

SUMMER 2019

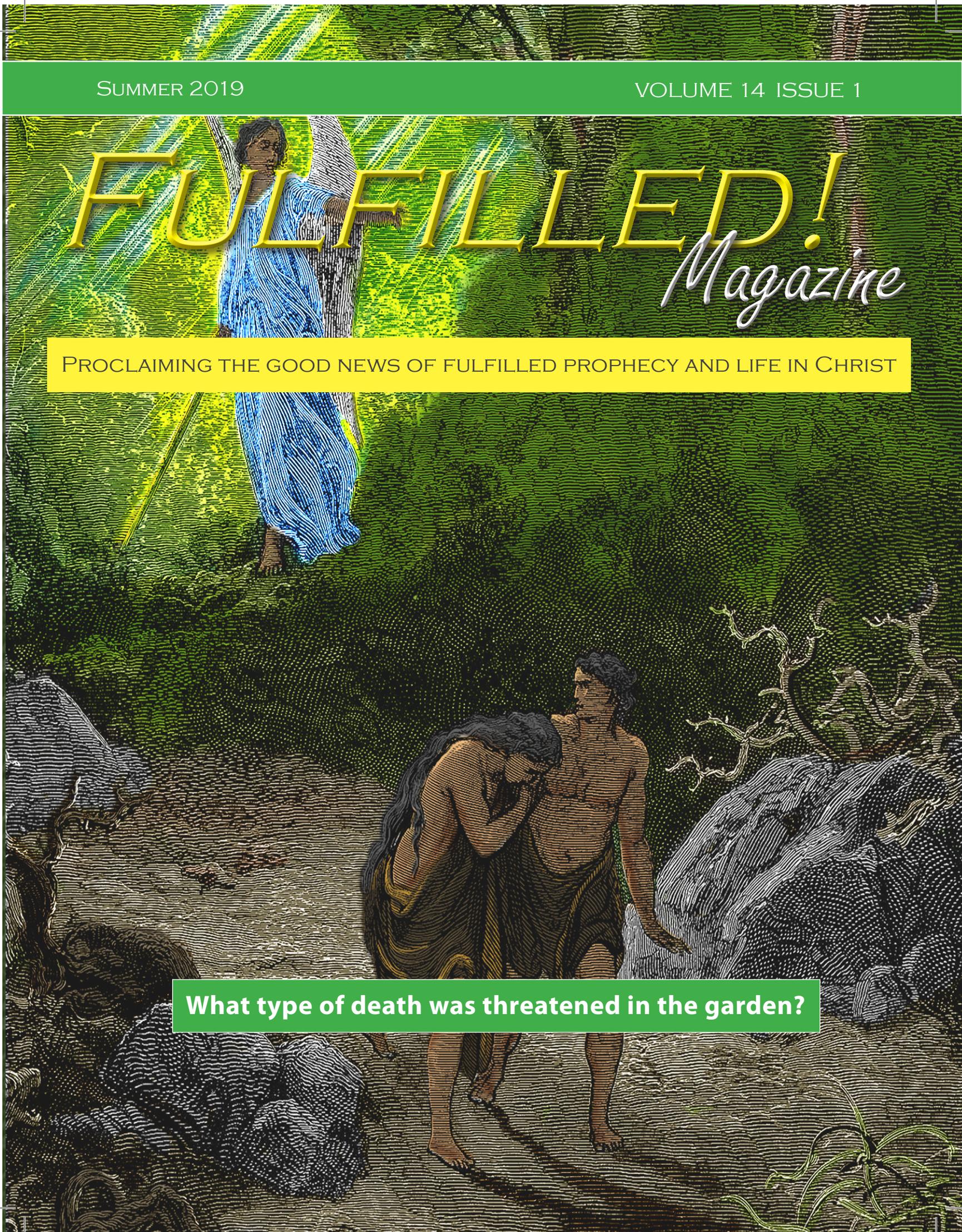
VOLUME 14 ISSUE 1

# FULFILLED!

*Magazine*

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST

What type of death was threatened in the garden?





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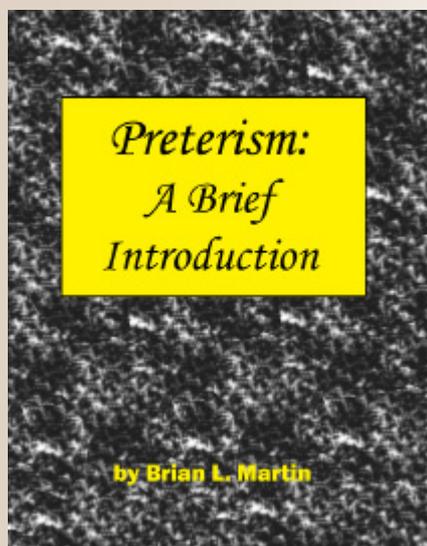


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(Please note that this booklet is currently not available from FCG.)

- 4. **Editor's Note**  
In this issue we are embarking on a series of articles dealing with the most divisive subject in preterism—the resurrection.

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- 5. **Mailbag**  
Catch some of the letters to the editor and comments on articles and features from the readers.

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- 6. **Perspectives - Death in the Garden**  
A panel of respondents list what kind of death they believe was threatened to Adam and Eve in the garden.

