

Exegetical Notes – 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

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Introduction: Having finished his discussion of issues affecting the Church in Corinth, in this chapter, he turns to the great truths which make Christians different from those who practice other religions.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Verses 1-9

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

Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

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

- Paul's intention is to review the gospel with the Corinthians. It is not the first time they have heard it. He has told it to them before. But it is the gospel; the good news. He wants the Corinthians to remember this message above all else.
- They have taken their stand on what follows. If the Corinthians hold true to this message they will be saved from the consequences of sin, death, -- and receive eternal life from the Lord. However, if they renounce the Gospel, they have pretended to believe and that in vain. Their pretended faith will not save them.
- He then repeats the five points of the Kerygma! Although he does not mention the first point, it is assumed in the second. The basic points of the

Gospel message are: 1. Jesus came to earth. 2. Jesus lived among us. 3. Jesus died for our sins. 4. Jesus rose from the dead. 5. Jesus is coming again.

- It is the 4th point which is most problematic. Paul provides ample proof that Jesus' resurrection is true by listing the people who saw him alive after he had died. Two or three witnesses are required to prove a matter in court. Paul provides more than 500 witnesses to Jesus' resurrection.
- The last on Paul's witness list is he, himself. He encountered the risen Jesus personally on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19). This encounter changed his life.

Verses 9-11

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But 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. ¹¹ Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

- Paul is aware that many Christians, including some in Corinth, dispute his right to claim to be an Apostle. This office in the church was reserved for people who followed Jesus during his time on earth. The office is currently closed. But Paul claimed it because he had seen the risen Jesus physically on the road to Damascus. He acknowledges that before he came to Jesus, he persecuted the church. But by God's grace, he was converted and became a follower of Jesus Christ.
- Because God had been gracious to him and forgiven him for persecuting Christians, he worked harder than others to spread the news of Jesus to those who had not heard it.
- He gives all the credit to God.
- Regardless of who the preacher is, Paul has preached the true word of God. Through the message he preached many in Corinth believed in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Paul's title notwithstanding, he has preached the word faithfully and the Corinthians have received the truth. In the true word of God they are saved by grace through faith.

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