

Message #65**I Corinthians 15:1-11**

Jesus Christ came to this earth, hung on a cross and died, and then on the third day He arose. These are critical historical facts of the Gospel. There were actually some in the church of Corinth who were denying the resurrection (15:12). According to Paul, these people were fools (15:36), but they were in the church.

I Corinthians 15 is THE great chapter in the New Testament that deals with the critical subject of the resurrection.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS A CRITICAL PART OF THE GOSPEL WHICH SAVED YOU AND IT IS A PROVABLE HISTORICAL FACT.

FACT #1 – The Gospel which saved us contained the message of the resurrection. **15:1-2**

Result #1 - This was the Gospel which every believer received. **15:1b**

The main idea behind the word “receive” is to take to one’s self.

Result #2 - This was the Gospel in which every believer stands. **15:1c**

The word “stand” means to place or to set something in such a way that it stands firmly or steadfastly. The verb is perfect tense, meaning this was the Gospel of God, which caused you to stand in your relationship with God in the past and continues to cause you to stand in the present into the future.

Result #3 - This is the Gospel by which every believer is saved. **15:2**

There is no question that the doctrine of the resurrection is a critical part of salvation; in fact, in another text Paul wrote: “that if you shall confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved” (Rom. 10:9). Since Paul has already established that they received the Gospel and were saved, this is a sarcastic statement designed to cause them to remember the Gospel to which they responded.

A critical point to observe is that empty, vain faith stems from incorrect doctrine. Faith that is empty is faith based on human philosophy and logic. Faith that IS NOT empty is faith based on Biblical truth and doctrine.

FACT #2 – The Gospel the Apostle Paul received contained the message of the resurrection. **15:3a**

The verb “receive” is aorist, meaning Paul is looking back to a point in time when he received the message he proclaimed. Paul received the Gospel which he proclaimed and penned directly from Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12).

Jesus Christ personally revealed the Gospel to Paul and it was his specific set-apart assignment to record it and this Gospel included the doctrine of the resurrection (Rom. 1:1, 4).

FACT #3 – The Gospel which was delivered by Paul contained the message of the resurrection. **15:3-4**

The word “deliver” is an interesting word for it carries with it the idea of delivering or handing over something to someone at some personal risk or hazard (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 339).

Part #1 - Christ died for our sins. **15:3b**

The preposition “for” is the preposition “huper,” meaning Paul taught that Jesus Christ died in our place, as our substitute, as a sacrifice for our sins, whose sacrifice is far beyond and above any other type of sacrifice which has ever been or that ever could be offered.

When Paul adds the prepositional phrase “according to the Scriptures,” he is saying not only is this my message, but His substitutionary death is divinely inspired and rooted in the O.T. (i.e. Ps. 22; Is. 53).

Part #2 - Christ was buried after His death. **15:4a**

The burial of Jesus Christ was a critical part of Paul’s Gospel presentation because it establishes that Christ was truly and actually dead.

Part #3 - Christ was raised from the dead. **15:4b**

The verb “He was raised” is perfect/passive, meaning Christ arose the third day and is still risen to this very present day and His resurrection was the work of the Godhead.

FACT #4 – The resurrection is proved by several reliable witnesses. **15:5-8**

Witness #1 - Christ’s resurrection is proved by the testimony of Cephas. **15:5a**

Cephas is the Aramaic name for Peter; it means a stone or rock (John 1:42).

Witness #2 - Christ’s resurrection is proved by the testimony of the twelve. **15:5b**

The term “the twelve” is a group title, not a numerical count (Luke 24:33).

Witness #3 - Christ’s resurrection is proved by the testimony of 500 believers. **15:6**

To deny that Christ was resurrected is to deny the eyewitness account of 500 eyewitnesses.

Witness #4 - Christ's resurrection is proved by the testimony of James. **15:7a**

James was our Lord's half-brother (Gal. 1:19).

Witness #5 - Christ's resurrection is proved by the testimony of the apostles. **15:7b**

This term has specific reference to the church since the foundation of the Grace Age is apostolic teaching (Eph. 2:20).

Witness #6 - Christ's resurrection is proved by the testimony of Paul. **15:8-10**

Paul had seen the resurrected Christ and testified of this time and time again (i.e. Acts 9:1-8; 18:9-10; 23:11; I Cor. 9:1; 15:8).

(Reality #1) - He was the last to see Jesus Christ. **15:8**

Paul was the last apostle, in the chronological order, to see the resurrected Christ.

(Reality #2) - He was the least of the apostles. **15:9**

Paul considered himself to be the smallest of the apostles, not even fit or competent to even be called an apostle because he persecuted the church of God.

(Reality #3) - He was an apostle by God's grace. **15:10a**

Paul was what he was by God's grace, which means he was saved by God's grace, gifted by God's grace and entrusted with ministry by God's grace.

(Reality #4) - He was the hardest working apostle. **15:10b**

No other apostle outworked Paul. Paul never wanted God's entrustment to him to prove to be vain, so he labored more diligently than any other apostle. Clearly in the mind of Paul, God's grace is made vain if one doesn't minister for God.

FACT #5 – The resurrection has been preached and believed. **15:11**

The Gospel, proclaimed by the apostles, taught the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Is God's grace powerfully displayed in your life or downplayed in your life? Is the resurrection power of Jesus Christ, which produces new life, evident or not?