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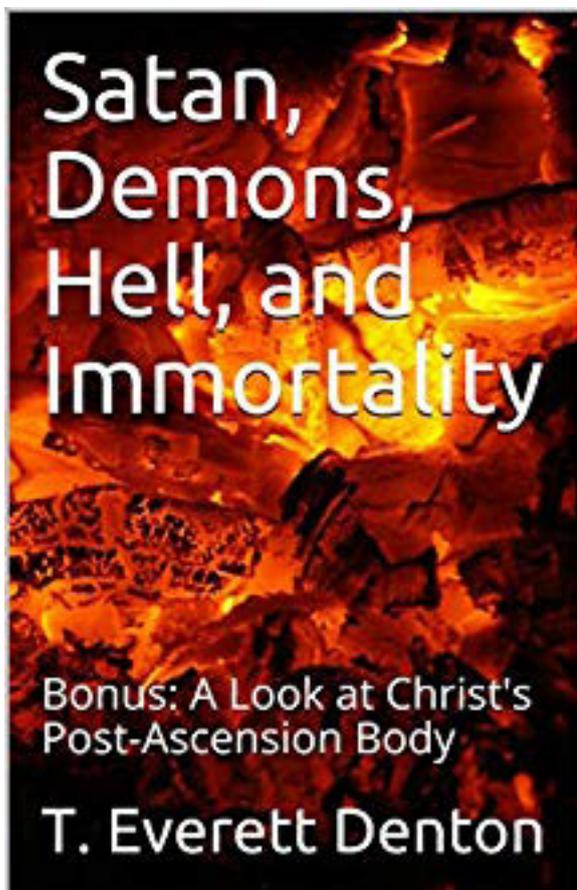
- 8. **Death of Adam - Ed Stevens**  
An IBV perspective of the death of Adam and Eve.

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- 10. **The Threat of Death - Alan Bondar**  
A CBV perspective of the death of Adam and Eve.

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- 14. **A Note on Genesis 2:17 - Mark Honegger**  
A linguistic analysis of Genesis 2:17.



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*If a truly Berean—or open-minded person (cf. Acts 17:11) spends the time necessary to execute an exhaustive study of biblical eschatology (or end times / last days), he/she will discover that it affects numerous topics which he/she may or may not have ever considered it affecting, and this happened to me several years ago.*

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## Editor's Note...

After five years of what seemed like endless remodeling projects, my wife and I finally finished our major renovations. We made a major push the first quarter of this year to wrap things up and get this off of our plate (you know, that plate that everyone has too much on). Although we still have projects we'd like to undertake, these are more along the lines of "when we're in the mood" kind of projects. Having the major projects behind us is a welcome relief and has greatly reduced my stress and freed up some much needed time.

As you may have surmised, all of this activity is the reason I was unable to produce a spring issue; thus we're starting 2019 with the summer issue. In this issue we are continuing our examination of the various views of the resurrection within preterism. Based upon one of the panel's prevalent responses in our previous issue to the question "where do CBV and IBV first part ways," in this issue we are focusing on the type of death threatened to Adam and Eve for eating from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. I hope you find the articles enlightening and thought-provoking, and use them as springboards for your continued study on these issues.

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We are also grateful for those readers who directly support us financially. Many of you have consistently given over the years, and I hope now that our house remodeling days are behind us I will be able to be more consistent in the various aspects of FCG; responding to emails and phone calls, producing the magazine, etc.

Kayla's cancer continues to remain in remission, and now that the major house projects are behind us we intend to renew our focus on healthy eating and exercise. We look forward to slowly landscaping our property and getting some gardens established to produce some healthy food. Our next major milestone will be my retirement, for which we will be seeking God's guidance in the coming months.

Blessings,

*Brian*



Engraving by Gustave Dore  
Colorized by Jeff McCormack

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## Mailbag...

Thank you both for all of your efforts in putting together your magazine. We are sure it has blessed many people out there. Also putting their minds to thinking. We especially appreciate Jim Moore's articles. Lord continue to bless you both.

*Garrett & Beverly, CA*

I praise the Lord for you and the magazine. After reading "Critical Christian Thinking" and the perspectives of the men in the article, I think (in my understanding) I am a hybrid. I was also blessed by James Moore's article—great food. Thanks for being there.

*Marjorie, PA*

Keep up the good work. In Christ's love,

*David, OR*

I sure want our preterist faith to grow. I just don't see why our Father chose me to turn me to this faith. God bless all of you who make it possible.

*Bonita, MS*

May the Lord bless you brother. Keep up the good work,

*Mark, AZ*

“  
I praise the Lord  
for you and the  
magazine.”

# Perspectives

## What kind of death(s) was threatened to Adam and Eve in the garden?

**O**NE OF THE COMMON THEMES which presented itself in last issue's survey of where CBV and IBV first part ways was the definition of the term "body" in the resurrection passages. Yet it seems that how one defines this body, and thus the resurrection, is closely tied to the nature of death threatened to Adam and Eve for eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Whether one views the resurrection in a spiritual/corporate light or a physical/individual light depends upon how they view the death of Adam and Eve in the garden. Charles Meek summed it up succinctly when he wrote:

"The IBV recognizes two types of death (spiritual and physical) mentioned in the Bible, thus requiring two types of resurrection. While the CBV acknowledges that physical death exists, they hold that only spiritual death requires a resurrection."

Based upon this, I asked our panel the following question:

How many deaths do you see threatened in Eden, and how many resurrections are required?

We have Charles Meek's response from the previous issue, and Ed Stevens and Alan Bondar are presenting full articles describing the IBV and CBV views of death in the garden.



### David Curtis - Hybrid

David is Pastor of Berean Bible Church in Chesapeake, VA  
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I think the biblical writers use both of what we call the IBV and CBV. However, as regards the rising again, I think it's just spiritual. As Paul says, "*The first man is out of the earth, made of dust; the second man is the Lord out of heaven; as is the one made of dust, such as these are also the ones made of dust; and as is the heavenly one, such as these are also the heavenly ones; and, according as we did bear the image of the one made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly one*" (1 Cor 15:47-49). So if Christ has a body, then so shall we, but not the one made of dust.

