

## Sickness Unto Death

The Bible has a lot to say about sickness and types of sickness. No one is immune from sickness and we all have a sickness unto death. Sickness and death are inseparable and are the consequences of Adam's sin. *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* (Romans 6:23).

The Word of God makes it very clear that death is universal. *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”* (Hebrews 9:27). We all have an appointed time when our life on earth will come to an end and we will stand before Almighty God.

The fact is, we are all dying. Our physical bodies are plagued with disease and are breaking down moment by moment. From the very second we are born, we are dying. God's mercy has allowed modern medicine, in some cases, to help slow down the dying process. In days past, it was uncommon for men to live as long as they do today. Sicknesses we consider mild and trivial were, in many cases, sickness unto death for our forefathers.

Before the flood, men enjoyed longevity, but they still died. Methuselah lived to be 969 years old, but we read *“and he died”*. It took 969 years for the death process to come to completion. After the flood, we notice a major decrease in the longevity of man. There is no doubt our time on this earth is short. However, our concern should not be about the length of time we are here, but whether or not we are prepared to meet God. *“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”* (James 4:14). *“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of*

*strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.” (Psalm 90:10).*

Scripture teaches two types of death: spiritual and physical. Man is not only a physical being, but he is also a spiritual being. Death is not the end of human existence, but a change of place (heaven or hell) in which conscious existence continues.

Spiritual death is the condition of the unregenerate man still in his sins and alienated from the life of God, and destitute of the Spirit.

*“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;” (Ephesians 2:1). “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)” (Ephesians 2:5). “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” (Ephesians 4:18,19).*

If this condition of spiritual death continues beyond the death of the body, a lost sinner ends up in a state of eternal separation from God, and conscious suffering in the Lake of Fire. This is referred to as the second death. Please read Luke 16:19-31.

*“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” (Revelation 2:11). “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:6). “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book*

*of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:14-15). “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8).*

Physical death refers to the death of our earthly tabernacle. It is a departure, being absent from the body. *“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:8). “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:” (Philippians 1:23).*

The genesis of both spiritual and physical death originated in the garden of Eden and was brought about by the fall of man.

*“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:26-28) “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Genesis 2:7).*

When *“God said let us make man in our image, after our likeness”*, we see reference to the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, one Triune God, existing in three distinct persons. So being created in the image and

likeness of God, man is a threefold being: body, spirit and soul. *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

In Genesis 2:7 we see the threefold creation of man.

*“And the LORD God”*

1. *“formed man of the dust of the ground”* - the formation of the body
2. *“and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;”*- the impartation of the spirit
3. *“and man became a living soul”* – the union of the body and spirit.

The two major parts of man are the body and spirit. The functions of these two parts are separate, one being spiritual and the other being physical. The soul is in between them.

The **spirit** – is the part of man related to worship and divine communion. The Word of God clearly teaches that the spirit makes man capable of being God-conscious. It is through the spirit that man communicates with God. *“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”* (John 4:23-24). Read Job 32:8 and Proverbs 20:27.

The **body** – is the house in which the spirit and soul live. When the individual believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in his heart. The heart is the seat of life. Therefore, the Holy Spirit abides in his body and his body becomes the temple (or tabernacle) of the Holy Spirit. *“What?*

*know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).*

The **soul** – is the immortal part of man which concerns life. The soul is the seat of all our affections and emotions, the part of man that loves and hates. It is our entire inner nature and our entire personality. It is man's imagination, conscience, reason and memory.

The **spirit** and **soul** are not the same, even though some use the terms as synonyms for each other. *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of **soul** and **spirit**, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* (Hebrews 4:12).

When Adam was obedient to God and they were enjoying sweet fellowship, there was complete harmony between the spirit, soul and body. It was when Adam disobeyed God that the conflict between the spirit and soul began. (Read Romans 7:7-24).

*"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* (Genesis 2:15-17).

