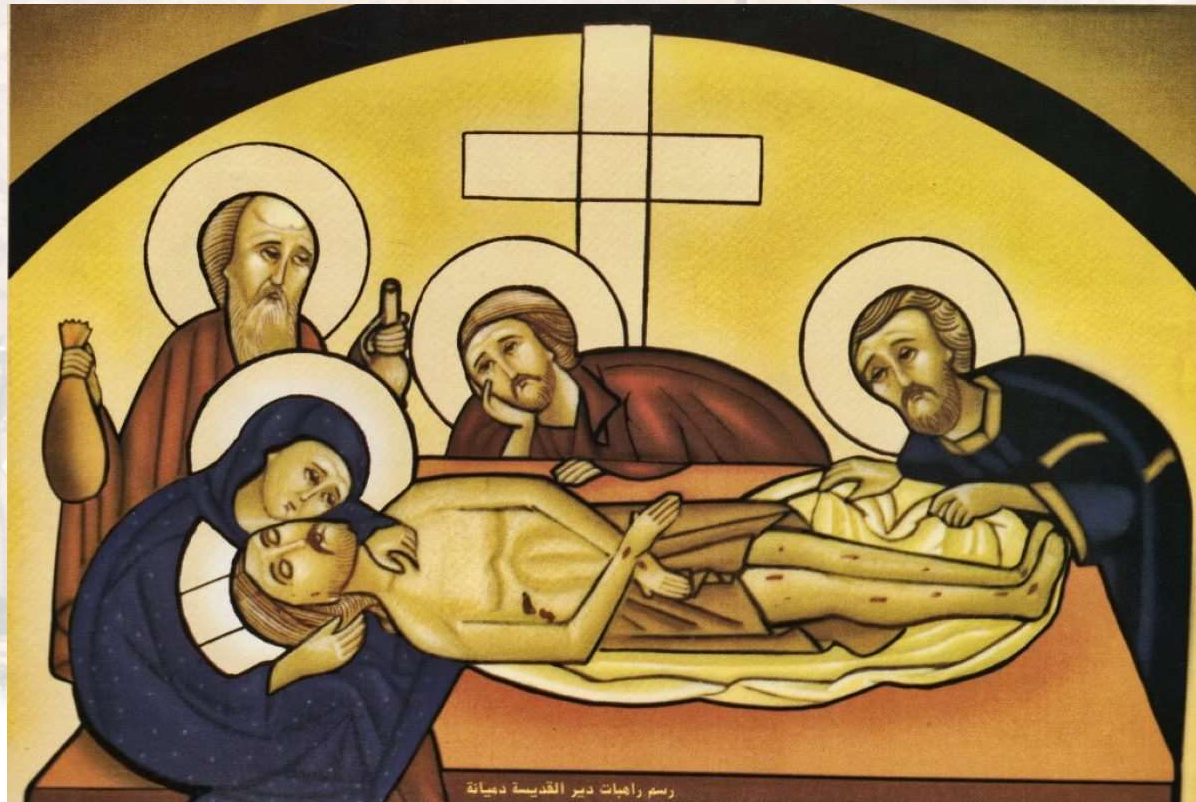


Life and Death

Scriptural and Patrological Perspective



What is Death?

† Physical death?

⊕ *Separation of spirit from body*

† Eternal death?

⊕ *Separation from God*

† *What is death in general?*

⊕ *Nonexistence/absence of life!*

† *Does death have existence? Is it an entity?*

⊕ *No. Life is existence, death is the absence of life*

⊕ *Darkness is the absence of light*

⊕ *Evil is the absence of good*

Life and Death

† Creation

† Commandment

† Contravention (Transgression)

† Collapse (Death)

† Cure

الخلق

الوصية

التعدي

الموت

العلاج

† *Sources:*

Scripture

St. Athanasius (On the Incarnation of the Word)

1 - Creation

† “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Gen 2:7)



† Is God a being with a mouth?

