

e-concepts

A Weekly Publication of Relational Concepts Inc.

The Resurrection of Christ Makes the Resurrection of Believers Inevitable

By Jerry Collins

First Corinthians 15:20-28 is an interesting passage which points to the nature of God's authority in relationship to Jesus. God has given Jesus authority, or has made "all things subjected to Him," but Jesus is still subjected to the One who has made all things subjected to Him—namely, God the Father. God the Father is the final authority. The Scriptures are, in fact, God-breathed, words spoken from God Himself, that carry that same authority—the authority of God. The authority of Scripture is found in its inspiration—those words which come directly from God. Just as God's words were authoritative in Genesis 1, the words which were given to His creation through Scripture hold that same authority.

The Resurrection of Jesus Is a Sure Thing

Verse 20—The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is a historical fact. *But now Christ has been raised from the dead.* Speculation now gave way to affirmation.

- The resurrected Christ *was the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.* This *first fruits* were representative of the harvest to follow and the **first installment** and a guarantee of the harvest to come for those who had already died (*fallen asleep*). In that sense, Christ's resurrection was the first fruits of the larger group of those who believed.
- Resurrection would be a fruitless idea if it did not apply to those who were already dead. This is the last mention of Christ's resurrection in the argument, but all that follows rests on this fact.

Verse 21—Adam was the first man in the old creation, and, like him, all of his sons died physically, *since death came through a man.*

- Christ is the first man in the new creation, and, like Him, all of His sons will live physically. *The resurrection of the dead also came through a man.* Both Adam and Jesus were men.

Verse 22—Therefore, our resurrection will be a human resurrection, not some "spiritual" type of resurrection. *For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*

- Physical resurrection is as inevitable for the sons of Jesus Christ (believers) as physical death is for the sons of Adam (humans).

Resurrection for Believers Is Guaranteed at the Coming of Jesus

Verse 23—Christ was **first in rank** in resurrection, and those who follow Him are **next in rank** in resurrection—the full harvest, *but each in his own order* (τάγματι an orderly arrangement).

- The answer to the timing of the resurrection is in the **ranking** of resurrections. *Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming.*
- And the fact that our resurrection is linked with Christ's is the guarantee of our resurrection.

In Revelation 20:5-6, John referred to *the first resurrection* of all believers of every age, even though their resurrections rank differently.

First Resurrection

- Jesus was raised first, who is the firstfruits of those who sleep (1 Corinthians 15:23).
- Believers' bodies are raised at the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13f).
- The two witnesses are raised during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 11:3 and 11).
- Tribulation martyrs are raised at the beginning of the Millennium (Revelation 20:4). Old Testament saints are apparently raised at the same time (Isaiah 26:19f; Ezekiel 37:12f; and Daniel 12:2f).
- **The first resurrection, then, is the resurrection of all believers, which takes place in stages.** John says *this is the first resurrection* and *blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection* (Revelation 20:6).