

Death is Gain

The thought of death, especially our own, is somewhat terrifying to consider. The reality, though, is that not only is there nothing to fear in death, but death is actually now a blessing for us because of Jesus. In Philippians 4:21, the Apostle Paul makes this rather striking statement: *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

OK, so Jesus gives us the remedy for death, but what does it mean that death is gain? Well, let's reconsider the fact that death is the absolute cure to cancer. Wouldn't a person who is diagnosed with cancer consider its cure to be gain? Certainly! Now understand that death has become to cure to every problem that afflicts God's children. Do you have arthritis? You won't any longer. Do you struggle with anxiety or depression? Those will be gone after you die. Does your life seem to go from one tragedy to another? After you die tragedies will cease.

Through Jesus, death isn't just the end of our life on earth, it's the beginning of our life with our Savior in paradise. It's so hard to see it from this side, but death is now the way we get to heaven. It's kind of like a door through which you must walk to get out of the storm and into the warmth and beauty of your home. This is what Jesus has done for us, turning even our worst fear into our greatest hope! Here's Jesus' promise to you:

"The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death."



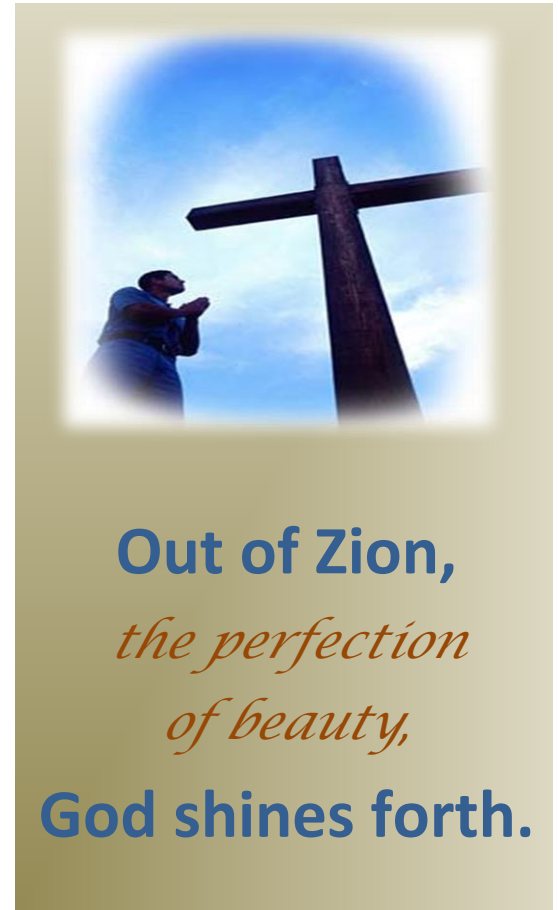
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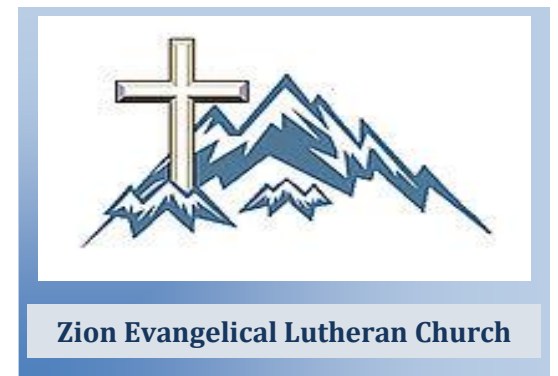
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#6 – DEATH



Out of Zion,
the perfection
of beauty,
God shines forth.



What is Death?

Evolutionists claim that life spontaneously began when a few chemicals bumped into one another in some pool of slime millions and millions of years ago. For all of their fanciful ideas, what they don't have is an answer for how death came about. Isn't that interesting? The thing that everyone fears the most and which affects everyone equally, they have no true explanation for whatsoever. The Bible gives an answer for what death is, how it came about, and more importantly, what its remedy is.



