

GOD WILL SWALLOW UP DEATH

O Death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? (I Cor. 15).

When our forefathers heeded to the voice of the enemy of their souls, death came to them as a curse and was carried out to all born of men. Disguising himself through a serpent, who was more subtle and crafty than any living creature of the field which the Lord God had made, (Gen. 3:1), he tempted Eve to doubt God's reason for not letting them eat the fruit from the tree of the middle of the garden. He succeeded when Eve fell to his temptation. The seed of death entered into the world and from then on, humankind was subjected to condemnation of physical and eternal death, with Satan their master. However, in spite of all his power, Satan is resistible. James wrote, "Be subject to God, resist the devil [stand firm against him] and he will flee from you" (4:7). God has provided us His spiritual armor in order for us to wrestle with Satan. In the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul admonishes us to put on the armor of God, for we are not wrestling with flesh and blood but with Satan and his hosts. Satan manifests himself as an angel of light, changing his appearance in the auspice of good, when he is the prince of darkness, according to Scripture (Eph. 6). Satan is a liar, a deceiver, a tempter and an accuser of men. He was not happy when God created men; so, he became men's enemy with the purpose to destroy them physically and eternally. His sting of death has taken many with him to hell, because men rejected God, choosing him, instead.

Satan was called the anointed guardian cherub. We read this in the Bible about him: "You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, the carnelian, topaz, jasper, chrysolite, beryl, onyx, sapphire, carbuncle, and emerald; and your settings and your sockets and engravings were wrought in gold, On the day that you were created they were prepared; You were the anointed cherub that covers with overshadowing, and I set you so. You were upon the holy mountain of God; you walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire [like the paved work of gleaming sapphire stone upon which the God of Israel walked on Mount Sinai]." (Ezek. 28:13-14). What more did this angel want? He wanted to be God. In his pride, Satan rose against God and corrupted the beautiful garden God had created. Not only the garden, but the entire world. The Bible says, "All have sinned and became short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Separated from God and His mercy, goodness, and love, men were destined to eternal death, for there was none that had not sinned. Men's heart is perverse and contrary to God's laws. The Prophet Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly perverse and corrupt and severely, mortally sick! Who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). The world in its entirety suffered the consequences of sin. It left a stain only YAHSHUA could wash away. The stain of physical and eternal death; nature was also subjected to decay as Paul so said in Romans chapter 8:19-22: "For even the whole creation waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known, for the creation was subjected to frailty, not because of some intentional fault on its part, but by the will of Him Who so subjected it with the hope that nature itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption into the glorious freedom of God's children. We know that the whole creation has been moaning together in the pains of labor until now."

Many tears have been shed at the death of a loved one. YAHSHUA felt compassion for the fallen men in bondage to sin. In their sickness, He healed many; in death, He brought a few to life. But it was when His blood covered the entire world when sacrificed on the cross, that His mercy and love reached out to the spirit of men with salvation to whosoever will. In the final days, when judgement will fall on the wicked ones, there will be still hope for His elected ones – the Jews and for those Gentiles who will receive the message of the Gospel at that time. At the end of His judgement, "God will swallow up death [in victory; He will abolish death forever]. The Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; and the reproach of His people He will take away from off all the earth; for the Lord has spoken. It shall be said in that day, Behold, our God upon Whom we waited and hoped, that He might save us! This is the Lord we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isaiah 12:8-9). Rejoicing will resound in the earth, when God will fulfill His promises to His people, when His goodness will shine throughout the world, and salvation offered once more to the people. They will sing, "O Lord You are my God; I will exalt You, You, I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things, even purposes planned of old in faithfulness and truth" (Isaiah 25:1).

The world will witness and see that our God is the only true God, Who is in control of His creation, He is in control of time and season and He is in control of the end time. His judgments will fall on those who have rejected Him, Jews and Gentiles. No one can thwart His plan, or escape His judgment. But for those who are

waiting for Him, they will see His salvation, as He has promised. The Lord God, in His mercy and grace, provided a way out of condemnation for men, by promising a Redeemer- His only Son (Gen. 3:15) when they first sinned. Embedded in His promise was the abolishment of death. When YAHSHUA took upon Himself the sins, iniquities and guilt of men, He suffered as He was travailing to give men a new birth. A birth that would change man's destination from hell to heaven. We have been regenerated (born again), not from a mortal origin, but from one that is immortal by the ever living and lasting Word of God (1 Peter 1:23). The spiritual battle went on and on while YAHSHUA was hanging on the cross for the many for six hours. Satan, the enemy of our soul, inflicted in YAHSHUA the pain we would have suffered in hell, separated eternally from God. At the end of His ordeal, He declared, IT IS FINISHED! Satan lost the battle; At that moment, God abolished death forever, salvation came to suffice instead of condemnation. Man, was free from the power of sin, Satan lost his power over him. But man had to do his part, that of receiving his freedom by accepting the sacrifice of YAHSHUA, acknowledging his sins and through repentance receive forgiveness.

The Prophet Isaiah predicted the judgement of the world in a mini-Revelation in chapter 24 of his prophetic book and on chapter 25, he predicted victory at the end of all things, when God's promises will become reality, in that day, when He will wipe away all tears, and abolish death forever. It will be a time of rejoicing for the recipients of His promises. Paul calls it the "blessed hope" in his letter to Titus in Titus 2:13. He resounded a voice of victory, saying, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? ... But thanks to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord YAHSHUA Messiah" in the letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 15:55,57). This is our glorious hope, the hope that will never fade away, or die; it is the hope that emanates from the very word of our Lord God. He that promised, will fulfill His promises to us in His due time. He is faithful to His word; none of His word will fall to the ground, or return to Him void, but will accomplish that for which it was sent (Isa. 55). Believe it, my friend. It was for you that He died to give you hope, the hope that someday death will be abolished; your tears, He will wipe away, your sufferings you will remember no more. Persevere in faith and you will receive the conqueror's crown of glory (I Peter 5:4).