



Where the Resurrection Leads (1 Corinthians 15:20-28)

- Paul continues to describe the amazing power and implications of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - It is right at the heart of the compelling gospel message (15:1-11)
 - It is essential to the gospel and would turn Christianity upside down if there were no resurrection of Jesus in the past or in the future (15:12-19)
 - Now, Paul wants to show where the truth of the resurrection leads (15:20-28).
- In this section, Paul shows how the resurrection of Jesus Christ leads to two future realities.

① It is a great certainty that will never fail (15:20-22)

- The words *“but now Christ has been raised from the dead”* deliver a strong message of the hope and confident expectation about our future resurrection.
- The resurrection of Jesus is the *“first fruits”* (a great symbol) of the harvest that guarantees the rest of the harvest (resurrected bodies) will take place. The resurrection of Jesus (a great solidarity) also guarantees our future resurrection because everyone *“in Christ”* gets what Christ got (a resurrection) just as everyone *“in Adam”* (all who ever lived) got what He got (physical death).
- If one sinful man (Adam) can affect the destiny of every person ever born, then another sinless Man (Jesus Christ) can affect the destiny of everyone born again.

② It is a great climax that will never end (15:23-28)

- Paul traces the impact of Christ’s resurrection all the way to the end of the end when God culminates His eternal plan.
- Paul draws out three big implications of Christ’s *“first fruits”* resurrection:
 - **#1:** Christ’s resurrection leads to our resurrection and there is a sequential *“order”* to it. There are two categories of resurrections: The *“first resurrection”* (Rev. 20:5-6) for believers and the second or final (*“second death”*) resurrection for unbelievers (Rev. 20:8, 11-15), but Paul doesn’t address the second one in this text. There are also five phases of the *“first resurrection”*:
 - 1) **First** is the resurrection of Jesus Christ (*“first fruits”* of the coming harvest – 1 Cor. 15:20, 23)
 - 2) **Second** is the resurrection of the church saints (all those *“in Christ”* from Pentecost to the rapture – 1 Thess. 4:16-17). There’s debate about when this happens (pre-trib, mid-trib, three quarters trib, post-trib, but the most compelling evidence to me (Pastor Jeff) is a pre-tribulational rapture.
 - 3) **Third** is the resurrection of the martyred tribulation saints who were saved and killed during the seven year period when God’s wrath was unleashed on the world in a series of three judgment (seals, trumpets, bowls – Rev. 6-19), yet God resurrects them at the end of the tribulation (Rev. 20:3-5)
 - 4) **Fourth** is the resurrection of the Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2) which most likely takes place at the same time as the resurrection of the tribulation saints.
 - 5) **Fifth** is the resurrection of the earthly kingdom saints which most likely will take place at the end of the one-thousand year earthly reign of Jesus Christ. Since there will be non-glorified believers in the Millennial kingdom repopulating the earth (Isa. 65:20-25) and glorified believers (the church, tribulation, Old Testament saints), there would need to be a resurrection in order to

fit these believers with a new heavenly body for life in the new heavens and new earth (The Bible is silent on this resurrection).

- **#2:** The rule and reign of Jesus Christ in His earthly kingdom (v. 24-27). Jesus will be abolishing “*all rule and all authority and power*” during His reign (v. 24b) and “*putting all His enemies under His feet*” (v. 25) and conquering “*the last enemy*” of death (v. 26) and “*putting all things in subjection under His feet*” except Himself (v. 28)
- **#3:** The return of Jesus Christ to His original functional role within the Godhead. The “*end*” will come “*when He (Jesus) hands over the kingdom to the God and Father*” (v. 24) and Jesus “*will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all*” (v. 28).