

## Death Is Defeated

Evolutionist Charles Darwin was a strong Christian in his early years, but after his five year journey on the *HMS Beagle*, he became a skeptic. Darwin was deeply troubled by death and disease which he believed had continued for millions of years. And then his daughter Annie died in 1851, devastating him. In 1859, he published *The Origin of Species*, theorizing that the survival of the fittest explains the origin and complexity of living things.

The Bible teaches that God created a perfect world (Genesis 1:31), but death entered as a result of Adam's sin (Romans 5:12). All of creation fell under a curse (Romans 8:20; Genesis 3:17), which will be restored when God creates a new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1).

### **Five Contrasts Giving Us Hope that Death Can Be Defeated:**

1. **Between the \_\_\_\_\_ (Garden) and the \_\_\_\_\_ (Cross)**
  - a. *“But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the man died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!” Romans 5:15.* Sudden death, like the Kennedy assassination or 911, has a way of rocking us like nothing else.
  - b. Death entered our world through Adam’s sin in the Garden and continued unhindered until Jesus broke its power at the Cross. Jesus bore the penalty for our sin by offering himself as a gift for us. Have you received the gift of forgiveness that he freely offers?
  
2. **Between \_\_\_\_\_ (Condemnation) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Justification)**
  - a. *“Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man’s sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.” Romans 5:16.* We are all guilty and under condemnation in the courtroom of God’s justice. But there is a way, through Christ, to be justified (“declared righteous”)!
  
3. **Between the \_\_\_\_\_ (Reign of Death) and the \_\_\_\_\_ (Reign of Life)**
  - a. *“For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:17.*
  - b. Adam and Eve ate of the fruit, expecting to become like God (Genesis 3:5). Instead they became unlike God, bringing death to all of creation. The reign of death came because of man’s sin. Jesus came to restore the reign of life to people and ultimately to all creation. In Genesis 1-3, paradise is lost. In Revelation 20-22, paradise is regained!

4. Between \_\_\_\_\_ (Disobedience) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Obedience)

- a. *“For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.” Romans 5:19.* When you were born again, Christ paid for all your sins – past, present, and future (Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 9:12). Salvation is obtained by faith, not works (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- b. But obedience is of great value for it leads to happiness because the favor of God is on our lives (Matthew 5:1-12). Sin makes you miserable. Obedience to God brings you happiness!

5. Between \_\_\_\_\_ (Law) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Grace)

- a. *“The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:20-21.* 613 commandments are in the Old Testament, none of which can get you to heaven. So why try keeping them?

**We don't “have to” obey God, we “get to” obey God. For many believers, facing death has revealed to them the joy of wholeheartedly trusting God. *“This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses...that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life.” Deuteronomy 30:19-20.***

# Discussion Questions

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1. Why do you think Darwin fell away from his earlier Christian faith? Have you ever been troubled by the amount of evil in the world? Has there been a particular death that really rocked you? Why? What does Romans 5:12 and Romans 8:20-21 teach about the impact of Adam's sin on humanity and all of creation? What does Revelation 21:1 teach about this curse being lifted?
2. Read Romans 5:12-21. Look at verse 15. Why do you think the assassination of President Kennedy and the tragedy of 911 had such an impact on us? How did everything change when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden? How was this reversed at the Cross?
3. Look at verse 16. How have you experienced condemnation? Imagine being in a courtroom and being found guilty of a serious crime by a jury of your peers. How would you feel when that verdict was given? What does "justification" mean? How do we obtain justification?
4. Look at verse 17. How was the reign of death introduced by Adam and Eve? What had Satan promised them if they ate of the fruit? What happened instead? How did Jesus restore the reign of life? Look at verse 19. Why is it important to understand that we are not saved from our sins by acts of obedience? How does Colossians 2:13-15 and Hebrews 9:12; 24-27 demonstrate that Christ died for our past, present, and future sins? How are we saved according to Ephesians 2:8-9? Why then should we obey God, if we are not saved by obeying God? What does Jesus teach in Matthew 5:1-12? How have you experienced the reality that sin makes you miserable and obedience makes you happy?
5. Look at verses 20-21. How many commandments are given in the Old Testament? How many of them do you have to obey to get to heaven? Why try obeying if we continually fall short? Do you obey God because you "have to" or because you "get to"? What's the difference? Have you ever faced death yourself, or the death of a close friend or loved one? Did this experience tend to drive you to God or away from Him? What did you learn through this experience? Why should we obey God according to Deuteronomy 30:19-20?