

More Than Talk

PROGRAM 4 - THE UNCANCELLABLE APPOINTMENT

From the time he appeared, he had the strut of the unbeatable bully. After all, to this day no one can cancel our appointment with Dr. Death. Even that name—death—frightens and terrifies the strongest, smartest and richest of men. But far worse than the moment of death was—and is—the fear of that moment. The fear of death. Until you meet personally the One who beat up the bully and says He wants to be on your side. It's all just ahead on More Than Talk. I'm Frank Eiklor. Today, The Uncancellable Appointment.

THE UNCANCELLABLE APPOINTMENT - CHAPTER 1 (The Choosing Of Death)

“When I introduce myself, you may not want to listen to me. Many have tried to ignore me and regretted it. You see, my name is Death. I haven't always been, and I won't always be. You humans are very limited, so let me just say I am part of a mystery. You might call it what Paul did—the ‘mystery of iniquity’.

“My time to operate is limited because God hates me. In fact, the Creator is going to cast hell and me—death—into the lake of fire. Old James got it right when he exposed the one who conceived me—Sin. And sin leads right to the door of what you might call my father—the devil. He was in love with himself. So much so that he was determined to tell his Creator that he wanted to assume that title and power that goes with being God. Talk about ‘free will!’ He got an army of those mighty angels to follow him—but how do you stand a chance against the one who has always existed from eternity to eternity!? Well, the adversary, satan, got his lights punched out and was kicked out of heaven. He still likes to transform himself into an angel of light to deceive you humans.

“Anyway, he was cast out to a planet called earth—and that's where you and I come in. Your first parents had it all. Even garden walks with God. He didn't want robots, so He gave that couple what Lucifer the devil had—the power to choose good or evil—free will. All they had to do was love God by obeying Him. They had it all with just one condition: ‘But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shalt not eat of it: for in the day you eat thereof—you shall surely die’.

Well, that little lady got into a brief debate with the father of lies—and you know who won! Once they used free will to break God's law, sin let me go to work. I, death, killed them that day, but they didn't know it. Their undefiled fellowship with God was no more. They knew they were naked and hid from Him. But soon enough, they learned how terrible and powerful I am. If you could have only seen those first parents when they learned their son had been murdered—by his own brother! You see, they had never known of anything ‘dead’. They called his name in anguish and wept bitterly—but Abel had already turned cold and stiff.

“Yes, Adam and Eve chose me—death. That’s how it works. The God of truth gives free will to you humans. The father of lies tempts you to choose and caress sin. Sin turns me, death, loose to kill you spiritually and, finally, physically. We three, Satan, sin and death, have a terrible day of judgment coming. God hates us. The devil has a short time, and knows it. Sin has a sting—that’s me, death—that is coming to a crashing end. But right now, we’re still free to work—on you humans. Most of you are scared to death of me. Imagine! Scared to death of death! But I’ll leave that weapon, ‘the fear of death’ for our next visit. I’ll just leave you now with the word ‘choose’. We three, Satan, sin and death hope you will choose us because we have come to steal, kill and destroy. Besides, we know that if you choose God and His holy Son, Jesus, you will be forever separated from us and the lake of fire. And since misery loves company, well, you know...”

THE UNCANCELLABLE APPOINTMENT - CHAPTER 2 **(The Fear of Death)**

“It’s me again—Death. I’m back! You would be smart not to ignore me. But maybe I wish you would—ignore me, that is. Because if I have to go through with these five visits with you, I know I’m going to be exposed and my days of tormenting you will be over. You see, I can’t help but brag about my power to fill you with fear, but I’ll also admit where I, Death, am scared to death.

“Even my name frightens you, doesn’t it? You’re not alone. I terrify kings. Presidents, scientists, philosophers, dictators: the wealthiest of men. But I play no favorites. I also torment those the world calls weak, poor and simple. In fact, you humans fear me so much that many of you die 10,000 times in your mind before I finally end your lives. The book that spells my doom—you know, the Bible—exposes how my boss and I operate. I know, some of you don’t even believe in the devil. How foolish! But keep on being fooled. Satan will keep on tempting. Men will keep on sinning. And I, Death, will keep on killing.

“But even devils can recognize the truth once in a while. They know there is only one God—and they are terrified. And our leader, Satan, knows he only has a short time, so he is super angry with the Creator. And since I’m linked to Satan, my days are also numbered. You see, before God sent His holy Son Jesus into the world, we had little opposition. Other than those trouble-making prophets who spoke of the coming Savior of men, Satan, sin and I felt free to scare the hell into people.

