

## THE LAST ENEMY

**“The last enemy to be destroyed is death.” (1 Cor 15:26)**

Yes! There’s no doubt about it. Death is an enemy. Unfortunately, caskets come in all sizes and colors but even so nobody really wants to buy one. The death of an infant is particularly painful. Why do little babies have to die? We also scratch our heads when little children die of accidents and illness. Even more disturbing statistically, are the thousands of orphans and widows created each generation by the monster of war. The good news is that through death, Jesus Christ has destroyed the one who had the power of death, that is the devil (Heb. 2:14).

Every parent is painfully aware that death is waiting in the shadows every time a little baby is born. Our enemy has an almost infinite number of weapons at his disposal. Our little ones can choke on a piece of food or die from a spider bite. They can be killed in an accident or die in a fire. Thousands succumb every year to a broad category called SIDS (Sudden infant death syndrome). This is what the coroner writes down as the cause of death when there is really no rational reason why the little baby died.

But our enemy is relentless. If he cannot kill our baby as an infant, he will wait patiently for another chance in childhood. When our children go to school his chances of success are greatly increased. Nor does maturity make us immune from his deadly pursuit. He relentlessly follow us from the cradle to the . . . Yes! You know the answer. From the cradle to the grave. For it is appointed unto every man once to die and after this the judgement (Heb. 9:27).

But the good news is that the enemy of death will ultimately be destroyed. His days are numbered. The closer he comes to destruction the more desperate he becomes. Paul put it like this: **“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God--having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.” (2 Tim 3:1-5)**

So, in a strange way, “terrible times” signal the good news that we are in the “last days”. As wickedness increases we have a growing confidence that our ultimate redemption is drawing near. John encourages us to continue in Christ so that when He appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 Jn. 2:28). The book of Revelation helps to understand the increase of evil by reminding us that the wicked one is filled with fury when he realizes that his time is short (Rev. 12:12).

As the darkness deepens, however, the stars become more bright and beautiful. So also as these “terrible times” increase the message of Easter shines with greater glory. Believers do not cower when the wicked one roars like a lion seeking to devour us. It is in times like this that our boldness is intensified. We know that when we resist the devil, he will flee (Ja. 4:7). We know that He that is within us is greater than he that is in the world (1 Jn. 4:4). We know that we are “more than conquerors” through Him Who loves us (Rom. 8:37). We know that when our earthly tabernacle is destroyed we will have an eternal dwelling in heaven in a house not made by human hands (2 Cor. 5:1).

So be of good cheer! Even though we are at present experiencing great tribulation in this present world, our triumphant Savior has overcome the world (Jn. 16:33). Our lives are not just characterized by “joy”, but by “exceeding joy” (Jude 24). Or as Peter put it, by “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pet. 1:8).

Before time began, God was everything. With creation came rebellion which helps us to understand the present turmoil we see around us. Believers, however, are ambassadors for Christ and ministers of reconciliation. We beseech wicked people to be reconciled to God. But the time is coming when everyone who refuses to be reconciled will be destroyed so that God may again be “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28). PTL! At this happy time, our “last enemy”, will also be destroyed!