eve to keep the commandment that God had put them under they became subject to death. It is suggested by some that when God said to Adam “thou shalt surely die” that Adam should have died on that very day. But should we interpret a verse of Scripture on one verse alone? This is not wise. To understand what was meant by the saying we must look to another verse of Scripture - “And unto Adam he said... In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

This was the death sentence that was placed upon Adam, and was also to be passed on to all his posterity, not because they were guilty of the same crime that their father had committed, but because they were born into his line of descendants on whom the sentence of death had been passed. This is what the Apostle Paul says to the Roman brethren and sisters when he writes:- “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world (Kosmos) and death by sin.” That is into the world that God had created, of which the first chapter of Genesis says all things were very good, entered a situation that did not allow God to continue as it was before. Adam’s transgression caused that situation that no longer allowed him to remain in the place where he had been placed. This is seen when it says:-

“Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man.” So Paul says “so death passed upon all men.” The last part of Paul’s statement which is translated “for that all have sinned” should be better understood, “in whom all have sinned, or held guilty.” Put in other words -”in whom the death sentence continues through his posterity.

This is confirmed by Paul when he says:- “nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude (likeness) of Adam’s transgression.” Now the general thinking on these passages is that Adam’s transgression was the means of making all his descendants into weak failing creatures who became corrupted by his sin, and fail continually to keep God’s laws. And due to this thinking the teaching of a Christ who was not a human being came into existence; for how could one condemned by sinful flesh and all the weaknesses in man so live a perfect life before God? But what does the Scripture say? “And Yahweh Elohim said, Behold now man has become as one of us to know good and evil...”

To some, Jesus had to be the product of a new creation and not in Adam’s descendants. Others think that Jesus was part of the Creator that came down from heaven, and after fulfilling what was required of Him, went back to the Creator again. So what do we find in the Scriptures concerning Jesus? Paul calls Jesus, the man Christ Jesus, born of a woman in fulfilment of the prophecy made in Genesis 3:15, by which He is called the seed of the woman. The Greek is more emphatic (The Childbearing) so referring to the promise; also the Greek word is ‘*sperma*’ and nature has taught us that it is the male that produces the sperm, the female makes the egg, so to be called the seed of the woman must speak of some reason why the birth should take place in that way. The birth of Isaac was also a miracle, when Sarah is seen as one that is passed the age of giving birth.

As already said, some think that the birth of Jesus took place in this way because they believe that in some way Adam’s sin is passed on by the male seed, and Jesus, not having a natural father, would be free of all Adamic sin. Those who believe that Christ was a completely new creation, so free of Adam’s condemnation, are not accepting certain facts laid down in Scripture. First, that Jesus was a human being made of flesh and blood. Second, He was one who was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, or

human weaknesses. Third, He was of the seed of David according to the flesh and so a child of the Adamic race who was subject to death.

The Scriptures show of a person who during His life learnt how to become fully dependent on His God. He, like the Psalmist, had a wonderful love for God's Law (Psalm 119:97). And because of His love for that Law, loved righteousness and hated iniquity. To Jesus the greatest commandment of the law was to love God with all His being, and the second was His love for His neighbour. To Jesus the whole law and the teaching of the prophets was fulfilled on these two commandments, and on such Jesus established His life.

But to go back to why Jesus could not be seen as the Son of Joseph: - First, though Joseph was of the house and lineage of David, the child promised was to be of the woman and not of the man (Genesis 3:15) as we have already said. (This teaching was to be found in many of the ancient religions, where we find the mother with child was the central thinking of their worship). Second, for Joseph to want to put away Mary before their marriage was consummated shows that the child was not his. Thirdly, Joseph was a carpenter and was not of the school of the Rabbis and Jesus was destined to be a teacher in Israel as the one like unto Moses. As the Son of Joseph He would have been known as Rabbi Ben Joseph and not by His name Joshua (Saviour). Fourthly, the Messiah that was promised was spoken of as one of which God had said "I will be his Father and he shall be my son."

So Jesus fulfilled the Scripture that required Him to be the seed of the woman, of whom Mary was told, He shall be called the Son of the highest, and Yahweh Elohim shall give him the throne of His father David. (This also shows that Mary was a descendent of David). Being born of a woman, He was a child of flesh and blood, who, according to the law was circumcised on the eighth day. As a male that was a firstborn, He was called holy to Yahweh, and this presentation required an offering made unto Yahweh. (This shows that Jesus was born of a natural birth). And even after His resurrection He showed Himself to His disciples as one that still possessed flesh and bones and not like a spirit. (God is Spirit - no indefinite article).

