

# ARGUMENT ONE: THE PRIMARY FACTS OF THE GOSPEL 1 CORINTHIANS 15:01–11

## ***DIVISION OVERVIEW: The Resurrection (1 Cor 15:01–58)***

The Corinthian church was confused about the resurrection of the believer. Therefore, in the letter which the church had written to Paul, one of the questions had to do with the resurrection of the believer's body (see 1 Cor. 7:1-40). Some in the church were flatly denying the resurrection (v. 12). Some were apparently following the false teaching of others:

=> spiritualizing the resurrection, saying it was already past or else took place at death (cp. 2 Tim. 2:17-18).

=> rebelling against such an idea, claiming that it was scientifically impossible for maimed, scattered, decomposed bodies to be raised in an act of recreation.

The answer of Paul is simply argued: the resurrection of Jesus Christ proves the resurrection of the human body. In fact, Jesus Christ arose so that all men in their full and complete persons — bodies as well as spirits — could live forever. The resurrection of Jesus Christ makes the resurrection of men absolutely certain.

After establishing this fact, Paul deals with some very common objections to the glorious truth.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 15:01–11 GOSPEL

Gospel means "Good News." There is only one gospel, but it is described in different ways. It is called the "Good News of the Kingdom and the Good News of God" (Mt. 4:23; Mk. 1:14); the "Gospel of God's Grace" (Acts 20:24); the "Gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1); the "Gospel of Christ" (Mk. 1:1; Rom. 1:16; 2 Cor. 4:4; 10:14); the "glorious Gospel" (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Tim. 1:11); and the "Eternal Gospel" (Rev. 14:6). □

## ***Introduction (1 Cor 15:01–11)***

The first argument for the resurrection of the human body is the gospel itself. The primary facts of the gospel prove that God can bodily raise a person from the dead. He raised up the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, perfecting the very same body He had possessed while on earth. This is the point of the whole chapter: the dead shall be raised in their same bodies, their bodies no longer being physical and imperfect, but spiritual and perfected. Nevertheless, despite the change of nature and composition, their bodies are the very same bodies. The facts of the gospel which prove the resurrection of the believer are fivefold.

- I. The importance of the gospel (vv. 1-2).
  - II. Fact 1: Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture (vv. 3).
  - III. Fact 2: Christ was buried and arose according to the Scripture (v. 4).
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- IV. Fact 3: there were eyewitnesses (vv. 5-7).
- V. Fact 4: there was one strong eyewitness, Paul himself (vv. 8-10).
- VI. Fact 5: there is only one gospel that is preached and has to be believed (v. 11).

### **I. 1 Corinthians 15:01–02 The Gospel**

The importance of the gospel. Paul says that he declares the gospel to the Corinthian church, the *very same gospel* which he had *already preached* to them. This is significant. In fact, the word “remind” (gnorizo) means to *make known*. Paul is not reminding the Corinthians of the gospel, he is again...

- declaring it as though they had never heard it.
- proclaiming it as though they had never sat before it.
- making it known as though they had never known it.

Some in the church were in danger of not continuing in the faith; they were denying the very hope of *personally* living in the presence of God (v. 12). They desperately needed the importance of the gospel proclaimed again. Note what Paul says about the believers in the church.

1. They had received the gospel, that is, actually embraced it as true believers.
2. They stood in the gospel. The idea is that they firmly adhered to it, professing and standing for the truths of the gospel. This indicates that some were still faithful to the truth of the resurrection despite the error being taught by others (v. 12).
3. They were saved by the gospel. The word “saved” is present or continuous action, “you are being saved.” Scripture teaches three tenses or stages to salvation: the past, present, and future (see *Salvation*, 1 Cor. 1:18). In this verse Scripture is referring to the present or progressive stage of salvation. Salvation is a *continuous experience* that is here said to be conditional.

=> They must keep the gospel “firmly.” The Greek words (ei katechete) mean *if you hold fast*. In order to be saved, of course, a person must hold fast to the gospel. No man could ever deny the gospel and expect to be saved.

=> They must not believe in vain. The idea is that some might believe, but believe in the wrong thing — believe in something that is vain, empty, worthless, useless.

**Thought 1.** A person must hold fast, continue to believe to be saved.

**Mat 10:22** ...*He who stands firm to the end will be saved.*

**Heb 10:23** *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

**James 1:12** *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*

**James 1:21** *Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*

**James 5:11** *As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

## II. **1 Corinthians 15:03 The Death of Jesus Christ**

The first fact of the gospel is that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Note four points.

