

An in-depth study of 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

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The Apostle Paul went on 3 apostolic journeys to Asia, Greece-Macedonia, and Rome. During this time covered in the book of Acts, he wrote Romans, Corinthians, Galatians and Thessalonians, or in chronological order: Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians and at last Romans. In each area he visited he went to the Jews first. Each time the Jews rejected him, he turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46, 18:6, 28:28). The book of Acts is God's everlasting account of the fall and partial blindness that had come upon Israel, nationally, after their rejection of God the Father thru the prophets, The Son: Jesus Christ and at last the Holy Spirit thru Stephen in Acts 7. God set the kingdom program (associated with the nation Israel), or the bride of Christ program, aside, in favor of a brand-new program called the dispensation of the grace of God, or the body of Christ program. This program/dispensation, and the church; the body of Christ, started with the conversion of Saul/Paul, on the road to Damascus (Acts 9, 1 Timothy 1:15-16). Jesus Christ spoke from heaven, and started revealing the mystery to Paul, and he made him the Apostle to and of the gentiles.

The book of Acts should be read as what it is; a history book. It tells us WHAT happened, not WHY it happened.

It's very important to understand that Paul went to religious unbelieving Jews, NOT already saved Jews (kingdom saints; those who were saved during the kingdom program). The Jews who believed his Gospel/good news (the good news Jesus Christ became members of the church; the body of Christ, and the grace assemblies Paul and his "converts" were establishing.

After the Acts period, Paul wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, or or in chronological order: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians, Titus and Timothy.

So, what does this have to do with 1 Corinthians 15:1-4? Let's read it:

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 KJV

- 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.
- 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:**

"According to the scriptures"?! Is Paul implying that Jesus Christ's death for sin, burial and resurrection is in the Old Testament of the Bible?! Yes, he is! That was no mystery. It was prophesied (a spoken word), and the Jews knew very well about their Messiah: Jesus Christ, but they didn't understand the prophecies. Let's take a closer look at some relevant bible passages:

Isaiah 53:5-12 KJV

- 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.

Who are the “we”, “our” and “my people” mentioned in Isaiah 53? Israel! God's favored nation/people at that time. They were to be a peculiar treasure unto God above all people/the gentiles , “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation”:

Exodus 19:5-6 KJV

- 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine:
- 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

...and the gentiles would come to Israel for salvation; to Israel's light/"thy light":

Isaiah 60:1-3 KJV

- 1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.
- 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.
- 3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

A ransom for MANY:

Matthew 20:28 KJV Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a **ransom for many**.

Mark 10:45 KJV For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a **ransom for many**.

Again, who are the “many” spoken of here? Israel! Matthew-John covers Jesus Christ’s earthly ministry to the nation Israel, and not to the gentiles (Matthew 10:1-8, 15:22-28, Luke 12:32, Acts 1:21-26, 2:5, 2:14, 2:22, 2:36-38, Romans 15:4, 15:8). Where are the gentiles in all of this?

Ephesians 2:11-13 KJV

- 11 Wherefore remember, that ye *being in time past Gentiles in the flesh*, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision [the Jews] in the flesh made by hands;
- 12 **That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:**
- 13 **But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**

We know that Jesus Christ, and the 12 disciples, preached the gospel/good news of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23, 9:35, 24:13-14, Mark 1:14-15). Did the 12 know about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Luke 18:31-34 KJV

- 31 Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and **all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.**
- 32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:
- 33 And they shall scourge *him*, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.
- 34 **And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.**

Matthew 16:18-23 KJV

- 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
- 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
- 20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.
- 21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.
- 22 **Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.**
- 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Clearly they did not! “They understood none of these things”, and Peter even rebuked Jesus Christ for saying that he was going to “be killed, and be raised again the third day.”

In Acts 1, Jesus Christ ascends up into heaven. We see Peter in Acts 2 & 3, continuing where Christ left off, telling the Jews to change their minds about the source of their righteousness, never being the law (Leviticus 26:40-46, Deuteronomy 6:25).

Acts 3:19-21

- 19 **Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;**
- 20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:
- 21 Whom the heaven must receive until **the times of restitution of all things**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Notice when their sins were going to “be blotted out”: “the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord “. His second coming. He was going to be their High Priest and King, sitting on the throne of David, ruling and reigning over the nation Israel. God raised Him up in order for him to sit on that throne:

Acts 2:29-32 KJV

- 29 Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.
- 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, **he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;**
- 31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.
- 32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

The Pharisees sat in Moses' seat as the authority (religious/governmental) over the Nation.

Matthew 23:1-3 KJV

- 1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,
- 2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:
- 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

Had they repented in Acts 3, it would've started the next events on the prophetic calendar, namely the time of Jacob's trouble; the Great Tribulation, followed by „the day of the Lord“; the second coming of Christ. This is what Jesus Christ meant when he said he gave Peter the "keys" to the Kingdom (Matthew 16:19). Peter had the ability to "unlock" and "open the door" to the Kingdom; he proclaimed the message they had to believe. However, an open door does no good if no one walks through it, and that's exactly what happened... The leadership of the Nation didn't walk through it.

