

**I CORINTHIANS**  
**Chapter 15:1-11**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The preaching of the Gospel was also the secret to Paul's success - **Romans 1:15-16** - **"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."**

Some Corinthian pagans who were converted believed that Christ was resurrected, but denied that they would be resurrected - **15:12, 35**. This pagan division brought into the church was heretical, and had to be corrected. In doing so, Paul provided believers with the classic chapter on the important subject of the resurrection of the body.

As we think of it and begin this study, we are almost thankful that the error was permitted to develop so early. This permits us to get answers by the writings of the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. How much we would have lost had there been no occasion to write this great chapter!

**VERSE 1:**

Historically and doctrinally the Gospel is defined by death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In - **verse 3** he spoke of Christ as the redeeming Christ: **"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."**

Paul tells us that the death of Jesus Christ was not an incidental death. There was a great purpose in His death. He - **"died for our sins"**.

**"Moreover brethren I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you"**.

Paul was not merely reminding them of the facts of the Gospel, but he is beginning again and stating these foundational truths as though they had never heard them, though he personally had indeed preached the - **"gospel"** to them in the beginning of his ministry among them.

**"I declare** (make known) **unto you the Gospel."** **"Gospel"** - means good news, glad tidings. The good news is - **"...that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. . ." - I Timothy 1:15.**

**"Which also ye have received"** - **"received"** - means to receive from another, to take to, or with, oneself. Therefore, it is recorded - **"...Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized"** - **Acts 18:8**. To hear, receive, take to oneself the Gospel, is to be saved by the grace of God. Of course, it is only by the effective work of the Holy Spirit that any lost sinner is enabled to receive the Gospel.

**"And wherein ye stand"** - The Holy Spirit through Paul here refers to the believer's "legal standing" in the Lord Jesus Christ. This standing in Jesus Christ has nothing to do with what the believer has done, is doing, or shall do. It is purely and entirely a transaction between the Father and the Son in the covenant of grace. It is based upon the unchangeable act of God whereby He declared all true believers in Christ to be fully and eternally justified. This justification of the believer is based upon the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died in the place or stead of all who shall believe on Him, paying their sin debt so that it can never again be charged to their account.

Therefore all who truly believe on Him as their Saviour are as sure for heaven as if they were already there. They have a perfect standing in Jesus Christ; the holy law of God has nothing else against them because Jesus fulfilled the law for them. The law demands perfect obedience and Jesus perfectly obeyed it for His people. The law demands death for all who break it and Jesus fulfilled that demand by dying for His people. - **Romans 8:1-4; Romans 8:28-39.**

**VERSE 2:**

**"By which also ye are saved,"** – The sinner's salvation is his being delivered from the bondage and penalty of sin by the power of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. {13} **Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: {14} In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"** – **Colossians 1:13-14.**

Because the Gospel is the power of God unto the salvation of lost sinners, Paul was not ashamed of it. **"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"** - **Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 1:18, 21.**

**"If you keep in memory what I preached unto you"** – means if you hold fast the Word, the Gospel, and the truth Paul had preached to them.

**"Unless ye have believed in vain"** - The more obvious meaning in keeping with the whole context is that if Christ was not raised from the dead as the Gospel declares and as Paul had preached to them, then they had believed in vain or for no purpose. In fact, if Christ is not resurrected, then Paul's preaching and all Gospel preaching would be without cause having no validity, and thus would provide no basis for belief. But, those who truly believe are saved for Jesus Christ is risen from the dead: and through Paul, the Holy Spirit goes on to give indisputable evidence of His resurrection.

The gospel is the means whereby the believer is saved. Our salvation rests in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

The true believer has to say:  
 Could my tears forever flow,  
 Could my zeal no respite know,  
 This for sin could not atone  
 Thou must save, and Thou alone:  
 In my hand no price I bring,  
 Simply to Thy cross I cling.

