

THE GOSPEL THAT WAS PREACHED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:1-4: -

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NOTE: - All Bible texts are taken from the King James Version; and the compiler has supplied all emphasis throughout this Study Document.

"¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ² By which also ye are saved, if ye keep^a in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴ And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

In VERSES 1 & 2 Paul has recorded the truth that he had preached the gospel to the Corinthians when he ministered to them at Corinth (See Acts 18:1-11), and that they had then received it, and they were presently standing in it when he wrote this first epistle to them. It is by means of the gospel that Paul had preached to them, that they "**are being saved**"¹, if they hold fast the word that Paul had preached unto them, otherwise they would have believed in vain.

This little word "**if**" indicates a condition being attached to their being saved by the gospel; the "if" being that they had to hold fast to the gospel truths that Paul had preached to them

In VERSE 3 Paul wrote that he had delivered to the Corinthians what he himself had received, when he first preached the gospel to them. We must take note of the fact that Paul himself testified that he received his gospel through direct revelation from Jesus Christ. He had not been taught the gospel by any person, not even by any of the other apostles of Christ.

Galatians 1:11 & 12: - "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Ephesians 3:3 & 4: - "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)."

WHAT WAS THE GOSPEL THAT PAUL PREACHED?

- The gospel of Christ "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16).

Paul proclaimed to the Ephesians that they had "heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Ephesians 1:13).

The gospel of Christ does indeed bring salvation to those who believe it.

a keep...: or, hold fast

¹ See the appendix for a full discussion and explanation of this translation.

☞ Let us now examine in some detail the two features Paul has presented in 1st Corinthians 15 concerning the gospel that he preached.

- “how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;”

☞ Paul’s gospel was **NOT** a new gospel originating in the New Testament Scriptures as many Christians assume. Both aspects of Paul’s gospel were **“according to the scriptures”**. That is, they were found within and were in harmony with the Scriptures, or what we today traditionally call the “Old Testament” writings.

No doubt one of the Scripture passages from the Old Testament that Paul preached from concerning Christ’s death for our sins, is found in the well known passage of Isaiah 53, where the gospel prophet repeatedly refers to the Messiah’s future death when he would bear and take upon himself our sins and iniquities.

Isaiah 53:3 - 12: - ³ He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴ **Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:** yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ **But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.** ⁶ **All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.** ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. ⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? **for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.** ⁹ And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ **Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt 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.** ¹¹ He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; **for he shall bear their iniquities.** ¹² Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; **because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”**

Turning to the New Testament Scriptures, we find that the apostles of Christ have outlined in very simple language, some of the purposes that are to be achieved by Christ dying for our sins².

- “Who was delivered for our offences,” (Romans 4:25);
- “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:6 - 8).

² It would be wise at this point to briefly define SIN from the New Testament Scriptures, as this is what Christ came and died for. The apostle Paul has taught us that “where no law is, there is no transgression” (Romans 4:15); that “sin is not imputed when there is no law” (Romans 5:13); that “I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Romans 7:7; Paul is quoting the 10th Commandment in this verse); and finally, the apostle John has defined SIN as being “the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4).

- “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,” (1 Peter 3:18);
- “Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world,” (Galatians 1:3 & 4);

This present evil world consists of “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,” (1 John 2:16), for which Christ gave himself for our sins to deliver us from.

- “Our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity³, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”(Titus 2:13 & 14);
- “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.” (1 Peter 2:24);

We note that Peter is quoting from Isaiah 53:5 & 6 in this verse.

- Christ has “appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:26);
- Jesus “that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” (Hebrews 13:12.)
- “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:” (Galatians 3:13);

What did Christ redeem us from? The curse of the law.

When did he do this? When he was made a curse for us, when he was hung upon the tree - “Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.” (Acts 5:30). Peter writes concerning Christ’s hanging upon the tree, that “his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,” (1 Peter 2:24).

Paul has taught us that Christ “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity (or lawlessness – compiler),” (Titus 2:14); he has also stated concerning Christ that God “hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Therefore “the curse of the law” which Christ was made for us and which he has redeemed us from when he hung upon the tree or the cross **IS SIN!**

The heavenly angel repeated this same truth to Jesus’ earthly stepfather Joseph that “he shall save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21.)

- “And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”

No doubt two passages that Paul could have referred to from the Scriptures referring to the resurrection of Christ from the dead on the third day are given below.

³ The Greek word that is translated as “iniquity” in Titus 2:14 is the word “anomia” – See Strong’s Concordance; Greek, No. 458. This Greek word is defined as “Lawlessness” - A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, by W. Bauer, Translated and revised by W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker; pages 71 & 72.

