

## PART 2 OF GOD'S PLAN TO CONQUER EVIL AND SUFFERING—THE RESURRECTION

### INTRO

So far, we've seen that the declared reason for evil and suffering is the fall of man. Although God did not cause the fall, He knew it would happen and allowed it to happen and had a plan in place to fix it.

Two weeks ago, we looked at God's **plan** to conquer evil and suffering and saw that the focal point of that plan was **the Cross**. Christ's suffering and death on the cross as our substitute provided the way for us to be forgiven and spared from eternal evil and suffering. The cross, then, provides the solution for the **consequences** of man having sinful hearts.

Is that the extent of God's plan? Is God's plan for the future a **continuance** of the cycle that is taking place now? --People being born with sinful hearts

--People living a life on earth engaged in a spiritual battle over their souls,

\*Some believing Christ's words and trusting His shed blood to provide forgiveness of sins

\*Others rejecting Christ's words and trying to earn forgiveness of sins by their efforts

--Then each one—at their appointed time—**dying**:

\*Those that have trusted only Jesus for their salvation go to be with Him in heaven after death

\*Those that refused Him and His way of forgiveness receive what they wanted—an eternity without Him—suffering eternal torment in hell after they die

Again, I ask: Is the extent of God's plan to conquer evil and suffering just to fix the consequences of **sin**, but never get rid of death...or evil...or sin....or suffering? Isn't there more to it than that?

There most certainly is—and God does not make us guess or wonder what the rest of His plan is. The cross addressed the **consequences** of sin, but the **Resurrection** is what makes possible the **restoration** of all things. We often—and rightly so—tie the necessity of the resurrection to our salvation. We sometimes forget, however, that there are reasons for the resurrection NOT tied to salvation.

In I Corinthians 15:20-28 we see 5 reasons for Christ's resurrection (won't cover them all this am)

1) to demonstrate that we, too, shall rise; 2) to defeat the enemies of God; 3) to allow for the dominion of Christ; 4) to destroy death; and 5) to deliver the kingdom to the Father

### 1. The Resurrection of Christ was necessary to demonstrate that we too, shall rise

In verses 12-19, Paul uses a bunch of hypothetical "if's" to remind the Corinthians of all the negative ramifications there would be if there was no such thing as the resurrection. Seven times in eight verses we see the word "if;" most of them followed by a "then." Example—vs 14. That all changes in verse 20, though.

A. Paul leaves the hypothetical and declares his **conviction**: "But **now** is Christ risen from the dead..." Why was Paul so certain Christ rose? Look at verse 3 (read through v 8). Paul was convinced of the resurrection because he had met Christ and talked to Him!

B. Paul then shows the **connection** between the resurrection of Christ and their future resurrection. He first shows them a connection they are quite familiar with—their connection with Adam.

--v 21 "for since by man came death;" Adam brought death into the world because he brought sin into the world.

--v 22: "For as in Adam all die..." You know death is real because you've seen it and you know that all face death because all are sinners.

--Paul then argues that just as certainly as there is this thing called death, there is also the resurrection. He gives the same argument in verse 49—"And as we have borne the image of the earthy"—the humanly—"we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

--Paul gives another connection in verses 20 and 23 when he refers to Christ as "the first-fruits." What is meant by "first-fruits"? The first-fruits was the first sheaf of ripe grain at the beginning of the harvest. According to Leviticus 23, this sheaf—bundle—of grain was to be offered to the Lord and was given to express gratitude for the harvest—and in recognition of the fact that God had a right to all that the offerer had. It was a **pledge to** God that there would be more coming—and a **trust in God** that more would be coming. Christ was not only first in regards to time—He is also the guarantee that there are more to follow.

Would like to pause here for a moment. What kind of body do people in heaven have right now? It is not their *glorified* body because Christ has not returned; meaning the rapture of the living and the resurrection of the dead has not yet taken place. I tend to think that those in heaven right now have some kind of body, although it is a temporary one. We get a picture of this in Revelation 6:9-11. Those that were martyred for Christ during the Tribulation asked, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them..."

So, if the saved are with God in heaven right now with a temporary body, why do we need a **resurrected** body? Because just being forgiven does not **restore things** to the way they originally were. Randy Alcorn writes: "We feel homesick for Eden. We long for what the first man and woman once enjoyed, a perfect and beautiful Earth with free and untainted relationships with God and each other" (202).

Will we have that some day—a relationship with God on earth? Revelation 21:1-3 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

If the "new Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven..." it must come to the new earth. We will then have—at least to some degree—a return to how it was in the garden of Eden—God and sin-free man dwelling together on earth.