I don't think that physical death was part of the curse. I think that dying physically was always part of man's constitution.

I see one death threatened in Eden, spiritual death, and one resurrection, spiritual.



### Jerel Kratt

Jerel is an agricultural scientist and former Church of Christ minister, and has spoken at several preterist conferences.  
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I don't think physical death was introduced at Adam's sin. I think it was a covenantal death, but the consequence was ultimately meted out at physical death (which pre-existed).



### Rod Stokes - IBV

Rod is pastor of Open Door Church in Maple Ridge, BC Canada, and conducts yearly missionary training with pastors/leaders in various countries.  
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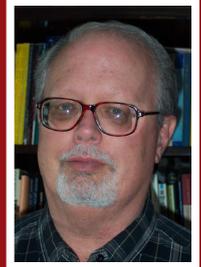
The threat to Adam in the garden was an "all-encompassing/comprehensive death" (including physical, spiritual, and eternal death) which had to be executed "on the very day Adam sinned" (i.e., "in the day you eat" Gen 2:17; 3:5).

# Death in the Garden

I don't think biological death is punishment at all. Adam had to eat to live before he sinned. He had a digestive system, esophagus, 3 colons, stomach, etc., etc., just like us. If he didn't eat, he would die biologically. Biological death isn't our enemy, nor a punishment for sin. That leaves . . . the death Adam died when he ate (Gen 2:17), and learned good and evil (Gen 3.5)

## Samuel Dawson - CBV

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I do not see any death and/or its related resurrection under consideration in Eden other than a covenantal, relationship, or fellowship (which I suppose could be called "spiritual" if defined accurately in context) death and resurrection.

## Tony Denton - CBV

Tony is administrator of the Preterist Network Registry and author of commentaries on Hebrews and James.  
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I have identified five "deaths" in the Bible, all of which were directly or by implication threatened in the garden. These are:

1. Moral/spiritual death (moral alienation and estrangement from God; Eph 4:18);
2. Juridical death (God's judicial verdict condemning sin, resulting in loss of communion with God; e.g., "dead in trespasses and sin"; Eph 2:1, 5; Col 2:13);
3. Physical death (death of the physical body in consequence of loss of access to the tree of life; Gen 3:22-24);
4. Hadean death (sequestration of the spirit in Hades pending the eschatological resurrection; 1 Cor 15:55; Rev 1:18);
5. Eternal death (the "2nd death" or Gehenna; viz., annihilation or Eternal Conscious Torment, depending on one's view; cf. Rev 2:11; 20:6, 14, 15).

These are progressive, each proceeding and leading to the one next following. Eternal death would have been the inevitable result of Adam's transgression had God not interposed the cross of Christ and therefore must be understood as implicit in the warning of death in the garden. There are five resurrections, corresponding to each of these "deaths."

1. Moral/spiritual resurrection or enlightenment (Eph 5:14);
2. Juridical resurrection (acquittal or justification from sin through obedience to the gospel and baptism; Rom 6:3-6; Col 2:12, 13);
3. Physical resurrection (only isolated cases exist of this);
4. Hadean resurrection (e.g., the "first resurrection" consisting of the soul's rest in Hades Paradise; Rev 20:4-6; cf. 14:13);
5. Eternal life of the soul/spirit in heaven, initially at the eschatological resurrection from Hades in AD 70, but now at the time of physical death (Rev 20:11-15; cf. 2 Cor 5:1-10).

## Kurt Simmons - IBV

Kurt is president of the Bi-Millennial Preterist Association.

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Only one death threatened and only one eschatological resurrection required. God did not have to threaten man to naturally do what he would naturally do, i.e. return to dust since he was made of dust. Natural death is man's appointment and it is why in view of Christ's consummated redemption, natural death remains a part of the human experience.

## William Bell - CBV

William is the founder of All Things Fulfilled online ministries and author of several books, audios, and DVDs on Covenant Eschatology.

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# Perspectives

“. . . in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

## Death of Adam: Spiritual-Only or Physical Also?

by Edward E. Stevens

### Introduction

There are two major views on resurrection within the Preterist movement: the *Collective Body View* (CBV), and the *Individual Body View* (IBV). These two views part ways at the very beginning of the Bible in regard to how they each define the “death” that God threatened and carried out against Adam “on the day” he sinned. The CBV defines it as a *spiritual-only* death, while the IBV sees it as a *comprehensive* death, including both physical and spiritual death.

Some might wonder how physical death (in any sense) could be included in the death that was threatened against Adam’s sin, especially since Adam did not personally die physically on that day. We will explain that here in this article.

The CBV affirms that the *only* kind of death Adam died on the day he sinned was *spiritual*. They deny Adam died physically *in any sense* “on the day” he sinned. One of the leading CBV advocates explains how crucial a *spiritual-only* Death of Adam is to their collective body framework:

[The] death of Adam, which is the end time resurrection work, has **nothing to do with biological death**, but with the loss of spiritual fellowship with God. . . if you mis-identify the death of the Garden, you will of necessity wrongly identify the nature of the resurrection in [the whole] New Testament. If your protology (doctrine of the beginning) is **wrong**, your eschatology (doctrine of the end) is destined to be **misguided**. [Preston, *We Shall Meet*, p 4, boldface added]

To wrongly identify the death of Adam is to **wrongly construct eschatology**. To wrongly identify the nature and focus of Christ’s substitutionary, atoning work is to **misinterpret . . . the story of redemption**. We must place our understanding of . . . all eschatological passages within the proper context and framework or we are **doomed to miss and/or misconstrue their message**. [Preston, *We Shall Meet*, p 20, boldface added]

Do you see what Preston has just admitted here? This means that if the CBV concept of a *spiritual-only* Death of Adam is mistaken, then both their protology and eschatology are “wrong” and “misguided,” including their explanation of Christ’s substitutionary atonement and the whole story of redemption. And that would negate their entire collective body framework which is built on their assumption that the Death of Adam was *spiritual-only*.