⊕ God set man apart from all other creatures

⊕ He graced him with His Holy Spirit!

⊕ “But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding. (Job 32:8)

⊕ “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” (Job 33:4)

The Breath of God

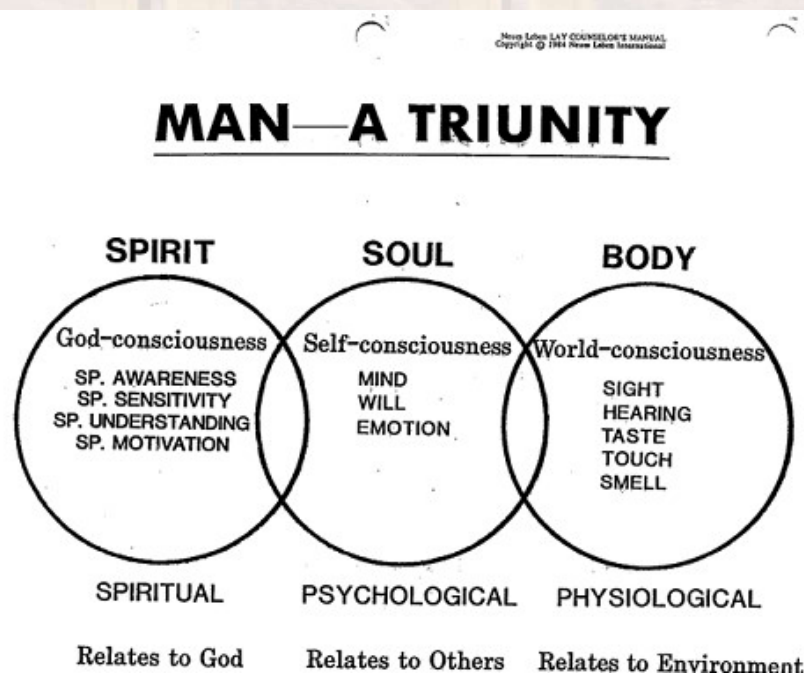
† Gave man:

‡ Rational spirit, Living soul

† Soul: the life of the body. All animals have souls

† Soul is not eternal; dies with the death of the body

† Man: body, soul, spirit



The Breath of God

“For God is good--or rather, of all goodness He is Fountainhead... He created all things from nothing with His Word, Jesus Christ our Lord... He reserved especial mercy for the race of men.

*Upon them, ... He bestowed a grace which other creatures lacked--namely the impress of His own Image, a share in the reasonable being of the very Word Himself”
(St. Athanasius)*



Problem of “nothing”

† What happens to something, that is made of nothing, when it ceases to exist?

⊕ Plants/animals die and return to “nothing”

† Was Adam made of nothing? Returns to?

⊕ Body dies, soul returns to nothing...

⊕ SPIRIT remains: *“bestowed a grace” (St. Ath.)*

† “Additional Grace” (النعمة الإضافية):

gave us:

⊕ (1) change of nature – incorruptibility

⊕ (2) eternity

النعمة الاضافية - "Additional Grace"

† What is “rational spirit”?

✦ *“The grace of such a divine image was sufficient in and of itself to make us know God the Word, and know the Father through him” (St. Athanasius)*

