

What is the Gospel?

1 Corinthians 15:1–11: Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ 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. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

According to the bible, the gospel is the good news message about Jesus: (1) that He died for our sins, (2) was buried, and (3) rose again the third day, (4) and was seen by many.

1. Jesus died for our sins

The title ‘Christ’ means Messiah, Anointed One, and Paul uses this to refer to Jesus.

Jesus is Man. Matthew 1 shows us that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. Jesus entered this world as a human being, born of a woman like every other person.

John 1:14 says: ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

This Word – Jesus – became flesh. He became a human being. He hungered. He thirsted. He became weary.

And yet, He was also unlike every other human being.

Jesus is God. Galatians 4:4–5: But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

John 1:1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

That ‘Word’ was Jesus. The Word was God. Jesus was and is God.

In Mark 2 we have the story of Jesus in Capernaum where many had gathered to hear Him preach. Four men presented to Jesus a paralytic down through the roof and Jesus saw their faith and said to the paralytic:

Son, your sins are forgiven you (Mark 2:5)

To these words some of the scribes that were present that day reasoned: “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2:7).

Jesus responded by these words:

Mark 2:8–11: “**Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?** ⁹ **Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk?’** ¹⁰ **But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”**—He said to the paralytic, ¹¹ **“I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”**

Yes, only God has the power to forgive sins. Jesus forgave this man’s sins.

What does that tell us? He is God – God the Son.

Jesus is Man and Jesus is God.

Why did He die for our sins?

Because He loved us.

Romans 5:8: But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Jesus also died for us because we were all hopeless and could not save ourselves. We would have to be perfect, and we are not.

Romans 3:23: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 5:12: Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Apart from Jesus, we stand condemned. John 3:36: He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Jesus died for our sins because the penalty for our sin is death.

Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus came to earth and died for our sins so that He might rescue us from the curse of sin and death.

Jesus had the power to forgive that paralytic because He was God. Jesus has the power to forgive our sins because He is God.

Mark 10:45: **For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”**

Jesus demonstrated His power as God by telling the paralytic to arise, take up his bed, and go home. He not only announced the forgiveness of his sins, but also proved Himself to be God through the miracle of healing.

In summary, Jesus died for our sins because we were lost and needed to be rescued from the power and penalty of sin.

Jesus, the perfect Son of God, the sinless one, gave His life for us.

That is the greatest story ever told. This is why we preach about Jesus. This is why we sing about Jesus. This is why we sing about the cross and the blood that He shed.

This is the great work of redemption (Romans 3:24) – the freedom God grants to us through the finished work of Jesus Christ.

2. Jesus was buried

After Jesus was crucified on that cross, Joseph from Arimathea came to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Pilate allowed Joseph to take Jesus’ lifeless corpse. Joseph wrapped the body of Jesus in linen and laid Him in a tomb that was cut from the rock – a sepulcher that had never been used (Luke 23:50-53).

A large stone was rolled against this tomb to secure it shut.

According to Matthew 27, the leaders were concerned that Jesus’ disciples might somehow steal the body so they could later claim that Jesus had risen from the dead. And so they went to Pilate and asked if they could set guards to watch the tomb. He agreed, and so they made the tomb secure by sealing it shut and setting a guard to watch it (Matthew 27:65-66).

Jesus was buried. The scriptures are clear.

Many people in those days (1 Corinthians 15:12-19) and many in our time don’t think that resurrection is possible.

If that is true, then certainly Jesus did not come back to life.

But what does the bible say about this?

3. Jesus rose again

Many months before Jesus died on the cross, He told the crowd in John 2:19 these words: “destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

They were confused because they cited history and said that it had taken 46 years to build the temple.

But of course, Jesus was not talking about a building. Rather He was referring to His own death, burial, and resurrection – a resurrection of His body after three days.

John tells us in John 2:22 that the disciples recalled that conversation after Jesus had risen from the dead.

When Jesus was suffering on the cross, Matthew records that some passed by and said to Jesus: “You who destroy the temple and built it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matthew 27:40).

They were mocking Jesus.

And yet, it was true: after three days, Jesus did rise from the dead.

On that first day of the week two ladies came to see the tomb and found the stone rolled away. There they saw an angel of the Lord who said to them: “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay” (Matthew 28:5).

Jesus did speak the truth. After three days He would rise again from the dead.

Jesus told the truth and He did come back to life.

Is there any additional proof of this?

Can others verify this?

4. Jesus was seen by many

In Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20-21 we clearly see that Jesus appeared to many people. Notice again 1 Corinthians 15:5-8:

⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ 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. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

Even Paul, who came later in time, saw Jesus and that information is recorded in Acts 9.

There were witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection. Why is that important? Because it verifies what Jesus said was true.

Truth is established on the basis of honest witnesses. If we are accused of wrongdoing, authorities need evidence. If enough people testify honestly, the fact is established.

How many testified that Jesus rose from the dead? Paul lists the 12 disciples plus 500 others as well as Paul Himself. That is more than two or three.

And so, let us review: **what is the gospel?**

It is the good news message about Jesus: (1) that He died for our sins, (2) was buried, and (3) rose again the third day, (4) and was seen by many.

If these things are so, then what should be our response? The gospel of Jesus Christ demands a response.

There are two responses to the gospel message:

1. Rejection

We can reject it. We can doubt it. We can ignore it. Either way, if we persist the end result is the same: rejection.

If we reject the gospel of Jesus Christ, the bible reminds us that we are still dead in our sins (John 3:36) and someday will have to pay for our sins under the penalty of God (Romans 6:23).

Revelation 20:15 tells us that in that final judgment, if our name is not found in the Book of Life, we will be cast into the lake of fire.

Sin demands payment. That is justice.

Rejection is the response of most people.

However, there is another response:

2. Belief. Faith.

It is my sincere hope that you will believe the message of the gospel and receive it by faith.

Look again at 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 and notice again how Paul begins: Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

If we receive this good news about Jesus it means we receive it by faith. We believe the gospel. We accept it as true.

We say that Jesus died for MY sins. He suffered and died in MY place.

Notice also that this gospel is something in which we stand. It becomes the message that defines us.

Paul once defined himself by his impeccable pedigree as a Pharisee (Philippians 3:4-6).

Paul said he could have had confidence in himself because he was miles ahead of others. And yet he says this in verses 7-11:

Philippians 3:7–11 (NKJV) ⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things

loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith

Most people define themselves by their good works and notable efforts. Hard work and good deeds are commendable and very important in their proper place, but they will not save us.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7)

The only response that saves us is the response of faith. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust Him for your eternal life.

The great blessing of forgiveness of sins is only found in the righteousness which comes through faith in Jesus Christ. His perfect righteousness is what we need, and we cannot gain it with our best efforts.

John 1:12-13 (NKJV): ¹² But as many as received Him [Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Acts 16:31 says “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved....”