

# The Miraculous Guarantee That Gives All Believers Hope for the Future

We are continuing a four-part series about the biblical belief in the immortality of the soul and the body—in a glorified, *resurrected* form. It is this unique doctrine of the Resurrection that Christians reaffirm every Easter.

As I suggested in the last article, you might like to use a modern translation or paraphrase to review these basic premises Paul presents and which we will consider in these final two studies. Today we will study:

## **The Assurance of the Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-28)**

Having confronted questions causing doubt about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and that of believers when He comes to receive living and deceased saints at a future gathering (1 Thess. 4:13-18), Paul now confidently presents positive assurances concerning this future resurrection.

He began by flatly proclaiming 1 Corinthians 15:20a, “But now is Christ risen from the dead”! This fact and spiritual assurance are presented in the original Greek in the present tense, which stressed the continuing action from a past event. Our present faith is confirmed from this supernatural past action, which has a continuing effect.

Verse 20 continues by stating that Christ has “become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.” The first fruits are the initial ripened grains of the spring harvest. They are evidence the entire harvest is on the way. Leviticus 23:4-14 speaks of the first fruits in connection with the Passover festival where the coming harvest was consecrated.

The New Testament teaches that Jesus actually died on the Passover, and His Resurrection occurred the following Sunday morning, the day following the Sabbath after the Passover (ff.). This day corresponds to our Resurrection Sunday (John 19:31-20:10) and is a promise of our own future resurrection, "...those who are Christ's at His coming" (v. 23b).

In 15:22-24 Paul compares Christ with Adam, His prototype, in that what one man—Adam—did, now the resurrection from death has also become a certainty because of what one Man—Christ—did. As humans, we all are related to Adam and most will physically die as he did, but all who are rightly related to Christ spiritually will be made to live again when He appears in the clouds and gathers up the dead and living saints to Himself (1 Thess. 4: 14-17). Only those living saints will be transformed in that instant and will be the only ones who do not die.

### **When Our Resurrected Lord Returns**

The Second Coming of Christ is not a timeless philosophical idea to be discussed and debated. Rather, it will be a distinct experience of human life and will complete the resurrection harvest (possibly at Rev. 14:14-16), for which He and His Resurrection were the "firstfruits."

Everyone who follows Him by faith in His completed spiritual destiny can have the hope of complete acceptance and satisfaction before God as well!

Not all of God's own will die, but we all will be changed—in a fraction of a second! 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 assures us that at Christ's second coming we will be raised, in our proper order. The dead who belong to Christ will be the first to rise. Then, believers who are still alive will be caught up with them in the clouds, to meet Christ our Lord in the air.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ not only *confirms our faith*; it *certifies our forgiveness* and *guarantees our future*!

We can anticipate, with confident assurance, the future day of His “coming” in a physical return to earth at the second Advent (15:23-25). At Christ’s Resurrection, death was *defeated* and at His actual “coming” back to earth to rule, it will be *destroyed* (cf. Rev. 20:14). Paul explained later in this chapter that death is the last enemy to be conquered in Christ’s total triumph (15:26).

This Easter season celebrates this progressive triumph of our Lord Jesus over death, hell and the grave! The tomb is empty, and He is alive!

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