

The three elements that must be believed of saving gospel: Jesus died, he was buried, and he rose from the grave, all were prophesied in Scripture.

The Facts of the Gospel | 1 Corinthians 15:5-7

Verse 5—

Paul gives facts of the resurrection. The first fact is that Jesus was **seen by Cephas**. Cephas is Simon Peter, Or, Simeon being his Hebrew name, or Cephas in Aramaic—his surname (nickname); a Greek synonym, Peter which means rock. Paul not only mentions Peter as being the first to see Jesus, but two disciples (Paul doesn't mention these two) on the road to Emmaus also saw Jesus and made the same claim in Luke 24:34 when they had returned to Jerusalem to tell the eleven disciples that the Lord was risen indeed. (Luke 24:13-35).

Verse 5 goes on, **Then of the twelve**. In the Luke (23:33) passage, Jesus appeared to the eleven (although Paul says twelve). Is there a contradiction here? After Judas betrayed Jesus there were eleven disciples, but they found a replacement (Acts 1:26) in Matthias, bringing their number back to twelve. In order for Matthias to have replaced Judas he had to have been an eyewitness to the resurrection (Acts 1:22). Matthias may have actually been in the room (although not yet a disciple; notice Luke 24:33 *“them that were with them.”*). Therefore, Paul is correct in saying **the twelve** since by the time he wrote 1st Corinthians (AD 59), Matthias was an apostle. Luke is also correct in that technically there were eleven disciples currently present.

By the way, the gospel of Mark tells us Jesus *upbraided the eleven with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen* (See Mark 16:14).

Verse 6—

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once. There is no other passage other than this one that describes where this took place. Paul isn't trying to prove anything to us, he is just stating fact of what happened. At the time of this writing, around AD 59, some of those 500 plus people were still alive.

Verse 7—

After that, he was seen by James. Which James was this? Probably the Lord's half-brother, James, and the author of the book of James: Not James the apostle. It is interesting that in John 7:5 we have a record of James not believing in Jesus. Is that the reason Jesus appeared to him? Did James believe at this point? He later became the leader in the Jerusalem church.

Then of all the apostles. (Luke 24.50; Acts 1:2-12) This no doubt included more than just the twelve.

Paul Explains His Apostleship | 1 Corinthians 15:8-11

He is still dealing with the topic of the resurrection and the many infallible proofs, but he takes a little side trail here in verses 8, 9, 10, and 11 to talk about his apostleship. In Verse 12 he will get back directly to the topic of the resurrection.

Verse 8—

And last of all he (the risen Lord) **was seen of me also**. This happened on Paul's Damascus road experience. **He was seen**, this was not a vision, it was a physical appearance. It was there he personally encountered Jesus Christ (Acts 9:3,4; 17; and 26:16). **As one born out of due time**. This is one word in the Greek, *ektroma*, ek=out of, you might recognize the word *trauma*. Paul is saying he was born out of trauma. The word is always used for *pre-mature*. How was Paul born out of due time? Is he trying to be humble? Or, was he born spiritually pre-maturely?

1 Timothy 1:15,16: Grammatically the word *chief* means chronologically *first* (He is not saying he is the first sinner). Rather, Paul is saying is, "Christ came to save sinners, I am the first one that he saved." Paul was the first one saved by grace through faith. Salvation, up until the time of Paul was vested in the kingdom. Therefore, when the kingdom comes the faithful are going to be saved. Only the nation of Israel or those who became a part of the commonwealth of Israel could be saved. Before Christ brought in the dispensation of grace through the apostle Paul, Gentiles were without hope and without God (Ephesians 2:11). The blood of Jesus Christ allowed those who were lost to receive everlasting life.

The apostle Paul comes along and says, the kingdom has not come, yet I am saved. What does this mean? It means people have not always been saved the way we are! Up until Paul, there was no individual salvation, only national salvation of the nation. So, Paul is really giving a unique and brand-new message here. And, in verse 1 Timothy 1:16 he repeats that he is *protos, first*, by saying he is the pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him for life everlasting.

