

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians

The Ethical Implications of the Resurrection of the Dead

1 Corinthians 15:29-34

1. **The _____ (v.29)**
The one thing that scholars can agree upon regarding this verse is that it is the most difficult passage in the letter to interpret with up to 50 different possible interpretations that have been offered. It is likely best to leave the description of "baptism for the dead" undefined, at least dogmatically, with the confidence that both Paul and the Corinthians had full understanding of the situation (cf. 1 Cor. 12:8-10). Whatever it was that they were doing, it was incompatible and ridiculous if the dead were not going to be resurrected.
2. **The _____ (vs.30-32)**
Jesus said those who followed Him would experience heartache and hardship (Matt 10:34-39; cf. Ps. 55:12-14) even unto death (Matt 10:16-23). Christian discipleship is truly a course of life where death and hardship are anticipated from the outset (John 15:18ff). Paul later recounts to the Corinthians a list of the hardships he has endured for the cause of Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23ff). If there were no resurrection of the dead, then all of this evangelistic zeal would be for naught (cf. vs.16-19) and it would be better instead to live for the moment (cf. Luke 12:18).
3. **The _____ (vs.33-34)**
Paul was not admonishing the Corinthians to isolate themselves from their non-believing neighbors, relatives, or other acquaintances, but rather from those individuals who professed to believe the gospel and therefore could understand the ways in which Christians ought to live still living as the unrighteous (1 Cor. 5:9-13; cf. Eph 4:1ff). The Corinthians were being issued a shamefully necessary wake up call (v.34) to live in accordance to the truth. Right doctrine, beginning with saving faith in Christ and His gospel, is the only solid basis upon which to live a truly righteous life (Heb. 11:6; cf. Hab. 2:4).