“Talk about fear! We had most everyone living their whole lives in fear of me—death. Oh there were some who defied me—like Daniel and those three characters whose names I won’t repeat. I remember ordering those lions to devour Daniel, but instead God sent His angels and shut their mouths. Man oh man, have you ever seen one of those terrifying angels?! It’s enough to scare the death out of me! And those other three? They told a king they would welcome me—death—rather than deny their Creator. Imagine! It really burned me up to see them enjoying the flames that couldn’t touch them or that fourth one that joined them—you know, the Son of God.

“But mostly, the devil and I, death, had our way with you humans. Once Abel became food for worms, men shivered at the thought of me. I remember Methuselah. I couldn’t touch him for 969 years. But I could keep him running scared through the fear of death. Then the Holy God reduced those life spans all the way to 120 years and then to 70 or 80. Well, the shorter the life span, the greater the fear factor. And you know what that Book that I don’t like says: that through fear of death you humans were all your lifetime subject to slavery. We thought we owned you.

“Then He came. Jesus. How could Satan, sin and I know the full mystery in the mind of the one who is our Creator and future executioner—God? How could we know that by becoming weak flesh and dying on that cross He would destroy my boss the devil, break our prisons in pieces and rescue those who were lifetime slaves to their fear of me?! But that is for another visit. Enough for now is to leave you with what my devilish boss and I still hope to do to you. We want you to fear us who can kill your body but can’t touch your soul. We want death to stay a mystery that torments you with fear rather than have you experience that other mystery—you know, Christ in you, the hope of glory.

“Somehow I think I may regret having these discussions with you. Maybe I should have just told you about the father of lies, my boss. For if you ever encounter the One who calls Himself ‘the truth’, my days of tormenting you with the fear of death will be over. Because once you know the truth, the truth will set...well, you know the rest. And that won’t set too well with the boss and I.”

THE UNCANCELLABLE APPOINTMENT - CHAPTER 3 (The Mystery of Death)

“From the time I placed my chill of death over Abel’s body, you humans have feared me. You have good reason to. My name is death—and to most of you I remain a terrible mystery. You know you have to die, but in most cases, you don’t know when. And even many with terminal diseases fear my approaching footsteps

“But I will admit a few things to you if you have a mind to listen. You think the enemy of your great God is my ruler. Even the Satan—God’s adversary—knows better. He knows our time to operate is so brief in comparison to eternity. And I, death, know that when the devil meets his final end, I go with him. That’s not a pleasant thought!

“Right now, though, I’m very busy. As the great God of life says, ‘It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment. You humans make all kinds of appointments you can break. But the appointment you have with me—Death—can’t be broken.

“So I’ll admit something else. I often feel like I’m in a tug of war. The father of lies uses me for his purposes. And the great God of truth uses me to do His will. It’s like this—Satan succeeds in using me to torment people who don’t know God. He teases them with that age old question Job once asked, ‘If a man die, will he live again?’ And the devil answers ‘Of course not! When

you're dead, you're dead. Food for worms.' He even gets away with telling you humans another lie that you repeat to anyone who tries to tell you that there is life after death. You know, the old line that 'No one ever came back from the dead to tell us different'.

"Of course, someone did come back from the dead. You know who—the one I thought I owned for three days until that resurrection morning when the Son of God rendered Satan impotent and me helpless. We in the spirit world saw it all because He actually used us to destroy us. Talk about triumph! Every evil principality and power knew their authority couldn't last. And Satan, sin and I, death, were used like pawns in the hand of the all-wise God. How could we know that He would use the devil's hate to demonstrate His own redemptive love for you humans? Or that He would take sin by the throat by taking on Himself the sins of every man that we had condemned as lost and worthy of hell? Or that He would expose me—death—as only a temporary power that the great God would use for His own purposes?

"I mean, to most of you humans I, death, am ugly. Fearful. Final. You see the physical evidence after I strike. There's nothing beautiful about a corpse—man, animal or whatever, is there? Like James said, '...the body without the spirit is dead.' That's why the adversary tries to make humans concentrate on the word 'body' but not on that other word 'spirit'. That way we can keep your mind on only the physical evidence—just corpses that die, decay and disappear. And as long as Satan can keep me—death—a mystery, we can keep you tormented through fear of your future appointment with me!

