

1 Corinthians 15

The Gospel Declared

1. declare: To make clear or plain (anything that is obscure or imperfectly understood); to clear up, explain, expound, interpret, elucidate.
2. This is the same gospel that Paul had preached to the Corinthians and that they had also received. **v. 1 c/w ACT 18:1-11.**
 - A. It was Paul's gospel that converted them. He was the father of their conversion. **1CO 4:15; 2CO 11:1-2.**
 - B. In his absence, they had strayed from Paul's gospel to the point that they might accept any gospel. **1CO 11:19; 2CO 11:3-4.**
 - C. Paul had sent Timotheus to remind them of *his ways in Christ*. **1CO 4:16-17.**
 - D. How important it is to remind saints of basic gospel! **2PE 1:12-15.**
3. In this gospel they *stood*.
 - A. It is by faith in this gospel that believers stand. **2CO 1:24.**
 - (1) Thus they maintain their place in the church. **ROM 11:17-23.**
 - (2) Thus they stand and withstand Satan. **EPH 6:11-19.**
 - B. Take away this gospel and you take away a Christian's foundation.
 - (1) They have nothing to stand in.
 - (2) Their whole religion collapses as Paul will demonstrate.
4. The Corinthians had been saved by the gospel. **v. 2.**
 - A. This was a *temporal* salvation since one must be eternally saved *before* he can receive the gospel. **1CO 1:18; 2:14.**
 - B. Through the gospel one is saved from ignorance, immaturity, error, false teachers, heaviness, mourning, and fear to fulness of joy, and fellowship with God and other believers. **EPH 4:11-15; ISA 61:1-3; 1JO 1:1-4.**
 - C. At issue in this chapter is the doctrine of bodily resurrection which, if denied, causes faith to be corrupted and overthrown. **2TI 2:17-18.**
5. Salvation by the gospel continues only if the gospel is *kept in memory*.
 - A. Unlike eternal salvation (**JOH 6:39; 10:28**), this salvation can be lost.
 - B. They have believed in vain who do not keep in memory what was preached unto them.
 - (1) What purpose does it serve to believe something only to forget it?
 - (2) Forgetfulness results from lack of application. **JAM 1:22-25.**
 - C. Remembering the gospel will save us from a lot of problems.
6. The word "gospel" means *good tidings*. **LUK 4:17-18 c/w ISA 61:1; ROM 10:15 c/w ISA 52:7.**
 - A. tidings: The announcement of an event or occurrence; a piece of news; reports, news, intelligence, information.
 - B. The very nature of the gospel is informational. It imparts knowledge.
7. Paul restates the gospel that he had delivered to them first of all. **vs. 3-6.**
8. That which he *delivered* unto them he had also *received*.
 - A. The gospel he preached he had received by revelation of Jesus Christ. **GAL 1:11-12.**
 - B. He only preached what came by revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - C. He preached nothing that originated with men. **1CO 2:12-13.**
 - D. He cursed anything different that originated with men or angels. **GAL 1:8.**
9. The gospel is the declaration of:
 - A. the person of Jesus Christ Himself. **ACT 9:20; 18:5.**
 - B. the death of Christ for our sins according to the Scriptures.
 - C. the burial of Christ.
 - D. the resurrection of Christ according to the Scriptures.