Now what does this mean in our 1st Corinthians passage in 15:8 when it comes to **one born out of due time**? Salvation was only of the kingdom, but the kingdom had not and has not yet come, therefore, *prematurely* there is individual salvation being offered during this dispensation of grace, and Paul was the first saved prematurely, out of due time of the kingdom salvation! Salvation by grace through faith allows everyone to be saved prior to the coming of the kingdom.

Verse 9—

I am least of the apostle...not meet to be called and apostle. Chronologically, Paul was the last of the apostles and he was the apostle for the *premature* time when people would be saved outside of the covenants of God to the nation of Israel. He wasn't fit to be one of the 12 because he had not even been a follower of Jesus Christ, and he persecuted those who believed in the kingdom gospel (Notice *the church of God; not the body of Christ*).

Verse 10—

But by the grace of God I am what I am. Without grace Paul is nothing. The grace given to Paul caused him to **labor...not in vain...but more abundantly than they all**. He didn't abuse this grace, it just made him want to work harder as an ambassador for Christ.

Verse 11—

So we preach. He means the preaching of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The fact of the resurrection is of greatest importance to either message; the kingdom message or the Pauline message of salvation by grace through faith for the individual.

The Result of Christ Not Being Raised | 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

Verse 12-14—

If Christ be preached that he rose...how say some...there is no resurrection of the dead? In other words, with all the people just mentioned in the passages above, who have preached or heralded the fact that they saw the resurrected Christ, how is it that some say otherwise? The fact of Christ's resurrection has been accepted throughout history as irrefutable due to all the evidence and "infallible proofs." Paul listed numerous facts of the resurrection. Let's look briefly at some proofs:

1. **The first proof is Jesus Christ himself.** Throughout his ministry he anticipated his death and his resurrection. For example, in John 2:18-21, the Jews asked Jesus for a sign. He told them "destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." Verse 21 includes a note that he was speaking of his body. See also: Matthew 12:38-40; 16:21; 17:9, 23; 20:19; 27:63; Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:34; 14:58; Luke 9:22; 18:33.
2. **The Empty Grave.** In our last session we looked at several theories of how Jesus could have revived in the tomb, not really being dead, but we saw that was impossible. At Christ's burial a large stone was rolled before the tomb, the tomb was sealed, and a guard was placed before it. It could only have been a super human feat, to remove his body, no man could have done it. How could his friends have done it in the presence of a Roman guard? And if they did remove the body, why would strip him naked first? Why would they have taken the time to unwrap the body? Why would his enemies do it? That would cause the report of his resurrection to spread—his enemies wanted him in the tomb. If there is any evidence that is adequate, it's the empty tomb. It is the one thing skeptics simply do not know how to deal with.
3. **The Transformation of the Disciples.** They had seen their master die. It was a horrific day. One day they were discouraged and dejected, and then suddenly their doubts fled! Then they saw him. If couldn't have been a hallucination involving over 500 people at once.
4. **Thousands of Jews Believed in Him.** As a result of Peter's eyewitness account in Acts 2:14-41.
5. **The Apostle Paul's Witness.** "Last of all he was seen of me also." (15:8). Everything the apostle Paul did and everything he preached began with that sudden change—when he saw the risen Lord. Everything Paul did he attributed to the sight of the risen Christ.
6. **The Gospel Accounts.** There are four different accounts describing the chain of circumstances from the empty tomb to his ascension (Mk 16:19; Lk 24:51).

Verses 15-19—

Put together, overwhelmingly, if we study them closely, we have "many infallible proof" presented to us. If Jesus Christ is not risen then Paul is a false witness, the faith of believers is worthless, or futile, and even more horrific, believers are still in their sins. **Then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in the Christ, we are of all men most miserable.**