God placed Adam in the garden of Eden, a paradise which had an ideal environment and perfect conditions. Adam was given the responsibility to watch over the garden. God, in order to test Adam's obedience, gave him specific instructions of

what he was allowed to eat. The only restriction placed on Adam was not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man was given a solemn warning about the consequences that would result from his disobedience: *“for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”*.

*“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. (Genesis 3:1-6).*

Not only does the Holy Spirit give us the detailed account of the fall of man, but also reveals to us the first attack on the Word of God and the danger of adding to God’s Word. Satan cast doubt on God’s Word and called God a liar. *“Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”*, *“And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:”*. This is the devil’s lie and it has been echoed down through the ages and adopted by the religious systems of the world. Eve added to the Word of God. God never said *“neither shall ye touch it”*. God was very specific in His command to Adam. *“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the*

*day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* (Genesis 2:16-17).

The seed of doubt was planted when Satan contradicted God. The devil continued attacking God by accusing God of not wanting Adam and Eve to have a knowledge of good and evil. *“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”* Now the seed of doubt began to grow in Eve’s heart, which caused her to take her eyes and mind off God and His Word and to desire the fruit of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Instead of Eve seeking God’s protection and deliverance from the devil and temptation, *“she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat”*. When Adam appeared, she in turn tempted him, *“and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat”*. Eve was deceived but Adam sinned willfully.

That very moment when Adam and Eve disobeyed God SIN entered into the world and SIN brought forth death. The first effect of Adam and Eve’s disobedience was their eyes were now opened and they now had a knowledge of good and evil. Man’s first attempt was to try to cover up his sin by his own merits or deeds, sewing aprons of fig leaves; it was unsuccessful. *“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.”* (Genesis 3:7-8).

Even though Adam tried to blame Eve and Eve blamed the serpent, they had no one to blame but themselves. *“ But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin:*

*and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” (James 1:14-15).*

*“And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 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. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 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.” (Genesis 3:9-19).*

The result: physical and spiritual death! *“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Genesis 2:17).*

*“And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 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; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”* (Genesis 3:22-24).

When *“the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”*, man in his present physical body was to live forever. Man at this point was immortal. However, the very moment Adam and Eve disobeyed God, man lost his immortality and now became mortal. This fact is revealed by the above Scripture verses Genesis 3:22-24, showing that God revoked Adam’s access to the tree of life, in order that he would not live forever in a cursed body. Also we read, *“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.”* Although it took 930 years for his physical body to totally break down, Adam died physically!

If Adam did not sin, he would be alive today. Not only was his death physical, it was also spiritual. The very moment our first parents sinned, they broke communion with God and they tried to hide themselves from the very presence of God.

When the Lord God created Adam and Eve, they were created innocent, without a sin nature. From them the whole human race was born. Therefore, when Adam sinned, he sold the world into sin and brought about the ruin of mankind. In addition, their state of innocence ended. Man, a threefold being, is now born with a body, soul, a dead spirit and now a sin

nature. Remember, Scripture teaches that the spirit is the part of man related to worship and divine communion and makes man capable of being God-conscience. Man's spirit is only quickened (made alive) when he is born again according to the Word of Almighty God.

All the sickness and death in the world can be traced back to the consequence of Adam's sin.

*“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. ...).”* (Romans 5:12-14).

When Adam sinned, all mankind sinned in him. By one man, the first Adam, sin entered into the world. Notice sin, not sins. Death followed, which was both spiritual and physical death. As a result, not only was this death passed on to Adam's offspring (the whole human race) but also his sinful nature. However, we cannot blame Adam or anyone else for our own sins and our own unbelief. Sin is a capital offense and the wages of sin is death. Man cannot save himself, nor pay for any of his sins. Whether or not we want to accept the Biblical truth, we are all born sinners and on our way to hell and that fact does not change.

