

Defeat of the Final Enemy

by Stella Paterson

There is no question that we are in a time of great turmoil. On a daily basis, news reports come in to our homes and places of employment telling of wars and atrocities, financial disasters, famines, destructive earthquakes, tsunamis, and the list goes on. Jesus said we would see these things come to pass.

*And when you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, **be not troubled: for such things must needs be**; but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and **troubles**: these are the beginnings of sorrows.* (Mark 13:7-8).

The Greek word for *troubles* is defined as "disturbance, that is, **(of water) roiling**, or (of a mob) *sedition*." Jesus knew the effects we would see when the earth begins to quake in greater measure.

In the last article we learned what the *abomination of desolation* was, and how Islam has become a world-wide threat against Israel and against those who name the Name of Christ. Although the mainstream media report very little of such accounts, there are other news sources which give great detail of the horrible deaths of true believers in Jesus Christ. But He knew that His people would face such things.

*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But **the very hairs of your head are all numbered**. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. **Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*** (Matthew 10:28-33).

Countless souls have been brutally slaughtered because they refused to deny their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.^[1]

As just illustrated, God knew long ago what was in the heart of man, and what would transpire throughout the days of time. He also had His prophets foretell of the *defeat of the final enemy*. Who is the final enemy? How is it defeated? *Who* and *how* are vitally important. So come a long with me as we look at this amazing plan of our awesome God—a marvelous plan, like a well-orchestrated symphony.

Let's start with what we might describe as . . .

God's eye view

In a prayer to God, Moses said, "*For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.*" (Psalm 90:4 KJV). Peter also spoke of how there are no time constraints in *God's eye view*, when he said, "*But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" (2 Peter 3:8 RV).

God is eternal . . . timeless . . . Alpha and Omega. He knew all things from the beginning, and holds the world in His hands. He orders the lives of His righteous ones. Yet at the same time He knows the hearts of the wicked, and has in place a plan for the good of mankind. His mercy knows no end. He sees when the lowly sparrow falls to the ground, and knows how many hairs we have on our head.

In the Garden of Eden, God tested Adam and Eve when He offered them a choice between life and death. Of course, we know they chose *death* when they partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. With that knowledge, man became aware of all that *SELF* is capable of, causing him to turn from trust in God. He became a mortal soul, separated from the life of God. And every person born since then has inherited that same mortality. But the Eternal, all-knowing God had a plan for man's redemption. That plan was to restore life to His creation--man. The first indication came immediately following man's transgression, and the subsequent exposure of *self*. To cover man's nakedness He made them clothes of animal skins. But to do so, He had to shed blood--an animal gave up its life for that covering.

Because of His plan, which included the shedding of blood, God created man and animals with blood running through their veins. The Hebrew word for *blood* means, "that which when shed causes death." It was not a thing to be trifled with.

*And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eats any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. **For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul.*** (Leviticus 17:10-11 KJV).

Partaking of Life

In His wondrous plan for the redemption of man, God would come in the form of His Son Jesus--the pure and spotless Lamb. He would fulfill the Law, which, in part, said that Israel and those among them were not to partake of the life of the flesh--the blood. Under the New Covenant--God's New Testament (Will)--man could partake of the Life of Jesus, as we see here:

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoso eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him. (John 6:51, 53-56).

Under the Law, the command was to not eat blood--literally. The meaning was also figurative, as well as pointing them to the coming Messiah whose blood would be shed to make atonement once, and for all. Under the New Covenant, the meaning was also figurative--we dwell in Him and He dwells in us.

Man was separated from God when he became a creature of mortal--and sinful--flesh. So Christ came in the *likeness of sinful flesh* to shed the life of the flesh--his own blood. But it is not through Christ's death alone that we have salvation; His death served to reconcile us to God. It is by His life that we are born anew, as Paul explained to those at Rome: "*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, **much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.***" (Romans 5:10) The Greek word for *more* actually means "rather" or "in a greater degree."