1. The words “of first importance” mean that the very first thing Paul ever preached to the Corinthians was the death of Jesus Christ. The death of Christ is so important that it must be the first thing preached. It is the very foundation of a person's salvation. Apart from the death of Jesus Christ there is no salvation; therefore, the fact of Christ's death must be the first subject proclaimed.
2. The first fact Paul himself received was the death of Christ. As Leon Morris says, Paul is *not interrupting* the message he had received; he is giving us the *exact message* he had received (*The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. “Tyndale Bible Commentaries,” p. 205). This is a crucial fact, for Paul had been convicted by a direct appearance from Christ Himself. This means that the first words Christ spoke to Paul dealt with the Lord's death. This fact alone stresses the great importance of the Lord's death (Gal. 1:11-12; cp. 1 Cor. 11:23).
3. “Christ died *for our sins*.” The word “for” (huper) means for our benefit, for our sake, in our behalf, in our stead, as our substitute. (See *Ransom for Many*, Mk. 10:45.) This means at least three things.
  - a. Christ died as our sacrifice.

**1 Cor 5:7** *Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

**2 Cor 5:15** *And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

**2 Cor 5:21** *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

**Eph 5:2** *And live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

**Heb 7:26-27** *Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.*

**Heb 9:13-14** *The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

**Heb 9:25-26** *Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

**Heb 10:10** *And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

**Heb 10:12, 14** *But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God...because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

**1 Pet 2:24** *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

- b. Christ died as our ransom (see *Redemption*, Rom. 3:24; Gal. 3:13).

**Rom 3:24** *And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

**Col 1:14** *In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

**Titus 2:14** *Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

**Heb 9:12** *He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.*

**1 Pet 1:18-19** *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

**Rev 5:9** *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

- c. Christ died as our propitiation or sacrifice of atonement (see note, Rom. 3:25. Cp. 1 Jn. 2:1-2.)

**Rom 3:25** *God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.*

**1 John 2:2** *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

**1 John 4:10** *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

4. “Christ died...according to the Scriptures” (see *Death of Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. 15:3).

### 1 CORINTHIANS 15:03 DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 15: 03*

The Old Testament Scriptures bore strong predictions concerning the death of God’s Messiah.

=> Christ rebuked his disciples for not believing all the prophets had spoken about His death (Lk. 24:25-26).

=> Paul’s very method of preaching was to convince people that Jesus Christ was the Messiah who had been predicted in Scripture (the Old Testament).

**Acts 17:2-3** *As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,” he said.*

**Acts 26:22-23** *“But I have had God’s help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen – that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”*

=> Paul clearly said that he was determined to preach nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and that the gospel had been promised before by the prophets in Holy Scripture.

**1 Cor 2:2** *For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.*

**Rom 1:1-2** *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God – the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.*

**Rom 3:21-22** *But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference.*

=> Much of the book of Hebrews is an exposition on how the death of Christ fulfils the Old Testament.

Some of the major Old Testament prophecies are given with the references to their New Testament fulfilment. (See *Scripture Fulfilled*, Jn. 1:45 for many of the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus Christ and their fulfilment.)

**Gen 3:15** *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”* (cp. Heb 2:14)

**Psa 22:1** *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?* (cp. Mt 27:46)

**Psa 22:13, 16, 18** *Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me...Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet....They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.* (cp. Lk. 23:34; Jn. 19:23-24)

**Psa 34:20** *He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.* (cp. Jn 19:36)

**Psa 69:21** *They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.* (cp. Mt. 27:34; Mk. 15:23; Jn.19:28-30)

**Psa 69:26** *For they persecute those you wound and talk about the pain of those you hurt.* (cp. Mt. 27:34; Mk. 15:23; Jn. 19:29)

**Psa 109:25** *I am an object of scorn to my accusers; when they see me, they shake their heads.* (cp. Mt. 27:39)

**Isa 50:6** *I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.*

**Isa 52:14** *Just as there were many who were appalled at him — his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness.*

**Isa 53:03-12** *He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By*

*oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

**Dan 9:26** *After the sixty-two 'sevens', the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.*

**Zec 9:11** *As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.*

**Zec 12:10** *"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."*

**Zec 13:6-7** *If someone asks him, 'What are these wounds on your body?' he will answer, 'The wounds I was given at the house of my friends.' "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the LORD Almighty. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones." □*

### **III. 1 Corinthians 15:04 Burial and Resurrection of Christ**

The second fact of the gospel is that Jesus Christ was buried and arose from the dead according to the Scriptures. (See *Jesus Christ, Resurrection*, Mt. 17:23.) Note three points.

