

# EASTER GOOD NEWS

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*By the Book™* A Chapter by  
Chapter Bible Study Series  
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## Let's Begin

*Most of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians addresses local church issues—church division, destructive personal sin, and disruption in the services as it related to spiritual gifts. Paul magnificently addresses those problems one by one.*

*In addition, some Christians in Corinth denied the resurrection of the body. This was very serious because it impinges upon the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Paul flatly told them, "if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen" (v. 13). The whole Christian doctrine stands or falls on the reality of the resurrection of Jesus.*

*Years ago as a young, inexperienced believer, I picked up a "Time" magazine and began to read an article in the Religion section. The article described some bones found in a tomb outside the city of Jerusalem. Immediately my heart leaped within me. If it were possible to retrieve the bones of the Lord Jesus from some abandoned gravesite in Jerusalem, then you and I have no Christian faith! Why? It all stands or falls on whether or not three days after He was buried Jesus Christ bodily arose from the dead. The problem of the resurrection is precisely what is going here.*

*Thus, as we begin our study of 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, let's follow the outline below:*

- I. Christ Paid for Our Sins (vv. 1-3)
- II. Christ Put Away Our Sins (v. 4a)
- III. Christ Prevailed Over Our Sins (vv. 4b-8)

## I. Christ Paid for Our Sins (vv. 1-3)

Paul opens this section, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (vv. 1-2).

Paul informs them the Gospel he preached is the Gospel they both received and believed (v. 1). Those two words are connected multiple times. To believe is to receive, and to receive is to believe. Salvation—saving faith in Jesus Christ—is not merely a belief in the head. John says in his Gospel, "He came unto His own and His own received Him not..." (1:11). In other words, they did not believe in Him. Right after that, he says, "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on His name" (v. 12). Faith in Jesus means trust in Jesus. It's more than just believing the facts in your head, it is receiving those facts in your heart.

Additionally, Paul speaks of the Gospel, "By which also you are saved." Literally, he is saying you are "being saved." Technically, were someone to ask the believer, "are you saved?" the answer should be "Yes, I'm saved: I have been saved, I am being saved, I shall be saved." Why? If Scripture is understood properly, you have been saved

in the past from the *penalty* of sin; you are being saved in the present from the *practice* of sin; and then you shall be saved in the future from the very *presence* of sin.

Thus, "Christ died for our sin." Note the focus on the *person* of Christ. The Old Testament called for the sacrifice of either animal or grain. But nothing so mundane could ever take away sin. It took the *person of Jesus Christ* to die for our sin. Christianity is neither a philosophy nor a set of rules. The Christian faith is a relationship with a Person. Nor is it a relationship with just any person. It is a relationship with

### Reflection Connection

*Do you think most people have an adequate understanding between "head knowledge" and "heart knowledge"? Why or why not?*



a *Divine Person* (John 1:18). Jesus was God in human flesh. Or, as one put it, “Jesus was God, but with skin on.”

Even so, while we may never take away from Christ’s full deity, it is a mistake to think Jesus Christ was less than human. Hence, Jesus was not only a *Divine Person*, He was equally a *human person*. As John put it, He “dwelt among us.” The term “dwelt” literally translates “tabernacled.” In other words, Jesus pitched His tent among men in His incarnation.

No wonder, then, the *passion* of the God-man is so evident in the Gospels. Paul said Christ *died* for our sins. His death was a violent, tortuous butchery that took place at the hands of the Romans. He experienced no peaceful sunset as He died. Instead He endured what no other mortal could endure.

He suffered *physically*. We know the physical suffering He bore mostly from historical records outside the New Testament. The four Gospel writers focus little on His physical suffering. Of course, they all record His crucifixion. And, they record His humiliation by being spat on and ridiculed.

However, the primary focus of the Gospel writers dwells on the *spiritual suffering* of Jesus. For example, we hear Him cry out not under physical stress but spiritual torture, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). This cry perplexed the great Reformer, Martin Luther, “God forsaken of God...! Who can understand that?” Yet, the profound mystery of our Savior’s love oozes from the cross.

