BETWEEN DEATH AND RESURRECTION: THE DISCIPLES' VIEW

Posted on May 12, 2010 by Eddie

Category: Observations

Put yourself in the shoes of one of Jesusâ€™ disciples. Everything is over, finished, done, gone to pot. The man they had pinned their hopes on is dead, executed by the people they thought that he would be replacing. The disciples believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the one who had come to rule the nation, but he ended up being tortured to death while people took the mick out of his royal pretensions. It really couldnâ€™t have been much worse.

Except that it was worse. For the disciples, the death of Jesus wasnâ€™t just a personal tragedy, it cut deep into the fibre of their being. These were people who were soaked in The Story from their birth. They knew all about the creation and fall, about Godâ€™s covenant with Israel and the stories of exile and return. They believed that Jesus was to be the culmination of The Story, the one who would finally restore Godâ€™s kingdom to earth through the Jewish nation. They had invested so much in Jesus that his death meant that The Story itself had failed. Everything they had been brought up to believe, the stories of national pride and hope all died on the cross with Jesus. The world was all of a sudden very empty and without meaning.

Of course, we look at this from the other end of The Story and we know what is about to happen. We picked up on Jesus hints about rising again and we might guess at the symbolism involved in the temple curtain being torn in two, but we havenâ€™t just heard the dreadful sound of soldiers hammering nails into the hands and feet of our friend and mentor. We shouldnâ€™t feel superior to the disciples: they were there, we werenâ€™t and the pain and despair was very, very real.