

THE GREATEST BATTLE
WORLD'S GREATEST EVENTS #7

24 year old George Washington sat in his tent on July 18, 1755 and lifted his pen to write a letter to his mother. He was exhausted from a ferocious battle that had just taken place the previous day. Colonel Washington along with the rest of his men in the Virginia militia were involved in what history would dub the French and Indian War. Basically the conflict was between the British and the French for control of the American colonies. The American settlers had sided with the British in this conflict and the Native American population had joined the French. Either the British or the French would control our country after this conflict was over depending on who won. The previous day had marked the low-point for the British troops and Colonel Washington. The British General Edwin Braddock had walked his troops right into an ambush in the Pennsylvanian woods. Over half of General Braddock's soldiers had been shot down while the French and Indian troops had only lost 30. Of the 86 British and American officers involved in the battle, only Colonel George Washington was left on horseback when the fighting ended. He led the troops to retreat back to Fort Cumberland in northern Maryland where they could regroup and go on to fight another day eventually winning the French and Indian War. But it is that letter that Washington wrote the day after the battle to his mother that has proved to be of such special interest to historians. Listen to a paragraph from it: "After the battle was over, I took off my jacket and noticed I had 4 bullet holes through my jacket! But not a single bullet had touched me! When I brushed my hair, I had bullet fragments in my hair but had not been scratched. I had several horses shot out from under me but I am unharmed. God's hand was on me. God protected me and God kept me through that battle!"

*Can you imagine what our country would be like today if the French would have won the French and Indian War instead of the British and our patriots? French would undoubtedly be our national language and probably the dominant language in the world today.

*Can you imagine what our lifestyle would be like if George Washington would have been killed in that battle and unable to lead our nation 2 decades later in the Revolutionary War? Many historians claim that our country would not have won the Revolutionary War without his leadership. What if we had been unable to gain our independence and were still under British rule?

The outcome of wars have had a great influence in determining the course of human history. Basically we are where we are today as a nation and as individuals because of the outcome of wars that have been fought and won or lost.

So it should not surprise us to find ourselves discussing a battle as the 7th in our series of world's greatest events. But this battle might surprise some of the world's most prominent scholars. For this battle was not a physical battle - it was rather a spiritual battle. This was the ultimate battle between God and Evil that took place in the area known as the place of the skull. The crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ must not only be included in the list of the world's greatest events, but may well be the candidate for the single world's greatest event. For it was on a rugged, Roman cross that the great battle between good and evil took place. It was on that battlefield called Golgotha that God's war against Satan and Sin was engaged. And it was from the tomb just a thousand or so feet away that the

ultimate victory was secured when Jesus Christ rose in power and glory on the third day.

WHY WAS CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION THE GREATEST BATTLE IN ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY?

The answer to that question is found in the simple fact that IN HIS ATONING WORK, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST DEFEATED THE 3 GREATEST ENEMIES KNOWN TO MAN: I want to discuss these 3 great enemies with you this morning. And certainly as we celebrate the value and importance of work on his Labor Day weekend, it is most appropriate for us to consider the greatest work ever accomplished.

1. The first enemy who was defeated by Jesus Christ in his redemptive work was THE DEVIL- HEB. 2:14 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he (the Lord Jesus Christ) too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is the Devil.*

Ever since Lucifer exalted himself in opposition to God, this fallen angel who is also called the Devil or Satan became an enemy of God. And when Satan, using the beguiling serpent, tempted Eve into sinning, and then when Adam followed Eve in disobeying God, the Devil gained a strategic foothold here on planet earth.

Now there was never any hope that the Devil would be victorious in ultimately defeating God. The Devil for all of his skillful methods and powerful means is still just a finite creature. True, he is much more powerful and intelligent than the strongest and smartest human, but he is still just a finite creature. God, who created him in his perfect state, is infinite in being. There never was any doubt about who was strongest, or who was the most intelligent, or who would ultimately prevail. But, in his hatred and anger against God, the Devil kept on fighting, unwilling to lay down his arms in surrender. And even today, the Devil continues to promote his evil and wicked designs in this world, trying his best to thwart the holy kingdom that God is building.

