

No More Death

A Sermon on Revelation 21:4

by *Wulfert Floor*

Psalter 225 st. 1, 2 & 3

Read Revelation 21

Psalter 297 st. 1, 2 & 3

Psalter 363 st. 1, 2 & 5

Psalter 104 st. 3, 4, 6 & 10

The text on which we wish to speak about, can be found in Rev. 21:4 and only these words, "***And there shall be no more death.***"

We read in 2 Kings 13:19 "*And the man of God was wroth.*" This text speaks of a man of God, of a man of God who became angry, a man of God who was wroth. And now we ask, is it becoming for a man of God to become wroth: was that anger a sinless or a solemn anger? Or was it rather a mark of human depravity, even in an old man of God, who was now on his deathbed, and therefore ready to enter shortly into the blessed heaven? As for myself, I dare not give a well founded answer to this question, yet I must say that recently these words, "*the man of God was wroth,*" sounded so strange to me, that it gave me occasion to meditate upon the common defects which cleave to a man of God here upon earth, even unto the time when he is about to die.

Moreover I began to think about certain men of God, and also devout women, who I have known, and who are already before the throne, who by an ill and impatient temper upon their sick or death bed, revealed the misery of their soul. "Ah," thought I, "what is man?" How does evil cleave to us constantly even until we breathe our last? At times we are wroth when we should be gentle and tolerant: then again our soul clings so much to the perishing things, whereas we should travel as pilgrims through this world, and be satisfied with a

few feet of earth as our property: and at other times we are so lax, lazy and prayerless, whereas we should be zealous, prayerful and watchful. Ah, how little can be expected of us, and as to our Christian deeds, fruits and activities, are they not as the Lord says in His Word. *"and ye have snuffed at it"* (Mal. 1:13).

"But," you say, "I hope a better time will come." Very well, but when? While here on this earth? While you are still within the confines of this uncertain time state? Yes, you may and must prayerfully seek to be joined nearer and closer to the Lord: nor would I believe that you are converted, if it matters not how you live, and if the wrong frame of mind and conduct does not cause continual strife and sorrow. Nevertheless we shall ever be disappointed in ourselves even unto our death. Because of sin, temptations, inward darkness, manifold difficulties, and sorrows, which are the consequences of sin, our life here continues to be miserable, and gives us constant occasion to sigh and groan. Only on the other side of the grave will the Christian possess and enjoy that which he here seeks and desires.

At times, I think of the patriarchs, who lived in the first centuries of the world before the flood, and who at that time lived seven, eight and nine centuries. If they learned to know the way to heaven early and were converted in their young days, they had opportunity for many centuries to be disappointed with themselves, and I think they must have been very glad to enter heaven after so many difficulties and disappointments.

What it shall be to every Christian, when one day he may exchange this earth for heaven, is what we now wish to speak a little more about when considering the following.

I. We will speak about that death which reigns, and which threatens all of us.

II. About the blissful state of the New Jerusalem where there shall be no more death.

I. Death is not a fruit of nature, as the death of the brute beasts who are produced to be caught and killed, such as the Apostle Peter tells us (2 Peter 2:12), but our death is a consequence of sin, to which the devil tempted us in Paradise,

who is therefore called a murderer (John 8:44). Death was threatened upon sin (Gen. 2:17) and after the fall our death sentence was pronounced and read to us (Gen. 3:19). Hence death is called the wages of sin, or the well-earned wages of sin. (Rom. 6:23). By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin (Rom. 5:12).

Based upon the Bible, we can consider death in a threefold sense.

1st. There is, **spiritual death**, which is an estrangement from God, and a deadly inability to do any good. It is a natural enmity to godly and spiritual things, together with a stubborn indifference about our spiritual and eternal welfare. Because of it, man lives carelessly in sin, and is usually the most indifferent when he sits in church, or with the Bible in hand; and he is most attentive when he counts his money or is at the market, or in the theatre, or when he adorns himself for the world.

Most of the professors and church members of our time are subjects of this spiritual death. Just listen to their conversations as soon as they come out of church. Usually it sounds as if they came from an auction rather than from God's house. Do you want more marks of spiritual death? Consider then the following things: lying and deceiving; being dishonest in walk and conversation: mocking with religious services and devout people; being careful and troubled only about temporal things; desecrating the Lord's day; resting in some external duties, without knowing the Lord Jesus, and seeking Him as the foundation for our salvation; the irreverent and heartless reciting of prayers; thinking highly and greatly of one's own wisdom and ability. Behold all these things, and many more, are the marks of spiritual death.

