



Cheating Death

by

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How do we cheat death and live forever? That's one of the primary questions I asked in the book, ["A History of Man's Quest for Immortality"](#) (Fifth Estate Publishing, 2007). The world has searched for a cure to death for thousands of years. The human race has tried every possible method and means to discover the sure way out of the miserable end everyone faces – death. It's really quite simple – but extremely hard to do.

Let's start at the beginning.

The first words of the Bible tell us what the entire Bible will teach us: "In the beginning God..." The Bible is about God: Who He is and what He does. The Bible is God's Self-Revelation. He revealed Himself to the authors of the Bible so they would know Him and pass along the revelation to the world.

"And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

2 Peter 1:19-21

When we study the Bible we are reading the message God has for us. No one made it up – God "inspired" it: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may

be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

The Greek word for “inspiration” is *theopneustos*. It is made up of *theos* (God) and *pneustos* (from *pnein*), “to breathe.” God was involved in every part of the writing of the Bible. Every Word has His holy “breath prints” all over it: “... this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David ...” (Acts 1:16)

Theologian Henry Thiessen wrote, “The Holy Spirit so guided and superintended the writers of the sacred text, making use of their own unique personalities, that they wrote all that he wanted them to write, without excess or error.” (Lectures in Systematic Theology, William B. Eerdman’s)

God reveals Himself through the names used for Him in the Bible. The English word “God” comes from the Hebrew words *elohim*, *elyon*, *el*, *shadday*, *yahweh* ... and the Greek word *theos*. The Bible student will find the name of God listed almost four-thousand times in the Scriptures. The most used name is *elohim*. It’s first usage is Gen. 1:1, “In the beginning God...” The next most used name is *yahweh*. It is often translated “Lord.” The Bible student will find God as Lord listed more than 65-hundred times in the Scriptures. It is almost always the word *yahweh* (Jehovah).

Elohim implies strength. God is strong! The Bible says God is “Almighty” (Gen. 17:1; Rev. 4:8). All things are possible for Him (Matt.

19:26). Nothing is too difficult for Him (Jer. 32:17). The word is also plural in number.

Jehovah is the holiest of God's names. Jews in ancient Israel would not pronounce it. They would substitute other words for it—including *Adonai*. They would write *YHWH*, but read *Adonai*. Some renderings of the meaning of *Yahweh* are "He causes to be" and "O He!" The name is unique to Israel.

Other names from *Jehovah* are: *Jehovah-Jireh* (*Jehovah will provide*), *Jehovah-Nisi* (*Jehovah my banner*), *Jehovah-Shalom* (*Jehovah my peace*), and *Jehovah-Shammah* (*Jehovah is there*).

Jehovah expresses the eternality and immutability of God's nature. It also speaks to the faithfulness of God to all His purposes and promises.

"God is infinite in relation to time. He is without beginning or end, he is free from all succession of time, and he is the cause of time."
(Thiessen, Lectures)

God was "In the beginning," but He had no beginning. He always was – the great I AM. Here are some examples of how God revealed this truth to the world: "Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God." (Gen. 21:33) "Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God." (Psalm 90:2) "... He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of

lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.” (1 Tim. 6:15-16)

In addition to being infinite in relation to time, God is also infinite in relation to space. “He is not limited or circumscribed by space; on the contrary, all finite space is dependent upon him.” (Thiessen, Lectures) “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!” (1 Kings 8:27) “The LORD is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens.” (Psalm 113:4 ... also read Psalm 139:7-12) “Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?’ says the LORD; ‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’ says the LORD.” (Jer. 23:24 ... also read Acts 17:24-28)

We learn more about God from the Greek names for Him. The word *theos* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew words *Elohim* and *Jehovah*. The primary Greek word for “Lord” is *kurios*. It signifies one who has power or authority. It can also be translated “master” or “owner.” Writers of the New Testament used the name *kurios* for God and Jesus Christ. The reason for that is simple: Jesus Christ is God!