- E. the fact that the resurrection had numerous eyewitnesses.
10. The gospel is the declaration of what God HAS done about sin and its consequence, death.
- A. In this chapter Paul will reason from the resurrection of Christ to the future resurrection of all God's children.
- B. What Christ has done in history has consequences in the end of history.
- (1) The future resurrection of the dead and the judgment are part of the gospel message as necessary conclusions of it. **ACT 10:40-42; 17:31; 24:14-15; ROM 2:16.**
- (2) He Who conquered death has power over death to deliver men from it or consign them to it. **REV 1:18; 2:23.**
- (3) What Christ has done in the past gives hope for the future, which hope the gospel holds forth. **COL 1:5, 23.**
11. Following are several presuppositions necessary to the gospel message.
- A. There is one eternal, infinite God, Who made all things.
- B. This God has communicated to man in the Scriptures.
- C. God made man and gave him a law.
- D. Man has transgressed that law and this has brought death and destruction into the world.
- E. In other words, the account of **GEN 1-3** is essential to the gospel.
- F. These presuppositions must be established in order for the gospel to be relevant.
- G. Consider the implications of the theory of evolution that make reestablishing these presuppositions necessary.
- (1) Evolution is an attempt to explain the existence of all things without God.
- (2) With the denial of God comes denial of ultimate moral concepts of good and evil.
- (3) Evolution teaches that death and destruction were present in the world before man appeared. Therefore, death has nothing to do with the sin of man.
- (4) Evolution teaches that man evolved from a lower state to a higher state whereas Scripture teaches that man fell from a higher state to a lower state.
- (5) Man's continuing evolution rather than a resurrection is the hope of this theory.
12. The gospel is the tidings of the Person of Christ.
- A. That it is *Christ* that died, was buried, and rose again is of utmost significance.
- B. "Christ" is a Greek term meaning *anointed* (**ACT 4:26 c/w PSA 2:2**). The word is "Messiah" in the Hebrew. **JOH 1:41.**
- C. A Messiah, the son of David and the Son of God, Who would bring salvation, was promised in the Scriptures.
2SAM 7:12-14; PSA 89:19-20; JER 23:5-6; DAN 9:24-25; ZEC 9:9.
- D. In preaching the gospel it is necessary to demonstrate that the historical Jesus is God's Christ. **ACT 18:5.**
- E. It would have availed nothing had any other than God's Christ died on that cross.
13. Christ *died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*
- A. The good news is not that Christ died. All men die for that matter.
- B. The good news is that Christ died for our sins.
- C. His death was vicarious; that is, it took our place.
- (1) The wages of sin is death. **ROM 6:23.**
- (2) Christ's death was an offering of Himself in sacrifice to God to take away our sins. **HEB 9:26-28.**
- (3) He died the death we deserved to die and in so doing satisfied God's law against us thus taking away our sins. **GAL 3:13.**
- (4) The ultimate penalty for sin is being forsaken of God. **PSA 5:4-5; 2TH 1:8-9.**
- (5) Christ was forsaken of God on the cross and thus endured the ultimate penalty. **MAT 27:46.**

- D. Christ's death was for *our* sins, for a particular people rather than for all men in general.
- (1) According to **v. 1**, Paul was addressing *the brethren*.
 - (2) In **1CO 1:2**, Paul addressed these brethren as they "...that are sanctified in Christ Jesus..."
 - (3) Christ died for those who are in Him, which are the elect of God.
1CO 1:30; EPH 1:4; HEB 10:14.
- E. Christ's death was *according to the Scriptures*. **LUK 24:25-27, 44-46; ACT 13:27-29.**
- (1) The means, circumstances, and effects of the death of Christ were spelled out in types and prophecies of the Scriptures.
Consider **EXO 12; LEV 16; PSA 22; ISA 53.**
 - (2) The types and prophecies clearly show Christ's death being for His people, the elect.
 - a. The Passover lamb was provided for the Israelites, not the Egyptians.
EXO 12:3.
 - b. The sin offering on the Day of Atonement was made for *all* the transgressions and *only* the transgressions of the children of Israel.
LEV 16:34.
 - c. "...for the transgression of MY people was He stricken" (**ISA 53:8**).
 - (3) The types and prophecies further show Christ's death being effectual in putting away sin. **EXO 12:21-23; LEV 16:33; ISA 53:10-11.**
- F. All of this corresponds with the doctrine of sovereign election unto salvation by Christ through His death which saved them eternally.
EPH 1:3-7; 1PE 1:2; ROM 9:11-16; 8:28-30 c/w HEB 9:15.
- (1) Those who hold that Christ shed His blood and died for all mankind without exception commonly make salvation a mere possibility *conditioned upon something that the spiritually dead sinner does* (let us call such "conditionalists").
 - a. They commonly reject the doctrine of sovereign election of only some sinners, of limited atonement and particular redemption.
 - b. However, many conditionalists affirm that God was just in only choosing Israel as a covenant people in the O.T. and only giving *them* His law and religion by which men could be saved.
 - (2) God's sovereignty in only saving some sinners cannot be avoided.
 - a. Any conditional system for saving sinners excludes all who are unable to fulfill the condition. Therefore God choosing a salvation system conditioned upon what sinners do is a sovereign choice to NOT save those who cannot meet the condition.
 - b. Consider the missionary who believes that sinners must receive the gospel in order to be eternally saved. He knows of two distant and separate islands of complete heathen but also knows he has not the resources or time to go to both places. In anguish, he begs God to somehow show him which island he should go to with the gospel. Has he not therefore asked God to sovereignly decide who will NOT be saved?
 - (3) Professing Christians who outwardly reject the doctrine of a limited atonement nevertheless commonly affirm a limited atonement.
 - a. Whereas Scripture teaches that the bloodshed and death of Christ actually eternally saved all of God's elect, the conditionalist affirms that the bloodshed and death of Christ actually saved nobody. That's very limiting!
 - b. Some conditionalists affirm that infants have no sin. If true, then infants do not need a Savior: Christ's atoning blood and death did not apply to them

