

April 25, 2020

## Life and Death

The focus of life and death have been at the forefront of our lives recently. There are daily briefings both by the state of Maine and the Federal Government task force regarding all matters related to the impact of Covid-19. The news is a constant barrage of all things Coronavirus. It has become a constant in our lives today.

As we remain couped up in our homes with few options for going out, the news is not nearly as bad as it is being presented.

You should know me well enough by now to know that I am all about context.

Over half the deaths have occurred in Senior care facilities in Maine, isolated, not wide spread.

To date, there have been 47 Covid-19 related deaths. (as of today...52,243 nationwide)

The most recent numbers available from the CDC are 2017...

In 2017 there were 301 deaths that were flu/pneumonia related are 6.4 times the number of Covid-19 deaths. (55,672 nationwide)

In 2017 there were 424 deaths from drug overdose which is 9 times the number of Covid-19 deaths. (70,237 nationwide)

Numbers that are far greater than Covig-19, yet with nowhere near the same response, nor the same public official outcry.

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/maine/maine.htm>

Yet, what have we learned this week from three different studies based on statistical modeling of a sample size in New York State and California?

*New data from random antibody tests conducted in New York State suggest that as many as 2.7 million people statewide have had the coronavirus. That along with the just over 15,000 deaths that have occurred leads to a fatality rate for the virus of .5 percent.*

<https://thefederalist.com/2020/04/23/looks-like-trump-was-right-about-the-coronavirus-fatality-rate/>

*A new study unveiled Monday from the University of Southern California (USC) with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health discovered infections of the novel Wuhan coronavirus to be far more widespread with a lower fatality rate than initially thought.*

*Stanford scientists estimate that between 48,000 to 81,000 people had been infected with the virus in the county by early-April, a 50-85-fold increase in the number of publicly confirmed cases with 100 deaths projected by April 22. That lands the fatality rate at 0.12 to 0.2 percent.*

<https://thefederalist.com/2020/04/21/usc-study-finds-coronavirus-far-more-spread-in-l-a-county-than-reported/>

Death, the loss of a loved one or friend is a traumatic and life altering event that happens regardless.

In a letter by — *Benjamin Franklin, to Jean-Baptiste Le Roy, in 1789 he wrote...*

Our new Constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency; but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except **death and taxes**.

Today, as you are reading this week's Parshot, (a double) Tazria/Metzora I want to look at Life and Death from a much different perspective than what we understand.

The human perspective of Life and Death is more finite, more absolute. For many, death is an end, an absolute end. To them, there is nothing after death. For many of us, even believers, death offers an aspect of uncertainty. Yes, we as believers have read the Scriptures...

**Php 1:21** For to me, life is the Messiah, and death is gain.

**2Co 5:6** So we are always confident — we know that so long as we are at home in the body, we are away from our home with the Lord;

**2Co 5:7** for we live by trust, not by what we see.

**2Co 5:8** We are confident, then, and would much prefer to leave our home in the body and come to our home with the Lord.

And yet, many believers do everything in their power to avoid this union with Messiah.

**Mat 6:27** Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to his life?

**Ecc 3:1** For everything there is a season, a right time for every intention under heaven —

**Ecc 3:2** a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,

This is the challenge in all our humanness. Yet, in that same passage Solomon writes this...

**Ecc 3:14** I know that whatever God does will last forever; there is nothing to add or subtract from it; and God has done it so that people will fear him.

Now, let's look at Life and Death from Adonai's perspective.

What God does will last forever. This is most certainly not a finite statement. This is something we need to unpack in order to understand further.

Let's start at the end and work our way back.

Is death an end?

**Rev 20:10** The Adversary who had deceived them was hurled into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

**Rev 20:11** Next I saw a great white throne and the One sitting on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them.

**Rev 20:12** And I saw the dead, both great and small, standing in front of the throne. Books were opened; and another book was opened, the Book of Life; and the dead were judged from what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

**Rev 20:13** The sea gave up the dead in it; and Death and Sh'ol gave up the dead in them; and they were judged, each according to what he had done.

**Rev 20:14** Then Death and Sh'ol were hurled into the lake of fire. This is the second death — the lake of fire.

Death here, in this case the second death, is not an end, but rather a continuation. Yet, this death is an end, but not an end of existence but a permanent conclusion.

What is that conclusion?

Separation from God.

Death = Separation from God.

Life = Being with God.

We see this reality play out through Scripture. Torah itself provides us with many examples of this dynamic right at the beginning...Adam and Chavah...

**Gen 3:22** Adonai, God, said, "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Now, to prevent his putting out his hand and taking also from the tree of life, eating, and living forever — "

**Gen 3:23** therefore Adonai, God, sent him out of the garden of `Eden to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.

**Gen 3:24** So he drove the man out, and he placed at the east of the garden of `Eden the k'ruvim and a flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

They were sent out of the garden...they were separated from the place where they were to dwell with Adonai.

Here, I want to introduce you to two Hebrew words that you are going to experience in this week's Parsha that will provide greater understanding to this aspect of life and death, union and separation. These two words provide you with Adonai's reason...

