

LEAD! A.8 Christ's Salvation

In Which We Receive the Gospel, And Are Saved By It

Our [series](#) so far -- indeed, the first half of human history -- is but a prelude to the coming of Jesus Christ. In Christ we have the [word](#) of God made flesh, the perfect revelation of God's [character](#), a tangible representative of the [Trinity](#), and a reminder of what we were [created](#) to be.

Yet even more glorious than all that: Christ is Our [Lord](#), and has become our [much-needed](#) Savior...

Adoration

[Psalm 22](#)

Bible

[1 Corinthians 15:1-8,20-28,45-49](#)

Out of the entire New Testament, we have chosen to focus on Christ as revealed in [St. Paul's epistle](#) to the [Corinthians](#), as that provides one of the most succinct summaries of the gospel:

Moreover, [brethren](#), I [declare](#) unto you the [gospel](#) which I [preached](#) unto you, which also ye have [received](#), and wherein ye [stand](#);

The term "[gospel](#)" simply means "good news." Right away, even before we know *what* the gospel is, we know that:

- Paul preached it
- The Corinthians welcomed it
- Their church was established on it

And furthermore, it is the basis of their [salvation](#):

By which also ye are [saved](#), if ye [keep](#) in memory what I [preached](#) unto you, unless ye have [believed](#) in [vain](#).

So what must they [remember](#)?

For I [delivered](#) unto you first of all that which I also [received](#), how 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](#):

The gospel they must remember is the one they received from Paul, who himself

received it -- that Christ:

1. Died for our sins
2. Was buried
3. Rose again

That's it. Just three simple statements -- but oh, the implications!

The first thing to note is that Christ [died](#) "for our sins." This is known as the doctrine of [substitutionary atonement](#), the fact that in some crucial yet mysterious way Christ's death [substituted](#) for **our** sins, similar to sacrifices on the Jewish [day of atonement](#). Whatever else Christ's life and death accomplished, they first and foremost restored to us the relationship with God that was broken by the [fall](#), by taking away the penalty for our sins.

The fact that Jesus was [buried](#) might seem a minor point except for what happened afterwards: He rose again! Christ's resurrection placed His death (and life) in a whole new light, validating His [claim to be divine](#): the [Son of God](#), worthy of [worship](#) and able to [forgive sins](#).

On these twin pillars -- Christ's death and resurrection -- hang all of orthodox Christianity. Without them, Christianity is nothing more than sentimental platitudes (and a cruel [hoax](#)). With them, we finally have sure knowledge of the Deity who created our universe.

The resurrection is such a crucial fact that Paul goes out of his way to enumerate the witnesses:

After that, he was [seen](#) of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part [remain](#) unto this present, but some are fallen [asleep](#).

After that, he was seen of [James](#); then of all the [apostles](#).

And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one [born out of due time](#).

We now skip down to verse 20, to explore the implications of that resurrection further:

But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the [firstfruits](#) of them that slept.

The [firstfruits](#) were a cause for celebration in every [agrarian society](#). They represent the beginning of the harvest after a long summer of plowing and planting, and an end to the reliance on last year's leftovers. Among Jews, the firstfruits were also [offered to God](#) as an expression of gratitude.

Paul taps into that potent imagery, as well as the parallels with Adam:

For since by [man](#) [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in [Adam](#) all die, even so in Christ shall all be [made alive](#)

Here we can see the promise of eternal life for those who are in Christ, reversing the death that Adam brought on humanity. Christ is the first to be raised from the dead -- but far from the last:

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his [coming](#).

Here we see a connection between Christ's resurrection and His second coming:

Then [cometh] the [end](#), when he shall have [delivered](#) up the [kingdom](#) to [God](#), even the [Father](#); when he shall have put down all [rule](#) and all [authority](#) and [power](#).

As Western evangelicals, we have a tendency to focus on Christ as our "[personal savior](#)". While that is an important truth, it is far from the whole truth. Here, Paul makes it clear that our individual salvation is actually part of a much larger story: Christ (re)establishing the [Father's Kingdom](#) on earth, over and above all earthly [powers and authorities](#):

For he must [reign](#), till he hath put all [enemies](#) under his feet.

Christ is on a mission to establish dominion over everyone -- and everything -- that has rebelled against God's created order. *That* is the fulness of the gospel. Our deliverance from death is just a part of that -- though a noteworthy part:

The last enemy [that] shall be [destroyed](#) [is] death.

Lest we get the wrong idea, Paul clarifies that Jesus is not part of that created order being submitted:

For he hath put all things [under](#) his feet. But when he [saith](#) all things are put under [him, it is] [manifest](#) that he is [excepted](#), which did put all things under him.

This alludes to the fact that Jesus is fully God, and thus doesn't need to be redeemed along with the rest of humanity. Yet even though He has divine authority, Jesus still chooses to submit to the Father:

And when all things shall be [subdued](#) unto him, then shall the Son also himself be [subject](#) unto him that put all things under him, that God may be [all](#) in all.

This is one of the many [paradoxes](#) of Jesus: that in His divine nature He is a [full member](#) of the Godhead, yet in His role as Son and representative member of humanity He is [submitted](#) to the Father. We can try our best to explain Him, but ultimately all human understanding falls short of the transcendent Reality which is Jesus Himself.

We shall close with verses [45-49](#), which returns to the Adam as a metaphor for Jesus:

And so it is written, The [first](#) man Adam was made a [living soul](#); the [last](#) Adam

[was made] a [quickenning spirit](#).

The [allusion](#) is to [Genesis 2:7](#), where God breathed life into the dust of the earth. However, the life conveyed by the "last Adam" (Jesus) is of a different sort:

Howbeit that [was] not [first](#) which is [spiritual](#), but that which is [natural](#); and [afterward](#) that which is spiritual.

That is, Jesus is the source of our spiritual life much as Adam was the source of our natural life. How?

The first man [is] of the [earth](#), [earthy](#): the second man [is] the [Lord](#) from [heaven](#).

As [is] the earthy, such [are] they also that are earthy: and as [is] the heavenly, such [are] they also that are heavenly.

Put another way, Adam -- our ancestors, or any human -- could only give us earthly life, since they themselves are part of the earth. But Christ not only came from heaven, He is the Lord of heaven, and thus has the ability and authority to remake us in His image:

And as we have [borne](#) the [image](#) of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

This, then, is the ultimate reason Jesus came: to manifest God the Father through His life, death, and resurrection, that we -- and all creation -- might someday bear the image of Christ.

Conversation

1. Share when and how you first "received" the gospel.
2. What do you consider the most compelling evidence for the resurrection? (see "[Explore More](#)")
3. How would you define "eternal life"?
4. Do you think of Jesus as your "personal savior"? Why or why not?
5. What kind of life have you inherited from your earthly parents? What kind of life are you inheriting from your heavenly Father?

Decision

- **Repentance:** Where does Christ need to further establish His reign in your life?
- **Action:** How can you better manifest Christ's image in the earth?
- **Worship:** What does Christ's death and resurrection reveal about the depths of God's character: e.g., His justice, love, and wisdom?

Explore More

- [How Long Was Jesus in the Tomb?](#)
- [Substitutionary Sacrifice for Sin](#)
- [Going All In: "The Third Day He Rose from the Dead" – Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
- [Evidence for the Resurrection](#)
- [The Deity of Christ](#)
- [Philippians 2:5–8 The Humanity of Christ](#)

For Next Week

Read [John 16](#). Why is Jesus sending the Holy Spirit?