But the Bible tells us that on the cross of Calvary and the resurrection tomb, the Devil was defeated. His wicked end was secured. His destiny spending eternity in the Lake of Fire was assured. His power was broken. The Devil is now a defeated foe. It is just a matter of time now, until he will meet his predicted end.

British Theologians like to compare Calvary to D-day in World War 2.

*Allied forces knew that if they could establish a military presence on the European Continent, the final outcome of W.W.2 would be sure. The most vulnerable time would be landing the forces on the beaches.

*So great and careful planning was made to land those Allied Forces. Once those troops were established at Normandy, the final outcome of the war was sure.

*Yes, there continued to be battles and skirmishes, but the outcome of the war from the time of D-day on was never in doubt.

*So Calvary was like D-day for the Devil. When the Lord Jesus Christ cried out those words from the cross, *It is finished* and when he rose in glory from the grave and was *declared to be the son of God* according to Romans 1:4, the final outcome of God's battle with the devil was finally secured. So the author of Hebrews could write, *by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is the devil.*

*Now the practical truth for each of us as believers is the simple fact that we needn't live our lives in terror and fear of

the Devil. Now we should respect his power - he is far stronger than we. And if we try to fight him in our own strength, we are doomed to be defeated. But we needn't live in terror of him - for *greater is he who is in us than he who is in the world.* In the almighty power of God we need only to submit ourselves fully to God and resist the Devil and the Bible says he will flee from us. He must flee because he is a defeated foe. His power has been broken. In his redemptive work, the Lord Jesus Christ defeated the Devil.

2. A second enemy that was defeated by Christ was DEPRAVITY. The Lord Jesus Christ came as the spotless lamb of God to provide the final and perfect sacrifice for sin so that the human debt of sin could be finally taken care of in a permanent fashion. - READ ROMANS 8:1-4: *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.*

Now I am certain that the Devil was somewhat surprised at all that transpired on that fateful Passover weekend. We must remember that Satan is not omniscient - he does not know the future with absolute certainty. The Devil certainly has his plans. And he works hard to have his programs succeed. But he does not know all things. And that is the reason for his prophets not being 100% accurate with their predictions. In fact, when you see the error rate of false prophets, the Devil doesn't succeed in a very large proportion of his plans at all.

Satan was the one who directed the crucifixion of the Savior. It was Satan who filled the heart of Judas to betray Jesus Christ according to the Bible. It was Satan who fanned the flames of jealousy in the Jewish Religious leaders. It was Satan who stirred up the crowds to cry out for Barabbas instead of Christ to be released. And it was Satan who led the soldiers to roll that stone in front of the grave to keep the body of Jesus trapped inside. Satan was just doing what he had been doing since the announcement of God in Gen. 3:15. The Devil was trying to stop the seed of the woman who was going to crush his head. This was not his first attempt:

*He had tried to stop the seed of the woman by inciting Cain to kill Abel. God had just raised up another line thru Seth.

*He had tried to pervert the entire world with the sons of God intermarrying with the daughters of men. God had just raised up Noah, a righteous man.

*He had tried to stamp out the godly line of Abraham many times.

-thru the Egyptians enslaving the Israelites

-thru the wicked Queen Athaliah trying to kill off all of David's seed and succeeding to the point where only 1 was spared - a baby named Joash.

-thru Nebuchadnezzar exiling the Jews into Captivity

-thru Haman trying to annihilate the Jews during the time of Exile.

-thru Herod trying to kill all the baby boys born around Bethlehem

*But the Devil had failed at every turn - God had preserved his promised seed.

*But now, Satan must have thought that victory was his. Else why would he have incited this crucifixion? He certainly wouldn't have filled the heart of Judas and the religious leaders and the crowds and the Romans if he thought he was going to be defeated by his efforts. No, the Devil must have felt that he had finally won the victory. He must have agreed with the disciples that Christ had come to set up an earthly kingdom. And now he was thwarting God's plans. How smug he must have felt as Jesus apparently lifeless body lay in the tomb.

