

WEEK 16

The Significance of Eating and the Defeat of Death

Scripture Reading: Lev. 11; John 6:53-57; 11:25; Heb. 2:14-15; 2 Tim. 1:10

OUTLINE

<< DAY 1 >>

I. In order to know the real meaning of eating in Leviticus 11, we need to know the significance of eating:

A. To eat is to contact things outside of us that could affect us inside (vv. 1-23):

1. Eating is not merely contacting something but also receiving something into us (Jer. 15:16).
2. Once a thing is received into us, that thing can be digested inside to become our constituent, that is, our being, our constitution.
3. We all are a constitution of the food that we eat and digest; what we digest becomes our constitution (John 6:53-57).

B. Taking in the Lord to digest and assimilate Him so that He may become life to us is signified by our eating the bread of the Lord's table (vv. 50-51, 57; Mark 14:22):

1. Eating the bread of the Lord's table indicates that the Lord comes into us as our life supply, and then the bread becomes us, the food becomes us, and we become the bread (1 Cor. 10:17).
2. There is not only an organic union between us and the food that we eat, digest, and assimilate; we are also mingled with the food that we assimilate into us:

- a. In a similar way, when we take Christ as our food, we are mingled with Him (John 6:53-57).
- b. Eating, digesting, and assimilating food involve an intrinsic mingling of the food with our being; eating, digesting, and assimilating also involve a becoming, for the food that we assimilate becomes our very being (Ezek. 3:1-3; John 6:57, 63).

« DAY 2 »

C. God wants us to eat, digest, and assimilate Him so that we become God in life, nature, constitution, and expression but not in the Godhead (1:1, 14; 6:57):

1. The Lord Jesus is the bread of God—the bread of life, the living bread, the true bread out of heaven (vv. 32-33, 48, 51).
2. God wants to be digested and assimilated by us so that He can become the constituent of our inward being (vv. 53-57).
3. Because we are what we eat, if we eat God as our food, we will be one with God and even become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead.

D. The way for us to become the reality of the kingdom of the heavens is to eat Christ as the all-inclusive bread (Matt. 15:26-27, 32-37):

1. God's economy is not a matter of outward things but of Christ coming into us inwardly; for this, we need to take Christ by eating Him (Eph. 3:17a; John 6:57).
2. The reality of the kingdom of the heavens is Christ Himself (Luke 17:20-21).
3. As the heavenly King and the kingdom itself, Christ rules over us by feeding us with Himself as bread (Matt. 15:26-27):
 - a. We can be the reality of the kingdom of the heavens only by being nourished with Christ as our food (vv. 26-27, 32-37).
 - b. The more we eat Christ as the all-inclusive bread, the more the royal

ingredients are constituted into us to become the ruling element within us and to cause us to become the increase of Christ as the reality of the kingdom of the heavens (Dan. 2:34, 35b, 44-45).

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4. By eating the kingly Christ as the all-inclusive bread, we are cleansed inwardly (Matt. 23:25-27; 15:1-2, 18, 20, 26-27):

- a. In order for us to be cleansed in our inner being, something must get into us, and the only way that this can take place is by eating (23:25-27).
- b. As our food, Christ is the best cleansing element; He washes our inner being, and we thereby experience the washing of our disposition.
- c. We all need an inward cleansing from the Lord—the cleansing that comes from eating Jesus.

E. Eating Jesus is the secret of overcoming; the unique way to be an overcomer is to eat Jesus (Rev. 2:7, 17; 3:20; John 6:57).

F. The fact that Leviticus 11 speaks of death in relation to diet indicates that our diet, our eating, is a matter of life or death (vv. 2-4, 9, 24-25, 39, 47).

II. Leviticus 11 is concerned very much with death (vv. 24-25, 27b-28a):

A. Death is abominable to God; in His eyes death is the most ugly thing, whereas life is the most precious thing (Rom. 5:10, 12, 17; John 10:10b; 11:25).

