

Unity over the Resurrection (1 Cor 15)

“Getting the Resurrection Right Pt. 2” (1 Cor 15:20-34)

1. Jesus is both the model and mechanism of our resurrection (vv. 20-22)

Paul explores the conception of Jesus as both the model and mechanism of the resurrection. As a human being, as *the human being*, Jesus lived perfectly as Adam should have lived. But he died the death that belonged to imperfect humanity. But he did so to become the first crop of the new age. Jesus is the first fruit of the harvest that will bring renewal to all of the world. Death came through Adam’s sin and corrupted humanity and all of creation. Now, through Jesus’s death and resurrection, believing humanity and creation will be made alive.

2. The resurrection will end with the defeat of death and God being all among all (vv. 23-28)

Jesus’s resurrection has already ushered in the reign of God. There is a now and not yet sense in which the reign of Jesus is occurring. Now, Jesus sits at God’s right hand and all enemies are being subdued under his feet. Every enemy, every ruler and power, will be placed there. But the last enemy to be destroyed is death. Right now, every enemy has already been defeated. But the not yet is that they will be completely destroyed. Then, Jesus at his coming will hand over everything to his Father. At that moment, God will be all among all. No enemies will be left to vanquish.

3. Life is a guarantee for the believer. Act like it! (vv. 29-34)

Paul tries to show the absurdity of some of the practices of the Corinthians if there is no resurrection. Why are people being baptized for the dead? What this practice was we are not sure. People may have been being baptized in memory of their dead loved ones. It made no sense to Paul if they would remain dead.

Furthermore, Paul looks at his own apostolic ordeals. If there is no resurrection, why would he face beasts at Ephesus, the place from which he is writing this letter (16:8). “Beasts” here may be a metaphor for the danger he is constantly suffering. The attempts on his life may have pushed him to say he dies every day. That is, he is pretty much close to death every day of his life because of the persecution.

There has to be something beyond this life for all of it to make sense. We cannot say, in effect, let’s eat and drink for it’s all over tomorrow. Rather, we should stay away from profligate and crazy living. Sin puts us in the way of God’s wrath. There is hope and there is a tomorrow for those who trust in Christ.