

Easter Sunday
Colossians 2:20-3:4
Victory over Evil
God & Evil 3

Sermon

Hobart, Easter Sunday, April 24th, 2011

Launceston, May 1st, 2011

Matthew 28:1-20 Early on Sunday morning,^{*} as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to see the tomb.² Suddenly there was a great earthquake, because an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled aside the stone and sat on it.³ His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow.⁴ The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.

⁵ Then the angel spoke to the women. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.⁶ He isn’t here! He has been raised from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying.⁷ And now, go quickly and tell his disciples he has been raised from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember, I have told you.”

⁸ The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to find the disciples to give them the angel’s message.⁹ And as they went, Jesus met them. “Greetings!” he said. And they ran to him, held his feet, and worshiped him.¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there.”

¹¹ As the women were on their way into the city, some of the men who had been guarding the tomb went to the leading priests and told them what had happened.¹² A meeting of all the religious leaders was called, and they decided to bribe the soldiers.¹³ They told the soldiers, “You must say, ‘Jesus’ disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body.’¹⁴ If the governor hears about it, we’ll stand up for you and everything will be all right.”¹⁵ So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today.

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them still doubted!

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth.¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”²¹

^{*} *Matthew 28:1* Greek *After the Sabbath, on the first day of the week.*

¹ *Holy Bible : New Living Translation.* 1997, c1996 (electronic ed.) (Mt 28:1). Wheaton: Tyndale House.

Colossians 2:20-3:4

²⁰ You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the evil powers of this world. So why do you keep on following rules of the world, such as, ²¹ “Don’t handle, don’t eat, don’t touch.” ²² Such rules are mere human teaching about things that are gone as soon as we use them. ²³ These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, humility, and severe bodily discipline. But they have no effect when it comes to conquering a person’s evil thoughts and desires.

Living the New Life

3 Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits at God’s right hand in the place of honor and power. ² Let heaven fill your thoughts. Do not think only about things down here on earth. ³ For you died when Christ died, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ And when Christ, who is your* real life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

* *Colossians 3:4* Some manuscripts read *our*.

INTRODUCTION:

I. WELCOME TO OUR CELEBRATION OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE SON OF GOD

A. TODAY WE ARE GOING TO CONTINUE ON WITH THE STORY OF HOW GOD HAS DEALT WITH THE SINS, EVILS AND SUFFERING WE SEE ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND ALL THROUGH HISTORY

1. Tom Wright has suggested;

a) Too often we look at the huge problem of evil in the world, the question as to "how a good and powerful God can allow evil, and why hasn't he stopped it?" as a subject on its own

b) And we tend to see the question "why did Jesus have to die?" as another completely separate topic,

(1) seeing Jesus death in terms of personal forgiveness and reconciliation.

(2) and not connecting it to the question of God and evil

2. Today we are going to continue to look at how Jesus' death and resurrection are God's full answer to the problem of evil for all mankind, and the whole of creation

a) Overcoming our individual problems;

(1) our personal sins, our individual separation from God and the personal injustice and pain we suffer

b) But on a larger scale

(1) conquering the worldwide phenomenon of evil, suffering and injustice

c) We are going to see how God in Christ has not only saved us from sin and suffering,

(1) but also provides the hope and the means of living the new and better life God intended for the not only us, but the whole world, from the beginning

B. PRAYER

BODY:

II. GOD'S PLAN

A. WE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT

1. How God has continually shown how he is aware of, and is dealing with, and will finally, in the end, destroy evil;
2. What God has been doing to overcome evil and bring peace and harmony back to the earth, is not a simplistic matter
 - a) It isn't as so many think, a matter of a powerful supreme being simply intervening and instantly stopping all evil with a wave of his hand,
 - b) coming down and with a violent attack, wiping out all evil doers
 - (1) In the latter event, there would be none of us left
3. Tom Wright, "Evil and the Justice of God", talks about God's mysterious and long plan to restore all things
 - a) he shows how God's plan isn't one of destruction, but of restoration

This project is a matter of setting the existing creation to rights rather than scrapping it and doing something else instead. God decides, for that reason, to work through human beings as they are--even though their hearts think only of evil--and through Israel, even though from Abraham onward they make as many mistakes as they do acts of obedience.

Both in the grand narrative itself, and in many smaller moments within it, we observe pattern of divine action, to judge and punish evil and to set bounds upon it without destroying the responsibility and agency of human beings themselves; and also both to promise and to bring about new moments of grace, events which constitute new creation, however much they are themselves necessarily shot through with ambiguity.

