

Paul has established the truth of the resurrection of Christ and of His own. **Belief in a risen Christ is essential to salvation.** There is no point to Christianity and suffering for Christ's sake if there is no resurrection. Now Paul pauses to speak to the role resurrection plays in God's overall plan. While He doesn't give a timetable with dates, he does lay out the order of events and the outcome of all things subsequent to Christ's resurrection. He also differentiates between the race headed by Adam and that headed by Christ. (He resumes his train of thought about the suffering believer in verse 29.) But first he presents a wonderful insight on the very being and nature of God Himself. Isn't God gracious to give them, and us, these wonderful truths despite their earthly and selfish approach to life? But it is the truth that sets us free. He sets our thoughts far above the what we are and what we have down here.

First, Christ is not only risen from among the dead, all the others who have died before and since will also be raised. He is the firstfruits of them that sleep, of them that have died in Christ. For example Minnesotans look forward each summer to enjoying the first tomato of the season. It not only tastes especially good but is appreciated even more because it is a foretaste of more tomatoes to come. The risen Christ is the first of many to follow. This sinless man, Jesus Christ, has overcome the power of death that afflicts and embarrasses all mankind because of Adam's sinful act. In stark contrast, the Sinless Man suffered for the sins of sinful men. He will raise all the dead, some to life eternal, some to eternal damnation.

John 5:21 *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.*

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 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. 30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

The order is,

Christ first,

next those who are Christ's at His coming,  
then, at the end, the rest of the dead.

At that point, death as we know it, is completely destroyed. All men have been raised whole, body, soul and spirit. Some enjoying eternal life, the rest to enter an eternal hell, the Second Death. (While Paul doesn't enlarge here on the raising of the unsaved for judgement, later in the chapter he gives more details on the raising and changing of the those who are Christ's.)

Revelation 20:4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. 20:11 ¶ 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 [hades] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell [hades] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Now, having laid out the order of events flowing from the resurrection of Christ, Paul opens a huge insight into God's Plan, and, incidentally, the very nature of God.. Christ Himself delivers up the kingdom to God the Father. (Note here that this views God the Son and the God the Father as distinct Persons.) Christ's mission on earth is to redeem and restore all things to God. All history and prophecy looks forward to this. Only He is able to accomplish

this. How does He do this? There are several stages.

First, He becomes Man and lives a perfect life walking with God.

Second, He dies on the cross. His shed blood redeems all creation including the earth, it's peoples, the nations, Israel, the Church, the Kingdom of God.

Third, He then rises from the dead and ascends to heaven awaiting the signal to return.

Fourth, He then subdues and takes possession of what He has purchased.

He first claims and raises all believers since sin entered the world through Adam's sin. They join Him in Heaven forever. Many, including us, before the tribulation, more just after it ends. No more believers will die after this.

He then takes possession of His claim on the earth and reigns over it after destroying His enemies with physical death. He puts down all authority and rule and power, both human and unseen spiritual beings.

During His one thousand year reign of blessing, as a Man over all creation He maintains righteousness and peace, judging criminals and rebels with physical death.

Fifth, At the end He raises the dead (in their sins), judges them, and they are all cast into the Lake of Fire. Death is finally and completely destroyed. (The living inherit, enter and occupy the New Earth forever.)

Sixth, He delivers up the Kingdom to God who gave Him authority to come and do this in the first place.

In all of this, the Son acts in subjection to God, Who puts all things under His (the Son's, Christ's) feet. The Son, although He is God and equal with God, doesn't just come and do all this on His own. There is no sense of independent action on His part. Nor is there any sense of Him usurping something that was not His. He comes as sent (delegated) and acts as sent, takes authority as given, and accepts dominion as given. When He has completely subdued all, including death, He voluntarily in loving unity with the Father

and the Holy Spirit subjects Himself to Him of the Trinity, the Father, Who put all things under Him. Why? So that God may be all in all. That the One God, the Three in One, Father, Son and Holy Spirit may be, as THEY always are, all in all. We are upon Holy ground here. We are granted a peak into the mystery of the Triune Godhead itself. Over a period of time, a lifetime (probably an eternal lifetime), as we personally meditate upon this passage and others the Spirit sees fit to bring to mind, God will allow us to enter more and more into What/Who It/He as One Triune God is. Confusing? Humbling? Why shouldn't it be? Even as revealed, God is beyond description or comprehension of mere creatures. We accept that! And continue our earnest but reverent probing throughout a blessed eternity as His!

A reminder is given here that the One who put all things under His feet is **not included** in that which is put under His feet. Why? It seems obvious. But the Triune God Itself/Himself always remains Supreme. Unlike the ways of sinful, fleshly men or the desperately prideful Adversary, no single One of the Three ever gains dominion over Another One, or the Other Two. This authority is never given! It is never sought! They are perfectly serenely content to be the perfectly THREE-IN-ONE GOD, for GOD IS LOVE! Being LOVE, They also are so perfectly, ferociously jealous of the eternal UNITY They enjoy, that no creature should dare attempt to intrude and usurp as did Lucifer. On the other hand, They, being LOVE, cannot seem to contain and confine Their LOVE to simply between Themselves. So it is spilled out into time, the universe and eternity, in the blood of the Cross, bringing all who will come into the very presence of God, into eternal Life and into His eternal blessing. We are brought into the Loop so to speak, although never as deity, as unbelievably blessed, redeemed creatures of His Love. Well, I am in far beyond my depth! What is of Him cannot be plumbed in an eternity for He is infinite but He loves to have us keep trying, and gives us joy when doing so.

What a gracious God He is to grant this blessed spiritual revelation to the selfish, self centered Corinthians who prided themselves in their intellectual prowess and knowledge. Glory to God in the Highest!

By Ron Canner, January 21, 2004

Afterthought:

Christ, the firstfruits, was not the chronological first to be raised from the dead, but all others, before Him or after Him did not raise themselves as He did. Apparently they all died again and are waiting to be raised again. He instead arose, was changed and ascended to heaven forty days later.