

Sleeping safely
in the
PRISON|HOUSE
of the
Enemy

Jutta Deichsel

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Content

Content	3
The Author of Death.....	4
The Pillars of Satan’s Power.....	8
The Author of Life and Resurrection	14
Resurrected by His Father	19
They that hear shall live	29
The last enemy that shall be destroyed	33

The Author of Death

The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy are clear about who holds the power of death.

*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy **him that had the power of death, that is, the devil**; Hebrews 2:14*

*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. **He was a murderer from the beginning**, and abode not in the truth, ... John 8:44*

***The power of death was held by the devil**; but Jesus had removed its stinging despair, by meeting the enemy upon his own territory and there conquering him. {3SP 239.2}*

*The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction **of him who has the power of death**, who was **the originator of sin**. {5BC 1132.8}*

***Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer.** {Ministry of Healing 113.1}*

***Christ never planted the seeds of death** in the system. **Satan planted these seeds** when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. {2SM 288.2}*

Believers and unbelievers, godly people and wicked people—all who died on earth died through the one who had the power of death—the devil. There were only two who escaped death and were directly translated to heaven: Enoch and Elijah.

A few in every generation from Adam resisted his (Satan's) every artifice and stood forth as noble representatives of what

*it was in the power of man to do and to be, while Christ should co-operate with human efforts, to help man in overcoming the power of Satan. **Enoch and Elijah are the correct representatives of what the race might be through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.** Satan was greatly disturbed because these noble, holy men were untainted amid the moral pollution surrounding them, perfecting righteous characters, and accounted worthy for translation to heaven. **As they had stood forth in moral power, in noble uprightness, overcoming Satan's temptations, he could not bring them under the dominion of death.** {Confrontation 26.1}*

*In the midst of a world by its iniquity doomed to destruction, **Enoch lived a life of such close communion with God that he was not permitted to fall under the power of death.** {Patriarchs and Prophets 88.3}*

Moses could have joined them but through his sin in smiting the rock he came under the power of the destroyer and the dominion of death. Satan was delighted that he had succeeded in tempting Moses to sin. Now he could exercise destroying power over him, for sin and death are both Satan's domains and are closely linked together.

*In consequence of sin **Moses had come under the power of Satan. In his own merits he was death's lawful captive; ...** (Patriarchs and Prophets 479.1)*

*Satan had exulted at his success in **causing Moses to sin against God, and thus come under the dominion of death.** The great adversary declared that the divine sentence—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19)—**gave him possession of the dead. The power of the grave had never been broken, and all who were in the tomb he claimed as his captives, never to be released from his dark prison house.** (Patriarchs and Prophets 478.2)*

At that point Satan was sure that all humans who had died were his captives forever, 'never to be released from his dark prison house'. The grave was

Satan's prison house, and he was certain that no one could escape from this prison house and that he could thus rob the Father and the Son of their earthly children forever to cause sorrow and pain in heaven.

Satan was unaware of the possibility of resurrection, or perhaps he deliberately chose not to hear about it because it was threatening to him, but God taught His children about it from the beginning.

*Adam's life was filled with sorrow. Every dying leaf, every victim of sacrifice, every stain upon man's purity, was a reminder of his sin. Terrible was the agony of remorse as he met the reproaches cast upon himself as the cause of sin. **Faithfully did he repent of his sin, and he died in the hope of a resurrection.** (From Here to Forever 391.4)*

David prayed in faith:

*As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: **I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.** Psalms 17:15*

The Prophet Isaiah knew:

***Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.** Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Isaiah 26:19*

The angel told Daniel:

*And **many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake**, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Daniel 12:2*

It happened in the time of Moses that Satan had to learn that his power was limited and that the Son of God would take his prey from him, because as Satan is the author of death, Christ is the author of the resurrection.

For the first time Christ was about to give life to the dead.** As the Prince of life and the shining ones approached the grave, **Satan was alarmed for his supremacy. With his evil angels he

stood to dispute an invasion of the territory that he claimed as his own. He boasted that the servant of God had become his prisoner. He declared that even Moses was not able to keep the law of God; that he had taken to himself the glory due to Jehovah — the very sin which had caused Satan's banishment from heaven — and by transgression had come under the dominion of Satan. (Patriarchs and Prophets 478.3)

Christ did not retaliate in answer to Satan. He brought no railing accusation against him, but raised Moses from the dead and took him to heaven. Here for the first time the power of Christ was exercised to break the power of Satan and give life to the dead. Here began His work of making alive that which was dead. Thus He testified that He was indeed the Resurrection and the Life, that He had power to ransom those whom Satan had made his captives, that although men die they will live again. The question had been asked, "if a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:4). The question was now answered. {10MR 160.1}

This act was a great victory over the powers of darkness. This display of power was an incontrovertible testimony to the supremacy of the Son of God. Satan had not expected that the body would be raised to life after death. He had concluded that the sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" gave him undisputed possession of the bodies of the dead. Now he saw that he would be despoiled of his prey, that man would live again after death. {10MR 160.2}

But even though Satan suffered a humiliating defeat through the resurrection of Moses, after this event things continued as before. Humans were born and died under the dominion of death and have since filled Satan's dark prison-house. Christ's power to release the dead from their prison and set them free and translate them into heaven did not manifest itself for many centuries until after His own resurrection.

