



Question: "What does it mean that Jesus Christ conquered death?"

Answer: Most obviously, the statement that Christ has conquered death refers to His resurrection. He who was dead is now alive (see Revelation 1:18). These three words—Christ conquered death—define the most important difference between Christianity and all other religions. No other religious leader ever predicted his own death and resurrection (Matthew 16:21), based his claims about himself and his teaching on that prediction (John 2:18–22; Matthew 27:40), and then kept that promise (Luke 24:6).

Jesus' resurrection marks the first time in history that someone rose from the dead *never to die again*. Others who were raised from the dead eventually died a second time (see 1 Kings 17:17–24; 2 Kings 4:32–37; Mark 5:39–42; John 11:38–44). Jesus' resurrection was a true and total defeat of death. As the Holy Son of God, Jesus overcame death once and for all, as Peter explained: "It was impossible for death to keep its hold on him" (Acts 2:24). The triumphant, risen Christ said, "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). Keys are a symbol of authority. Jesus is sovereign over death. Christ's conquest of death was permanent and eternal.

Christ conquered death because He was sinless. The curse upon mankind in the Garden of Eden, brought about by their sin, was plainly stated: "You will certainly die" (Genesis 2:17). Ever since, we have seen the truth of Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death." But Jesus Christ had no sin (1 Peter 2:22); therefore, death had no power over Him. Jesus' death was a voluntary sacrifice for *our* sin, and, given His sinless perfection, His resurrection logically followed. "I lay down my life," Jesus said, "only to take it up again" (John 10:17).

The fact that Christ has conquered death has eternal consequences for us. The good news—the gospel—is grounded in Christ's victory over death. Without the resurrection, there is no gospel; indeed, there is no hope for us at all: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). But Christ *has* risen, and, as fellow conquerors with Him, Christians "have passed from death to life" (1 John 3:14). Christ "has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10).

The fact that Christ has conquered death means that believers have also been granted victory over death. We are “more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37). Christ is “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20), which means that Jesus’ resurrection is the first of many: believers who have “fallen asleep” (died) will be likewise resurrected. Jesus promised His followers, “Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19).

The fact that Christ has conquered death is a fulfillment of prophecy. The psalmist predicted the Messiah would overcome death: “You will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay” (Psalm 16:10). Other prophets filled God’s people with the hope that the Lord would one day abolish death: “He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces” (Isaiah 25:8), and “I will deliver this people from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction?” (Hosea 13:14; cf. 1 Corinthians 15:54–55).

Death is the devil’s most powerful, terrifying weapon against us. At the cross, Christ defeated Satan on behalf of us helpless sinners: “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out” (John 12:31; cf. Colossians 2:15). With the empty tomb, Christ destroyed the devil’s most powerful weapon, death. Satan, our accuser, is now powerless to condemn Christians. We will not share his fate (Revelation 12:9–11; 20:10, 14).

When Christ conquered death for us, He removed the “sting of death,” sin (1 Corinthians 15:56)—that is, we will not be judged by God according to our sins; rather, we will stand before God robed in Christ’s own perfect righteousness. That is why believers in Christ “will not be hurt at all by the second death” (Revelation 2:11), and “the second death has no power over them” (Revelation 20:6). Christ has received our death penalty for sin and, through His death, has conquered death (Revelation 20:14).

Believers “are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37). What can separate us from the love of God in Christ? “Neither death nor life” (verse 38). Christ has conquered death, and believers stand firm on Jesus’ words: “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies. And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die” (John 11:25–26, BSB).

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