**VERSE 3: - "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received,"**

**"First of all"** - does not refer to point of time, but more literally means - among the first things, or among the foremost points. In other words, it was first because of its importance. Remember, Paul first preached to these while they were yet lost sinners involved in idolatry. In dealing with the unsaved the Gospel is of – **"first"** importance. By the Gospel men are shown Christ's death, burial, and resurrection for their sins that they might be saved from their sins.

**"How that Christ died for our sins"** - Paul declared in **Romans 5:6 - "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."** Also, in he stated in **Romans 5:8 - "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."** Christ died for our sins. That was the purpose of His death.

Christ died for, or on behalf of our sins. He **"... who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens"** - **Hebrews 7:26** – He died for our sins! How this ought to humble us, and melt our cold hearts before God who has shown us such Amazing Grace.

He, by His sufferings and death, satisfied the justice of the thrice holy God, by paying our sin debt. The justice of God, His holy law, demanded death as the penalty on our part for our sins - **"For the wages of sin is death"** **Romans 6:23a.** Eternal death is the sentence passed by God in perfect justice upon all who refuse to believe on His Son as their personal Saviour - **"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"** - **John 3:36.**

Christ did not die for us because we were good or would ever become good, but He died for us because we were sinners – **“Christ died for our sins”**. – {6} **For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.** {7} **For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.** {8} **But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”** - **Romans 5:6-8.**

**“According to the scriptures”** - Paul also tells us that His death was neither incidental nor accidental. His death was according to a pre-determined and pre-written plan. It was not an afterthought, but forethought. It was conceived before the foundation of the world.

By - **“the scriptures,”** both here, and in **verse 4** - Of course, Paul meant the Old Testament Scriptures especially the types and prophecies of the Old Testament. The following are but a few of the Old Testament Scriptures setting forth the truth that Christ died for our sins. **Isaiah 53:1-12** should be compared with Luke’s account of an incident in the ministry of Philip - **Acts 8:26-35**. The Lord taught the disciples from the Books of the Old Testament concerning His death. Read - **Luke 24:25-27, 46-48; Acts 26:22-23.**

#### **VERSE 4**

**“And that he was buried,”** – The fact of His burial is essential to the fact of His resurrection. His burial, even as His death and resurrection, was **“according to the scriptures”**. **“And He made** (more lit., He was appointed) **His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death”** – **Isaiah 53:9a**. This was fulfilled in minute detail. Christ was crucified between two thieves and it was the intention of all who were involved in having Him crucified that He be buried in total dishonor among criminals. But, a rich man named Joseph got permission to take His body and bury it in his own new tomb - **Matthew 27:57-60.**

**“And that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”** - Meaning - and that He hath been raised. The verb here is perfect tense showing the permanent, continuous state of resurrection, and its power to produce the intended results of His resurrection. He was buried once temporarily. He is resurrected forevermore! – **Revelation 1:18.**

Peter shows in his sermon preached on the day of Pentecost that His resurrection was according to the Old Testament Scriptures. He quotes from David - **Psalms 16:8-11; Acts 2: 25-36.**

#### **VERSE 5-7:**

Paul referred to both His public appearances and private appearances as proof that Jesus was raised from the dead. In light of these appearances and the eyewitnesses that could testify that He had risen from the dead, the resurrection should not be denied or doubted.

The resurrection of Christ is proved by His appearances. Basically, the proof is twofold; the appearances of Christ - **15:5-7**, and the change in Paul’s life - **15:8-11.**

The apostle did not list all of the post-resurrection appearances, but did provide a sample selection which would be adequate to prove the reality of the resurrection. The list shows that Christ appeared to individuals, small groups, and a large crowd. He appeared at different times and in various places; and He was seen, touched, and heard.

