

To God We Belong, to Him Is Our Return

by Paul Bramsen

We were created to belong to God and will one day return to Him, and it's our sorrow and longing that can lead us back to Him.

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Separation From God"

Description

Paul Bramsen reflects on the joyous reunion believers will experience when they return to God, likening it to the anticipation and emotions felt when reuniting with a long-lost friend. He delves into the separation of humanity from God starting with Adam and Eve's fall from Paradise due to disobedience, leading to a deep longing for the close relationship they once had with God. Bramsen draws parallels between the grief of losing loved ones to death and the sorrow Adam and Eve felt at being separated from God, suggesting that sorrow may be a tool God uses to draw us back to Him.

Transcript

At the airport waiting room I eagerly anticipated welcoming a friend whom I hadn't seen for many years. It was interesting to see how others expressed their emotions at being reunited. One reunion was particularly striking because of the overwhelming joy that even spilled over into tears. Seeing these scenes made me wonder, "What will God feel when He welcomes home the believers at their final return?" "To God we belong and to Him is our return." Will this "return" be joyful?

The joyous experience of being reunited with a loved one presupposes a prior period of separation. Therefore we need to consider whether we humans were once "with" God but now are separated from Him?

Our first parents, Adam and Eve, enjoyed intimate fellowship with God while they lived in Paradise. Then by Satan's cunning deception they fell from innocence. Their disobedience against God caused them to be driven out of Paradise and banished. They had to live the rest of their lives in a world of enmity (Surah 2:36-38) and corruption.

No doubt they longed to return to their original home where they had enjoyed pure happiness. They missed the close relationship which they had experienced with God, the Most beautiful and Most Loving One. Such a momentous loss and banishment must have caused them deep heartache and grief.

But what relevance does this ancient tragedy have for our lives today? Like Adam and Eve, we too have experienced the grief of being separated from loved ones. Each time death takes a loved one away we feel sorrow and grief.

Could it be that our sorrow is an echo of the pain that Adam and Eve felt at being separated from God? Perhaps sorrow is something God uses to turn our attention back to him?

Adam's sorrow at being separated from God was linked with a longing to return. But his Paradise home is, in a sense, also our true home. Therefore shouldn't we also feel a longing to return - a longing born out of sorrow?

May each of us realise the real roots and Divine purpose of grief. I pray that God will rekindle in our spirits a yearning to be reunited with Him in our true home.

To be sure, we have come from God and to Him we will return. Unfortunately, for many people this return is a frightening prospect - an unavoidable appointment. Why don't we look forward to it as a joyous occasion in which long separated friends are reunited?

The prophet Asaph rejoiced at the prospect of being reunited with God saying, "You guide me with your counsel and afterwards You will receive into glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? And being with You I desire nothing on earth." (Psalm 73:24,25)

Another biblical writer of sacred poetry wrote about the mystery of our instinctive dislike of death saying, "No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him"... [so as to avoid death] "The ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough... But God will redeem my soul from the grave; He will surely take me to Himself." (Psalm 49:7,8,15)

Death is certainly an unpleasant hurdle which we must all cross on our return journey to God. Are you trusting God to redeem and rescue your life from decay and helplessness in the grave? Can you face death with the same peace and confidence that the psalmist had? Do you want to know more of what the prophet said about preparing for your final return?

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