

Subject: *The Resurrection of Christ and Christians – Part 3*

Scripture: *1 Corinthians 15:20-28*

One of the oldest questions in human history came from a man named Job: “If a man die, shall he live again?” Job answered his own question:

Job 19:25-26 ²⁵ *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:* ²⁶ *And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:*

There is a tombstone in England with these words:

Beneath this sod and beneath these trees, lies the body of Solomon Pease.

This is not Pease; this is only his pod; Pease shelled out and went home to God.

That’s true. The Bible says at death the believer is absent from the body and present with the Lord. But God has a plan for the body as well as the soul, and He has revealed that glorious plan in this chapter of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians.

1. The resurrection of Christ

Here is what Paul has told us so far in the chapter: the truth of Christ’s resurrection (vs. 1-4); the evidence of His resurrection (vs. 5-11); and the importance of His resurrection (vs. 12-19). The turning point in Paul’s powerful argument is verse 20. Now in verses 20-28, Paul reveals the connection of Christ’s resurrection and the resurrection of believers. Paul has shown that because of Christ’s resurrection there *can be* a resurrection of believers (15:12-19). Now he shows that because of Christ’s resurrection there *will be* a resurrection of believers (15:20-28).

A. The statement of Christ as the first fruits (vs. 20, 23)

This reference to first fruits goes back to the Old Testament, when the Jews brought an offering of first fruits. Before they harvested their crops, they brought a sample of the harvest called the first fruits.

Leviticus 23:10 *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest:*

The "first fruits" is that part of the harvest which is a sample and guarantee of the entire harvest. Not all the harvest ripens at the same time. Christ’s resurrection is the sample and guarantee of the believer’s resurrection to life.

Christ is the first to rise from the dead, never to die again. Other people were raised from the dead, but they all died again. Even those that Christ raised from the dead (including Lazarus) all died again. Christ is the first part of the harvest to rise from the dead.

B. The significance of Christ as the first fruits (vs. 20-22)

Just as Adam was the cause of death for all men (see also Rom.5:12-21), Christ is also the cause of resurrection life to all believers. Just as we are united to Adam by our first birth and sin, we are united to Christ by our new birth and faith. Our connection to Adam is physical. Our connection to Christ is spiritual.

2. The resurrection of Christians

Paul not only reveals the certainty of our resurrection, but the timing of our resurrection. It will be when Christ returns. We don't know the exact time, but we do know the order. Unlike the first fruits of the grain harvest, the full harvest of resurrection is far removed in time from the resurrection of Christ. Here is what the Bible teaches about the resurrection of the dead.

A. All people will be raised from the dead

Bodies of the saved and the lost will be raised up.

Daniel 12:2 *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

John 5:28-29 ²⁸ *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,* ²⁹ *And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

The resurrection of the saved and the lost will not happen at the same time. There is 1,000 years between the two resurrections.

B. Believers will be raised when Christ returns

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 ¹³ *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.* ¹⁴ *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* ¹⁵ *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.* ¹⁶ *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:* ¹⁷ *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.* ¹⁸ *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

C. Unbelievers will be raised at the Great White Throne Judgment

Revelation 20:11-13 ¹¹ *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.* ¹² *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* ¹³ *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

3. The restoration of all things

Things are not as they should be and they are now out of place. The church is out of place but the bride will one day be with the bridegroom. The devil is out of place but one day he will be in the lake of fire. The resurrection of believers is just one part of God's plan to restore all things.

A. God's kingdom will be delivered to the Father

Jesus came as the Mediator, the Savior, the Deliverer and His work is complete. He has

accomplished the work the Father sent Him to do. After the Millennium and the destruction of Satan, the Lord Jesus will deliver the kingdom to God the Father.

B. God's enemies will be finally defeated

Every force of evil and darkness, every rebel will be conquered. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. Death is a definite fact, a destructive force, and it is also a defeated foe. Christ defeated death for Himself and for us. Death is not final.

C. God's glory will be forever displayed

Christ will continue to reign in His full and glorious place within the Trinity. All things will be restored as they once were and as they should be. This is what Jesus prayed for the night before He was crucified.

John 17:4-5 ⁴ *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* ⁵ *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

John 17:24 *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

God will be all in all. That doesn't mean that God will be everything and everything will be God, but that God's supreme authority over everything is established forever. As it was before sin entered the world, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit will reign in glory forever, never to be challenged again.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND CHRISTIANS – PART 3

Connection of Christ's Resurrection and Our Resurrection

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1. The resurrection _____

Paul has shown that because of Christ's resurrection there *can be* a resurrection of believers (15:12-19). Now he shows that because of Christ's resurrection there *will be* a resurrection of believers (15:20-28).

A. The _____ of Christ as the first fruits (vs. 20, 23)

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2. The resurrection _____

A. _____ will be raised from the dead

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B. Believers will be raised _____

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3. The restoration of _____

A. God's kingdom will be _____

B. God's enemies will be _____

C. God's glory will be _____

This is what Jesus prayed for the night before He was crucified.

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