

Lawrence Burchfield Memorial

Fred R. Coulter—December 7, 2024

Lawrence Burchfield was born December 6, 1933 and he died December 6, 2024. And he was an elder with us for pretty close to 30 years in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and served the brethren well. His wife passed some years ago.

Now whenever we come to death, that always brings up the question:

- Why death?
- Why life?

The Bible tells us the answers to all of those questions because the Bible is the Word of God and it tells us:

- how we got here
- what we do
- what has been done
- what is being done
- what is going to be done according to the prophecies and things in the Bible

God has made us as independent free moral agencies and *we have to choose*. Also, the Bible tells us there's a time to be born and there's a time to die.

So, Lawrence was actually 91-years-old. I talked to him about 10 days ago and he was very weak and he told me, 'Well Fred, now you're going to have to catch up with me.' So, he had a good sense of humor right up until the end.

Now then, at death the spirit goes back to God. For those who die in the faith, ***they have the spirit of man plus the begettal from God***, which is also called *a seed*. A seed in Greek is 'sperma.' ***When we die, the spirit goes back to God!***

Heb. 12—we will see what it says about the Throne of God. God is in charge of all. He has all knowledge, controls all life, created the vastness of the universe. This tells us what happens. Now, we don't see the spirit of man and we don't see the Spirit of God, ***which is the power of God and not a separate God being***. Paul is talking here about what we as Christians when we come before God.

Hebrews 12:22: "But you have come to Mount Zion, and to *the* city of *the* living God, heavenly Jerusalem..."

So when we have the Spirit of God, we have a direct connection with God. We have access to God in heaven above at His Throne. Also at the Throne are:

"...an innumerable company of angels... [it talks about the time of the resurrection here]: ...*To*

the joyous festival gathering..." (vs 22-23). ***That will be the first resurrection!***

All of those who die in the faith will be in the first resurrection; Lawrence will be there along with everyone else.

"...and to *the Church of the Firstborn*, registered in *the Book of Life* in heaven; and to God, *the Judge of all...*" (v 23).

God judges every single one! He can do that, because everything that we've ever—

- thought
- saw
- heard
- spoke
- did

—is recorded in the spirit of man. Likewise, when we're converted, then everything that we do spiritually is connected with God.

- when we pray
- when we study
- when we think
- when we read
- when we understand the Word of God

"...and to *the spirits of the just who have been perfected*" (v 23).

So, *the spirit goes back to God!* Let's liken it to a computer chip. *The spirit of man* is like a computer chip. You take it out of the computer and everything that you have on it is still there. But it's not functional unless it is in a computer and the computer has electricity.

So likewise, when we die, our spirit goes back to God, ***and all of the spirits of the just made perfect are there stored waiting for the first resurrection!***

Now, there is *no conscious thought* of these spirits that come from each individual. ***There is no consciousness until God gives life again at the resurrection!*** Whether it is the first resurrection or as we know, the second resurrection, or the resurrection for the those who commit the unpardonable sin.

But all the spirits of mankind, as well as the spirits of those converted, go back to God. Then at the time for the *first resurrection* God will take those spirits and convert them into spirit beings with spirit minds, with a spirit language; all of that will take place at the resurrection!

Because of this, God's view of death is different than how people view death. He says,

Psalm 116:15: "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints."

The righteous have hope in their death. ***That's the hope of the resurrection!*** Think about that for a minute.

Go all the way back in time; for us, that's hard to do. For God, Who created the heavens and the earth and the universe and all that there is, that's not difficult at all.

Isaiah 57:1: "The righteous perish, and no one lays *it* to heart, and merciful men *are* taken away; none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come." *He shall enter into his rest, enter into his peace!*

That has happened to Lawrence, and there are a lot of us out there getting close to the end. This will happen to all of us. One day, Jonathan will be right here and he will tell you that Fred has passed on. When that will be, he's hoping it will take a long time, because he doesn't want to have to face that. But one of these days he will.

Now, because death is final, we do have grief for the loved ones. We understand that when there's death that life is temporary.

What does that bring us to? *To the ultimate knowledge that human beings are completely, absolutely helpless!*

Look at down through time. How many people—men and women—have tried to live forever or find the key to everlasting life? ***They can't without God!***

So, the only way we overcome death is through Jesus Christ our Lord and God the Father. Jesus was the Firstborn from the dead. So, this tells us the physical life that we now possess is temporary.

