

The Gospel of the Confirmed Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:1–11 (NKJV)

15 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I,

but the grace of God *which was* with me.

¹¹ Therefore, whether *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Introduction

This past week had been historic for many reasons. News has given us a constant diet of death. Every night, the news gives the grim numbers of more people that have died from the deadly Coronavirus.

Especially sad has been the country of Italy where 19,448 people have died from the virus.

Over a 3 year period, records indicate that in Italy an average of 1,763,333 were diagnosed with the flu. Of that number, an average of 22,666 died. So with the flu. 1.2 % die,

But as it stands now in Italy, 12% of people who contract the virus Covid 19 die.

That is a huge difference.

And although, we hardly hear of the all the deaths from automobile, drugs, suicide, heart disease and other medical condition that are happening.

In the US alone, 8000 die every day.

That is the equivalent of over 2 1/2 9/11 events a day.

But those don't usually get our attention. They are scattered throughout the whole nation.

But when over 700 die from one virus in one day in New York city alone, it gets our attention.

This morbid and very sad reality has cast the light of a subject that most would rather not talk about.

And that is death.

Night after night, day after day we are forced to come to grips the the mortality of the human race and how fragile life is.

Most importantly we are forced to think soberly about our own impending death.

Its coming and it will be here sooner than you think.

Death is real, death is certain, and you my friend are going to experience it.

There are some who have tried to deny its existence like

Mary Baker Eddy Glover Patterson

The founder of the religious cult, Christian Science believe that evil and disease and death were and illusion to be rejected by the mind and the imagination.

Christian Scientists have always had good explanations for why pain seems to be happening, even though according to them, there's no such

thing. They have thousands and thousand of pages about it, and you could read them in reading rooms.

But in the words of rock band Daniel Amos, “We might have believed her if her teeth hadn’t fallen out

She also found out that death is no illusion to be concurred by the imagination.

She died December 3 1910 of pneumonia.

Throughout history men have tried to deal with the reality of death by adopting certain philosophical and religious positions.

Materialists, Atheistic, Evolutionist believe in utter extinction, total annihilation. Nothing human, physical or otherwise, survives after death. Death ends it all.

Some religions teach reincarnation, wherein the soul or spirit is continually recycled from one form to another—even from human to animal or animal to human.

You may die and come back as an animal or human or a bug.

Others believe in what is generally described as absorption, in which the spirit, or at least a certain part of the spirit, returns back to its source and is absorbed back into the ultimate divine mind or being. That belief is reflected in a statement of the

contemporary philosopher Leslie Weatherhead: “Would it really matter if I were lost like a drop of water in the ocean, if I could be one shining particle in some glorious wave that broke in utter splendour in perfect beauty on the shores of some eternal sea?”

In all those views, human personhood and individuality are forever lost at death. Whatever, if anything, survives is no longer a person, no longer an individual, no longer a unique being.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1984). [1 Corinthians](#) (p. 408). Chicago: Moody Press.

But is that all there is. We live, we die and that's it. Is there more to this life than what we see and experiment now.

The Bible teaches us that there is. We will live forever, and we will not live as disembodied spirits. But we will have resurrected Bodies.

The the Doctrine of the Resurrection as taught in the Scripture is wholly different than any other religion in the World.

Job said it this way

Job 19:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ And after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*,
That in my flesh I shall see God,

First Corinthians 15 is devoted entirely to doctrine of the Resurrection. In these 58 verses Paul gives the most extensive treatment of the resurrection in all of Scripture.

Just as the heart pumps life-giving blood to every part of the body, so the truth of the resurrection gives life to every other area of gospel truth. The resurrection is the pivot on which all of Christianity turns and without which none of the other truths would much matter. Without the resurrection, Christianity would be so much wishful thinking, taking its place alongside all other human philosophy and religious speculation.