Though Jesus did not die a natural death, being in the line of those that have been born after the flesh, if He had lived a normal life then His obedience to the law would have given Him a long life (Ephesians 6:2,3) but He would have eventually died.

Paul teaches us that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, but as we have seen, Jesus showed Himself to His disciples, having flesh and bone; here then Jesus is energized by Spirit, and so the last Adam became a living Spirit.

The Son of God "And declared to be the Son of God in strength, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). The day of Jesus' resurrection was to Paul the day spoken of in the second Psalm :- "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." And being a child of the Resurrection, He was become the head of the body, the Ecclesia: who is the first (arche) - the firstborn of dead ones. Did Jesus die to pay the price of Adam's transgression? The teaching of the Christian Church that makes Jesus the universal Saviour of the human race came into existence when the church sought to separate itself from its Jewish beginnings, and the God of Israel became the God of the human race. The separation of the children of Jacob to be God's own special people, had excluded the rest of the human race, but now that the special people have been rejected because they had rejected their Saviour; the church used the opportunity to establish Christ's sacrifice as a universal Saviour of mankind. But is this what the Bible teaches?

The Old Testament Scriptures, commencing at the end of chapter eleven of Genesis, introduces us to the family that God had brought from Ur of Chaldea. It was out of this family that the man Abraham came, and unto Abraham God made promises that would have their fulfilment in one that is called the seed of Abraham, and to the Apostle Paul this seed was the Christ. These promises made with Abraham would one day make of him a great nation and a blessing that would involve all the families of the soil (Hebrew - Admah. These promises were then confirmed with his son Isaac (Genesis 26:3,4) and then with his grandson Jacob. But the promises were not passed on to the next generation. When Jacob was

130, he and his family moved to Egypt and there they remained for the next 240 years. It was at the time when the children of Israel were bond slaves in that land of Egypt that the God of Heaven chose to take this nation as His people, and at Mount Sinai He made a covenant with them that so separated them from all other nations upon the face of the earth. So Israel became God's people and they agreed to accept His laws. God promised them that they would live in the land that He had promised to their fathers, but this covenant was established on the basis of obedience and would only continue if Israel fulfilled their side of the bargain. Old Testament history shows that Israel as a nation failed to keep His laws and commandments and God saw it necessary to speak of another covenant (Jeremiah 31:31). But before the Sinai covenant could be taken away it needed that one should fulfil it (Matthew 5:17).

Now before Jesus was born Mary was told that His name was to be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. Here then is the one that was to redeem the Jewish nation from the position they now found themselves in- He was born as one of their nation; as a child of the Law; to redeem them that were under the Mosaic Law. To achieve this it was necessary for Him to fulfil what God required of His people who lived under that law. And Jesus did this by living to those two commandments based on Love - loving God and loving his neighbour, and the Scripture says He loved them unto the end.

As the writer to the Hebrews taught, the blood of bulls and goats could never remove their sins, because the hearts of the people were far removed from their God. The blood of bulls and goats were offered on the day of Atonement every year, yet because they were commanded to be offered every year the law showed they would never make the nation perfect. As long as Israel remained under the law, disobedience continued and the nations sins mounted up; a sacrifice was needed to pay for these sins and this sacrifice had to be a human one (Hebrews 10:9,10). So when John saw Jesus he said "Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the (Jewish) world.

This use of the lamb figure is seen in the Passover Lamb, of which Jesus became, fulfilling His obligation to the lamb that redeemed a people out of Egypt, killed on the 14th of the first month; and yet in His death He paid the ransom in full (apolutrosis) for the transgressions that were under the first covenant (Hebrews 9:15). But being a Passover Lamb it was necessary to show faith in Him for their sins to be forgiven. If Jesus had represented the sacrifice on the day of Atonement then there would have been no need to show this faith in Him, for it would have automatically have blotted out there sins. So Jesus did not die to pay the price of Adam's sin and this is shown in that the law of death still remains, but Paul sees himself freed from the Law of sin and death, which was Mosaic (Romans 8:2). So to continue -

The Acts of the Apostles shows us that this message was rejected by many in Israel. To them Jesus had become a stumbling block, for they saw no need to go through another act of redemption; the covenant made at Sinai gave them their privileged position, they were the nation that Yahweh had chosen, they saw no need to change the status quo. But as far as God was concerned the life of Jesus Christ had achieved its purpose and the law and covenant given at Sinai had come to an end. Now in Jesus Christ a New Covenant had been established (Hebrews 8:7,8) and there were many Gentile converts to Judaism who saw in this new covenant a way of obtaining an equal status with the Jewish believers that was denied them in the covenant made at Sinai.