since He only died for the ungodly. **ROM 5:6.**

- i. This means a limited atonement.
- ii. This also means that infants are an eternally secure crowd for whom Jesus did not die, and they do not need a new birth!
- iii. Since aging beyond infancy could imperil one, the best thing for an infant would be to never age too much and so remain in a group for which Jesus did not die.
- iv. Conclusion: the most eternally secure people are those for whom Jesus did not die and who are not born again.

- (4) What conditionalists fail to understand is that the love of God for sinners is either universal or eternal but it *cannot be both*.
 - a. God's love is indeed the primary reason for the giving of His Son. **JOH 3:16; EPH 2:4-5.**
 - b. To say God's love is not eternal is to remove all real assurance of salvation.
 - c. To say God's love is universal demands that all sinners without exception are eternally saved, since *nothing can separate one from the love of God*. **ROM 8:38-39.**
 - d. To say that all are universally *and* eternally loved but some will end up in hell is to say that God's love is realized by torturous torment and agony apart from Himself as much as it is realized by joy, peace and health in His presence.
 - i. This is insane "Annie Wilkes" kind of love.
 - ii. Let not this kind of God's love be the pattern for marital love.

- (5) The conditionalist (albeit ignorantly), casts doubt upon the death of Jesus Christ which was expressly designed to take away sin.

G. The historical, actual bodily death of Christ was thoroughly verified. **LUK 23:46-49; JOH 19:31-35.**

H. The actual bodily death of Christ is a necessary prelude to the actual bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead.

14. Christ *was buried*.

- A. Jesus' dead body was wrapped in a clean linen cloth with 100 pounds of spices according to Jewish custom. **JOH 19:39-40.**
- B. The body of Christ was laid in "...a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid" (**JOH 19:41-42**). Therefore, when Christ arose there was no trace of a dead body in the tomb.
- C. Jesus Christ was as dead and buried as any other man had been. **JOH 11:44; ACT 5:5-6.**
- D. His burial was necessary that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. **ISA 53:9; MAT 12:40.**
- E. In order to save His people from the grave, Christ entered into that enemy territory and conquered it. **HOS 13:14.**

15. Christ *rose again the third day according to the Scriptures*.

- A. By His conception and birth of the seed of David He was raised unto Israel a Saviour. **ACT 13:22-23; LUK 1:67-69; 2:11.**
- B. At His resurrection He was raised again. **ACT 2:30-32.**
- C. He rose again the third day as He Himself had prophesied. **MAT 16:21.**
- D. By His death, burial and resurrection the Messiah has brought the promised salvation. **1PE 1:10-11.**
- E. The Scriptures typified and prophesied of the resurrection of Christ.
 - (1) The return of Isaac from the mount of sacrifice was a resurrection in figure pointing to the actual resurrection of Christ. **GEN 22:5 c/w HEB 11:17-19.**