The resurrection was the focal point of every other truth Christ taught. He taught His disciples that “the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again” (Mark 8:31; cf. 9:9, 31). He said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies” (John 11:25). The first two sermons preached after Pentecost both focused on the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:14–36; 3:12–26). Because of that truth the heart-broken followers of the crucified Rabbi were turned into the courageous witnesses and

martyrs who, in a few years, spread the gospel across the Roman empire and beyond. Belief in the resurrection, the truth that this life is only a prelude to the life to come for those who trust in Jesus Christ, could not be obliterated by ridicule, prison, torture, or even death. No fear or dread in this life can quench the hope and joy of an assured life to come.

True New Testament Christianity is a religion of the resurrection. John Locke, the 18th-century British philosopher, said, “Our Savior’s resurrection is truly of great importance in Christianity, so great that His being or not being the Messiah stands or falls with it.”

Because it is the cornerstone of the gospel, the resurrection has been the target of Satan’s greatest attacks against the church. If the resurrection is eliminated, the life-giving power of the gospel is eliminated, the deity of Christ is eliminated, salvation from sin is eliminated, and eternal life is eliminated. “If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied” (1 Cor. 15:19). If Christ did not live past the grave, those who trust in Him surely cannot hope to do so.

Without the resurrection salvation could not have been provided, and without belief in the resurrection salvation cannot be received. “If you 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). It is not possible, therefore, to be a Christian and not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1984). [1 Corinthians](#) (pp. 397–398). Chicago: Moody Press.

Lesson

The Gospel of the Resurrection Affirmed by Salvation

The Gospel of the Resurrection Attested by Scriptures

The Gospel of the Resurrection Authenticated by Saints

1. The Gospel of the Resurrection Affirmed by Salvation

15:1

Moreover, brethren, I **declare to** you the gospel which I preached to you

Γνωρίζω δε υμιν
αδελφοι το ευαγγελιον ο
ευηγγελισαμην υμιν

I declare Pres. Act. Ind.. I am making known
γνωρίζω

Original Word: γνωρίζω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: gnórizó

Phonetic Spelling: (gno-rid'-zo)

Definition: to come to know, to make known

Usage: I make known, declare, know, discover.

From a derivative of **ginosko**; to make known; subjectively, to know -- certify, declare, make known, give to understand, do to wit, wot.

to cause to know v. — to cause someone to know something.

Ephesians 1:9 (NKJV)

⁹ having **made known** to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

Robertson and Plummer may also be right in suggesting that “[t]here is a gentle reproach in the word. He has to begin again and teach them an elementary fact, which they had already accepted.”

Ciampa, R. E., & Rosner, B. S. (2010). *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (p. 743). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

15:1

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you **the gospel** which I preached to you

Γνωρίζω δε υμιν
αδελφοι **το ευαγγελιον** ο
ευηγγελισαμην υμιν

euaggelion: good news

Original Word: εὐαγγέλιον, ου, τό

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: euaggelion

Phonetic Spelling: (yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on)

Definition: good news

euaggélion – the Gospel – literally, "God's good news." See 2097 (euangelizō). The Gospel (2098 / euaggélion) includes the entire Bible, i.e. it is not limited to how a person becomes a Christian.

Romans 1:16–17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, *“The just shall live by faith.”*

15:1

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you

Γνωρίζω δε υμιν
αδελφοι το ευαγγελιον ο
ευηγγελισαμην υμιν

I preached to you

εὐηγγελισαμην **Aorist Middle Ind**
 euaggelízō (from 2095 /eú, "good, well" and
 angellō, "announce, herald") – properly, proclaim
 "the good message" (good news). In the NT, 2097
 (euaggelízō) refers to sharing the full Gospel of
 Christ – literally, "gospelizing" that announces the
 complete message of "the good news" (the Lord's
 glad tidings).

Cognate accusative, “the gospel which I
 gospelized unto you.”