But do we find proof of this spiritual death in the Bible? Certainly, for does not Paul speak of those people who are dead while alive? (1 Tim. 5:6), and Jesus says, *"Let the dead bury their dead"* Matt. 8:22. For that reason the true conversion is called a "resurrection from the dead" (Eph. 5:14), and in another place Jesus says, *"The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live"* John 5:25.

2nd. There is **eternal death**, which is also called "being hurt by the second death" (Rev. 2:11), or having their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8).

This second death, which is the eternal separation from God and all the blessed people, is that being tormented in the flame, is that being cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, where all those poor people will be like unto that burning bush and will burn forever, without ever being consumed; and where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched forever.

This eternal death is surely the most terrible of all dreadful things. No doubt we have been sick at one time or another, and also spent anxious, sleepless nights and trying days, on our sickbed. We have counted the hours in those anxious nights, and then it appeared to us that such a night lasted almost a week. Ah, how trying was such an anxious and painful sickbed, and yet our sickness did not last thirty-eight years, as we read of that man who had lain at the pool of Bethesda for so many years; nevertheless Jesus said to that man after he had been healed, "*Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*" Hence, eternal death is much worse than a sickness of thirty-eight years, and also much worse than being in solitary confinement for life in a dismal dungeon.

Happily we are not yet in hell where thousands of our fellow sinners already are. We are still being earnestly warned about the eternal flames of that infernal fire, in order that we may yet learn to shun the way to hell and to choose the way to heaven. Paul still preaches to us saying, "*Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*" Col. 1:28. Jesus still calls to us: "*Look unto Me, and be ye saved*" Isa. 45:22. God still swears to have no pleasure in our death (Ezek. 33:11). Ah, then let us fall on our knees before God and call upon Him, and choose Jesus as our Surety, Mediator and King, and join ourselves unreservedly, with our whole heart, forever to the service of the blessed God in order that we may escape the well deserved punishment, and one day, with all the children of God enter into glory.

One day the time to choose and to seek, the time for warning and admonishing, the time of Law and Gospel will cease forever, for in the **third** place there is also a returning of the spirit to God, and a lowering of the body into the dark grave.

Temporal death is the lot of all men; *“And how dieth the wise man? as the fool”* Eccl. 2:16. Like grapes, the spirit of princes is cut off (Ps. 76:12). *“Man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish”* Ps. 39:12. Hence death is called the way of all the earth (Josh. 23:14), and the grave the house appointed for all living (Job 30:23).

It is a wonderful and solemn thought that the whole city of Amsterdam must shortly die out. Paris, London and New York with all the thousands in them will shortly lie in the grave of corruption. When I sit in church I think: “The mouth of that man who calls from the pulpit will shortly be silent: so also the organist, the hearers, whether rich or poor, men, women, young men and young women, a multitude of several hundreds, and myself not excluded. Fifty years from now there will perhaps not be but only a few left. We shall all have departed to eternity, and our mortal remains will lie in the grave, either half or wholly consumed.

If I go traveling by train, and at one place or another I sit in a waiting room where the people team like ants, where there is so much talking, where there is so much laughter and singing that I am hardly able to understand myself, I think, “All those people are traveling to various places in or out of my country, but shortly they will all travel, and myself included, to the same place, to the grave, where the small and great are, and where the servant is free from his master” Job 3:19. And for how few perhaps, of that great number will the grave be a sanctified resting place, a bed that is sanctified and blessed by the burial of Christ: and am I one of those few? Ah, this question I must ask myself constantly, for although death is universal, salvation is certainly not universal, for *“strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life.”*

Consider further, that temporal death has wrought great havoc in families and generations. Solomon considered all the oppressions that are under the sun, and the tears of such that were oppressed and had no comforter (Eccl. 4:1). Think of the widow who came to the prophet and lamented the sad loss of her God-fearing husband (2 Kings 4:1): of the widow of Nain who followed the bier weeping over her only son (Luke 7:12-15): of Job, David and Jacob, and so many others who had to mourn about such grievous losses, and of so many

orphans, widows and others, who mourn the loss of one without whom they thought they could not live, and who nevertheless was rent from their heart by death.

Death not only works such great havoc, but it also usually comes unexpectedly, as a thief in the night. Therefore how necessary it is to watch and pray. How necessary it is to ask with David: "*Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days.*" Ps. 39:4: and with Moses "*Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*". Ps. 90:12

The plans, which we make here usually vanish like smoke in the wind, and when the time to realize our plans has come, then men are perhaps preparing for our funeral.

