

# 8. The Essence of the Gospel Is That the Risen Christ Was Seen

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From the **TeachingtheWord** Bible Knowledgebase

Part 8 of a series. Read [part 7](#).

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

In prior articles we have seen that the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ are essential to the Gospel. These are historical facts. The essence of the Gospel also involves the fact that Jesus Christ was seen by many on earth after His resurrection, and was seen in Heaven by at least three individuals in subsequent years. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Luke states this essential fact at the beginning of his account of the spread of the Gospel, the book of Acts:

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put

in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:1-11)

Some false teachers try to say that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was merely a spiritual or symbolic resurrection, not a real, literal, bodily resurrection. But that is not what the Bible teaches. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a physical, bodily resurrection. It is one of the most well-attested events of human history.

We have the proof of a great number of witnesses who saw Him during the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension. Paul names them here - as many as 500 people at one time.

In Acts chapter 7, we read of Stephen at his martyrdom gazing upward and saying, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

We have the witness of Paul himself, who was confronted by the risen Christ on the road to Damascus in Acts chapter 9.

And, we have the witness of the Apostle John, who many years later saw the risen Christ repeatedly as he was given the Book of Revelation.

Bodily resurrection was necessary so that Christ the great High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies in Heaven, and place His blood upon the heavenly altar, where it will remain through all eternity, as the full and final payment for our sins.

Bodily resurrection was necessary so that Jesus could ascend to the right hand of the Father, where He rules and reigns and makes intercession for us when we come to the Father in prayer.

Bodily resurrection was necessary so that Jesus Christ can come again - bodily, visibly, to rule and to reign and to judge, and to dwell with His glorified people for all eternity.

The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul sets forth the case beginning a few verses later in 1st Corinthians 15:

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up - if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. (1 Corinthians 15:12-26)

**Next: The Essence of the Gospel Is That It Is According to the Scriptures**

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