"But we—Satan, sin and I have a problem. A big one! Once our conqueror, Jesus, opens your eyes to the light of His resurrection and power, the mystery part of me is finished. That's when the believer in Jesus begins to discover that Satan's power is only delegated and limited by the sovereign Creator. And when the one who holds all power in heaven and earth is invited to come into your lives as the Savior, those who love Jesus lose their fear of me. Some even welcome me. Me! Death! They see me as only a door that leads to their Father's house. And they know that in the great God's sight, their death is even precious because He gets to lavish His love on them forever.

"That's why the one who has been given delegated power to use me in his 'steal, kill and destroy' rage is so desperate to keep you in his darkness. The mystery of me—death—will no longer hold your attention. How can it when the one who calls Himself the light of the world captures your focus on the greatest mystery that the Creator ever revealed to you humans—Christ in you, the hope of glory. When that happens, you Christians see me, death, as only the beginning of the beginning. But for us—Satan, sin and I—there is no new beginning. There is only a terrible end!"

THE UNCANCELLABLE APPOINTMENT - CHAPTER 4

(The Conqueror of Death)

“In our trinity of evil—Satan, sin and death—it is me, death, that gets the most attention from you humans. All of the supernatural spiritual powers know there is a devil whose name was Lucifer. They were around when the great God threw him out of heaven. But I admire his powers to deceive. Why he even has you blind humans deceived in believing he is only a myth. Wow! Are you stupid! And sin? The adversary really has you under his spell. He knows how to make sin look, smell and taste so good that you fools even consider sin pleasure. But me—death—even Satan can’t make me look good. That’s because I make you look so bad when I get finished with you. Who ever enters a corpse in a beauty contest?!

“But I don’t know how much more time I have to terrorize and kill. Satan, sin and I thought we had an eternity to live, kill, steal and destroy. From Adam to Moses to those Jews living in the Galilee when that baptizer named John appeared, no one and nothing could stop us. But then we heard words never spoken for some four thousand years as you humans measure time. “Behold, the Lamb of God.” And there He stood—our immortal enemy—Jesus the Messiah. The Anointed One. The Savior.

“Most of you dummies didn’t recognize or receive Him. But we three—satan, sin and I, death, knew the battle was on. A fight to the finish. So prince satan attacked with all his power and strategies. Lust to tease the flesh. Lust to tempt the eyes. Lust to trip the pride switch. Those three weapons never failed to defeat you humans. But not Him. When He finished with the boss of sin and me, poor satan—I mean it—poor prince devil—had to admit defeat and retreat from the field of battle.

“We declared war on Jesus for those three years. We would fill a man with demons but Jesus would throw them out. We faced him with blind, deaf and dumb to make His look bad. I mean, who ever gave sight back to a man born blind? He did, that’s who! You guessed it—every work He did made us—the fearsome threesome of Satan, sin and death—look weak, beaten, defeated.

“We had one final chance to win. We thought we were setting the trap for His death and disappearance. Out of sight, out of mind. But here we go again. The great God—Jesus’ Father—made us look like fools. He put the sins of all you humans on Jesus and let Him be the one sacrifice that would pay for your sins and get you off our hook forever. Oh that Cross! Every time I think about it, I get scared to death. When He called out “It is finished”, He meant we were finished! Everywhere His news is preached, prince serpent, sin, and I, death, find trouble, trouble, trouble.

“That’s because of what happened after we thought we killed Him. You humans think we were fooled for three days until He exposed us with that resurrection. But we weren’t fooled like you blind humans. Jesus was already on the attack. Why, He invaded hell itself because He has the keys of hell and me, death.

“After three days it wasn’t just Jesus’ spirit that was on the loose. The great God put on a terrifying display of His might when He literally raised Jesus—yes, His very body that I thought was dead, dead, dead—back to life again.

“He was the big winner. Jesus conquered us—Satan, sin and me, death, and the great God put on a display that was seen throughout the universe and beyond. All of our invisible evil might—principalities, powers and rulers of darkness—were disarmed and made a terrible example of what happens to those who oppose God. Now everywhere the news of that Cross and resurrection goes, our prisoners go free. We can’t stop it! That other Trinity—you know, that holy One—marches on. God the Father exposes Satan as ugly and weak. The blood of Jesus the Son cleanses you people from all sin. And God the Holy Spirit not only gives Christians the power to live for what pleases Christ, but even view death as gain. Imagine! Gain! I take my best shot and kill their bodies and all that does is what that revolutionist Paul said: “absent from the body, present with the Lord.”