The Pillars of Satan's Power

How was Satan able to bring nearly all humans under his power and under the dominion of death? Satan deceived a part of the angels and later almost all humanity through his lies about our identity and about God's character, His law, and His justice.

*Before Christ's first advent the world seemed indeed to have become the grave for all piety. It was Satan's seat; **man was in the power of the great apostate, helplessly receiving his lies of God and of Christ as truth.** ... {Signs of the Times April 15, 1897, par. 2}*

Christ identified Satan as the originator and father of all lies:

*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. **When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.** John 8:44*

What happened to Adam and Eve and all subsequent generations when they began to believe Satan's lies?

*"Your eyes shall be opened," the enemy had said; "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:5. Their eyes were indeed opened; but how sad the opening! **The knowledge of evil, the curse of sin, was all that the transgressors gained.** There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in yielding to appetite. **It was distrust of God's goodness, disbelief of His word, and rejection of His authority, that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil. It was this that opened the door to every species of falsehood and error.** {Education 25.2}*

Had Adam and Eve never disobeyed their Creator, had they remained in the path of perfect rectitude, they could have

known and understood God. But when they listened to the voice of the tempter, and sinned against God, the light of the garments of heavenly innocence departed from them; and in parting with the garments of innocence, they drew about them the dark robes of ignorance of God. The clear and perfect light that had hitherto surrounded them had lightened everything they approached; but deprived of that heavenly light, the posterity of Adam could no longer trace the character of God in His created works. {The Review and Herald, November 8, 1898}

After Satan led our first parents into sin, they suddenly had to deal with feelings and sentiments that were completely new to them: feelings of guilt, fear, shame, insecurity, self-condemnation, worthlessness. These feelings were extremely uncomfortable, something they had never experienced before. We see that Adam could hardly cope with this sentiment of guilt and therefore tried to get rid of it in placing the blame on his wife and his saviour. 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.'

After Adam had sinned, a feeling of terror seized him. A constant dread was upon him; shame and remorse tortured his soul. In this state of mind he wished to be as far removed as possible from the presence of God, whom he had so loved to meet in his Eden home. {Signs of the Times December 23, 1886, par. 4}

We see the same thing in Adam's son Cain: After committing this terrible sin and murdering his own brother, he could not bear the weight of his guilt, so he decided immediately not to permit this sentiment and completely shut his heart to it. He hardened his heart to such an extent that when the Lord asked him where his brother was, he defiantly replied: 'I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?'

This is the curse of sin, the condemnation of the law. It does not change God's mind but our mind. It does not come from our Heavenly Father but it is the natural consequence of our transgression, when we do something

we know to be wrong. It comes from the broken law inside of us. It burdens our conscience and robs us of our peace and causes us all the time seeking to escape these disconcerting emotions and sentiments. This is the experience our Father never wanted us to have.

*Four thousand years had Satan been at work against the government of God, and he had obtained strength and experience from determined practice. Fallen men had not the advantages of Adam in Eden. They had been separating from God for four thousand years. **The wisdom to understand, and power to resist, the temptations of Satan had become less and less, until Satan seemed to reign triumphant in the earth. Appetite and passion, the love of the world and presumptuous sins, were the great branches of evil out of which every species of crime, violence, and corruption grew.*** {1SM 280.2}

Along with being constantly exposed to Satan's lies about God's character and a justice demanding the death of the transgressor and thus to perceive God to be a stern judge for whom we are of no value if we not perfectly obey His requirements, this condition of men creates a deadly cocktail which destroys our ability for freedom and happiness and for healthy relationships. We become selfish and self-defensive and try to find some pleasure and distraction in the things of this world.

***Sin has brought decay, deformity, and death.** Today the whole world is tainted, corrupted, **stricken with a mortal disease.** The earth groans under the continual transgression of the inhabitants thereof. {BEcho May 21, 1900, par. 2}*

Satan has filled the whole world with lies about our supposedly 'independent' identity and with false ideas about God. He constantly tempts us to sin and then presses the guilt deep into our souls. The resulting constant shame and fear of death enables him to keep us in an invisible bondage. Lies, sin and death are the pillars of his kingdom.

Satan's work since his fall is to misinterpret our heavenly Father. - The plans of Satan have been indeed in a large degree

successful, as the lack of a knowledge of God in the Christian world can testify. **Satan's cruel deceptions have had their effect and have demonstrated his attributes as a deceiver, a liar, a murderer, and an accuser of God and of all who love God.** {Ms51-1890.5}

After Satan brought sin into the world, **he tempted man to set himself in rebellion against the authority of God.** He inspired him with hatred against God because of the results that followed sin. **He suggested that God was arbitrary, destitute of mercy and benevolence, because the penalty of the law fell upon the transgressor.** {Signs of the Times July 14, 1890, par. 2}

Satan's influence is constantly exerted upon men to distract the senses, control the mind for evil, and incite to violence and crime. He weakens the body, darkens the intellect, and debases the soul. **Whenever men reject the Saviour's invitation, they are yielding themselves to Satan.** Multitudes in every department in life, in the home, in business, and even in the church, are doing this today. **It is because of this that violence and crime have overspread the earth, and moral darkness, like the pall of death, enshrouds the habitations of men.** Through his specious temptations Satan leads men to worse and worse evils, till utter depravity and ruin are the result. {Desire of Ages 341.1}

God worked with His angels and His Spirit tirelessly upon men, trying to draw them to Himself and to deliver them from Satan's power but only few responded to His drawing. The people of Israel failed miserably in their mission to be the light of the world.

