



the **HOPE** *of Easter*

Central to the Gospel

- The Resurrection is central to the Gospel, not a theological side issue
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
- In 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote a letter to his dear spiritual children, those he had personally led to the Lord and spent a year and a half pouring into, teaching, and discipling.

Central to the Gospel

- He addressed some grave concerns he had been told about them – theological factions, sexual immorality, and division within the church based on socio-economic status, as well as answering their theological and moral questions.
- Paul addressed one of the most essential questions of the Christian faith toward the end of the letter.

Central to the Gospel

- This is a question that is central to the Gospel, not a side issue about which we can “agree to disagree.”
- In other letters, Paul explained that we can have different views or convictions about non-salvific issues like dietary laws, the holy days, drinking wine, and eating meat (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 10:23)

Central to the Gospel

- We cannot disagree about core Gospel issues.
- Otherwise, we simply aren't practicing the same faith (Galatians 1:6–7).
- Theologians describe this as “unity in the essentials, liberty in the non-essentials, and charity in all things.”

Central to the Gospel

- Paul wrote to remind them that the Resurrection of Jesus was an established fact, testified to by many eyewitnesses.
- It is the very foundation of the Christian faith.
- He also said the Resurrection of Jesus is tied to the Resurrection of His people; the two cannot be separated.

Central to the Gospel

- Verses 3b–4 are the basic points, which, because of the structure and context, we can tell was a confession memorized by early disciples.
- “What I received, I passed on to you” describes the method of what scholars call “traditioning,” how Jewish teachers passed on teachings to their students who would pass them on to others.

Central to the Gospel

- Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Isaiah 53:4–12
- He was buried.
- He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. Psalm 16:10; Hosea 6:2

True History

- The Resurrection is true history witnessed by many eyewitnesses
- 1 Corinthians 15:5-8
- Paul focused on sharing the eyewitness testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus because in the legal system in the ancient world, eyewitness testimony was highly valued.

True History

- In the Gospel accounts, the risen Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18) and other women who followed Him, before revealing himself to His male disciples (Matthew 28:1–10).
- Paul started with Jesus' appearance to Peter.
- The testimony of women was not considered admissible in court in their culture.

True History

- This makes it much more likely that the Gospels accounts were true, not made up.
- If the male disciples were making up the story, they wouldn't have made the first eyewitness to Jesus' Resurrection women.
- This makes the story more reliable, not less.

True History

- Those who are familiar with the Gospels would know that Thomas said he would not believe unless he actually touched the holes in Jesus' wrists and side.
- When Jesus appeared to him, Thomas responded with a bold declaration of faith.
- Not just "my Lord" but also "my God" (John 20:28).

True History

- Paul emphasized that most of the 500 men who saw the resurrected Jesus were still alive, reminding the Corinthians that if they doubted him, they could ask them.
- Plenty of people could corroborate his story.
- Luke told us He appeared to them over a period of 40 days, teaching them about the kingdom.

True History

- Paul included himself last. Jesus appeared to him much, much later on the road to Damascus.
- After He had already ascended to the Father, after the Spirit had come, after His disciples had been spreading the Gospel.
- This alludes to the idea that Jesus can appear to anyone anytime (e.g., Muslims in the Middle East).

Resurrection Transformation

- Paul's own experience shows the power of God's Resurrection transformation
- 1 Corinthians 15:9-11
- Paul went from being a persecutor of the Church, trying everything he could to stop the Gospel from spreading, to the chief evangelist to the Gentiles, spreading the Gospel all over the Roman Empire.

Resurrection Transformation

- His life was consumed by advancing the Gospel; it was his only concern (Acts 20:24).
- When he encountered Jesus, it was like his old life died and he was resurrected to a completely new life with a completely new identity, purpose and mission.
- Jesus was physically resurrected, but Paul was spiritually resurrected to a new life.

Resurrection Transformation

- One day, we will be physically resurrected to a new glorified body and new life in His kingdom.
- But even now, when we choose to follow Jesus, we are “buried” with Him and then resurrected to a new life in Christ (Romans 6:4).
- We are made a new creation that we may walk in newness of life (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Resurrection Transformation

- This is what happened to Paul. The Gospel changed his entire life, everything about it.
- When we truly encounter Jesus as risen Lord, this is what happens to all of us.
- This is what repentance means – to turn back, to turn around and go in the opposite direction.

Resurrection Transformation

- Paul wrote that he didn't consider himself worthy to be an apostle because of his past of persecuting the Church. But by the grace of God, he became a harder worker for the Gospel than any of them.
- Because of the Holy Spirit who transforms us, day by day, with ever increasing glory, into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).



Point of View

A BIBLICAL VIEW ON

The Declaration

By Kerby Anderson

The Declaration

- The Declaration answers the “why” of American government, and the Constitution answers the “how” of American government.
- British author G.K. Chesterton explained, “America is the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed. That creed is set forth with dogmatic and even theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence.”

Sources

- Thomas Jefferson wrote that he drew his ideas from many sources.
- Many of those ideas came from two biblical Christians: John Locke and William Blackstone.
- He also drew from political documents of the day (Virginia Declaration of Rights) and even a declaration from Presbyterians in North Carolina.

Sources

- Jefferson's initial draft left God out of the manuscript entirely except for a vague reference to "the laws of nature and of nature's God."
- Yet even this phrase makes an implicit reference to the laws of God.
- It was a direct reference to the laws of God as described by John Locke and in William Blackstone's Commentaries.

Sources

- Another source was the Virginia Declaration of Rights, authored by George Mason and adopted June 12, 1776.
- “That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights . . . namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, and the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.”

Changes

- Jefferson wrote: “We hold these truths to be sacred.” But the word “sacred” was changed to “self-evident,” perhaps because of advice from Franklin.
- Jefferson wrote that men are created equal and “from that equal creation they derive rights.” Instead, he changed that (perhaps because of a suggestion from John Adams) they are “endowed by their Creator” with rights.

Changes

- In the original draft of the Declaration, Jefferson included a strong condemnation of the King for promoting the British slave trade.
- Unfortunately, this condemnation of the slave trade was removed from the Declaration because of objections from delegates from South Carolina and Georgia.

God in the Declaration

- “laws of nature and nature’s God”
- they are “endowed by their Creator”
- “appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World”
- “protection of divine Providence”

Biblical Foundation

- The biblical foundation of the Declaration can be found in the writings of the founders of this country and the framers of the Constitution.
- Two researchers conducted a massive study of 15,000 documents written during the founding period.
- They found 3,154 citations or references to other sources.

Biblical Foundation

- The most quoted source (34%) was the Bible. In fact, three-fourths of those references were from reprinted sermons given by preachers during the 18th century.
- When they quoted from other writers during this period of the Enlightenment, they quoted from Christian thinkers like Montesquieu, Blackstone, and Locke.

Biblical Foundation

- The religious foundation can also be seen in the tempered nature of the document and the subsequent American Revolution.
- The Declaration of Independence was a bold document, but not a radical one.
- The colonists did not break with England for “light and transient causes.”

Biblical Foundation

- They were mindful that they should be “in subjection to the governing authorities” which “are established by God” (Romans 13:1).
- Yet when they suffered from a “long train of abuses and usurpations,” they argued that “it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government.”

Conclusion

- British Historian Paul Johnson concluded,
- “There is no question that the Declaration of Independence was, to those who signed it, a religious as well as secular act, and that the Revolutionary War had the approbation of divine providence.”



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