Psalms 16:10: - "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

Hosea 6:2: - "After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

- Paul teaches us that Jesus "was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

Within the 15th Chapter of 1st Corinthians Paul reinforces the above vital truth, but from the opposite point of view, teaching that "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17).

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." (1 Corinthians 15:20).
"They that are Christ's" will be raised up "at his coming" (1 Corinthians 15:23).

☞ Paul has within this 15th Chapter of 1st Corinthians linked together Christ's resurrection from the dead with the resurrection of those who sleep in Christ at the 2nd Coming of Jesus, when they shall receive the finishing touch of immortality and incorruption.

- Paul taught "that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Corinthians 15:50).

The Resurrection of the Just and the glorification of the saints therefore are absolutely vital for the saints to be able to inherit the kingdom of God. Paul has outlined this in detail within the same 15th Chapter of 1st Corinthians, as taking place at the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:51 - 55).

- It is no surprise then that Paul taught that Christ shall "appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).
- Jesus himself encouraged his disciples with the truth that "because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

"The Son quickeneth (that is, makes alive – compiler) whom he will" (John 5:21); and when he calls those who sleep in the grave, they "shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25). It is at this Resurrection that Jesus raises those who "have done good, unto the resurrection of life" (John 5:29), so that "neither can they die any more" because they "are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36).

- The apostle Paul has linked together the two aspects of the gospel which he preached, of Christ's death for our sins, his burial and resurrection from the dead, in the experience that every repentant believer experiences in

undergoing a death to serving sin and being buried symbolically with Christ in Christian Baptism, and then being raised up from the waters of baptism to walk in newness of life, as Christ was raised up from the dead.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed^a from sin.” (Romans 6:3 - 7.)

“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” (Colossians 2:11-13.)

THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL: -

- The apostle Paul has written about “the hope of salvation” (1 Thessalonians 5:8).
- He has also written about the “hope of eternal life” (Titus 1:2); and also that “we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:7).
- The prophet Jeremiah taught, “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.” (Lamentations 3:26).
- Paul has referred to “the hope of the gospel” (Colossians 1:23).
- Paul exhorts us to “rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:2).
- Paul refers to “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).
- The apostle Peter refers to us having being begotten again to “a lively (or living – complier) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).
- Paul was examined by the unbelieving Jewish leaders because “of the hope and resurrection of the dead” (Acts 23:6).
- Paul describes the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ as “that blessed hope” (Titus 2:13).
- Paul refers the saints to “the hope which is laid up for you in heaven” (Colossians 1:5).
- Paul also informs us that we “wait for the hope of righteousness by faith” (Galatians 5:5).

a freed: Gr. justified

☞ It needs to be carefully observed that nowhere in the New Testament Scriptures, both in the original Greek Text, and in the English King James translation does the expression “**the assurance of salvation**” appear once. Those Christians who emphasis the “assurance of salvation” in their personal Christian faith or in their Christian witnessing, are going beyond the teaching of the actual text of Scripture. They need to take heed of the following admonition from the book of Proverbs: -

Proverbs 30:5 & 6: - “Every word of God is pure : he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”

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APPENDIX: -

THE TRANSLATION OF 1st CORINTHIANS 15:1 & 2 EXAMINED: -

KING JAMES VERSION: -

¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ² By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

AN ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATION: -

¹ But I would make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ² by which also you are being saved; if you hold fast, what word I preached to you, unless you have believed in vain.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE UNDERLINED PORTION OF VS. 2: -

Some comments on the Greek verb “**sozo**” that has been translated as “ye are saved” in VERSE 2 in the KJV may be in order at this point.

The technical parsing of this form of the Greek verb is outlined as follows: - 2nd person, plural in number, Present Tense, Indicative Mood, and it is in the Passive Voice, of the Greek verb “**sozo**” – “I save”.

The key to understanding how this verb should be translated is found in the understanding of the aspect of the Present Tense in New Testament Greek.

“The present and imperfect tense-forms occur in contexts where the user of Greek wishes to depict the action as in progress, regardless of whether this is an objective characterization”.⁴

⁴ Idioms of the Greek New Testament, by Stanley E. Porter, page 29.

Concerning this form of the verb as it appears in VERSE 2, we read,
“Pres. indicates a continuous action which was being performed in the believers. Theol. pass.# indicating that God is performing the action.”⁵

- George Ricker Berry's Interlinear translates it as “ye are being saved”.

☞ It can therefore be legitimately translated as I have done as **“you are being saved”**.

⁵ The New Linguistic And Exegetical Key To The Greek New Testament, by Cleon L. Rogers JR. and Cleon L. Rogers III, page 384 –
Comment on 1st Corinthians 15:2.

Stands for “Theological Passive”.