This new covenant in Christ again is limited to those who are called. Yet will have in its number those of every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue. So what do we know about this new covenant?

- 1) To those who accepted Christ and were baptised into Him, were no longer condemned by the Law they did not keep (Romans 8:1).
- 2) This New Covenant was established on the Abrahamic promises and allowed both Jew and Gentile to become members (Galatians 3:14). So creating a new body of people that God could call His people.
- 3) Those who were under the Mosaic Covenant who would not accept this teaching were to be seen as Ishmael; cast out and having no part in the new agreement (Galatians 4:28-31).

4) This New Covenant was established on two principles. Faith and Love, and the example to follow was none other than Jesus Christ Himself, recognising in Him the status of a child of God.

5) That those who come into this Covenant enter into God's Kingdom in a spiritual sense which allows the participants the privileges under that Covenant :-

5a). The right to call God our Father, or Abba Father.

5b) The right to have a Mediator, or Intercessor, to speak on our behalf.

5c). The right, as long as the covenant lasts, to learn of what is required to remain as an acceptable child of God.

5d). The right to a resurrection from the dead to face a judgment that will be an assessment on the life that has been lived in Christ, whether the character is of such that it can be immortalized.

5e). If accepted, the privilege will be given to reign with Jesus Christ over the house of Israel in the land that was promised to the fathers, and there be the means of establishing God's Kingdom upon the face of the earth, so that God can be glorified in His people.

5f). Like the Mosaic Covenant this one will come to an end at the coming of Christ.

David Nodding.

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The above exposition covers far too much ground to be answered in a few words and it was felt necessary to bring the subject back to the very beginning and to do this, during further conversation and as part of his reply, Ray gave David Nodding the booklet, "The Usage and Meaning of Muth Temuth and B'yom."

**In response to this booklet David wrote the following letter, starting with a short extract:-**

Taken from the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament the word MUTH = Die, Kill, Have one executed.

MUTH may refer to death by natural causes or a violent death. The latter may be as a penalty or otherwise. The root is not limited to the death of humans although it is used predominantly that way.

This is a universally used Semitic root for dying and death. The Canaanites employed it as the name of the god of death and the netherworld. Mot (of ANET, pp. 138-42).

In Hebrew it is occasionally used metaphorically as when Job speaks of the death of wisdom (12:2) Volume 1, page 1165.

1. The word Temuth is a simple active verb expressed as a future in the third person singular (feminine) He, She, It shall die. The word Muth is a masculine singular noun expressed as an infinitive or verbal noun. The Hebrew infinitives are expressed as an Absolute or as a Construct. The infinitive Absolute functions in syntax. The expression "he will keep" is expressed, "He will indeed (surely) keep," showing emphasis when it immediately precedes the finite verb, so to die or dying.

**2.** The writers of a small pamphlet (The Usage and Meaning of “Muth Temuth” and “B’Yom”) based on these two Hebrew words, seem to have some problem with the death sentence that was passed against Adam and Eve, and was to continue with those who descended from them;

**2A)** Because Adam and Eve did not die the very day that God’s commandment was broken, but only became mortal beings.

**2B)** The problem these two Hebrew words appear in other passages in the Old Testament, and

**2C)** if mortality was the punishment for the crime then how can those who have been made mortal be threatened with mortality again?

**3.** These writers think that because these two words are used again in the context of those who when threatened so had lost their lives the same day, then because Adam and Eve should have died on the same day they broke the law, and they believe that it was only the mercy of God that allowed our first parents to extend their days.

**4.** With the exception of Genesis 2:17 all other passages quoted are spoken to people who were subject to death or dying creatures.

**5.** The first two quoted references have to do with Abimelech and his nation in the days of Abraham and Isaac. Both these patriarchs, because of fear, had referred to their wives as their sisters, which had created a situation that in the case of Sarah, was taken into the house of Abimelech to become his wife; God’s threat to him in a dream was not that he would become a mortal being, but his life would be cut short. As Abimelech put the situation right, God did not have to carry out His threat.

**6.** The second passage is in the same context, but this time to the people Abimelech ruled over.

**7.** The case concerning Shimei (1 Kings 2:36-46) and Ahimelech of the house of Lev! (1 Samuel 22:16-18). Both had their lives shortened. Shimei because he returned to Jerusalem after being warned not to leave the place, and Ahimelech with another 85 Levites were murdered by Doeg the Edomite.