When Israel had possessed the land (Canaan), God set up judges to rule over them. God was King, but their physical ruler ship was facilitated by judges. In the Kingdom yet future, the judges come back. It is not the Pharisees that will sit in authority, it is the 12 disciples - those who were given the authority in Acts 1 to operate under the New Covenant.

Matthew 19:28 KJV And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon **twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

It didn't happen, but it certainly will in a day yet future, when God resumes the kingdom program, and sets that nation at the forefront again.

Let's review what we've discovered so far.

According to prophesy the Messiah: Jesus Christ was going to:

- Die for sins, be buried and rise again from the dead.**
- Give his life a ransom for MANY: Israel.**
- Forgive their (national) sins at his second coming.**
- Raised up Christ to sit on his throne.**

Let's take a closer look at Paul's gospel/good news (also referred to as the gospel of Christ/the gospel of the grace of God); the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the

revelation of the mystery (Romans 16:25-26), and what makes it unique and distinct.

According to mystery, Jesus Christ gave himself a ransom for ALL (Mankind: Jew and Gentile), not just MANY:

1 Timothy 2:3-7 KJV

- 3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;
- 4 Who will have **all** men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.
- 5 For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;
- 6 Who gave himself a **ransom for all**, to be testified in due time.
- 7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and* lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

We have all forgiveness up-front:

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 KJV

- 17 Therefore if any man *be in Christ*, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
- 18 And all things *are of God*, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;
- 19 To wit, that **God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their** [the world's] **trespasses unto them**; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.
- 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.
- 21 **For he** [God the Father] **hath made him** [God's only begotten Son, the God Man Jesus Christ] **to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**

Colossians 2:13-14 KJV

- 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, **having forgiven you all trespasses**;
- 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Romans 5:6-10 KJV

- 6 **For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.**
- 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.
- 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, **while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**
- 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.
- 10 For if, **when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son**, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Reconciliation is the Greek word *katallagē*, it simply means a change in status or restoration to favor. That's what forgiveness is all about. Reconciliation and forgiveness, where God is concerned, is of God: God accomplished it. Today it isn't something we work for or wait for...it isn't a future event, nor does it happen at the point of belief. It is something the world already has—Past, present, future. So, the issue where salvation is concerned isn't sin, but righteousness. Belief or unbelief: believing what the cross-work of

the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished on our behalf.

It's man who needs to be reconciled to God, not the other way around. God is already reconciled to us, where our sins are concerned.

Ministers of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) still believe that sin is the issue, almost 2000 years after God took care of it! In their mind, God is waiting for man to make a decision, so He can forgive them of their sins. Is Christ going to be crucified again for every lost person who makes that decision? Of course not, but that's what they really believe!

Romans 6:9-10 KJV

9 **Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more**; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, **he died unto sin once**: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Colossians 1:21 KJV And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

The Colossians thought that their wicked works were making them the enemies of God, but Paul is telling them that God is already reconciled where their wicked works are concerned.

What about those who believe that Jesus Christ didn't die for all, just many or a distinct few?

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 KJV

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that **if one died for all, then were all dead**:

15 And *that* **he died for all**, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

If Christ did not die for all, then all were not dead (or separated from God). We know that's not the case:

Romans 3:22-24 KJV

22 **Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference**:

23 **For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God**;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Or they believe that sin will be the issue at the judgment seat of Christ (for the saved) and the great white throne judgment (for the lost). If that would be true, God is going to judge sin all over again, which means that God is hiding the sins of the world behind his back for future judgment. What do they believe happened to the sins Christ died for?! Nothing! Either God didn't accept the payment of the sin debt Christ paid for, or the payment Christ paid for wasn't sufficient. It really is as simple as that.

God can't dwell with someone less righteous than He (perfect righteousness). That's why the lost will spend an eternity apart from God. The lost go to hell/the lake of fire with their sins paid for!

Many believe, in order to be saved, that man has to do some kind of work, ritual/ordinance (water baptism, communion/the Lord's Supper etc.), abstain from doing certain things, endure to the end, keep the faith, you name it. Salvation is by grace, through faith, apart

from any works, and has always been by grace, through faith:

Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:
9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Faith is simply taking God at His word, taking your stand where God takes His. If God would tell you to do some kind of work to be saved, like he did during the kingdom program, it wouldn't be the work itself that saved you, but the faith you had which resulted in you doing that work. Big difference!