Praise God that man's fate of being a lost, hell-bound sinner with a sinful nature, spiritually dead and loss of his physical immortality does not end here. For God, in His great love and mercy, promised man a redeemer. *“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.”* (Genesis 3:15). So man does not have to spend an

eternity of eternal suffering in the Lake of Fire. *“For the wages of sin is death; **but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**”* (Romans 6:23). Neither does man have to fear death as an enemy. *“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 15:55-57).

God confirmed His promise of a redeemer to the guilty, but forgiven couple by providing them coats of skin for a covering. *“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”* (Genesis 3:21). Innocent blood had to be shed on behalf of Adam and Eve. This sacrifice is a picture pointing to the great sacrifice that took place on Calvary’s cross, where God provided the perfect and only cure for our sins, the Lord Jesus Christ, the spotless Lamb of God. *“...and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”* (1 John 1:7b).

The Bible teaches that God is love in 1 John 4:8 and 16. God loved us so much He allowed His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to go to Calvary’s cross for you and for me, in order to pay that great sin-debt, which we cannot pay. *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”* (1 John 4:10). *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16).

Scripture makes it very clear that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, so man does not have to go to hell. *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am*

*chief.” (1 Timothy 1:15). Jesus said, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Luke 5:32). “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10).*

On Calvary's cross Jesus cried with a loud voice, *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*. Because of God's holiness, *“But thou art holy”*, God will not and cannot look upon sin. All sin must be judged. It was a divine necessity that God the Father turn His head from God the Son when He was bearing the sins of the entire world, paying the sin-debt for all mankind. Here we are at the heart of the atonement, when God the Father made Christ Jesus, God the Son, Who knew no sin, to be sin for us. It was then that God laid on Him, Jesus Christ, the iniquity of us all. Jesus took our place and endured the wrath of God for all our sins: past, present, and future. *“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2). “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21). “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:5-6). “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:9-10).*

The believer's eternal security is based on Christ's one offering upon Calvary's cross for sin forever. The Lord Jesus Christ, by Himself, purged our sins and now sits at the right hand of God making intercession for His saints. Throughout the

Epistle to the Hebrews, the Holy Spirit emphasizes how great a salvation we have in Christ Jesus. *“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”* (Hebrews 10:10). *“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;”* (Hebrews 10:12). *“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”* (Hebrews 7:25). Notice the following verse: *“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”* (Hebrews 10:14). Who are the sanctified? Those who are born again! Sanctification is part of our salvation. Once again, based on the Bible - once saved always saved!

We see that eternal life is a gift of God. A gift is something that is given out of love and has nothing to do with the merits of the one that receives the gift. One does not work for a gift. All those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ receive eternal life. Eternal life is part of our salvation. God saves us by grace, and God keeps us by His grace. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* (Ephesians 2:8, 9). God makes it very clear that He wants us to know that we have eternal life and that it is based upon believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, not by living a sinless life. *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”* (1 John 5:13).

Jesus’ last words on Calvary’s cross, *“It is finished”*, would take volumes to explain. What these three very precious words mean for mankind! Jesus finished redemption’s plan. Jesus paid it all. *“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;”* (Hebrews

10:12). The only sacrifice for sin that was acceptable to a holy and righteous God was God's great sacrifice at Calvary. *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"* (Colossians 1:14). Jesus Christ, the mighty conqueror, conquered death, the grave and hell. God provided a perfect way for man to escape the eternal damnation of hell. So when someone asks how a loving God can send anyone to hell, just remind him of God's great love and the great sacrifice that Jesus paid for all mankind.

What do we mean when we say someone is born again? A person is born again when he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ by receiving the crucified, buried, risen Lord as his Saviour. He realizes he is a sinner in need of a Saviour by accepting the finished cross work and shed blood of Christ for his own atonement for his sins. When a person is born again, the miracle of regeneration takes place and the individual is a new creature in Christ with a new birth and a new nature. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

*"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"* (Romans 3:23). *"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"* (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;..."*. (Romans 1:16). *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,"*. (Ephesians 1:13).