1. The burial of Jesus Christ is important, for it proves two significant things.
  - ⇒ It proves that Jesus Christ died. No man is buried unless he is dead.
  - ⇒ It proves the resurrection. The empty tomb is evidence that Christ arose from the dead.
2. Jesus Christ arose from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus Christ assures the believer that he too shall be raised from the dead.

- a. The resurrection of Christ proves that *God exists*: that He does exist and care for the earth. There is no power on earth that can raise a man from the dead. Only a Supreme, eternal power and Person can do that. Only God can give life to dead matter and to the dust of the earth. The very fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead proves that God exists and cares for this earth.
- b. The resurrection of Christ proves that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, the Son of God Himself. It proves that Jesus Christ was sent to earth to secure the Ideal righteousness for man and to die and to arise from the dead for man. (See *Justification*, Rom. 5:1.)

**Rom 1:4** *And who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**Eph 1:20** *Which [God's mighty power] he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.*

- c. The resurrection of Christ proves that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. It proves that Christ is the very One whom God sent to earth to save men from death and to give them life. (See Rom. 6:3-5.)

**Rom 4:25** *He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*

**Rom 10:9** *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

**1 Cor 15:2-4** *By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

- d. The resurrection of Christ proves that He is "the Spirit of life." It proves that Christ is the very energy and force of life, the very power and Being of life, and that He can give the same "Spirit of life" to men. He can raise men from the dead, even as He arose from the dead. (See Rom. 8:2-4; 1 Cor. 15:12-19; 15:20-23.)

**Rom 8:11** *And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.*

**1 Th 4:14** *We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.*

**1 Pet 1:3-4** *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new' birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you.*



**1 Pet 3:18** *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

3. Jesus Christ “rose again...according to the Scriptures.”

=> Jesus Christ said that Jonah was a type of His resurrection.

**Mat 12:40** *“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”*

=> The Gospel of John says that the resurrection was predicted in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ rebuked the disciples for not believing the predictions of His death and return to glory (resurrection).

**Luke 24:25-27** *He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

**John 20:9** *(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)*

=> Paul proclaimed the Old Testament predictions concerning the resurrection of Christ.

**Acts 26:22-23** *But I have had God’s help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen – that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”*

=> Peter proclaimed the Old Testament prophecies predicting the Lord’s resurrection.

**Acts 13:35-37** *“So it is stated elsewhere: ‘You will not let your Holy One see decay.’ For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.”*

=> Psalm 16:10 is a clear prediction of the Lord’s resurrection.

**Psa 16:10** *Because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*

=> All the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah’s eternal reign are prophecies of His resurrection. This is clear, for He could reign eternally only if He was raised from the dead. (See *Jesus Christ, Davidic Heir*; Lk. 3:24-31.)

**Thought 1.** Note the implication of this fact for all believers. No man can live forever unless he is raised from the dead, for all men are doomed to die. Therefore, all the prophecies concerning believers living forever can be fulfilled only if we are raised from the dead.

#### **IV. 1 Corinthians 15:05–07 Eyewitnesses to the Resurrection**

The third fact of the gospel is that there were eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It should be noted that Paul does not give all the resurrection appearances of Christ; he lists what he feels is more than enough to give conclusive evidence. (See *Jesus Christ, Resurrection*, Mk. 16:1-13.)

1. There was the resurrection appearance to Cephas or Peter. Peter had failed the Lord miserably, having denied Him three times. Peter's miserable failure and denials came in the Lord's most critical hour — the hour when the Lord needed Peter's loyalty more than ever. Because he had failed the Lord so terribly, Peter desperately needed a private interview with the Lord; and because the Lord had appeared to Peter, Peter was a strong witness to the love of God for man. He could readily testify that God loves man so much that He had sent His Son into the world to deliver man from his terrible sin and failure. He could readily testify that God forgives and saves man and gives him eternal life through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter's testimony was forceful, for he had personally experienced the forgiveness, the deliverance, the salvation and the promise of eternal life from the lips of the resurrected Lord Himself.

*Mark 16:7* “But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

*Luke 24:34* And saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.”

2. There was the resurrection appearance to the twelve apostles. The term “twelve” was just a common or general term used to apply to the apostles of Christ. Judas was dead, having committed suicide. Jesus made several appearances to the apostles collectively, and He could have made others that are not recorded (Lk. 24:33-36; Jn.20:19f).

The apostles had deserted the Lord in His hour of trial, failing Him miserably. Therefore they, as Peter, were strong witnesses to the love of God for man: that God had sent His Son into the world to die and to arise that men might live eternally with Him.