What allows that to take place? Us having a resurrected body.

Not only does the resurrection of Christ give us assurance of our future resurrection,

## **2. The Resurrection of Christ is necessary for the defeat God's enemies**

Notice v 24: "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Notice the order here—the kingdom is delivered up "when"—after—"he shall have put down all rule and authority and power." Seems almost nonchalant, doesn't it? "...when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."

It reminds me of Mt 27:26 "and when he—Pilate—had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified." Short, to the point, lacking details, and easy to read on past without giving it a second thought. Let's not read past it, though; let's think about what it means for Christ to "put down"—meaning abolish or destroy—"all rule and all authority and power."

Take your Bibles and **turn to** Revelation 19—the most detailed account of Christ as a Coming Conqueror.

--v 11: “in righteousness He doth judge and make war.” It is for the right reason Christ judges and makes war—and it is done in a righteous—as opposed to sinful—way. MacArthur writes: (in bulletin)

God’s patience has an end. He will not always tolerate iniquity. Justice will not always live with injustice. Truth will not always live with lies. Rebellion will not always go on. And when sin is finally incorrigible and man is incurable, then will come the destruction. Mercy abused will bring the executioner. Then will come the sword of insulted majesty, the wrath of rejected grace.<sup>1</sup>

--v 12 says His eyes were as a flame of fire meaning they see and penetrate everything  
On His head were many crowns because He is “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” according to verse 16.

--v 13 Many commentators suggest that being “clothed with a vesture dipped in blood” refers to Isaiah 63:1-3, the blood being not Christ’s blood, but the blood of His enemies

--v 15 says He smites the nations with a sharp sword from His mouth and “rules them with a rod of iron;” His garments will be stained once more as He treads “the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”

--In verses 17 and 18 an angel beckons the birds to “eat the flesh...all men”—so great is the carnage from this battle.

--In verse 20 we see the beast and the false prophet “cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

--And in verse 21 we see “the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse”

No wonder there were those who “said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: <sup>17</sup> For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev 6:16-17)!

God’s plan to conquer evil and suffering included the resurrection because only through Christ’s resurrection will we be resurrected and only a resurrected Christ can exact judgment on those who refuse to repent.

### **3. The Resurrection of Christ is necessary for Christ’s dominion on earth**

Not only does Christ have to “put down all rule and all authority and power” (v 24), “He must *reign*” (v 25).

What do we know about Christ’s dominion—His reign—on earth? The challenge in studying Christ’s reign on earth is that it is scattered throughout the Bible—there is not one particular chapter where you can turn to get the bulk of the teaching on the subject. Here in I Corinthians 15 we have the “resurrection” chapter; in I Corinthians 13 we have the “love” chapter and in Hebrews 11 we have “the hall of faith.” We do not have a Millennial Kingdom “chapter”—but we do have numerous references to it.

A. The Fact of Christ’s Reign: Daniel 7:14—“And there was given Him [the Son of Man] dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him...” Zechariah 14:9—“And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.”

B. The Duration of Christ’s Reign: 1000 years (Revelation 20:4-6)  
Revelation 20:6 “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.”

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<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, “Visions of the Glorious Christ,” 35.

C. The Place of Christ's Reign: Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3)

Isaiah 2:3 "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

D. The Peace of Christ's Reign: There shall be no more war (Isaiah 2:4)

Isaiah 2:4 "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

E. The Worship during Christ's Reign: The people of the earth will worship King Jesus (Zechariah 14:17)

Zechariah 14:17 "And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain."

F. The End of Christ's Reign: At the end of 1000 years (Revelation 20:7-8a)

Revelations 20:7-8a "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nation which are in the four quarters of the earth..."

G. The Blessings that are ours Because of Christ's Reign: We reign with Him! (Revelation 20:4, 6)

In Luke 19, Jesus gives the parable of a nobleman giving 1 pound (a measure of money) to 10 servants. "And it came to pass, that when he was returned, *having received the kingdom*" the servants were called unto him so that he could reward them. The first who came had earned 10 pounds; Luke 19:17 tells of the nobleman's response: "And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities."

When Peter asked Jesus how the disciples would be rewarded for what they had given up to serve Christ, Jesus answered: "...Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

We will be rewarded for what we have done for Christ and I believe part of that reward consists of places of responsibility in Christ's kingdom.