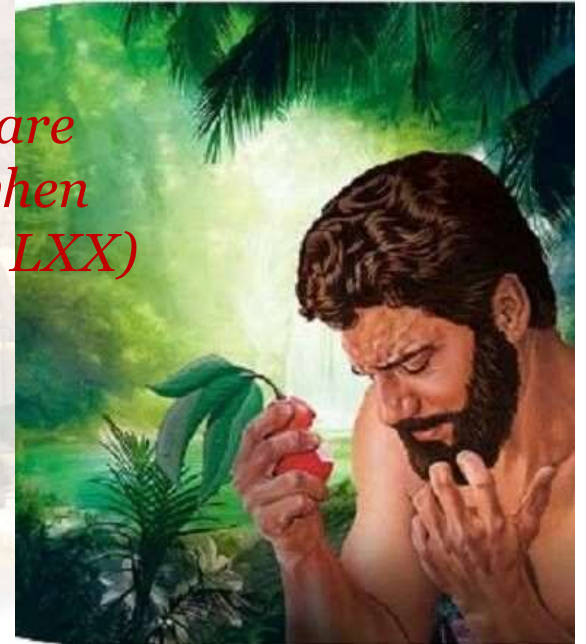
✦ (3) gave us knowledge of God

✦ *“Creation in the image of God gave man the perception, logic, and correct vision so that we would live in communion with God” (St. Athanasius)*

✦ *“Only man, is equipped with reason, and is compassionate and called to inclination towards all his virtue, and he took authority to rule over all beings that live on earth because of the **grace of creation according to the image of God**” (St. Cyril)*

2 - Commandment

- † *“Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Gen 2:16-17)*
- † Did Adam die on the same day that he transgressed?
He lived 950 years!
- † Eternal death: *Separation from God*
 - ✦ *He preserves not the ungodly; because they are not willing to know the Lord, and because when reproved they were disobedient.” (Job 36:12 LXX)*
- † *Lost some of the “additional grace”*
- † *Remained in the eternal corruption of death!*



Eternal Corruption

† Losing the additional blessing did not remove the eternity.

⌘ Man continues to be an eternal being

⌘ Lost his knowledge and communion with God

- *He will live forever a corrupt being!*
- *Live forever a slave of Satan!*

⌘ This is DEATH!

- *The day he transgressed he did die!*
- *“There is none righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. ¹² They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.” (Rom 3)*



Why the Commandment?

- † Did God create man with man's will?
- † How do we express our Love to God?
- † He must give man freedom to choose!

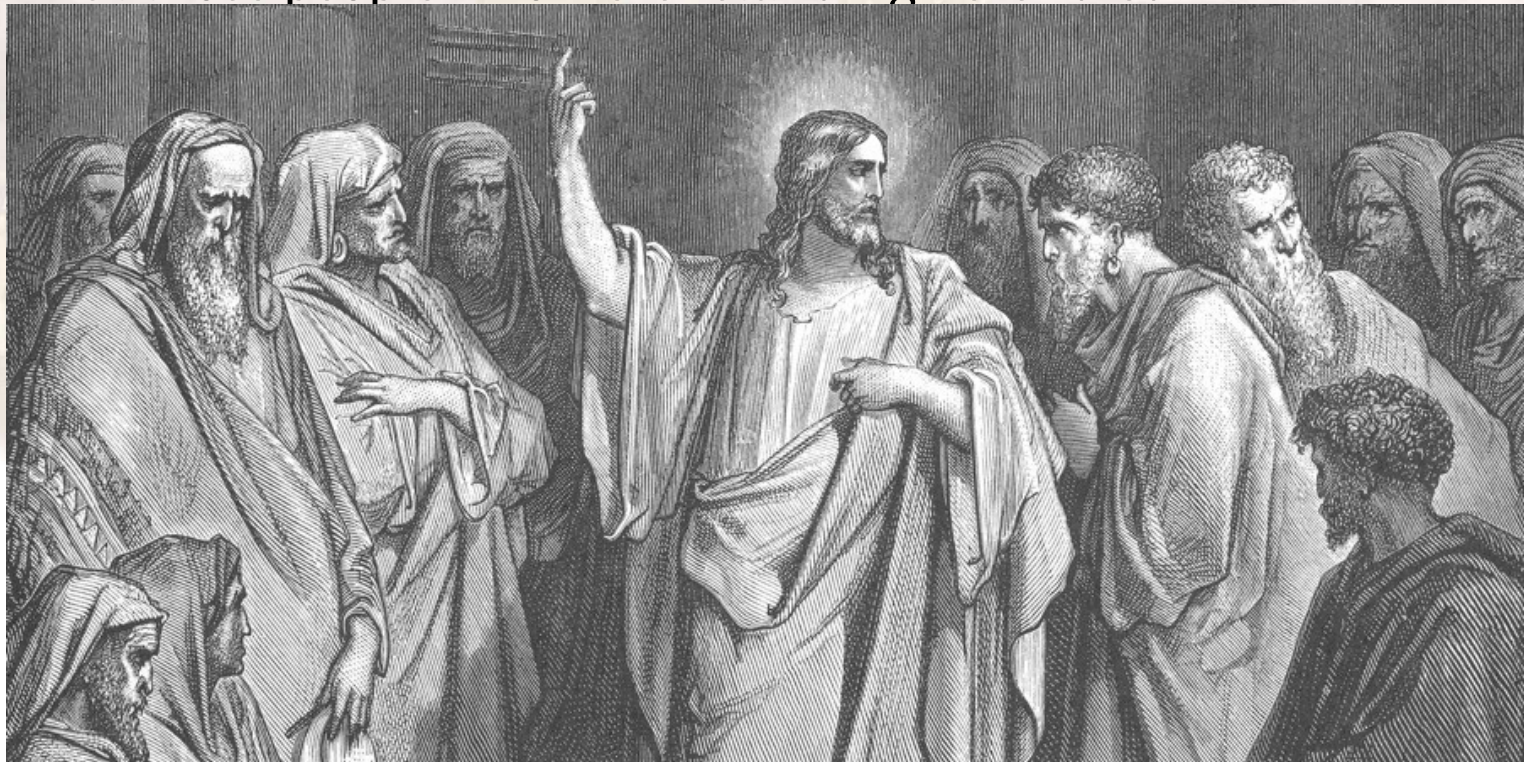
✠ *“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deut 30:19)*



