

Prophetic Proof

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

I. Intro

● Anecdote

- Sagan
 - It was back in 1979 - when Carl Sagan popularized the expression “extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.”
 - Sagan - who was a professor of astronomy at Cornell University in New York....
 - ...was encouraging his audience to exercise a healthy amount of skepticism...
 - ...before believing the extraordinary claims made by those who worship what he described as an...
 - “...outsized light skinned male with a long white beard sitting in a throne in the sky and tallying the fall of every sparrow...”
 - Sagan went on to insist that there isn’t enough evidence to support our belief in the God of the Bible...
 - ...and the reason why is because - “extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.”
- Skeptics
 - Ever since Carl Sagan coined that phrase - this argument has been used by agnostics and atheists alike...
 - ...who are quick to dismiss the Bible as being a book of that is filled with many extraordinary claims...

- ...and yet - without the extraordinary evidence necessary for confirming the claims being made.
- And it's sad to say that there are many Christians who are easily silenced by this argument.
- That being the case - we're going to spend our time today - considering the extraordinary evidence...
- ...that confirms the claims made by the first century Christians...
- ...who publicly proclaimed the good news - about the death - burial and resurrection of our Savior - Jesus.

II. Outline

● Points

- Proof
- Here in our text today - we find Paul pointing to the Messianic prophecies that we find in the Old Testament...
- ...as the extraordinary evidence that proves the extraordinary claims of the Christian faith.
- And as we study the scriptures before us this morning - we'll begin to see that...
 1. ...we have Prophetic Proof of Jesus' Crucifixion
 2. ...we also have Prophetic Proof of Jesus' Inhumation
 3. ...and we have Prophetic Proof of Jesus' Resurrection
- With this as our outline - let's open our Bibles to 1st Corinthians chapter 15...

- ...where we find Paul - appealing to the prophetic proof of the gospel message that he preached.

III. Crucifixion

● Set up

- Context
- As we make our way to the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians - I wanna take a moment to put our text - back into it's context.
- It was in our study last week - when we considered Paul's claim - that his epistles were written - according to the wisdom of God's word.
- And while it's true that Paul's epistles are equivalent to the Old Testament scriptures...
- ...it's also true that Paul appealed to the prophecies found in the Old Testament...
- ...as evidence that proves the gospel message that he presented - here in our text today.
- With this as our focus - let's turn our attention to 1st Corinthians chapter 15.
- Look with me - beginning there at verse 1 - where Paul declared...

● Text

1Co 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,
 1Co 15:2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.
 1Co 15:3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
 1Co 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,
 1Co 15:5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

1Co 15:6 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.

1Co 15:7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

1Co 15:8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

1Co 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

1Co 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

1Co 15:11 Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

- Gospel
 - Here in our text today - we find Paul - reminding his readers about the gospel message that he had preached to them.
 - And just to be clear - the word - gospel - found there in verse 1 - was translated from a Greek word...
 - ...which is the basis for our English words - evangelism - and evangelist.
 - The original Greek word was used in reference to a messenger that brings glad tidings of good news.
 - And in the context of the Christian faith - the gospel message is the good news that sinners can be saved...
 - ...by faith in the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- Vain
 - I like the way that the scholars who created the Amplified bible presented the first two verses of this chapter - they put it like this...

1Co 15:1 Now brothers and sisters, let me remind you [once again] of the good news [of salvation] which I preached to you, which you welcomed and accepted and on which you stand [by faith].

1Co 15:2 By this faith you are saved [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, and set apart for His purpose], if you hold firmly to the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain [just superficially and without complete commitment].

- The gospel message that Paul preached - is the good news that is able to save those who truly trust in Jesus Christ.
- As a matter of fact - the gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.
- At the same time - there is a difference between the saving faith of those who embrace the gospel message of grace...
 - ...and the vain belief of those who fail to receive the free gift of forgiveness.
 - And just to be clear - let's consider the vain belief of those who fail to receive the grace of God.
- Demons
- This was the issue that James was addressing - in the 2nd chapter of his epistle - it's beginning at verse 19 - where he declared...

