

## Introduction

My father always tried to make things straight forward and simple. He took complicated engineering procedures and made it where field personnel could understand and apply them. He wrote books like, *Tripping Practices For The Man On The Rig*, *Lost Circulation For The Man On The Rig*, and *Well Control For The Man On The Rig*. I have tried to follow his footsteps, only I am dealing with spiritual principles rather than drilling principles. I like to take spiritual principles, and make them understandable and practical for everyone to apply in their walk with the Lord.

Our passage today is about the order of resurrection, and it is pretty straight forward; but it is not understood by many people. Although the resurrection of the dead is one of the six elementary or foundational teachings found in Hebrews 6, I have found that many people don't understand it. While the passage is straightforward, it has some challenges. For example, when it says that we will be resurrected at His coming, it says, "then comes the end." This end is not a single moment in time; it is like the end chapter, and this end chapter lasts for 1,000 years. There is a lot of things that happen in this end, and there are scholars with lots of differing views on what this end looks like. In 1 Corinthians 13:12 Paul wrote that we now "see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known." I will begin by saying that I see dimly, and I know in part. I look forward to that day when we are with the Lord that we will fully know. I will be sharing to the best of my ability what I dimly see and partially know.

(Heb 6:2) "of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment."

(1 Co 13:12) "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known."

Earlier in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul has established that the resurrection of Christ is a critical part of the gospel message, and that it was witnessed by the apostles and hundreds of others. Paul also tied the resurrection of Christ to our resurrection. In our passage today, Paul talks about the order of the resurrection. Christ was raised from the dead and is the first fruits. Those that are in Christ, that is believers, will be resurrected at Christ's coming. Then comes the end, when Christ hands over the kingdom to the God and Father. I will use some other Scriptures to help fill in the gaps, and hopefully this will connect the dots for everyone. We will have an opportunity at the end to discuss, and hopefully clarify, any questions that you have.

(1 Cor 15:20-28) "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. {21} For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. {22} For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. {23} But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, {24} then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. {25} For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. {26} The last enemy that will be abolished is death. {27} For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. {28} When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all."

**Order of the Resurrection** (1 Cor 15:20-28)

1. Resurrection of Christ (1 Cor 15:20-23)
2. Resurrection of Believers (1 Cor 15:23)
3. Resurrection at the End (1 Cor 15:24-28)

1. **Resurrection of Christ** (1 Cor 15:20-23)

Paul has established that the resurrection of the dead is a vital part of the gospel message. The simple gospel message that he shared was “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

(1 Co 15:3) “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,”

Next, Paul gave evidence of the witnesses of the resurrection. After Jesus was raised from the dead, He appeared to Peter, then the twelve apostles, then to more than five hundred brethren at one time, then to James, then to all the apostles, and finally to Paul.

There were some in the church at Corinth that were saying that there is no resurrection of the dead. Paul said that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ would not have been raised from the dead. If Christ had not been raised from the dead, their preaching was in vain, and the faith of the Corinthians was in vain. Furthermore, Paul and the rest of the apostles who were bearing witness of His resurrection would be classified as false witnesses. All of them would be considered of all men the most to be pitied in this life.

Our passage today is a continuation, and Paul said, “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.” All of the “what ifs” about Christ not being resurrected are emphatically thrown out. Christ has been raised from the dead. That means that Paul’s preaching was not in vain. That means that Paul and the other apostles are not false witnesses. That means that their faith is not in vain. That means that they are not to be pitied at all for hoping in Christ. The most pitied men of this life would be those who reject the gospel and resurrection of Christ.

(1 Cor 15:20) “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.”

Christ has been raised from the dead and He is the first fruits of those who are asleep. The Corinthians were agrarian and they understood what the first fruits were. The Jewish believers would also have understood what the first fruits were. In Leviticus 23, the Lord told Moses that they were to bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of their harvest to the priest, and he was to wave the sheaf before the Lord for them to be accepted. The offering sanctified the whole harvest. This is the same thought as the offering of the first dough. In Romans 11:16, Paul wrote “if the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also.” Paul’s point is that Christ was the first fruits, and the church is the harvest which is coming. Since Christ was resurrected, the believers will also be resurrected, but at a later date, when the harvest is ready.