**8.** So in these first four references we can see that Muth Temuth has been used in different ways, some lost their lives and some that didn’t.

**9.** This is also the case with Jeremiah the Prophet ( 26:8-19). He was threatened but the death sentence was not carried out.

**10.** And Ahaziah eventually died because he looked to the pagan god of Ekron to be healed. God refused to heal him; his injuries eventually brought about his death. (Thou shalt not come down from thy bed).

**11.** As we have seen, none of these Bible passages prove what the writers so believe. Our conclusion on the matter is this, the words Muth Temuth, whoever they are spoken by, so controls the decision on how long that person’s life should continue, whether it is a short or long duration.

**12.** So let us return to the first time we come across this expression in Scripture (Genesis 2:17). Here the threat of death is made against a person that was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and said to be very good (verse 31). Adam at this time WAS NOT A MORTAL OR DYING CREATURE, when God’s commandment was broken, then God’s punishment came upon Adam; Adam’s life was now limited to a period of 930 years (See Genesis 5:5). Those years were to be experienced with hard work (By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread) and would continue till he returned to the ground from which he had been created (for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return Genesis 3:19).

**13.** Now note, that this punishment was exacted out upon Adam and Eve before there is anything said about the skins of an animal that God clothed them with (verse 21). That is to say that the animal’s

sacrifice was not so that Adam and Eve could continue to live, but so that they could have a means of approaching their God.

**14.** Being removed from the Garden (that was their previous home), any desire to make communication with their God required bringing a gift. When Abel approached God his gift was acceptable, but Cain's was not (Hebrews 11:4).

**15.** It was the promise made in Genesis 3:15 on which the hope of a restoration of what had been lost was the means of separating those who sought to please their God and those who pleased themselves.

**16.** The human race are all the children of Adam and will die. This will continue as long as the Adamic race exists. Paul's words to the Corinthians - The last enemy is death (1 Corinthians 15:26). This word death speaks of a cessation of life. It comes to young and old alike, regardless whatever religion or beliefs they have.

**17.** The only hope of life that will not be subject to this death state is to be found in the man Christ Jesus; this is what the Apostle Peter taught the Jews in his day (Acts 4:12). And Paul's teaching on immortality was how this death state could be overcome (1 Corinthians 15:54, 55). Now this promise of life in Christ is conditional on character, what has been promised to all in Christ is a raising from the dead, and it is only those who are acceptable (those who are conformed to the image of the Son - Romans 8:29) that will be made immortal (Romans 2:6-10).

David Nodding.

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**In Reply:-**

Thank you for the trouble you have gone to in producing the facts you give from the "Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament" and the observations in your first paragraph concerning the grammar used in this matter, all of which go to confirm our understanding and has already been taken into account in our booklet "The Meaning and Usage of Muth Temuth and B'Yom" and give full support to our views.

For ease of reference I have numbered certain paragraphs of your letter and below used the same numbers in reply to each section.

**2.** The writers have no problem with the death sentence passed upon Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve had been placed under the law of sin and death when God said to them "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." When they transgressed they became liable to the consequence of breaking that law.

While by the grace of God they were not put to death in the day of their transgression as they expected, they no longer had any right to their life as it was now under condemnation and this is the life which Adam passed down to his children – a condemned life as Paul explains.

**2A.** The life Adam was given at creation was not made to last forever; it was a natural life with a limited span as chosen by God; this is the same with all other forms of natural life on this earth; all made very good.

In theology mortal is a legal term and refers to being under the condemnation of the law through transgression. (This is the sense in which you are using it here and we can agree with this, though it is rarely used today in this way).

**2B).** The two Hebrew words “Muth Temuth” in the fourteen other references prove the meaning in Genesis 2:17 beyond all doubt. We have no problem with this, but are consistent in applying one meaning only, wherever they occur – it is certainty of being put to a premature death.

**2C).** You mention that the sentence was mortality but this is impossible as it could not be used a second time. Once a person is mortal then there can be no threat of being made mortal again. However we see that God uses it again in the case of Ahimelech in 1 Kings 2:36-46. It clearly means a premature, violent death. And such is the meaning in every case whether carried out or not as the case may be.