The six confirming testimonies include:

1. **“Cephas”** - this is the Apostle Paul’s favorite name for the Apostle Peter as is seen in – **I Corinthians 1:12.** Note the record of Peter seeing Christ - **Mark 16:7; Luke 24:34.**
2. **“The twelve”** - **Luke 24:36; John 20:19**

3. The **"five hundred"** - Three statements are made about this group of five hundred - **15:6**. They all saw Him at one time. In the approximate twenty-five years since that appearance some had died, but the majority was still alive. Thus, their witness was available for cross-examination. While there is no specific verse of Scripture that states when and where this meeting took place, the general consensus is that it took place, on a mountain in Galilee, **1 Corinthians 15:6-7; Matthew 26:31-32**.
4. The fourth witness was – **"James"**, a half brother of Christ - **John 7:5; Acts 1:14; Galatians 1:19**.
5. The fifth witness, that – **"of all the apostles"**. Evidently, during the forty days between the resurrection of the Lord and His ascension back to the Father in Heaven He was seen of all the apostles many times - **Acts 1:1-11**.

**VERSE 8: - "And last of all he was seen of me also,"**

**"Last of all"** - after He had appeared to all the others, after He had ascended back to the Father, He was seen of Paul. Paul, known as Saul of Tarsus before he was saved, saw the risen and glorified Saviour while he (Saul) was on the road to Damascus - **Acts 1:17; Acts 26:13-17**.

Who was this Saul, now called Paul, to whom Jesus appeared? He was a zealous, self-righteous Pharisee. Note his own account of what he had been - **Philippians 3:4-6**.

He was a bloodthirsty persecutor of the members of the Lord's Church. - **Acts 7:58; Acts 8:1, 3; Acts 9:1-2**. He was an unbeliever, yea one who was possessed of a deep-rooted, blinded, prejudiced, passionate, and consuming unbelief. Since God saved such a sinner as Paul, He can save any sinner, as Paul himself shows. - **1 Timothy 1:12-16**.

**"As one born out of due time,"** - Paul is speaking here of his spiritual birth. He is referring to the fact of his sudden conversion, or being born again, on the road to Damascus and of suddenly being thrust into the service of God as an apostle. Unlike the other apostles who were saved and disciples before they were apostles, Paul goes all of a sudden from being a merciless, passionate persecutor of the Lord's Church to one who greatly loved the Lord Jesus Christ. Saul, who had hated Christ with an overwhelming hatred was now Paul who was completely devoted to the gospel. Therefore, compared with the other apostles he was - **"as one born out of due time."**

**VERSE 9:**

Paul considered himself the least of the apostles, and not even fit to be called an apostle because of the life he had lived - **Acts 8:3; Acts 22:14; Acts 26:11**. The very gospel he hated and attacked had been the instrument of his transformation.

Paul could never forget what he was and what he had done before he was saved: **"who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious ..."** - **Timothy 1:13**. **"Injurious"** - in the original means to treat or use others despitefully, to outrage and insult them; and this he had done to the members of the Lord's Church - **"because I persecuted the church of God."** **"The church of God"** - here can only refer to the church at Jerusalem as a careful study of the book of **Acts** will show.

**VERSE 10:**

The term - **"grace"** means free favor, unmerited or undeserved favor. Thus the grace of God is His free favor to man who does not and cannot deserve such favor. The very term - **"grace"** always is in direct opposition to all works of every kind and degree - **Romans 4:4; Romans 3:9-20; Ephesians 2:1-7;**

**Romans 11:6.** Paul went from a persecutor to a preacher. He had been changed – **“by the grace of God”** and transformed by the power of the gospel.

I think of the inscription on the grave of John Newton the author of Amazing Grace:

John Newton, Clerk  
 Once and infidel and libertine,  
 A servant of slaves in Africa,  
 Was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ,  
 Preserved, restored, pardoned,  
 And appointed to preach the faith  
 He had long labored to destroy.

Thanks be unto God for the power and might of the gospel. Every believer stands as a testimony of its power.

**“And his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain;”** - **“Vain”** means - fruitless, without effect, empty. **“Grace”** - bestowed, given, made effective in the heart of the recipient by the Holy Spirit is NEVER bestowed in vain. Grace is never fruitless, without effect or empty, but will always accomplish that which God intended.

**“But I labored more abundantly than they all.”** – The word - **“labored”** means: extreme toil, growing weary in such toil. I was more diligent in preaching; I encountered more perils; I have exerted myself more. The record of his life compared with the records of the other apostles fully shows this.