The very moment one gets saved the following occurs:

Justification (Romans 5:1) - we are justified as if we never sinned

Sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:2) - we are set apart to live a holy life unto God

New creature (2 Corinthians 5:17) - we now have peace with God, no longer at war with God or His Word

Placed into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Becomes a child of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:15-17; John 1:12)

Sits in heavenly places with Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6)

Sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30)

Receives the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9, 11; 1 John 4:13)

Receives the promise of eternal life (1 John 5:13)

Name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 21:27)

Promise of the believer's blessed hope and a glorified body like unto Christ (Philippians 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Possesses eternal life (John 3:15-16)

Forgiveness of all sins – past, present and future (1 John 1:7,9; 2:2)

Regeneration is not reformation! This is where most people get confused. They think by cleaning up their lives, turning over a new leaf, doing works of righteousness, joining some religion or denomination, means they are now born again. Let

us discuss the difference between reformation and regeneration.

Romans 10:3 defines the act of reformation. *“For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”* The word reform means to correct, change or improve. Reformation is the process where one tries to reform, change his behavior and tries to establish his own righteousness. However, this reformation is brought on by one who is relying completely on his own power, completely ignoring God. In reality, what we end up with is the unregenerate man trying to establish his own righteousness by conforming to the principles of the religion of his choice, hoping to bring on some kind of reform. This is only an outward change and will only last as long as the individual stays committed to or is able to resist the temptation. Relying on one's own strength is a formula for defeat.

Regeneration is an act of the Holy Spirit resulting in the new birth, a miracle of God, which happens immediately the lost sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”* (John 6:47). *“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* (John 1:13). *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”* (Titus 3:5). Take note that the Word of God states, *“by the washing of regeneration” - not by water baptism!*

The word regeneration means born again; reborn; new birth; born of God; transformed. This happens the very moment one is born again. When one believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and accepts Him as his personal Saviour (Titus 3:5, regeneration) he

is a new creation in Christ Jesus. Scripture also links regeneration to a spiritual resurrection. *“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”* (Romans 6:13). *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:”* (Ephesians 2:1-6). Regeneration, being born again, is an act of the Holy Spirit and not based on our works of righteousness.

Ever since the fall of man, the whole human race has been plagued by all types of diseases. It is true that God will and does allow sickness and disease to afflict us, but when this happens we need to remember that this sickness is the result of man’s sin.

The Bible gives us many different examples on how God uses sickness in an individual’s life and the reason why. There are reasons for God allowing sickness in a person’s life:

### **Born Again Believer**

- For the Glory of God
- A trial, a time of testing. Edification of the believer
- Chastisement

## Unbeliever

- For the Glory of God
- For salvation
- Judgment

When a child of God is faced with sickness, he gets his strength and comfort from God and His Word. First of all, nothing happens to the believer unless permitted by God. It is for the believer's good and God's glory. *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."* (Romans 8:28). Furthermore, nothing *"shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"*, not even sickness unto death. In addition, even if this sickness is unto death, we know that death is not an enemy to fear. God gives His saints the grace they need as they prepare to go home to be with the Lord. *"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."* (Psalms 116:15). The believer has a whole different outlook and perspective on death. The Apostle Paul cried out in Philippians 1:21,23, *"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* and *"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:"*.

As a born again believer, I know for sure that I will go to heaven. There is no uncertainty about where I am going to spend eternity. *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."* (1 John 5:11). The Lord Jesus Christ gives His saints a peace that passes all understanding. *"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:7). *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."*

*Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”* (John 14:27). We have God’s promise of eternal life and that there is no condemnation (hell) to those who are in Christ Jesus. *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* (Romans 8:1).

In 2 Corinthians 12, the Holy Spirit reveals that the Apostle Paul’s thorn in the flesh was for the glory of God, for Paul’s own good, and that God’s grace was sufficient for him.

