

# Five Awesome Steps of Blessing!

Sunday, November 6 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, November 7 at 7 PM  
All Saints' Day (observed) – 2016

**Introduction:** Dear friends: People live and people die; living *SEEMS* to be the beginning and death *SEEMS* to be the ending, **but** let us SEE the BIG PICTURE of God's work! These words in **Romans 8:30** are called *the order of salvation*; the Bible says, "*whom [God] **predestined**, these [God] also **called**; and whom [God] called, these [God] also **justified**; and whom [God] justified, these [God] also **glorified***" (Rom 8:30 NAS). **So God took action before time – to predestine, and in time – to call and justify; He will also take action after time – to glorify.** So, YES, there is **much more** than living and dying.

Now we live, someday we will die; so, *in regard to death*, is it a step **up** or a step **down**; in other words, is death a **positive** or a **negative**? Let's consider **five awesome blessings**, which began *before time* and will continue *forevermore*:

1. **Predestination – GOD Chose Us before Creation:**

<sup>ESV</sup> **Ephesians 1:4-5** "[God the Father] chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world [*thus even before He created the world*], that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he **predestined** us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will..." // What does it mean that God predestined us to be His holy children? It means that He decided *beforehand, before creation*; furthermore, God's decision *before time* is what **caused us in time** to be *called by the gospel and justified through Jesus!* The Bible is clear: **GOD CHOSE US!**

2. **Conception – GOD Gave Us Physical Life:** <sup>ESV</sup> Acts 17:24-26, 28 “The God who made the world and everything in it... he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth... ‘In him we live and move and have our being...’” // So we are not alive by ☹️the big bang or ☹️chance or ☹️luck; instead, **GOD** is the One who ➡️knew about us before creation, ➡️brought us to life in time – *when we were conceived*, ➡️enables us to live, move, and exist now, and ➡️provides all we need, *thus our daily bread!*
3. **Spiritual Birth – GOD Gave Us Spiritual Life:** For Adam and Eve, God made them alive in two ways – *both physically and spiritually*; **but** their fall into sin brought *immediate* spiritual death and *eventual* physical death. We have **all** inherited those sad realities (Romans 5:12); therefore, *from conception*, ♣️we were spiritually dead and eventually ♣️we will be physically dead. So, *knowing we were dead in our sins*, **GOD TOOK ACTION:**
- a. <sup>ESV</sup> **1 Corinthians 1:26-27, 30** “...consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards... But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise... And because of him you are in Christ Jesus... // How does the world look upon us; are we ♦️wise, ♦️brilliant, ♦️amazing people? **No!** Are we saved because we ♣️figured it out, ♣️cracked the code, ♣️are living holy lives? **No!** We have spiritual life *because GOD made us alive through Jesus!*

- b. <sup>NAS</sup> **Titus 3:5** [**God the Father**] **saved us**, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit... // **God** is the One who saved us, **but how**? Even though He saw we were filthy with sin *He loved us*, so He ➔washed us clean, ➔wrapped us with Jesus, and ➔gave us spiritual life, *through Holy Baptism!*
- c. <sup>ESV</sup> **James 1:18** **Of his own will** [*the will of God the Father*] **he brought us forth** by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." // The WORD OF GOD is **so important**; it is *God's chosen means* to bring us forth **from** spiritual death **to** spiritual life – *for a purpose*, to "**be a kind of firstfruits.**" Jesus is the *ultimate* firstfruit; He is the firstborn from the dead, *He was even raised on the festival of Firstfruits!* As He was raised from death to life physically, *so we have been raised from death to life spiritually.* **WE ARE SO BLESSED!**

4. **Physical Death – GOD Takes the Souls of Those Who Die in Jesus to a Place of Peace and Rest:** We can understand the joys of ♦physical birth and ♦baptism into Christ, *but what about death*; **is it a step up or a step down?** These words help us see the death of a believer from God's perspective: <sup>NIV</sup> **Isaiah 57:1-2** "**The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away**, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away **to be spared from evil**. Those who walk uprightly enter into **peace**; they find **rest** as they lie in death." // The "**righteous**" and

“**devout**” are not people who are self-righteously good, *but people who died with their trust in the promised Messiah / the Christ!* Even before we lived a single day outside the womb, God knew how many days we would have on earth (Ps. 139:16). God gave us life; then, *at the appointed time*, He will take us away from this sin-filled world to spare us from evil. Then what? Then ➔ *perfect spiritual peace* and ➔ *perfect physical rest!*

### 5. **Jesus’ Return – GOD Will Dwell with All Who Die in**

**Jesus:** This passage follows right after the final judgment: <sup>ESV</sup> **Revelation 21:3-4** “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. **He will dwell with them**, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” // Though spiritual life with God in paradise is good, *and is the current place of all who have died in Jesus*, the words of Revelation 21 will be fulfilled *after the resurrection*. Those **wonderful blessings** are *yet to come* for all who continue to abide in Jesus, *thus for all saints!*

**Conclusion:** So death in Jesus IS definitely a step UP: ☺ God chose us *before time* to be His very own; ☺ then, *in time*, He gave us life both physically and spiritually; ☺ then, *when we die in Jesus*, He will take us – *soul and spirit* – to paradise; and ☺ then, *when Jesus returns*, ➔ *we will be raised* and – *body, soul, and spirit* – ➔ *we will be with God forevermore! Amen!*