This is not, I think, exactly the same as the "free-will" defence," beloved by some who try to explain or vindicate God) "God gave us free will, so it's all our fault"). It is more a "commitment to action" on God's part, coupled with the settled affirmation of creation as still basically good.

God cannot undo that good creation, even though it has gone wrong. He will therefore act from *within* the world he has created, affirming that world in its created otherness even as he is putting it to rights.²

4. Wright is correcting that misapprehension that

a) the world and material things are fundamentally bad in themselves

b) that the answer is to become purely spiritual, and avoid and rise above the created world and human life

(1) with the solution to everything being eventually escaping the earth to live in heaven

5. God made the world, and man, good

a) We have messed our lives and the creation up by living separately and contrary to God

b) Evil, pain, suffering and death are the result

B. IT IS CLEARLY IN THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS, HIS DEATH AND HIS RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION, THAT WE FIND THE ANSWER TO EVIL

1. and the means by which God himself, steps into his creation

a) and becomes one of us in order to deal with evil, and set the world right again

2. He becomes the 2nd Adam

a) He becomes the one prophesied to crush the serpent

3. He becomes the seed of Abraham through whom all nations will be blessed

4. He becomes the one Moses spoke about

5. He becomes the one prophesied to sit on David's throne and bring peace and prosperity to the earth

a) Peter spoke of this to the crowds at the first Pentecost

Acts 2:22-36

²² "People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus of Nazareth by doing wonderful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. ²³ But you followed God's prearranged plan. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to the cross and murdered him. ²⁴ However, God released him from the horrors of death

² N.T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, p. 73-74

and raised him back to life again, for death could not keep him in its grip.²⁵ King David said this about him:

'I know the Lord is always with me.

I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.

²⁶ No wonder my heart is filled with joy,

and my mouth shouts his praises!

My body rests in hope.

²⁷ For you will not leave my soul among the dead*

or allow your Holy One to rot in the grave.

²⁸ You have shown me the way of life,

and you will give me wonderful joy in your presence.*

²⁹ "Dear brothers, think about this! David wasn't referring to himself when he spoke these words I have quoted, for he died and was buried, and his tomb is still here among us.³⁰ But he was a prophet, and he knew God had promised with an oath that one of David's own descendants would sit on David's throne as the Messiah.³¹ David was looking into the future and predicting the Messiah's resurrection. He was saying that the Messiah would not be left among the dead and that his body would not rot in the grave.

³² "This prophecy was speaking of Jesus, whom God raised from the dead, and we all are witnesses of this.³³ Now he sits on the throne of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today.³⁴ For David himself never ascended into heaven, yet he said,

'The LORD said to my Lord,

Sit in honor at my right hand

³⁵ until I humble your enemies,

making them a footstool under your feet.*

³⁶ So let it be clearly known by everyone in Israel that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified to be both Lord and Messiah!"

* *Acts 2:27* Greek *in Hades*; also in 2:31.

* *Acts 2:25–28* Ps 16:8-11.

* *Acts 2:34–35* Ps 110:1.

6. Peter is telling them that Jesus is the solution to all our problems

a) Jesus is our victorious King

b) the one who has fully dealt with all that stands against us and life with God

(1) He is our loving ruler, and the one who will return to victoriously to make the whole earth his kingdom

7. He is also our superior High Priest, who has made the ultimate sacrifice and atonement

a) He fulfils all the law and the sacrifices by becoming himself, the ultimate and perfect sacrifice to cleanse us from all sin and guilt, once and for all people and for all time

b) As the High Priest, as the Passover Lamb, The Scapegoat,

(1) By pouring out his own blood as a liquid offering pleasing to God, he has brought us back into relationship with God

(2) and He has inaugurated the New Covenant

C. AS THE PROPHETS FORETOLD; GOD WAS GOING TO SEND ONE OF THEM, THE MESSIAH, TO DEAL FULLY AND COMPLETELY WITH SIN AND EVIL

1. To do what all of his servants, what Israel, had failed to do

2. As one of us, as Abraham's seed, an Israelite, as descendent of David, and the High Priest

3. Jesus took on Satan, and all hatred and sin and evil of the world, personal and national

a) He took on all the injustice, the violence, the pain and the suffering of Israel, and all of mankind, upon himself

b) He took on all that divides us from God, and from one another

c) He took all failed attempts at trying to be right and good, it and nailed it to the cross in victory

d) He took all attempts to find happiness and success through greed and egotism and abuses of power and wealth, all sin and anti-God anti-fellow man destructive behaviour,

