

## THE BIBLE & THE FUTURE — THE TRIUMPH OF THE RESURRECTION

We're studying what the Bible has to say about the future. The study of the last things is called "eschatology." Eschatology is usually divided into two parts:

- *General Eschatology* — Topics like the Second Coming and Final Judgment usually fall under the heading of general or historical eschatology.
- *Individual/Personal Eschatology* — When we consider death, the continued existence of the soul, and the intermediate state, we are engaged in personal or individual eschatology (i.e., What happens five minutes after I die?).

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**Context:** 1 Corinthians 15 is the classic NT passage on the resurrection of the physical body at the last day.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-58 (ESV)** <sup>50</sup> I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." <sup>55</sup> "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

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**Introduction:** The Bible describes death as an aggressive, relentless, stinging reality. It stalks every member of the human race, but Christ has brought finality to the *sting of death*. "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your **sting**?" (1 Cor 15:55; citing Hosea 13:14). This triumphant passage nurtures faith and bolsters assurance.

- The Courage of the Disciples
- The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus
- The Emergence of the Christian Church

### I. **The Necessity of the Resurrection** — vv. 50-52

#### A. *The Context of 1 Corinthians 15*

An outline of 1 Corinthians 15:

- **Verses 1-19** — The Centrality of the Resurrection
- **Verses 20-34** — The Future Display of Resurrection Power
- **Verses 35-50** — The Nature of the Resurrection Body
- **Verses 51-58** — The Inspiration and Triumph of the Resurrection

B. *Radical Incompatibility: Perishable vs. Imperishable* — v. 50

“*Flesh & blood*” vs. “*Kingdom of God*” = “this world” vs. “that world”; the present decaying world vs. the future undecaying world. There is radical incompatibility between this world and the next world.

C. *A Sudden and Complete Change* — vv. 51-52

A “mystery” is not something that humans can figure out or guess on their own. It is utterly unknowable unless the Lord discloses it.

The last trumpet = signals Jesus’ return — Trumpets in the OT were used to proclaim the Lord’s presence (Exod 19:16). In 1 Cor 15, it represents a universal, divine proclamation that will announce the end — “Awaken the dead! The King returns! The Lord is here! Come to judgment!” (cf. 1 Thess 4:16-17).

II. **The Triumph of the Resurrection** — vv. 53-57

Don’t miss the *continuity*. The perishable body preserves a degree of continuity (cf. seed analogy in vv. 35ff). Note the parallelism in verse 53:

- Perishable Body vs. Imperishable Body
- Mortal Body vs. Immortal Body

Victory presumes an adversary. Paul’s discussion of victory concerns the ultimate adversary — death. Death will be conquered. It will not win.

III. **The Assurance of the Resurrection** — v. 58

“Therefore” implies a *practical application* for the doctrine of the resurrection: the work that Christians do for the kingdom of God—service, evangelism, worship, generosity, love for neighbor—will bring results that redound for eternity. Our work and faith are not in vain. We are “children of the resurrection” (Lk 20:36 NIV).

John Stott says, “We need to say to ourselves regularly with great acclamation, ‘Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.’ For then our present duties will be inspired by the past and future comings of Christ.”