Jas 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

Jas 2:20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

- According to James - the demons believe all of the details about the Lord Jesus Christ.
- What this also means is that - a person can believe all of the facts about Jesus - without being born-again.

- And it's sad to say that there are many in the church today who fit this description.
- They believe Jesus died on the cross and rose up from the grave - and yet - they have YET to trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.
- It's for this reason that Paul described these people as those who have believed in vain.
- Belief
 - In other words - these are people who believe the facts about Jesus - without receiving the benefits of saving faith.
 - And while it's true that there are many who fit this description - - it's also true that there are many unbelievers who reject the gospel message...
 - ...and the reason why is because - they don't believe that there's extraordinary evidence...
 - ...that can verify the death - burial - and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.
 - It's for this reason that we should present these people with the proof that Paul appealed to...
 - ...as he reminded his readers about the Old Testament prophecies that point to the sacrifice of our Savior.
- Scriptures
 - Let's consider how Paul put it - here in 1st Corinthians chapter 15 - look with me again - there at verse 3 - where he declared...

1Co 15:3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures
 - Now - listen - when Paul informed the Christians in Corinth - that Christ Jesus died for our sins - according to the Scriptures...

- ...he was referring to the Old Testament scriptures - that contain the prophetic promises...
- ...that point to a promised Messiah - Who would offer Himself as a sacrifice for our sins.
- And with this as our focus - let's consider a couple of these prophecies...
 - ...that the Lord revealed in the scriptures that we find in the Old Testament.
- Septuagint
 - Hold your place here in 1st Corinthians - and let's turn in our Bibles - to the book of Isaiah.
 - We're going to make our way to Isaiah chapter 53 - and as we make our way to the 53rd chapter of Isaiah...
 - ...I wanna take a moment to point out that - the prophecies that we find in the Old Testament...
 - ...were provably written before the birth of the Lord Jesus.
 - The proof of my point can be found in the Septuagint - which is the first Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.
 - And it should be noted that - the evidence helps us to see that this Greek translation of the Old Testament...
 - ...emerged as early as the mid-second century B.C. - which is long before the birth of Jesus.
- Scroll
 - Not only that - but - it was back in 1947 - when Bedouin shepherds found the Dead Sea scrolls - in a cave near the Dead Sea.

- And it was there Qumran cave number 1 - where they found the Great Isaiah Scroll...
- ...which is the largest - and best preserved of all the biblical scrolls.
- This nearly complete scroll contains all 66 chapters of the Hebrew version of the biblical Book of Isaiah.
- And being that this scroll of Isaiah was created around 125 BC - we can be confident that the prophecy found in Isaiah 53...
 - ...was written more than 100 years - before the birth of Jesus Christ.
 - What this means is that this prophecy was not written after Jesus was crucified.
- Death
- With this in mind - let's consider this Messianic prophecy that points to the death of the Lord Jesus.
- Look with me - there at Isaiah chapter 53 - we'll begin reading there at verse 10 - where we learn that...

Isa 53:10 ...it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;
He has put Him to grief.

When You make His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days,
And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

Isa 53:11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.
By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,
For He shall bear their iniquities.

Isa 53:12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,
Because He poured out His soul unto death,
And He was numbered with the transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many,
And made intercession for the transgressors.

- Here in this messianic prophecy - we find Isaiah describing the way in which the Lord sent our Savior...
- ...so that He could present Himself as an offering for our sins.
- And we must not fail to notice how Isaiah described the way that our Savior poured out His soul unto death...
- ...as He bore our our iniquities - so that sinners might be saved by His sacrifice.
- This was clearly one of the prophecies that Paul was referring to - when he referred to the way that Christ died for our sins.
- Cross
- We also find another prophecy - in the 22nd Psalm - where King David described the way that our Savior would die.
- It's beginning at verse 14 - where King David presented our Messiah's perspective by declaring...

