

# The Last Enemy

By Rich Jacobs, M.D.

*For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who care asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. **1 Corinthians 15:16-26***

1. Paul's letter to the Corinthians includes verses that outline God's battle plan to defeat His enemies and establish His eternal Kingdom. (See **1 Corinthians 15:16-26**, above).
  - a. Notice that God's ultimate enemy is "Death"; it is the last "hold-out" against God's sovereign authority and reign. (**1 Corinthians 15:26**)
  - b. Death is spoken of in the Bible as though it were a person or personality, similar in concept to the "Death Angel" or "Grim Reaper".

*. . . I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death . . . **Revelation 6:8***

*Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire . . . **Revelation 20:14***

- c. Death is not defeated instantly, all at once. It is defeated according to a divinely executed plan ". . . *each in his own order* . . .", distributed over time that takes millennia to complete in a pre-established sequence. (Re-read **1 Corinthians 15:16-26**, above)
  - i. Christ is the first One to overcome Death through His resurrection (Timing: c. 31 AD). For this reason, and others, Christ is called the "first fruits" of God's plan. (**1 Corinthians 15:23a**)
  - ii. Christ's Church, the saints, are the next ones to overcome Death through their rapture and resurrection, when Christ returns to redeem Israel and establish His Millennial reign on earth (Timing: sometime in the future, after May 2016 - **1 Corinthians 15:23b**)
  - iii. At the end of Christ's Millennial reign, He puts all His enemies under His feet, including Death, which is "abolished" (Timing: 1000 years after Christ's return - **1 Corinthians 15:25, 26**)
  - iv. God's plan to abolish Death is designed and implemented in a way to both eliminate Death and to eradicate the root cause of Death permanently and eternally. As a part of His design, God has announced and published in the Bible this plan far in advance of its execution and completion.

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*He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away. **Revelation 21:4***

- v. To understand the reasons behind God's plan to eradicate Death permanently, one must understand the root causes of Death and misery in the world.
- 2. The reign of God was challenged by His ultimate enemy, Satan, who controls Death. Man joined Satan's rebellion through sin. Now Death reigns over man and his whole dominion, the World.
  - a. God gave man one simple law - don't eat from one tree in the garden.

*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. **Genesis 2:16, 17***

- b. The serpent introduced doubt about God's integrity, motive, and wisdom into Eve's mind. See **Genesis 3:1-5**, below.
  - i. Notice the Serpent implies that God is "holding out" on Eve for His own selfish purposes. This statement directly questions the righteousness of God.
  - ii. Notice the Serpent explicitly contradicts God, which at the very least, implies that God is wrong (if not lying). This statement directly questions the wisdom (and integrity) of God.
  - iii. Notice that Eve really does not know God and is, therefore, vulnerable to ideas that create doubt in her about Him. Doubt is the opposite of faith, and is the cause of sin which leads to death!

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! 'For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" **Genesis 3:1-5***

- c. As a result of Eve's doubt about God and His word, she begins to obey her own thoughts and desires and disobeys God, resulting in sin. Adam willingly joined his wife in rebellion against God

*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. **Genesis 3:5***

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- d. Death was the unavoidable consequence of Adam and Eve's sin, just as God told them beforehand that it would be.

*For the wages of sin is death . . .* **Romans 6:21**

- e. Death gained its power in man and in creation through sin. Death now reigns in creation, so all men and women are subject to its rule — all people die.

*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned . . .* **Romans 5:12**

*. . . by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one . . .* **Romans 5:17**

*. . . death reigned from Adam . . .* **Romans 5:14**

3. Christ did not desire the humiliation, suffering and death on a cross, but He chose to trust and obey His Father. Jesus even trusted God in death.

*"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."*  
**Luke 22:42**

*And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus \*said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"* **Matthew 26:51-53**

*Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."*  
*When he had said this, he breathed his last.* **Luke 23:46**

4. Jesus Christ's faithful obedience of the God the Father and His resurrection from the dead proves His victory over Death.

*When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."* **Revelation 2:17, 18**

*Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil . . .* **Hebrews 2:14**

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*He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. **Colossians 1:18***

5. The saints overcome Death through faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ.

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." **John 5:24***

*For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . **1 Corinthians 15:56***

*And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. **Revelation 12:11***

*. . . even so through one act of righteousness (i.e. Christ's faithful obedience on the cross) there resulted justification of life to all men. **Romans 5:18***

6. The resurrection of Christ and saints proves God's trustworthiness and wisdom. By this, God destroys the first enemy, doubt, so that the last enemy, death, can be destroyed permanently.

*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, **Ephesians 3:5-11***

*"You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me. I, even I, am the LORD, and there is no savior besides Me." **Isaiah 43:10, 11***

*I declared the former things long ago and they went forth from My mouth, and I proclaimed them. Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. Because I know that you are obstinate, and your neck is an iron sinew and your forehead bronze, therefore I declared them to you long ago, before they took place I proclaimed them to you . . . **Isaiah 48:3-5***