

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

September 13, 2021

The Sting of Death

In the beginning of the Revelation, Jesus spoke to John, saying, *“Fear not; I am the first and the last: 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.**”* Revelation 1:17-18. This statement was a declaration of victory and of promise fulfilled. The power of *“death and hell”* had been crushed, as foretold in the word of God.

There are two different Greek words translated as *“hell”* in the New Testament. One is *“geenna,”* which speaks of a place of eternal punishment. The other, which is used in this passage, is *“hadēs,”* and means *“unseen, or the place of departed souls.”* It is translated as *“hell”* and *“the grave.”* This word is never used in reference to *“the lake of fire.”* In some places it seems to speak of where those who died without knowing God are kept, but in other places it speaks of *“the grave”* in general as simply the place of departed souls. It would be an equally accurate translation to read Jesus’ words as *“I am alive for evermore, Amen; **and have the keys of the grave and of death.**”*

Revelation 1:18.

When the Bible speaks of Jesus, saying, “...*thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption*” Acts 2:27,” it is speaking of “*hell*,” not as a place of punishment, but as “*the grave*.” Jesus entered “*the grave*”, to destroy its power, but he never went to the “*lake of fire*.” The teaching that Jesus “*burned in hell*,” is a perversion of the word of God.

God had given a promise of Jesus’ victory over the grave through the prophet Hosea, saying, “*I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: **O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction:***” Hosea 13:14. Countless souls have entered the grave because of deadly plagues which came upon them. This prophecy, however, was a promise that God Himself would be a plague upon death. In a sense, God would cause “the death” of death!

Jesus also gave a promise of “*the grave’s*” destruction. When Peter made the statement “*thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,*” Jesus said “...*upon this rock (this revelation of Christ) I will build my church and the gates of hell (the grave) shall not prevail against it.*” Matthew 16:18. This statement is actually a promise of the resurrection of the saints. It was assurance that “*the grave*” would not be able to keep or hold those who stood upon the truth of Christ.

The Apostle Paul reminds us of this promised victory when speaking of the resurrection of the redeemed. He said, “...*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?" ¹ Corinthians 15:54-55. In that day, both "death" and "the grave" will be powerless to hold the children of God. This passage is actually mocking "death's" and "the grave's" impotency. Paul asked, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Paul then identifies the "sting" of death, saying, "**The sting of death is sin!**" ¹ Corinthians 15:56.

This thing called "Sin," which Paul calls "*the sting of death*," is what gives "death" and "the grave" dominion over a person. The Bible says "death" entered the world with sin, and "*passed upon all men...*" Romans 5:12. From that day, "*sin and death*" have been partners. Wherever sin is found, death reigns. Romans 5:14. As long as sin is in your heart, "death" has dominion over you.

Jesus was "*...manifested to take away our sins.*" ¹ John 3:5. Paul explains the reason Jesus suffered upon the cross, saying, "*...our old man is crucified with him, that **the body of sin might be destroyed**, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*" Romans 6:6. This is how Jesus fulfilled his promise to make us free from sin. John 8:36. In our death with Christ, sin is destroyed, and death then loses its dominion over us. We may indeed one day depart this world by way of "*the grave*," yet even so, "*the gates of hell (the grave)*" cannot hold us if we truly know Christ. On the other hand, those who die in their sin ...will be lost! John 8:24.