God allowed Satan to afflict Job’s health. This was also for the glory of God and a testing of Job’s faith. Take the time to read the Book of Job.

God also allows His children to be afflicted with sickness as a means of chastisement. Elisha’s servant, Gehazi, was stricken with leprosy for his sin (2 Kings 5).

Sometimes God allows sickness to strike a believer to slow him down so he will be quiet and wait upon the Lord God. No matter what, the child of God is to *“Rejoice evermore”* and *“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”*

Sometimes our suffering is for the benefit of others. The Apostle Peter tells us that the suffering of Christ was for our benefit. Paul’s affliction was an encouragement to many of the brethren. *“And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”* (Philippians 1:14).

However, it is different when an unbeliever is diagnosed with a sickness, especially if the sickness is unto death. First of all, the lost is not prepared. He is not ready to die. Death is an enemy that he fears and that makes his sickness more

devastating on him and his loved ones. There is uncertainty of his eternal home. An unbeliever may try to find peace in his religion, but there is a void that religion cannot fill. True godly peace can only come from the true Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ, not any religion. How can one find peace in a religion that teaches “No one can know for sure whether or not he will go to heaven until after he dies”. Friend, if you do not know for sure that you are going to heaven when you depart this life, when you die it will be too late. You will die in your sins and there is no forgiveness for the sin of unbelief and no second chance.

My sincere prayer and desire is that you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. I know that you and your loved ones are going through some very difficult times. Sickness unto death affects all. We see from Scripture the reason and cause of death and sickness. We also see how the Lord God has provided for you to have a godly peace and to know for sure that you are heaven bound. Your departure can be a time of rejoicing, rather than a sorrow with no hope. Dearly beloved, in spite of your devastating news, there is a silver lining. **God is trying to get your attention!**

Have you taken the time to stop and listen to what God is saying? We only have a short time on this earth, and that is why it is so important to hear God's message. Believe His plan of salvation. It's sad that many are too busy or preoccupied to take the time to listen to what God is trying to tell them. The gospel of Christ has been presented to you before, but you have been avoiding God and refusing to believe on His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This (sickness) is how God sometimes speaks to men when they will not come to the Saviour. The Word of God explains

the longsuffering of God, *“that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation”*. (2 Peter 3:15). *“...but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* (2 Peter 3:9b).

Many have a zeal for God but not according to the truth; many have a form of godliness but deny the power. Many refuse to believe the glorious Gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to all those who believe. *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”* (Romans 1:16).

In the 33<sup>rd</sup> chapter of the Book of Job, the Holy Spirit reveals to us why God will allow sickness to attack our bodies. *“For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.”* (Job 33:14). *“He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:”* (Job 33:19). Only God knows man’s hearts and his deepest thoughts and what is keeping him from coming to God and responding to His Word. *“And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.”* (1 Chronicles 28:9).

The fourth chapter of the book of Daniel is a remarkable example of God's matchless grace, and illustrates most preciousely the verses in Job 33:14 and 19. The Holy Spirit gives us a detailed account of how God’s physical affliction upon King Nebuchadnezzar lead to his conversion.

God had spoken the first time to Nebuchadnezzar and given him the dream of the great image of the Times of the Gentiles in Daniel, chapter 2, but he still refused to believe.

God spoke the second time by the marvelous vision of the Son of God in the midst of the fiery furnace, keeping the three Hebrew children safe from all harm. The king still refused to believe.

God then spoke the third time by afflicting King Nebuchadnezzar with a very rare sickness. God got the king's undivided attention. King Nebuchadnezzar looked up and called on the name of the Lord and believed.

King Hezekiah's only son, Manasseh, was in physical *"affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers"* (2 Chronicles 33:12).

Has God been trying to get your attention? For some unknown reason are you refusing to listen?

*"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John 3:3). *"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."* (John 3:7).