Abraham's family

Once again, considering things from *God's eye view*, and according to His plan, there would arise a man whose trust in God, when tested, was so great that he would become the "father" of faith. That man was Abraham, whose faith made him righteous in God's eyes. "*And he received the **sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.***" (Romans 4:11-12).

It is a well-known fact that Abraham's two sons, and their descendants, have been at war since the days of their youth. And today it is even more evident, with the increase of Muslim influence against Israel and around the world. But for now, we will look at the lineage of Isaac and his son Jacob (Israel). Although Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob, it is Jacob's family that will be our focus.

Jacob went through a lot to be able to marry Rachel, his beloved. They had two sons, Joseph and Benjamin. With Rachel's older sister, Leah, and the concubines of both his wives, Jacob had ten other sons, but Joseph and Benjamin were his favorites. We will refer mainly to Judah, as well as Benjamin. Of course, such reference to them will be primarily of their descendants.

Were these sons of Israel perfect? Were any of their descendants perfect? No, the bible shows they were not. In fact there is no perfect human. How, then, do these humans, often speaking of the God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, figure so greatly in God's plan of redemption?

When we look at the book of Revelation, in the passage where John is comforted in his grief over no man being worthy to open the sealed book of Daniel, we see this: "*Weep not: behold, **the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.***" (Revelation 5:5b) The tribe of Judah, of whom David was a part, is seen as the ancestral family of Jesus. But is it really?

Abraham's Seed

We see the answer in the words of Paul, a descendant of Benjamin, in Galatians 3:16: "*Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises spoken. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ. ."* (EMTV).

Being blind to the truth of Messiah, the Jews were challenging Jesus over His message that they would know the truth and the truth would make them free. They told Him they were Abraham's *seed* and that they had been in bondage to no man. Jesus' response was that anyone who is enslaved to sin is in need of being freed. (John ch. 8) They knew of the promise made to Abraham, and believed they were the "seed" that would inherit the promise. But they missed it when they did not receive Him as their promised Messiah--the Seed of Abraham.

Let's take a look at this *ancestral family* from which the "Root of David" came.

Judah was one of Jacob's sons--the one whom God chose as the tribe which would become His Son's earthly family. And what a strange mixture it was, with the inter-marriage of Judah's sons with women of Gentile nations. To mention a few, there was Salmon who married Rahab the harlot; Boaz, their son, who married Ruth the Moabitish woman; and David, who married the wife of Uriah the Hittite, whose death he arranged so he could have Uriah's wife for himself.

There was one thing in common between Rahab, Ruth and David, and that was their trust in God. It was not their family heritage, or the deeds they had committed, but faith that mattered most to God. It was the faith of Abraham that followed down through the generations until the birth of Christ--the Seed of Abraham.

Messiah

According to the flesh, there is no pure seed. ^[2] God used mortal man in His choice for a lineage for Jesus' earthly family. Matthew 1:16 tells of the final birth, in the generations from Abraham to Christ: "*And **Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.***" Jesus, the spiritual Seed, would be raised by Joseph who was Abraham's natural *seed*. The *seed* of Abraham's faith was evident in the lives of those of his descendants whose trust was in God--especially David, the man after His own heart. Only the Holy Spirit could impregnate Mary with the holy Seed, resulting in the birth of Messiah, the Author and Finisher of faith.

This passage tells of the role of the Law until Faith came: "*What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made. . . Howbeit the scripture hath shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*" (Galatians 3:19a, 22-24 RV).

How often do we hear it said that the Law is for everyone, and still applicable today? Paul's words in this next verse tell us otherwise. "*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.*" (Romans 10:4 EMTV). The Law was given to Israel as a *tutor* until faith came, as we just read. The *end* [Greek #5056], or "point", or "goal" of the Law was Christ's coming to die for all. He was the fulfillment of the Law, and became Righteousness for all who come to faith in Him.

But faith came not only for the natural seed of Abraham. It is for *all* who believe. "*For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be*

sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." (Romans 4:16 RV).