3. There was the resurrection appearance to five hundred believers at one time. Just when this appearance took place is not known. Perhaps it was in Galilee, which seems to have been an appointed meeting set up by the Lord: “But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee” (Mt. 26:32). After He had arisen, He told the women to whom He appeared: “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me” (Mt. 28:10). “My brothers” probably means all the disciples; moreover, as the word spread that He had arisen and wanted to meet His disciples in Galilee, it is doubtful a true believer would fail to keep the appointment.

The point is this: five hundred believers could testify of the love of God for men. God had sent His Son into the world and conquered death by raising Him from the dead. They could testify undeniably that God's way for saving man was through the death

and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, and through the promise of being personally raised from the dead someday out in the future.

4. There was the resurrection appearance to James. This is most likely James, the Lord's brother. Jesus had several brothers and sisters, and they had been terribly embarrassed by Him because of...
  - His claims to be the Son of God.
  - the rumours of insanity and devil-possession.
  - the severe opposition by leaders and others.

The family of Jesus just did not understand nor believe His claims; therefore, they too opposed Him. By appearing to James, Jesus was able to prove beyond a doubt that His claims were true. Consequently, James became a significant witness for the Lord. Jesus was definitely the Son of God sent by God to demonstrate His love for man. Men, even those who have denied and been hostile to the Lord, can be saved by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note a striking fact: James even called Jesus "our glorious Lord Jesus Christ." Just think: James was reared with Jesus beginning from the earliest years of childhood stretching right on through the years of adulthood. If anyone ever had an opportunity to see and observe Jesus, it was James. He had every chance to see some act of disobedience, some sin, something contrary to the nature of God. However, James' testimony is: "Our glorious Lord Jesus Christ," the One in whom the very presence of God dwelt among us (Jas. 2:1).

5. There was the resurrection appearance to all the apostles. To what appearance does this refer? The answer is unknown, but it could refer either to the appearance in the upper room (Jn. 20:26) or at the ascension (cp. Acts 1: 1f). Again, the point is that the apostles could give unquestionable evidence of the love of God: God has conquered death through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ by which He gives us assurance of living eternally with Him.

## **V. 1 Corinthians 15:08–10 Paul, Witness of the Resurrection**

The fourth fact of the gospel is that there was one strong eyewitness, Paul himself. Note three facts.

1. Paul saw Christ after the Lord's ascension. The phrase "one abnormally born" (to ektromati) means a miscarriage, an abortion, an unnatural birth, a child born out of time. Paul is simply saying that he did not know and follow the Lord when the Lord walked upon the earth, but he saw the Lord after He had left the earth and ascended into heaven. Paul is, of course, referring to his experience on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1f), and perhaps to the visions granted him (2 Cor. 12:1f).
2. Paul was radically converted and changed against all odds. Paul had a deep sense of unworthiness. Note exactly what he says, his estimate of himself:

=> “I am the *least* of the apostles.”

=> “I do not even deserve to be called an apostle.”

=> “Because I persecuted the church of God.”

Before his conversion he had persecuted and killed early believers (Acts 7:58; 9:1f). He had also possessed a staunch pride in who he was and what he had achieved in his position and personal morality and righteousness (2 Cor. 11:22; Ph. 3:4-6). The sins of murder and pride gave Paul a deep sense of being the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). Nothing less than having actually seen Christ face to face could change a man so radically. Nothing less than having actually seen Christ face to face could make a man give up so much and pay so great a price for preaching the gospel (2 Cor. 6:4f; 11:22f; Ph. 3:4f).

3. Paul was desperately driven to work for Christ. To Paul the greatest thing in all the world was the grace of God, the fact that God loved him so much...
  - that God forgave his terrible sins.
  - that God allowed him to follow and serve His dear Son.
  - that God allowed him to proclaim the glorious cure for the cancer of sin and death, even the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All that Paul was and all that Paul did was by the grace, the undeserved favour of God. As he himself declared: “By the grace of God I am what I am.”

Because God had done so much for him, Paul worked ever so diligently for God. The word “worked” (*kopiaō*) means to labour to the point of being weary and exhausted. Note his statement: he worked, laboured more than all the others that served Christ. Why? Because he owed it to Christ: he had sinned so terribly against the Lord. Note that he even gives the credit for his labour to the grace of God.

## **VI. *1 Corinthians 15:11 The Only Gospel: The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ***

The fifth fact of the gospel is desperately needed by the world: there is only one gospel that is preached and that has to be believed. The facts of the gospel are the same facts...

- preached by all true preachers.
- believed by all true believers.

There is no gospel other than the gospel of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. His death and resurrection is the only gospel that truly offers eternal life to men. The fact of the Lord’s resurrection is the only truth that gives men victory over death. The fact of the Lord’s death and resurrection assures man that God loves him and will raise him up to live eternally with Him. ■