

Over 500 Witnesses!



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The apostle made this statement ¹ Corinthians 15:1 “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ² By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.” The man who was an avowed enemy of Christ, was convicted and converted to be a faithful follower of Christ.

The resurrection of Christ from the tomb, is the very foundation on which we place our faith in God, and on which the entire Christian life is based. If that did not happen as the Bible clearly states, our walk by faith is futile and ineffective—our life of faith is pointless.

¹ Corinthians 15:14 “If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.” It is a main point to be repeated ¹ Corinthians 15:17 “And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” There would be no reason to live as we do, nor to trust God in faith as we have. ¹ Corinthians 15:20 “But, in reality, Christ *has* risen from among the dead, being the first to do so of those who are asleep.”

The Truth from the Word declares that the resurrection of Jesus *did* happen—and there are over 500 witnesses over 40 days who could affirm it is true—that is *overwhelming evidence*. Because our Savior lives—everyone can face tomorrow with confidence—that the Atonement

sacrifice of Jesus was made for sinners—to give a living hope of salvation.

Actually we are like one or the other of the two malefactors [criminals; evil-doers] who were crucified with Jesus. One mocked Him; and the other loved Him; one was critical; and the other remorseful; one complained *at* Jesus; and the other submitted *to* Jesus.

Good works offers *no payment*; but a good sacrifice offered *full payment*. Jesus said ^{Luke 13:3 and 5} “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” By sincerely repenting of our sins, and placing our faith and trust on the shed Blood of Christ, we can be with Him forever in Paradise.

All the thief said to Jesus was ^{Luke 23:42}, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” To which Jesus replied ⁴³ “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Only an attitude change, changed the direction of his life. The man went from lost to saved in that moment of time—Jesus knew his *heart*, and promised him *Heaven*.

It all depends on faith, but faith is not a feeling. We can exercise faith without any emotion or sensation. We believe that a chair will hold our weight, but there is no feeling connected to that. Doubt *is* a feeling, however, because we can feel uneasy if we believe that a chair will not hold us.

Faith is *not* a feeling, but is a settled choice of our own will. *That chair looks okay to me*, so we sit down without thinking anything further. It is a *choice* based on *trust* by what we *see*. Faith in Jesus is based on *trust* by what we *know* is *true*. Once we decide to trust in faith, there is no feeling or emotion involved—we just *know* what Jesus did on the Cross and trust on His promise to deliver.

Each of the malefactors on the cross had a choice of how to treat Jesus. As a result of their choices, one went to *Hell* and the other went to

Heaven. We all have that *same* choice. Whatever we decide about Jesus, will determine where we spend eternity. With the two alongside of Jesus, only an *attitude* separated Heaven from Hell.

The apostle admitted ¹ Timothy 1:13 “Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.” God’s love, mercy, and grace reaches further than our worst mistake.

The apostle admits that he is the vilest of sinners, and does not deserve *any* mercy or grace ¹ Timothy 1:16 “But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.” A truly penitent heart is promised the same Paradise given to the thief.

Another promise of Paradise, because of the resurrection of Christ, is ^{Colossians 2:14} “He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ’s cross.”

Blotting out the ordinance, means canceling the debt, and stamping it *Paid in full!* When Jesus said “*It is finished,*” it means all prophecy had been fulfilled regarding the Messiah’s work on earth of atoning for sins in the world. 2,000 years ago the debt was paid, so God no longer sees us as a sinner heading for the flames, but as a beloved child getting ready to return home to Him.

All that God *wants* to give us is *ours*—if we will decide to accept those gifts by faith and live each day by trusting on the Blood of Christ. God does *not force* us to love Him—but gives

us a *choice* to love Him. Our purpose in this life is to have an attitude adjustment. God created us with free will, so we are here to exercise it. The question then; Will I run my own life, or ask God to run it!

If anyone sets themselves up as their *own* god—the *true* God will allow them to do it. That is *not* His desire, however, but our *own* willful choice. ² Peter 3:9 *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*

If we will come to repentance; if we are sorry for the wrongs we have committed; for the rebellious attitudes we have taken; and if we will truly ask Jesus to come into our heart to control our life; our attitudes, and our choices from that moment, He promises to do it, and to give us the kingdom.

Jesus paid it all, so we are free to return to God. We can approach His throne of grace without fear—that is what the Good News is all about. God desires to *show* us mercy, and He has offered us the most valuable gift of all time—total forgiveness through faith in His Son. If we make the decision to receive that gift—and remain steadfast in faith to trust Him to the end, we will be with him!

We are free from the debt of our transgressions, if we will accept by faith, what Jesus has accomplished for us on the Cross, and continue to live in appreciation of that atoning sacrifice He made for us. Over 500 witnesses and over 40 days is evidence enough that Jesus lives!

When some women arrived at the tomb of Jesus that morning, and bringing spices, they found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. ^{Luke 24:4} *“As they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ They said to them,*

‘Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen!’”

The angels told them to recall what Jesus had said—that ^{Luke 24:7} *“The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. ⁸ And they remembered his words.”* The words of the Bible are accurate, and it contains all the teaching we need to take us to Heaven. ^{Acts 2:24} Jesus is He *“whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”*

It brings us back to the opening verses and what the apostle declared to the brethren. He said that the Gospel he gave them would save them from God’s wrath, if they would keep in memory the Gospel he spoke—of enduring faith in the Atonement of Christ through all trials and tests.

¹ Corinthians 15:3 *“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 Peter, and then to the Twelve.”* That would be thirteen eye-witnesses, and not counting the two angels or the women who later met Jesus.

The apostle Paul goes on to explain all that took place following that all-important resurrection of Christ. ¹ Corinthians 15:6 *“After that [Jesus] 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.”*

The apostle *knew* how merciful and loving God is, and that He will give anyone every opportunity possible to repent, believe, and come back to faith in the Blood of the Cross for the

saving of their soul—every opportunity. ^{Hebrews 3:7} *“As the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert.’”*

We must open our heart to God’s Truth, and be willing to receive His offer of grace. The apostle was the grateful recipient of God’s forgiveness—¹ Corinthians 15:9 *“For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy 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 toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”*

In a Jewish court of law, at least two witnesses were needed to establish the truth of anything. When Jesus rose from the grave, He was seen by at least 552 people in thirteen different places over forty days. The resurrection of Christ and His presence in the world for 40 days was not behind closed doors, but out in the open for all believers to witness.

This proved beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Jesus is God incarnate; the Messiah had come. All of Jesus’ followers were willing to die for their faith, because they had each seen the resurrected Savior! ^{Acts 1:3} *“After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.”* Over 500 witnesses confirm the truth of the Gospel!



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