Psa 22:14 I am poured out like water,
And all My bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It has melted within Me.

Psa 22:15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And My tongue clings to My jaws;
You have brought Me to the dust of death.

Psa 22:16 For dogs have surrounded Me;
The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.
They pierced My hands and My feet;

Psa 22:17 I can count all My bones.
They look and stare at Me.

Psa 22:18 They divide My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots.

- Here in these verses - we find King David - describing the way that our Savior would be sacrificed.

- He not only described the way in which the Romans soldiers would divide Christ's clothing...
- ...but - we also find him - referring to the way that our Savior would die - with pierced hands and feet.
- And while it's easy for us to understand that - this is a reference to the crucifixion of Christ Jesus...
- ...we must not fail to realize that this prophecy was presented a few hundred years - before Crucifixion was invented.
- Fulfillment
 - Now - as we consider the way that Jesus fulfilled these Messianic prophecies that point to His crucifixion...
 - ...there should be no doubt that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.
 - Not only that - but - the fulfillment of these prophecies also help us to see that the God of the Bible is the omniscient One...
 - ...Who is able to reveal the future in advance.
 - And while it's true that the gospel message of grace is based on extraordinary claims...
 - ...it's also true that the fulfillment of these prophecies provide us with extraordinary evidence.

● Transition

- Points
 - This brings us to our second point - because listen...
 1. ...we not only have Prophetic Proof of Jesus' Crucifixion...

2. ...but - we also have Prophetic Proof of Jesus' Inhumation

- In order to explain what I mean - let's turn back to 1st Corinthians chapter 15...
- ...where we find Paul - referring to the prophecies about our Savior's Inhumation.
- Look with me again - beginning there at verse 1 - where Paul declared...

IV. Inhumation

● Text

1Co 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,
1Co 15:2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.
1Co 15:3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
1Co 15:4a and that He was buried...

- Inhumation
- Now - I wanna stop right here - so that we can consider the burial of the Lord Jesus.
- That word - Burial - found there in the middle of verse 4 - was translated from a Greek word...
- ...which was used of those who celebrate funeral rites - - and not only that - but it also refers to the interment of those who are deceased.
- The same Greek word refers to the Inhumation of those who are laid to rest.
- And while it's true that the Old Testament includes messianic prophecies that point to our Savior's crucifixion...

- ...it's also true that the Old Testament includes messianic prophecies that point to our Savior's inhumation.
- Humanity
 - With this as our focus - hold your place here in 1st Corinthians - and let's turn in our Bibles - back to Isaiah chapter 53.
 - And as we make our way to the 53rd chapter of Isaiah - I should take a moment to remind you that...
 - ...the deity of the Lord Jesus is the infinite Logos - Who can never die.
 - At the same time - the humanity of the Lord Jesus is the flesh and blood child of Mary.
 - And it was there on the cross - where the humanity of Jesus suffered and died for our sins.
 - Then - after His passion was complete - the physical body of Jesus was laid to rest in a rich mans tomb...
 - ...according to the prophecy that Isaiah presented - here in Isaiah chapter 53.
- Grave
 - Let's consider how the prophet Isaiah put it - beginning there at verse 1 - where he asked...

Isa 53:1 Who has believed our report?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

Isa 53:2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground.