On the other hand, if the CBV is right in their assertion that the Death of Adam was *spiritual-only*, then Christ did not need to die *physically* in order to overcome the *spiritual-only* death of Adam, and the physical death of Jesus was not His substitutionary death for our atonement. But that flies in the face of Hebrews 9:22 which states, “*without the shedding of [Christ’s] blood there is no forgiveness.*” The CBV attempts to avoid this dilemma by redefining “blood” in Hebrews 9:22 as being “spiritual blood.” Steve Baisden, Holger Neubauer, and Don Preston defended this idea on FaceBook in October 2018.

So, we see that the core issue distinguishing the CBV from the IBV is our respective definitions of the death that Adam died “on the very day” he sinned. And since these two diametrically-opposed definitions of the Death of Adam cannot both be right, it means that we need to study this issue very carefully to determine which one is correct.

How we define the Death of Adam in Genesis will absolutely determine what we believe about the Death and Resurrection of Jesus and His saints in the New Testament. This immediately raises the question, “Why does the CBV absolutely insist that the *only* death that Adam died on the day he sinned was *spiritual* death?” Let’s look at the Genesis text to see what kind of death was both threatened and carried out upon Adam “in the day” that he ate.

To wrongly identify the death of Adam is to wrongly construct eschatology.

### What Does ‘in the day you eat’ Mean?

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Gen 2:16-17, NKJV)

Notice that whatever kind of death God threatened against Adam was to be executed upon him “*in the very day*” he ate from the forbidden tree. There is nothing ambiguous about this language. It is very explicit. Therefore, it cannot be talking about the physical *natural death* of Adam nine-hundred years later. Instead, it can only be talking about a *penal* death that Adam would die “in the very day he ate.” No other death at any other time will fit the clear language here.

Many commentaries try to explain away this language by suggesting that Adam merely *began to die* on that day, or that he became *mortal* (subject to eventual death), or that the *death penalty* was only imputed against him on that day. But there is not a hint of those ideas in the context. God explicitly warned Adam that if he ate from the forbidden tree, he would

# Death in the Garden

## Ed Stevens

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die “in the very same day he ate.”

Furthermore, the CBV advocates agree that whatever kind of death it was that was threatened, it had to be the same kind of death that was actually carried out *in the same 24-hour day* that Adam sinned. Here is how they argue their case:

Did Adam and Eve **die [physically] the day that they ate** the forbidden fruit? . . . The vast majority say, “No, Adam and Eve did not die [physically] the day they ate.” Interestingly however, when we point out that God said they would die that day, and that **Satan said they would not die that day**, there is an immediate recognition that their view has a serious problem! The denial that Adam and Eve died the day they ate the fruit **makes Satan the one who told the truth** . . . This conundrum, is very real. Who really told the truth, God, or Satan?

It will be readily admitted that the term “day” can be used metaphorically. . . . [However] only context can determine what “the day” means in any given text. Do we have any contextual help for understanding what “the day” means in Genesis 2:16f? We do indeed.

Note that YHVH told Adam and Eve, “In the day that you eat thereof, you will surely die.” When Satan confronted Eve, he told her, “You will not surely die, but, God knows that ***in the day you eat*** of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). Notice the direct correlation between “***in the day you eat*** you will surely die” and “***in the day you eat*** you will know good and evil.”

Of course, Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. The question therefore is, in **what day did they come to know good and evil?** Was that knowledge imparted 900 years later? Did they continue in their innocence for several more centuries? The answer is obvious, is it not? **They knew good and evil in that very day**, the day marked by the sun, moon, and stars, **a twenty-four hour day**.

The identical term “in the day” is used to say they would die, and they would come to know good and evil. Where is the contextual evidence that “in the day that you eat you will surely die,” can be extrapolated into almost a millennium?

Consider the grammatical problem of saying Adam and Eve did die spiritually that day, but they did not die physically for hundreds of years. This means that the same identical term, in the same verse, has two totally disparate, contradictory, definitions. We are told that “in

the day that you eat, you will surely die,” means that **in that very same twenty-four hour period**, they would lose their fellowship life with YHVH and be cast out of His presence. But then, that same identical statement, within the same verse, meant you will die physically hundreds of years from now! What rule of grammar, of linguistics, of semantics, of hermeneutic, allows the identical term, in the identical verse, to mean two totally different things? It appears from our vantage point that **only a preconceived idea of the nature of the death of Adam can force this kind of meaning onto the text**. [Preston, *We Shall Meet*, pp 5-7, boldface and bracketed words added for clarity and emphasis]

Thus, it seems clear that the phrase “*in the day you eat*” in the context of Genesis 2-3 means that Adam would certainly die some kind of death within the same twenty-four-hour day that he ate the forbidden fruit. There is simply no grammatical or contextual justification for the idea that this death could occur sometime later. Whatever kinds of death were threatened (spiritual and/or physical), they all had to occur literally “on the day he ate.” So that raises the question:

What kinds of death were threatened and carried out “on the very same day they ate”?