There are two Hebrew words used throughout these two parshiot that are variously translated as clean/pure or unclean/contaminated/impure. These English words do not convey the true meaning of the original Hebrew. In fact, there are no English equivalents! Some translations use the word ritually clean or ritually unclean. These two words are closer to the mark.

**Unclean**—The Hebrew word translated unclean—beginning in Vayikra (Leviticus) chapter 11 – is tamei [or tame] (טעמא א.)

**Clean**—The Hebrew word translated clean is tahor (ע טהור.)

Tamei and tahor are one of many binary aspects found in Scripture. When I say binary, this means there are only two possible options. There is no third option. There is no “undecided”. There is no all of the above or none of the above.

Life and Death

Clean and Unclean

Genesis 1 makes distinctions between

Light and Dark

Land and Sea  
Man and Woman

So, separation and communion with Adonai is binary as well. There is no third option. Either you are or you aren't.

We see this expanded further through the double Parsha of Tazria/Metzora

The Hebrew word translated *leper* is metzora ( מִרְצָרָעָה ). The metzora (leper) was one who had any one of *several skin disorders*. In cases where one of these various skin disorders rendered one tamei, it was given the term tzara'at ( טַרְאָאָת ), which has been erroneously translated as leprosy. It is understandable that translators try to find English equivalents; however, some words and concepts cannot be properly translated into every language.

Your thematic study will go into greater detail as to the origin.

What I have shared with you in the past about tzara'at is that it is a physical manifestation of a spiritual condition.

**Lev 13:45** "Everyone who has tzara'at sores is to wear torn clothes and unbound hair, cover his upper lip and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!'

**Lev 13:46** As long as he has sores, he will be unclean; since he is unclean, he must live in isolation; he must live outside the camp.

This separation is a type of death.

**Num 12:9** The anger of Adonai flared up against them, and he left.

**Num 12:10** But when the cloud was removed from above the tent, Miryam had tzara'at, as white as snow. Aharon looked at Miryam, and she was as white as snow.

**Num 12:11** Aharon said to Moshe, "Oh, my lord, please don't punish us for this sin we committed so foolishly.

**Num 12:12** **Please don't let her be like a stillborn baby**, with its body half eaten away when it comes out of its mother's womb!"

**Num 12:13** Moshe cried to Adonai, "Oh God, I beg you, please, heal her!"

**Num 12:14** Adonai answered Moshe, "If her father had merely spit in her face, wouldn't she hide herself in shame for seven days? So let her be shut out of the camp for seven days; after that, she can be brought back in."

**Num 12:15** **Miryam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not travel until she was brought back in.**

She looked like a stillborn baby and was to remain separated, outside the camp for seven days.

To Adonai, she was dead. To the people she was unable to be part of the community.

We see this dynamic in Luke 17...

**Luk 17:11** On his way to Yerushalayim, Yeshua passed along the border country between Shomron and the Galil.

**Luk 17:12** As he entered one of the villages, ten men afflicted with tzara'at met him. They stood at a distance

**Luk 17:13** and called out, "Yeshua! Rabbi! Have pity on us!"

**Luk 17:14** On seeing them, he said, "Go and let the cohanim examine you!" And as they went, they were cleansed.

Luk 17:15 One of them, as soon as he noticed that he had been healed, returned shouting praises to God,  
Luk 17:16 and fell on his face at Yeshua's feet to thank him. Now he was from Shomron.  
Luk 17:17 Yeshua said, "Weren't ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?"  
Luk 17:18 Was no one found coming back to give glory to God except this foreigner?"  
Luk 17:19 And to the man from Shomron he said, "Get up, you may go; your trust has saved you."

The metzora (leper) was essentially **THE WALKING, LIVING DEAD!**

**Those on death row at their time of execution would be referred to as "dead man waking" in that their outcome was already determined, just not final.**

That's right. The thematic connections clearly paint this picture. If we want to see what death is like, then we look to the metzora (leper), who was totally cut off from the presence of Adonai in the Mishkan (Tabernacle) as well as all human relationships. Walking about in a perpetual state of mourning, for the death of what? **FOR THEIR OWN DEATH!** How tragic. Now we can see how the metzora (leper) was related to all the other forms of ritual uncleanness. They are all related by **DEATH and SIN**.

It is our Tamei, our uncleanness that separates us from Adonai.

Yet, it is our Tahor, cleanness through Yeshua who brings us life and therefore unites us with Adonai.

**Rom 5:12** Here is how it works: it was through one individual that sin entered the world, and through sin, death; and in this way death passed through to the whole human race, inasmuch as everyone sinned.

**Rom 5:13** Sin was indeed present in the world before Torah was given, but sin is not counted as such when there is no Torah.

**Rom 5:14** Nevertheless death ruled from Adam until Moshe, even over those whose sinning was not exactly like Adam's violation of a direct command. In this, Adam prefigured the one who was to come.

**Rom 5:15** But the free gift is not like the offense. For if, because of one man's offense, many died, then how much more has God's grace, that is, the gracious gift of one man, Yeshua the Messiah, overflowed to many!

