



## **The Gospel Paul Preached (1 Corinthians 15:1-11)**

As I contemplated writing the first update of the new year, various themes popped up in my head. At the top of the list were the need for community in 2023 and the need for comfort of the saints in these difficult days. Although these two areas of concern are greatly needed in our churches today, I convinced myself that it is appropriate at the beginning of the new year, to revisit the foundation of Christianity – the gospel of Jesus Christ. Immediately, I thought of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians.

In the fifteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul begins with a grand statement about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He says, "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain." Paul's gospel is centered on Christ and demands a response from those who hear it. Notice that the Corinthians had already heard the gospel through Paul's preaching and responded favorably. It appears, however, that there were some among them who doubted the truth of the future bodily resurrection of Believers. It is not clear who were the advocates of this position. Probably they were influenced by the teachings of the Sadducees who did not believe that there would be a future resurrection (Matt. 22:23; Acts 23:8). Nevertheless, Paul knew the dangerous consequences of such error. If there is no bodily resurrection, then the bodily elements of Christ Himself are even now in the dust of the earth. Moreover, Christianity is useless; we are even now lost in sin; Christians who died have perished, and we are more pitiable than all other people (see 1 Cor. 15:12-19). In order to correct this error, Paul "delivered" to the Corinthians what he also "received," that is, the core elements of the message of the gospel which he proclaimed. By passing on the teaching he received Paul is upholding the established tradition (see Deut. 6:4ff.).

The Gospel Paul preached is centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ. In our present passage, Paul focuses on the work of Jesus Christ, that is, His death and resurrection. In verse three, Paul makes two claims about the death of Jesus. First, he asserts that the death of Jesus is sufficient for sins. This is implied in the words "Christ died for our sins." To say that Christ died for our sins is to confirm that His death is sufficient for our sins. In other words, it is the remedy for our sins. This truth is implicit in Hebrews 10:11-12, "And every priest stands daily ministering and offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God."

The death of Jesus is not only sufficient for sins; it is also the fulfillment of Israel's Scriptures. Paul says that Jesus died for sins "according to the Scriptures." From the perspective of the New Testament writers, the term "Scriptures" refer to the writings of the Old Testament. The death of Jesus is the fulfillment of "the Scriptures," because the sacrifices required for sins in the Old Testament, pointed to the death of Jesus Christ. As the verse which we quoted earlier says, the sacrifices of the Old Testament priesthood were never able to "take away sins." They were a foreshadowing of the death of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

This is the first element of the Gospel Paul preached: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." As we enter the new year, let us contemplate the tremendous implications of this truth! That Jesus died for our sins means that the ransom has been paid! Salvation has been purchased for us! We have forgiveness through His blood, and much, much more benefits! We simply must trust in Him. As Peter proclaimed in his Pentecost sermon, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

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By God's Grace and for His glory,

Pr. Francis

## Hymn: "Saved by the Blood"

(by S. J. Henderson, 1902)

1. Saved by the blood of the Crucified One! Now ransomed from sin and a new work begun, Sing praise to the Father and praise to the Son, Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!

*Refrain:*

Glory, I'm saved! Glory, I'm saved!  
My sins are all pardoned, my guilt is all gone!  
Glory, I'm saved! Glory, I'm saved!  
I'm saved by the blood of the Crucified One!

2. Saved by the blood of the Crucified One! The angels rejoicing because it is done; A child of the Father, joint-heir with the Son, Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!

3. Saved by the blood of the Crucified One! The Father He spake, and His will it was done; Great price of my pardon, His own precious Son; Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!

4. Saved by the blood of the Crucified One! All hail to the Father, all hail to the Son, All hail to the Spirit, the great Three in One! Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!