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (1 Co 15:1). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

The gospel (1) was preached to them by Paul; (2)
 they received it; (3) they stand on it; and (4) they are
 being saved through it.³² The four points seem to
 progress in chronological order, starting from their
 first experience with the gospel and moving to the
 process of salvation which they are presently
 experiencing and which God would bring to
 completion at the end (cf. Phil. 1:6)

Ciampa, R. E., & Rosner, B. S. (2010). *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (p. 743). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you,
which also you **received**
and in which you stand,
 Ο ΚΑΙ **ΠΑΡΕΛΑΒΕΤΕ** ΕΝ Ω
 ΚΑΙ ΕΣΤΗΚΑΤΕ

So first he preached it,
 then they received it.

Acts 18:8–11 (NKJV)

8..... And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

⁹ Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “**Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent;** ¹⁰ **for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.**”

¹¹ And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

The very fact that the Corinthian Christians themselves, and all other Christians everywhere, had received the gospel and believed in Jesus Christ and had been miraculously changed, was in

itself a strong evidence of the power of the gospel, which power is in the resurrection of Christ.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1984). *1 Corinthians* (p. 399). Chicago: Moody Press.

Unlike the Jews who for the large part did not receive him

John 1:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

Matthew 10:40 (NKJV)

⁴⁰.....and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

Colossians 2:6 (NKJV)

⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

which also you received

παρελαβετε Aorist Act Ind

paralambanó: to receive from

Original Word: παραλαμβάνω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: paralambanó

Phonetic Spelling: (par-al-am-ban'-o)

Definition: to receive from

Usage: I take from, receive from, or: I take to, receive (apparently not used of money), admit, acknowledge; I take with me.

3880 paralambánō (from 3844 /pará, "from close-alongside" and 2983 /lambánō, "aggressively take") – to take (receive) by showing strong personal initiative

It is interesting to note that, the word receive in the English is not always the same in the Greek.

In a number of passages the word

δέχομαι

is used, or a form of it.

déxomai – properly, to receive in a welcoming (receptive) way.

1209 (déxomai) is used of people welcoming God (His offers), like receiving and sharing in His salvation (1 Thes 2:13) and thoughts (Eph 6:17).

1209/dexomai ("warmly receptive, welcoming") means receive with "ready reception what is offered" (Vine, Unger, White, NT, 7), i.e. "welcome with appropriate reception" (Thayer).

[The personal element is emphasized with 1209 (déxomai) which accounts for it always being in the Greek middle voice. This stresses the high level of self-involvement (interest) involved with the "welcoming-receiving." 1209 (déxomai) occurs 59 times in the NT.]

Like in these verses

Acts 2:41 (NKJV)

⁴¹ Then those who gladly **received** his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

Acts 11:1 (NKJV)

11 Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:6 (NKJV)

⁶ And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,

But when when Paul wants to stress personal involvement he uses

παραλαμβάνω
paralambanó:

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)

¹³ For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you **received** παραλαμβάνω the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men,

but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

1 Corinthians 11:23 (NKJV)

²³ For I **received** παραλαμβάνω from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread;

Galatians 1:9 (NKJV)

⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Galatians 1:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

15:1

Moreover, brethren, I declare to
 you the gospel which I preached
 to you,
which also you received
and in which **you stand,**
 ο και παρελαβετε εν ω
 και **εστηκατε**

Paul preached it,
 They Recieved it
 and
 They remained in it.

and in which **you stand,** Perf Act. Ind

The receiving is Aorist and the standing is Perfect.

histémi: to make to stand, to stand

Original Word: ἵστημι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: histémi

Phonetic Spelling: (his'-tay-mee)

Definition: to make to stand, to stand

Usage: trans: (a) I make to stand, place, set up, establish, appoint;
 mid: I place myself, stand, (b) I set in balance, weigh; intrans: (c) I

stand, stand by, stand still; met: I stand ready, stand firm, am steadfast.