“Well, I know that the two I work with—Satan and sin—are finished. That’s only a matter of time. But at least I thought I, death, might win a third of my war against humans. I can’t touch your souls or spirits but I at least wanted your bodies to rot and disappear. But now, your great Creator won’t even let me have that! He plans for those who love Him to have it all made new in the likeness of Jesus—body, soul and spirit. Those who trust Him inherit a Kingdom of righteousness, joy and peace. But me, death? My future is limited to time. And time is running out.”

THE UNCANCELLABLE APPOINTMENT CHAPTER 5 (The Death Of Death)

“You humans know you are going to die. The great God of eternity sets each of your appointments—once to die, and after that the judgment. And I, Death, get to carry out His sentence. That’s why most men dread the thought of me. Many shrink back in fear at my approaching footsteps. Others freeze in terror. Only a few stand fearless at my coming. More about them later.

“Because I keep most of you scared to death of me, what you don’t know is that I, Death, also have an appointment—a terrible one even I can’t cancel. You might call it my own death—yes, the death of death! You see, God really hates me. That’s because I work so closely with those other two objects of His terrible righteous anger—Satan and sin. Satan tempts men to sin by saying yes when God says no or no when God says yes, and I, Death, give humans their wages for their rebellion. I kill them. I can’t touch their eternal souls—only their temporary bodies. But I do get to witness the battle of the ages—Satan versus the great God, evil versus good—a war of eternal consequences fought over your souls, your spirits, that part of you that never dies.

“Of course, you would think the great Creator God would win the majority of you humans to His side. After all, He is from eternity to eternity—whatever that is, even I, Death, can’t fathom. And He has all power. Poor Satan is only a spirit being—a fallen angel—created by the great God.

Yet in this war for the loyalty of you humans, it is the satan, Lucifer, who gains the majority of you foolish beings.

“It’s how the devil does it that amazes even me—Death. The great God introduces Himself to you through His Son, Jesus the Christ. The God of love. Of holiness. Of everything that is right and good. And the guarantor of eternal life given to any of you who want it. Incredible!

“But His adversary is no dummy. He uses this beautiful gift God gave you—you know, free will—to see if he, satan, can win you over. He even takes the good things God made for you and corrupts them. Like sex. God made it for marriage—man and wife—faithful lovers in a bed blessed by Him. The adversary? ‘Why limit sex to marriage?’, he tempts. ‘To only one? To only the opposite gender? Who says so? What God? And that archaic book, the Bible? Come now, take a fresh bite out of this fruit. Taste good? Always remember, if it feels good, it has to be right’.

“And most of you buy that baloney. Until I strike. Every one of you becomes a believer after I kill your body. It’s impossible not to believe when you’re faced with the blinding glory of the Judge of the universe. But by then it’s too late to avoid the sentence—separation from the Savior who once called you but whom you just shook off. That’s when those who mock today, must bow before this Christ tomorrow.

“But then there are those incredible multitudes who, in their own valleys of decision, chose to believe in irrefutable facts. In the God of creation. In the Scriptures that even satan can’t stop the archaeologists and historians from declaring their incredible accuracy. In Jesus Christ, whose factual death and resurrection have caused the greatest minds to echo Thomas with ‘My Lord, and my God!’

“And that is why I must meet my end. The death of me—Death. The great God will utter those final words ‘There shall be time no longer’. His evangelists shall have won the final soul to the Son of God and satan shall have deceived his final followers. All my power over you believers will be broken. I, Death, will be completely abolished. My sting will vanish and even the graves will surrender their contents. Some of you will face God’s everlasting contempt, and others will inherit the fullness of everlasting life in a new heaven and new earth.

“Men like Job, whom I killed long ago, will see the end of me, Death. I remember well how I tried to terrify him with my approaching footsteps but his faith in God could not be shaken. Rather than fear me, do you know what he said? ‘For I know that my redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

“There are four things—the fruits of sin and satan—that God hates. I am one of them and those who choose Him and the Redeemer, Jesus, will never again feel our power to hurt: . . . there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away’.

“For you who love Him, there is the promise ‘I make all things new.’ For you the new day dawns. For Satan, sin and death, it is our night. A night that will never end. I, Death, will tell you no more. I probably have already told you more than I should. You’re not in ignorance anymore. And now you face the big question: what will you do with Christ? Your decision will make all the difference in time and eternity when I, Death, see you at our uncancellable appointment.”