« DAY 4 »

B. From Eden onwards, God's controversy with Satan has been the issue of death and life (Gen. 2:9, 16-17; 3:22; John 5:25; Rom. 6:9-10; 1 Cor. 15:26, 54-55).

C. According to the Bible, death is more defiling and abominable than sin (Lev. 11:31):

1. Through the trespass offering, any sin could be forgiven immediately, but a person who touched the carcass of any animal was unclean until the evening (vv. 24-25, 27b-28a, 31b-32, 39-40).
2. Our sins are forgiven immediately after we confess them to God (1 John 1:9), but a certain period of time must pass before we can be cleansed from the defilement of spiritual death (Num. 19:9, 11).

D. Death is an exceedingly great power; apart from God, death is the greatest power in the universe (Heb. 2:14-15; John 1:1, 4; 11:25).

E. Death is allied with the devil (Heb. 2:14-15):

1. Since the devil is God's enemy, death is also God's enemy.
2. Death is the last enemy that God will abolish (1 Cor. 15:26).

« DAY 5 »

F. The attack upon the church will come from the gates of Hades, from death (Matt. 16:18):

1. The ultimate weapon that Satan uses to attack the church is death.
2. Only the life of Christ and that which issues from the life of Christ will prevail against the gates of Hades (John 11:25).
3. God intends for the church to manifest the life of Christ; thus, the church must be full of life (Rom. 5:10, 17, 21; 6:4; 8:2, 6, 10-11; 12:4-5; 16:1, 4).
4. In ourselves we cannot overcome death, because Satan has injected death into us; the only One who can overcome death is the Lord Jesus Christ (5:12; 7:24; Rev. 1:17-18; 1 Cor. 15:22).

G. On the cross Christ tasted death, destroyed the devil, and

nullified death (Heb. 2:9, 14-15; 2 Tim. 1:10):

1. The Lord Jesus tasted death not only for human beings but also for everything created by God, thereby enabling God in Christ to reconcile all things to Himself (Heb. 2:9; Col. 1:20).

<< DAY 6 >>

2. Through His death on the cross, Christ destroyed the devil, who has the might of death, and released those who were held in slavery because of the fear of death (Heb. 2:14-15):

- a. The Son of God became flesh so that He might destroy the devil in man's flesh through His death on the cross; this was to abolish Satan, to bring him to nought (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4; John 3:14; Heb. 2:14; 1 Cor. 2:6)

- b. Since the Lord destroyed the devil, who has the might of death, we who were held in slavery because of the fear of death have been released by Him (Heb. 2:15):

- (1) Death reigned over us (Rom. 5:14), and we were under its slavery, continually fearing death.

- (2) Since the Lord destroyed the devil, we now have no more fear of death and are released from its slavery (Heb. 2:15).

3. Through His work on the cross, Christ nullified death (2 Tim. 1:10):

- a. Through His devil-destroying death, Christ brought death to nought.

- b. To nullify death is not to remove death but to make it of none effect; death will be removed when it is cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14).

- c. Although death has not yet been removed, it is nonetheless a fact that death has been nullified through Christ's death on the cross (2 Tim. 1:10).

H. Through His resurrection the Lord Jesus overcame death and broke through death (Acts 2:24; Rev. 1:17-18):

1. The last thing that the devil used to attack the Lord Jesus was death:
 - a. Christ came to meet His enemy, who has the might of death (Heb. 2:14).
 - b. The Lord Jesus did not avoid death, because He did not fear it and knew that He would overcome it.
 - c. The Lord delivered Himself to death, but death had no way to detain Him; rather, death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it (Acts 2:24).
2. Death could not hold the Lord, the grave could not restrict Him, and Hades could not detain Him; He resurrected; resurrection is the overcoming of death (Rev. 1:17-18).

I. Because the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit dwells in us, we can reign in life over death; the divine life enthrones us as kings to reign in life over death (1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:10; 5:17).

- J. For the building up of the Body of Christ, we need to minister life; we experience and enjoy the resurrection life within and then minister this life by being a channel through which this life can flow into other members of the Body (1 John 5:11-12, 16; 2 Cor. 4:10-12).*

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Morning Nourishment

Mark 14:22 And as they were eating, He took bread and blessed it, and He broke it and gave it to them, and said, Take; this is My body.