## II. Christ Put Away Our Sins (v. 4a)

Paul writes, “And that he was buried...” Our faith does not rest on sand castles but is firmly rooted in historical fact. The facts of the Gospel are real. If they had had television cameras there, they could have filmed what took place. Paul sets forth Gospel truth in three succinct statements. Statement number one we looked at earlier: Christ died for our sins; number two, He was buried; and number three, He rose again from the dead. Those are the three historical essentials of Gospel truth.

The first statement we touched on above and the last we will consider below. For now, let’s establish the second essential: *He was buried*. Initially, we affirm the *reality* of His burial. But what does His burial mean as far as the Gospel is concerned? Foremost, it means Christ put away our sins. When Jesus Christ was buried, our sins were laid in that tomb with Him. Our sins have been put away, out of sight, so to speak.

Years ago, children sang a little song in Sunday School:

“Gone, gone, gone, gone, yes my sins are gone.

Now my soul is free and in my heart’s a song

Buried in the deepest sea, yes that’s good enough for me

I shall reign eternally, praise God, my sins are gone”

That’s what the burial of Jesus means. One of the greatest hymns ever penned is *One Day*, and there’s a line in it which says, “Living He loved me, dying He saved me, buried He carried my sins far away.” That is precisely what took place when



Jesus was buried. He cancelled my sin debt. I owed it to God myself. But God took my sin and buried it with His Son.

Furthermore, it means my sins are forgotten. God buried them and will never dig them up. Jeremiah reminds us in a similar fashion, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (32:34). Every Christian needs to be on guard, however. While God remembers our sin no more, that does not mean Satan won't. In fact, he will throw up our past lives in order to discourage us. Unfortunately, some Christians are depressed and defeated because of something in their past life. They cannot seem to get over it. Grace has really not sunk deeply enough into their heart. The Gospel truth is, our sins are buried with Christ!

### III. Christ Prevailed Over Our Sins (vv. 4b-8)

Paul continues, "and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (vv. 4b-8). If the Gospel stopped there, what would be good about it at all? So what if Jesus died and was buried? The same could be said for everybody in the planet's history!

But if Jesus really arose from the dead, however, such would be good news, "he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (v. 4b). The resurrection of Jesus is an unavoidable fact. To science, His resurrection says 'explain me'; to technology, it says 'duplicate me'; to history, it says 'repeat me'; to unbelief, it says 'disprove me'; and to the tomb, it says 'prevent me.' Most of all, to you and me, the resurrection says, 'believe me'!

Three days past. All doubted Jesus was Who He said He was. But Paul says, "He rose again the third day." And, over two thousand years later He is still alive. The resurrection is the most astounding truth of the Christian faith. Jesus Christ is not dead and in a tomb somewhere outside Jerusalem. Instead He is alive! And, He is moving in your city, your neighborhood, walking up and down the aisles of your church, touching lives and changing human beings. That's the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor is the resurrection of Jesus without evidence. Paul says He appeared to many, the greater part of whom were still alive at the time of his writing (v. 6). Christ gave evidence of His resurrection in unmistakable appearances to both individuals and to groups. The first group are those who saw Jesus in a public kind of way (v. 5). Also, around 500 people at one time saw the Lord Jesus Christ. Skeptics argue the disciples wanted so bad for Jesus to be raised from

#### Reflection Connection

*How persuasive is the empty tomb in proving the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Explain.*

*The resurrection of Jesus is an unavoidable fact.*



the dead, they just imagined the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet we know it is absolutely impossible that 500 people at the same time will have the same hallucination.

Additionally, private appearances of Jesus give evidence that He rose again. Simon Peter and James, for example saw Him (vv. 5, 7). Furthermore, Paul saw him as well (v. 8). Thus, Paul's testimony makes Jesus' resurrection a *personal* appearance to him.

### Golden Greek Nugget

In verse 2, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to “keep in memory” the Gospel. In the Greek text, only one word exists—“*katechete*.” It means “to hold fast,” “to latch on to” and, in essence, to not let go. The implication is clear. The Gospel will save those who embrace it with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

### Wrap Up

*The question every person must ask and answer today concerns the personal aspect of Jesus resurrection: are you able to say in your heart, “I know Jesus Christ arose from the grave because He lives in my heart”? Paul elsewhere proclaims, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:9). No one should leave the Bible study time without making sure they’ve answered this question.*