(1) all pain and suffering and injustice and evil

e) and annihilated it all by taking it to the grave and leaving it there

D. AND TODAY WE CELEBRATE THAT VICTORY,

1. **the fact that God raised Jesus from the grave, giving him, and us, complete victory over all these things**
2. **including the final victory over death**
 - a) He was raised as one of us, ascended to the Father
 - b) Bringing us into the life of the Father, Son and Spirit, once and for all
 - c) Adopting us into his family
 - d) Making us once again his people

E. SO THE WAY TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS OF OUR PERSONAL LIVES

1. **The problems of personal sin and evil**
2. **The way to find forgiveness, to and overcome sin**
3. **The way to peace with God and our neighbour**
4. **Is not through our own efforts, or the solutions and philosophies, the rules and practices of the world around us**
5. **but through the loving help of the resurrected Jesus Christ**

I John 5:4-5

⁴ For every child of God defeats this evil world by trusting Christ to give the victory. ⁵ And the ones who win this battle against the world are the ones who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

Colossians 2:8-3:4

⁸ Don't let anyone lead you astray with empty philosophy and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the evil powers of this world,* and not from Christ. ⁹ For in Christ the fullness of God lives in a human body,* ¹⁰ and you are complete through your union with Christ. He is the Lord over every ruler and authority in the universe.

¹¹ When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure—the cutting away of your sinful nature. ¹² For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

* *Colossians 2:8* Or from the basic principles of this world; also in 2:20.

* *Colossians 2:9* Greek in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

¹³ You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins. ¹⁴ He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. ¹⁵ In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross of Christ.

¹⁶ So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new-moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. ¹⁷ For these rules were only shadows of the real thing, Christ himself. ¹⁸ Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on self-denial. And don't let anyone say you must worship angels, even though they say they have had visions about this. These people claim to be so humble, but their sinful minds have made them proud. ¹⁹ But they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For we are joined together in his body by his strong sinews, and we grow only as we get our nourishment and strength from God.

²⁰ You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the evil powers of this world. So why do you keep on following rules of the world, such as, ²¹ "Don't handle, don't eat, don't touch." ²² Such rules are mere human teaching about things that are gone as soon as we use them. ²³ These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, humility, and severe bodily discipline. But they have no effect when it comes to conquering a person's evil thoughts and desires.

Living the New Life

3 Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits at God's right hand in the place of honor and power. ² Let heaven fill your thoughts. Do not think only about things down here on earth. ³ For you died when Christ died, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ And when Christ, who is your* real life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

F. SO WE SEE THAT IN JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

- 1. The ultimate victory over evil, over everything that separates us from God, from peace and love; is WON for every individual**
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* *Colossians 3:4* Some manuscripts read *our*.

III. GOD WON THE VICTORY FOR ALL OF THE WORLD OVER ALL THE EVIL POWERS OF THE WORLD

A. THE ANSWER TO WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO DIE? LEADS TO THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTIONS ABOUT

1. how God deals with our individual suffering and sin
2. How he rescues and saves us from our own sins and restores us to relationship with him
3. But Jesus' death is also the victory over all the forces of evil, the solution to the damage and destruction brought about by the wider powers of injustice and destruction

B. ISRAEL WAS TO BE GOD'S LIGHT TO ALL THE WORLD

1. Through Abraham's seed all nations are to be blessed
2. Through the Messiah, all the wickedness of nations and powers is to be dealt with as well as those of the individual

C. GOD CHOOSES TO WIN THE VICTORY FOR ALL OF THE WORLD OVER ALL THE EVIL POWERS OF THE WORLD,

1. in and through his creation, not APART from it
2. to conquer evil and restore the world from within it, not outside of it
3. Because that was his plan from the beginning
4. To use mankind to dress and keep the earth, to make it as he intended it to be

D. JESUS DIED AS ONE OF US, FOR ALL OF US, FOR ALL OF CREATION

1. Wright;

The story of Gethsemane and of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth present themselves in the New Testament as the strange, dark conclusion to the story of what God does about evil, of what happens to God's justice when it takes human flesh, when it gets its feet muddy in the garden and its hands bloody on the cross. The multiple ambiguities of God's actions in the world come together in the story of Jesus.³

³ Wright, p.74

E. THE WHOLE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTED TO THIS VICTORY

1. Jesus told his disciples how all the scripture spoke of him
2. We can only truly understand what Jesus has done in the light of the OT
 - a) and we can only understand the OT in the light of Jesus