“Shall not taste death”

† *“Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” (Matt 16:28)*

⌘ But those people who were “standing here” died!



“Shall not taste death”

† Those who live in Christ, will not see death!

✠ 1. Faith: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

(Jn 5:24)

✠ 2. Works: “Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”

(Jn 8:51)

✠ Through: Love “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death.” (1Jn 3:14)

Life and Death

+ Creation

- ✦ Additional Grace: Rational spirit, Living soul
- ✦ Incorruptibility, eternity, knowledge

+ Commandment

- ✦ To give man freedom to express his love
- ✦ Man lost the extra blessing
- ✦ Doomed to live in eternal corruption: Death

+ Contravention (Transgression)

+ Collapse (Death)

+ Cure

3- Contravention (Transgression)

- † After transgression, man lost the blessing of non-annihilation and immortality, and his natural annihilation and natural corruption remained.
 - ✦ God did not “kill” man, but removed “life” from him.



Transgression

“Men, having turned from the contemplation of God to evil of their own devising, had come inevitably under the law of death. Instead of remaining in the state in which God had created them, they were in process of becoming corrupted entirely, and death had them completely under its dominion.

For the transgression of the commandment was making them turn back again according to their nature; and as they had at the beginning come into being out of non-existence, so were they now on the way to returning, through corruption, to non-existence again” (St. Athanasius)

Transgression

† “But according to my will, I did eat. I put Your law behind me by my own counsel, and became slothful towards Your commandments. I plucked for myself the sentence of death.” (St. Gregory)



† This is Transgression!

✦ “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she **took** of its fruit and **ate**.” (Gen 3:6)

✦ Man rejects the counsel of God

- “Sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.” (Gen 4:7)

4 - Collapse (Death)

- † *“No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, and no one has power in the day of death.” (Ecc 8:8)*
- † Adam did not know death, until the transgression
 - ⌘ Before: no one had power over his spirit – he could have lived forever.
 - ⌘ *“Man ... bears also the Likeness of Him Who is, and if he preserves that Likeness through constant contemplation, then... he remains incorrupt... And being incorrupt, he would be henceforth as God” (St. Athanasius)*

After the Fall

† After transgression: Satan had power over man's spirit!