(Le 23:9–11) “Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, {10} “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. {11} ‘He shall

wave the sheaf before the Lord for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.”

(Ro 11:16) “If the first piece *of dough* is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.”

Jesus was not the first person raised from the dead. In the New Testament, in John 11, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. In the Old Testament, in 1 Kings 17, we have the account of the widow’s son who died. Elijah stretched himself upon the child three times, prayed, and the boy’s life returned to him. This was not the same resurrection. This boy would die again physically. Lazarus was going to die again. The resurrection that Jesus had was different. He now had a glorified body. The young boy had his life return to his earthly body. In the resurrection of the dead, we are referring to receiving a glorified body. Jesus was the first fruits of the resurrection of the dead where a resurrected body was given.

(1 Ki 17:18–22) “So she said to Elijah, “What do I have to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance and to put my son to death!” {19} He said to her, “Give me your son.” Then he took him from her bosom and carried him up to the upper room where he was living, and laid him on his own bed. {20} He called to the Lord and said, “O Lord my God, have You also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?” {21} Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the Lord and said, “O Lord my God, I pray You, let this child’s life return to him.” {22} The Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived.”

Paul then said that “since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.” In Romans 5:12-14 Paul said, “just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.” Then, he mentioned that Adam was a type of Him who was to come, referring to Christ. Adam brought sin into the world, and Christ brought the opportunity for people to be made alive.

(1 Cor 15:21-22) “For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. {22} For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”

(Rom 5:12–14) {12} Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— {13} for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. {14} Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Paul said that there is an order to the resurrection of the dead. In verse twenty-three, he said, “But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming.” Christ’s resurrection has preceded all other resurrections; He is the first fruits, the first born from the dead.

(1 Cor 15:23) “But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming,”

I want to talk about the word order for just a minute. The Greek word is *tagma* (Strong's G5001). It comes from the word *tasso*, which means an orderly arrangement, or a series or succession. This is a military word, and refers to something orderly in arrangement, like a troop. The word for submission is *hupotasso*, which means under proper order and arrangement. In this verse I believe it is more of a series or succession. Because Jesus is the first fruits, He is at the top of this list or arrangement.

## 2. Resurrection of Believers (1 Cor 15:23)

The second to be resurrected are those who are Christ's at His coming. This is referring to believers. When Christ comes, those who have placed their faith in Christ will be resurrected.

(1 Cor 15:23) "But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,"

There are three parts to the resurrection of believers. In 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul wrote that he did not want us to be uninformed about what happens to people when they die. The word he uses is *asleep*, which often is used to refer to people who have died. He said, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus." The believers that are alive at the time Jesus returns will not precede or go before those who have died. In verse sixteen, Paul said that the Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. So, the dead in Christ will be next to be resurrected in this order. Then, "we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." There is not going to be much time lapse between those who have died and those who are still alive.

(1 Th 4:13–17) "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. {14} For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. {15} For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. {16} For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. {17} Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."

In Revelation 20, we get some more insight about what happens when Jesus comes. In John's vision he saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. This is referring to believers. The believers that are resurrected at the coming of Christ are going to reign with Christ for a thousand years.

(Re 20:4) "Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

After Jesus comes and the believers at that time are resurrected from the dead, they are clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Jesus, who is called Faithful and True, comes riding on a white horse. These resurrected believers are referred to as armies, and they follow Jesus on white horses, and Jesus strikes down the nations and rules them with a rod of iron. Often times, we picture ourselves going to heaven and just sitting around the throne room singing hymns with the angels and elders. However, we find in Revelation that we are an army and are riding on white horses, and following Christ as He judges and wages war. That is a new concept for many of us.

(Re 19:11–16) “And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. {12} His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself. {13} *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. {14} And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses. {15} From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. {16} And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

There is another group of believers that will be resurrected from the dead. In Revelation 20:5 we read that the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. Those that received Christ after His appearing and during the thousand-year reign will be resurrected when the thousand years is complete. Those that were resurrected before the thousand years are referred to as the first resurrection, and they will be priest of God and of Christ and will reign with Him during this thousand-year period.

(Rev 20:5-6) “The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. {6} Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”

So, there are three groups of believers that are resurrected. The first group is those who are dead in Christ when He comes. The second group of believers to be resurrected from the dead are those who are alive when Christ comes, and they will be caught up with Christ and those who were dead in Christ. The third group are those that are resurrected at the end of the thousand-year period. That is the order of the resurrection of the believers.