**“Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”** - Although he was a willing servant of the Lord, and everything he had done and all that he was that pleased the Lord he immediately attributes to the – **“grace of God”**. He does not boast of anything except the Lord. Paul was certainly not ignorant or unaware of the many great talents God had given him. He knew it was an indisputable fact that his wearying, toiling, wearing-out labors and his many and great sufferings for the Lord, were indeed - **“more abundant”** than of any of the other apostles. However, he also knew that it was God who had wrought in him such willingness and perseverance in His service.

**Verse 11: Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.”**

Whether by Paul or by the other apostles the foundation doctrine of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Gospel had been preached. This verse shows what is truly important in preaching: (1) not the preacher - **“whether it were I or they”**, but the truth preached. (2) Not the mere listening to the preacher, but the believing of the truth preached - **“so ye believed”**.

The principle stated in this verse applies to both saved and lost. The preacher must preach the truth - **“all the counsel of God”**, to the saved and in turn, they must believe the truth preached if they are to - **“grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”**

**I CORINTHIANS 15:1-11****Work Sheet**

1. What was the secret of Paul's success?
2. What is the Gospel?
3. What was the purpose of the death of Christ?
4. What is the definition of the Gospel?
5. What is the definition of Justification? What does it mean and how is it accomplished?
6. All who truly believe on Christ as their Saviour are as sure for heaven as if they were \_\_\_\_\_. They have a \_\_\_\_\_ standing in \_\_\_\_\_; the holy law of God has nothing else \_\_\_\_\_ them because Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the law for them. The \_\_\_\_\_ demands \_\_\_\_\_ obedience and \_\_\_\_\_ perfectly obeyed it for \_\_\_\_\_. The law demands \_\_\_\_\_ for all who break it and Jesus fulfilled that demand by \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ people. - **Romans \_\_:1-4;**  
**Romans \_\_:28-39.**
7. The sinner's salvation is his being delivered from the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of sin by the power of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. Gospel is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God unto the \_\_\_\_\_ of lost sinners; Paul was not ashamed of it. Give Bible verse to prove your answer!
9. What does the following mean - **"unless ye have believed in vain"**
10. What does **"first of all"** mean?
11. Why did Christ die? Give Bible verse to prove this answer.
12. The sufferings and death of Christ satisfied the \_\_\_\_\_ of the thrice holy God, by \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Where is the following verse found in the Bible - **"For the wages of sin is death"**?
14. Christ \_\_\_\_\_ for us because we were good or would ever become good, but He died for us because we were \_\_\_\_\_.
15. The death of Christ was neither incidental nor accidental. His death was according to a \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ plan.
16. What did Paul mean by the phrase by - **"the scriptures,"** both here, and in **verse 4?**
17. Give at least seven (7) verses in the Old Testament that speak of the death of Christ
18. Give the first verse in the Bible that tells of the death of Christ for our sins.
19. Whose tomb was Jesus buried in? Give the verse of scripture that proves your answer.
20. **"and that he rose again the \_\_\_\_\_ day \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_:"**
21. List the six confirming testimonies of the resurrection of Christ. Give Bible verses to prove your answers.

- a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  - f.
22. Define the kind of person Saul was before he was saved. Give chapter and verse to prove your answer.
  23. What did Paul mean by the phrase - **“As one born out of due time,”**
  24. Paul considered himself the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_, and not even fit to be called an apostle because of the \_\_\_\_\_.
  25. What does the word **“grace”** mean?
  26. Give at least five (5) verses that prove salvation is by grace and not works!
  27. What does **“vain”** mean?
  28. What does the word - **“labored”** mean?
  29. How was Paul able to do his work and suffer as he did for the Lord?
  30. What did Paul mean when he used the phrase - **“more abundant”**?
  31. In **verse 11** Paul showed the importance of \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel.
  32. The principle stated in **verse 11** applies to both saved and lost. The \_\_\_\_\_ must preach the truth to the saved and in turn, they must believe the \_\_\_\_\_ preached if they are to - **“\_\_\_\_\_ in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”**