He has no form or comeliness;

And when we see Him,

There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

Isa 53:3 He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;
 He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
 Isa 53:4 Surely He has borne our griefs
 And carried our sorrows;
 Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
 Smitten by God, and afflicted.
 Isa 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions,
 He was bruised for our iniquities;
 The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
 And by His stripes we are healed.
 Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
 We have turned, every one, to his own way;
 And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
 Isa 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
 Yet He opened not His mouth;
 He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,
 And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
 So He opened not His mouth.
 Isa 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment,
 And who will declare His generation?
 For He was cut off from the land of the living;
 For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.
 Isa 53:9 And they made His grave with the wicked—
 But with the rich at His death,
 Because He had done no violence,
 Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

- Here in this prophecy - we find the prophet Isaiah - prophetically pointing to the day - when our Savior would be led like a sheep to the slaughter.
- And while it's true that our Messiah was cut off from the land of the living - being crucified between two criminals...
- ...it's also true that he was buried in the grave of a rich man - just like the prophet Isaiah promised.
- And I have no doubt that this was the prophecy that Paul was appealing to...

- ...when he reminded the Christians in Corinth - about the inhumation of the Lord Jesus.
- Fulfilled
 - We also find Matthew - Mark - Luke and John - confirming the fulfillment of this prophecy - in their gospel accounts.
 - And with this as our focus - let's consider the account that the apostle Matthew presented in his historic record.
 - Continue holding your place there in 1st Corinthians - and let's turn in our Bibles to Matthew chapter 27...
 - ...you see - it's here in the 27th chapter of Matthew's gospel account...
 - ...where we learn about the day when a wealthy man named Joseph asked Pilate if he could bury the body of Jesus.
 - And in this way - he fulfilled the Messianic prophecy - presented by Isaiah.
- Tomb
 - Let's consider how Matthew described that day - here in Matthew chapter 27 look with me beginning there at verse 57 where he informs us that...

Mat 27:57 ...when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.

Mat 27:58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him.

Mat 27:59 When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

Mat 27:60 and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.

Mat 27:61 And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

- Here in these verses - we find a rich man named Joseph from Arimathea - collecting the corpse of Christ Jesus...
- ...so that he could place the physical body of our Savior - in the tomb that he made for himself.
- And whether he knew it or not - he was fulfilling the prophecy that the prophet Isaiah presented...
- ...when he informed us that they made His grave with the wicked - But with the rich at His death.
- And listen - this prophecy was not only fulfilled by Joseph of Arimathea - but - also by a Pharisee named Nicodemus.
- Nicodemus
- It's in the 19th chapter of John's gospel account - beginning at verse 38 - where the apostle John tells us that...

Jhn 19:38 ...Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus.

Jhn 19:39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

Jhn 19:40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

Jhn 19:41 Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

Jhn 19:42 So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

- Here in these verses - we find Nicodemus - bringing a Hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes...
- ...which they used in order to prepare the body of Jesus for His burial.
- And together - they took the corpse of Christ Jesus to the garden tomb which was near to the place where He was crucified.

- In this way - these men fulfilled the prophecy that Isaiah presented about the burial of our Messiah.
- And what this means is that the extraordinary claims of Paul - is proven by the extraordinary evidence of fulfilled prophecy.

● Transition

• Points

- This brings us to our third and final point - because listen...
 1. ...we not only have Prophetic Proof of Jesus' Crucifixion...
 2. ...but - we not only have Prophetic Proof of Jesus' Inhumation...
 3. ...but - we also have Prophetic Proof of Jesus' Resurrection
 - In order to explain what I mean - let's turn back to 1st Corinthians chapter 15...
 - ...where we find Paul - referring to the prophecies about our Savior's Inhumation.
 - Look with me again - beginning there at verse 3 - where Paul declared...

V. Resurrection

● Text

1Co 15:3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
 1Co 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...

• Rose

- Here in the second half of verse 4 - we find Paul - assuring his audience that the Lord Jesus rose up from the grave.

- That word - rose - was translated from a Greek word - which - in this context...
- ...was used of those who are aroused from the sleep of death - or more literally - those who are raised up - from death - to life.
- And it's there in verse 4 - where Paul reminded the Christians in Corinth...
- ...that the Lord Jesus rose again on the third day - according to the scriptures.
- Prophecy
- This reminds me of the prophetic promise that Christ Jesus presented - as they prepared to travel to Jerusalem.
- It's in Luke chapter 18 - beginning at verse 31 - where the Lord directed the disciples by declaring...