In addition to the names “God” and “Lord,” He reveals Himself to us as “Lord God,” “God Most High,” “The Sovereign Lord,” “God Almighty,” “The Eternal God,” “The God of Bethel,” “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” “I AM Who I Am,” “The God of Israel,” “God, the Rock,” “The Lord, the God of heaven,” “The Mighty One, God the Lord,” “God the King,” “The Holy One of Israel,” and “The Mighty One

of Israel.”

The study of the meanings in each of these names would take a student months to complete. The study would reveal that God is **holy, eternal, infinite, immortal, invisible, all-knowing, everywhere present, all-powerful, unchanging, incomparable, righteous, perfect, awesome and majestic, and gracious**. You will also learn that God is spirit.

And back in the beginning – we learn that God is the Creator of all we see: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) God’s creation is also His revelation of His greatness and power. When we consider the size of the “heavens” (the universe), we begin to comprehend just how great is our God!

“O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth,
Who have set Your glory above the heavens! ... When I
consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon
and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You
are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?”
Psalm 8:1, 3

“The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament
shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night
unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor
language Where their voice is not heard.” Psalm 19:1-3

“Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth; Oh, sing praises to the
Lord, Selah To Him who rides on the heaven of

heavens, which were of old! Indeed, He sends out His voice, a mighty voice. Ascribe strength to God; His excellence is over Israel, And His strength is in the clouds.” Psalm 68:32-34

The nature of God (Who He is) has a direct bearing on the works of God (What He does). God is true to His character because He is Self-existent. He depends on no one. Because God is immense He cannot be contained. Because God is eternal, He is not limited by time. Because God is all-powerful, He cannot lose. Because God is All-knowing, He knows Himself and all other things perfectly from all eternity. Because God is present everywhere at once He sees everything and is involved in everything. Because God does not change, He is reliable. We can believe in Him and trust Him without question, concern or fear. We know from this that what God does will always be holy, righteous, just, good, true, loving, kind, merciful, and gracious. What a comfort it is to know these truths!

Now that we know Who God is and that everything He does is right, let's look again at our question – how can we cheat death and live forever?

God's first work (action) was to choose us in Christ. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which

He made us accepted in the Beloved.” (Eph. 1:3-6) Something important to see here is that God blessed us with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.” He created all things for us. But what we see in Ephesians 1 is that God did something **before** the beginning – before He created the heavens and the earth: He **blessed** us and **chose** us. The blessing came first, then the choice.

The opportunity for us to “cheat death” began with God’s **blessing** and **choosing**. The Greek word for “choose” is *exelaxato*. It is the first aorist middle of *eklego*, “to pick out.” The middle voice means the subject of the verb (He–God) acted in His own interest — “to pick or choose out for one’s self.” This word is also used when presenting God’s choice of Israel from all nations for the purpose of bringing salvation to the world. The object of such choice is for a certain object or goal. The stated purpose for this choice is that Christians would be “holy and blameless in His sight.” God chose us for Himself in a past time. The aorist tense in the Greek is like a snapshot. We can pick it up, look at it, and enjoy the memory.

Paul gives us a reference time for God’s action of choosing us. It was “before the creation of the world” – *pro kataboles kosmon*. *Kataboles*, “creation,” is a compound word: *kata*, “down,” and *boles*, “to throw.” It describes the act of the Almighty God **throwing down** the world. The world did not exist prior to God’s creating it. The world began in space and time. God was above space and before time. *Kosmon*, “world,” means “order, arrangement, ornament, adornment.” What God created was beautiful and perfect in its simplicity and complexity.

What we see here is a splendid and wonderful plan. Before God created the world, **He thought about us**. He considered us. He made everything, designed everything with us in mind. As we see in the first chapter of Ephesians, God chose us in Christ, He predestined us, He redeemed us, He made known to us the mystery of His will, and He included us. This speaks strongly of a very special plan.