*Imagine his shock and surprise when he realized too late that God's plan was to offer his one and only son as a sin offering to finally and completely pay for sins.

*How did God do that? In a most unusual way. God the Father first heaped upon his son all of the sins of humanity. Listen to these words of the prophet, Isaiah. *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Is. 53:6.*

*But God the Father did even more than this. He not only placed all of the sins of the world upon his beloved son, but he then allowed his son to become sin itself upon the cross of Calvary. Listen to the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 5:21. *God made the Lord Jesus Christ who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

*Now do you see what happened on the cross of Calvary with regards to our sins? We can't explain fully how this could happen. But we do know of the process because God tells us about it in His word. God the Father first heaped all of our sins upon Christ - every one of them. And then he allowed those sins to eat up Christ so that he actually became sin for us. But the glorious truth was that when Christ died, all of those sins died with him. He literally became the perfect sin sacrifice. Jesus Christ, as the perfect antitype of the O.T. scapegoat, became sin for us, and then put to death all of those sins in his own body, upon the tree. Therefore, all of our sins have been totally destroyed. They have been put to death once and for all. Sin is a defeated foe. We will never have to worry about the penalty of our sin for all eternity. We can have the absolute confidence that we will live in a sinless heaven for all eternity. All because the Lord Jesus Christ has conquered sin.

Yes, in his redemptive work, Jesus Christ defeated not only the Devil but he also defeated Depravity.

3. But there is a final enemy that the Lord Jesus Christ defeated – DEATH.

*Now we might have expected this, because death originally came into the world as the result of sin. After God created Adam, He told him not to eat of the forbidden fruit from the tree of the Knowledge of God and Evil, for in the day that he ate the fruit he would surely die. Adam ate - and Adam died just as God said that he would.

*The Apostle Paul would later write to the church at Rome: *The wages of sin is death. Rom. 6:23a.* And because he also wrote, *For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23),* we can understand the conclusion that the author of Hebrews comes to in Heb. 9:27 when he says, *It is the destiny of every man once to die and after this the judgment.* Listen to the summary that the Apostle Paul gives of man's seemingly hopeless condition in Romans 5:12, *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.*

*But then came the Lord Jesus Christ. He defeated the root cause of death - that is sin. And once sin became a defeated foe, it was only natural that death would then follow in defeat. Listen to the words that Paul writes in that great chapter explaining the resurrection of the body found in 1 Cor. 15.

*1 COR. 15:55-57: *Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Now because we are born with these earthly bodies that are burdened with a sinful nature, we must go through the process of physical death. For the wages of sin is death. But we now can have the glorious hope of living and reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all eternity outside of death's reach. For death is a defeated foe. And God has changed even physical death from the ugly, hopeless end that it once appeared to be to the glorious door through which we enter into our eternal state. The more we grow in our knowledge of God, the more we begin to look at death in the same way that the Apostle Paul viewed it. He told the church at Philippi that he was really torn because he knew that death was his pathway to perfect fellowship with God throughout all eternity. So he would stay on this earth and serve the Lord because he knew that this was God's will for his life. But he did not fear death. Rather he looked at death as his friend. He saw death as the last great adventure of life. He knew that death would be his gate to eternal life. Jesus Christ rose in victory over death from the grave and he has promised that all of his children will likewise be raised from their graves to glorified resurrected bodies.

*The Devil was convinced that he had finally thwarted God's plan of building his kingdom when those Roman Soldiers nailed the hands and feet of the Son of God to that wooden cross. He gloated smugly when the lifeless body of Jesus was inspected by the Roman soldier and then taken down and given to Joseph of Arimathea to be sealed in his tomb. But puffed up with overconfidence, God's enemy didn't realize that he was going down to final defeat. God once again in His almighty power and wisdom had taken that which appeared to be disastrous and turned it into eternal good.

For when the Lord Jesus Christ cried out in victory - Tetellistai - It is finished – and when Jesus Christ rose in victory from the grave,

*The devil was finally and completely defeated

*Depravity and all the sin of the human race was finally paid for in full

*And death was now a conquered foe.