As the prophet Isaiah wrote:

For, lo, the darkness doth cover the earth, And thick darkness the peoples, ... Isaiah 60:2 YLT

But the hope for a Redeemer had been in the world since the time of Adam and was revealed in the writings of the Old Testament. And among those who feared God, it was even known that the Redeemer would be the Son of God Himself.¹

It was the Son of God that gave to our first parents the promise of redemption. It was He who revealed Himself to the patriarchs. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel. They looked for salvation through man's Substitute and Surety. These holy men of old held communion with the Saviour who was to come to our world in human flesh; and some of them talked with Christ and heavenly angels face to face. {Patriarchs and Prophets 366.1}

Many prophecies were given describing the mission of this redeemer, the Son of God:

*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, **to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;** ... Isaiah 61:1*

*I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; **To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.** Isaiah 42:6,7*

We have already mentioned two prisons in which Satan holds humans captive. His invisible prison consists of his lies about God, about our identity and our value, which enslave our minds and keep us in bondage through fear of death.

¹ The Knowledge of God in Old Testament-Times

<https://maranathamedia.com/book/view/knowledge-of-the-son-of-god-in-old-testament-times>

*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him **that had the power of death, that is, the devil**; And **deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage**. Hebrews 2:14,15*

Satan's visible prison-house is the grave:

*For six thousand years, Satan's work of rebellion has "made the earth to tremble." He has "made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof." And he "opened not the house of his prisoners." **For six thousand years his prison house has received God's people, and he would have held them captive forever**; but Christ has broken his bonds and set the prisoners free. {Great Controversy 659.3}*

The fear of death is the great 'Goliath' in our lives. Nothing threatens us more than the fear of death.

*His (Goliath's) power over the souls of men relates to our fear of death. **This is, for the overwhelming majority of the world, the greatest fear that men and women experience**, and it is through the fear of death that "Goliath" rules ...²*

With this condition of the human mind, subjected to all these lies, all this confusion, all this fear, someone had to come who knew exactly how to find a way out, who knew the truth about how the universe really works and on what foundation the universe rests and what humanity needs to be healed from its profound degradation and to rescue the race from this vortex of lies and the seduction of sin. There was only one person in the universe who could do this.

² "Escaping the Pentagon of Lies", chapter 51

The Author of Life and Resurrection

‘But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.’ At the exact time predicted in the Old Testament prophecies of Daniel, the Son of God was born as a man, as the Messiah and Redeemer of humanity. He came to reveal to us the truth about His Father and that there is a way out of fear and out of death.

*“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” There we have the rich promises of God. **What did Christ come here for? To represent the Father. What a heart of love and sympathy! He came to bring eternal life, to break every band.** When God gave His Son, He gave all heaven. He could give no more. (Temperance 286.3)*

Why couldn't the angels accomplish this and Jesus could have remained in heaven supervising and directing everything from above?

*Before Christ's first advent, the world seemed indeed to have become the grave for all piety. It was Satan's seat; man was in the power of the great apostate, helplessly receiving his lies in regard to God and to Christ, as truth. **The heavenly angels looked upon the world polluted by sin under the inhabitants thereof, and thought how much easier it would be to exterminate it than to reform it.** But the Son of God Himself came to work a reformation. {BEcho March 8, 1897, par. 2}*

We see that even the angels didn't understand the depth of the love of the Father and the Son towards fallen humanity and therefore would be unable to reveal it to the human race.

Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work.** The only way in which He could set and keep men right was to make Himself visible and familiar to their eyes. **That men might have salvation He came directly to

man, and became a partaker of his nature. {Signs of the Times, January 20, 1890, par. 6}

Christ, the Son of God, was the only one who could rescue us from the impenetrable web of lies and misunderstandings, from sickness, pain, hopelessness, worthlessness and – most importantly – from death.