Luk 18:31 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.

Luk 18:32 "For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon.

Luk 18:33 "They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

- The Lord Jesus appealed to all of the prophets - when He informed His disciples that...
- ...He would be scourged - killed - before rising again on the third day.
- And it's in Acts chapter 10 - verse 40 - where the apostle Peter confirmed this - by informing his audience that...
- ...God raised Jesus up on the third day, and showed Him openly to the witnesses that He chose beforehand.

- And it's here in our text today - where Paul confirmed the fact that Jesus rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

- Corruption

- One of those prophetic passages is found in the 16th Psalm - it's beginning at verse 7 where King David declared...

Psa 16:7 I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel;
My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.

Psa 16:8 I have set the LORD always before me;
Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.

Psa 16:9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will rest in hope.

Psa 16:10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

- Writing from the perspective of the promised Messiah - King David assured his audience that...
 - ...the corpse of Christ Jesus wouldn't experience the corruption of decay - as His soul was in Sheol.
 - The reason why is because - the Lord Jesus rose up from the grave - on the third day.
 - This was in fact the implication of the prophecy that King David presented - there in the 16th Psalm.
 - And the proof of my point can be found in the message that the apostle Peter presented on the day of Pentecost.

- Resurrection

- As a matter of fact - it's in Acts chapter 2 - beginning at verse 22 - where Peter declared...

Act 2:22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—

Act 2:23 “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

Act 2:24 “whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Act 2:25 “For David says concerning Him:

‘I foresaw the LORD always before my face,

For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

Act 2:26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;

Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

Act 2:27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades,

Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

Act 2:28 You have made known to me the ways of life;

You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’

Act 2:29 “Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Act 2:30 “Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,

Act 2:31 “he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

- It was on the day of Pentecost - when the apostle Peter reminded his audience about the prophecy the David presented in the 16th Psalm.
- After quoting that prophecy - - Peter expounded upon the text - by informing them that...
- ...the body of the Lord Jesus escaped the decay of corruption - through the physical resurrection.
- And while it's true that the apostle Peter was making an extraordinary claim...
- ...it's also true that he presented the people with extraordinary evidence.
- Witnesses

- With this as our focus - let's turn our attention back to 1st Corinthians 15 - look with me there at verse 5 - where we learn that...

1Co 15:5 ...(Jesus) was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

1Co 15:6 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.

1Co 15:7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

- Here in these verses - we find Paul - appealing to the eyewitness evidence of our Savior's resurrection.
 - This not only includes the 12 apostles - who spent 40 days with Jesus - after rising from the grave...
 - ...but - there were more than five hundred eyewitness - who saw our Savior - after He was buried in the tomb.
 - And listen - most of those eyewitnesses were still alive - when Paul penned this epistle.
 - What this means is that - the Christians in Corinth were able to cross examine those eyewitnesses.
- Martyrdom
 - We should also consider the extraordinary evidence that is found in the Apostles' Deaths.
 - According to the historic traditions - which have been passed down throughout the church age...
 - The apostle James was put to death with the sword - by the command of King Herod
 - The apostle Peter was crucified upside-down on an x-shaped cross in Rome.
 - The apostle Matthew suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia - being killed by a sword wound.

- The apostle Bartholomew was flayed to death by a whip - for his preaching in Armenia
- The apostle Andrew was whipped severely by seven soldiers and then crucified on an x-shaped cross in Greece.
 - His followers reported that when he was led toward the cross, Andrew declared:
 - "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it."
- The apostle Thomas was stabbed with a spear in India during one of his missionary trips to establish the church there.
- The apostle Matthias was stoned and then beheaded.
- The apostle John faced martyrdom when he was boiled in a huge basin of oil during a wave of persecution in Rome.
 - However, he was miraculously delivered from death and exiled to the Island Patmos.
 - With all of this in mind - we must ask - what could convince these men to become martyrs...
 - ...for a message that that is based on the death - burial - and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - The only reasonable response is that - they were truly eyewitnesses of our Savior's resurrection.
- Salvation
 - Paul also appealed to his own testimony - as evidence that the resurrection of Jesus was a historical fact.