**3.** I think I understand your meaning to be that because in reference to the other fourteen cases, the threat was carried out in some instances but it was not carried out in the case of Adam and Eve, then we must put this down to the mercy of God. Yes, of course we do. God did not tell Adam and Eve of the possibility of forgiveness until the need arose. From subsequent events it can be seen that this was the case. The sacrifice of the animal or animals in Eden illustrate God’s mercy and loving kindness which we see time and time again throughout the scriptures. Again, when Moses read out the law to the children of Israel after leaving Egypt they promised, “All that the Lord hath said we will do.” While Moses was again in the mountain to receive further instructions from God we find that the children of Israel broke the law which they had promised to keep. These further instructions which Moses brought down contained how they may receive forgiveness for breaking the law. This seems a as good a parallel case as one can find, and it was God’s design.

**4.** You say that with the exception of Genesis 2:17, all other passages quoted are spoken to people who were subject to death. To be logical, we say that in every case it was spoken to all people including Adam and Eve whom you suppose were immortal.

**5.** The first two quotes being Genesis 20:3-7 and Genesis 26:11. You agree with our understanding when it comes to Abraham and Abimelech that the threat was that Abimelech’s life would be cut short unless he returned Sarah to Abraham, which he promptly did, and so the threat was then automatically withdrawn; also you say “God’s threat to him in a dream was not that he would become a mortal being, but that his life would be cut short.” We wholeheartedly agree with you and if you can see this is the case here then why do you refuse to apply it to Adam and Eve? We do, because it is the reasonable thing to do.

**6.** Here again we have the same context, so we apply it in the same way, and we see the reason for deviation by others as an endeavour on their part to find support for false doctrine.

**7.** The case of Shimei is in many ways identical to the situation in which Adam and Eve found themselves as in each case a commandment had been broken, but in the case of Adam and Eve their lives were spared, but Shimei was put to death at the first humanly possible opportunity.

**8.** You say “in the first four references we see that Muth Temuth has been used in different ways, some lost their lives and some didn’t.” Really, David, what logic is this? The words were applied and used in an identical way - the only differences being whether righteousness and mercy was exercised or not. God was merciful, and David was righteous, but Doeg was neither. The words carried identical meaning for all concerned. By what authority do you say they meant different things to different people? The Theological Word-book does not support you and you violate your own paragraph (1) above and so set your own problems.

**9.** It is clear how this threat was understood by Jeremiah - in just the same way as it was by others to whom it was made in all fifteen cases, but just because the threat was made it does not have to be carried out.

**10.** The case of Ahaziah is no exception. Had he turned to God in faith instead of appealing to a false god he may well have received mercy and lived longer.

**11.** You say “As we have seen, none of these Bible passages prove what the writers so believe” Do they not? We say they prove our case beyond dispute. Your conclusion on the matter is just not true. It is not true to say that whoever speaks the threat controls the length of life of the person concerned, for in some of the cases considered it is seen not to be so. Take the case of Jeremiah for example. The threat against him was not carried out because the ones making it in the first place were overruled. See Jeremiah 26:24. The same in the case of Jonathan; here Saul was overruled and Jonathan “died not.” Conclusions like yours are bad because they can and do lead to all sorts of false ideas, but matters must be reasoned out more carefully if one is to find the truth taught in Scripture.

**12.** As you say, the threat of death was made against a person who was made in the image of God and said to be very good. It is here I believe that you start to go wrong, for if I am right in supposing you to believe that because Adam was made in the image of God then he was not mortal because God is not mortal, then such an argument is flawed. But as you do not state clearly that this is what you believe then I may be guilty of making a false assumption. However, if I understand you correctly regarding your belief then the argument is invalid because it would be logical and reasonable to say that because Adam was made in the image of God, and God is Spirit and immortal, then Adam was made Spirit and immortal. This you will not agree with and neither do we, but to say Adam was not created mortal is an assumption, and you cannot reason it from Scripture, for the evidence points to the fact that he was made with a limited natural life.

That Adam was made very good does not mean he was made different to the other animals for they were also made very good. All God’s creatures were created with a natural life span. Indeed, all the natural creation which has life, plant and animal, were created so as to grow and die from illness, disease, violence or old age, and we do well not to assume Adam was any different in this respect. “First the natural...”

So how was man made in the image of God? It was in his intelligence, with his ability to reason, and with reason he was given choice. He could, of his own free will respond to God’s love. God gave him a spiritual aspect to thought and reason. In short, it is all the things which make man mentally higher than the other animals. But in physical make up and bodily functions he is the same as the other animals which, as we have said, were also made very good, yet created mortal.

If, as you suppose, the words when first used applied to mortality we have utter confusion, for you agree that they can never be used to mean mortality a second time, so you apply a different meaning for them whenever used after Genesis 2:17. We are consistent in applying that one meaning throughout. Mortality was not the punishment. Violent death as in the second death is the punishment.

