

1 Corinthians 15:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

Analysis

But now is Christ risen from the dead (Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν)—The emphatic nyni (Νυνί, "But now!") signals the glorious turn from reductio ad absurdum to triumphant affirmation. The perfect tense egēgertai (ἐγήγερται) indicates completed action with ongoing results: Christ was raised and remains risen. This is historical fact, not wishful thinking. The phrase ek nekron ("from among the dead") indicates Christ didn't resuscitate into old mortality (like Lazarus) but entered new resurrection life.

And become the firstfruits of them that slept (ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἐγένετο)—The agricultural metaphor aparchē (ἀπαρχή, "firstfruits") refers to the first sheaf harvested and offered to God (Leviticus 23:10-11), guaranteeing the full harvest follows. Christ's resurrection is not isolated miracle but inauguration of new creation. As firstfruits guarantee harvest, Christ's resurrection guarantees ours. The perfect participle kekoimēmenōn (κεκοιμημένων, "having fallen asleep") indicates believers' death is temporary rest before resurrection harvest.

Historical Context

The Feast of Firstfruits occurred during Passover week—Jesus rose on that very day, fulfilling the typology. The first sheaf offered to God anticipated the full harvest weeks later at Pentecost. Similarly, Christ's resurrection initiates the harvest of resurrection bodies at his return. Paul connects Old Testament agricultural feast to eschatological reality.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the 'firstfruits' metaphor demonstrate that Christ's resurrection guarantees yours?
2. What does it mean that resurrection is not just resuscitation but entrance into new creation?
3. How should the certainty of resurrection harvest shape Christian hope and perseverance?

Interlinear Text

Νυνὶ	δὲ	Χριστὸς	ἐγύγερται	ἐκ	νεκρῶν	ἀπαρχῇ	τῶν
now	But	Christ	is	from	the dead	the firstfruits	G3588
G3570	G1161	G5547	G1453	G1537	G3498	G536	

κεκοιμημένων	ἐγένετο
of them that slept	and become
G2837	G1096

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 15:23 (References Christ): But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Acts 26:23 (Resurrection): That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

Revelation 1:5 (References Christ): And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

1 Peter 1:3 (Resurrection): Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Colossians 1:18 (Parallel theme): And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Romans 8:11 (Resurrection): But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

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