As Moses wrote in Psalm 90:10: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they are fourscore years..."

Well, if we go on before four score, which Lawrence did—he was 91, 11 years beyond that—and we know that Moses lived to be 120 years. That was before the Flood began. We know that after the Flood God limited the days of men to be 120 years. That's exactly how old Moses was when he died.

Death comes because of what Adam and Eve did. So, in talking to Adam and Eve after they had committed their sin, here's what God told them: '*For dust you are—because God formed us out of the out of the ground—and unto dust you shall return.*' That just the way it is. No one has changed

it. No one's going to change it, ***because God is decreed it!***

We're all physical. Then there comes a time for us at the time of death, the breath goes forth. Now, that's interesting, isn't it? Every human being breathes from the time of their first breath until the time of their last breath. All of us right now are breathing automatically. Now, if something interrupts that, then we'll either cough or we'll choke or we'll do something.

We're dust, our breath leaves us and we return to the earth, and guess what? *All of our thoughts perish* as far as mental ability at that time. Those are recorded on the spirit of man and that goes back to God and it sits there stored, idle, doing nothing, thinking nothing, because it needs a new brain and it needs a new body so that ***when it's inserted into the new body and brain, then you have new life***, you are a new being. At the resurrection, that's what's going to happen.

Now then, everyone wants to know what happens after death. Well, we've covered some of that already. No one has overcome death except Jesus Christ, and here's what He said:

Revelation 2:17 "...I am the First and the Last, even the One Who is living; for I was dead, and behold, I am alive into the ages of eternity. Amen. And I {Jesus Christ} have the keys of *the* grave and of death" (vs 17-18).

Men can strive all they want to try and find out about life and death. They can discover certain things, but they still, *if they don't know God*, have no idea where it comes from. Furthermore, the Scriptures teach us that death is an enemy and the last enemy that's going to be destroyed.

Jesus said that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and the Resurrection of Life. So, there is no second life or resurrection to life, whether it be a spirit life, which is because of God the Father, or a physical life because of Christ. ***It must come from God!***

So, are all the days that are appointed to us, and then at the resurrection, the change will come. What will happen at that point?

John 14:15—*Job said: "You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall have the desire for the work of Your hands."*

Think about this, because we will cover this a little later about how we came to be. But we're all formed by the hand of God because He made all of the genes and chromosomes with Adam and Eve. That's how we got here. Jesus is the only One Who has the authority and the power to bring life.

John 5:25—*Jesus says: "Truly, truly I say to*

you, *the* hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. For even as the Father has life in Himself, so also has He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and has also given Him authority to execute judgment because He is *the* Son of man. Do not wonder at this... [He said to the Jews] ...for *the* hour is coming in which all... [think about that word] ...who are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth: those who have practiced good unto a resurrection of life, and those who have practiced evil unto a resurrection of judgment" (vs 25-29). ***That resurrection to judgment is the second death!***

Now, here's the enigma that most people don't understand, because at this time, God has only called a very few. *Christ is the One Who reveals the Father to us!* It is only through the Father that we receive the gift of the begetting of the Holy Spirit.

Because God is love, He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. All of those who never had an opportunity for repentance—we know through the Plan of God's Holy Days—that those who had not committed the unpardonable sin will be raised to a second physical life for an opportunity for salvation, *because they didn't have it!*

God only calls those who are willing to repent; those who are willing to come to God. Then when they are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit becomes the *seed or the 'sperma' of eternal life that unites with the spirit of man!* Hence then we grow and develop character. That's what all of us do when we're called and we grow and overcome.

God says He wills that all men/women to be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth. But there's free moral agency. So, all men and women ***have to choose*** what they're going to do. Therefore, God the Father, in His great wisdom and profound love, has provided that even if one dies without the knowledge of salvation, he will resurrect each person to a new life in the flesh. ***That's for those who are not called at this time!***

That's called, as we know in Rev. 20, The Great White Throne Judgment. At that time, salvation will be offered to them, and they all will have a chance to choose.

What this tells us is that the Plan of God is so great that there is marvelous and just wonderful hope for all of mankind, especially when you look around the world, some place on earth, there's always a war: killing, death, and destruction. *Man can only be rescued by God, he can't do it himself!*

*For those of us who are converted and have the Spirit of God, Jesus said, John 14:6: "...**I am the Way and the Truth and the Life...**" This is what all of us who have the Holy Spirit of God need to understand and keep in mind ***and realize that it comes only through Jesus Christ!****

- those of us who have repented and receive the Holy Spirit of God
- those who are elders all down through time
- all the apostles
- all of the prophets

all of them will be in the first resurrection!