### What Kind of Death Did God Threaten?

In the conversation between the Serpent and the woman (Gen 3:1-6), we can discern what her concept of the threatened death must have been. The Serpent questioned what God said: “Did God actually say that you

could not eat from every tree in the garden?” The woman replied: “We do eat from the trees of the garden, except this one about which God said, *do not eat of it, nor even touch it, lest you die*.” But the Serpent said: “*You will not surely die*, for God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was *good for food, a delight to the eyes*, and would make her wise, she took and ate.

Notice the four italicized statements above: (1) not to *eat* of it, nor even *touch* it, lest you die; (2) You will *not surely die*; (3) *good for food*; (4) *delight to the eyes*. The woman associated three physical actions with the threatened death, *eating, touching, and seeing*. This implies that she understood the death threat to be physical death, since there is no indication that she already knew what spiritual death was. In fact, since they had not yet sinned, they could not have known what spiritual death was.

...continued on page 12

# Perspectives

“. . . in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

## The Threat of Death

by Alan Bondar

**H**OW MANY DEATHS WERE threatened by God in the Garden? The answer is one. Only spiritual death was threatened by God as a consequence for sin. Physical death was always a natural part of being human, not a consequence of sin.

To prove this, we'll begin by dealing with the Hebrew idiom, "in/on the day." Some have attempted to make a case for physical death as a result of sin because this Hebrew idiom can be translated as, "dying you shall die," or "as certain as." The idea is that the idiom applies to the day on which they ate the fruit rather than the day on which the death would take place. In other words, when you eat the fruit, that day the curse of certain death will be enacted. But *when* that certain death will take place is unknown. Here are a couple other places this idiom is used:

*For on the day you go out and cross the brook Kidron, know for certain that you shall die. Your blood shall be on your own head.* (1 Kings 2:37)

*Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me; take care never to see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die."* (Exodus 10:28)

These are two of the verses sometimes used to make a case that the idiom "on the day" means simply, "as certain as." In the 1 Kings example, it is certainly plausible that the death which was threatened would not necessarily take place on the day they went out and crossed the brook Kidron. But the reason why this is plausible is not because "on the day" makes it plausible, but because "know for certain" makes it plausible. "For on the day you go out . . . know for certain you shall die." What will happen on the day they go out? They would know for certain. The verse does not say "on the day you go out *you will die.*" It says "on the day you go out *you will know for certain.*"

In the Exodus verse, Pharaoh did not mean, "on the day I see your face, you will die in 930 years." Surely, his threat was intended to mean, "if I see you again, I'm going to kill you right then and there." Genesis 2:17 matches Exodus 10:28, not 1 Kings 2:37. What we have, then, in Genesis 2:17 is not a threat that a death will certainly take place at some point in time, but that a death will take place in the day they would eat the fruit.

Even if we were to grant the proposition that the idiom in Genesis 2:17 simply means that the death would certainly occur, then all we need to do is find out when the death took place. Did Adam and Eve die in the day; albeit as soon as

they ate the fruit? The answer is yes. They died a death that day—spiritual death. You see, if the meaning of "in the day" means simply "as certain as," that does not remotely imply that two deaths were threatened in the Garden. It simply implies that whatever kind of death was threatened would certainly take place. The only reason one would seek to find another death beyond the death that they died that day is if they are bringing presuppositions into the text from a faulty eschatology that demands a physical death as a result of sin.

Even the dialogue between Eve and the Serpent demands that they understood that an immediate death would certainly take place the very day they ate the fruit. Look at the dialogue:

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" (Gen 3:1-3)*

To wrongly identify the death of Adam is to wrongly construct eschatology.

When would they die? How did Eve and the Serpent understand God's threat? Let's read on:

*But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that*

*when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* (Gen 3:4-5)

Did Eve sit down and think, "Now if I just eat this fruit, I know I will begin to know good and evil over the course of the next 930 years until one day I will just know it all?" Of course not. That's ridiculous. She thought what anyone else would think: "If I eat this fruit, I'll be like God knowing good and evil right away." This is evident from the verses that follow:

*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.* (Gen 3:6-7)

When were the eyes of both of them opened? Right away! That's how they knew they were naked. And notice that we're talking about spiritual eyes here, just like the curse of death

# Death in the Garden

Alan Bondar - CBV

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was spiritual. It didn't take 930 years for their spiritual eyes to gradually be opened. They immediately felt the repercussion of their action. And that repercussion was recognition of their sin (eyes were opened) and separation from God (death). God did not wait 930 more years to separate them physically. He removed them from the Garden right away. Physical death had nothing to do with it. In fact, when we let the text speak for itself, what we discover is that the curse had nothing to do with physical death at all, but rather, the curse had to do with WHERE that physical death would take place, namely, outside the Garden separated from God's presence. This is all laid out in Genesis 2-3:

*Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. The Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. (Gen 2:7-8)*

So man is formed of dust from the ground and THEN placed into the garden that is planted toward the east. Compare this with the curse of Genesis 3:

*Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Gen 3:17-19)*

The phrase, "till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken," refers to how long Adam would eat bread by the sweat of his face and is therefore stating nothing more than the fact that he had been taken from the ground and so he would return to the ground. The ground to which Adam would return was the ground from which he was created. Where was that ground? Let's compare Genesis 2:7-8 with Genesis 3:19:

*2:7 Then the LORD God formed man of **dust from the ground** . . . . 2:8 The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and **there He placed the man whom He had formed.***

*3:19 . . . Till you **return to the ground**, because from it you were taken; **for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.***

Adam was created from the dust of the ground outside of the Garden and then he was placed into the Garden. This order is made even clearer when we consider that only after the Garden was completed and the two famous trees were already in the midst of the Garden that Genesis 2:15 tells us, "**Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.**"

Now, as a result of his sin, he would return to the dust of the ground from where he was created *outside of the Garden*. It was to that ground that Adam would return because he would now spend the rest of his days on earth outside the luscious Garden and in the desert (cf. Israel in the wilderness). This is the curse that Adam now faced. This is spiritual death—separation from God. That this indeed is what God meant when He declared the curse upon Adam for his sin is demonstrated by the fact that God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden and made sure they could not return. This whole interpretation is clearly summarized in Genesis 3:23-24:

*Therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate **the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.***

What is so significant about the tree of life? Was it some sort of magic tree that would give you eternal physical life if you ate its fruit, sort of like the apple from Snow White? Doubtful.

