

Physical Death is an Illustration

- How can we use this illustration to teach the “natural man” about spiritual things?
 - There is a part of us that will live forever.
 - Let’s call that eternal part of us our “spirits.”
 - God is also a spirit: eternal and non-physical.
 - Physical death is used by God to illustrate spiritual death.
 - When our spirits are connected to God, we are “alive;” when we are not connected to God, we are “dead.” Spirits do not literally die; it’s a figure of speech.
 - Physical death is inherent to this creation. It is not a punishment for sin. If it were, then there is part of the effects of sin that Jesus failed to remedy.
- Passages about spiritual death:
 - Genesis 2:8 – 17, 3:22 – 24 Adam lived over 900 years after being told, “In the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.” Several explanations have been offered to avoid the obvious meaning. All of them result in Jesus being ineffective in totally reversing the effects of sin. Spiritual death began when Adam and Eve sinned.
 - Romans 6:16 – 23 Paul’s point is that sin enslaves us and separates us from God (death of spirit). The free gift is reconnection (life of spirit).
 - Romans 7:5 – 8:6 Paul’s example is that the justice mentality (embodied in rules) leads only to failure (death of spirit). Good people recognize this and are at a loss for how to re-connect with God (7:24). Paul’s counterpoint is “in Christ” and “according to the spirit.” This new mindset, the faith mentality, is based on making decisions from the viewpoint of a spirit (John’s definition of Truth). Romans 8 continues with advantages provided by God to make that transition between the two mentalities.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:20 – 26, 35 – 57 Jesus’ resurrection (in addition to being proof that He is God) was an illustration of the re-connection of our spirits with God. Some in Corinth were too physically minded, applying the promise of our resurrection to the physical (that which is short-lived) instead of the spirit (that which lives forever). So, Paul gave a long description of our resurrected “bodies” which are spirits. Note that, in 15:26, “death” is destroyed. Whether this is death of the body or death of the spirit is not specified by the context, meaning that both are included. The end of physical death (the illustration of spiritual death) comes to an end because it will have nothing left to illustrate. The symbol (physical death) is destroyed when it has nothing left to symbolize (separation from God).
 - 2 Corinthians 7:10 Paul’s contrast is between salvation and death, both of the spirit. So, salvation is “life” to the spirit, re-connection of our spirits with God.
 - 2 Timothy 1:10 Jesus abolished death of spirits. Paul expected to die physically in the near future (4:6).
 - James 1:15, 5:20 James confirms that the “death” that results from sin is that of the spirit.
 - 1 John 3:14 John told Christians that they had already passed from death to life.