*How was God to be rightly represented to the world? **How was it to be known that He was a God of love, full of mercy, kindness, and pity?** How was the world to know this? **God sent His Son, and He was to represent to the world the character of God.** (5LtMs, Ms7, 1888, par.5)*

As He said about Himself: ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.’ He was the only one (apart from the Father) who could accurately assess our condition and knew what we really needed. He was the only one who shared the Father’s nature and who knew the Father intimately as the source and foundation of the entire universe. He knew His Father's character because He was begotten by Him and the Father had raised Him and taught Him everything. Therefore He was the only one who knew and could manifest the depth of the Father's Agape love for His creatures. That is why Ellen White writes about Him:

*The Lord saw us in a sad condition, and sent to our world **the only Messenger that He could trust with His great treasure of pardon and grace.** Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was the delegated messenger. He was ordained to do a work that even the angels of heaven could not accomplish. **He alone could be trusted to do the work required for the redemption of a world all seared and marred with the curse. And in this gift the Father gave all heaven to the world.** {LHU 208.3}*

‘All heaven’ was in the Son of God. What does that mean? He was the only one who knew the Father. The Father Himself IS heaven and defines heaven because He is the source and the foundation of the whole universe - perfect, selfless, giving Agape love. And because Christ is the only begotten of the Father, having received everything from Him, raised by Him, taught

by Him, loved by Him before anything has been created, therefore knowing Him more intimately than any other being in the universe – therefore His knowledge of the Father which is in Him means that ‘all heaven’ is in Him, the only begotten Son of the almighty only true God.

*All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; **neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.** Matthew 11:27*

Through His teaching about the gentle and parental love of the Father for His creation and for every human being He was able to free us from the invisible prison of Satan’s lies about God if we would listen and believe His words.

***From the beginning it has been Satan’s studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself.** Therefore he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men... **Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, a God of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. By the world’s Redeemer the thick darkness with which Satan had enshrouded the throne of the Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifest to men as the Light of life....** {In Heavenly Places 8.2-3}*

That was the message of healing we needed. That there is a compassionate Father in heaven who is ‘greater than all’ who does not condemn us but loves us, who does not despise us but values us highly. Someone for whom we are not worthless servants when we achieve nothing, but for whom we are always His beloved children. A God of life and a God of love.

*Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. **But the very hairs***

of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Matthew 10:29-31

And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah 29:18-19

*And Jesus having heard that John was delivered up, did withdraw to Galilee, and having left Nazareth, having come, He dwelt at Capernaum that is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtalim, that it might be fulfilled that was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying 'Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations! — **the people that is sitting in darkness saw a great light, and to those sitting in a region and shadow of death—light arose to them.**' Matthew 4:12-16 YLT*

The shortest summary of Christ's ministry on earth is provided by the Apostle John:

*This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, **that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.** 1 John 1:5*

Christ also was the One who would bring 'life and immortality to light' through His life, His death and His resurrection. We were caught up in Satan's lie that 'every sin must meet its punishment'³ and therefore believed that 'without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness' (Hebrews 9:22). That is why Christ had to provide a sacrifice so valuable that all humans could believe that their sins had been 'paid for' and that they can receive forgiveness. Therefore in agreement with His Father He provided Himself as a most valuable sacrifice to set our minds free from this delusion.

³ Desire of Ages p. 761.4

By becoming the sin-bearer, He lifted from the human race the curse of sin. In His own body He paid the penalty of that on which the power of Satan over humanity is founded—sin. ... By His death He became the possessor of the keys of hell and of death. {YI June 28, 1900, par. 5}

*Jesus Christ laid off His royal robe, His kingly crown, and clothed His divinity with humanity, in order **to become a substitute and surety for humanity**, that dying in humanity, He might by His death destroy him who had the power of death. **He could not have done this as God, but by coming as man, Christ could die.** By death He overcame death. **The death of Christ bore to the death him who had the power of death**, and opened the gates of the tomb for all who receive Him as their personal Saviour. (Letter 97, 1898, p. 5. 10MR ch 42)*

At the same time, Christ exposed Satan's true intentions before the entire universe in allowing the enemy to reveal his hatred and to murder Him, the Son of God, in the most cruel and violent manner.

*All heaven saw the cruel work done to Christ. In the dreadful scenes transacted in the judgment hall, **God showed to the heavenly universe the spirit that would be manifested by those that are unwilling to yield obedience to His law. God then presented the once-hidden principles of Satan's power.** All heaven saw them as they were. The sympathies of the heavenly angels were with Christ, and **Satan was uprooted.** {12MR 412.1}*

While Satan brought Jesus to death through lies, deception, force and brutal violence, Christ brought Satan to death through revealing the truth about God and His love for His creatures and manifesting a selfless and self-sacrificing non-violent character who rather endures force and violence instead of ever use them and therefore destroying Satan's lies about God and unmasking his true purposes.

But Satan saw that his disguise was torn away, that the character he had tried to fasten on Christ was fastened on

himself. *It was as if he had the second time fallen from heaven. He had acted out his own attributes.* After the crucifixion, he saw that he had over reached himself. {12MR 411.5}

Satan had acted out his own attributes and Christ had acted out His own attributes which are the attributes of the Father and the entire universe was witness.

When Christ bowed His head and died, He bore the pillars of Satan's kingdom with Him to the earth. He vanquished Satan in our human nature. ***The nature by which the enemy was overcome is the same nature over which in Eden he obtained an easy victory. He sustained a humiliating defeat. He was overcome by the human nature of Christ.*** The power of the Saviour's Godhead was hidden. He must overcome in human nature, relying upon God for His power. This is the privilege of all who accept Jesus Christ. In proportion to their faith will be their victory. {12MR 410.3}

Resurrected by His Father

By overcoming Satan and his temptations in our human nature and remaining sinless, Christ became the second Adam. He defeated Satan and even the enemy had been allowed to kill Him, death could not hold Him, the Son of the living God, in the grave because there was no sin in Him. The Father Himself would resurrect His beloved Son by the working of His mighty power.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: ... And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not

*only in this world, but also in that which is to come: ...
Ephesians 1:17,19-21*

Jesus did not raise Himself from the dead as some believe. Scripture is clear that it was His Father who raised Him. Christ was raised through the glory of the Father who is the God of peace.