- Let's consider how he put it - here in 1st Corinthians chapter 15 - look with me beginning there at verse 8 - where he declared...

1Co 15:8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

1Co 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

1Co 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

1Co 15:11 Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

- It was on the road to Damascus - as Paul was pursuing Christians to persecute...
 - ...that's when he found himself - face to face with our risen Redeemer.
 - It's my guess that this was the moment when he was spiritually caught up to the third heaven...
 - ...and it was at that point in time when he realized that - Jesus is the promised Messiah that King David wrote about.
 - And listen - Paul proved his faith - on the day when he was tortured and then beheaded - for refusing to recant the gospel message.
- Conviction
 - Now - as we consider the way in which the apostles of Christ were all willing to suffer a martyrs death - for the gospel message of our Messiah...
 - ...there should be no doubt that - the extraordinary claims of the Christian faith...
 - ...have been confirmed by the extraordinary evidence that was revealed by those who were unwilling to recant their testimony.
 - And being that most of these men ran away - and hid from the authorities on the night of Jesus' arrest...

- ...we should take a moment to ask - where did they get the courage to become Christians - who were ready to risk their lives...
- ...by publicly preaching the death - burial - and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The only reasonable response is that - they truly witnessed the resurrection of Jesus Christ - just like they claimed.

● Application

- Peter Stoner
- With all of this in mind - let's consider how the fulfillment of prophecy - proves the extraordinary claims of the apostles.
- There's a Mathematician named Peter Stoner - who took the time to figure out the probability of one man fulfilling 48 of those Messianic prophecies.
- And according to his calculations - this task is equivalent to one chance - in 10 to the 157th power.
- Without debate - this probability is so small - that it's difficult to even grasp how small it is.
- And so - imagine with me for a moment that we doubled the amount of electrons in our universe - - and I marked one of them.
- Then - I sent you out in a spaceship with no windows - - and I gave you one chance to find the marked electron.
- This illustration is equivalent to one man - fulfilling 48 of the messianic prophecies - found in the Old Testament.
- Borel
- It's also interesting to note that - there was another mathematician named Emile Borel - who gave us the single law of chance.

- According to Borel's single law of chance: "once we go past one chance in 10 to the 50th power...
- ...the probabilities are so small it's impossible to think they will ever occur."
- In other words - there's no natural reason for us to think that - one man could fulfill the Messianic prophecies found in the Old Testament.
- And knowing that the Lord Jesus has in fact fulfilled those prophecies that point to His first advent - then...
 - ...there's a good mathematical reason for us to believe that - the Bible is of supernatural origin - and Jesus is a supernatural savior.

VI. Conclusion

● Wrap up

- As we consider the Messianic prophecies that the Lord Jesus fulfilled - there should be no doubt that...
- ...there is enough extraordinary evidence - to substantiate the extraordinary claims of the first century Christians.
- And with that being the case - we'd all do well to present people with this extraordinary - by helping them to see that...
 1. ...we have Prophetic Proof of Jesus' Crucifixion...
 2. ...we have Prophetic Proof of Jesus' Inhumation...
 3. ...we have Prophetic Proof of Jesus' Resurrection
- Not only that - but we also have the testimony of credible eyewitnesses who were willing to die for the gospel message of our Messiah.

- And it's for this reason that we should present the good news of Jesus Christ - with complete confidence...
- ...knowing that the death - the burial - and the resurrection of our Redeemer is based on the proof of Messianic prophecies.