One new man

The children of Israel were often unfaithful to God, and had moved Him to jealousy with their turning to other gods. In Deuteronomy 32:21, He said, "*They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.*"

What might Israel have thought, had they understood that God would offer salvation to the Gentiles?--the most notorious of which were the descendants of Ishmael and Esau, Isaac's brother and Jacob's brother.

In God's eye view, Saul of Tarsus, a descendant of Benjamin, would be miraculously transformed and sent to the Gentiles with the message of the Cross of Jesus Christ. Saul was taken by the Holy Spirit, and taught the true meaning of the Law he had so meticulously followed--even killing Christians who would not come under the Law. As we know, Saul became Paul who was called of God to take the gospel to *those which are not a people*. Paul went from being a Pharisee wholly devoted to the Law of Moses, to one of the most ardent followers of Jesus. He spent his life for the gospel.

*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that **by revelation he made known unto me the mystery**; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; **that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body**, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Ephesians 3:1-6*

In one of Paul's many letters to the various ekklesia of his day, he told of God's plan to make *one new man* by bringing together the believing Jews and Gentiles in what we might call a "post-Law era." "*Having **abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances**; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in **one body** by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*" (Ephesians 2:15-17).

To those at Rome, Paul spoke about what a true Jew is, now that the Law was fulfilled and the Cross of Jesus Christ was behind them. "*For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise [Greek: 'commendableness'] is not of men, but of God.*" (Romans 2:28-29 RV).

Then, to the ekklesia at Galatia Paul said, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ*

Jesus. And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:28-29).

Lion of Judah

When Jacob (Israel) was nearing the time of his death, he summoned his twelve sons and spoke in the presence of them all, the things that would befall each one *in the last days*. To Judah he said,

*Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; **thy father's children shall bow down before thee**. Judah is a **lion's whelp**: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, **he couched as a lion**, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The **sceptre shall not depart from Judah**, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, **until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be**.* (Genesis 49:8-10).

"Shiloh" is an epithet of the Messiah, so Jacob is referring to the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*.

Jesus, the *Lion of Judah*, was "King of the Jews," as is shown in the record of His crucifixion. It was His own people, of the tribe of Judah--the Jews, who rejected Him as their King on that day when He gave His life for not only them, but all. He arose three days later, and that was the Day when New Testament Faith was manifested.

We noted earlier, the faith of Rahab, Ruth and David. But also notable were Daniel and the three Hebrew boys who were in the fiery furnace. They too were of the tribe of Judah, and exhibited the faith of their father Abraham.

Daniel was the chosen prophet who would prophesy extensively of the end times. The Lord gave instruction to Daniel regarding the things he was shown. "*And he said, Go your way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. . . . But go your way till the end be: for you shall rest, and **stand in your lot at the end of the days***." (Daniel 12:9, 13). Could it be, that Daniel was the "elder" who spoke the words to John in Revelation 5, telling him how the *Lion of the tribe of Juda* would reveal what was in the sealed book?

Then we have the passage in Revelation 22, where there is a strong possibility it was Daniel again. Read it carefully and you will see. "*And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the [messenger] which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for **I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book**: worship God. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.*" (Revelation 22:8-10).

John had been taken up *in the spirit*; and all other beings, at the time of the revelation of those things he was given, would also be spiritual beings. Some bible translators chose to use the word "angel" to translate a Greek word that primarily meant "messenger". One day we will learn the identity of all the other *messengers* who spoke the words of Revelation of Jesus Christ to John. Could one have been Elijah? Or . . . ?

'Keeper' of faith

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews contains the account of a number of the saints of old. At the beginning of the twelfth chapter, we see reference to them as being a great *cloud of witnesses*, as an admonition begins for us to follow their example, and not enter into unbelief—that *sin that so easily besets us*. "Looking unto Jesus the **author and finisher [perfector] of faith**; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2). The translators inserted the word "our", but Young's Literal Translation reads, simply, the *author and finisher of faith*.

