



*<sup>1</sup> There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: <sup>2</sup> A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease. <sup>3</sup> If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he. <sup>4</sup> For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness. <sup>5</sup> Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other. <sup>6</sup> Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place? (Eccl 6:1-6)*

What a sad and tragic development for a young mother to dream of the child in her womb – to prepare her soul to nurture and teach the child in the way of righteousness – and to have her precious dream smashed as with a hammer by a still born child. Still born is what Solomon refers to above in Verse 3 as an *untimely birth*. The word used in the Hebrew is *NEPHEL* – meaning aborted or miscarriage.

It may surprise some readers to know that, but for the discerning grace of God, every child is brought into the world spiritually still born. God knows His own, and He knows them long before they are conceived in their mother's womb. Life begins at conception. The DNA is already programmed (at the instant of conception) determining talents, tastes, hair and eye color, physical stature, etc. at the moment of conception.

The DNA is God's blueprint and pattern of who, and what, we shall become physically. But there is another more pure and priceless DNA that is a spiritual DNA stamped by the calling and grace of God in eternity past. *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. (Jer 1:5) Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me." (Isaiah 49:1-2) For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. (Psalm 139:13-16)*

The above foreknowledge of God is not reserved for Old Testament Scripture alone, though it would have just the same force of application if it were not so reflected in New Testament Scripture – but it is! Look at these references: *But when it pleased God,*

who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace. (Gal 1:15) Please remember the calling of Nathanael in the Gospel of St. John after Philip has found him and brought him to Jesus: <sup>45</sup> Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. <sup>46</sup> And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. <sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!* <sup>48</sup> Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, *Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.* <sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. (John 1:45-49)

If we simply read the account of Nathanael superficially, we will miss the greater meaning. Please read the account again. What is the magnitude of the words of Christ to Nathanael? Please note that Nathanael agreed to come with Philip burdened with great doubt: *And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Jesus uttered only two sentences and, based on those two comments, Nathanael was convinced that Jesus was, indeed, the Son of God! So what Jesus told Nathanael must have possessed greater gravity than meets the eye (or ear, in this case). What did Jesus say to Nathanael that was so revealing? *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!* The moment Jesus saw Nathanael, He knew him. That knowledge could have been gotten by previous inquiry, but not in this case. Nathanael was mystified that Jesus seemed to know him so well. He asked Jesus, *Whence knowest thou me?* The next line of Jesus seals the matter in Nathanael's mind: *Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.*

So what was so very convincing about this last remark of Jesus, and why did it convince Nathanael beyond all doubt that Jesus was the Son of God? In the time of Jesus, women would carry their babies to the fields while they labored on the crops and harvests. Most of those fields were lined by fig trees. The mother usually left her baby under the spreading branches of the fig tree whose limbs were adorned with dense green leaves. It became a common term in Israel to say, if you knew a person from the time that they were a baby, "I knew you while you were yet under the fig tree." Jesus is telling Nathanael that He has known him from birth – and, factually, He has known Nathanael, you, and me, from long before birth. This comment convinced Nathanael that Jesus knew him better than Nathanael knew himself since no baby remembers the first months of birth. *Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.*

Unless called by the grace of God from the womb, we are born as spiritually dead as was Adam at the partaking of the forbidden fruit. The dead know nothing at all. Solomon says: *For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.* (Eccl 9:5) Does this verse seem to contradict the Words of Christ in John 11:25-26? *I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?* (John 11:25-26) No, by no means, does this contradict the words of Jesus.

If we are spiritually alive in Christ, we never shall spiritually die. We fall asleep in these mortal bodies and awaken in a glorified body – and our sleeps seems to have been merely the twinkling of an eye. <sup>51</sup> Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. <sup>55</sup> O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (1 Cor 15:51-55)

Until the Holy Spirit, borne on the wings of God's Love, calls us and chooses us, we are yet dead in trespasses and sin. We remain still born! Did we do something to merit that salvation of grace? No, because the dead can do nothing at all. Without the grace and calling of God, we are as dead as was Lazarus in the stone tomb of Bethany. *1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 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: 3 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. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)* (Eph 2:1-5)

We could not have loved God unless He first loved us! *10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins . . . . 19 We love him, because he first loved us.* (1 John 4:10,19)

Just as Brother Lazarus had no awareness whatsoever that Jesus stood that day outside his tomb ere his name was called. Neither did your soul have a kinship with God until that same Voice called you forth by name. Lazarus body had already begun its decomposition when Christ spoke the words that resonated and resounded down the Halls of Eternity, *Lazarus, Come Forth!* That Voice penetrated the stone walls of the tomb, the dead ears of Lazarus, descended into the molding chambers of a dead heart – and suddenly, the warmth of life sprung up as surely as fountain of waters in the lush gardens of God. The heart began to pulse, the blood, restored in its constituent properties, began to flow to every dead cell of his body giving the light and love of life. Every Christian will have that same experience when Christ calls their name. The soul remains spiritual dead and unknowing until Jesus speaks, and your soul is quickened as described in Ephesians 2.

There are no elderly in heaven, for the new birth is eternal and ageless. We are all as children in God's Paradise of Delight. *Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* (Matt 18:3)