

With chapter 15 we come to the **third** main division of the Epistle.

1. In the **first division** we have the Cross of Christ excluding the wisdom of the world, the license of the flesh and the worship of demons ([1 Cor. 1 — 10](#)).
2. In the **second division** we have the free action of the Holy Spirit, maintaining order in the meeting of God's church ([1 Cor. 11 — 14](#)).
3. Now the **third division** brings before us the **resurrection of Christ**, triumphing over death and the grave, and opening the way to the perfect condition when God will be all in all. Smith

The progress of evil, as seen in this Church, is solemn and instructive.

1. First, there were evil practices.
2. Secondly, there was assembly disorder.
3. Thirdly, there was false doctrine.

One evil leads to the other

- Moral laxity **opens the door** to the flesh, and **denies the Cross**.
 - Assembly disorder leads to **clerisy (learned persons as a class; literati; intelligentsia clergy)** and human order and ignores the Spirit.
 - Doctrinal error opens the way for the enemy to **undermine the foundations of our faith and attacks the Person of Christ.** Smith

*¹ Now I make known to you, brethren, **the gospel** which I preached to you, which **also** you received, in which **also** you stand,*

While the denial of resurrection undermines the gospel

1. Paul first reminds these believers of **the gospel** as that he had **declared to them** originally which he had **preached**,
2. Which they had **received**,
3. Wherein they had their **standing (POSITION)** in blessing before God.

² *by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless (Ei) you believed in vain.*

As the means of their salvation by which they were saved. But he adds the words, “*unless ye have believed in vain*”

- a. For if there is no resurrection they had evidently believed in a myth.
- b. However, he shows in a parenthetical remark that *the reality of their faith would be proved by holding fast the word that he had announced to them in the glad tidings.* Smith

The hypothetical particle, **εἰ**, **supposes the fact** of their holding fast the glad tidings, otherwise their faith was worthless. Kelly

*³For I delivered to you in the first place that which I also **received**,
that **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures**;*

Paul carefully remarks that the gospel he preached, he had **“received,”** as we know from another epistle, **“by the revelation of Jesus Christ”** ([Galatians 1:12](#)).

Without the death of Christ for our sins, not only has the gospel no foundation, but the Old Testament has no adequate meaning or worthy end. Kelly

⁴ and that he was buried; and that he was raised the third day according to the Scriptures;

God would give more than enough evidence. So it is added to Christ's death (ver. 4), “*and that he was buried.*” Only here is made no mention here of the Scriptures.

This is reserved for the immense fact of the resurrection: “*and that he was raised the third day according to the Scriptures*”

His resurrection is the grand pivot of the chapter.

The perfect tense and passive voice of the Greek verb translated “*was raised*” implies that since God raised Him He is still alive. Kelly

Paul Immediately sums up the glad tidings under **three headings**.

1. First, “**Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.**” This brings before us the great propitiatory work of Christ for all the world, foretold in all the Scriptures, for the law sets it forth in figure, the Psalms present it experimentally, and the prophets announce it prophetically.
2. Secondly, **Christ was buried**, the complete evidence of His death and the solemn fact that all His links with man after the flesh are severed.
3. Thirdly, “**He was raised the third day, according to the Scriptures,**” the everlasting witness that the power of death is broken, the devil defeated, and God is glorified. Smith

⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

- Paul confirms the resurrection of Christ by certain of His appearances afterwards, as He had the death by burial.
- He confirms the truth of the resurrection of Christ by bringing forward different witnesses to whom Christ appeared after He had risen from the dead.
- Paul is led to select those witnesses who, by reason of their service, or numbers, have special importance as witnesses. Smith

*⁶ After that He appeared to more than **five hundred brethren** at one time, most of whom **remain until now**, but some have fallen asleep;*

First, the risen Christ was seen by Peter.

- the Apostle who first preached the gospel to the Jew, and
- was used to open the door of grace to the Gentile.

Second,

- He appeared to the twelve who had accompanied Him on earth.

Third,

- He was seen in resurrection by **five hundred at one time**.
- The greater part of these five hundred united witnesses **still survived if any one doubted**.

*"After that he appeared to **James**, after that to all the apostles."*

James had a place of singular honor, both as the leader of the church at Jerusalem, and as an inspired writer; and he was the object alone of an appearance of Christ.

All was in place, and each had its separate importance; and extending over forty days with such a variety of occasions and circumstances, it marks the care with which divine wisdom and grace made the resurrection known. Kelly

⁸ *and last of all, as to one **untimely born**, He appeared to me also.*

- Paul regarded the Lord's appearance to him on the Damascus Road as an equivalent post-resurrection appearance and the Lord's last one. Constable
- In describing himself as **untimely born**, he is using a word that means **miscarriage** and was used as a term of contempt.
- This is an apt description of Paul's call to the apostleship.
McCalley

⁹"for I am the *least of the apostles*, who am *not fit to be called an apostle*, because I persecuted the church of God."

His claim to be the *least of the apostles* is based on his past conduct toward the church.

Evidently Paul felt himself the *least worthy* to be an apostle. He did not regard his apostleship inferior to that of the other apostles, however. Constable