

## You will Surely Die!

The question: In Genesis 2:17, God tells Adam, about eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die." But Adam ate some of the fruit, and he didn't die that day. A lot of bad things happened, but he didn't die. So how would you explain the apparent discrepancy in what God said?

The Hebrew text ("dying you will die") does not refer to two aspects of death ("dying spiritually, you will then die physically"). The construction simply emphasizes the certainty of death, however it is defined. Death is essentially separation. To die physically means separation from the land of the living, but not extinction. To die spiritually means to be separated from God. Both occur with sin, although the physical alienation is more gradual than instant, and the spiritual is immediate, although the effects of it continue the separation. (NET Bible notes)

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Adam and Eve certainly deserved immediate death when they sinned, and the spiritual death of the human race in trespasses and sins dates from that moment (Eph. 2:1, Col. 2:13). They became as dead as we are before trusting Christ. Physical death was now on the horizon, whereas it would seem they were previously immortal (Rom. 5:12). On the other hand, God withheld the complete judgment in order to provide salvation for His children. As the animals killed for clothes died to signify the death of Jesus Christ, so the death intended for Adam and Eve fell on Christ. Thus were God's justice and honesty satisfied in the end, even though these sinners lived on for a time, in contradiction of God's plain statement at the time. (T. McVay, a friend of Linda's)

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My first thought is of the passage: A day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a single day. God's time is not as our own. Surely, the death process began the day sin came into the world (A. Anthony, friend of Linda's)

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Linda - My husband also replied to this, so I will give my input as well. You can sure bet that Adam DID feel the death in his soul immediately when he sinner. Do we not as well, especially when we have been in sweet fellowship and then some temptation comes along, we succumb, and feel it - the separation, the "down" sense of having done wrong, the death of what was so sweet and wonderful and glorious; now, never again. (W. Hunter, friend of Linda's)

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Adam did die on two counts: 1 - he died spiritually and relationally with God. **2 - The day he ate, God could foresee his death and to God it was a completed action; Adam died that day.** (husband of W. Hunter, bold mine)

True, Adam did not die physically that day. But he died spiritually. Death is the experience of separation from God. He and Eve hid themselves from God and did not want to see his face, and recognized their "nakedness". They were physically naked before, but now they have lost their "innocence" and for the first time knew shame (a result of sin). (C. Cheung, friend of Linda's)

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I will take the challenge of Genesis 2:17. First, the Bible only hints at what God intended for our lives to be like if we had never fallen. I think that part of "plan A", as I like to call it, was eternal life for us. I think he wanted us to live forever, a good life for everybody, with no death interrupting things. (Though I don't know how he was going to deal with the population problem. I suppose we will find that out in heaven which will contain a lot of people.) In fact He wanted it so bad for us, that 4000 years later He sent His own son to die for us so that we could return to the original plan of abundant eternal life. However, on the day that Adam ate of the fruit, death became a certain part of his future, and a certain part of the future of all of his offspring. That day sealed our fate, however if he had died that day, there would have been no offspring, no history, no us, no Christ. I guess he thought that Adam and his offspring, his creation, were valuable enough to keep, even flawed, and He did not wipe him out and "go back to the drawing board". He thinks we are "keepers" even with our sin. Isn't that great?

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Linda's response: The Bible only hints at what God intended for our lives to be like if we had never fallen, because (this is a deep theological issue here) He was not taken by surprise at the fall of man. He is supremely wise, and did not need a 'Plan A' and 'Plan B.' We believe that the Trinity discussed and planned redemption before the foundation of the world. We know from the Bible that we were chosen before the foundation of the world. Some of what my friend (who is not reformed) has written above is worthy of consideration, but we must be careful to keep from diluting the truth of Scripture or going astray from reformed doctrine, even when dealing with hard questions in very simple English!

The points I would salvage are: