

RESURRECTED

REJUVENATED



Sometimes weird, unexplainable things happen in our world. They've been happening all throughout history!

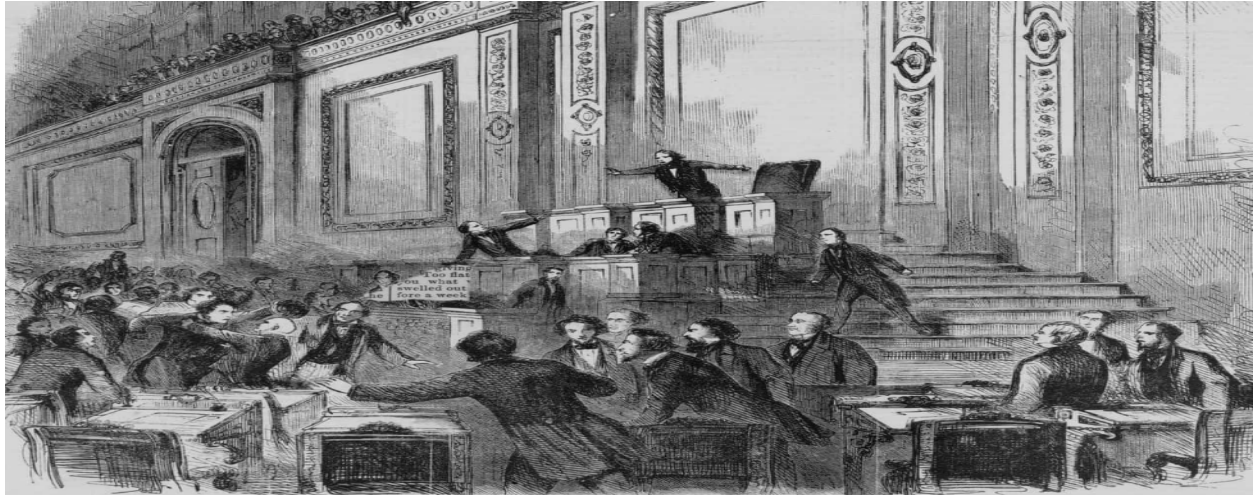
In July 1518, [Frau Troffea](#) became patient zero in a [dancing pandemic](#) that claimed nearly 400 victims. After Troffea danced silently and involuntarily by herself for more than a week, other citizens of Strasbourg began contracting the fatal disease.



Local doctors even ordered the creation of stages and the presence of musicians in hopes of comforting the unfortunate victims. The physicians believed that if they allowed the dancing to continue, patients would ultimately dance the fever out of their bodies.

The hysteria lasted for two months and claimed countless victims to stroke, heart attack, or exhaustion before it subsided.

Experts are still unclear about what caused the plague. Hypotheses include the populace's fear of St. Vitus's wrath (he was the patron saint of dancers), the consumption of a hallucinogenic mold that grows on rye bread, and psychogenic disorders.¹



After hours of arguing the pro-slavery constitutional status of the Kansas territory, Northern Republicans and Free Soilers broke out into a full-on **30-man brawl** against Southern Democrats on February 6, 1858.

Tensions were high from the beginning, and it wasn't uncommon for fights to break out in the middle of the House floor. **Congressional violence** was a regular part of meeting from the 1830s leading into the Civil War years, and representatives often brought canes, bowie knives, and guns to work with them.

The Supreme Court's ruling against Black citizenship and the approval of slavery throughout the West during the Dred Scott case in 1857 was still fresh on everyone's minds. The fateful decision caused chaos to erupt at 2 am on February 6, when representatives assembled for an overnight discussion over Kansas's admittance status as a free or pro-slavery state.

A Southern representative grabbed his Northern colleague by the throat during the heated debate, causing the entire floor to break out into a multi-man fistfight. The dispute didn't end until Wisconsin Republicans John Potter and Cadwallader Washburn pulled the wig off of their colleague William Barksdale's head. The room erupted into laughter, putting an end to the altercation.²

¹ <https://www.ranker.com/list/bizarre-historical-events/lauren-glen>

² <https://www.ranker.com/list/bizarre-historical-events/lauren-glen>

There have been a lot of unbelievable things that have happened in history. And the bodily resurrection of Jesus, is, for many, one of those wildly unbelievable things.

When I was seventeen years old I didn't believe in the resurrection of Jesus. I didn't want to even think about it. But I believed, for a few months, that I was John Lennon reincarnated. After all, he was shot on December 8, 1980. I was born early on July 20, 1981. It didn't seem inconceivable to me that I could've been conceived during the moment of his shooting and his soul somehow transferred into mine.

A few years later I got off of all the drugs I was doing and realized how tripped out and stoned I was to believe such a thing about myself... I also realized what a bizarre delusion of grandeur it was. This is your brain on drugs kids...

And now, with a sober mind, a clear head, and years of chasing after truth I couldn't be more certain that the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and my eventual resurrection into an eternal, sinless body as His follower, is a reality.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christ followers in what we now mark as Chapter 15 of what we now call 1st Corinthians. The Corinthians were culturally predisposed to questioning the validity of a bodily resurrection, and Paul wanted to aid them in their understanding and provide many proofs that Jesus, in fact, did rise from the dead and appear bodily.

It's important to know contextually, that, for the Corinthians, it was not the resurrection of Christ that was being denied, but the resurrection of the Christ follower's body over against the pagan doctrine of the immortality of the soul. To the first-century mind the immortality of the soul was unquestionably true for most pagans. The resurrection of the body was absurd to them (*cf.* Acts 17:32)³

Paul began his thorough explanation of resurrection to the Corinthians, and ultimately, to us, in 1 Cor. 15:1;

Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. (1 Cor. 15:1-2)

The gospel Paul had preached in Corinth (2:1–2) had not changed; And he was about to give the Corinthians a brief sketch of this gospel.⁴ Paul did fear that just as there had been declension in the church concerning the message of Christ crucified and its

³ Winter, B. (1994). [1 Corinthians](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 1183). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

⁴ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:1). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

implication for believers, the same was happening with regard to the message of Christ resurrected.⁵

Paul graciously, assumptively challenged the Corinthian Jesus followers to “take their stand” on this gospel. He wanted them to own their faith. He wanted them to live fully and robustly for Jesus Christ, casting off all else.

Paul never shied away from preaching this gospel again and again.

We need to preach the gospel to one another again and again, in intimate, medium sized, and larger groups, technologically and viscerally. Echoing Paul, Christ will lead us to intentionally pour into one another spiritually in a way that elevates *our* spirits into the presence of the *Holy* Spirit.

Additionally, the message of the resurrection was an essential element in the Corinthians’ experience of ongoing salvation (the pres. tense of the verb **saved** focuses on sanctification), so was the latter.⁶ Christ followers experience salvation in part now (in the sense of beginning their relationship with Christ without the burden of sin standing between them and God), but this salvation will be complete when Christ returns and they are unified with God for eternity (see Phil 1:6).⁷ Tony Evans notes that being saved in 1 Cor. 15:2 refers to present tense salvation for deliverance from the power of sin. Believers must continually abide (i.e., hold fast) in the knowledge and application of God’s Word.⁸

I did *become a parent* on three separate occasions: July 12th, 2012, June 13th, 2015, and September 10th, 2021. These were the days when, respectively, my daughters Charlotte, Brooklyn, and Madison were born. But it wasn’t like these days were the end of it! I, in fact, have been “becoming” a parent to all three of them since it all started, and I *continue* to become a parent more and more every day!

Now I’m no perfect parent, but I wouldn’t technically *be* a parent if I ignored my kids, avoided them, beat them up, treated them poorly, didn’t feed them, and/or did whatever I wanted while they suffered. CPS could be called and they’d hit me up, threatening to take my kids away, and I could plead “But I’m their parent! I did that thing that made my

⁵ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 542). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁶ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 542). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁷ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:2). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁸ CSB Tony Evans Study Bible Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers.

wife pregnant and they were born!” CPS would tell me “but you’re not acting like their parent, therefore, you can’t parent them.”

I *became a follower of Christ* on a Spring Day in early 2002. I was reading the New Testament when 1 John 4 stated that “God is love”, and in that moment I gave my life fully to Jesus Christ. But it wasn’t like that was it! I, in fact, have been *continuing* to give my life fully to Christ for the last twenty-one years since that day, and more so every day! And it certainly doesn’t get easier!