1 Cor. 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

The first thing we need to consider in relation to discernment in diet is the significance of eating. To know this significance is to know the real meaning of eating in Leviticus 11.

To eat is to contact the things outside of us that could affect us inside. This especially refers to our contacting of people. When we...contact something that is outside of us,...[it] has nothing to do with us. However, if we eat that thing, it can affect us inside. In Leviticus 11 the things we eat signify people, and eating signifies our contacting of people. (Life-study of Leviticus, pp. 313-314)

Today's Reading

To eat is not merely to contact something but also to receive something into us. Once a thing is received into us, that thing can be digested inside to become our constituent, that is, our being, our constitution. We all are a constitution of the food we eat and digest. Eventually, what we digest becomes us; it becomes our very constitution. This indicates that contacting people is an important matter. If we intend to live a holy life as required by the holy God, we need to be careful about our contact with people. Our contact with certain kinds of people can cause us to be reconstituted and thus make us another kind of person. Whatever we contact we will receive, and whatever we receive will reconstitute us, making us a different kind of person from what we are now. (Life-study of Leviticus, p. 314)

Taking in the Lord to digest and assimilate Him that He may become life to us is signified by the eating of the loaf on the table. Whenever we come to the Lord's table, we see a loaf. That loaf is not merely for display; it is for us to eat. When the

Lord Jesus instituted His supper, “He took bread and blessed it, and He broke it and gave it to them, and said, Take; this is My body” (Mark 14:22).

The bread on the table is not for us to analyze or merely think about; the bread is for us to take in, to eat, as our life supply. This bread should be digested and assimilated by us to become our very being. The significance of this is profound.

Eating the bread of the Lord’s table indicates that the Lord comes into us as our life supply and then actually becomes us. If we consider the matter of eating, we shall realize that the food we eat eventually becomes us. We may say not only that the food becomes us, but even that we become the food. Not only is there an organic union between us and the food we eat, digest, and assimilate; we are mingled with the food we assimilate into us.

It is a serious mistake to say that mingling is not scriptural. How could anyone reasonably deny the fact that we are mingled with the food we eat, digest, and assimilate? In fact, assimilating food into our being goes beyond mingling. We do not have the words to describe this. However, we do know that we are mingled in a deep way with the food we eat. In a similar way, when we take in the Triune God as our food, we are truly mingled with Him. In order for the food we eat to become our life, it must be mingled with us. The principle is the same with taking in the Triune God as our food.

We have pointed out that eating food involves something much more than an organic union between us and the food. Actually, eating, digesting, and assimilating food involve an intrinsic mingling of the food with our being. What we eat actually becomes part of us. Hence, this is not only a mingling; it is also a becoming. The food we digest and assimilate becomes part of our very being. For this reason, after we have thoroughly digested and assimilated our food, it is impossible for it to be located within us, because it has become a part of us. We use this matter of assimilating food to illustrate the deep significance of eating the bread of the Lord’s table. (Life-study of Mark, pp. 383-385)

Further Reading: Life-study of Leviticus, msg. 36; Life-study of Mark, msg. 44

<< WEEK 16 — DAY 2 >>

Morning Nourishment

John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I will give is My flesh, given for the life of the world.

57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

God not only desires that man be His vessel to contain Him (Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:7) but also wants man to eat, digest, and assimilate Him (John 6:57). When we eat, digest, and assimilate physical food, we are energized and strengthened....Eventually, the food that we have eaten becomes the fiber, tissue, and cells of our being. In the same way, God's eternal plan is to dispense Himself into us so that He becomes every fiber of our inward being. He wants to be digested and assimilated by us so that He can become the constituent of our inward being. (CWWL, 1990, vol. 3, "The Divine Dispensing for the Divine Economy," p. 221)

