



Victory Over Death
1 Corinthians 15:50-58
April 12, 2020

Death

Covid-19 has reminded us of the overwhelming power of death. As I write on Wednesday, over a million people have the disease, another 320,000 have recovered, and about 87,000 (22% of resolved cases) have died. Beyond this, about 150,000 people die *daily* worldwide from other causes and about 7500 in the USA. We have endured death among us many times over the years and even in the last few months.

We often euphemize death and so fail to see its true colors. Death was not a part of the original creation. It is an intruder. It is not a “natural part of life” and definitely is not “good.” It entered the world when sin came into the world (Romans 5:12) and has “reigned” as a tyrant ever since (Romans 5:14, 17, 21). Though God oversees everything, Satan is the one who holds the power of death and enslaves people through their fear of it (Hebrews 2:14-15). Death is an enemy, in fact the last enemy that will be destroyed. The especially terrifying part of it (the “sting”) is sin because this shuts us off from life, hope, and God. We can postpone death but are powerless to stop it.

Victory

Yet the Bible tells us that God will overcome death. He’ll do it by raising the dead and transforming our bodies into immortal,

imperishable, glorious, powerful, spiritual bodies (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 50-53). This will take place instantly at the last trumpet, when Christ returns (1 Corinthians 15:52; Matthew 24:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16). Then, when we are clothed in immortality, two Old Testament prophecies will be fulfilled (1 Corinthians 15:54-55): 1) Death will be swallowed up in victory (Isaiah 25:8), and 2) death will lose its victory and sting (Hosea 13:14). At that time we will inherit the (eternal) kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:50).

This is a remarkable claim. God has not revealed all the details of how he is going to do it; there is “mystery” involved (1 Corinthians 15:51). But there is a strong basis for thinking we are going to be raised and changed into immortal beings.

Basis

The basis is that Jesus was raised from the dead! (Matthew 27:57-28:10; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23). Resurrection is another in the long list of things people said were impossible— *until they happened*. The resurrection of Christ shows that we too will be raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Peter 1:3).

Without resurrection, Christianity is worthless (1 Corinthians 15:13-18, 29-34). Believing Jesus was raised from the dead is ultimately a matter of faith, but there are good historical reasons for believing it, and the alternate explanations of the facts fall short. (contact me if you want more info).

Our hope for the *future* is based on a remarkable event in the *past* which affects us in the *present*. 1) It gives us joy and hope for eternal life with God in heaven (Romans 5:1-5; 8:23-25; 12:12; 15:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; Titus 1:1-3), 2) it gives us victory in the face of sin and death even now, (1 Corinthians 14:56-57), and 3) it inspires us to stand firm in our faith and abound in the Lord’s work (1 Corinthians 15:58).

