



# The Resurrection

## Victory Over Death

1 Corinthians 15:20–26

March 31, 2013

### Introduction

Two days ago we celebrated Good Friday, commemorating the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. But without today (Easter), there would have been nothing good about that Friday. It is only because of the resurrection that we can see the good that came from the brutal suffering and death Jesus experienced nearly 2,000 years ago. Paul records for us several marvelous things that result from Jesus' resurrection from the dead in 1 Corinthians 15.

### The Uniqueness of Christ's Resurrection (v. 20)

There are two realities we must acknowledge when we consider the events of that first Easter morning. The first is that Jesus rose from the dead. And His resurrection was unique. He was the firstfruits of a harvest. Sure, we can point to other resurrections in the Bible prior to Christ's, but all those people died again. Only Jesus faced death and defeated it — never to be subject to it again! The second reality is that as a result of Christ's resurrection others will also be resurrected. 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17 describes believers who have died as those who have "fallen asleep." According to that passage, they will be resurrected when Jesus returns to rapture the church!

### The Necessity of the Resurrection (v. 21)

It says two times in verse 21 "by a man." Both death and resurrection are linked to man. The first man (Adam) chose to defy God. There was only a single command he had to obey — don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And yet he still disobeyed. Unfortunately, all of us have done the same. Isaiah pictures this by saying "All we like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way." (Isa 53:6). In doing so we have all become sinners. And the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). So by man came death.

But also by a Man came resurrection. And it could *only* come by a man. For centuries in the Old Testament, there was no man who could meet

God's perfect standard. But then came Jesus. He fulfilled all of God's perfect demands and was completely righteous. Jesus paved the way for the resurrection of other human beings.

### **Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ (v. 22)**

The first man was Adam. We are all "in Adam" because we're all human. And all who are in Adam will die. But even though Christ was descended from Adam, He was vindicated by God because death had no claim on Him (Acts 2:24). So if we want to be a beneficiary of the resurrection, we must be in a proper relationship to Christ.

The second Man, Christ, brings life. If you're in Adam, the only certainty is death. But if you're in Christ, the wages of sin and death have been paid. And we have the hope of the resurrection. Those who are "in Christ" are those who have received the gospel (15:1-5). That's the frame of reference for understanding "in Christ." Easter is a phenomenal opportunity to remember what Jesus did. But we cannot remember it properly from a distance. We can't stand back and just mouth the words "Jesus rose from the dead." There must be an inner joy in our hearts that only comes from being changed by the gospel of Christ. The only way to go from being *in Adam* to being *in Christ* is to abandon everything it means to be "in Adam." Those of us who are Christ's recognize that there is no hope in Adam and we must transfer all our hope to Christ. We must also take up our cross and follow Him.

### **Victory Through Christ (vv. 23-26)**

Notice the crescendo in these last three verses: Christ rose from the dead → He's the firstfruits → there's going to be a harvest → He's coming back → He's going to rule → He's going to abolish death...but only for those who are in Christ!

Where are you this evening? Are you in Adam? Or are you in Christ? Have you abandoned your rebellion against God and bowed the knee to the Lord? Have you abandoned all hope of obtaining heaven based on your own efforts? Have you acknowledged all your righteousness is like filthy rags, but Christ's righteousness is pure and perfect? He offers you a robe of righteousness which will satisfy all of God's demands, because the penalty has been paid. That's why He rose from the grave. Jesus is the resurrected Savior, and only He can save you from the agony and defeat of eternal death! Will you trust in Him?

~AWB