

mentioned in Revelation, but a literal interpretation of the O.T. teaches they will be raised at the time of the Tribulation (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:1-3 and contexts). They will be raised to enter the "kingdom" which is equated with the 1000 years (rev. 20:6). Then will be fulfilled all the promises of God to the nation (Isa. 11, 35, etc.).

c. Third order--nonbelievers. This is indicated by the phrase "then the end." 1000 years is covered by the word "then." Now comes the resurrection of the wicked dead (Rev. 20:11-5) and this is identical with the second death (Rev. 21:8). It is a sort of "second resurrection" and the horrible anticlimax of the phases related to the "first resurrection."

3. EXPECTATIONS vv. 24-28

a. Administration. The specific that here is to the 1000 years of earthly reign of our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 25). At that time period He will bring into practical subjugation all things (v. 27) and this includes various orders of beings including angels (v. 24). Christ actually triumphed over these at the Cross, but now they are laid low before Him (Col. 2:14-15), The final enemy to feel the thrust of the Lord's sovereign power will be death itself (v. 26). He does this by virtue of the dynamic resurrections! The verb "destroy" (v. 26) is the same as "put down" (v. 24) and means to utterly dismiss and set at naught. The sting of death has been rendered inoperative (v. 55). A self-evident truth is that Christ Himself is excepted from the subjugation (v. 27). So Christ will be maintained until His goal is accomplished.

b. Presentation. The final act in the drama of the resurrection is the end of the mediatorial reign of Christ. Now all returns to the triune God--Father, Son, and Spirit (vv. 24, 28). The finality which rings here is significantly and sovereignly solemn!

Conclusion One word alone needs to be registered: make certain you are included in the "in Christ" and "first resurrection." Anything less is an eternal doom of night and pathos. Amen.

THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

"How the Dead Will Rise"

1 Cor. 15:20-28

Introduction

1. The concept of a resurrection from the dead is an established fact according to the Scriptures (vv. 12-19). The use of the perfect tense affirms the liveness of Christ today (v. 20).

2. Since people do rise from the dead, the question is how is this done. Paul is careful not to fall into the erroneous position of a full scale resurrection at the end of all mankind. Rather, he points to an ordered one which is fully consistent with one's relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Look carefully at the following points and you will grasp the significance of the fact that the future resurrection of men is ordered by the Lord:

1. IDENTIFICATIONS vv. 21, 22.

In the Bible, there are two persons upon whom there is remarkable emphasis in this study. These are a. Adam. This is the original man created by God. Any speculation about pre-Adamic races is just that--speculation. Adam was the first man and as such he became the medium of flesh, trespass, and death. His antitype is the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam who is the medium of spirit, righteousness, and life. These things are doctrinally loaded!

The prepositional phrase "by man" connotes it was through human mediation that death came. It is not by some philosophical arrangements, but through human flesh!

The phrase "in Adam" is a doctrinally explosive one and points to a special position. It is what all humans have at birth. "Death" is obviously physical here and is related in this section to the matter of resurrection, whilst in Romans the idea is the matter of sin (Rom. 5:12-21).

b. Christ. That Christ is perfect man is taught by the phrase "by man" (v. 21). No one ends it all in the grave, hence the idea is given here that there is universal resurrection just as surely as there is universal death through Adam. The hope of resurrection for anyone rests squarely with Christ.

Another technical phrase is employed here--"in Christ" (v.22). It is one received by grace through faith (2 Cor. 5:17) and is therefore reserved only for those who are believers since Pentecost (1 Cor. 12:13). The verb "made alive" cannot properly be applied to unbelievers for it has a narrow connotation. Not only is the body raised (v. 21), but there is a restoration to "life" in its full sense and meaning (John 5:29). The solidarity between the Lord Jesus and those who sleep "in Him" is thus taught (v. 20 and 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

NOTE: The most crucial question ever presented to a human being is: are you "in Christ?" If he does not own this position through faith on Christ's shed blood, he remains "in Adam" with "death" as his only expectation.

2. DESIGNATIONS vv. 20, 23-24.

Now that there is the idea of resurrection established and it is known just what is involved in the two positions "in Adam" and "in Christ," it remains to discover just what will take place in the "in Christ" resurrections and those who are "in Adam." The text is clear:

a. First order--Christ. The word "order" used here is a military term and not found elsewhere in the N.T. in this form. A body of troops or corps is indicated. Christ is the first order or troop of resurrection. The term "first fruits" suggests that He is a beginning from something. He is taken away from the mass that is left in the grave. This one term shows that there are many more to come, but their identity in nature with Him is patent. Incidentally, "first fruits" is based on the O.T. concept of a feast (Lev. 23). Two others are noted in Corinthians (5:7; 16:8).

b. Second order--believers. The actual phrase used here is "they that are Christ's" (v. 23). These are those who "sleep" and wait for the resurrection morning. There is no such thing as "soul-sleep" in the sense of unconsciousness for the dead (cf. Luke 16:19-31; Matt. 17:1-13; Phil. 1:23). It is a phrase which is extremely broad and speaks of all those associated with the redemption in Christ from all dispensations (Rom. 3:24, 25). It does not have the technical significance of the phrase "in Christ" which is limited to believers of the present church age.

"They that are Christ's" at His coming is connected with the similarly technical idea of the "first resurrection" (Rev. 20:5). Both of these phrases refer to one and the same event in the Bible. A comparison of those listed in the "first resurrection" points to an explanation of "they that are Christ's." It will be observed that there are three phrases to this "first resurrection." Mark them:

- 1) Phase 1. "They who sat" (Rev. 20:4). These speak of the N.T. saints since Pentecost. Paul promised they would judge (1 Cor. 6:2,3). Here they are enthroned. They are identical with the 24 elders (Rev. 4,5). They went up at the Rapture (Rev. 4:1; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). They are in the presence of the Lord now (Phil 1:23).
- 2) Phase 2. "They who were beheaded." The breaking of the 5th seal shows that they are tribulation saints (Rev. 6:9). The word soul does not detract from their reality as persons (Gen. 45:25-27; Acts 2:41; 27:37, 1 Pet. 3:20). The next group to rise in the first resurrection after the Rapture are these persons. Closely aligned with these are "they who worshipped not the beast." The "beast" is the coming antichrist who will be a world-wide dictator (Rev. 13).
- 3) Phase 3. The Old Testament saints are not