*... we were buried together, then, with Him through the baptism to the death, that even as **Christ was raised up out of the dead through the glory of the Father**, so also we in newness of life might walk. Romans 6:4*

***Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus**, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ... Hebrews 13:20*

*Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of **God, who hath raised Him from the dead**. Colossians 2:12*

*For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve **the living and true God; And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus**, which delivered us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10*

Through Christ's life on earth and the revelation of the truth about God and about His kingdom to be based on selfless and non-violent Agape love, through His death on the cross caused by the hate and enmity of Satan and through His resurrection wrought by His Father, the only true God, Christ and the Father brought life and immortality to light through the gospel and broke down the pillars of Satan's kingdom.

Christ has made of none effect the power of Satan. He laid hold of the pillars of Satan's kingdom, and passed through the conflict, destroying him that had the power of death. A way was now opened whereby mercy and truth could meet

together whereby, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. By His death Christ perfected forever them that are sanctified. This enabled Him to proclaim with a triumphant voice on the cross of Calvary, "It is finished." {12MR 409.3}

In shedding His precious blood at the cross He satisfied the demands of penal substitution so that mercy and truth could meet and righteousness and peace could kiss each other. He thus placed us on vantage ground so that we could believe that through this exceedingly valuable sacrifice, all our sins have been paid for. This sacrifice was not something the Father needed in order to forgive us, but it was necessary for us so that we could believe that we are forgiven. In dying for us Christ lifted from the human race the curse of sin and has made of none effect the power of Satan over our minds.

*To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein **He hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins**, according to the riches of His grace; Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;... Ephesians 1:6-8*

*Only by bearing the penalty of our disobedience could Christ deliver us from eternal death. **He became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Thus He placed us on vantage ground, where we could live pure, sinless lives.** Repentant sinners stand before God justified and accepted, because the Innocent One has borne their guilt. {Signs of the Times June 17, 1903, par. 9-10}*

In the Old Covenant mindset the blood of Christ is necessary to convince our conscience of full forgiveness which the blood of goats and calves could not accomplish. In the mindset of the New Covenant, the blood of Christ convinces us of His love and self-denial on our behalf and of the unwavering will of the Father and the Son to save us, no matter what the cost, and this creates love and trust in our hearts.

God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that through Him it might be saved. My love for you has been

*more self-denying than a mother's love. **It was that I might blot out your dark record of iniquity [in our conscience]; and put the cup of salvation to your lips [the wine of sonship], that I suffered the death of the cross, bearing the weight and curse of your guilt. The pangs of death, and the horrors of the darkness of the tomb, I endured that I might conquer him who had the power of death, unbar the prison-house, and open for you the gates of life. {4T 387.1}***

When we recognize the full extent of such love, it simply must melt our hearts, destroy the enmity within it and turn it towards our Heavenly Father and His Son. And that is the whole purpose and goal of the Gospel. This is salvation and this is atonement.

*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. ... **Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: 2.Timothy 1:7,9-10***

The Life, the death and the resurrection of Christ were the greatest and most important events in human history. The resurrection of Christ through the power of His Father marked the victory of God and His Son over Satan who had usurped rulership over this world.

*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, ... **Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: Romans 1:1-4***

Already during His life among us humans, Jesus proved that He is the life-giver in the power of His Father, not only by healing thousands of sick

people but also by raising the dead: The widow's son in Nain, Jairus' daughter and one of His best friends, Lazarus from Bethany. But these humans were only raised back to a temporary life and must die again in order to be resurrected once more at Jesus' second coming and receive eternal life.

When we study the story of Lazarus' 'first' death, from which Christ raised him, we learn another detail:

Had Christ been in the sickroom, Lazarus would not have died; for Satan would have had no power over him. Death could not have aimed his dart at Lazarus in the presence of the Life-giver. Therefore Christ remained away. He suffered the enemy to exercise his power, that He might drive him back, a conquered foe. He permitted Lazarus to pass under the dominion of death; and the suffering sisters saw their brother laid in the grave. {DA 528.2}

Christ had to stay away to permit Satan to aim his deadly dart at Lazarus. Thus the enemy was permitted to bring God's saint under the power of death. Christ is obviously allowing a breach to occur so that Satan can step in and take the temporal life of His precious child. That could not have happened if Jesus had been present.

Jesus never taught that those believers who die go straight to heaven, but that they will be raised from the sleep of death and receive eternal life at His second coming.

To the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, He said:

And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err. Mark 12:26-27

The resurrection at the end of this world was an important part of Jesus' teaching.

*Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; **and I will raise him up at the last day.** John 6:54*

*But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: **for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.** Luke 14:13-14*

*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the **resurrection of life**; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. John 5:28-29*

Lazarus' sister Martha was well taught about the resurrection and when the first resurrection will happen and Jesus confirmed her faith and referred to Himself as the originator of it:

*Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:** John 11:23-25*

The doctrine of the resurrection had always been present among God's people, but like many other things, it was often buried under false teachings and traditions. But when our heavenly Father called His Son from the grave, the fact of His resurrection became one of the most well-known and widespread truths of Christianity.

*The power of death was held by the devil; but Jesus had removed its stinging despair, by meeting the enemy upon his own territory and there conquering him. **Henceforth death would be robbed of its terror for the Christian, since Christ himself had felt its pangs, and risen from the grave to sit at the right hand of the Father in Heaven, having all power in Heaven and on earth. The conflict between Christ and Satan was determined when the Lord arose from the dead, shaking***

the prison-house of His enemy to its foundations, and robbing him of his spoils by bringing up a company of the sleeping dead, as a fresh trophy of the victory achieved by the second Adam. This resurrection was a sample, and an assurance, of the final resurrection of the righteous dead at Christ's second coming. {3SP 239.2}

By raising up Christ as the first-fruit and with Him a whole group of saints from all ages, it was impossible to conceal the truth of the resurrection. Even though the Jewish leaders did everything they could to deny and conceal it, they did not succeed.

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Acts 4:33

When He arose a victor over death and the grave, while the earth was reeling and the glory of heaven shone around the sacred spot, many of the righteous dead, obedient to His call, came forth as witnesses that He had risen. Those favored, risen saints came forth glorified. They were chosen and holy ones of every age, from creation down even to the days of Christ. Thus while the Jewish leaders were seeking to conceal the fact of Christ's resurrection, God chose to bring up a company from their graves to testify that Jesus had risen, and to declare His glory. (Early Writings 184.1)

Those who came forth after the resurrection of Jesus appeared to many, telling them that the sacrifice for man was completed, that Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, had risen from the dead; and in proof of their words they declared, "We be risen with Him." They bore testimony that it was by His mighty power that they had been called forth from their graves. Notwithstanding the lying reports circulated, the resurrection of Christ could not be concealed by Satan, his angels, or the chief priests; for this holy company, brought forth from their graves, spread the wonderful, joyful news; also Jesus showed Himself to His sorrowing, heartbroken disciples,

dispelling their fears and causing them joy and gladness. (Early Writings 184.3)

The Son of God has broken the power of Satan over our souls. He has freed us from our wrong understanding of our heavenly Father, from our worthlessness and hopelessness. He has in Himself brought life and immortality to light and is ready to give it to everyone who comes to Him in faith. The fear of death must not bother us anymore. Christ has Himself passed through death to help us to break free from every slavery of fear and sin. All the walls of the prison in which Satan held us captive have collapsed. But only those who are willing to think about and study these important issues of life and death will be able to grasp this truth and enter into the true freedom of the sons and daughters of God.

In the Book of Revelation, Christ told John:

*And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, **Fear not**; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, **I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.** Revelation 1:17-18*

Satan knew he was defeated but he determined to do everything to distort this gospel in as many ways as possible. Having completely lost his influence over the angels, he focused solely on seducing as many humans as possible and preventing them from accepting the salvation in Christ that had been so generously offered.

*Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, **having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.** Revelation 12:1*

Even at the time when Jesus was still on earth, the martyrdom of His followers was already beginning with the murder of John the Baptist.

He (Satan) had been unwearied in his efforts to draw away the Baptist from a life of unreserved surrender to God; but he had failed. And he had failed to overcome Jesus. In the temptation

*in the wilderness, Satan had been defeated, and his rage was great. **Now he determined to bring sorrow upon Christ by striking John. The One whom he could not entice to sin he would cause to suffer.*** (Desire of Ages 224.1)

*Jesus did not interpose to deliver His servant. He knew that John would bear the test. ... Gladly would He have delivered His faithful servant. **But for the sake of thousands who in after years must pass from prison to death, John was to drink the cup of martyrdom.*** As the followers of Jesus should languish in lonely cells, or perish by the sword, the rack, or the fagot, apparently forsaken by God and man, what a stay to their hearts would be the thought that John the Baptist, to whose faithfulness Christ Himself had borne witness, had passed through a similar experience! (Desire of Ages 224.2)

Satan was permitted to cut short the earthly life of God's messenger; but that life which "is hid with Christ in God," the destroyer could not reach. Colossians 3:3. He exulted that he had brought sorrow upon Christ, but he had failed of conquering John. Death itself only placed him forever beyond the power of temptation. In this warfare, Satan was revealing his own character. Before the witnessing universe he made manifest his enmity toward God and man. (Desire of Ages 224.3)

After all, with the sure hope of the resurrection the grave is not such a bad place to be for the saints. As Ellen White mentions in the above quote about John the Baptist: 'Forever beyond the power of temptation'. Satan no longer has any access or any power over them. No pain or sorrow torments God's children any longer. Unconscious and unaware of anything what is happening on earth, they rest safely and securely in the bosom of the earth until Jesus second coming.

