

Christians Gone Wild!
1st Corinthians, week 15
Jesus' Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1–11)
April 16, 2006, Easter Sunday
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[Jesus] Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures . . . he was buried . . . he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures
1 Corinthians 15:3-4

We live in an age of unprecedented information where the average television is on eight hours a day and the average person spends more than three additional hours a day online. We are bombarded with messages from television, film, radio, iPods, email, text messages, cell phones, magazines, newspapers, books, blogs, websites, mail, and innumerable forms of advertising.

Why does this all matter? Because the continual onslaught of information has the tragic effect of causing us to overlook the few things that we truly must know. Thankfully, this week's Scripture reveals to us the set of truths that is "of first importance" in all the world.

The Gospel Mission

¹Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

The gospel is the good news about the sinless life, substitutionary death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins. This good news reveals the human problem (sin), the tragic consequence (death), and the divine remedy (Jesus). By believing in Jesus, we are saved from sin, death, and hell.

The Gospel Message

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

First, Jesus died in our place for our sins. His death (promised in Isaiah 53:8,12) is certain because He was flogged, crucified (promised in Psalm 22:16), and impaled through the heart with a spear.

Second, Jesus was buried. His body was wrapped in roughly one hundred pounds of burial linens and spices and placed in a tomb gifted to Jesus by a rich man (promised in Isaiah 53:9).

Third, Jesus resurrected from death (promised in Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:10–12).

Fourth, after rising from death Jesus appeared to eyewitnesses. Among these were His friends (Peter and the other disciples), strangers (crowds of more than five hundred people), family (His brother, James), followers, and enemies including Paul, who transformed from a murderer of Christians to a Christian pastor because he saw Jesus risen from death.

This set of facts about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection were penned when many of the eyewitnesses were still alive to verify their truthfulness. And this section of Scripture was perhaps the earliest Christian creed, summarizing the most important truths for early Christians and all Christians since.

The Gospel Messengers

⁹For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. ¹¹Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

Paul closes his teaching about the death and resurrection of Jesus by stating that he and all other Christians are sinners and hypocrites unqualified for God's love. But it is by God's unmerited loving grace poured out through Jesus that people are both saved from their old way of life and empowered to live a new way of life.

Since the days of Paul the good news of Jesus has changed the world. Jesus has become the most important person in the history of the world. Time itself is organized around his life—B.C. stands for "Before Christ" and *anno Domini* (AD) means, "in the year of the Lord." More songs have been sung about Jesus, more artwork done of Jesus, and more books written about Jesus than anyone who has ever lived. Furthermore, billions of people from the nations of the earth worship Jesus as God. No army, nation, or person has changed human history to the degree that Jesus has because He alone has forgiven sin and conquered death. Therefore, we gather on Easter Sunday to worship Jesus as God and place our trust in Him, for this life and the life that awaits us beyond the grave with Him.

Verses for next week: 1 Corinthians 6:12–7:7