- (2) The success of the Day of Atonement hinged upon the survival of the high priest. **LEV 16:2-3, 17, 20-22.**
 - a. Had the high priest not emerged alive from presenting the sin offering before God, the atonement would not have been accomplished and sins would not have been put away.
 - b. This pointed to the resurrection of Christ as necessary to the success of His atoning death. **ROM 4:25; 5:10-11.**
 - c. “And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (**1CO 15:17**).
- (3) **ISA 53:12** prophesied that the One Who *poured out His soul unto death* would *divide the spoil with the strong* which necessitates that He rise from the dead.
- (4) The Scriptures prophesied that *Christ abides forever* (**PSA 89:4; 110:4 c/w JOH 12:32-34**). Jesus cannot be the Christ if He is still dead.
- (5) **PSA 2:7** and **PSA 16:10** are prophecies of the resurrection according to **ACT 13:32-37.**
 - a. Above all other evidences, Christ’s resurrection declares Him to be God’s Son. **ROM 1:4.**
 - b. Denial of His resurrection is denial of God’s Son, which is the spirit of antichrist. **1JO 2:22-23.**

- F. The possibility of the resurrection must be granted from the evidence of God’s power in the creation. **JER 32:17.**
 - (1) If God could create a living man from the dust, He can certainly raise that dust to life again. **ACT 26:8.**
 - (2) If God could generate life from dust, He could certainly regenerate the uncorrupted body of Jesus Christ that *never decayed toward dust after death*. **ACT 13:34-37.**
 - (3) Even evolutionists will grant that life came from non-living matter; hence, they accept life from the dead.

16. There were numerous witnesses to the resurrection of Christ. **1CO 15:5-8.**

- A. This is a vital part of the gospel message.
- B. The apostles constantly affirmed that they were witnesses of the risen Christ. **ACT 2:32; 3:15; 5:30-32; 10:40-41; 13:30-31.**
- C. There is an abundance of evidence to support faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. **ACT 1:3.**
 - (1) infallible: Of things: Not liable to fail, unfailing. a. Not liable to prove false, erroneous, or mistaken; that unfailingly holds good.
 - (2) That they are *infallible* proofs excludes the Shroud of Turin, a one-piece cloth which is purported to bear the image of the body of Jesus Christ.
 - a. If the image is an artifact of decomposition, mind that the body of Christ did not corrupt. **ACT 2:27.**
 - b. The image appears to have long hair but Jesus had short hair. **1CO 11:14.**
 - c. The image’s face is in fair condition but Jesus’ *visage* (face) was *marred* (mangled, disfigured) *more than any man*. **ISA 52:14.**
 - d. Jesus’ burial garb was two pieces: body cloth and separate napkin for the head. **JOH 20:5-7 c/w JOH 19:40 c/w JOH 11:44.**
 - (3) RSV and DRV drop “infallible.” NASB and NIV soften to “many convincing proofs.”
- D. Our faith is a reasonable faith in something that is factual and provable by eyewitness accounts.
 - (1) Sound faith rests upon facts rather than fables, which are stories not founded on