*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. **For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring***

with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 1.Thessalonians 4:13-17

After Jesus' ascension, there were still some temporary resurrections by the apostles, but none more to eternal life. All believers who have died since then are still filling Satan's prison-house and are resting in the bosom of the earth.

Again we ask: Did they all die through Satan's power? Even all the righteous ones? Let us look at some examples.

In the life and death of the father of our movement, William Miller, we see that Christ had to allow a temporal breach in order to protect the eternal life of His faithful, weary servant who was making wrong decisions out of loyalty to his friends and thereby straying from the narrow path. Christ permitted him to fall under the power of Satan, the dominion of death, to hide him in the grave and save his eternal life.

*If William Miller could have seen the light of the third message, many things which looked dark and mysterious to him would have been explained. But his brethren professed so deep love and interest for him, that he thought he could not tear away from them. His heart would incline toward the truth, and then he looked at his brethren; they opposed it. **Could he tear away from those who had stood side by side with him in proclaiming the coming of Jesus? He thought they surely would not lead him astray.*** {Early Writings 258.1}

God suffered him to fall under the power of Satan, the dominion of death, and hid him in the grave from those who were constantly drawing him from the truth. Moses erred as he was about to enter the Promised Land. So also, I saw that

*William Miller erred as he was soon to enter the heavenly Canaan, in suffering his influence to go against the truth. Others led him to this; others must account for it. **But angels watch the precious dust of this servant of God, and he will come forth at the sound of the last trump.** {Early Writings 258.2}*

We have another report from Brethren Fitch and Stockman who had preached the gospel of the kingdom and both died in 1844:

*We all went under the tree and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when Brethren Fitch and Stockman⁴, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and **whom God had laid in the grave to save them**, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping. ... (CCh 35.2)*

Some may argue that it says here that God laid them in the grave, which implies an active role on God's part. But here we have an inspired statement from the Spirit of Prophecy that makes it clear that all saints die by the power of the destroyer:

***The last thing that the dying saint recognized as he fell under the power of the destroyer was the pangs of death;** but as he springs from his dusty bed he exclaims, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" It is then that Christ is admired of all them that believe. {BEcho January 15, 1889, par.10}*

They that hear shall live

What, then, is the difference between a dead follower of Jesus and a dead unbeliever? Why will the faithful disciple of Jesus participate in the first resurrection and the unbeliever not? Is this an arbitrary decision on the side of God or is there something in the saints themselves?

⁴ Levi Stockman died on June 25, 1844, and Charles Fitch died on October 14, 1844.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: **and they that hear shall live.** John 5:25*

They are the ones having learned in their lives to listen to the still small voice of Jesus. They know the frequency of His voice. These are His sheep.

***My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:** And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. John 10:27-28*

When the Jews argued with Him about whether He was the Messiah, Jesus said to them:

*But ye believe not, **because ye are not of My sheep,** as I said unto you. John 10:26*

*Why do ye not understand My speech? **even because ye cannot hear My word.** John 8:43*

These men were Sabbath keepers. They were Bible readers, yes even Bible teachers, well-known men with a flawless reputation. They were faithful tithers. But still ... they had not learnt to hear the voice of Jesus. When the new wine came they clung to their old wineskins and refused to let go. They had not learnt from the Father.

***No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him:** and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. **Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father,** cometh unto Me. John 6:44-45*

Christ's sheep are those who have not only heard from the Father, that is, been addressed by Him, but who have also learned of Him, that is they have not resisted Him, but have allowed themselves to be drawn by Him to His Son, their redeemer.

*Christ proclaimed over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, "I am the resurrection and the life." [John 11:25.] He, the world's Redeemer, has bruised the serpent's head, depriving him of all power to ever make men feel his scorpion sting, for He has brought life and immortality to light. The gates of eternal life are thrown open to all who believe on Jesus Christ. **All believers who pass through a natural death have, through eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God, eternal life in them, which is the life of Jesus Christ.** In dying Jesus has made it impossible for those who believe on Him to die eternally. {Lt97-1898}*

Only those who have tuned their spiritual ears to the voice of Jesus will hear His voice when He calls His children out of the grave.

*And they that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth. Jesus shall come, and the angels of God with Him; and the glory of His appearing shall flash on human eyes as the vivid lightning or as a consuming fire. He will descend with a shout and with the voice of a great trumpet, **and those that hear that vivifying voice will spring rejoicing from the grave. And they will recognize the voice that awakens them to immortal life as that of Him who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."** {BEcho January 15, 1889, par.10}*

Through their union with Christ, they have become partakers of the divine nature and this qualifies them for eternal life.

*The Life-giver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection, and until that triumphant hour, when the last trump shall sound and the vast army shall come forth to eternal victory, **every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name.** By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and **because they were partakers of the divine nature,** they are brought forth from the dead. (Letter 65a, 1894 quoted in The S.D.A. Bible Commentary 4:1143. Hvn 38.2)*

This is so precious: 'Every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name.' Their names are in the book of Life and nobody can take away their inheritance. They are co-heirs together with Christ. For the sleeping saint, it makes no difference whether he lies in the grave for three months or 300 years or 3,000 years... for him, it is only a brief moment, closing his eyes and opening them again when the Lord of Life calls him to his eternal inheritance.