Romans 5:2 (NKJV)

² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Acts 2:41–42 (NKJV)

⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. ⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

John 8:31 (NKJV)

³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, **“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.**

Colossians 1:21–23 (NKJV)

²¹ And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled ²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—²³ if indeed you continue in

the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

1 John 2:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

15:1

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, **2**
by which also you are saved,

δι ου και σωζεσθε

Pres. Pass. Ind

SŌZŌ (from sōs, "safe, rescued") – properly, deliver out of danger and into safety; used principally of God rescuing believers from the penalty and power of sin – and into His provisions (safety).
 you are being saved.

Ephesians 2:8 (NKJV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved (Pf.P.Pt.) through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,

1 Corinthians 1:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved (P.P.Pt.) it is the power of God.

Salvation has three aspects

Saved from the Penalty of Sin	Past.
Saved from the Power of Sin	Present
Saved from the Presence of Sin	Future

15:1

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you,

which also you received and
in which you stand, ² by
which also you are saved,

if you hold fast that word which I
preached to you—unless you
believed in vain.

The Corinthians' holding fast to what Paul had preached (see 11:2) was the result of and an evidence of their genuine salvation, just as their salvation and new life were an evidence of the power of Christ's resurrection. It must be recognized, however, that some lacked the true saving faith, and thus did not continue to obey the Word of God.

Paul's teaching about the security of believers was unambiguous.

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Rom. 8:29–30; cf. vv. 35–39; 5:9–10; 9:23; 1 Cor. 2:7; etc.).

It is only by God's power that we are saved and only by His power that we are kept saved. Our salvation is kept by Christ's holding us fast, not primarily by our holding Him fast. Our holding onto Him is evidence that He is holding onto us.

A professing Christian who holds to orthodox doctrine and living and then fully rejects it proves that his salvation was never real. He is able to let go of the things of God because he is doing the holding. He does not belong to God and therefore God's power cannot keep him. Such a person does not **hold fast the word** because his faith is **in vain**. It was never real. He cannot hold fast because he is not held fast.

Our Lord repeatedly spoke of sham believers who had useless, non-saving faith. The parable of the sower (Matt. 13:1–23) tells us that some of the seeds of the gospel fall on shallow or weedy soil, and that tares often look like wheat, but are not (13:24–30, 34–43). Jesus spoke of many kinds of fish being caught in the same net, with the good being kept and the bad being thrown away (13:47–50). He spoke of houses without foundations (7:24–27), virgins without oil for their lamps, and servants who wasted their talents and so were “cast out” (25:1–30). He warned of gates and paths that seem right, but that lead to destruction (7:13–14).

Some of the Corinthians apparently had intellectually and/or outwardly acknowledged Jesus' lordship, savior-hood, and resurrection, but had not trusted in Him or committed themselves to Him. They believed only as the demons believe (James 2:19). They acknowledged Christ, but they had not **received** Him, did not **stand** in Him, were not **saved** by Him, and did not **hold fast** to His **word**, which Paul had **preached** to them. As Jesus made clear in the illustrations just cited above, many people make positive responses of one sort or another to the gospel, but only genuine faith in Jesus Christ results in salvation.

Many people have useless faith. "Many" will say, "Lord, Lord," in the day of judgment, but be excluded because of their empty, sham faith (Matt. 7:22–23; 25:11–12). Those who forsake Christ and His church prove that they never really belonged to Him or to His true Body (cf. 1 John 2:19). It is those who "abide in My word," Jesus said, those who **hold fast the word**, who "are truly disciples of Mine" (John 8:31; cf. 2 Cor. 13:5; 2 John 9). The truly justified and righteous not only are saved by faith but continue to "live by faith" (Heb. 10:38). Obedience and continuous faithfulness mark the redeemed.

The fact that, despite their great immaturity and many weaknesses, the Corinthian church even continued to exist was a strong testimony to the power of the gospel. Who but the risen, living Christ could have taken extortioners, thieves, adulterers, fornicators, homosexuals, liars, idolaters, and such thoroughly worldly pagans and transformed them into a community of the redeemed? Despite their shortcomings and failures, and despite the presence of false followers in their assembly, Christ lived in and through the true saints. Paul was ashamed of much of what they did and did not do, but he was not ashamed to call them **brethren**.

