

Parson to Person

1 Corinthians 15

(The Resurrection) – Part 1

“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 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. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 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. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. 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? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 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. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable” (1 Corinthians 15:1–19).

The Good News

Paul declared the Gospel as a documented, provable, prophetically declared, foreordained fact. He wrote, “*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures*” (1 Corinthians 15:3b–4). This is “good news,” for by Jesus’ death, burial and physical resurrection, He secured for us everlasting life. Jesus died in our place for our sins and rose as conqueror of death. He did this in order to redeem us from the consequences of our sins. For this I am so very thankful—words are inadequate. Therefore, we give up our lives to Him—for He is worthy!

According to the Scriptures

Many Christians have limited knowledge of the Old Testament and are therefore unable to defend the foreordained plan of God through the Old Testament Scriptures. Yet, Paul declared that what Jesus did in order to redeem us from our sins was “*according to the Scriptures.*” The Scriptures he referred to are nothing more than the Scriptures of the Old Testament—the only “bible” Paul had on hand when he wrote 1 Corinthians.

The passages are vague and/or overlooked by many. The Jews fail to see these passages as the result of a God-sent “*spirit of slumber*” (see Isaiah 6:9–10 and Romans 11:8). Gentiles miss the passages as the result of youthfulness in the faith or lack of careful study.

With these things in mind, we are wise to examine the variety of Old Testament passages foreshadowing these declared truths:

a. Jesus Died for Our Sins—According to Scriptures

Several passages scattered throughout the Old Testament declare Jesus' death. These were obviously prophetic in nature as the result of their pre-incarnational dating.

Two clear passages found in the Old Testament are Psalms 22 and Isaiah 53. Other less understood passages include Deuteronomy 21:22–23, Daniel 9:26, and Zechariah 12:10 and 13:6–7. Moreover, we note that the entire sacrificial system foreshadowed Jesus' sacrificial death.

Psalms 22 and Isaiah 53 cover the rejection, suffering, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, a read-through of the two chapters is recommended.

b. Buried for Three Day and Three Nights—According to the Scriptures

Jesus' burial was predicted—as was the duration of His time in the grave. However, the passages are a bit more elusive. The most obvious is found in types foreshadowing His burial. The death of Jonah (when he was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights) provides a noted example (see Jonah 1:17). Moreover, none can deny that Jesus identifies Himself with the Church, but He does so also with Israel—Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. In this case may I cite a promise concerning Israel's climactic redemption and restoration. *“Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight”* (Hosea 6:1–2).

c. Physically Resurrected—According to the Scriptures

As is true of Jesus' death and burial, His physical resurrection was declared. Psalm 16:9–11 proves insightful. *“Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You*

will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Further insights include, *“O LORD, You brought my soul up from the grave; You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name. For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning”* (Psalm 30:3–5), and, *“But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for He shall receive me. Selah”* (Psalm 49:15).

Death could not hold our Lord—thus He rose from the dead.

Note: The Psalms (although written in the first person by the poets—David, Asaph, the Sons of Korah, Heman, Solomon, Moses, Ethan the Ezrahite, etc.) are frequently noted as the written prayers of Jesus. These Psalms are no exception! The Holy Spirit inspired the poets, from outside of time, to record the prayer life of Jesus, offered in real time during His incarnation, before His incarnation. This insight eludes many.

Believed in Vain

If the Corinthians, and/or any of us, have faith in Jesus, but Jesus never rose from the dead, we embrace a misguided faith. As Paul suggested, *“if Christ is not risen”* (physically risen from the dead) (vss. 14 and 17), the Corinthians’ faith (and our faith) is in *“vain”* (vs. 2), *“empty”* (vs. 14), and *“futile”* (vs. 17). However, *“Christ is risen from the dead”* (vs. 20).

The Gospel is the message Paul preached. It is the message we preach. Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was

buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. This is the “good news.”

I love you all,
Pastor Paul