Think about it as the antithesis to the other tree. What was it about eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that caused death? Was it because the fruit of that tree was poisoned by God so that Adam and Eve would gradually die physically from the poison? Of course not. There was nothing poisonous about that tree. It was simply the tree that God commanded them not to eat from. It was sin that brought death. It was the act of feasting on a tree that God said not to feast from that brought death, not the actual fruit. So the tree of life is also not a tree that had some sort of magical qualities to its fruit. It was simply the tree that God would provide life through because of the obedience of faith. It is why this tree returns at the end of the redemption story and provides healing to the nations (Rev 22:2). Eating from the tree of life is faith in Christ. And general access to that tree was blocked until Christ came to put away sin and bring resurrection (a "standing again" in the presence of

...continued on page 13

## Death of Adam

by Ed Stevens

...continued from page 9

Her spiritual eyes had not been opened yet. But she was able to see the delightful-looking tree with her physical eyes. And since she associated the threatened death with those three physical actions (*eating, touching, and seeing*), it strongly, if not necessarily, implies that her concept of the threatened death was *physical*.

This conclusion is further supported by the fact that when the Serpent reassured her that they would not die by touching it or eating it, she understood that the fruit was *safe to eat* (i.e., “good for food”). It would not kill them. It does not appear that she had any concept of spiritual death (sin-death) whatsoever. Her only concern appears to have been whether they would physically die from touching and eating the fruit.

Furthermore, Eve got this physical concept of death from Adam, and Adam got it straight from God, which necessarily implies that physical death was at least included in the kinds of death that God threatened to execute upon them “in the very day they ate.”

This means that when God showed up “in the cool of the day” they should have been struck dead on the spot, in the same way Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead on the very day they lied to Peter and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5). God did that very kind of thing to Ananias and Sapphira, so *why did he not kill Adam and Eve “on the very day they sinned”*? Below we explain how there actually was a physical death on behalf of Adam and Eve on the very day they sinned.

### How Was That Physical Death Carried Out?

“The LORD God made garments of *skin* for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.” (Gen 3:21, NAS95)

Notice that little word “skin.” Many commentaries point out that this necessarily implies that an animal was slain by God in order to provide these “garments of skin” for Adam and Eve. But God was not merely concerned about covering their physical nakedness. He was even more concerned about their forgiveness and spiritual well-being.

Chandler and McKeever explain how the physical death of that animal in the garden on the very day they sinned brought *provisional forgiveness* to Adam and Eve, and was the beginning of the substitutionary sacrificial system which pointed straight to Jesus who provided the full and final *once-for-all atonement* through His physical death on the Cross:

In harmony with God’s preplanned arrangement for atonement, physical death was required “in the day” of the sin, and was just as surely given! An animal was slain from which clothes were taken in the form of skins. It must be so that the slain animal was the substitute victim for Adam

and Eve. Physical death came into Eden “in that day,” but it came upon man’s sacrificial substitute. When the animal was slain, it represented the death owed by the man. (Darwin Chandler. “The Fate of Innocence,” *Expository Review* (vol. 1, no. 10, Oct. 1982))

Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, this pattern of atonement for sins is followed: physical death of a perfect animal (i.e., without blemish or spot) on behalf of the sinner, although the blood of these bulls and goats could not take away sins (Heb 10:4). This pattern culminated in the real thing, which God had promised in the beginning —Gen 3:15—the physical death of the perfect Lamb of God on the Cross on behalf of his people. [Stacia McKeever, “What Does Jesus’s Death Accomplish?” *Answers in Genesis* website article]

The Protoevangelium, or first statement of the gospel (Gen 3:15), provides proof that God had forgiven them. The promise of a descendant to crush the Serpent shows that God gave them a future. They were not going to die on that day. The animal was slain in substitute for them, and its skin was a visible reminder of its substitutionary sacrificial death on their behalf. Thus, Adam and Eve left the garden in a forgiven state.

### Conclusion

Preston claims (and I agree) that if we wrongly identify the Death of Adam, we will automatically mis-interpret the story of redemption, wrongly construct eschatology, and wrongly identify the nature of the resurrection in the whole New Testament. This means that if the CBV has mis-identified the Death of Adam as being *spiritual-only* (and they have), then their whole CBV view of eschatology is “wrong” and “misguided” (Preston’s words).

We have shown (and Preston agrees) that no matter what kind of death was threatened against Adam, it had to be carried out *on the very same twenty-four-hour day* that Adam ate the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:17). We also showed that Eve understood that threat to at least include physical death (Gen 3:1-6). And we saw how an innocent animal *did die physically* on that day to not only provide a covering for their nakedness, but also to be a *substitute sacrifice* for the provisional forgiveness of their sin (Gen 3:21; Heb 9:22).