Though it is largely a subjective proof, the endurance of the church of Jesus Christ through 2,000 years is evidence of His resurrection reality. His church and His Word have survived skepticism, persecution, heresy, unfaithfulness, and disobedience. Critics have denounced the resurrection as a hoax and fabrication, but have never explained the power of such a fabrication to produce men and women who gave up everything, including their freedom and lives when necessary, to love and to follow a dead Lord! His living church is

evidence that Christ Himself is alive; and He could be alive only if He had been raised from the dead.

H. D. A. Major, former principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford, has written,

Had the crucifixion of Jesus ended his disciples' experience of Him, it is hard to see how the Christian Church could have come into existence. That Church was founded on faith in the Messiahship of Jesus. A crucified Messiah was no Messiah at all. He was one rejected by Judaism and accursed of God. It was the Resurrection of Jesus, as St. Paul declares in Rom. 1:4, which proclaimed Him to be the Son of God with power (*The Mission and Message of Jesus* [New York: Dutton, 1946], p. 213).

Church historian Kenneth Scott Latourette wrote in *History of the Expansion of Christianity*,

It was the conviction of the resurrection of Jesus which lifted his followers out of the despair into which his death had cast them and which led to the perpetuation of the movement begun by him. But for their profound belief that the crucified had risen from the dead and they had seen him and talked with him, the death of Jesus and even Jesus himself would probably have been all but

forgotten (vol. 1 [New York: Harper & Row, 1970], p. 59).

A follower of Buddha writes of that religious leader, “When Buddha died it was with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains.” Mohammed died at Medina on June 8, 632, at the age of 61, and his tomb there is visited yearly by tens of thousands of Muslims. But they come to mourn his death, not to celebrate his resurrection. Yet the church of Jesus Christ, not just on Easter Sunday but at every service of immersion baptism, celebrates the victory of her Lord over death and the grave.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1984). [1 Corinthians](#) (pp. 400–401). Chicago: Moody Press.

The Gospel of the Resurrection Affirmed by
Salvation

**The Gospel of the Resurrection
Attested by Scriptures**

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

The Old Testament clearly predicted Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. When Paul says **I delivered to you**, he means he *brought* authoritative teaching, not something of his own origination. He did not design it, he only **delivered** what God had authored.

To the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus said, “ ‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?’ And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:25–27).

When the unbelieving Jews asked for a sign of Jesus' messiahship, He responded, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the

Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:39–40).

At Pentecost Peter quoted from Psalm 16 and then commented that David, the author of the psalm, “looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay” (Acts 2:25–31).

Paul proclaimed before King Agrippa, “And so, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:22–23).

Jesus, Peter, and Paul quoted or referred to such Old Testament passages as Genesis 22:8, 14; Psalm 16:8–11; Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; and Hosea 6:2.

Over and over again, either directly or indirectly, literally or in figures of speech, the Old Testament foretold Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. No Jew who believed and understood **the Scriptures**, referring to what we now call the Old Testament, should have been surprised that the Messiah was ordained to die, be buried, and then resurrected. Twice Paul repeats the phrase **according to the**

Scriptures, to emphasize that this is no new thing, and no contradiction of true Jewish belief.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1984). [1 Corinthians](#) (pp. 401–402). Chicago: Moody Press.

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5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

Throughout history the testimony of responsible and honest eyewitnesses has been considered one of the most reliable forms of evidence in a court of law. Paul's third evidence for Christ's resurrection is in that form.

Lawyer Sir Edward Clarke said,

As a lawyer I have made a prolonged study of the evidences for the events of the first Easter day. For me, the evidence is conclusive, and over and over again in the high court I have secured the verdict on evidence not nearly so compelling. Inference follows on evidence, and a truthful witness is always artless and disdains effect; the gospel evidence for the resurrection is of this class, and as a lawyer I accept it unreservedly as the testimony of truthful men to facts they were able to substantiate.