**13.** You seem to lay some store by the fact that the “punishment was exacted...before there was anything said about the skins of an animal that God clothes them with.” But it makes no difference whether the pronouncement (surely you don’t mean exaction?) of the “punishment” was made before or after the sacrifice of the animals. Certainly the animal’s sacrifice was “so that they could have a means of approaching their God.” They could not approach God if they were dead. But all the circumstances of life outside of Eden were not the threat of which God had warned them. This was instead of exacting the punishment and allowing Adam and Eve to become the federal head of the human race.

**14.** We agree that when in the Garden Adam and Eve had continual communion with the Elohim which they lost once they sinned, but I’m not sure what you have in mind when you say that “any desire to make communication with their God required bringing a gift.” What gift? It was God who slew the animal to provide the covering. That was God’s gift to them.

Approach to God has always required humility and simple trust, and is expressed by Jesus in the words “Suffer little children to come unto me... for of such is the Kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” The sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving has ever been the only pleasing gift whenever one approaches God, and for Adam and Eve it was the same. The ritual offerings and sacrifices, as under the Law of Moses for example, were for specific occasions and we are not told that Adam and Eve had to offer an animal as

a gift every time they wished to “make communion” with God. This again is presumption. Cain’s offering was not of faith.

15. Genesis 3:15 “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” This certainly refers to the Gift of God in Jesus Christ for the sins of the world and as such is the means of separating those who will serve God and those who will not, but it was not done to restore what was lost by Adam and Eve; but was a means of calling out a people for His Name to grant them eternal life as a free gift.

16. This is not so. There are at least two who have not died – Enoch and Elijah, and apart from those there will be many more, as the Apostle Paul tells us “We shall not all die...” The fact that we die now is because our Lord has not returned, but when He is here there will be no reason at all for those who choose to be His servants to die but will continue to the end of the thousand years reign of Christ and then be changed to immortality as the saints will have been at the coming of Christ; the last enemy is death, as Paul says, and this will eventually be ended at the end of the thousand years, but till then death will come to those who reject Christ or are ignorant of Him.

17. “Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This promise is conditional on faith and obedience; “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you” said Jesus. All “in Christ” have been promised eternal life, and will be raised immortal. They will not suffer the second death. Those who suffer the second death are those who have rejected Christ and not those who are “in Christ.”

The threat to Adam was that he should die “in the day” (“B’Yom”) of 24 hours and this matter you have not dealt with. “Muth temuth” conveys the idea of certain death and “B’Yom” tells us that death was to have been in the very day of transgression. Yet you create insurmountable problems for yourself by denying the meaning of “Muth temuth.”

Russell Gregory.

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**Correspondence with David Nodding continued with the following letter -**

(The paragraphs have again been numbered for ease of reference - Editor).

1. Because Russell believes that Adam and Eve were created as mortal beings, then the human race are not subject to death because their first parents broke a commandment, but because they were created mortal, and the statement made by Paul that “As in Adam all die” then, does not mean anything.
2. Because Russell believes that God should have carried out His death threat upon Adam and Eve, on the day they broke His commandment and this he concludes, because the two Hebrew words appear in other places in Scripture. (Yet it has been shown, that the people to whom these words were spoken, also were not always executed on the same day). His answer to this is that they escaped it because of their faith, or God overruled the situation.
3. Why should God create dying creatures we ask ourselves, when he so required His creation to be His children (Luke 3:38, which was the son of God).
4. We are told that Adam was created in the image and likeness of God, which you say, refers to his Intelligence with the ability to reason, he was given choice, and had free will to respond to God’s love and the only thing you have missed out, is that he exhibited a being that was living and not dying.

5. As I can't accept your statement in paragraph 4, because I teach that Adam was not created as a dying creature, but became one by breaking God's commandment, and so to me Genesis 2:17 is an exception.

6. In paragraph 9 you think I am not being logical because I pointed out that where we find these two words employed, that sometimes the death sentence is carried out, and some- times it is not. The reason I wrote this was because the booklet that has been written to explain these two words says:-

"If it is true that the penalty threatened by God, to be inflicted on Adam should he sin, was that he should become a dying man, it follows of necessity, that such a threat cannot again be used, by God (or man) against either Adam or any of his descendants. The same threat, however, is repeated in several cases recorded in the Old Testament, of which the following are examples. In every passage cited the same word appears in the Hebrew Scriptures the only variations being grammatical as the verb is used in the 2nd or 3rd person."