So, this is going to be a tremendous thing. Then all of us are going to have part in bringing peace to the world for a thousand years. ***At that time, there will be a lot enter into eternal life!***

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him [Thomas]: 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.'"

John 11:25: "Jesus said to her [Martha], '**I am the Resurrection and the Life.** He who believes in Me, though he die, shall live *again*; and everyone who lives and believes in Me... [then dies] ...shall not die forever...'—*because there is the resurrection!*

That's a promise from God! Christ was God manifested in the flesh. ***So, it's a promise from God!***

"...and everyone who lives and believes in Me... [then dies] ...shall not die forever..." (v 25)—*because there is the resurrection!*

Now then, remember this: Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins. Now, His life and His death was the only true payment that could be made because He was the Creator of Adam and Eve, hence the Creator of all human being.

So, for Him to come manifested in the flesh and to live as a human being, to be born as all of us have been born and to grow up and so forth—***yet never sin and become our Savior***—He is the One Who is called then the Firstfruit, the Firstborn from among the dead.

For as in Adam, all die! That's because part of the judgment against Adam and Eve for their sinning against God and following Satan, the devil, death came to them.

1-Corinthians 15:22: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ *the* Firstfruit; then those who are Christ's at His coming" (vs 22-23).

This tells us that of the religions of the world. Now, you go back and look and see what

Satan told Adam and Eve. Satan said that *in eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you shall not surely die!* In other words, he was offering them eternal life by a different route than what God had planned! Every religion on earth has some method of what they call living forever. *But there's only one! That's God's way!*

- that's through the resurrection of Christ
- that's through the first resurrection when Christ returns

for those in this life now who:

- ✓ repent
- ✓ are baptized
- ✓ receive the Holy Spirit of God
- ✓ grow in grace and knowledge

Because Christ was resurrected, we shall be saved by His life!

Paul goes on and writes and says this:

Verse 20: "But now Christ has been raised from *the* dead; He has become the Firstfruit of those who have fallen asleep"—*in Christ Jesus, the very First One!*

Remember the account in the in the Gospels: how after He was:

- in the grave three days and three nights
- resurrected from the dead
- appeared to the apostles

and when Jesus began His ministry, He had 40 days of temptation under Satan the devil, *and He didn't sin!*

He told the most profound Truth for all people to remember, which is that man—any man, woman or child—shall not live by food alone or bread alone, ***but by every Word of God!*** That's the ***key to receiving eternal life, beginning with the begettal in this age!***

"...Christ *the* Firstfruit; then those who are Christ's at His coming. Afterwards the end *comes*, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to Him Who *is* God and Father, when He shall have put an end to all rule and all authority and power. (vs 23-24).

God's Plan is going to be very sweeping and very complete, and it's going to include millions, if not billions and billions of people. That's hard for our little minds to fathom. But for God, His Plan is so great we can't handle it in the flesh. We can get hints of it.

Like He told Abraham when He made the covenant with Abraham.... And by the way, everything in the Bible from that time forward flows from the promises given to Abraham. God took him out and showed him, 'look to the heavens and count

the stars if you're able to number them; so shall your seed be.'

Now we've got all these fantastic telescopes: Hubble 1, Hubble 2, and now the James Webb telescope. We can see the stars and galaxies out there, magnificent and beautiful and beyond comprehension. So far out there, they can't even measure how far that is. ***God's Plan is so great!***

Verse 25: "For it is ordained that He reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. **The last enemy to be destroyed is death**" (vs 25-26). *That's quite a wonderful thing that we have!*

Now, think about this for a minute: How many people in the world when they're faced with death, regardless of how it comes about, have no understanding of God's Plan? *Some few do, but that's about it!*

The very reason for the resurrection of the dead is to destroy death or to annul death. So, Paul writes this.

Verse 42:"So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption..."

We get old, we get weak, we fall apart! Then one day we quit breathing, and that's it! Some lose their lives very early on. What is God going to do with all of the abortions?

God is not going to be defeated in one single thing by Satan, the devil; you can know that absolutely for sure!