So, what is death? The Latin word that is consistently translated as death is *mortor*. Literally, *mortor* means “destruction” or “ending.” Over time it became the word used to refer to the end of a person's life, what we call *death*. In ancient Gothic, the word used to describe death, *dauor* (pronounced dow-or), wasn't as much a reference to the timeline as it was to the lack of any movement. Quite literally, *dauour* was a reference to the inactivity, or lifelessness, of the person who had died. If he wasn't moving he was considered to be *dead*, or inactive.

While every language has its own concept of referring to death, the Bible presents death more in terms of a *separation*. When a person dies, two things are being separated. Death is the result of the soul of a person being separated from the body of that person. Since the soul is the part that is needed for life, what's left behind is a lifeless body. It can't move, talk, breathe, or think. When someone dies, he is separated from the part that makes him who we knew them to be. We can no longer interact with them or enjoy their company. That's because they are separated from their bodily existence. Their body remains, but their spirit has been separated from that body.

This separation is the result of *sin*. In Ezekiel 18:4 we have this statement that explains the very thing we witness with sadness throughout the world every day:

The soul that sins shall die.

More than One Death

When the Bible speaks of death it isn't always referring to the death that leads to a person's funeral, what is referred to as physical death. That is but one kind of death. When one keeps in mind the idea of death involving a separation, we find that there are actually three kinds of death – *spiritual*, *physical*, and *eternal*, all of which are the direct result of sin.

The first death is the one that occurred immediately when Adam and Eve, the first two humans created by God, disobeyed God's command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That death was a spiritual death. It was a death in that it separated them from God spiritually through the loss of the righteousness in which God created them. Through their disobedience, all of their children inherited that same spiritual death.

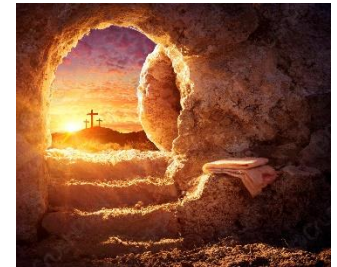
The next death is the one that people usually think of when they hear that word, namely, the separation of the body from the soul so that one is no longer physically alive. This death, too, was the result of Adam and Eve's disobedience. In fact, they came to know death when their oldest son, Cain, murdered their second oldest son, Abel. Now, we all have to contend with the sorrow of losing loved ones and will eventually also experience this same death.

The third death of which the Bible speaks is the eternal death of hell. This is the death that separates one from God for all eternity. This death is every bit the result of sin that the other two are. This death is also the result of rejecting God's promised forgiveness in Jesus. Since God doesn't force anyone into a relationship with Him, He will allow those who reject Him to experience the fullness of that rejection of His love when they leave this earthly life. This death is also the one that comes with great suffering since God withdraws the fullness of His blessings from those who despised His blessings.

The Remedy for Death?

Sin not only brings death, but also many of the other problems we experience – broken bones, disease, sicknesses, neurological disorders, and even cancer. It's interesting that the surest cure for many such problems cancer is actually death. For example, the moment a person quits breathing and the heart stops pumping blood, cancer cells start dying. Within mere days, they are completely gone. If only we had a cure for death!

Actually, we do. No, it's not a pill. It's not a surgery or a therapy or even a program. It's the simple message that Jesus Christ has obtained victory over our sin and victory over death through His own death on a cross. In a miracle of God's amazing love, the second person of the Triune God took on a human nature to take our sin to His own righteous soul. He never sinned, so He didn't deserve to die. Yet, He chose to die in order to give us the remedy to death. On the third day after His death, Jesus came back to life. He is the first human being ever to come back to life never to die again. And He didn't. He simply ascended into heaven as the victor over death.



But how is Jesus' victory over death a remedy for us? If you get cured of cancer, that doesn't mean that everyone is cured. Remember, though, Jesus died because He took on our sin. It would be akin to a transplant, so that our cancer-ridden heart became His heart, and we have a new heart through Him. When Jesus stepped out of the tomb in which His dead body had been laid, He revealed that death is defeated for us all. So He promises:

I am the resurrection and the life... whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.