F. AT THE LAST SUPPER/PASSOVER

1. Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom was at hand
2. Showed how in the bread and wine, and how in his body, and his death God's plan would be fulfilled
 - a) He then went out to await the powers of evil in the Garden of Gethsemane
 - b) He knelt and prayed that the cup pass from him, but that nevertheless that God's will be done
3. Jesus became the scapegoat for everyone
 - a) For the muddled, lost and sinful people
 - b) and the wicked and powerful perpetrators of evil
4. The Jews and Romans took Jesus
 - a) And he let them do their worst
 - (1) he was the victim of all the power games of rulers and powerbrokers
 - (2) **both secular and religious**
 - (3) He let them manipulate and lie and scheme and unjustly convict and condemn him
 - (4) and take him away and crucify him
5. At noon darkness came over the land until 3pm
 - a) and Jesus died
6. Hebrews tells us why he died, and what his death accomplished

Hebrews 2:14-15

¹⁴ Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—Jesus also became flesh and blood by being born in human form. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the Devil, who had the power of death. ¹⁵ Only in this way could he deliver those who have lived all their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.

G. JESUS DIED, BECAUSE:

1. **It was always God's plan to overcome the forces of darkness and evil, the prince of the power of the air, and the wickedness of nations and other powerful entities**
2. **Jesus died, because God overcomes evil with good**
3. **Jesus died because God chooses to use his people as his agents to bring mankind back into relationship with him**
 - a) **To fulfil his plan to never to be without us in his life and creation**
4. **So as we failed over and over to be his agents, God the Son came himself**
 - a) **to be one of us**
 - b) **and as one of us to be God's agent to overcome evil with good**
 - c) **and as one of us, to bring us all and all of creation out from under the oppression and destruction of the forces of evil and back into relationship with him**
5. **Thomas Torrance sums this up as well as anyone;**

We must think of the Son of God as engaging with the forces of darkness immediately he became incarnate, for the whole of his life was a redemptive operation in our human nature where the forces of evil have entrenched themselves and seek to enslave us. He was made one of us in order to submit himself to those forces of evil, in order to both bear and vanquish them in his own human existence and vicariously provide for us a way of saving obedience and communion with the Father.⁴

IV. VICTORY OVER EVIL

A. THE VICTORY OVER EVIL BOTH IN THE WORLD, AND IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES; IS NOT ALL SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE

1. **it has already taken place at the Cross**
2. **it was through Jesus, death, resurrection and ascension that Jesus became appointed the Great High Priest, the King of Kings, the supreme judge and authority over the earth**

⁴ T.F.Torrance, *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ*, edited by Robert Walker, 2009, p.209-10

B. AND THROUGH OUR UNION WITH CHRIST, HIS VICTORY IS THERE FOR US IN OUR LIVES TODAY

Colossians 2:8-15

⁸ Don't let anyone lead you astray with empty philosophy and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the evil powers of this world,* and not from Christ. ⁹ For in Christ the fullness of God lives in a human body,* ¹⁰ and you are complete through your union with Christ. He is the Lord over every ruler and authority in the universe.

¹¹ When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure—the cutting away of your sinful nature. ¹² For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

¹³ You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins. ¹⁴ He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. ¹⁵ In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross of Christ.

- a) The way to victory over sin and evil is through Christ and the mighty power of God, not our own efforts, religious or otherwise
- b) We are freed from sin and evil to share in Jesus life of love and holiness today
- c) We have the privilege of participating in what God has planned for all of creation from the beginning

C. GOD'S WONDERFUL PLAN TO OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD, THROUGH US, WILL NEVER BE THWARTED

- 1. The resurrection and ascension guarantee that
 - a) The victory is already won, there will be no going back
 - b) There is nothing that can stand in the way of God's mission of love to free us from evil and bring us back to him

Romans 8:31-39

Nothing Can Separate Us from God's Love

* *Colossians 2:8* Or from the basic principles of this world; also in 2:20.

* *Colossians 2:9* Greek in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

³¹ What can we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? ³² Since God did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't God, who gave us Christ, also give us everything else?

³³ Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? Will God? No! He is the one who has given us right standing with himself. ³⁴ Who then will condemn us? Will Christ Jesus? No, for he is the one who died for us and was raised to life for us and is sitting at the place of highest honor next to God, pleading for us.

³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or are hungry or cold or in danger or threatened with death? ³⁶ (Even the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") ³⁷ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels can't, and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away. ³⁹ Whether we are high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. Torrance;

...in the resurrection God's Yes is finalised in and through the No of his resistance to all corruption, evil and death.