Today's Reading

Praise the Lord for the day we received the Lord Jesus! He is the tree of life. "In Him was life" (John 1:4). The tree of life is good for food, and Jesus as the bread of life is also good for food. The best way to receive Jesus as the bread of life into us is by eating. We are a living container. We received Jesus into us by eating Him....Recently, I have learned something about eating in a scientific way. When anything is eaten, it is digested and assimilated into the blood system. Eventually, what is eaten becomes the very cells and organic tissues of our being. It simply becomes us....We are composed of all the elements we eat. It is the same spiritually. If we eat Jesus all the time, we will be composed with Jesus. God made man as His container with His image, and then He put this living container before a tree symbolizing Himself as life. There man was to take God in by the way of eating. The Word tells us that the tree of life was good for food (Gen. 2:9). The

only way to take anything into us in order that it might become us is by eating. God is good for eating. God is edible. God presented Himself to man in the form of food. (CWWL, 1973-1974, vol. 2, "The Wonderful Christ in the Canon of the New Testament," p. 221)

The way for us to realize Christ as the kingdom is to eat and drink of Him as the tree of life and the water of life. These two items, the tree of life and the water of life, will be our portion for eternity. (CWWL, 1972, vol. 2, "The Kingdom," p. 442)

We do not need outward rituals or practices...God's economy is not a matter of outward things; it is a matter of Christ coming into us inwardly. For this, we need to take Christ in by eating Him. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 550-551)

Luke 17:22-24 proves that the kingdom of God is the Savior Himself, who was among the Pharisees when He was questioned by them. Wherever the Savior is, there the kingdom of God is. (Luke 17:21, footnote 1)

As the heavenly King, [Christ] rules over His people by feeding them with Himself as bread. We can be the proper people in His kingdom only by being nourished with Him as our food. To eat Christ as our supply is the way to be the kingdom people in the reality of the kingdom. (Matt. 15:26, footnote 1)

How can we do God's will in the kingdom? There is no other way but to take Jesus in. We should not try to do the will of God ourselves. We will only fail. The way to fulfill God's will is to take in the One who obeys God all the time. Jesus is the kingdom of obedience. We simply need to take Him in, to eat Him as the children's bread. We may be the Gentile dogs, but we all have our portion under the table (Matt. 15:22-28). We all can eat King Jesus and take Him into us. All the kingly elements are in this bread. The more we eat Jesus, the more the royal ingredients will get into us. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord for such a ruling element within. (CWWL, 1973-1974, vol. 2, "The Wonderful Christ in the Canon of the New Testament," pp. 57-58)

Further Reading: The Wonderful Christ in the Canon of the New Testament, ch. 2; Life-study of Matthew, msg. 46

« WEEK 16 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.

In order to be cleansed from within, something must get into us, and the only way this can take place is by eating. As the nourishing food, the Lord Jesus is the best cleansing element. When He comes into us as food, He not only nourishes us, but also inwardly cleanses us. He does not wash our hands; He washes our system, our very being. This matter of inward cleansing through the eating of Jesus is the link that joins the first two sections of Matthew 15.

This is the kind of cleansing we need. This is not a matter of outward washing of hands to make a display of how clean we are. It is a matter of the inward cleansing that comes from eating Jesus. We all need such an inward cleansing from the Lord. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 544-545)

Today's Reading

The secret of overcoming [is eating Jesus]....There is no other way. We must not take the way of learning things, the way of picking up teachings. May the Lord be merciful to us that we would pick up this one way, the way of eating Jesus. Day by day we must eat Him as the tree of life, the hidden manna, and the feast. Then we will be the overcomers.

For many years I did not have the secret of overcoming my temper, but eventually the Lord gave me the secret. The way to overcome our temper is to call, "O Lord Jesus." Simply breathe Jesus in a little. Jesus is the strongest "chemical agent." When He comes in, right away He neutralizes our anger. Even if we try to

lose our temper, we will have no temper. I know this quite well. Previously, the more I reckoned, the more anger I had. But now when the anger comes, I call, "O Lord Jesus," and He neutralizes it; moreover, He turns the anger into praising. (CWWL, 1971, vol. 4, "Enjoying the Riches of Christ for the Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ," pp. 185-186)

We have seen that chapter 11 of Leviticus is concerned with the matter of diet, with the matter of eating. Now we need to see that this chapter is also very much concerned with death. In Leviticus 11 the word carcass is used at least thirteen times, and the word dead is used twice. Without death, there could not be any carcasses. A carcass actually denotes death. As long as there is a carcass, there is death.