Isaiah prophesied of the *Author and Perfector of faith*, with these words: "*In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, that the righteous nation which **keeps the truth** may enter in. **Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusts in thee.**" (Isaiah 26:1-3). We find a parallel to Isaiah's words, "keeps the truth," in the message to the ekklesia in Philadelphia, where Jesus acknowledges that they have "**kept His word**, and not denied His Name." (Revelation 3:8).*

Then, in the next verse, we see words not unlike those spoken to Judah by his father Jacob. "*Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*" (Revelation 3:9).

Earlier, we quoted Paul's words about who are the true Jews--the *one new man*, which is every person whose trust is in Jesus. He is the *Keeper of faith*, as the next verse shows. "*Because you did keep the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*" (Revelation 3:10). In each of the occurrences of the word "keep/kept," the definition is the same: "guard from loss or injury by keeping the eye upon." When we place our trust in Him for our spiritual well being, He **keeps** us. We rest in Him, and He does the *keeping*.

Hear Jesus' own words that He prayed to the Father: "*While I was with them in the world, I **kept** them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have **kept, and none of them is lost**, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest **keep** them from the evil.*" (John 17:12, 15).

Revelation of the mystery

A number of times, Paul referred to a *mystery* that had been hidden, and was now revealed. "*Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was **kept secret since the world began**, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, **made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.**" (Romans 16:25-26).*

In Genesis 1:26, God said, "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . .*" The word *image* comes from a Hebrew word that means "phantom," which we know is a spirit. But when *flesh* came to prominence, and man was cast away from the presence of God, he became spiritually dead--just flesh, as Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:6-7. "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. . . . You must be born again.*"

God foreknew what man's choice would be--so all was not lost. You see, Jesus was there in the Father at creation, when God used the words "let **us** make man in **our** image." His plan was for Jesus to be born of a virgin, die and be resurrected by the Spirit, so that by the same Spirit, Christ could come to dwell in us. Paul put it this way, in Romans 8:11: "*But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit indwelling in you.*" (EMTV). At the new birth we become re-created in Christ Jesus. "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a **new creation**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

God is still at work today, creating in His own image those who come to faith in His Son. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. But then *self* was exposed, and man became separated from the Spirit and Life of God. Now we see Paul's words, briefly describing the mystery: "*Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the **glory of this mystery** among the nations; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect [Greek: 'complete'] in Christ Jesus:*" (Colossians 1:26-28).

Obedience of faith

Paul said that the *mystery* was made known to all nations *for the obedience of faith*. The Greek word for *obedience* is defined as "attentive hearkening/submission."

In 1 Corinthians 9:27, Paul was speaking of the importance of faithfulness in trusting God. "*But I keep under [Greek: 'subdue'] my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*" He then went on to say how Israel had been under the protection of the Lord God, when Moses led them through the Red Sea, and how He had provided for them spiritually as well. "*And did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But **with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.***" (1 Corinthians 10:3-5).

A few verses later, we see the point he was trying to make. "*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*" (1 Corinthians 10:11-12).

Jude also spoke similarly, when he said, "*I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.*" (Jude 1:5).

In earlier articles, we have often spoken of the fact that *faith* is "reliance upon Christ for salvation," and *believing* is "entrusting our spiritual well being to Christ." But when we look closer at these next passages, we see much stronger Greek words being used in reference to *unbelief*:

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36). To *believe not* is to "willfully and perversely *disbelieve*," or to be "unpersuadable."

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." (Ephesians 5:6).

"For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:" (Colossians 3:6).

In both verses, *disobedience* is "obstinate and rebellious *disbelief*."

The consequences are dire for those refusing Life through unbelief, as we saw in the words of Jesus, above.

Identity of the final enemy

All around us, there are reports of the deeds of evil men--men whose sole desire is to control the world. It does not matter a whit who they are, or what banner they come under. Whether in the name of greed, or some Godless ideology, they are pure evil. And their intent is to battle against all that is of God. But our salvation is not played out on some battle field. Our salvation comes in only one way--constant trust in the One who gave His all that we might have Life. All the power-hungry people in the world cannot steal our salvation. As Jesus said, we are not to fear these things, or be troubled by them.