In this life, we put the bodies in the grave or whatever. That's called in the Bible:

"...sown in corruption... [if they're converted] ...it is raised in incorruption" (v 42). *After all, isn't that what all human beings really want?*

- goodness in life
- love
- truth

all of the things that go with it! Now, at this time:

Verse 43: "It is sown in dishonor..."

You can see that in any archaeological thing that they dig up. What do they find?

- they find bones
- they find out how they died
- they find out approximately when they died

The earth is filled with the places where people have died and have been buried. *That verifies the Word of God, that it "...is sown in corruption" (v 42). Only Christ has the keys of death and hell, the grave, and He can raise them back to life!*

Even though we're "...sown in weakness... [because we die being weak] ...it's raised in power" (v 43).

What is it going to be like to have inherent within us eternal life? *That power!* That's going to be absolutely amazing! Right now, we're like little children still in the womb. We can't understand it.

Verse 44: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." *Right now we all have the natural body.*

Verse 45: "Accordingly, it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul...'"

It tells us in Ezek. 18 that the soul that sins, it shall die. Satan comes along with his counterfeit and says that you have an immortal soul. and he'll tell you how you can live forever with your immortal soul. ***But that never works out!***

"...There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body; accordingly, it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul; the last Adam became an ever-living Spirit'" (vs 44-45).

Now, here is the key. This is what is important!

Verse 46: "However, the spiritual was not first, but the natural—**then**... [at the resurrection]: ...the spiritual" (vs 45-46).

That's why when we receive the Spirit of God and baptism and the laying on of hands; ***that is a begettal! That is a new beginning!*** *But that is not finalized until the resurrection!*

Verse 47: "The first man *is* of the earth—made of dust. The second Man *is* the Lord from heaven. As *is* the one made of dust, so also *are all* those who are made of dust; and as *is* the heavenly One, so also *are all* those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the *one* made of dust, **we shall also bear the image of the heavenly One**" (vs 47-49).

Now, that's amazing! That goes all the way back to Gen. 1; ***that God made us after His likeness and after His image, male and female!***

Verse 50: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit *the* Kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, **I show you a mystery**... [this is part of an answer to that mystery] ...we shall not all fall asleep..." (vs 50-51)—*because Paul was expecting the return of Jesus Christ during his time!*

Isn't it interesting how many times during the time of the death of the Apostle John until now have people said Christ is returning, but He hasn't returned because it's not according to God's time

schedule, yet. We see we're getting closer to it. Every time we it looks like we're getting closer to it, then something happens and it doesn't work out the way that it is going to fulfill the prophecies in order for Christ to come.

Verse 51: "Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all fall asleep... [there will be some still alive when Christ returns] ...but we shall all be changed, in an instant, in *the* twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (vs 51-52).

Now, there's a wonderful rendition of this in *The Messiah* by George Handel.

Here's what the Apostle John wrote concerning us now and what we will be then:

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!"

Think about that! We are the children of God, not yet born into *the* spiritual Family of God! But Lawrence, like all of the other saints who die in the faith, are in the category waiting for the resurrection to be the actual children of God, spirit beings.

"...For this reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God..." (vs 1-2). *That's why it's so important that we:*

- stay faithful
- that we love God
- that we love His Word
- that we understand what He's saying
- that we grow and overcome
 - ✓ God will be with us
 - ✓ God will strengthen us
 - ✓ God will help us in every way

"...and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is" (v 2).

What is that going to be like? *Well, make it to the resurrection—like Lawrence is going to make it—and you will see.*

*The Apostle Paul writes; Philippians 3:21: "Who... [Christ and God the Father] ...will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the inner working of His own power, whereby He is able to subdue **all** things to Himself." That is everything on the earth!*

2-Corinthians 6:18: “And I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says *the* Lord Almighty.” *Now, that’s quite a thing!*

God’s Plan is being worked out. Part of that is that *we die in the faith*, as Lawrence has, and many of us were reaching that age. That’s going to happen to us, as well.

Then God will fulfill His purpose for His saints, as promised to Abraham, where he said, ‘I will make your seed multiply like the stars of heaven.’ Quite a fantastic thing!

Daniel 12:2: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And **they who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament...**” (vs 2-3).

It’s kind of like this: a baby in the womb has no knowledge of what it’s going to be like when it’s born. Even after it’s born, has no knowledge about life except that it must sleep, and it must eat, and it must have all of the bodily functions working. It must grow and grow and grow, *likewise with us spiritually that has to happen!*

Jesus Himself confirmed the promise of God given through the Prophets when He spoke of the glory that those in the resurrection to eternal life will have.