It is in the resurrection, then, that the ultimate content and purpose of atonement and reconciliation come to fruition and to view--in the recreation of humanity in communion with God.⁵

3. Jurgen Moltmann talks about the future effects of Jesus' resurrection in his book "Sun of Righteousness, Arise!" p.55

his resurrection has a meaning for the future--for Israel, for the nations, for humanity, for the whole suffering creation.

Jesus' death on the cross was solitary, and exclusively his death, but his raising from the dead is inclusive, open to the world, and embraces the universe, an event not merely human and historical but cosmic too; the beginning of the new creation of all things.

* *Romans 8:36* Ps 44:22.

⁵ Torrance, p.238

It attacked the elemental force 'the powers of this world'; the power of sin, the inescapability of death, and the hopelessness of hell. ...We already sense this certainty of victory in Paul's chapter about the resurrection, I Corinthians 15.⁶

As the coming judge of the victims and perpetrators of sin, the risen Christ will bear the suffering of the one and the burden of the other, so as to bring both out of the rule of darkness into the light of God's kingdom.⁷

D. RETURNING KING AND HIGH PRIEST

- 1. As High Priest he has dealt with our personal sins, and restored our relationship with God**
- 2. As the King on David's throne, he has won the victory over all the evil forces of the world**
 - a) At his second coming he will come in that authority and power, as High Priest and King, to apply that atonement and victory, to fully redeem the earth, and rule over all people and places in love and mercy

3. TF Torrance;

With the resurrection, the priestly work of Christ merges with his kingly work. The kingdom has already drawn near and had been breaking in with the birth and ministry of Jesus, but with his crucifixion Christ begins to assume his kingly functions, and it is as the mighty king that he rises again from the dead. It is when he ascends to the throne of God that he is enthroned as king and the kingdom of Christ is fully inaugurated. It is as such that he will come again.⁸

I Corinthians 15:20-28

²⁰ But the fact is that Christ has been raised from the dead. He has become the first of a great harvest of those who will be raised to life again.

²¹ So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, Adam, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man, Christ. ²² Everyone dies because all of us are related to Adam, the first man. But all who are related to Christ, the other man, will be given new life. ²³ But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised first; then when Christ comes back, all his people will be raised.

⁶ Jurgen Moltmann, "Sun of Righteousness, Arise!" p.55

⁷ Moltmann, p.137

⁸ T.F.Torrance, Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ, edited by Robert Walker, 2009, p.201

²⁴ After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having put down all enemies of every kind. [Greek *every ruler and every authority and power.*] ²⁵ For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. ²⁶ And the last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For the Scriptures say, "God has given him authority over all things."* (Of course, when it says "authority over all things," it does not include God himself, who gave Christ his authority.) ²⁸ Then, when he has conquered all things, the Son will present himself to God, so that God, who gave his Son authority over all things, will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere.

CONCLUSION:

E. THE MESSAGE OF EASTER IS A MESSAGE OF VICTORY

1. a message of reassurance and hope
 - a) for each of us as individuals, and for the whole world
 - b) now and at Jesus' return
2. The resurrection of Jesus pronounces boldly and unequivocally, right in the midst of the powers and evil forces of the world
 - a) That sin, evil and death cannot overcome or defeat God
3. The resurrection is our guarantee that in Christ, God has rescued us from our own sins and evil deeds
 - a) and that he will not let injustice and suffering continue

F. JESUS' RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION GIVES US THE HOPE AND THE MEANS OF LIVING THE NEW AND BETTER LIFE GOD INTENDED FROM THE BEGINNING

1. not only for us, but the whole world

G. PRAYER

* *1 Corinthians 15:24* Greek *every ruler and every authority and power.*

* *1 Corinthians 15:27* Ps 8:6.

NOTES:

Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo, also pondered the nature of evil. In his City of God, and elsewhere, he maintained that since God has created all things "good" (Genesis 1:31), evil cannot have an independent existence. Evil is the absence of good, as darkness is the absence of light. Evil, then, is the absence of good; it is not the positive presence of something. This being the case, said Augustine, evil cannot be the efficient cause of sin; it is a deficient cause in the creature. Evil, being the absence of good, or the presence of a lesser good, is the result of the creature's turning away from the commands of God to a lesser good: the will of the creature. Herein is the essence of evil: It is the creature, not God, who is the creator of sin.⁹

⁹ W. Gary Crompton, A Biblical Theodicy, <http://www.leaderu.com/theology/theodicy.html#text2>