Again, temporal death is terrible for all who have spent their healthy days in the service of the world. The rich man died and lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torment: and it is written of every unconverted person "*They shall never see light*" Ps. 49:19. But on the other hand, temporal death is a blessing for those who are really united to God. Their death is precious, for then they will be loosed from sins and cares, and, in respect to the body, they will then rest in a blessed grave, and, in respect to the soul that shall be in the heavenly paradise. However the courage and comfort of God's people in their departing varies, as will be further seen.

Some of God's people, like old Simeon, enter heaven full of courage and comfort, and Job who had become tired of being upon earth, was full of days (Job 42:17). Here he had seen so much good and evil, had tasted so much sweet and bitter, experienced so many different frames of soul that he finally desired to depart. David also died in the full assurance of his salvation, otherwise it could never have been said of him that he died in a good old age, full of riches and honor (1 Chr. 29:28).

By faith others leaned upon Jesus and trusted in the promises without much sensible assurance. They trusted in Him Who is a perfect Saviour of all those that go to God by Him, because He is and remains an Intercessor of needy ones. They trust in the love of God in Christ for everyone who believes, and in that precious blood of atonement, which is a ransom for all needy souls. While dying, they have their eye on Jesus Who has come to seek and to save that which was lost, and thus hoping, trusting and praying, even though

they have no sensible assurance, they say with David, "Lord, do as thou hast spoken" (2 Sam. 7:25), and thus reverently and boldly, they remind the Lord of His Own Word.

But others when they die, must with a doubting Heman, take a leap in the dark, such as I did one time in a dream. In my dream I stood on a high elevation with a horrible unfathomable depth below me. I was in danger of falling, but for some time I held on as well as I could, but ultimately my exhausted and feeble hand could not hold me any longer, and while fearing and trembling, I was compelled to let go and fell into a horrible depth, fearing that I would be crushed against the wall of a building or on the hard pavement. I dropped, I was afraid; I dropped terror stricken, surrendering myself to the dark abyss. But what happened? Instead of being crushed on the pavement, I scared awake, and found myself on a soft bed. What a pleasing and surprising relief. What a happy and consoling deliverance and relief! Happy is the upright soul who is joined to Jesus, although he may feel himself to be unhappy because he must travel through darkness to the eternal light, for Jesus has come to deliver them who through fear of death, were all their life subject to bondage (Heb. 2:15). For such souls death is the last storm, but also a violent storm. How true when the Apostle says, "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." But it is most positive that death is an enemy, and if we are converted people, then we may wish that the last enemy might finish his work in us quickly, in order that our last struggle may be very short. I have been present many times and seen people die, and I think that the parting of soul and body is usually hard, and attended with a great struggle and with many convulsions.

II. But now our second point is the **happy state of God's people hereafter**, where there shall be no more death. And about this we will make a few brief remarks.

1st. There shall be no more spiritual death. However, God's people were free from that here also, and yet what horrid scars do they still show as a result, and what an unpleasant odor of death is found on them time and again. Slothfulness, barrenness in duties, are they not horrid remains of spiritual death? I have seen the godly so cold and indifferent under

the means of grace, that on account of drowsiness they almost fell from the seat, and that in other things they manifested the coldness and uncharitableness of their heart. How often they are hard and ungrateful while enjoying God's most precious mercies. They are dissatisfied with the least adversity, unreconciled with God's ways, often unbelieving, and prayerless. They are never as poor and humble, never as gentle, tolerant, and heavenly minded as becomes those that have been dearly bought and redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Beside that, they may perhaps get into a sad declension and become worldly-minded, or fall into open sins, so that they begin to resemble the spiritual deadness, as was at one time the case with Noah, David, Asa, Peter, and many others.

The danger of falling shall cease entirely when parting from this life, and all the faults and misconduct of walk and conversation shall then also, completely and forever, come to an end. Then it shall ever be a heart burning with love, even more so than that of Cleopas and his friend on the way from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Then they shall know God perfectly and shall be able to understand all the mysteries of the way of redemption. They shall forever love God, and their blessed fellow brothers and sisters most perfectly. And David's joy in God was at a certain time so great that he could not refrain from leaping and dancing, and that he leaped and danced with all his might before the Ark of God. What happiness shall then one day fill the heart of those that are saved, when they shall walk before the Throne of God, and shall have entered into that rest for which their soul so often longed.

