

The Gospel Paul Preached | 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

- Verse 1 –
 - The word **declare** is more literally, "to make known," as it is translated in many other passages, including Romans 16:26. The root is γινωσκω [ginosko], which is inherently a knowledge word.
 - Both **gospel** and **preached** are based on the word ευαγγελιον [euangelion]. Literally, the text says "the good news message which I good news messaged." We would at times say, "I evangelized," (a word which comes to English from *euangelion*).
 - A person who has *heard* and **received** the Gospel is saved, for they are described as *standing* in it.
- Verse 2 –
 - Paul literally says, "through which ye are being saved," which is more precise theology since full salvation doesn't come until the glorification of the body.
 - **Keep in memory** is literally "hold fast." The **if** is not given in an if/then form of grammar, as used in the English language, but rather a "since you hold fast."
 - Paul is teaching a *free grace* theology based solely on *receiving* the Gospel and therefore *standing* in it and therefore being *saved* because the individual has not **believed in vain**.
 - Does this teach the potential to fall from grace?
 - No, such an assumption would be *more than* the text says and *assuming* that another position is possible. Such an assumption cannot be built on this text, and one would want an explicit statement to build a doctrine of falling from grace.
 - On the contrary, there are many scriptures that speak of assurance, even for those who stray from their faithfulness.
 - What of the one who **believed in vain**?
 - Again, this text is presenting the Corinthians as those who did not believe in vain. But there is clearly the potential of having an *empty faith*.
 - We are not saved by faith *in anything*, but only faith in Jesus Christ. (Incidentally, the English word *unless* is a contraction from "not on less," as in "not on less of a reason than...." In English, the *un* replaced *not on*.)
- Verses 3-4 -
 - There is no Gospel without the propitiatory death of Jesus Christ. Either **Christ died for our sins** or we must die for our sins. Christ's death was not an example or a token, but a substitution.
 - **According to the scriptures**, for example: Ge. 3:15. Ps. 22; 69. Is. 50:6; Is 53. Da. 9:26. Zec. 12:10; 13:7.
 - **He was buried** - The Scripture gives a great amount of detail about His burial. This is a means of saying, "He was really dead."
 - **That he rose again on the third day** – As with the death and burial, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is fundamental to the Gospel. Paul emphasizes that it was **on the third day** to ground it in historic reality.
 - **According to the scriptures**, for example: Ps. 16:10, Is. 53:10, John 2:22, Acts 2:25-33
 - The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are fundamental elements to any Gospel presentation, yet many times the "gospel" is presented without them. The Gospel cannot be shown in full using a Scripture passage that doesn't contain these elements.
- A note about the Paul's Gospel-
 - Paul claims to have a *mystery* that was previously unrevealed, but then shares a Gospel that is **according to the scriptures** (undeniably the Scriptures of the Old Testament). How can this be?
 - Paul's Gospel (differing from that of the 12) is *the same in its basis* and *different in its audience and acceptance*.
 - What Peter preached was based on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but it was preached to the nation of Israel and involved repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38).
 - Note that Acts 2:38 is the response to a serious charge: that the nation had crucified her Messiah—vv. 36-37. This was not a *good news* presentation.
 - What Paul preached had the same basis but was presented to anyone, anywhere, any time, and involved *faith alone* with no works whatsoever allowed.
 - Note that if Paul's Gospel is the same in basis, audience, and acceptance, then his continual presentation of *my Gospel* is hard to explain.
 - "My Gospel" or similar: Romans 2:16, 16:25, 2 Timothy 2:7-8, 1 Cor. 15:1, 2 Cor. 4:3, Gal. 1:8, 1 Thes. 1:5, 2 Thes 2:14, and the most clear, Galatians 1:11-12.
 - Why did Paul have to go to Jerusalem to explain his Gospel, and do it privately? (Gal. 2:2).

- Verse 5 –
 - Paul gives several proofs of the resurrection, beginning with **Cephas**, the first of **the twelve** to see the living Lord.
 - The two disciples from Emmaus, having seen the Lord, rushed to **the eleven** (Lk 24:33) and announced that **The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon** (Lk. 24:34 - it appears that Simon may have temporarily been out of the room).
 - Note that Paul speaks of the appearance to **the twelve** while Luke is precise with **the eleven** (due to the death of Judas).
 - Is Paul mistaken? Not exactly, for by the time Paul writes, Matthias had replaced Judas, one of the requirements for replacement being that he was an eyewitness to the resurrection.
 - Furthermore, with the absence of Thomas on the first appearance (Jn. 20:24), Matthias could have been in the room).
 - Note: Resurrection chronologies are notoriously difficult.
- Verse 6 - We have no other information about this appearance. The Bible does not set itself out to be proven, but to be believed.
- Verse 7 - The reference to **James** is likely to the Lord's half-brother, author of the book of James and leader of the Jerusalem church in Acts 15.

Paul Explains His Apostleship | 1 Corinthians 15:8-11

- Verse 8 –
 - This is, unmistakably, a testimony of Paul's Damascus road experience, in which Paul saw the risen Lord. The experience was a personal encounter with the Lord, not a vision: Acts 9:3-5, 17, 26:16 (compare Acts 18:8 and 2 Cor. 12:1-6).
 - How was Paul **born out of due time**? The word ἔκτρωμα [ektroma] is in reference to a *traumatic* and *premature* birth. There is no means of interpreting this other than to say either:
 - Paul's experience (and, by extension, message) is *premature*, or
 - Paul's testimony is either incorrect or meaningless rambling.
 - How could Paul's experience be premature?
 - He claims to be the chief of sinners saved by faith (1 Tim. 1:14-15). Grammatically, the word *chief* is just as equally (if not more-so) *chronologically first*.
 - He claims to be **a pattern to them which should hereafter believe** (1 Tim. 1:16).
 - His claims being true, he is at least *first in the line of those saved by grace through faith without works*.
 - But this is not *premature*, but rather *first*. He was only premature in that the salvation of the nations was to take place *after* the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel, and not *before*. Thus, all of us who are saved in this dispensation are **born out of due time**.
 - Theologians (both dispensational and covenant) have had a hard time with this verse, because they refuse to separate the Pauline ministry from the others.
 - Ironside: Paul speaks of himself as having seen the risen Lord, and as one born out of due time. We are apt to think that this means that he was born much later than others, but the word he uses precludes any such thought. It really means, one born *before* the time. He is thinking of that glorious day when the risen, glorified Christ is to appear on earth once more, and His people Israel will look upon Him whom they have pierced, and as they recognize Him as their Lord and Saviour the nation will be born in a day. Paul had known that experience already. - H. A. Ironside, *Addresses on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1938), 467.
 - This is no different than the experience of Cephas, James, and the others in the passage.
 - Goudge: Thus the reference seems not to be to the lateness of S. Paul's call to be an Apostle, but to his utter insignificance and spiritual deadness before his conversion. H. L. Goudge, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: With Introduction and Notes*, Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen & Co., 1903), 139.
 - Here the author makes *early* to be *late*.
 - Barnes: The expression, "as of one born out of due time," would seem to imply that Paul meant to say that there was some unfitness *as to the time* when he saw the Lord Jesus...The word here used (ἔκτρωμα) properly means an abortion, one born prematurely. It is found no where else in the New Testament; and here it means, as the following verse shows, one that was *exceedingly unworthy*..." Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: I Corinthians*, ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 285.
 - He started out so close...then ran away!