

1 Corinthians 15:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

Analysis

For I delivered unto you first of all (παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, paredōka gar hymin en prōtois)—Paul uses technical rabbinic terminology for transmitting authoritative tradition (paradidōmi, παραδίδωμι). The phrase **that which I also received** (οὐ καὶ παρέλαβον, ho kai parelabon) indicates this is not Paul's invention but apostolic tradition dating to the earliest Christian community, likely within months of the crucifixion (AD 30).

Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφάς)—This is the earliest written creedal formula in Christianity. Hyper (ὑπέρ, "for, on behalf of") indicates substitutionary atonement. The phrase kata tas graphas ("according to the scriptures") grounds this in Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, etc.).

Historical Context

This creedal formula (vv. 3-7) predates Paul's letter by two decades, representing the church's earliest confession. Scholars date it to within 2-5 years of the crucifixion. Paul likely received it during his Damascus/Jerusalem visits (Galatians 1:18), making this the most ancient Christian document we possess.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What significance does the early date of this creed have for the reliability of resurrection testimony?
2. How does 'according to the scriptures' demonstrate that Jesus's death was not an accident but divine plan?
3. Why is substitutionary atonement ('for our sins') inseparable from resurrection in Christian faith?

Interlinear Text

παρέδωκα	γὰρ	ὑμῖν	ἐν	πρώτοις	ὅ	καὶ
I delivered	For	unto you	first of all		that which	also
G3860	G1063	G5213	G1722	G4413	G3739	G2532

παρέλαβον	ὅτι	Χριστὸς	ἀπέθανεν	ὑπὲρ	τῶν	ἀμαρτιῶν
I	how	that Christ	died	for	G3588	sins
G3880	G3754	G5547	G599	G5228		G266

ἡμῶν	κατὰ	τὰς	γραφάς
our	according	G3588	to the scriptures
G2257	G2596		G1124

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 2:24 (Sin): Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Galatians 1:4 (Sin): Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

1 John 2:2 (Sin): And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Galatians 1:12 (References Christ): For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:5 (Sin): And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Romans 4:25 (Parallel theme): Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Acts 3:18 (References Christ): But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

Ephesians 5:2 (References Christ): And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

1 Corinthians 11:23 (Parallel theme): For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

Zechariah 13:7 (Word): Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.