

1 Corinthians 15:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

Analysis

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial (καὶ σώματα ἐπουράνια, καὶ σώματα ἐπίγεια)—Paul extends analogy from earthly life to cosmic bodies. Epourania sōmata (ἐπουράνια σώματα, "heavenly bodies") refers to sun, moon, stars; epigeia sōmata (ἐπίγεια σώματα, "earthly bodies") to humans and animals. The word sōma (σῶμα, "body") applies to both—physical/material reality takes diverse forms.

But the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another (ἀλλὰ ἑτέρα μὲν ἡ τῶν ἐπουρανίων δόξα, ἑτέρα δὲ ἡ τῶν ἐπιγείων)—The word doxa (δόξα, "glory, splendor, radiance") indicates inherent brightness/majesty. Celestial bodies shine; earthly creatures don't. Yet both have appropriate glory for their sphere. Paul's argument: resurrection bodies will have doxa appropriate to the heavenly realm, different from earthly glory but real and physical.

Historical Context

Ancient cosmology distinguished celestial (incorruptible, eternal) and terrestrial (corruptible, temporal) realms. Aristotelian physics made this a metaphysical divide. Paul uses this framework but subverts it—resurrection doesn't mean escaping earthly for celestial (Greek dualism) but transformation of earthly into glorified form suited for new creation.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the distinction between celestial and terrestrial glory help us imagine resurrection bodies?
2. What does Paul mean by 'glory'—how will resurrection bodies manifest God's glory?
3. How does Paul subvert Greek dualism while using its categories to explain resurrection?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	σώματα	ἐπουρανίων	καὶ	σώματα			
There are also	bodies	celestial	There are also	bodies			
G2532	G4983	G2032	G2532	G4983			
ἐπιγείων	ἀλλ'	ἑτέρα	μὲν	ἢ	τῶν	ἐπουρανίων	δόξα
terrestrial	but	is another	G3303	G3588	G3588	celestial	the glory
G1919	G235	G2087				G2032	G1391
ἑτέρα	δὲ	ἢ	τῶν	ἐπιγείων			
is another	and	G3588	G3588	terrestrial			
G2087	G1161			G1919			

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