And I’m no perfect Christ follower, but I wouldn’t technically *be* a Christ follower if I didn’t ever pray, read the Bible, seek the Holy Spirit and do what He says, share who Jesus is with others, disciple others, be an active part of the Body of Christ and build the Kingdom. I could live my whole life just chasing down as much pleasure, money, fun and comfort as I want. I could even do ministry in addition to all of this, live a duplicitous life, and then come to the end of my existence. And I’d approach the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11). And Jesus would ask me to give an account for the life I led. I could say, “Jesus! I gave my life to you in Spring of 2002! Remember?” Jesus would have every right, because He sees right through me, to judge the sincerity and honesty of my dedication and love towards Him.

Now inevitably, some of you may be *triggered* by this. Please y’all- feel free to be triggered by spiritual abuse, immorality, unrepentant behavior, hypocrisy, stupidity and narcissism from me. Call me out on it if you see it. But don’t be triggered by the *Lord*. Jesus Himself, in reference to false prophets and potential phonies like me and you, said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount;

21 *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?’ 23 Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawbreakers!’ (Matt. 7:21-23)*

We don’t get to define, mold and morph Jesus into what we want Him to be. We get to call Him Lord, Savior, Friend and King! We get to submit to Him. He’s worthy of it all. He’s the only One really worthy. That’s why we are perpetually *being* saved. We don’t just have a moment where we *got* saved! Jesus is continually saving us through salvation, sanctification, and unto eternal resurrection!

For the Corinthians to reject this bodily resurrection eviscerated “the gospel” and made faith **vain** (*eikē*, “without cause” or “without success”; vv. 14, 17) because it had an unworthy object (15:13, 17). Believing the gospel included holding **firmly** to belief in

Christ's resurrection. Again, unless one held firmly, their belief was "in vain"; (Matt. 13:18–22).⁹

Oh may our faith not be in vain! Far too many in this generation have believed in vain. Far too many pastoral leaders have fallen. Far too many people have deconstructed Christ and His truth right out of their lives in favor of some other dominating philosophy, worldview and purpose. Far too many have walked away from the Church and the community of disciples meant to shepherd, encourage, and build them up in faith and the character of Christ.

And, praise God, what do we see in the wake of all this? God is good and He won't relent! We see a younger generation rising up, rejecting Christian celebrity, pursuing simple faith and worship, and trying to return to the roots of the faith. Oh friends, let's not miss this. God is doing a new thing. Let's latch on to it!

*Look, I am about to do something new;
even now it is coming. Do you not see it?
Indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert. (Isa. 43:19)*

Paul continued into a simple explanation of the gospel and accounts of the resurrection of Christ starting in 1 Cor. 15:3;

³ For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: 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 Cephas, then to the Twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. (1 Cor. 15:3-7)

Paul had passed on to the Corinthians what he had also received. He was emphasizing the continuity of his message with the early church's teaching.¹⁰ The following verses were the heart of the gospel, and an early Christian confession which Paul described as **most important**.¹¹

⁹ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 542). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁰ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:3). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹¹ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 542). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

More than the secondary matters, more than the finer points of theological and philosophical inquiry, Paul stated that the basic gospel was most important of all y'all.

If I threw egg, flour, butter, milk, and baking powder together and started to whisk it to make a pancake mix, but didn't put all the ingredients into a bowl, then the mix would be a disaster. A mess. A clean up job.

When we make all our secondary convictions primary, and remove the bowl of the basic gospel, it's like throwing pancake ingredients of our faith onto a table. We can try and whisk them and mix em together, but it ends up being a mess. And in the end we don't get pancakes, just a bunch of mixed up elements that don't make any sort of impact in any way. That fluffy taste of pancakes ain't gonna come from that kind of wacky effort.

We gotta keep the basics primary! We ain't gonna get pancakes unless we got the basic ingredients, and we ain't gonna mix nothing unless we got em in the basic gospel bowl! Then hey, we can throw in a little calvinist predestination vanilla extract, as long as we don't diss the other individual that throws in armenian free will raspberry extract and vice versa. We can put egalitarian bananas, as long as we don't decide to hate all men. We can put in complementarian chocolate chips, but for God's sake, we better somehow empower women like Jesus and the early Church did. We can put in pentecostal cinnamon, as long as we don't overpower the batter with it and make it spicy, thinking everyone has gotta constantly pray for healings, speak in tongues, and get slain in the Spirit to be a real believer! We can put in cessationist peppermint as long as we don't ignore and quench the Holy Spirit in favor of a dry, lifeless reading of the Word of God.