The fact that this chapter speaks of death in relation to diet indicates that our diet, our eating, is a matter of life or death. If we contact clean things, we get life. But if we contact unclean things, we get death.

Death is an ugly, abominable thing. Therefore, we need to abstain from death. Apparently chapter 11 speaks of abstaining from uncleanness; actually this chapter tells us to abstain from death. The death from which we should abstain is not mainly physical death but spiritual death. (Life-study of Leviticus, p. 321)

Death is the characteristic of Satan's work. The ultimate goal of his work is to saturate man with death. Today our meeting does not depend on numbers. If we have a bigger number, it does not mean that we have better meetings. The important thing is that we have to overcome death in our meetings. We have to swallow up death and release life. If we see death in the meeting, it means that life is absent. A Christian must realize that there is nothing more evil than death. At the same time, there is nothing better than life. In God's eyes death is the most ugly thing, while life is the most precious thing. What is life? Life is not a doctrine. A person who has life has the experience of life, but it may be very difficult for him to describe what he has experienced. Life is not excitement or good feelings. Life is just Christ Himself. (CWWN, vol. 44, p. 876)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1971, vol. 4, "Enjoying the Riches of Christ for the Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ," ch. 17; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 279

<< WEEK 16 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

Lev. 11:31 These are unclean to you among all the swarming things; whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until the evening.

1 Cor. 15:26 Death, the last enemy, is being abolished.

From Eden onwards, God's controversy with Satan has been on this issue of death and life....All of God is characterized by life, all of Satan by death....Life is one thing that cannot be simulated....Life is something deeper than thought, more real than feeling and doctrine. Where there is life there is God. The great difference between Christ and all others is that, whereas others are dead, He lives. Death could not touch Him. And God who destroyed death through Christ, now uses the Church for the same purpose. Today she is God's vessel of life, called to reveal the risen life of His Son, and to bring men to the knowledge of that life. (CWWN, vol. 40, p. 119)

Today's Reading

All dead things are unclean. Uncleaness, therefore, equals death. Death is more defiling and abominable than sin. But according to our concept, sin is more serious than death....Because of our ethical and moral concepts, we know that lying is sinful. If someone lies to us, we shall condemn that lie as sinful. However, we may not realize that talk which is ethical may nevertheless be filled with death. For example, we may not realize talking with a brother about his family may involve death. Such talk may be ethical but still be filled with death.

Leviticus 5 reveals that through the trespass offering any sin shall be forgiven immediately (vv. 2, 17-18). From this we see that to deal with sin, to have sin forgiven, is easy. We simply offer the trespass offering, and then we are forgiven.

According to Leviticus 11, a person touching the carcass of any animal shall be unclean until the evening (vv. 24-25, 27b-28a, 31b, 39-40). "Until the evening"

means until the end of one's daily life. This indicates that it takes time for us to be cleansed from the defilement of death. Our experience proves this. If we commit a trespass and then confess it to the Lord, we shall be forgiven immediately, and the matter is settled. But if we are defiled by death, we cannot be cleansed "until the evening." This means that a certain period of time must pass before we can be cleansed from the defilement of death.

Time is not a factor in being forgiven of our sins, but it is a factor in being cleansed from the defilement of death. We Christians deal with sins simply by confessing them and applying the Lord's precious blood to our case. As soon as we do this, we are forgiven and cleansed. However, if we touch a "carcass" and are thereby defiled by death, this defilement will remain with us for quite a period of time. Although it does not take time for us to be cleansed from sin, it does take time for us to be cleansed from the defilement of death. This proves that death defiles us more and longer than sin does.