*The hour will come; it is not far distant, and some of us who now believe will be alive upon the earth, and shall see the prediction verified, and hear the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God echo from mountain and plain and sea, to the uttermost parts of the earth. **All creation will hear that voice, and those who have lived and died in Jesus, will respond to the call of the Prince of life. It will be heard in the dungeons of men, in the caverns of the deep, in the rocks and caves of the earth, only to be obeyed.** It is the same voice that said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest,"—the same voice which said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." **All those who have obeyed that voice when it said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," will hear the "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."** To them, that voice will mean,—rest, peace, and everlasting life. They will recognize it as the voice of one who has been touched with the feeling of their infirmities. {RH July 31, 1888, par.9}*

What is still missing for this event to take place? Why must the sleeping saints wait so long for the resurrection? Why must creation still suffer and groan under the sin of mankind? As the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy point out, world history cannot yet be concluded until every living person has had the opportunity to learn the truth about God's loving and forbearing character. Only when the 144,000 as the first-fruit have been manifested, who are completely free from any false ideas about God and perfectly reflect His character, will this be possible.

*And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him **an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.** ... These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. **These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.** These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. **And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.** Revelation 14:1,4,5*

Satan's lies have so deeply permeated humanity that only this group at the very end of time, through God's grace, has been freed from every false conception of God's character. Because they have recognized God as He truly is, as a God of life in whom is no death and no darkness at all, they are under the full protection of the law and the light of His Agape love shines from their faces. They cannot die because they have separated themselves from every connection with sin and death and are completely united with the God of the Living through His Son, the Prince of Life. They understand the connection of sin with death as natural consequence and not as an arbitrary infliction on the part of God. They know Him as a completely non-violent God of selfless love, who respects the freedom of His created beings so much that He accepts their decisions, even when they contradict His explicit will. If humans resist His efforts to free them from the dominion of Satan, sin, and the resulting decay and death, God will, with great sadness, leave them to the consequences of their decision.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed ...

It is written: 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.' 1 Corinthians 15:26. For God's children to think that death comes from God prevents them to fully enter into the protection of the law through the Spirit of Christ because to subscribe something to God what is actually not in Him causes a breach in our mind and prevents us from entering in a complete loving and trusting relationship with God and His Son. As long as we hold to this falsehood we cannot have the Father's name in our forehead. We must stop connecting death to God otherwise we have no real capacity to distinguish

between the righteous kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan and sin. They are confused in our mind. We could say: 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death' also refers to the invisible realms of our mind and our perception of God.

And as long as the world has not had the opportunity to see the true character of God lived in the teaching and life of a group of God's children, the world cannot be brought to a final decision. Only when this has happened Jesus can return and finally take His children to Himself. And then Jesus' words will be fulfilled: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."

The 144,000 are absolutely necessary to bring this world history to its conclusion. Through their correct understanding of the character of God, they will open their hearts to the Spirit of Jesus in such a way that He can be fully manifested in them. Connected with the work of the fourth angel, who will illuminate the whole earth with his light, this group will bring the world into its decisive phase. And when every living person on earth has made their decision for or against the Prince of Life, the Lord Jesus can return and raise the sleeping saints and take them together with the living saints to Heaven.

This group already is being formed. It is still small, but it is represented in many parts of the world. The Father of Love Movement within Adventism is constantly growing, also still growing spiritually as it learns more and more about our gentle Heavenly Father and His beloved Son. It is a gentle movement that works according to the example of our Lord Jesus of whom it is written: 'He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.' We invite you to study some of our material, which is presented at the end of this book. All this material is based upon the Word of God, the Spirit of Prophecy and the message of Righteousness by Faith, brought to our church in 1888.

In Germany, people often say: Death is part of life. But that is not true. Death is life's greatest enemy because it destroys and abolishes life and even existence itself at least for them who refused to choose the salvation provided by Jesus Christ. They will lose life and existence never to be regained.

Let us stop viewing our Creator and Life-Giver as the One who brings death upon us when we do not do exactly what He wants. Let us recognize that He has given us His commandments as a protection, shielding us from the life-destroying principles of transgression and sin.

As it is written:

"...sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1:15

but:

"In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death." Proverbs 12:28

I want to close with this beautiful quote from one of our pioneers, Stephen Haskell:

***"The Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard."** Then the pious slave will rise and shake off the chains that bind him. The trumpet of the Lord's jubilee will resound through the length and breadth of the land. **Saints sleeping in Satan's prison house the grave will hear the glad sound,** and he "that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners" "did not let his prisoners loose homeward," will be powerless to hold his prey; for our Redeemer has said, **"The prey of the terrible shall be delivered,"- yea, delivered forever from the power of sin and Satan.** {The Cross and its Shadow CIS 255.4}*

*Thou wilt shew me the **path of life**: in Thy presence is **fulness of joy**; at Thy right hand there are **pleasures for evermore.** Psalms 16:11*