If we put in modalistic dog food, deistic Chef Boyardee Raviolis, universalistic cream of mushroom soup, or unitarian cat food, those ain't pancakes anymore y'all...

But if we have the nicene creed basics of pancake mix put into the bowl of the gospel, then God is gonna work with us. And hey, He'll even work on our imperfect convictions over time as well and reveal more and more of Himself! Now that sounds like a plan!

So the basic pancake mix that Paul is throwing down in this section is threefold:

- 1. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,**

Tony Evans noted;

Why did Paul consider Christ's death according to the Scriptures to be most important? (15:3). Because of who Christ is and what his death accomplished. Jesus Christ is the Word of God who became flesh (see [John 1:14](#)). He is the Son of God, the Second

Person of the Godhead, who became a man without giving up his deity (see [Phil 2:5-8](#)). He is the one and only person with both a divine nature and a human nature, unmixed forever. Therefore, he could serve as a perfect substitutionary sacrifice for sinners because as God he is without sin, and as a man he could die in our place. By bearing our sins on the cross, he suffered the wrath of God that we deserved so that we might be forgiven, receive eternal life, and be saved (see, e.g., [2 Cor 5:21](#); [1 Pet 2:24](#)).¹²

Jesus Christ died to save us from eternal hell, death, sin, and destruction! For the religious person and hardened cynic this is an annoying statement, but for the desperate, broken, end of the line drug addict, sex addict, pride addict, money addict, self addict, popularity addict, and isolation addict this is the most revolutionary, amazing, powerful news in the Universe! It has the power to save a soul for eternity and flip a life around that was headed for complete ruin! Praise the Lord and hallelujah!

Get broken, stay broken, and let the Savior of the Universe piece you back together. That way you don't have to attempt to do the same and botch the job!

2. He was buried,

The reality of Christ dying for our sins and being raised on the third day was verified by the Scriptures, (which in Paul's context referred to the OT, especially Ps. 16:10; Isa. 52:13-53:12, and Ps. 22.)¹³

Tony Evans noted again;

The fact **that He was buried** verified the confirmation and finality of His death.^{14 15} Jesus didn't merely swoon on the cross; he died. The Old Testament predicted that the Messiah would give his life as a sacrificial offering (see [Isa 53:4-12](#)), and the New Testament record assures us that this was indeed true of Jesus (see [John 19:33-42](#); [Phil 2:8](#)).¹⁶

This very Son of God, who turned water into wine, walked on water, calmed a storm, healed the blind, lame, deaf, and diseased, and raised people from the dead **died**

¹² CSB Tony Evans Study Bible Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers.

¹³ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Co 15:3). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹⁴ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 542). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁵ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Co 15:4). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹⁶ CSB Tony Evans Study Bible Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers.

Himself and was buried in a tomb. Jesus had all the power in heaven and on earth to not undergo this painful reality. He could've wiped evil out with one fell swoop. He could've destroyed His enemies. But Jesus forsook all of that for our sakes. Remember what happened when Jesus was arrested...

51 At (the) moment (that Jesus was arrested) one of those with Jesus reached out his hand and drew his sword. He struck the high priest's servant and cut off his ear.

52 Then Jesus told him, "Put your sword back in its place because all who take up the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot call on my Father, and he will provide me here and now with more than twelve legions of angels? 54 How, then, would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?"

55 At that time Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs, as if I were a criminal, to capture me? Every day I used to sit, teaching in the temple, and you didn't arrest me. 56 But all this has happened so that the writings of the prophets would be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and ran away. (Matt. 26:51-56)

Some "intellectuals" have said that maybe Jesus didn't die on the cross. Maybe He somehow got off of there and made His way back to the disciples. This isn't very intellectual at all! I've been listening to Lee Strobel's "The Case for Easter" on audiobook and it's a fascinating account of objections to the resurrection like this. Before coming to faith himself, Strobel was a deep skeptic looking to disprove the Bible, since his wife had become a Christ follower and was blowing his mind with the wonderful character qualities she was developing and winning him over with. He took some of the hardest questions to some of the most renowned experts on the resurrection, and they reasoned with him in a very compelling way. It's worth the listen or read especially as we ramp up into Easter! It's free on hoopla!