Whereas a person who touches the carcass of an animal shall be unclean until the evening, a person who touches the carcass of a man shall be unclean seven days (Num. 19:11, 13). This indicates not only that death is more serious than sin, but also that the carcass of a man is more defiling than the carcass of an animal. In the sight of God, human beings are the most defiling element. (Life-study of Leviticus, pp. 324-326)

Death is an exceedingly great power in the universe. No one can withstand death. Apart from God, death is the greatest power in the universe. When death comes, no one can withstand it. Throughout history man has been searching for ways to overcome death, but no one has ever overcome it. Rather, all have been taken captive by death. (The Living God and the God of Resurrection, p. 17)

Death is allied with the devil. Since the devil is God's enemy, death is also God's enemy. Death is the last enemy that God will abolish. (Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, vol. 6, p. 1148)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 40, ch. 8; Life-study of Leviticus, msg. 37

« WEEK 16 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live.

1 Cor. 15:22nFor just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

Satan is God's rival. He attacks everything that God wants to do. Since God's goal today is the church, Satan's attacks are directed specifically against the church. Satan does not necessarily stumble Christians or the church with the enticement of sin or the world, because these things are too obvious. While we may be free from sin and not love the world, we can still be under Satan's attacks....Dealing with sin and the world alone is not enough to stop the attacks of Satan. The ultimate weapon Satan uses to attack the church is death. Death is not easily identifiable; it can creep secretly into the church. This does not mean that Satan will not use the world and sin to attack the church. It means that Satan can use refined and moral things, not just filthy and treacherous sins to attack Christians. Many refined and moral things are filled with death, and Satan can easily utilize these deadly things to attack the church. (CWWN, vol. 44, p. 882)

Today's Reading

The church does not need good doctrines, good theology, or wonderful expositions. The church needs life, the resurrection life of Christ. No doctrine, idea, theology, or exposition can replace the life of Christ. Only the life of Christ and that which issues from it will prevail against the gates of Hades. Everything else is just disguised forms of death and cannot withstand the attacks of Satan. May the Lord be merciful to us, and may He keep us from touching death or bringing death into the church. May God fill the church with life, and may Satan find no opening to attack the church.

Christ is the resurrection and the life. Since the church is the vessel of Christ on earth, it should express this life and resurrection. God intends for the church

to manifest the life of Christ. Hence, the church must be full of life. In the church everything that issues from God is life, and everything that issues from Satan is death.

The main goal of the Lord coming to earth is for man to have life (John 10:10), that is, for man to receive God's life. The Gospel of John is a book on life; it is not on sin or other things. Almost every chapter concerns life and resurrection. God's Christ is life, and God's Christ is resurrection, and the church is the vessel of this life and resurrection. We know that a vessel is used to contain things. You cannot give water to others with your hands; you have to have a vessel to contain the water before others can receive it. Through the church—the vessel of Christ—God dispenses His life and riches to men.

How can we overcome death? We can never overcome death in ourselves, because Satan has injected death into us. The only One who has overcome death is the Lord Jesus Christ. The goal of the Lord's work on the cross was to put Satan to death. Satan ruled the world through death, but Christ destroyed Satan through death (Heb. 2:14). The Lord's death is a terminating death, while Satan's death is a non-terminating death. Christ's death is complete and thorough. All other deaths are merely deaths, but Christ's death is a termination. Neither the death of Hades, the death of the body, nor the death of the lake of fire can terminate anything. Only Christ's death terminates. His death has terminated Satan and has terminated even "death" itself. (CWWN, vol. 44, pp. 884-885, 881-882, 876)

Christ was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death so that by the grace of God He might taste death on behalf of everything. This means that He died for everything. Christ tasted death not only for human beings but for everything, every creature. The Lord Jesus' redemption was accomplished not only for people but for everything created by God. Thus, God can reconcile all things to Himself through Christ (Col. 1:20). (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 3721)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 44, pp. 841, 875-878, 881-885