### 3. Resurrection at the End (1 Cor 15:24-28)

After the resurrection of the first and second group of believers at the appearing of Christ, “then comes the end.” The end is not a single moment in time; it is like the end chapter, and as we have seen while looking at the third group of believers, this end chapter lasts for 1,000 years. At the end, Paul gives two things that will happen and two conditions that must take place before this happens. One thing that will happen at the end is Jesus will hand over the kingdom to the God and Father. The second thing that will happen is that Jesus will also be subjected to the Father who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

(1 Cor 15:24-28) “then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. {25} For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. {26} The last enemy that will be abolished is

death. {27} For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. {28} When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.”

There are some things that must take place before Jesus turns everything over to the Father. The first condition is He must abolish all rule and all authority and power. He has to put all His enemies under His feet. Under the feet means under the authority of that person, so all rule, authority, and power must be under Jesus’ feet and authority.

In Joshua 10, five kings fought against Israel, and when Israel was prevailing, these five kings fled and hid in the cave at Makkedah. Joshua had his men roll large stones against the mouth of the cave and assigned men to guard them. After Joshua and Israel had finished slaying their enemies, he had his men open up the mouth of the cave and bring out the five kings. Then, he told the chiefs of the men of war to come put their feet on the necks of these kings. This was a declaration that they had been defeated and were now under the authority of Israel. Then, Joshua told them not to fear or be dismayed, but to be strong and courageous, for the Lord was going to do that to all their enemies.

(Jos 10:22–25) “Then Joshua said, “Open the mouth of the cave and bring these five kings out to me from the cave.” {23} They did so, and brought these five kings out to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon. {24} When they brought these kings out to Joshua, Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, “Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.” So they came near and put their feet on their necks. {25} Joshua then said to them, “Do not fear or be dismayed! Be strong and courageous, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies with whom you fight.”

We find another example in the New Testament. In Acts 4, the saints in Jerusalem were selling land and houses and bringing the proceeds of the sales to be used for the needy among them. They would lay these proceeds at the apostles’ feet, and they would distribute to each as any had need. Under the feet meant that they placed this money under the control and authority of the apostles to manage.

(Ac 4:34–35) “For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales {35} and lay them at the apostles’ feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.”

The first condition before Jesus turns over the kingdom to the Father is all the authorities, rulers, and powers must be under the feet of Jesus, subjected to His rule and authority. Paul tells us how this is going to happen. He said that Jesus must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. During this thousand-year reign, Jesus will be ruling and putting all things under His feet and authority.

The last enemy that will be abolished is death. The reason that death will be the last enemy is that there will no longer be anyone who dies. In Revelation 20, John gave us some revelation about death being abolished. He “saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.” This is referred to as the Great White Throne room judgment. John “saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and

the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.”

(Re 20:11–13) “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. {12} And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. {13} And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds.”

In Hebrews 9:27 God tells us that it was appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment. The Great White Throne room is where this judgment will take place. When people die, their spirit and soul go to the place of the dead, which in the Old Testament was known as Sheol, and in the New Testament, Hades. They wait in the place of the dead until judgment. The Great White Throne room is that appointed time for the judgment to take place.

(Heb 9:27) “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment,”

In John 5, Jesus said that those who hear His word and believe in Jesus have eternal life and do not come into judgment, but have passed out of death into life. Until Jesus died for our sins, the souls of the righteous and the souls of the wicked all went to Sheol or Hades. There were two places in the place of the dead. The thief on the cross told Jesus to remember Him, and Jesus told him that he would see Him in paradise. The Greek word is *paradeisos* (Strong’s G3857), and it is the place in Hades where the righteous were waiting. There is another side of Hades, referred to as hell, and the Greek word is *tartaroo* (Strong’s G5020). This is a pit of darkness, and is where fallen angels were cast into and are waiting for judgment. We find this described in 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6. When Jesus cast the demons out of the demoniac, the demons begged Jesus not to send them to this abyss or pit of darkness. It cannot be a great place based on the descriptions that we have. Those that were waiting for the Messiah were not in this place, but in the paradiso.