3. He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

Again, Tony Evans notes:

Paul emphasized that Jesus was raised on the third day. He suffered and died on our behalf; he made payment for our sins. Was this payment accepted? We can be certain that it was because God raised him from the dead. This is the clear and consistent testimony of the early church (see, e.g., [Acts 2:24-32](#); [3:15](#); [5:30](#); [10:39-41](#); [13:29-37](#); [17:31](#)). The resurrection is your receipt that God accepted Christ's payment for your sins and mine.¹⁷

¹⁷ CSB Tony Evans Study Bible Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers.

Jesus rose from the dead y'all. Jesus paid it all, all to Him we owe, sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow. He's given us an eternal receipt that says "sins paid in full". I'm not sure if that's hard for you to swallow, or easy to swallow, but I'm certain it's true. I know He's alive and sitting at the right hand of God. I've seen demons be driven out of people (including myself). I've seen lives (like my own!) radically transformed. And it's all because of the power of His Name. You better bet that He rose from the dead!

Then 1 Cor. 15:5-7 goes on to say that Jesus appeared in His resurrected body to:

- Cephas, (the Apostle Peter)
- Then to the Twelve (Apostles)
- Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep.
- Then he appeared to James, (referring to James, the brother of Jesus, who became the leader of the church at Jerusalem (Gal 1:19),¹⁸
- Then to all the apostles.

The fact **that He appeared** to others verified His resurrection.¹⁹ They had physical sightings of Christ with their eyes—not merely visions.²⁰

It's fascinating that it's mentioned here that Jesus appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time. This appearance is unknown outside of this passage, though it recalls the gathering of believers in Acts 2. But the number of witnesses adds credibility to the claim!²¹ Tony Evans again notes that "The resurrected Jesus appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of whom were still alive and could verify this claim. This was no conspiracy concocted by a small band of people, then. *Hundreds* saw him!"²² Nonetheless, "some of them had fallen asleep", which was a common metaphor for death (1 Kgs 11:43; John 11:11).²³

Some have speculated that the 500 brothers and sisters may have formed the audience who received the commission recorded in Matthew 28:18–20 (as well as Acts 1:3–8).

¹⁸ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Co 15:7). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹⁹ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 542). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²⁰ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Co 15:5). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

²¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Co 15:6). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

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²³ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Co 15:6). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Since most of those were still living when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, they could also be consulted.²⁴

Just imagine for a moment what this would've been like. Paul had talked with not only Peter, the other apostles, and James the brother of Jesus, but had talked to likely hundreds of people in the early Church who corroborated their account of seeing Jesus resurrected from the dead in bodily form. Could you imagine how wild and electric this atmosphere was? Well hey, I sure would've been excited!

When it says that Jesus also appeared to “all the apostles”, it's possibly a reference to the 11 apostles present at Christ's resurrection (and still living at this time). But it may have also referred to the 72 mentioned in Luke (see Luke 10:1), and perhaps others; again, *all* of these people saw the risen Christ.²⁵

There's also an important connection between James and Paul himself.

Some have debunked this Resurrection appearance as simply the pious vision of Jesus followers seeing with the eyes of faith. Many listed here had been with Christ in the flesh. But Paul could have cited the testimony of two for whom that was not true, **James**, the half brother of Jesus, and **himself**.

Like Paul, James probably came to faith (cf. John 7:5 with Acts 1:14) because of an appearance of the resurrected Christ (Acts 9:3–6; 22:6–11). Paul considered himself abnormally born because he lacked the “gestation” period of having been with Christ during His earthly ministry (cf. Acts 1:21–22). It seems that the apostles were a body wider than the previously mentioned Twelve (cf. comments on Eph. 4:11), but were all distinguished by having seen the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 9:1) which made Paul the last of their company.²⁶

Paul, like all the others, had been transformed. He went on of his vision and powerful, life changing experience of Christ the risen Lord;

⁸ Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, (Jesus) also appeared to me. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, 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

²⁴ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 542). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²⁵ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Co 15:7). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