This statement implies that because we interpret the words *Muth Temuth* in relation to Adam with him becoming a dying person, then the same interpretation must apply in all other cases. And if we apply this threat of becoming mortal to all the other cases, then logic does not make sense, and this is true, but I did not say this in my paper. What I said was that whoever speaks the words to whomsoever, so made the decision when the sentence of death was to be carried out, whether by a violent death, there and then, like in the case of Ahimelech, when Doeg the Edomite murdered him with another 85 priests, or like Jeremiah who we believe died a natural death.

7- It is because you believe that Adam was created a mortal creature that you have difficulty in accepting this interpretation. After Adam had sinned it is recorded that his span of life was 930 years.

8. As for Enoch and Elijah not dying, something would have certainly have been spoken of in the New Testament, yet in Hebrews 11, after speaking of Enoch's translation, can still say "ALL THESE DIED IN FAITH."

9. Just accept it Russell, the death sentence on the Adamic race came about because Adam and Eve broke God's law.

10. As Paul wrote: "as by one man sin entered into the world, AND DEATH BY SIN; AND SO DEATH PASSED UPON ALL MEN. (Romans 5:12).

David Nodding.

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### **My reply to David's letter:-**

Dear David, Thank you for your further letter.

1. You misunderstand "as in Adam all die" (1 Corinthians 15:22). The verse reads: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Paul is explaining that we can be either "in Adam" or we can be "in Christ." However, whether we are "in Adam" or "in Christ" makes no difference to dying a natural death. Therefore it is evident the Apostle is not here considering natural death. What he is considering is a legal position. That is to say, we are either legally "in Adam" or we are legally "in Christ." It will be seen that natural death applies to both. It is vitally important we make this distinction between natural death and this legal position of which Paul speaks. Jesus Christ made the same distinction when He said, "Let the dead bury their dead;" He was saying in effect, 'Let the legally dead (though living) bury their dead (those legally and literally dead).' The legally dead being those "in Adam."

2. I do not believe in any such things as you say. You make two false assumptions here: **(a)** I did not say God should have carried out His death threat on Adam and Eve, and **(b)** I did not say anyone escaped the death threat because of their faith.

With regard to **(a)** - God showed mercy on Adam and Eve and thereby on all who have been born of them ever since, in giving them natural life.

With regard to **(b)** - one cannot say that Ahimelech and the 85 priests lacked faith and were therefore murdered.

(To say “God overruled the situation” can be said of almost anything).

3. Turn the question round and ask, why should not God create man corruptible? Either man was created corruptible or he was created incorruptible. If he was created incorruptible then he could never die, i.e. he could not later be changed to corruptible because that would mean he was never incorruptible in the first place. However, if he was created corruptible, he can be changed to incorruptible whenever God, in His mercy, love and grace decrees. Obviously Adam died, therefore he was created corruptible. It is unnecessary to pretend, suppose or invent any other condition once a right understanding of events in Eden are appreciated.

4. Your use of the word “dying” is very questionable. Adam was created a being that was living - and ageing for 930 years. You misuse the word by saying or implying that he was dying for 930 years. Did he not live for 930 years? That’s what the Bible says and that’s what I believe.

5. There is no need to make *Muth Temuth* mean something different in Genesis 2:17 from the other 14 instances cited. A right understanding of these events in Eden enhances one’s appreciation of the Atonement without straining interpretations.

6. We say *Muth Temuth* is the threat of execution in every instance – without exception for it literally means “you will certainly die. This threat does not refer to our natural death.

You repeat the point you made in your earlier letter that - “Whoever speaks the words to whomsoever, so made the decision when the sentence of death was to be carried out, whether by a violent death, there and then, like in the case of Ahimelech, when Doeg the Edomite murdered him with another 85 priests, or like Jeremiah who we believe died a natural death.”

But this isn’t true. For example, in the case of Jeremiah it was the priests and the prophets who threatened him with execution (Jeremiah 26:8 - “Thou shalt surely die”) but they did not get their way, because the princes prevented his execution. (Jeremiah 26:16. - “This man is not worthy to die”). We must ever be consistent in our handling of the word of God.

7. It is not a case of having difficulty accepting your interpretation (I think you mean explanation), but a matter of utterly rejecting it as being unscriptural, containing several assumptions.

8. The New Testament reaffirms that Enoch was translated that he should not see death (Hebrews 11:5); and regarding Elijah, I see three references in the New Testament implying he was alive at that time, and they are:- Revelation 1:1, the angel who was given the Revelation by Jesus Christ was, I believe, Elijah, and Revelation 19:10, “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God:...” and Revelation 22:8 & 9, “...I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then said he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.” I cannot prove beyond all doubt that this was Elijah but I seriously ask who else could it have refer to?

