

DEATH AND AFTER

Christ and Death

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The whole subject of death cannot be avoided. Death is as certain for each one of us as it is certain that the sun will rise and set each day. The old proverb that says, “there are only two things certain in life – death and taxes,” is true. No one gets out of the problem of death.
- B. Death is either openly or secretly feared by most people. They try so hard to cover up the whole idea of death or make it acceptable by not trying to make it as bad as it really is. This is shown by the way men talk. The body is no longer a corpse but “the departed.” Coffins become caskets and sleeping couches. Graveyards become resting places and cemeteries. Men try to drive from their minds the sure fact of death. They try to forget that death awaits, that it stands at the end of every pathway we might take to avoid it. Death is inescapable and we must all fall victims to death sooner or later.
- C. Why do men fear death? Men fear death because they fear the unknown and because God has somehow put on the conscience of every man that there is life after death and some kind of judgment awaits them. However, the ultimate reason men fear death is because they do not know Jesus Christ who is God’s solution to death.

II. WHY IS CHRIST QUALIFIED TO BE VICTOR OVER DEATH?

- A. His Miracles: By miracles of raising the dead, especially the raising of Lazarus (John 12:38-46). These miracles proved that Christ, as the God-Man, has authority over death.
- B. His Death: Through His death, Christ broke the power of death which grips men. By death Christ destroyed death (Rev. 1:18).
- C. His Resurrection: When Christ rose from the dead, He proved that sin and death had no hold on Him (I Cor. 15:12-20). He rose victorious over every man’s conqueror – death. Since Christ defeated death and rose victorious so shall the Christian who is one with Christ.
- D. His Kingly Authority: Christ must reign and put down the last enemy which is death (I Cor. 15:24-26). Christ will one day destroy all death forever.

III. HOW HAS CHRIST ABOLISHED DEATH?

- A. Christ is Sovereign Over Death (Rev. 1:17-18): The word “keys” is a symbol to express Christ’s sovereignty and Lordship. The keys are a picture of Christ’s authority, control and government. Jesus Christ has sovereign control over hell and death. Death moves at the command of Christ because He is God and He rose victorious over sin and death. Christ can permit to die whom He pleases and grant deliverance through physical and spiritual death whom He pleases. He is sovereign over death.
- B. Christ Destroyed the Devil Who has the Power of Death (Heb. 2:14-15): Christ had to become a man to die as a man in order to destroy the power of death over men. This power (strength) of death is held by the devil who is a real person. Satan

originally causes sin and sin brings death. Up until the cross of Christ, Satan had the power of death. The devil did not have the power of death in the sense of determining who dies and when life shall end. God alone gives life and takes life (Deut. 32:39). The “power of death” means the grip of death with its mysterious, fearsome and terrible qualities. Satan causes men to run from death and to fear it because he is the great deceiver. The word “destroy” (KJV) actually means “to render inoperative” or “render powerless” (NAS). The devil has not been destroyed for Satan is very much alive and active on this earth among the unsaved, but the devil’s authority and power to the saved is rendered powerless. Unsaved people are under the yoke and power of Satan but redeemed men have been delivered from the power of death because God has judged Satan at the cross (John 12:31; Col. 2:15). Christians can be tempted by the devil but they are no longer under his authority. NOTE: The devil convinces unsaved men that the grave ends it all and all that is worth living for is found in this earthly, human life. He blinds men to eternal realities and causes them to fear death and to live only for the immediate moment. The devil has duped men into believing that death is to be feared and ends all existence, so men accept the philosophy, “Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die!” Satan has taught unsaved man to fear death so they stoically shield themselves against it. NOTE: The Christian is identified with Christ and His death, so the Christian knows the power of Satan in sin and death has been broken in his life.

- C. Christ Removes the Fear of Death (II Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:15): Redeemed men are actually set free from the fear of death because they are no longer enslaved to sin and Satan. Christ destroyed death with death when He died at Calvary. How are men freed from the power and fear of death? Through the gospel of Christ, men realize that Christ came in to the world to defeat sin and death, and He rose victorious over the grave. True Christians do not accept the devil’s lie that the grave ends it all, but live for Christ and trust wholly in His person and work. NOTE: Christians can now look forward to death without fear because Christ has “abolished death.” In what sense has Christ abolished death? It cannot mean that He eliminated death because death is still with us. Christ has abolished death in that He defeated it and broke the bondage it had over true believers before they were saved. Christ abolished the fear of death, removing the sting of it (I Cor. 15:55-57).

IV. WHY DO SOME CHRISTIANS FEAR DEATH?

- A. Natural Fear: All Christians have a fear of the unknown in death. It is the last human experience of life and no mere human has ever returned from the dead to tell us about death. There are no human authorities on death. NOTE: Natural fear of death causes the Christian to exercise faith in Jesus Christ, for without that natural fear we might not trust Him at all. After all, the Lord Jesus Christ is the only person who ever lived and died and was resurrected from the dead. He alone has been through death and returned to tell us about it. We can trust His word on the subject of death.
- B. Babes in Christ: There are many true Christians who are babes in Christ. They may be young or old in chronological age but have failed to grow up as Christians. These babes are easily influenced by the thinking of the world. Therefore, they view death as the world would view it. In their heads they know the Christian message of hope, but they are still running on infantile emotions. This kind of Christian runs from death, does not want to face up to it or talk about it. The world’s fear of death has rubbed off on the babe in Christ. NOTE: Babes in Christ

must get into the deep things of the Word and face reality from a Biblical perspective.

- C. Failure to Believe God: Even a mature Christian can have a lapse in faith and fail to believe Christ's promise about death. The Bible is true when it speaks on death but our faith is not always true. A Christian must train his mind to trust God at any and all costs. NOTE: When you have a lapse of faith and the fear of death overtakes you, do the following things. First, realize that you are weak in faith and admit it to God. Second, meditate on the death and resurrection of Christ and see how it relates to you and your death. Third, claim the promises of God about death and even repeat them out loud if necessary. Fourth, pray and tell the Lord something like this: "Lord, I am trusting in you up to the very hour of death, and I believe you will be with me in death and I shall be with you after death. You are my only hope, Lord Jesus."