2nd: All remains of spiritual death will be forever banished from their heart and the harmful and seductive company of the spiritually dead will cease there, too. There, all the friends will be within, and all the enemies without. No Potiphar's wife will be there to entice Joseph to uncleanness. No Pharaoh shall be there to oppress and persecute Moses and all Israel, and no Saul will seek after the life of David. No captain shall be there to take Jeremiah in the gate of Benjamin, and to cast him into the dungeon, and there will be no more enemies to scourge and to stone Paul. There shall be no more company to mock, curse, and blaspheme in the

ears of God's children, who now with grief must hear it so often.

Here thousands of people have lost their precious life at the stake, on the scaffold or have even been put upon the rack. Others were locked up in dismal prisons, cast before wild animals or were burned upon the gridirons. Still others were killed in other murderous ways, and that simply because they served God, confessed Christ, and could not, nor would not go along with the world and the customs of the times.

After death that shall no more take place for then the entire company, all the inhabitants of that heavenly country shall serve God in the closest union and in the purest love, and of the Pharaohs, the Nebuchadnezzars, the Herods, and the Neros, the Christian can say with the Catechism, "Jesus shall cast all His and my enemies into eternal condemnation, and translate me and all His chosen ones into heavenly joys and glory."

3rd: There shall be no more eternal death: no restless and accusing conscience, and neither shall the wrath of God be found there. A converted person has never been in hell, but here such a one has experienced something of hell in his conscience: here he was free from judicial punishment, but nevertheless experienced the Fatherly corrections. What else would it mean, when we read: "*and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth*" Heb. 12:6. How grieved David was in his heart when he had backslidden from the Lord, and had to complain while God hid His face. "*For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer*" Ps. 32:4. and "*My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread*" Ps. 102:4.

But that shall never be any more in all eternity. Sin will be removed, and the Heavenly Father shall never again show His displeasure toward His children, but shall forever cause them to experience His love, mercy, and sweet presence.

4th: Temporal death shall be no more either, neither death itself nor its harbinger, such as sickness, hunger, war, feebleness, and old age, and other diseases and calamities which are often preceded by death. Jacob will halt no more, and neither will Isaac be blind. There shall be no more a daughter of Abraham who was bowed down so much that for eighteen years she could not raise herself (Luke 13:11).

Timothy will no more be troubled with a weak stomach, and will need no more wine because of his manifold weaknesses: David will not have to say anymore "my bowels are full of a loathsome disease": Miriam will no more be leprous, and Hezekiah will no more be sick unto death, and neither shall death separate one from the other in that company. The prophet's widow will have no more need to say, "Your servant, my husband, is dead," and it will not be necessary that some devout men carry Stephen to his grave. There David need no more weep behind the bier of Abner, neither mourn the death of his bosom friend, Jonathan. That entire happy company will remain forever inviolate or unbroken. Whereas sin, as the cause, has been put away, therefore death and the grave, as the consequence, will also forever be put away.

Before we end with the application, let us first sing from Psalter 363, stanzas 1, 2&5.

Let us now note for our instruction the following things:

1st: What a place of misery this world is, the country that we and all mankind inhabit at present. By one-man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. Of Saul it is said that he slew his thousands, and of David his ten thousands, but death slays its ten thousand times ten thousands, and respects neither poor nor rich, old nor young, beggar nor prince, and before long it will cut us down also.

If all the church yards and cemeteries in the whole world were placed next to each other, how many acres, yes, how many miles in circumference that would be where nothing is to be found but skulls and dead men's bones, and how many thousands find their grave in the sea, which also in the last day will give up its dead by the thousands.

How many tears has death, that terrible consequence of sin, pressed out of our eyes already, when our dear parents, husband or wife, children, friends, or relatives were so mercilessly taken away from our side, and rent from our heart! Ah, we still remember the day or night of the death of those who were as dear to us as our own soul, when together we stood around the deathbed, and together we could not ward off death. How it proved then, that poor man has no

weapon in this fearful struggle, and that weeping and praying is of no avail when the clock strikes, and the appointed hour is come which is according to God's counsel.

You may still remember the day of burial of your dear parents, husband or wife, or children, when their mortal remains were carried out of your home, and when for the last time the cover of the casket was taken off, so that your sorrowing eyes could cast a last look at that pale face of your dear one, after which the cover was put back on, and thus had to consider, that you would see him or her no more, only until after some years and then before the judgment seat of Christ.

Surely you followed the bier to the grave, saw the casket descend slowly to the bottom, heard the clods which fell upon the casket make a doleful sound when the bearers, each with their shovel covered the casket with earth, and then had to return to the house of mourning. (Thus it was at that time, although quite different today.)

