



"He died of natural causes." We might hear those words from the television or radio reporter or from a friend recounting the death of another. What we mean by this expression is that the deceased did not die by means of violence or accident. Let's stop for a moment and think about this "natural causes" phrase. Consider the familiar account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We know that they were created without sin in a perfect world. Their job in this perfect world was to tend the garden (Genesis 2:15). Their relationship with God was one of fellowship, worship and dominion over the earth He created. (Genesis 1:27-28). Man's only restriction was that he not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If ever he ate from that tree he would die. (Genesis 2:16-17).

Things were great until Satan, the fallen angel Lucifer, came in the form of a snake and spoke with Eve about the restrictions God had given and convinced her to take of the forbidden fruit. She and Adam ate that fruit and thereby sinned, disobeying God. (Genesis 3:6). Of course sin has consequences which God revealed to the snake, Eve and Adam.

Note in particular the statement God made at the close of Adam's condemnation. "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." (Genesis 3:19). We often focus on the first part of that verse but I wonder if we think much about the last section? Because Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit they were told that they would return to the ground ... they would die!

You see, death is not natural. It is the consequence of disobedience to God. That is why at the close of Genesis 3 we find God forcing Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden and setting up an angel guard there. Genesis 3:24 states, "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." If Adam and Eve had been able to eat from the tree of life they would have lived forever in sin and God graciously disallowed that.

People die because they sin. Romans 3:23 tells us that the wages of sin is death. The great blessing and matter of utmost importance is that "... Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." By taking man's sin and dying a man's death Jesus Christ offers to all who will call on Him in faith the gift of God which is eternal life. By His supernatural salvation Christ redeems men who die and gives them eternal life.

Look to Jesus today. If you have not received His salvation, confess your sin and call on Him today. If you are a believer look up and whisper "thank you Lord."

Looking Up!

Pastor Chuck Circle