This demonstrates that *physical death* was included in the kind of death that was threatened against Adam, and was carried out on the very day he sinned. This means that the CBV has mis-identified the Death of Adam by saying it was *spiritual-only*. And therefore, the whole CBV view of eschatology is “wrong” and “misguided.” †

## The Threat of Death by Alan Bondar

...continued from page 11

God). Consider how Paul teaches this:

*But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.*

(Gal 3:22-26)

*Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.*

(2 Cor 3:15-16)

Access to the tree of life is a restoration of life from death—the death that came through the sin of Adam. It was separation from God. Physical death is just a natural part of God’s amazing creation. These bodies were never meant to last forever. They were designed to die because the death of our bodies is how we enter the invisible realm of eternity with God. Even the writer of Hebrews recognized that there was only one death that was appointed as a result of sin:

*... he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

(Heb 9:26b-28)

Notice that the writer of Hebrews states that it is appointed for man to die once, not twice. We know that the writer is referring to the death appointed as a result of sin because he goes on in verse 28 to contrast that death with Christ being offered once to bear the sins of many. We also know that he is referring to the death appointed as a result of sin because of what he wrote right before it in verse 26 about putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

What is the judgment then? There are two other times in Hebrews that the word “judgment” is used. The first is in Hebrews 6:2. There it speaks of eternal (lit. “age-during”) judgment within a context of anticipating the powers of the new covenant age that was approaching and moving past the foundation of repentance from the dead works of the old covenant. It would appear that “judgment” in this

context is about covenantal judgment.

The other time “judgment” is used in Hebrews is Hebrews 10:27, which is also about covenantal judgment under the law of Moses. I propose, then, that the writer of Hebrews also has covenantal judgment in mind in Hebrews 9:27. This covenantal judgment is the result of the one death that is appointed for man to die except for those for whom Christ was offered. They would be saved instead.

The writer of Hebrews did not believe in two deaths threatened in the Garden. He only believed in one—the one that was appointed for sin. If Christ’s death was intended to fix both spiritual and physical death, then why do believers still die physically? Did His death not take? I surmise the response from those who maintain that physical death was threatened in the Garden is that Christ’s death and resurrection brings resurrection to our physical bodies, or some new immortal body of some sort, after death. But this doesn’t work.

The death Christ died for *spiritual* death was to unite those of faith to Him so that they could also be like Him in His resurrection (Rom 6). This is because all died in Adam. They were already dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2). What they needed was the death and resurrection of Christ so they could be raised from the death that they were already in. But strangely, when it comes to physical death, Christ is dying for people who are not physically dead yet. This is a problem for two reasons:

1. If the curse of Adam included physical death, then why isn’t everyone for whom Christ died already physically dead just like with spiritual death?
2. Those who are raptured do not get to participate in the full work of Christ on their behalf. It would seem that if the value of Christ’s death is to ensure that those who die physically get to share in His physical death so they could be raised like Him, then it would actually be a loss for anyone in Christ to miss out on physical death. So, in the case of a rapture, God would be robbing people of the application of Christ’s physical death to them by not allowing them to participate in His physical death like they did in His spiritual death.

These are just a few thoughts regarding the threat of death in the Garden. But just this quick overview is sufficient to recognize that God only threatened one death in the Garden—spiritual death. †

# Perspectives

## A Note on Genesis 2:17

by Mark Honegger

**I**N THE CURRENT FACEBOOK rapture debate between Don Preston and Ed Stevens, one of the issues at stake is what Genesis 2:17 tells us with regard to the nature of Adam's death. Both Preston and Stevens agree that v. 17 teaches that Adam died some kind of death in the same 24-hour period in which he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Stevens argues that "There is simply no grammatical or contextual justification for the idea that this death could occur sometime later." However, a look at the grammatical structure of the verse shows us that this is probably not the case.

An interpreter cannot simply translate a verse from Hebrew into English literally and then proceed to interpret the literal English translation against other possible English meanings. This is especially relevant when the target language uses a grammatical construction that is not present in the language of interpretation, and Genesis 2:17 uses such a construction. The relevant portion from v. 17 is given below:

ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות

A literal gloss would be, "in the day you eat from it, dying you will die." The underlined portion is an example of the Hebrew construction known as the infinitive absolute. It consists of an infinitive verb followed by a finite verb of the same stem. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* defines it thus:

The infinitive absolute is employed ... to emphasize the idea of the verb *in the abstract* [italics in the original], i.e. it speaks of an action (or state) without any regard to the agent or to the circumstance of time and mood under which it takes place." (339)<sup>1</sup>

You may have come across literal translations of this construction when reading the King James Version or Young's Literal Translation. The grammar goes on to explain the significance of the order of the two elements. When the infinitive precedes the finite verb (as it does in Gen 2:17), it states,

The infinitive absolute used *before* the verb [strengthens] the verbal idea, i.e. [emphasizes] in this way either the certainty (especially in the case of threats) or the forcibleness and completeness of an occurrence. (342)

The grammar cites Genesis 2:17 as an example of this usage, a verse where God is issuing a warning or threat to Adam.

There are numerous other examples of the infinitive absolute in the Old Testament that demonstrate how the construction is used to convey certainty rather than time. In 1 Samuel 9:6, Saul's servant describes Samuel using an infinitive absolute, "*all that he speaks, coming it comes*," i.e., all Samuel says comes to pass. In Genesis 18:18, God describes His blessing of Abraham with an infinitive absolute, "*Abraham becoming, will become a great and mighty nation*," i.e. Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation.