And now, those of our relatives who still remain must also go before long, and we with them, and who of us shall be first? That is known unto God, but we all must die, our death sentence has been pronounced in Paradise already, and the marks and harbingers of death are beginning to show themselves more and more in our bodies. If we have lived half a century more or less, our sight is becoming dim, and our feet refuse to walk as many hours with ease as formerly. Our stomach can no longer digest the food as well as before, perhaps we have become a little deaf, we begin to complain about rheumatism, also that our memory has become unfaithful, and more and more infirmities manifest themselves in our body, and in our spirit, and all this reminds us that with a rapid pace we are traveling to the grave. Add to this the troubles and cares which we meet in this vale of tears. Must we not say then, that because of sin the world is a place of misery?

2nd: But infinitely more shall hell be a place of misery. Of heaven it can be said, "*and there shall be no more death.*" But of hell it must be said on the contrary, "There shall be no life throughout all eternity." All that which makes life agreeable to the sojourn of the mortal here upon earth shall there be gone forever. The worm of conscience shall gnaw eternally:

the remorse of having neglected the time here shall torture the poor souls forever: the wrath and indignation of God shall be felt eternally, and also the hate of the infernal spirits: and the flame of that unquenchable fire shall go up eternally.

Shall there then be life, rest, comfort, and pleasure? And yet it must also be said of that place that there shall be no more death. No one shall there be able to die: the damned will continue to live always, they shall seek and desire death, but death shall flee from them, and they shall not find death. When here upon earth, poor man is at his wit's end if he can conceive of nothing more than to save his position and honor, and finds himself in the greatest need and despair, then he often seeks his comfort in death, and puts an end to his miserable and despairing life, either by hanging or drowning. But in hell there is no way or means to take our life. Whosoever enters there will remain there forever, and must suffer eternal torment in that flame.

3rd: Hence let us prayerfully seek to escape that dismal abode, and obtain a place in that country where death shall be no more.

We are still alive, while thousands of others have been dead a longer or shorter period of time. We are still living under the preaching of the Gospel: faithfully the Lord still warns us for those hot and burning flames of infernal perdition, and admonishes us to choose the best portion for our poor souls. The Lord is holy and righteous, and will in no wise clear the guilty: but He is so merciful that the psalmist in the one hundred-thirty sixth psalm, out of the fulness of his heart, was compelled to proclaim twenty six times that the mercies of the Lord are for ever. And because He is so merciful, for that reason Paul says: He spared not His Own Son: He has sent Him into the world for His Own enemies, so that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

And in the Son of His love the high God can deal with the low and poor sinner, notwithstanding that poor man is less than dust on the balance, or a drop in the bucket.

Therefore consider these things seriously, and seek that portion which will remain with you in the hour of death. Because Christ died, yes, what is more, was also raised from

the dead, and is seated at the right hand of God, and also prays for poor sinners. For that reason it is yet possible to escape the well-deserved punishment, and find grace in the sight of God and obtain a place in heaven.

To that end attend faithfully upon the means of grace, and seek especially through the means to obtain grace and salvation thru the merits of that Mediator. Do not rest until you have found Him. Beware of sins which are as a hell, because they pave the way thereto. Cry and wrestle much for discovery, and for the indwelling of God's Spirit. Think upon the precious present time, for when time is gone, law and gospel, and all the means of grace are gone too, and that forever. Then the door will be shut, never to be opened again to all eternity.

Finally, people of God, comfort yourselves with the future, especially in trying cases, when death in his harbingers or his painful consequences strike you, and when you have to mourn for your dear ones when they die. In the future world all your tears shall be wiped away. There shall be no more sin, and hence no sickbeds, no coffins, no burial grounds, nor undertakers, and nothing that can cause grief and sorrow.

Watch and strive always against the remainders of spiritual death, and let sin never be considered a light matter to you. Seek always in your actions, for yourself and others, to manifest your marks that you are a living soul. Think, speak, and act at all times as becomes a Christian. Let us walk honestly in the daytime, and let our light shine for all who surround us. Although most people choose the way to hell, let us manifest before the eyes of all, that we have chosen the way to heaven. May God help you!

At every suitable occasion, speak to all that you come in contact with, about that which eternity shall reveal to us, for your time is short; and work willingly, for the day of death is uncertain. Therefore let us hasten and be not slack in the work of our great Master, and to remember continually the word of the Apostle when he says: *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord"* 1 Cor. 15:58.

Now then, may God bless these poor remarks for our soul,
to our salvation and to His honor, for Jesus' sake.

Amen