Today he's telling us:

Romans 4:5 KJV But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Then, there are those who reject the deity of Christ. They don't believe that he was the only begotten Son of God; the sinless God-man (fully man, fully God). They believe he was simply a man. Most of them will also reject the resurrection of the dead, which was one of the issues at the Corinthian assembly, so Paul writes the whole fifteenth chapter to correct this false teaching:

- *1-11: Documentation/proof of the resurrection.*
- *12-19: The importance and reasoning of the resurrection.*
- *20-28: Triumph and order in the resurrection.*
- *29-34: The witness and suffering for the resurrection.*
- *35-50: What type of body we shall have (the resurrection bodies), and the nature of that resurrection.*
- *51-53: The mystery of the resurrection; the catching away of the body of Christ prior to the Great Tribulation. Also labeled the rapture.*

1 Corinthians 15:2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

Paul is reminding them of the Gospel he preached unto them, at a previous point in time, and the fact that it saved them, unless they didn't believe it. The context of v2 is found in v12-14:

1 Corinthians 15:12-14

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

14 And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.

What's the point of us being identified with a dead man? It would be of no benefit to us whatsoever. Paul's preaching (which incl. his gospel), as well as their and our faith would be vain and pointless. Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again, in order for us to be identified with and joined to himself: having his test score (his righteousness, his faith) written on our paper. None of that would be a reality without the resurrection! Not including the resurrection in Paul's gospel makes it another gospel, and another gospel does NOT save. The idea in 1 Corinthians 15:2 isn't having to believe steadfastly, until the second you do, in order to obtain or maintain/keep your salvation, else you might lose it. NO! The moment a lost person believes the gospel of the grace of God, that person is sealed

with the holy Spirit unto the day of redemption: they day when eternity awaits:

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

- 21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is* God;
22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Ephesians 1:12-14

- 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.
13 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Once sealed, always sealed. No one breaks what God has sealed. Also read Romans 5:5, 8:38-39, 2 Timothy 1:13-14, 2:13, 2:19.

Our faith (the faith IN Christ) enables God to justify us by the faith OF Christ (the faith belonging to christ-his faith):

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith OF Jesus Christ, even we have believed IN Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith OF Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith OF the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Philippians 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith OF Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Also read Romans 3:22-24, Galatians 3:22, Ephesians 3:11-12, Philippians 3:9, Colossians 2:12.

So you see, once we're saved our faith means nothing. It's all about the faith of Jesus Christ, and his faith is perfect, because he is God!

Romans 6:3-8 KJV

- 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
4 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.
5 For if **we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his resurrection*:**
6 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.
7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

Colossians 3:4 KJV When **Christ, *who is our life***, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Another major difference between prophecy (God's earthly program) and mystery (God's heavenly program) is that, according to mystery, Christ "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification":

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

Not raised again to sit on a physical throne, ruling over a physical nation called Israel, in a physical kingdom here on earth. The kingdom of heaven isn't heaven, it's a kingdom designed in heaven, brought down to earth (Revelation 21). That's according to prophecy, and has nothing to do with the revelation of the mystery Jesus Christ revealed to Paul. Our conversation, or citizenship, is in heaven, not earth.

Philippians 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Let's review what we've discovered thus far. According to mystery Jesus Christ:

- Died for the sins of the whole world, was buried and rose again the third day.**
- Gave himself a ransom for ALL.**
- We have all forgiveness up-front, lost or saved, makes no difference.**
- Raised again for our justification.**

1 Corinthians 2:6-8 KJV

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

So, just because someone says that they believe that Jesus Christ died for their sins, was buried and rose again, doesn't mean that they believe Paul's gospel, and are saved. Most Catholics, Pentecostals, Baptists, Jehovah's witnesses, Mormons, you name it, say they believe that. Are they saved? Sadly many aren't! What do they believe about what the cross work of Jesus Christ accomplished, where their sins are concerned?! That's the issue!

Let's get back to...

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 KJV

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.

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:

It's crucial to understand that Paul was talking to a mixed bag assembly of believers. The previously unbelieving Jews who were in the assembly could relate to what Paul was saying. He had shown them that Christ's death for sins was in 'their' scriptures. According to the revelation of the mystery (Romans 16:25-26), Christ died for the sins of ALL, so Paul was not speaking contrary to the mystery. Paul is teaching Jews and Gentiles, which explains why Paul seems to speak contradictorily at times. Even though he was addressing the Jews at times, the Gentiles at times, and both at times during the Acts period, he was always speaking to those who he had won to his gospel; the gospel of the grace of God.

Have you ever seen or heard the term "the word of truth" (singular, distinctiv) being used? 'The word of truth' is the gospel/good news, and it appears in all of the 3 time periods in your Bible: time past-but now-ages to come.

Time past: Psalms 119:43.

But now: 2 Corinthians 6:7, Ephesians 1:13, 2 Timothy 2:15.

Ages to come: James 1:18

As we've seen, there hasn't just been 1 gospel messages, but several. Keeping these gospels, and the doctrine/teaching associated with each gospel, separated is what 'rightly dividing the word of truth' is all about:

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

God made it easy, man makes it hard! This is not rocket science, so grab your Bible and do a good old bible study to shew thyself approved unto God :)