

1Corinthians 15:19-28

By Lloyd Dale

In order to properly understand 1Cor 15:19-28 many things must be taken into account. In 1Cor 15, Paul is refuting the erroneous notion that there is no resurrection. He Claims that "now Christ is risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of those that have died (slept)." Thus in order to properly understand this portion of this chapter, we must first properly understand what the Bible and Paul meant by "dead." For the present suffice it to say that Christ became "dead" when He voluntary surrendered to death on the cross.

Next Paul states that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. Contrary to popular opinion Paul is not writing about salvation here, he is writing about death in Adam and he is simply stating that Adam's death is imputed to all men that are born of Adam's seed. Then he states that in the same manner that Adam's death was imputed to all men Christ's resurrection life is imputed to all men that are born of Adam's seed.

Again, contrary to popular opinion, Paul is not writing about salvation in this passage. He is simply contrasting death and resurrection life. Other passages clearly tell us that there will "a resurrection of the dead, both the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15, cf. Dan 12:2). In that context, Paul states that this resurrection of the dead to life will occur for all men, "but each man in his own order. The first man, in this order of resurrection life, is Christ; He was the resurrection firstfruits of all men.

Next Paul states, "afterward (we now know from the balance of the NT that Paul's "afterward" meant approximately 40 years after Christ's resurrection) they that are Christ's at His Parousia." Paul's those "that are Christ's" is of course a reference to those that were given to Jesus by God the Father (John 17:9-24). In this verse, Paul clearly states the only "those that are Christ's" (the justified) will receive resurrection life at His Parousia. *Nothing what-so-ever is stated about the resurrection of anyone that was not Christ's (the unjustified).* By any reasonable standard this is the "first resurrection" of which John wrote in Rev 20:4d. We are told that those that "have a part in this first resurrection" will have no part in "the second death."

At this point let me ask you a question: How can anyone have a part in the "second death" unless he was born of Adam, and first died of Adam's death then experienced the resurrection life of Christ and then became subject to the "second death" because his name "was not found written in the book of life.?" Don't criticize my view until you have a reasonable and complete answer to this question.

At this point we are left with a serious question: "When will those that had not been given to Christ be resurrected?" By any reasonable standard those that had not been given to Christ by God the Father, i.e. "those that are Christ's at His Parousia" would be the "rest of the dead" of which John wrote in Rev 20:5.

John writes that "those that had a part in the first resurrection are blessed and holy and they shall be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him a thousand years."

Now without writing any more about this right now let's return to 1Cor 15:24 where Paul wrote, "then the end." What is this "end" to which Paul refers? One thing is certain, whatever it is; it clearly occurs **after** the "resurrection...of those that are Christ's at his Parousia" of verse 23 in Paul's sequence of events as presented here. That leaves two questions that we must answer correctly in order to properly understand what Paul is stating here: (1) "How long after the event of verse 23 (the Parousia resurrection of the justified) will it be until the "end?" (2) "What is this "end" to which Paul refers?"

From Scripture it can be deduced that Paul, John and the other apostles discussed the Revelation at the Jerusalem council in ca. 46 AD, therefore, I think that Paul and John were in agreement about these things. While Paul does not give us the details about the resurrection of the unjustified dead (the rest of the dead), in 1Cor 15:19-28; John does in Rev 20:5-6 and 11-15 and according to John this resurrection of the rest of the dead (the unjustified) takes place after a thousand year "heavenly kingdom" (2Tim 4:18) "reign" of the saints ("beheaded" and otherwise dead) resurrected at the Parousia (the justified of 1Cor 15:23b, cf. 1Tim 2:10-12, Matt 16:27-28,19:28, 25:31)

That this reign of the saints with Christ begins at the Parousia is verified by the sequence of verses 23 and 25 in 1Cor 15. First, the resurrection of "those that are Christ's at His Parousia," in verse 23 then "for He must reign..." in verse 25. In 1Cor 15 there is **NO** mention, not even a suggestion of a "reign" until after the Parousia of verse 23. However, in verse 26 after the Parousia of verse 23 Paul states, "for He must reign..." This follows or correlates perfectly with the events in Rev 20:4-6 & 11-15. Thus 1Cor 15:19-28 and Rev 20:4-6 & 11-15 are parallels that clearly establish that the "end" Paul has in mind in 1Cor 15:24 is the end of "the thousand years reign of the resurrected saints with Christ" which John describes in Rev 20.

It should be noted here that there is no coming of Christ or Parousia of Christ identified with the end of the thousand years reign of the saints with Christ in Rev 20:11-15. This all takes place in the realm of the "resurrected" both of the just and the unjust ("...whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" of the "second death, verses 14-15; Cf. Re 13:8, Re 17:8).

In keeping with both Paul's and John's sequence of events, the events of 1Cor 15:26-28 occur after "the thousand years reign of the saints with Christ."

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