⌘ Satan tried to capture Christ' Spirit when he died

- *“When Satan saw that the Lord ‘bowed his head and gave His Spirit’ he was pleased and came joyful to capture His Soul, because he thought that he was a weak naïve man. When he discovered His Divinity, he ran away, but the Lord rebuked and uncovered Himself and the devil was unable to move because the divine rays surrounded him.”*

(Interpretation of 9th Hour Gospels of Good Friday)



† Christ died of his own Will

⌘ Satan had no power over Him

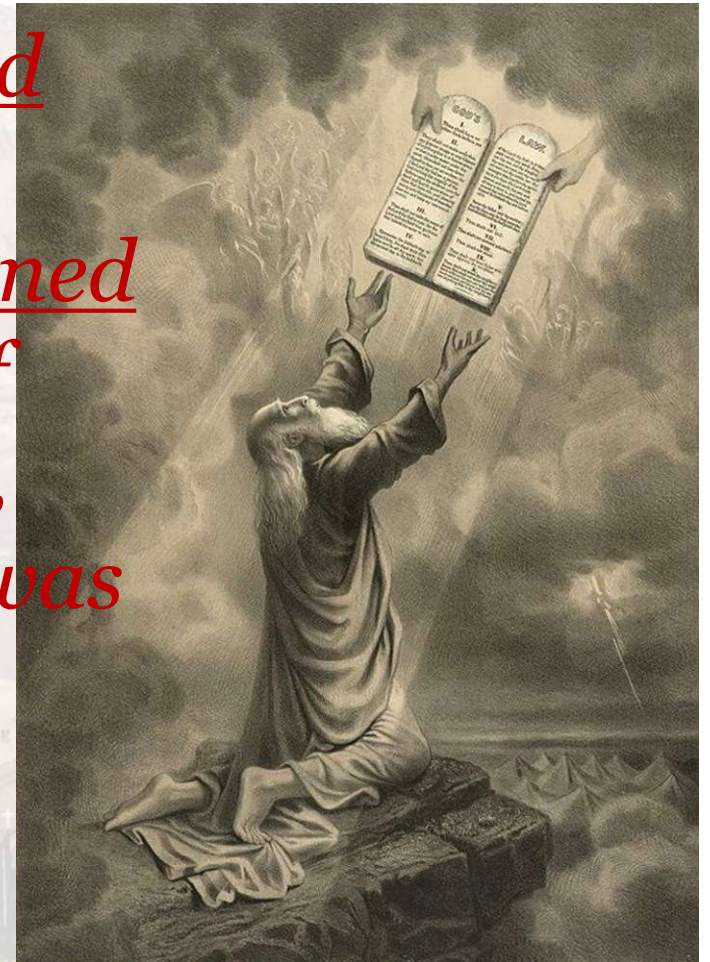
⌘ *“I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” (Jn 10:18)*

Death Reigned

† “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.” (Rom 5:14)

† Death is the master, man is slave

† Even those who had not sinned!



Why must man die?

† “It would, of course, have been unthinkable that God should go back upon His word and that man, having transgressed, should not die; but it was equally monstrous that beings which once had shared the nature of the Word should perish and turn back again into non-existence through corruption.”

(St. Athanasius)

1. God must take life away from man
2. God must allow man to live!

Could God have left man in corruption?

† *“Was He to let corruption and death have their way with them? In that case, what was the use of having made them in the beginning? Surely it would have been better never to have been created at all than, having been created, to be neglected and perish; and, besides that, such indifference to the ruin of His own work before His very eyes would argue not goodness in God but limitation, and that far more than if He had never created men at all.” (St. Athanasius)*

Freedom from Death

† *“He who has died has been freed from sin.” (Rom 6:7)*

✠ Freedom from death is through death:
Baptism!



