

CHRIST'S GUARANTEE OF VICTORY OVER DEATH

Introduction Christ's guarantee of victory over death is found in Rev. 1:18 "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell [Greek HADES = the grave] and of death."

This verse is a condensation of the whole message of the Bible concerning victory over death. The keys of the grave are in the hands of a Friend—our best Friend, Jesus Christ—One whom we can love and trust! What more positive, comforting assurance could ever be given to a grief-stricken world?

(See Chart No. 13—Christ's Guarantee of Victory over Death)

When Jesus says He has the "keys" of the grave, what does He mean? Firstly, that He alone can unlock the dark prison-house of death and set its captives free. Secondly, that He alone can unlock the dark mystery of death, and tell us what it means.

In this lesson we will study the seven "Keys of the Grave" which Jesus offers, to help us to understand the Bible truth about death.

Discussion 1.—THE FIRST KEY — HOW LIFE BEGAN

Before we can understand what death is, and how it began, we must first know something of what life is, and how it began.

Gen. 2:7: "God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life."

Here, in a few simple words, is God's answer to the baffling questions that men have been asking about the "Origin of Life" for thousands of years. Life is a direct personal gift from God!

Once given, how was man's life to be sustained? Had man now become a source of life, independent of God?

Gen. 2:9: "The tree of life in the midst of the garden."

The Tree of Life was the abiding symbol of man's total and continuous dependence upon God. It was an enduring reminder that man did not have life in himself. He was not naturally immortal. His life was conditioned on obedience. Should he ever be cut off from access to the life-giving tree, his existence must inevitably cease.

2.—THE SECOND KEY — HOW DEATH BEGAN

Gen. 2:15-17: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

This is the Bible's first mention of "death". What a baffling mystery God's warning must have been to Adam and Eve! They had known only a world filled with life!

Gen. 3:1-4: "Ye shall not surely die." Satan contradicts God's warning.

Gen. 3:5-6: Man believes Satan's lie, and disobeys God.

Gen. 3:17-24: The tragic result of disobedience: Separation from the tree of life.

Rom. 5:12: And so death passed upon all men.

NOTE: In spite of these plain Bible facts, the idea persists in many minds that man, even as a sinner, is NATURALLY IMMORTAL, so that some part of him can NEVER DIE. Millions have been deceived by the Devil's false assurance: "YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE". This is the TAPROOT of all the widespread confusion about life, death, and immortality. Yet this confusion would never have existed if men had read, and believed, THE LAST FEW WORDS OF GENESIS 3. The one sure defence against Satan's lie is to recognise that SIN CUT MAN OFF FROM ACCESS TO THE TREE OF LIFE. This basic Bible fact makes an immortal sinner impossible!