H. The Importance to Christ that He Reigns: To fulfill prophecy

--God said Christ would reign (Dan 7:14; Zech 14:9)—and here in I Cor 15:25

--God said where Christ would reign and how long Christ would reign and how He would be worshipped and how peaceful the earth would be during His reign

--Christ had to reign, then, in order for Scripture to be fulfilled and He had to be resurrected in order to reign

Is that all there is to it? Charles Ryrie writes:

"Why is an earthly kingdom necessary? Did He not receive His inheritance when He was raised and exalted in heaven? Is not His present rule His inheritance? Why does there need to be an earthly kingdom? Because He must be triumphant *in the same arena* where He was seemingly defeated. His rejection by the rulers of this world was on this earth (I Cor. 2:8). His exaltation must also be on this earth. And so it shall be when He comes again to rule this world in righteousness. He has waited long for His inheritance; soon He shall receive it."

#### 4. The Resurrection of Christ is necessary for destruction of death (v 26)

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Pretty short verse—but a lot in it.

##### A. Death is an enemy

Is death only **our** enemy—or is it God’s enemy, too?

1. God’s original plan for mankind was to avoid sin—and consequently avoid death.

Genesis 2:16-17—“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: <sup>17</sup> But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

2. God favors life over death

Ezekiel 18:23—“Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?” (See also verse 32 and Ezekiel 33:11)

What does Jesus call Satan in John 8? A liar and a **murderer**

##### B. Death will be destroyed

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” We can escape eternal death—the **second death**—by trusting Christ as our Savior, but physical death still awaits all of us—unless Jesus returns first. Physical death obviously has not been destroyed yet, but it will be. We know it will be because Jesus conquered it—He rose victoriously. (See also I Cor 15:54-57)

##### C. Death is the last enemy that will be destroyed

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (v 26)

Revelation 21:4: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and **there shall be no more death**, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Lastly,

#### 5. The Resurrection of Christ is necessary for Christ to deliver the kingdom to the Father (vss 27-28)

A. God puts all things—except Himself—under Christ’s rule (v 27)

B. When all things have been subdued unto—and by—Christ, then Christ shall subject Himself to God that God may be all in all (v 28). In light of the Trinity, how does that work? And what does it mean?

At first glance, these verses seem to call into question the teaching of the Trinity. How can the Son be subject to the Father if they are both equal?

--Before Jesus came to earth as a man, He was God.

--Was He the God-Man in heaven? No; He was just God.

--Why did He come to earth and become a man? To redeem man; to die as a substitute for the payment of man’s sins.

Please take your Bibles and turn to Revelation 20. We’ll look at that in just a minute, but before we do, let’s think through the “history” of Jesus, if I can use that word.

1) He became a man in order to die

2) He did die, then rose again and returned to heaven

- 3) He will return to earth, punish those in rebellion against Him, and set up His kingdom for 1000 years
- 4) Notice Rev 20:7-9. Satan raises up one last rebellion against Christ at the end of 1000 years and it is over rather quickly “and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (Rev 20:9)
- 5) The devil is then thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10)
- 6) The unsaved dead are resurrected—the second Resurrection—and stand before Christ at the Great White Throne judgement (Revelation 20:11-15)
- 7) Notice Rev 20:14 “**death** and hell” are cast into the lake of fire.  
Death is gone; never to rear its ugly head again!

In Revelation 21:1 we see the new heaven and the new earth “for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away...”

Here’s where I am going with this—Christ’s need to be a **mediator** between God and man is over!  
 --All prophecies that predicted Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, return, and rule have been fulfilled  
 --Death has been destroyed

Here’s what else Christ submitting Himself to the Father suggests—not only is His role as mediator now over—it will never need to be performed in the future. Eternity is “locked in,” so to speak!

Does God solve the problem of evil and suffering? He most certainly does—once and for all!

Is Christ any less important? No; look at Revelation 22

--v 1 “...proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” God and the Lamb are one and the same --v 3 has the exact same phrase: “the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

We see here joint occupancy—two persons seated on one throne—but they are not two different entities. God is one—and the Father and Son are one.

Can’t wrap your head around that? That’s okay—just be willing to believe what you can’t understand!

### **CONCLUDING CONCLUSIONS**

1. Notice again Revelation 20:6 “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.”

This verse not only shows the length of Christ’s reign, it also teaches another important truth—not everyone participates in the first resurrection; not everyone escapes the second death. Who has a part in the first resurrection? Those who are born again, the saved, those “that are Christ’s at his coming” we read in I Cor 15:23.

2. Are you faithful with what God has given you? That is what we are rewarded for. Will you hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant?”

3. Are you thankful for the power and wisdom of God? God is not stumped by evil and suffering; He will triumph in the end and set everything right. Christ’s resurrection demonstrates that He will raise us, and that He will defeat His enemies, and that He will someday have dominion on earth.