

The Christian and Death

Introduction

- A. One of the most startling and repugnant facets of life is death. There is something mysterious about the relationship of life and death. When we are faced with death ourselves, or in a relative or friend, we also sense that there is something terribly wrong about the whole matter of dying.
- B. The response of the human race to death has a great variety. Some have sought death. Most of us avoid doing any serious thinking about death even when we may be forced to attend a funeral. Many people have spent their life savings trying to avoid death.

I. The Reality and Fact of Death, I Corinthians 15:22.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Observation: This verse states clearly the obvious truth that life is a pilgrimage from the cradle to the grave. "All die . . ." is a common characteristic shared by all creatures. Some of our greatest monuments are closely related to death - the pyramids, the mausoleums, the statues to dead heroes, and even the simple graves of famous people which have been made into a tourist attraction. Every man, woman and child inexorably faces death.

II. The Cause of Death, Romans 5:21; 6:23.

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.

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

Observation: God did not design man to die. Death, with its attendant suffering and sickness, has been inflicted by the human race upon itself. God, Who is our life, is also absolute in truth, love and holiness. Sin has severed our relationship with God and this includes the relationship of life. We are not, by nature, in fellowship with God, and we bear in our physical bodies the condemnation of death.

III. The Explanation of Death, Hebrews 9:27/28.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after death the judgment, So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many

Observation: The divine warning to man, before he sinned, was that sin would bring death. (Genesis 2:17) In its physical aspect death means a cessation of existence in this physical realm. By death the physical existence of men is brought to an end and he is by that act brought into the presence of God for acceptance or for rejection* Those who have believed upon Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are welcomed into Heaven, those who have rejected Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are consigned forever to Hell. (John 3:36) Even the act of death itself has a judgment within it for the non-Christian. (I Cor. 15:56)

IV. The Victory of Jesus Christ over Death, Hebrews 2:14,15.

Forasmuch then as the children (human race) are partakers of flesh and blood, He (the Lord Jesus) also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Observation: Jesus Christ came into the world as the believer's Representative. He willingly gave Himself to suffer the judgment of our sin - which is spiritual and physical death. This is what happened on the cross. In His death Jesus Christ paid our debt, bore our curse and condemnation, and thereby vanquished death. This is why He said -

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, (Rev. 1:18).

V. The Christian's Freedom from Death, II Corinthians 5:1,2,4,8.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan . . . that mortality might be swallowed up of life. . . We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Observation: These verses teach that the Christian shares the victory of Jesus Christ over death. Although we may physically die, there is no penalty in our death, but we are brought immediately into the presence of God. This is why David could say "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil . . ." Psalm 23:4. The Christian is no longer under condemnation (Romans 8:1) and no longer under the sentence of death (Rev. 20:6).

VI. The Christian's Promise of Resurrection, I Cor. 15:20,23; Philipians 3:21.

But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept. . . but every man in his own order, Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.

Who (the Lord Jesus) shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

Observation: We do not know when but when He comes again then all those who have died as believers Will be resurrected from the grave and will be glorified in body. The Christian looks forward to living forever in the presence of God and the redeemed - with a glorified body. There will be no sickness, weakness nor death. Our mortality will have been swallowed up in life.

Conclusion:

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. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 1:54-57.