Matthew 13:43: “Then shall **the righteous shine forth as the sun...**”

Now, you just go out there today daytime and you look at the sun; you can just glance at it for a few seconds^[transcriber’s correction]. That’s the kind of glory that we’re going to have. Now, that’s hard to fathom. That’s why it’s called ‘*the mystery of God!*’

“...shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father...” (v 43).

Because of this and because of the hope that God has given us, He wants us not to be discouraged, not to be sorrowful and grieve continually, *but to have hope in God!*

1-Thessalonians 4:13—*Paul wrote*: “But I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, **that you be not grieved, even as others, who have no hope...** [because we have *the hope; we have the resurrection*] ...For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in exactly the same way also, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say to you by *the Word of the Lord*, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede those who have fallen asleep” (vs 13-15).

But those who are dead, “...with the voice

of an archangel and with *the* trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (v 16).

And what a tremendous thing that is going to be! And as we know, *we’ll all be resurrected to this vast, great Sea of Glass right over the Holy Land! What a thing that’s going to be!*

Verse 17: “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in *the* clouds for *the* meeting with the Lord in *the* air; and so shall we always be with *the* Lord.... [then Paul adds]: ...**Therefore, encourage one another with these words**” (vs 17-18).

Now then, this is why we can do this, because it says:

1-Corinthians 15:54: “...’Death is swallowed up in victory.’ O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” (vs 54-55). *Death will be destroyed!*

Death is the last enemy that will be conquered, annulled as if it never occurred. The ultimate love of God will be clearly manifested. God the Father will give eternal life to all of those who are in Christ Jesus, His Son. He will accomplish this through the power of the resurrection. And by his profound love and grace for each one He calls, as Paul wrote:

Ephesians 3:14: “For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole Family in heaven and earth is named... [we’re part of the God Family yet to be born] ...that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory... [What is that going to be like?] ...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man” (vs 14-16)—*at this time!*

To have eternal strength with his Holy Spirit, understanding and knowledge, love and truth, and all of that.

Verse 17: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *and* that being rooted and grounded in love... [that’s the whole purpose of why we’re here] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ...” (vs 17-19).

How much do we really know, even all the things that we do know? *Very little!* That’s why we need to hold on to everything that we have. *All of this:*

“...which surpasses human knowledge so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (v 19).

Now that's what God wants it to be, *and He has the power to make it happen!* He's going to make it happen.

John wrote in vision concerning the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Revelation 21:1: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.... [that's where we're going to live] ... And I heard a great voice from heaven say, '**Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men; and He shall dwell with them...**'" (vs 1-3) *Men and women made perfect; spirit beings living in glory, love and Truth!*

"...and they shall be His people; and God Himself shall be with them *and be* their God. And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and *there* shall not be anymore death, or sorrow, or crying; neither shall *there* be any more pain, because the former things have passed away.' And He Who sits on the Throne said, '**Behold, I make all things new.**' Then He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, 'It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the one who thirsts...' " (vs 3-6).

That's what we all do in the Churches of God. *We:*

- thirst for God's Spirit
- thirst for His Word
- thirst for His Love
- thirst for His working in our lives

so we can attain to the resurrection of the dead!

"...To the one who thirsts... [the one who overcomes] ...I will give freely of the fountain of the Water of Life" (v 6).

That's how it's going to be in the resurrection. So, this is how Jesus is going to do it. That's how God loves the world, loves the Church, loves every one of us.

Lawrence was an outstanding elder! We're thankful for what he has done for the brethren there in Tulsa, Oklahoma. We know that all the brethren will rejoice and be happy that he has made it safe to be put into the grave *to await the first resurrection!*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 12:22-23
- 2) Psalm 116:15
- 3) Isaiah 57:1
- 4) Psalm 90:10
- 5) Revelation 2:17-18

- 6) Job 14:15
- 7) John 5:25-29
- 8) John 14:6
- 9) John 11:25
- 10) 1 Corinthians 15:22-23, 20, 23-26, 42-45, 44-52
- 11) 1 John 3:1
- 12) Philippians 3:21
- 13) 2 Corinthians 6:18
- 14) Daniel 12:2-3
- 15) Matthew 13:43
- 16) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
- 17) 1 Corinthians 15:54-55
- 18) Ephesians 3:14-19
- 19) Revelation 21:1-6

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 20
- Ezekiel 18

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