

When the Great Teacher was preparing us for His last few days before His crucifixion, He told us to sell our coat and buy a sword¹. When we told him that we already had two swords among us, He seemed satisfied. But even so, we had the sense that He was not a warrior², and indeed He did not defend Himself when He was taken and arrested by the soldiers. We expected Him to break free and come down from the cross³, or have angels to come rescue Him⁴, but nothing like that happened. And so after His death we just waited without purpose as His body lay in the tomb.

I initially thought of that period as just a quiet interlude between the cross and the resurrection. It seemed somewhat like the surface of the lake on a very calm day, but later I realized that there was a violent storm that was occurring below the surface.

I know now that during that time Christ was battling death, and ultimately conquered it and emerged victorious! God did not just pluck Him out of the grave and put Him back above ground, though He clearly was part of the process of raising Him from the dead⁵. Christ was in a real war with death, and was able to destroy its power⁶ over Himself and us as well⁷. We need to consider and understand the intensity of that battle!

We have no ability on our own to be raised⁸. Christ went through this as a willing and perfect sacrifice to bear our punishment so that we could be saved. I see Christ as running to the battle line⁹ just as His ancestor David did when He faced Goliath! Also I think of Jonathan as he went up and attacked the Philistine garrison¹⁰. In a way we follow Him, being pulled along in the wake of His momentum as He divides the enemy and brings us through to salvation. Both David and Jonathan relied on God to help them to victory, and so did Christ.

As a swordsman myself I could not have accomplished anything on my own. I thank God that He has taken care of this through His Son our Savior. Christ has overcome the world, and that refers also to death itself. He is in control! In His own words:

*“Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And **I hold the keys of death and Hades....**”*

Revelation 1:18

1. Luke 22:35-38
2. I consider Christ in the Battle with Death similar to the battle with 1) Satan and the temptations, 2) the moneychangers, 3) getting every breath on the cross, and 4) opposition from the Jewish leaders
3. Matthew 27:40-42; Mark 15:30-32
4. Matthew 4:6 and Luke 4:10; Matthew 26:53;
5. God raised Christ from the dead (he did not see decay); Acts 2:24, Acts 2:32, Acts 3:15, Acts 3:26, Acts 4:10, Acts 5:30, Acts 10:40, Acts 13:30, Acts 13:34, Acts 13:37, Romans 4:24, Romans 7:4, Romans 8:34, Romans 10:9, 1 Corinthians 6:14, 1 Corinthians 15:15, Galatians 1:1, 1 Peter 1:21; also, God helped the Israelites fight and win many times; so in a similar way He enabled Christ to battle victoriously against death.
6. 2 Timothy 1:10, 1 Corinthians 15:24-26
8. We have been raised with Christ; see Ephesians 2:6, Colossians 2:12, Colossians 3:1

7. Hebrews 2:14-15, "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."
9. 1 Samuel 17:48
10. 1 Samuel 14

© Copyright 2021, Heard Lowry