(Jn 5:24) “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

(Lk 23:43) “And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”

(2 Pe 2:4) “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;”

(Jud 6) “And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,”

(Lk 8:31) “They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.”

When Jesus died, He went to paradise in Hades. It was there that the thief on the cross saw Jesus, and all the others that had been waiting on the Messiah to come. We find this also recorded in Ephesians 4, where we read that Jesus ascended on high and led captive a host of captives. These

were the souls of those who were waiting for the forgiveness of their sins. Since Jesus paid the price for our sins, when He rose from the dead, He brought with Him all these captives. On the other side of Hades, the souls of the wicked remained there, and still remain there and are waiting for the day of judgment.

(Eph 4:8–9) “Therefore it says, “When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men.” {9} (Now this *expression*, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?”

Before we go back to Revelation 20, I want to go back to John 5. Jesus said an hour is coming when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. This is the resurrection of the righteous. In verse twenty-eight, Jesus said that “an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.” At the Great White Throne room judgment, all of the dead will be resurrected to a resurrection of judgment. The believers have already been set free from Hades and Jesus will bring those with Him when He returns, and their resurrection will happen at that time. The resurrection of the wicked happens at the very end, after the thousand-year reign of Christ, at the time of the Great White Throne room judgment.

(John 5:25-29) Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. {26} “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; {27} and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man. {28} “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, {29} and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.”

After the judgment, death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire, which is the second death. Anyone’s name that is not found in the book of life is thrown into the lake of fire. So, at this time, everyone that does not belong to Christ will have been judged. There will be no more death, and there will be no more place of the dead, and these are thrown into the lake of fire.

(Rev 20:14-15) “Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. {15} And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

The end comes when all things have been abolished. All rule and all authority and power and death must be abolished. Once all things have been subjected to Jesus, Jesus will subject Himself to the Father, who subjected all things to Him. The word subjected is *hupotasso*, under proper order and arrangement. All things have now been placed under Christ, and Christ has subjected Himself to the Father, and there is a divine order. This does not mean that Jesus does not have equality with the Father. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are One, but there is an order.

(1 Cor 15:24-28) “then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. {25} For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. {26} The last enemy that will be abolished is death. {27} For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection

to Him. {28} When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.”

### **Conclusion and Applications**

The resurrection of Christ was witnessed by the apostles and hundreds of others. His resurrection is a key part of the gospel message. In order to become a Christian, we must believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, and we must confess Him as Lord.

Jesus was the first fruits, meaning that the rest of the harvest would come later, and the church is that harvest that comes later. The fact that Jesus was raised from the dead means that we will also be raised from the dead. Our resurrection will be when the Lord returns. The believers who are already asleep, will be the first to be raised from the dead, and those that remain, or are alive when He comes, will be caught up in the air with Him. There will be another wave of resurrections at the end. The end is more of a chapter of events than a specific time, as it will take place over a long period of time. At the end, Jesus must subject all things to Himself. He must subject all rule, authority, and power. The last enemy that Jesus must abolish is death. Then, Jesus will subject Himself to the Father so that God may be all in all.

### **Concluding Prayer**

Father God, thank You for a glimpse into the future. Thank You for the hope that You have given us, and that we will be resurrected with a new and glorified body. We have so much to look forward to. Yet for right now, You told the disciples that it was not for them to know the times and epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority. You told us that we have a job to do, to be witnesses of Your resurrection. Help us to be ready to give a defense of the hope that is in us. Help us to share the good news with others. We ask You for doors of opportunity. Give us boldness to share the gospel message with others. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Order of the Resurrection (1 Cor 15:20-28)**

**Introduction** (Heb 6:2, 1 Co 13:12, 15:20-28)

1. **Resurrection of Christ** (1 Cor 15:20-23, 1 Co 15:3, Le 23:9–11, Rom 11:16, 1 Ki 17:18-22, Rom 5:12–14)
  
2. **Resurrection of Believers** (1 Cor 15:23, 1 Th 4:13–17, Rev 20:4-6, 19:11–16)
  
3. **Resurrection at the End** (1 Cor 15:24-28, Jos 10:22–25, Ac 4:34-35, Re 20:11–15, Heb 9:27, Jn 5:24-29, Lk 23:43, 2 Pe 2:4, Jude 6, Lk 8:31, Eph 4:8-9)

**Conclusion and Applications**