

1 Corinthians

The Meaning of Resurrection

Interpreting the Text:

1. How do you think Paul's reminder of the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection relates to what he says about the resurrection of believers? Looking at it from the other direction, does what Paul says about the resurrection of believers give us any clues to his understanding of Jesus' resurrection?
2. Notice the way in which Paul uses analogies from nature (15:36-42) to try to explain his view of the resurrected body. How do these images function in Paul's argument? Where are other places where we might look at the relationship between the natural world and the world of faith?
3. Paul never writes down a systematic discussion of the relationship of Jesus to God in his letters, but he provides some clues to his view in these last chapters. If you had only chapter 15, how might you understand Jesus' role in God's plan? Look at the material on Adam in 15:45 and about the consummation of history in 15:24-28.

Applying the Text:

1. Professor Bartlett once preached an Easter sermon on this text where he tried to sound very much like Paul, saying that what the Corinthians seemed to think was that Jesus had risen from the dead but that none of the later Christians would do so. A very wise member of the congregation came up afterwards and said: "That's exactly what I believe." How would Paul respond to this? How would you?
2. In Christian funerals and memorial services we often hear that the person who has died has "gone to be with God," or is "in heaven with the saints." There are some New Testament passages that might suggest such a hope, but there is no such claim in 1 Corinthians 15. Does it make any difference whether Paul's view of death and resurrection is right or whether the more common view reflected in our funerals is right?
3. Look at the way Paul ends the chapter: "Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." How do these exhortations follow from all that he's been saying about resurrection?

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