Although the evil in this world may become almost too much to bear at times, (especially in some parts of the world), the day is coming when they will have their *reward*. It is not our concern.

Who, or what, then, is the *final enemy*? Paul gave us the answer: *"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."* (1 Corinthians 15:26) Why is death such an enemy? Why is it the last to be destroyed? And how is it destroyed?

First of all, we must look at where death came from. Paul said, *"Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:"* (Romans 5:12). He also said this: *"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."* (1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

There are those who believe in "universal salvation," and adhere to the false belief that ALL will be saved. But it is *all* those who are **in Christ** who will be *made alive*. It is the difference between Life and death. And Life comes to those who put their trust in Christ for salvation, and entrust their spiritual well being to Him.

Faith is so simple. It is the one thing that must be tried and tested to make it stronger. The biggest assault we face is from the enemy--death--that dwells in *self* (flesh). But there is wonderful hope found in the words of Jesus and the apostles, particularly Paul.

*If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. **Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.** For you died [to self], and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3).*

The life of faith is so much more than saying, "Praise God, I'm saved and on my way to Heaven." Faith is to be lived on a daily basis--moment by moment, and hour by hour. How often do we miss the simplicity that is in Christ? If only we could live in the way Jesus tells us. *"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they?" (Matthew 6:25-26)*

One writer of days gone by put it this way:

If any will dare to venture on the path of separation--cutting themselves aloof from **all human aid** and from **all self-originated effort**, content to walk alone with God with no help from any but Him--such will find that all the resources of the divine almightiness will be placed at their disposal." - F. B. Meyer (Emphases added).

Such a life is one of complete rest in the One whose Life dwells in us. Why would we go contrary to His will, with the flesh of *self* battling against the inner voice of His Spirit? Oh, how we must grieve Him when we persist in going our own way, ignoring the inner leading of His Spirit that will make all things work out for our good! *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."* (Galatians 6:7-8).

Death finds its 'abode' in *self* and flesh--man's mortal soul--and has, ever since the fall of man and his expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Paul described it in simple terms: *"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But **if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.**" (Romans 8:9). And again here: *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."* (1 Corinthians 15:50).*

Victory and Defeat - the irony

Although we are born as mortal souls, our spirits are made alive at the new birth when Christ comes to dwell in us by His Spirit. Eternal Life indwells us, while our physical body of flesh remains unchanged, and will eventually die; but our spirit will live on, never to be separated from the Lord who redeemed us. But we must surrender all that is of *self* to the crucifying power of our risen Saviour, which means, **to live we must die**.

A day of victory is coming, when even the mortal bodies will be changed.

*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye**, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. **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 gives us the **victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** (1 Corinthians 15:51-57).*

But Jesus said, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8b EMTV). There is victory for those who have submitted to the ongoing death to self/flesh, and are now alive, with faith firmly fixed in Christ.

The *defeat* of the final enemy--death/self/flesh--is described in chilling detail in Revelation, the nineteenth chapter, where John was shown, figuratively, the final destruction of flesh.

*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, **Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.** And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and **all the fowls were filled with their flesh.** (Revelation 19:11-21).*

In the next chapter, we read what follows the final judgment. "And the **dead** were judged by the things having been written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the **dead** who were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the **dead** who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to their works. Then **Death and Hades were thrown into the Lake of Fire.** This is the second death, the Lake of Fire. And if

anyone was not found having been written in the Book of Life, he was cast into the Lake of Fire." (Revelation 20:12b-15 EMTV).

[1] <http://www.politicalislam.com/blog/the-black-hole-of-history>.

[2] http://www.ekkllesia4him.net/how_sin_nature_handed_down.html.

Please also read:

- <http://searchthewordfortruth.blogspot.com/2009/01/glory.html>.

- <http://searchthewordfortruth.blogspot.com/2008/04/mystery-that-was-hid-in-god.html>.

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