

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

IN CHRIST JESUS.

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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IF IT DIES

“Most positively, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat, having fallen to the earth, dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. (John 12.24 ALT)

In the natural world, life begets life through seed. In the plant world, the plant propagates itself by producing seed that contains the genetic material that makes it what it is.

Seed is what produces a plant that in turn produces more seed, often through flowers or fruit. Each variety or species of seed requires its own environment in which to sprout life. Some require more water than others, some require only certain wavelengths of light, and yet others must be ingested by animals and passed through and out of their digestive tract into the soil in order to prepare the seed.

Thus, if the seed is never placed in the environment necessary for the particular variety or species of seed to germinate, then it will not produce a crop. It must be planted in an environment suitable for its germination, the process by which the seed's embryo begins to grow until it bursts forth from the often thick outer shell or the “seed coat.” In other words, all the ingredients for life are contained within the embryo, protected by the seed coat. If one looks at a seed, it looks dead; it doesn't move or do anything, let alone grow. From what I have read, the metabolic process within a seed is so slow that biochemical tests have a difficult time detecting signs of any life. In fact, in some seeds, if the embryo does not begin to germinate within a certain length of time, then it will die. Some species of plants need to germinate within weeks or they will die, and others can survive for many years.

Unlike those who built the **Svalbard Global Seed Vault** [#02-0870 May 30, 2008], God the Father opened the vault of heaven and sent His Son to this earth as the Seed of the Second Man, the new creation. But just as in the natural world the seed must fall into the ground and die, so too was it necessary for the Son of God to fall into the ground and die in order to bear the fruit of the many. Of course, falling into the ground refers to Jesus' death on the cross.

“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw [or, drag] all to Myself.” But this He was saying signifying by what sort of death He was about to die. (John 12.32-33 ALT)

He was lifted up on stakes of wood; consequently, He will drag all mankind to Himself, meaning that He will ultimately save every one born of Adam's race, not all at the same time but all eventually. This is the glory and absolute success of the finished work of the cross and God's love for the world.

Back to the seeds; according to biologists, there is life within a seed. If this life within the seed coat dies, then no life will ever come forth. There must be life hidden within the seed coat. So, what did Jesus mean by the grain of wheat must die if there is life hidden under the seed coat? After all, He is the Creator of all, and He most surely knew the inner workings of seed germination. He obviously knew that if the embryo of the seed dies, then there can be no life. It dies as a seed. So what must die? The answer is discovered in the seed coat, which is the hard outer shell that houses all the genetic material in the embryo of the plant species. Some seed coats are very thin, and with a little light and water germination begins quickly. Other seed coats are very thick and have to be abraded and broken down before germination begins. Seed that must pass through the digestive system of

animals falls within this group, for it requires the digestive juices of the animal to break down the outer shell of the seed.

Now, if we remain with this illustration and the question raised by it, we must assume that the spirit life within our Lord could not truly die. After all, if there was no life within Him, then He could not have germinated to bear fruit. As the Son of God, the life within Him could not die, which is likened to the embryo. Spiritually speaking, the embryo represents the spirit of God, which does not die. Solomon says that the spirit returns to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12.7). As He gave forth his last breath, Jesus cried out with a loud voice: **“Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit”** (Luke 23.46). So what dies? It has to be the seed coat, which represents the body. His body had to be broken for the sin of the world, so the very life of God, the spiritual life, could come forth (germinate) to produce much fruit, that is, to save all mankind, the many. Contrary to what many believe today, Jesus’ soul died along with His body, for **the soul is in the blood** (Leviticus 17.11), and when His blood was poured out of His broken body, so was His soul. [For more understanding of the soul, I refer you to my book *The Purpose and Plan of the Eons*, Volume 2, Chapter 1, *The Dead Know Nothing Whatsoever.*]

Christ’s body was the seed coat that was broken to release the Life of God.

And when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. (1 Corinthians 11.24 KJV)

The body of Jesus Christ was offered once for all to take away sin. The blood of bulls and goats was a reminder of sins year by year, but a body was prepared for the Son of God that had to be broken to completely take away sin for all mankind and for the glory of God.

But in those [sacrifices there is] a reminder of sins every year. For [it is] impossible [for the] blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins. For this reason, entering into the world, He says, “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You prepared for me; in offerings which are entirely burnt and [sacrifices] concerning sin, You took no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Look! I have come (in a roll of a scroll it has been written concerning Me) to do Your will, O God.’” [Psalm 40:6-8] [After] saying above, “Sacrifice and offering and offerings which are entirely burnt and [sacrifices] concerning sin You did not desire, nor took pleasure in” (which according to the Law are offered), [Psalm 40:6, 7] then He has said, “Look! I have come to do Your will, O God.” He abolishes the first so that He shall establish the second, [Psalm 40:8] by which will we have been sanctified, the [ones] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time! And indeed every priest has stood daily sacredly serving and repeatedly offering the same sacrifices, which are never able to take away sins. But He Himself, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, “sat down at [the] right hand of God,” waiting from that time onward “until His enemies are put [as] a footstool for His feet.” [Psalm 110:1] For by one offering He has perfected for all time the ones being sanctified. (Hebrews 10.3-14 ALT)

This is the glory of the new covenant inaugurated through the broken body and shed blood of the Son of God. One offering! Once for all time! Perfected for all time! The Son of Glory was raised from among the dead and ascended to the throne of God until the time fixed by the Father for Him to take the scepter of the kingdom of this world. The grain of wheat has died, but He now lives to bear much fruit, which refers to the many, that is, all mankind that will ultimately be saved at the consummation of the eons.

And I became dead. And look! I am living into the ages of the ages. And I have the keys of death and of the realm of the dead [Gr., hades] (Revelation 1.18 ALT). He was lifted up; He died, He now lives; and He will drag all mankind unto Himself, for God wills that all mankind be saved. God is love, and love never fails but triumphs over all! Glory to God!