

Were Adam and Eve Created with Immortality? An Explanation

- Gen 2:7 Then the Lord God formed man **of dust from the ground**, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.
- Gen 2:16-17 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for **in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.**"
- Gen 3:6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and **he ate.**
- Gen 3:19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, **till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.**"
- Gen 3:22-24 Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, **and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever**"— **therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out;** and at the east of the garden of Eden **He stationed the cherubim** and the flaming sword which turned every direction **to guard the way to the tree of life.** (Gen 3:22-24)¹

An Explanation

"Human resistance to death was not the result of immortal bodies. The text indicates that we are formed from the dust of the earth, a statement of our mortality (for dust we are and to dust we return, cf. Gen 3:19). No, the reason we were not subject to death was because an antidote had been provided to our natural mortality through the mechanism of the tree of life in the garden. When God specified the punishment for disobedience, he said that when they ate, they would be doomed to death (the meaning of the Hebrew phrase in Gen 2:17). That punishment was carried out by banishing them from the garden and blocking access to the tree of life (Gen 3:23-24). Without access to the tree of life, humans were doomed to the natural mortality of their bodies and therefore doomed to die. And so it was that death came through sin."¹

¹ John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 100-101.