The historian Thomas Arnold of Oxford has written,

The evidence for our Lord's life and death and resurrection may be and often has been shown to be satisfactory. It is good according to the common rules for distinguishing good evidence from bad. Thousands and tens of thousands of persons have gone through it piece by piece as carefully as every judge summing up on an important case. I have myself done it many times over, not to persuade others but to satisfy myself. I have been used for many years to study the history of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of

those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is better proved by fuller evidence than the great sign that God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead.

Jesus' appearance to Peter

It is significant that Paul says that Jesus **appeared** to those who saw Him after the resurrection. Until He revealed His identity to them, not even Mary Magdalene (John 20:14–16), the two disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:15, 31), or the disciples gathered together on Easter evening (John 20:19–20) recognized Him. The gospel accounts consistently speak of Jesus' appearing or manifesting Himself after His resurrection (Matt. 28:9; Mark 16:9, 12, 14; Luke 24:31–39; John 21:1; etc.). He was recognized only by those to whom He chose to reveal Himself, and there is no record that He revealed Himself to any other than His followers.

One of the requirements for apostleship was having seen the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22), and the first apostle to whom **He appeared** was **Cephas**, that is, Peter. We are not told the exact time or occasion for that appearance. We only know that it was sometime after His appearance to Mary and

before His appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:34). We are not told why the Lord appeared to Peter first or separately, but it possibly was because of Peter's great remorse over having denied his Lord, and because his role as a leader among the apostles and in the primitive church until the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). In going to Peter first, Jesus emphasized His grace. Peter had forsaken the Lord, but the Lord had not forsaken him. Christ did not appear to Peter because Peter deserved to see Him most, but perhaps because Peter needed to see Him most. Peter was the Lord's spokesman at Pentecost and was crucially used in the expansion of the church for several years. As such he was the prime witness to the resurrected Christ.

Jesus' appearance to the twelve

Jesus next appeared **to the twelve**. As mentioned above, He appeared to the eleven disciples (though still often referred to as "the twelve" even before Judas was replaced) as they were fearfully assembled on Easter evening (John 20:19; Luke 24:36).

The apostles laid the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20), which from the beginning based its

beliefs and practices on their teaching (Acts 2:42). Those men whom the Lord used to establish His church on earth all saw Him in His resurrected body (Acts 1:22). They were capable, honest, and reliable witnesses to the most important event of history.

Jesus' appearance to the five hundred

After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time. The quality of specific witnesses is represented by the apostles, all of whom were known by name and could easily be questioned. The quantity of witnesses is seen in the **five hundred brethren** who all saw the risen Christ **at one time**. Scripture gives no indication of who those people were, or where Jesus appeared to them, but they were surely well known in the early church, and, like the twelve, would often have been questioned about seeing the risen Savior. Even at the time of Paul's writing, more than two decades later, most of the witnesses were still alive. They **remain until now**, he adds, **but some have fallen asleep**, that is, died.

At the same time and same place five hundred witnesses saw Jesus alive after His resurrection!

Jesus' appearance to James

We are not told to which **James** Christ **then ... appeared**. Two of the apostles, one the son of Zebedee and the other the son of Alphaeus, were named James (Mark 3:17–18). I am inclined to believe, however, that this James was the half-brother of the Lord, the author of the letter of James and a key leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13–21).

James originally was a skeptic. Like his brothers he did not at first believe that Jesus was the Messiah (John 7:5). But now this member of Jesus' own household, this one who for several years did not recognize Jesus as the Christ, was a witness, a powerful and convincing witness, to His resurrection. Perhaps, as with Paul, it was the experience of seeing the resurrected Christ that finally brought **James** to saving faith. In any case, the convincing testimony of a family member and former unbeliever was added to that of the apostles and the five hundred.