9. You say “Just accept it, Russell.” Well, well, well! Whatever happened to “Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good”? Our Creator exhorts us to reason with Him, but you say, “Just accept it”!!

No, David! I say that to accept the word of my fellow-beings on their say-so is to fall into the same trap used by Apostate Churches who say to their congregations, "We have worked it out for you. Just accept what we say." It is the language of foolish popery. They did not want their congregations to think for themselves and neither did Robert Roberts when he said "We have passed the investigation stage." If I cannot find reason and proof from the Scriptures for my beliefs, and through the exercise of prayer and study, then I will wait till kingdom come, if necessary, but I will not accept man's teaching as though it were Bible truth.

But then you go on to say "The death sentence on the Adamic race came about because Adam and Eve broke God's Law." I agree. This is not a contradiction on my part but a more reasonable understanding of the word of God. A criminal who is to be put to death for his crime knows he would have to die in time - but after sentence is passed he finds his life is to be cut short by execution. Was not Adam told that in the day he transgressed he would die? Where lies the difference? One is a natural death common to all men as Moses called it and the other is execution as a punishment, e.g. Korah, Dathan and Abiram come to mind, Numbers 16:29, 30, "If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertaineth unto them, and they go down quick into the pit, then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD." Therefore natural death - "the common death of all men" - is not the punishment for sin. Again, the punishment for sin comes after judgment. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27).

**10.** Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that (or, in whom) all have sinned." So now let us reason from Scripture.

In 1 above I pointed out how Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul used the term "death" in the sense of a legal position.

Now let us ask what was the death sentence which came upon the Adamic race as a result of Adam and Eve breaking God's Law. We find the answer to this in the epistle to the Romans and I would here like to quote at length from a booklet by Brother Phil Parry, entitled "By Man Came Death - What Death?" where on page 5 he writes;

"Paul has been used to reveal the Federal position concerning "In Adam" and "In Christ" through the epistle to the Romans; it remains for us to understand it first and then accept it as a revelation.

If it were not for Paul's epistle to the Romans, the Gentiles would have had little idea of God's dealings with all men in general on the Federal Principle, for we see from Genesis to Malachi that His main dealings were with the direct descendants of Adam, Noah, Abraham and the twelve Patriarchs with their tribes... but a reading of Genesis alone, without the revealed mystery (secret) through Jesus and the Apostles, especially Paul, would leave us in ignorance of the Federal Principle in God's Plan of Redemption and Salvation through His only begotten Son Jesus laying down His life; which was shown first in type in Eden and finally in substance on the tree at Calvary...

Then on page 6 he goes on;

The doctrine of predestination in the New Testament epistles and the fact we are alive, indicates to us in retrospect that God intended to spare Adam's life but He did not indicate this fact to Adam before he sinned, nor did it make part of the serpent's statement true - "Ye shall not surely die," for if we understand Romans 5 we shall detect by logical reasoning that Adam died when he broke the Law.

You may ask, in what way and by what reasoning can you say this? Fair enough. Turn to Romans 5:15 and you will read, "For if through the offence of one many be dead..."

I ask, How were the many dead, and when? The answer is obvious; they were dead when the offence was committed.

And how were they dead? They were in the loins of Adam when he sinned.

How then did Adam die? He died by Law, his life was in forfeit to the Law and its claim was hanging over him, therefore if Adam met that claim physically, he and all in his loins would have perished.

1 John 3:14 - What death can he abide in if still physically alive? It is the moral and legal - not the physical, which governs the position.

If therefore in this legal position the many unborn were dead, then we must conclude legally that Adam was dead, but how (we might ask), could predestination work if Adam were to be put to death, and consequently all who were predestinated? The Apostle said, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (see Acts 15:18). How was God to replenish the earth with a people who would reciprocate His attributes, to become a success? The answer was already in the foreknowledge and plan - a new man who would justify His condemnation of Adam's sin, in a likeness of the same Adamic nature in which sin was committed and would lay down His own natural life instead of the life which Adam had forfeited by disobedience. This was demonstrated and typified in the lamb slain from the foundation of the world and referred to in Revelation 13:8, and by which Adam's sin, classified and referred to by John Baptist as "the sin of the world," was remitted and taken away."

Rather a long quote but I felt it necessary to cover the outline points of the subject and I am sending you the booklet as well which I hope you will kindly find time to read, and study the importance of its message.

Sincerely your brother in the quest for the truth in Jesus Christ,                      Russell.

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