

# The Facts of the Gospel

## 1 Corinthians 15 v 1-11

### Context:

Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor who presided over Jesus' trial and execution, asked Jesus in the course of that trial a very deep philosophical question: 'What is truth?' Today we live in a world where truth is personal and subjective rather than universal and objective. However, the Bible takes a very different view, and in today's study we will see how the apostle Paul sets out the historical facts of the Gospel and their transforming effects in human lives. So, let's explore the truth as Paul confidently declares it in his first letter to these fairly new Christians in Corinth.

### Observation:

1. What does Paul want to remind the Corinthian Christians about (v 1)?
2. Why is this so important (v 2)?
3. Where did Paul get his information (v 3 & see also Galatians 1 v 11-12)?
4. What is the first historical truth of Paul's Gospel (v 3)?
5. What are the second and third historical truths of this Gospel (v 4)?
6. What is the fourth historical truth of this Gospel and how many different witnesses are mentioned (v 5-8)?
7. How does Paul describe himself in v 9 and why?
8. What personal transformation does Paul describe in v 10 and what was its cause?

### Meaning:

1. Why is it so important that Paul tells us he '*received*' this Gospel (v 3) from Jesus himself (Galatians 1 v 11-12)?
2. What do you think it means to '*receive*' and '*take your stand*' on the Gospel (v 1)?
3. What does Paul mean when he says this Gospel saves us if we keep believing (v 2)? What are we saved from and for and why is ongoing faith critical to being saved?
4. In what sense was the death of Jesus '*for our sins*' (v 3)?
5. This death was '*in accordance with the Scriptures*' (v 3). Where in the Old Testament do we see the death of Jesus trailed or prophesied?
6. Why do you think Paul stresses the historical fact that Jesus was buried (v 4)?
7. Paul says Jesus' resurrection as well as his death was '*according to the Scriptures*' (v 4). So, where would you look in the Old Testament for trailers of Jesus' resurrection, specifically on the third day?
8. Why are the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus an important piece of evidence in the case for the historical resurrection theory (v 5-8)?
9. What possible alternative explanations are there for these appearances, other than the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and what credibility do they have?
10. What do you think Paul means by referring to himself as one '*abnormally born*' (v 8)?
11. Why do you think God chose someone like Paul to be an apostle (v 9)? - see also 1 Timothy 1 v 15-17.
12. How would you define the word '*Grace*' and what are the effects of grace in the life of those who believe (v 10)?

**Application:**

1. Why is it so important that the Christian Gospel rests on historical facts? To what extent does this distinguish the Christian faith from other religions?
2. Based on v 2-3 and looking ahead at v 14-19, what would you say to someone who claims the Christian faith is just a human invention rather than based on historical facts?
3. If you were to share the Gospel with a non-believer, how would you do it? What historical events would you include and why?

**Pray:**

- Thank God for the historical reliability of the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments.
- Pray for God's grace to hold firmly to the faith.
- Pray for courage to share the faith with others.