



## THE LAST ENEMY

This subject is very large, too large for one article. It's something that's all around us, and hangs over us like a dark sword. It gets his grips into us a little bit more everyday as life goes on. It's the worst thing about life. When you face it, it's usually unexpected. When it comes near you, it brings grief and sorrow, does violence to your emotions and wreaks havoc in a life. Men struggle against it, but when it strikes that final blow there's no going back. You can see its effects in the natural world, in hospitals and care homes, as a young man turns into an old man and walks with a stick slowly in the street. As summer turns to autumn then winter, as the leaf falls and the flower fades and everything returns to the dust. It works in everything over time and is a thief and a murderer. No one has ever overcome it or conquered it, except One. Yes, our subject is a grave one; DEATH. but there is hope in that One I've just mentioned.

There is a great lie in the world; that death is a natural part of life, but there's nothing natural about it. This lie, is some people's attempt to try to make the best of it, but there's no escaping or explaining this away. It was never part of God's good, original, creation. There's nothing good about death and it wasn't part of God's *design*, but it was part of his *plan*. Nothing is out of his control. It must be here; but why? Because sin is here. Death came in because of sin

## Genesis 2.16

*but of the tree... that shall not eat... for in the day that eatest... thou shalt surely die."*

They were tempted to disbelieve God so they brought death upon themselves. This has been man's problem ever since;

## Romans 5:12

*12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

## James 1:15

*15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

Death is destructive, powerful, final, horrific, and there is no sugaring the pill. It casts a shadow over life for everyone and the Bible says *"there is no discharge in that war"*. We shouldn't think that there must be nothing wrong with the existence of death in a world created by God. When you think about it, death is proof that the Bible is true. Why? Because if God, who is the judge of all things, exists, then something must have gone terribly wrong with us for death to exist, and something has gone terribly wrong with us, just like the Bible says. We all have a sense of right and wrong, a sense of justice, and a desire for judgement. If wrong exists, and death exists, and God exists, and God is just, then judgement after death must exist.

## Hebrews 9:27

*27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

Death is the rider on the pale horse and hell is said to follow him. Death cannot be explained in any other way than biblically. The 'world' certainly can't explain or make sense of it. I have a book at home called *'13 things that don't make sense; the most intriguing scientific mysteries of our time'*. Do you know what one of the chapters is entitled? *'Death; Evolutions problem with self destruction.'* No, we'll get no help from the world when it comes to spiritual matters. We need a spiritual book. You can't just guess at these things and hope for the best, you're not qualified to know, only God is. Everytime We get sick, death taps us on the shoulder. Anyone who's seen a dead body of a relative will tell you, "It looked like 'so

and so' but they were gone, they weren't there anymore". You see, the body is a shell, or a vehicle, a tent we live in, but the essential 'you' is a living soul. Death is separation of that soul from the body. Death is a plague. It was the most dreadful of the plagues in Egypt and yet there was a 'hope', when it passed over, in One that had already died; the sacrificial lamb. If the lamb's blood was put on the door posts of the house, death didn't come calling. This is a picture of a final judgement and the 'lamb of God.'

But, in a very real sense, man is already dead;

### *Ephesians 2:1*

**2** *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

Some protest, "I'm not dead!" No, you have a mind and emotions and a will, even a conscience, but man also has a spirit, and it's that spirit, that is asleep, or in a coma, as good as dead. Death is not only a plague, it's an enemy, your enemy. It's as though Satan works you like a slave all through your life and then pays your wages according to your works of sin;

### *Romans 6:23*

*23 For the wages of sin is death;*

However, there is another Master; you'll never earn his wages, so He freely gives them to His servants as a gift (having already paid the price), but you do have to be one of his. What is this gift? :- Eternal life.

### *Romans 6:23*

*23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Don't ever try to make a friend of death. Some people try! They love horror films and images of death, skull tattoos, graveyards and even suicide seduces them. The demon possessed man in the Bible, who lived amongst the tombs, is a picture of this. He was chained and cut himself and this is what we do to ourselves spiritually if we love our sins we give ourselves pain, we, as it were, kiss our chains! But the 'Prince of life' came to that place of death and freed the man. Just like when he came to the funeral procession, in Luke 7, and raised the dead to life again. He is death's match, death's Conqueror, but you are not. In the old testament the people of Israel were told that to touch a dead body would make a person 'unclean'. This can be applied to today. So many things corrupt a man in today's Godless culture. We mustn't touch these dead things.

## *1 Corinthians 15:26*

*26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*

Some think they can get out of any judgement they may face. Maybe they can lie to themselves as a way out of the judgement (called the second death), make an agreement with death? Isaiah talked about this;

## *Isaiah 28:15-18*

*15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:*

*16 Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*

*17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.*

*18 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.*

Remember, there is no discharge in that war. We'll all cross that river!

Christ is the only one who has overcome death itself and was resurrected. He was the only one strong enough, being the God-man, and if you want to overcome it, you have to be 'in Him'. How did He overcome it? Well, the power of death is sin, and He had no sin.

## *Acts 2:24*

*24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*

He overcame it by love;

### *Song of Solomon 8:6*

*6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death;*

If death is a chain, He holds the key;

### *Revelation 1:18*

*18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

### *Isaiah 25:8*

*8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces;*

What a comfort to those who grieve. Through the Lord of life, the dead can have life. If they look to him to save them, if they love him and trust him, sin can be taken away, dealt with on Calvary's cross. Then forgiveness is yours;

### *Colossians 2:13*

*13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*

The lord said;

### *John 5:24*

*24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

Thomas Vincent, a Puritan who lived in London during the Great Plague, noted how different the death of believers and unbelievers were, and in the book the 'The last words of saints and Sinners' are many accounts of the peace and security that Christians have in death. Vincent says of the non-Christian;

*"Some considering what they have been, and what is coming upon them, are filled with inexpressible terrors through the roarings and tearings of a guilty accusing conscience, and fore-thoughts of that horrible torment that they are so near unto. Now scaring dreams do*

*terrify them, and fearfulness of the bottomless pit doth surprise them in anguish and despairing... and however jovial and full of pleasure their life hath been, yet at the latter end they are utterly consumed with terrors."*

Of the Christian he says;

*"The end of that man is peace; whatsoever storms they have had in their passage through the rough sea (of life), sometimes have been ready to sink through opposition and discouragement; yet now they are come to the haven of death, the winds are hushed and still, the waves are smooth and silent, the storm is over, and there is a great calm upon their spirits; they are past the rocks and out of the danger they feared, when they are approaching death."*

I've known Christians who have died. One dear old lady, who was said to be singing hymns just before she died. Another old man, who died in a nursing home, who always came down to breakfast dressed smartly and was said to be the life and soul of the place. One day he didn't come down, so they went to his room and found him bowed over his bible, sitting dressed in his chair, after having done his morning devotions. He'd prayed to God, then went to be with Him. Of course, it is not only the old who die, our time is set, and tomorrow is promised to no one. Our life is but a span, whether long or short and a 'veil of tears', a journey we enter with a cry and leave with a groan- Oh to live for a future hope, an eternal hereafter of bliss and peace.

I finish with a few more verses and leave the last words with God. Think to yourself this question; "Am I alive or am I dead in my sins?"

### *Revelation 20:15*

*15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

### *Revelation 21:8*

*8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

*But look at this;*

### *Revelation 20:12-14*

*12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life:*

*and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

*13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

*14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

Death is a defeated foe in the Lord Jesus Christ;

### 1 Corinthians 15:54-58

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.