“Over a period of forty days” (Acts 1:3), between His resurrection and ascension, Jesus appeared **to all the apostles** on other occasions that are not specified (see John 21:1–14).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1984). [1 Corinthians](#) (pp. 402–404). Chicago: Moody Press.

Last, Jesus was seen by Paul

8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me. **11** Therefore, whether *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

The fourth major testimony of Christ's resurrection was that of the apostle Paul himself, a special and unique witness of the risen Lord. Paul was not among the original apostles, all of whom had been disciples of Jesus during His earthly ministry. He was not among the five hundred other believers who had seen the resurrected Christ. Rather, he had for many years been an unbeliever and a chief persecutor of the church.

He was, however, **last of all** allowed to see the risen Christ. The Lord's appearance to Paul not only was postresurrection but postascension, making Paul's testimony more unique still. It was not during the forty days in which He appeared to all the others but several years later. All the others to whom Christ appeared, except perhaps James, were believers, whereas Paul (then known as Saul) was a violent, hateful unbeliever when the Lord manifested Himself on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1–8). There were also other appearances (Acts 18:9–10; 23:11; cf. 2 Cor. 12:1–7).

Jesus appeared to Paul **as it were to one untimely born**. *Ektrōma* (**untimely born**) ordinarily referred to an abortion, miscarriage, or premature birth—a life unable to sustain itself. In Paul's figure, the term could indicate hopelessness for life without divine intervention, and convey the idea that he was born without hope of meeting Christ. But the use of the term in the sense of an ill-timed birth, too early or too late, seems to fit Paul's thought best. He came too late to have been one of the twelve. In carrying the idea of unformed, dead, and useless, the term was also used as a term of derision. Before his conversion, which coincided with his vision of the resurrected Lord, Paul was spiritually unformed, dead, and useless, a person to be scorned by God.

Even when he was born it was wrong timing. Christ was gone. How could he be an apostle? Yet, by special divine provision, **He appeared to me also**, Paul testifies.

Though Paul never doubted his apostleship or hesitated to use the authority that office brought, he also never ceased to be amazed that, of all persons, Christ would have called him to that high position. He not only considered himself to be **the least of the apostles**, but not even **fit to be called an apostle, because [he] persecuted the church of God**.

Paul knew all of his sins were forgiven, and he was not plagued by feelings of guilt over what he had once done against God's people. But he could not forget that for which he had been forgiven, and it continually reminded him that **by the grace of God I am what I am**. That he deserved God's forgiveness so little was a constant reminder of how graciously His grace is given.

It is possible that Paul's memory of having **persecuted the church of God** was a powerful motivation for his being determined that **His grace would not prove vain**. (Compare his testimony in 1 Tim. 1:12–17.) As is clearly substantiated in the New Testament, Paul was able to truthfully say, **I labored even more than all of them**. (Compare his

commitment as chronicled in 2 Cor. 11:23–12:12.) Yet he was not boasting in his own spirituality or power but in God's, because, as he hastened to add, **yet not I, but the grace of God with me.** The same grace responsible for his calling was responsible for his faithfulness. God sovereignly appointed Paul an apostle and sovereignly blessed his apostolic ministry. Paul believed, responded, obeyed, and was continually sensitive to the Lord's leading and will. But apart from God's prevenient grace the apostle knew that everything he did would have been in vain and worthless (cf. Eph. 4:15–16; Col. 1:28–29; etc.).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1984). [*1 Corinthians*](#) (pp. 404–406). Chicago: Moody Press.

1 Corinthians 15:12–22 (NKJV)

¹² Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁴ And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty. ¹⁵ Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. ¹⁶ For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸ Then also those

who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

Charles Spurgeon

We have often asserted, and we affirm it yet again, that no fact in history is better attested than the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It must not be denied, by any who are willing to pay the slightest respect to the testimony of their fellow-men, that Jesus, who died upon the cross, and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, did literally rise again from the dead.