²⁶ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 542). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. (Romans 15:8-10)

There was a definite abnormal manner in which Paul became an apostle. The Greek word used by Paul here, *ektrōma*, could sometimes translated as “abortion”.²⁷ ἔκτρωμα (*ektrōma*) meant untimely birth, abnormal birth, born out of due time, or even **monstrous** birth.²⁸

This intense word suggested that Paul considered himself different from the other apostles. For Paul, this “abnormality” served as proof of his apostleship.²⁹

I certainly don't mention the word “abortion” to trigger traumatic memories for anyone. If you've had an abortion, been close to someone who has, have considered having one, or are currently considering having one, Jesus Christ loves you. May He guide you and hold on tight to you through this intense reality. It's such an extremely complicated issue. There are so many difficult situations and stigmas. God help us all- republican and democrat alike.

But all that aside, what was Paul was saying here in this verse? He was saying that he felt like a weirdo.

Have you ever felt out of place? Like a misfit? An outcast? Paul did. Think about it. You're a guy traveling the countryside thinking that God is guiding you into murdering a bunch of people who are a part of a certain group, and then you have a vision of the One who is the central leader, reality, Lord and deity of that group, the script gets flipped, and then you're all of a sudden treating them like family no matter how weirded out some of them are by you.

And yet, Paul knew that He belonged to Christ. No matter how “monstrous” his birth through Christ was, He had an identity in the most High that would endure for eternity. Really, his spiritual birth was the equivalent of a failed spiritual abortion. He deserved to be deeply punished eternally for his actions.

Paul called himself “least of the apostles”. He considered his apostleship to be a sign of God's grace and mercy because he did not deserve it.³⁰

We're in America here y'all. Jesus followers in our country have become so spoiled and entitled- while some are persecuted, chastised, excluded, imprisoned, beaten, silenced

²⁷ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:8). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

²⁸ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

²⁹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:8). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

³⁰ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:9). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

and killed for their faith in places like North Korea, Afghanistan, Iran, China, and Nigeria, we think we deserve the best preaching, worship music, facilities, kids ministries, staff, and resources that money and influence can acquire. We complain, fight and compete about these things which are destined for moth and rust to destroy. We divide over secondary theological matters. We treat the Church like a restaurant that's supposed to cater to all our desires and preferences while forsaking discipleship, mission, carrying our crosses, loving God and loving people.

Do we not consider that on the other hand, we have Paul, who ultimately didn't even consider himself worthy of salvation, and yet gratefully, lovingly, humbly received it as a beautiful gift?

And maybe because of this deep gratitude, or that and a combination of many other motivating factors, Paul "worked harder than any of (the other early Church leaders)"! Still, Paul fully gave credit where it was due. It was the grace of God operating in Him, compelling him to live for Christ in any and every way.

We know that Paul was eternally grateful to be rescued from his former life- being a religious zealot and a murderer, and being filled and overcome with the forgiveness and grace of Jesus. He was a changed man, and was compelled to live for and labor for Christ. This can inspire us to be grateful for our salvation as followers of Jesus.

May none of us be flippant towards Christ and His Bride! May none of us be ungrateful! Do we know the gravity of what He did to eternally and temporally redeem us? If we were aware of the reality of it we wouldn't be flippant or ungrateful, but would share Paul's adoration and zeal for Christ.

Paul concluded the section;

*¹¹ Whether, then, it is I or they, so we proclaim and so you have believed.
(1 Cor. 15:11)*

In the final analysis it was not the messenger but the message which was important (cf. 1:18–4:5), and in that regard the apostolic message was that the crucified Christ became the resurrected Christ, which Paul did **preach** and the Corinthians **believed**.³¹

The message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the best news in the entire history of the Universe as we know it! There is nothing that provides more hope, more assurance, more of a grip on reality, and more radical life change than the message of Christ's

³¹ Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 543). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

resurrection! He wants to resurrect you! He wants to raise you up! He wants to forgive you of all your sins, past, present and future, and give you the hope of an eternity forever with Him in a perfect, sinless body like His! He also will transform your perspective and allow eternity and the hope of resurrection to dwell in your heart, so that He can dwell in you to resurrect relationships, cultures, neighborhoods, businesses, streets, people groups, and maybe even cities, countries and the world!