« WEEK 16 — DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

2 Tim. 1:10 ...Our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel.

Rom. 5:17 For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

After the devil, the serpent, seduced man into the fall, God promised that the seed of woman would come to bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). In the fullness of the time the Son of God came to become flesh (John 1:14; Rom. 8:3) by being born of a virgin (Gal. 4:4), that He might destroy the devil in man's flesh through His death in the flesh on the cross....This was to abolish Satan, to bring him to nought. (Heb. 2:14, footnote 1)

Since the Lord destroyed the devil, who has the might of death, we who were held in slavery through the fear of death have been released by Him. Death reigned over us (Rom. 5:14), and we were under its slavery, continually fearing death. Since the Lord destroyed the devil and nullified death (2 Tim. 1:10), we now have no more fear of death and are released from its slavery. (Heb. 2:15, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

In 2 Timothy 1:10 Paul tells us that through His work in His death Christ nullified death. The Greek word translated "nullified" also means make of none effect, bring to naught, do away with, abolish, annul, discard. Through His devil-destroying death, Christ nullified death, making it of none effect....Death will not be removed until it is cast into the lake of fire after the millennium (Rev. 20:14). Death will be the last enemy destroyed by the Lord (1 Cor. 15:26). Although death has not yet been removed, it is nonetheless a fact that it has been nullified through Christ's death on the cross. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 773-774)

The Lord Jesus overcame death and broke through death; He resurrected from death. He was incarnated not only to work but also to fight. He had to prevail over every opposing power in order to accomplish redemption.

The last thing that the devil, who has the might of death (Heb. 2:14), used to attack the Lord Jesus was death. The Lord came to meet His enemy, who has the might of death...The Lord did not avoid death, because He did not fear it, and He could overcome it. The Lord could overcome death because He is living. Death could not overcome Him. The Lord did not fear death; rather, He accepted the challenge of death.

The Lord entered into death in order to give it an opportunity to fight with all its might. Death has been operating and fighting in Adam's descendants for thousands of years. Except for the Lord, every person who has entered into death has been overcome by death...As a result, everyone fears death. Our Lord, however, not only did not fear death, He also overcame death. He entered into death and emerged from death. (The Living God and the God of Resurrection, pp. 17-18)

Christ abolished death on the cross, and He overcame Hades in His resurrection. Although death tried its best to hold Him, it was powerless to do so (Acts 2:24). Christ is both God and resurrection (John 1:1; 11:25), possessing the indestructible life (Heb. 7:16). Because He is such an ever-living One, death is not able to hold Him. He delivered Himself to death, but death had no way to detain Him; instead, death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it. With Christ, therefore, death has no sting and Hades has no power. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 636)

Death could not hold the Lord, the grave could not restrict Him, and Hades could not detain Him; He resurrected. Resurrection is deliverance from death. Resurrection is the overcoming of death. (The Living God and the God of Resurrection, pp. 18-19)

The life we have received does not merely save us from a few things; rather, it enthrones us as kings to reign over all things. This is much higher than being saved in life. (Rom. 5:17, footnote 3)

Further Reading: Life-study of Romans, msgs. 35-36, 48

<< WEEK 16 — HYMN

Hymns, #639

1

Death cannot hold the resurrection life,
The life of God eternal manifest;
'Tis uncreated, indestructible,
'Tis Christ Himself, unconqu'able, expressed.

2

Death cannot hold the resurrection life,
Though all its force against it may combine;
Death only gives it opportunity
To show the boundless pow'r of life divine.

3

Death cannot hold the resurrection life,
The more interred, the more it multiplies;
All kinds of suff'ring only help it grow
And fruits of life abundant realize.

4

Death cannot hold the resurrection life,
Through every block and barrier it breaks;
Conqu'ring the pow'r of darkness and of hell,
It swallows death and victory partakes.

5

Death cannot hold the resurrection life,
All of God's fullness it will manifest;
God's righteousness and holiness it yields,
His glorious image by it is expressed.

6

Oh, may I know this resurrection life,
In every kind of death its pow'r outpoured,
In my experience ever realize
This life is naught but Christ my living Lord.