

“Christ: The Firstborn from the Dead”
Colossians 1:15-20, Pt. 4

I. Jesus is the Firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:18)

- A. Unlike vs. 15, Paul is not using “firstborn” to mean “superior”.
- B. In vs. 18, Paul means “firstborn” in the *temporal* sense.
- C. But was Jesus really the first person resurrected from the grave?
 - 1. What about the other people in Old and New Testaments who are raised from the grave prior to Jesus? Even though they were raised, they died again.
 - 2. Jesus’ resurrection was qualitatively different:
 - a. He was raised to life beyond death.
 - b. He was raised with a glorified body, with new capabilities.
- D. The word “firstborn”, used the way it is in vs. 18, means others will follow Christ in resurrecting from the dead.
- E. In 1 Cor. 15:20-23, the same idea is stated using a different metaphor:

1 Corinthians 15:20–23 - ²⁰ 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

- 1. First fruits are the initial yield of a like harvest to follow.
- 2. Thus, God’s people will experience a like resurrection to Christ.

II. How will our resurrection be like Christ’s?

- A. We will be *bodily* raised.

1 Corinthians 6:14 - Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power.

Job 19:25-26 - ²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. ²⁶ And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God

- B. Our resurrection bodies will be beyond death forever.

1 Corinthians 15:53 - For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

- C. Our resurrection bodies will have glorified capabilities.

Philippians 3:20–21 - ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 - ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

D. Our resurrection bodies will be spiritual.

1 Corinthians 15:44 - it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

1. Not that we'll be non-physical...

Luke 24:39, 42-43 - ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have... ⁴² They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; ⁴³ and He took it and ate it before them.

2. But it will be our spirit that rules over our bodies not the reverse, as is so often true now.

3. Our spiritual body will be able to interact with both the physical and heavenly realms.

III. Concluding reflections...

A. Present suffering should be seen in light of the resurrection.

Romans 8:18 - I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

B. Present joys should be relativized by the hope of resurrection joys.