Ephesians 1:11 says it well: “In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.” The word “chosen” is *eklerothemen*. It translates “we were chosen as inheritance.” It is first person, plural, aorist, indicative. God chose us in the past (before the creation of the world). It comes from the word *kleres* and means “to assign by lot.” The ancients would place the names of people on a pebble, a potsherd or piece of wood and then place it into a vase. They would shake the vase until the object fell out. The first person whose name or “lot” fell on the ground was chosen. In this case, Christians were the ones chosen as an inheritance. Think about that! Do you realize how special you are to God?

Paul uses the word again in Col. 1:12 (*klerou ton hagion en to photi*) — “lot of the saints in the light.” The entire verse reads, “giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.” God wanted to give something special to a group of people. That something is an inheritance. The people are

the saints (*hagion*), “holy ones, those separated for holy use.” What God wanted to give His chosen ones was a special relationship with Himself. That is our inheritance — a deep and satisfying eternal relationship with God. No other inheritance can compare with what God has given us.

We find God’s desire for relationship with humans throughout the Bible. It began when He created man “in his own image.” When the first man sinned against God and broke the relationship, God instituted a path back to the relationship. He gave His Son Jesus Christ as the payment for the sins of mankind. Through Christ we can get back to God!

One of the best examples of God’s desire for relationship with mankind and His merciful provision is found in John 14. Jesus is speaking to His disciples: “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” Jesus continued that theme a few verses later: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jesus is the only way back to God!

Another insight to God’s desire for relationship is what He calls those who love and follow Him. Jewish followers are called “children, a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, the flock of God, and the wife of the Lamb.” Gentile and

Jewish followers are called **children, heirs, and joint heirs** (Romans 8:16-17 — “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”), **fellow workers, God’s field, and God’s building** (1 Corinthians 3:9 — “For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.”), the **temple of God** (1 Corinthians 3:16 — “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”), **the church, the body of Christ** (Ephesians 1:22-23 — “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”), a **holy temple, dwelling place of God** (Ephesians 2:21-22 — “in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”)

Let’s pause right here. Think about who you are – who you really are. We are sinners – saved by Grace. That’s who we are. Now, think about what God has done for us sinners. He has saved us from the penalty of our sins. He has placed His Holy Spirit in us. He has made us His children, heirs and joint heirs with Christ. We are fellow workers – we work with God. We are God’s field, God’s building, His church, the body of Christ. We are a holy temple, the dwelling place of the Almighty God. Think about who you are – who you really are – in Christ.

Chief among examples of God's desire for human relationship is His love for the world. Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) Think about that for a minute. The great God of Heaven, Who created this world and all that is in it, loved it so much that He gave His One and Only Son to die for sin, so that anyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. That's amazing in light of how the human race has treated God from the first man to the present man. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." (John 15:13) He said it – and did it.

God's love for the world led to His mercy for people. David, King of Israel, knew about God's love. He wrote, "But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation." (Psalm 13:5) Nehemiah, leader of Israel, wrote, "They refused to obey, And they were not mindful of Your wonders That You did among them. But they hardened their necks, And in their rebellion They appointed a leader To return to their bondage. But You are God, Ready to pardon, Gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, Abundant in kindness, And did not forsake them." (Neh. 9:17) The Queen of Sheba told Solomon, King of Israel, that he served a God who had "loved Israel forever" (1 Kings 10:9). In Psalm 136, the people responded 26 times that God's love and mercy "endures forever."

God's love for humans has never been passive. His love is active, powerful and life-changing! Paul the Apostle wrote, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still

sinner, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8) He taught that Christ’s love “passes knowledge” (Eph. 3:19). It is a love of self-sacrifice — “And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma ... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her ... ” (Eph. 5:2, 25)

Cheating death is not about just living longer – it is about living better and forever. It is about reaching your full potential in Christ. It is about returning to the truth and purpose of your creation. God created us to love us. He made us to be with Him forever. God wants a personal relationship of love with us. Everything else follows that goal. If we have a close and abiding relationship with God, we will have the spiritual, mental and physical support for all other relationships and challenges of life.

“O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 15:55-58

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