If the author of Genesis had wanted to say, "In the day you eat from it, your death is certain," this is how it would be expressed in Hebrew. Hebrew has a lack of adjectives and adverbs compared to English, and many concepts that we express in English with adverbs are expressed through the verbal system in Hebrew. Likewise, if the author had clearly meant to locate the death on the same 24-hour day as the eating from the tree, he could have done so by using the participle form of "eat," or by linking the two clauses with the conjunction ו ("and") and using the same aspect for both verbs. This latter option is what we find in Genesis 3:5, where the serpent says, "*in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened*." In 3:5, both verbs "eat" and "open" are in the perfect aspect and the clauses are joined with the conjunction ו ("and"), an indication of co-temporality. (Literally: "in the day you eat from it and your eyes are opened.") Stevens argues for co-temporality for 2:17 on the basis of its similarity to 3:5, but the two verses are not grammatically the same. There are no overt grammatical cues in v. 17 that mandate the co-temporality of the two actions of eating and dying.

Sailhamer, in his commentary on Genesis, points out that the expression מות תמות ("dying, you will die") in the rest of the Pentateuch means "that one has come under the verdict of the death penalty."<sup>2</sup> This construction can be found in Genesis 20:7, Exodus 31:14, and Leviticus 24:16. For example, Leviticus 24:16 reads, "*Whoever*



# Death in the Garden

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*blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death* (“dying, he will die”). That is, it uses the same verb in the infinitive absolute that Genesis 2:17 uses.

Hence, there is good reason to believe that Genesis 2:17 teaches that on the day Adam ate from the tree, his death became a certainty, i.e. a death sentence was passed by God, not that Adam died on that same day.

A second concern is to establish what kind of death Genesis 2:17 threatens—physical death, spiritual death, or some combination of the two. Preston argues that v. 17 refers to a spiritual-only death and Stevens for both spiritual and physical death.

With regard to spiritual death, the Hebrew words for “death” and “dying,” מוּת, rarely (if ever) refer to spiritual death. Instead, the Old Testament indirectly speaks to spiritual death in the many examples it gives of moral decline, for example in verses like Genesis 6:5 “*The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*”

We don’t tend to find verses in the Old Testament like 1 Timothy 5:6, where Paul speaking about widows says, “*she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives,*” a clearer reference to spiritual death.

With regard to physical death, if v. 17 refers to physical death, then one should ask why that is a punishment by itself. If Adam physically died but

was then immediately removed to heaven, that would seem to be a small consequence for his transgression.

However, there is another possibility. “Death” in Hebrew can refer to Sheol, the spiritual destination that both the righteous and unrighteous went to when they died during the Old Testament era. One of the key verses that alerts us to this usage of the word “death” is found in Hosea 13:14.

*Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I ransom them from Death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting?*

The parallelism in 13:14, so common in Old Testament writing, shows us that the words “death” and “Sheol” can

be used synonymously. (As an aside, when Paul cites Hosea 13:14 in 1 Corinthians 15:54-55, we can now see that he was predicting not the end of physical death or spiritual death but the end of Sheol as a destination for his children at death.)

Hence, when asking what a particular instance of the words “death” or “die” means in the Old Testament, one has to consider three possibilities: physical death, spiritual death, or Sheol.

Once this possibility is acknowledged, it becomes more natural to see that Sheol is the likely focus in Genesis 2:17. Physical death by itself is not a severe punishment. The use of the words for “death” to mean spiritual death and eternal damnation in hell are (always?) absent in the Old Testament. But Sheol is a punishment, because in the Old Testament people were separated from God at their physical death. Physical death becomes a curse in the Old Testament, not in and of itself, but because it led to Sheol. The Old Testament makes a number of references to this terrible state of affairs. Psalm 6:5 puts it poignantly:

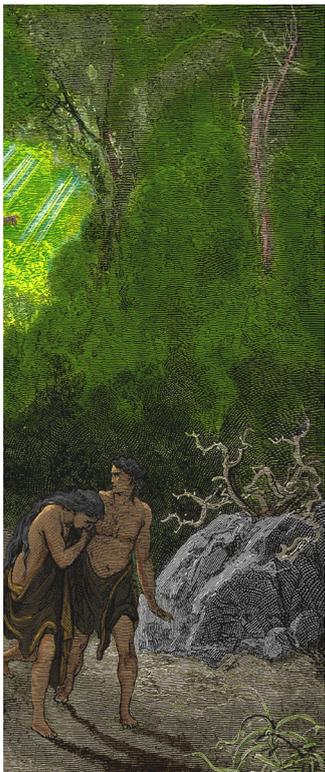
*For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise?*

This was the tragedy that faced every righteous person under the old covenant. The fellowship they had with God in life, where they could praise and enjoy him every day, was broken at death. This is the punishment with which God threatened Adam in Genesis 2:17.

To sum up, Genesis 2:17 tells us that the death sentence of Sheol was given on the day Adam ate from the tree. Neither Preston nor Stevens should use this verse in the way they have done to support their respective positions on the Collective Body View and the Individual Body View of the resurrection. There are strong grammatical and contextual reasons not to take the eating from the tree and the punishment of dying as co-temporal, and there are contextual reasons from the rest of the Old Testament to understand the dying as primarily a reference to Sheol. †

<sup>1</sup> Cowley, A.E. Ed. Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar As Edited and Enlarged by the Late E. Jautzsch. 1985. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>2</sup> Sailhamer, John H. “Genesis.” In the Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Vol. 2. Ed. Frank Gaebelein. 1990. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.



## In This Issue:

Death in the Garden—  
IBV

Death in the Garden—  
CBV

A Note on Genesis 2:17

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## Preterism...it's about time!

*It's about the time Jesus told His disciples that He would return—this(His) generation!*

*It's about the time the New Testament authors told their readers Jesus would return—  
soon, near, at hand, shortly!*

*It's about time for a scriptural explanation other than delay!*

*It's about time for a "last days" view that doesn't conjure up gaps and parenthetical ages!*



**Preterism**  
Preterism

*...maybe it's about time you looked into it!*