Life and Death

+ Creation

- ⌘ Additional Grace: Rational spirit, Living soul
- ⌘ Incorruptibility, eternity, knowledge

+ Commandment

- ⌘ To give man freedom to express his love
- ⌘ Man lost the Additional Grace
- ⌘ Doomed to live in eternal corruption: Death

+ Contravention (Transgression)

- ⌘ Breaking the commandment by our free will

+ Collapse (Death)

- ⌘ Necessary

+ Cure



5 - Cure

✝ Would repentance have been sufficient?

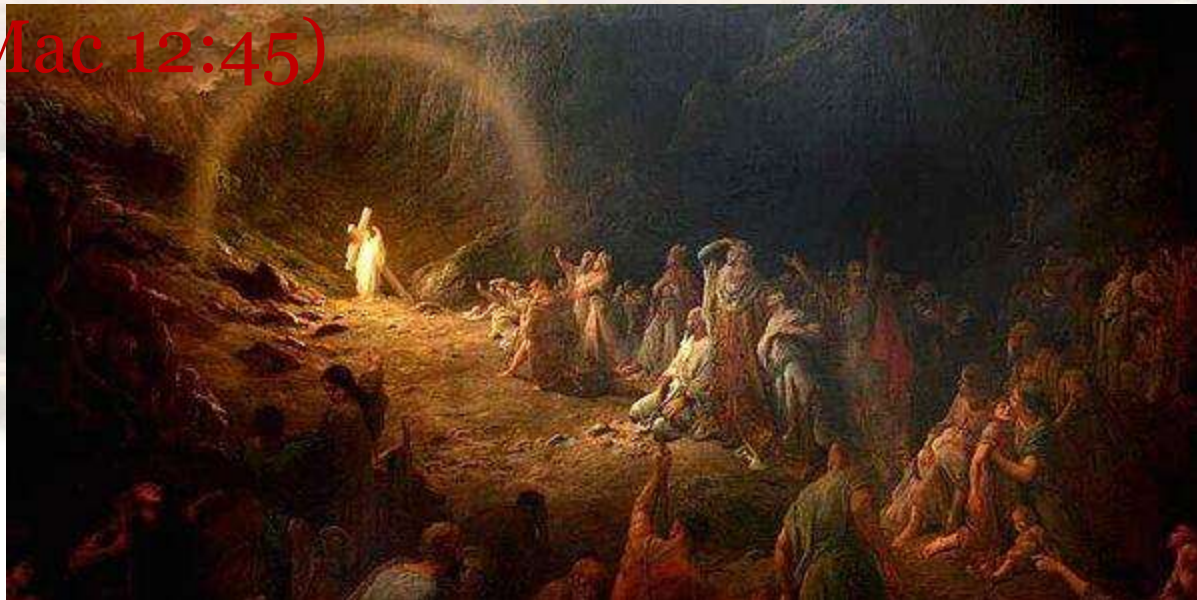
✧ *“Nor does repentance recall men from what is according to their nature; all that it does is to make them cease from sinning. Had it been a case of a trespass only, and not of a subsequent corruption, repentance would have been well enough; but when once transgression had begun men came under the power of the corruption proper to their nature and were bereft of the grace which belonged to them as creatures in the Image of God. No, repentance could not meet the case.” (St. Athanasius)*

Someone must die!

† Who? Someone who is immortal!

⌘ “For thou hast power of life and death: thou ledest to the gates of hell, and bringest up again.” (Wis 16:13)

⌘ “Whereupon He made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin.”
(2Mac 12:45)



Only the Word

“Who, save the Word of God Himself, Who also in the beginning had made all things out of nothing? His part it was, and His alone, both to bring again the corruptible to incorruption and to maintain for the Father His consistency of character with all.

For He alone, being Word of the Father and above all, was in consequence both able to recreate all, and worthy to suffer on behalf of all and to be an ambassador for all with the father.” (St. Athanasius)