- fact. **2PE 1:16.**
- (2) Scripture requires us to prove all things (**1TH 5:21; ACT 17:11**). Truth invites verification! The proof of Jesus is open for inspection. **ACT 26:26.**
 - (3) The Lord Jesus discouraged faith in Himself in the absence of proof. **JOH 10:37-38.**
 - (4) Faith without facts becomes a game of circular reasoning: what I believe is true because I believe it is true.
 - a. This is faith in faith rather than faith in God.
 - b. This focuses attention on man's personal experience rather than on God.
- E. The eyewitnesses of the resurrection are listed. **vs. 5-8.**
- F. Attempts to deny the resurrection break down.
- (1) Some say that Jesus did not actually die, He merely swooned.
 - a. There were witnesses to His death. **JOH 19:33-35; MAR 15:44-45.**
 - b. How did the weakened Jesus survive three days and three nights in a stone sepulchre bound in one hundred pounds of spices? **JOH 19:39-40.**
 - c. How did the weakened Jesus get past the Roman guard and roll away the stone over the door? **MAT 27:64-66.**
 - (2) Some say His disciples stole His body. **MAT 28:13.**
 - a. The disciples neither understood nor believed the resurrection before it was proved to them. **MAR 9:31-32; LUK 24:10-11.**
 - b. How did they get past the Roman guard to steal the body?
 - c. Would all of the disciples so uniformly suffer what they did for something they knew was a tale of their own devising?
 - (3) Some say that His enemies stole the body.
 - a. Why didn't they produce the body to discredit the apostles' testimonies?
 - b. His enemies were desperate enough to once seek to get rid of a body that He resurrected. **JOH 12:10-11.**
 - c. Attempts to silence the resurrection were made by force, not proof!
 - (4) Some say that a beast devoured His body.
 - a. How did the beast get past the guard and the stone?
 - b. A beast would have left traces of the body which would have been advanced by enemies to disprove the resurrection.
 - c. Beasts don't normally separate and wrap burial clothes. **JOH 20:7-8.**
 - (5) Some say that the disciples were hallucinating a risen Jesus.
 - a. It would have to have been mass hallucination. **1CO 15:5-6.**
 - b. Hallucinations are generally experienced by one who has a firm belief and high level of desire and expectation of something. The disciples neither understood nor believed in the resurrection until after it was proved to them. **MAR 9:31-32; LUK 24:10-11.**
 - c. Hallucinations, etc., are generally only experienced by one sense (sight, hearing, etc.) but the disciples met, saw, heard, conversed with and touched the risen Savior. **1JO 1:1.**
- G. The impact of the resurrection attests to its reality.
- (1) The apostles underwent a transformation after they had seen the risen Lord.
 - (2) Time is divided at Jesus Christ. Would time be divided by the impact of a deluded fanatic?
 - (3) The perpetual existence of the Christian faith attests to the historicity of the risen Christ. **MAT 16:18.**
 - (4) The change in world politics attests to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- a. The fragmenting of the nations attests to the ascension ministry of Christ. **PSA 2:8-9.**
 - b. The gospel of the resurrection liberated men's hearts in that the fear of death no longer could be used as a threat. **HEB 2:14-15.**
 - c. Emperor Julian's dying words are conjectured to have been, "Vicisti Galilaeae" (*Thou hast conquered, O Galilean*).
- (5) The setback to Gentile superstition attests to the power of the resurrection. **ACT 17:29-31.**
- 17. The record of the eyewitnesses of the events of the gospel has been written so that men might have the data upon which to base their faith. **JOH 20:30-31; LUK 1:1-4.**
 - A. We believe other events of history based on the records that have been left by those who experienced that history.
 - B. Most knowledge that we acquire comes from the accounts of others. **1JO 5:9.**
 - (1) The same applies to the history of the gospel.
 - (2) It is not a matter of whether one is accepting another's testimony or not. Every reasonable person does that. It is a matter of whether the testimony is true or not.
 - C. There are numerous manuscripts of the New Testament some of which date back to the second century after the events took place.
 - D. The oldest manuscript copy of the Roman historian Tacitus dates back to one thousand years *after* he wrote.
 - E. There is a thousand years between Caesar's Gallic Wars and the oldest manuscript available of *Commentarii de Bello Civil*.
 - F. Some approach the New Testament with the presupposition that all the writers lied about Jesus Christ.
 - (1) Imagine approaching a study of Napoleon with the presupposition that all the sources lied about him.
 - (2) Such a bias makes the study of history impossible, if it is consistently applied to all historical investigation.
 - G. The credibility of the gospel historians is established by the other facts they mention such as the Jewish situation, the Roman rule, and geography, which facts stand unquestioned.
 - H. The New Testament documents meet the criteria of reliable history.
 - (1) The N.T. writers were contemporaries of the times and persons of whom they wrote.
 - (2) The N.T. writers suffered for their testimony. If they were lying about Christ, it should be noted that whereas liars might make good fabulists and hypocrites, they make very unlikely martyrs.
 - (3) They record the doubts that they entertained and how they themselves accepted the facts only under the weight of the strongest evidence.
 - I. Simon Greenleaf, developer of Harvard Law School and a top authority on what constitutes sound evidence, said, "It was therefore impossible that they could have persisted in affirming the truths they have narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact." (Simon Greenleaf, *The Testimony of the Evangelists*, p. 28)
- 18. The gospel message is an historical account of events that occurred in history.