**Rom 5:16** No, the free gift is not like what resulted from one man's sinning; for from one sinner came judgment that brought condemnation; but the free gift came after many offenses and brought acquittal.

**Rom 5:17** For if, because of the offense of one man, death ruled through that one man; how much more will those receiving the overflowing grace, that is, the gift of being considered righteous, rule in life through the one man Yeshua the Messiah!

**Rom 5:18** In other words, just as it was through one offense that all people came under condemnation, so also it is through one righteous act that all people come to be considered righteous.

**Rom 5:19** For just as through the disobedience of the one man, many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the other man, many will be made righteous.

**Rom 5:20** And the Torah came into the picture so that the offense would proliferate; but where sin proliferated, grace proliferated even more.

**Rom 5:21** All this happened so that just as sin ruled by means of death, so also grace might rule through causing people to be considered righteous, so that they might have eternal life, through Yeshua the Messiah, our Lord.

*This is one of the great theological passages in the Bible; but because upon it Christians have erected the doctrine of original sin, it is for Jewish people one of the most problematic. Pivotal in chapters 1-8 of Romans, it looks backward to Rom. 3:21-Rom. 5:11, where God's means of considering people righteous (first mentioned at 1:17) through Yeshua is proclaimed, and forward to Rom. 6:1-Rom. 8:39, where Sha'ul*

*elaborates the consequences for the individual believer of what Yeshua has accomplished.*

*The purpose of these ten verses in their context is not to teach about the origin of human sin but to give assurance that the Messiah has truly redeemed us human beings from bondage to sin by paying its full penalty on our behalf.*

In this case, Death with Messiah leads to life and our union with the Life Giver, while death without Messiah leads to permanent separation from Adonai which includes constant torment.

Death with Messiah is nowhere near the devastation as death without Messiah.

Consider Yochanan the Immerser...

**Mat 11:2** Meanwhile, Yochanan the Immerser, who had been put in prison, heard what the Messiah had been doing; so he sent a message to him through his talmidim,

**Mat 11:3** asking, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for someone else?"

**Mat 11:4** Yeshua answered, "Go and tell Yochanan what you are hearing and seeing —

**Mat 11:5** the blind are seeing again, the lame are walking, people with tzara'at are being cleansed, the deaf are hearing, the dead are being raised, the Good News is being told to the poor —

**Mat 11:6** and how blessed is anyone not offended by me!"

He has come to restore our relationship with Adonai. To make us tahor, to cleanse us...

**1Co 15:51** Look, I will tell you a secret — not all of us will die! But we will all be changed!

**1Co 15:52** It will take but a moment, the blink of an eye, at the final shofar. For the shofar will sound, and the dead will be raised to live forever, and we too will be changed.

**1Co 15:53** For this material which can decay must be clothed with imperishability, this which is mortal must be clothed with immortality.

**1Co 15:54** When what decays puts on imperishability and what is mortal puts on immortality, then this passage in the Tanakh will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory.

**1Co 15:55** "Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?"

**1Co 15:56** The sting of death is sin; and sin draws its power from the Torah;

**1Co 15:57** but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah!

**1Co 15:58** So, my dear brothers, stand firm and immovable, always doing the Lord's work as vigorously as you can, knowing that united with the Lord your efforts are not in vain.

Note – verse 56: This verse sums up what is taught at length in the book of Romans, especially at [Rom\\_3:19-31](#), [Rom\\_5:12-21](#), [Rom\\_7:1-25](#).

**Deu 30:7** Adonai your God will put all these curses on your enemies, on those who hated and persecuted you;

**Deu 30:8** but you will return and pay attention to what Adonai says and obey all his mitzvot which I am giving you today.

**Deu 30:9** Then Adonai your God will give you more than enough in everything you set out to do - the fruit of your body, the fruit of your livestock, and the fruit of your land will all do well; for Adonai will once again rejoice to see you do well, just as he rejoiced in your ancestors.

**Deu 30:10** "However, all this will happen only if you pay attention to what Adonai your God says, so that you obey his mitzvot and regulations which are written in this book of the Torah, if you turn to

Adonai your God with all your heart and all your being.

**Deu 30:11** For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you, it is not beyond your reach.

**Deu 30:12** It isn't in the sky, so that you need to ask, 'Who will go up into the sky for us, bring it to us and make us hear it, so that we can obey it?'

**Deu 30:13** Likewise, it isn't beyond the sea, so that you need to ask, 'Who will cross the sea for us, bring it to us and make us hear it, so that we can obey it?'

**Deu 30:14** On the contrary, the word is very close to you - in your mouth, even in your heart; therefore, you can do it!

**Deu 30:15** "Look! I am presenting you today with, on the one hand, life and good; and on the other, death and evil -

**Deu 30:16** in that I am ordering you today to love Adonai your God, to follow his ways, and to obey his mitzvot, regulations and rulings ; for if you do, you will live and increase your numbers; and Adonai your God will bless you in the land you are entering in order to take possession of it.

You have a choice...

So we need not look at Life and Death the same way as everyone else, but as Adonai sees it. We will exist after our physical death, yet we will exist. The question is where will that be.

With Adonai or Without Adonai.